

U.S. Investments

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FOR A TRULY INDEPENDENT GUIANA

By CHEDDI JAGAN.

"Independence will be won by struggle, not by begging for it." While this statement is being freely made, yet one finds that the P.P.P., and its leaders, who are in the forefront of the struggle for independence and who have advocated taking strong measures—general strike, boycott, civil disobedience, etc...are being constantly maligned.

"Jagan and the P.P.P." we were told, "must be destroyed; they can never lead the Guianese people to independence."

"Why? Because of their communist views and Guiana's geographical location, the U.S.A., would never permit it. Even if Britain is willing to do so, she will have to accede to America's wishes! We are weak and isolated therefore we must be clever, we must change our tactics, we must fool them until we achieve our political independence. Thereafter we can do what we like." So runs the argument.

This calls for serious analysis. Why is it that the U.S.A., will not allow an independent Guiana with a P.P.P. Government? As I see it, possibly for three reasons:—



1. B.G. may become a military base for communist Russia.
2. B.G. may become an ideological base for international communism.
3. A P.P.P. Government in an independent Guiana may transform the economy, and attempt a wholesale policy of nationalisation and expropriation.

Let's examine the three points realistically.

(1) We have already publicly stated that the P.P.P. will stay within the British Commonwealth of Nations, and will pursue a policy of active neutrality like India. We do not believe in the cold war, in foreign military bases in our country. If it is assumed that after independence we would let the U. S. S. R. set up a military base here, recall that the U. S. A. has a 99 years lease to naval and air bases, which though de-activated can be resumed at any time. Is it seriously being suggested that we will be willing to invite Russia to push out America and have a war on our hands!

(2) As I see it, the ideological war between communism and capitalism will be settled not here but in Russia and America, in about 10 to 15 years on the basis of the achievement of living standards and real personal freedom. For our part we believe in the freedom of ideas and all that this implies... fullest discussion, freedom of the press, assembly, speech, etc.

(3) We have at no time advocated expropriation of private property. We do not see the need to nationalize any existing private industry, in our country which is almost, industrially untouched. Like the Ghana Government, we reserve the right to nationalize but if we do so, we will pay just and adequate compensation. However, we believe in the complete transformation of the economy of British Guiana. Without this, the living standards of the Guianese people cannot be raised. It is precisely this transformation which the imperialists in the U. K. and U. S. A. are opposed to. Recall that recently the World Bank, dominated by the U. S. A. refused to make a loan to India because it did not agree with India's second 5 year economic plan. This plan envisages 3 sectors in the industrialization plan (a) basic key industries to be completely state-owned: (b) intermediate to be owned jointly by state and private enterprises (c) small scale industries to

be completely in the hands of private enterprise.

From the above, it should be abundantly clear that point 3 is the only one deserving of any serious attention. In other words, the main reason why the imperialists may not desire to grant political independence to B.G. with a P.P.P. Government in power, is that the PPP may transform the nature of the economy.

To turn now to the arguments of our detractors. We are told we must be tactful, diplomatic, etc. so as to fool the imperialists in order to achieve our political independence after which, we can then proceed to transform our economy.

Firstly, the basic assumption that we can fool the enemy is completely wrong. They are 'wiser' and more cunning. Even if we succeeded in fooling them, will they stay fooled? Did not they pounce upon and eventually overthrow a government (Arbenz) of a sovereign territory (Guatemala) when this government stepped on the toes of a powerful U.S. monopoly, the United Fruit Company? Was not the Government of Dr. Mossadeq overthrown when, after many long years of struggle, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) was nationalized in 1951? The economic history of politically free Persia (Iran) is one of terrible exploitation.

It is estimated that the return on a total investment by AIOC of £21½ million, of which the British Government contributed £5 million is as follows:—

(1) £115 million went to shareholders of which £49 million went to the British Government.

(2) £400 to £500 million was put back into the industry, thus increasing shareholders property, not only in Persia, but throughout the world.

(3) £175 million went into taxation to the British Government. In other words, investment of £21½ million brought back to Britain £700 to £800 million over the past 50 years, during which Persia got only about £105 million giving in exchange about 300 million tons of oil.

In addition, in November, 1955 when the company changed its name to British Petroleum Company, it gave a 400 per cent share bonus from its reserve of £80,550,000. The British Government holding of ordinary shares thus rose to £56 250,000 and the Burma Oil Company's to £26, 714 025—over eleven times the sums invested. In other words, original £ 1 shares were then worth £11.5s (face value) and nearly £50 (market stock exchange value).

Mr. R. A. Butler, Chancellor of the Exchequer said on February 15, 1955—'The value of the Government's £5 million investment went up to nearly 400 million!'

It is important to note for the purpose of this argument the attitude of the imperialist powers during the Persian Crisis (1951). The U.S. Government had more or less agreed to a loan of \$120 million to the Persian Government but after the U.S. failure in attempting to persuade Dr. Mossadeq to see Britain's point of view, the U.S. State Department announced that the Persian Government could not have the loan.

Britain blocked sterling and exports of valuable raw materials. It was put out that if Iran fell in line, "Her Majesty's Government will release restrictions on exports to Iran and on Iran's use of sterling; and the U.S. will make an immediate grant of \$10 million."

Dr. Mossadaq, however, carried through the nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. He was shortly after overthrown; and 10 days after his arrest, the U.S. announced continuation of Point Four Aid to the tune of \$23 million, and an emergency grant of \$45 million.

Mr. Henry Byroade, Assistant Secretary of State was extatic. He said, after the overthrow of Dr. Mossadeq's government "out of the black cloud, white rain has descended. His Majesty, the Sheik and Prime Minister Zahedi are producing sweet remedies... Zahedi's advent to power is a repudiation of the sterile negative policies of the past." This was the same gentleman who, after the U. S. applauded Britain for the suspension of our constitution proclaimed that "a premature independence (to the colonies) can be dangerous, retrogressive and destructive."

For the record of those who think that the U. S. is prepared to oppose only communists, let it be noted that Dr. Mossadeq was an ardent nationalist, and an equally ardent anti-communist.

In a recent letter to President Eisenhower, Mr. Nelson Rockefeller, heir to Standard Oil Millions, let the cat out of the bag. He said:- "We should not ignore the vital fact

that virtually all of our natural rubber, manganese, chromium and tin, as well as substantial proportions of our zinc, copper and oil and a third or more of the lead and aluminum we need comes from abroad, and, furthermore, that is chiefly drawn from the underdeveloped areas of Africa and Asia, which are in the orbit of one or other of the military alliances built by the U.S. This is also true of a major part of our 'superstrategic material, (uranium ore, particularly)' Then drawing attention to the economic side of the U.S. military alliances, he went on:...

"The most significant example in practice of what I mean, was the Iranian experiment with which, as you will remember, I was directly concerned. By the use of economic aid we succeeded in getting access to Iranian oil and we are now well established in the economy of that country. The strengthening of our economic position in Iran has enabled us to acquire control over her entire foreign policy and in particular to make her join the Bagdad pact. At the present time the Shah would not dare even to make any changes in his Cabinet without consulting our Ambassador."

Imperialism is not averse to using force to achieve its own ends. History is full of many sad examples of the rights of independent nations being trampled underfoot. This is how Major General Smedley Butler put it in his book 'Common Sense'—"I spent 33 years and four months in active service as a member of our country's most agile military force, the Marine Corps. I served in all commissioned ranks from second lieutenant to major-general. And during that period I spent most of my time being a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism....."

"Thus I helped to make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank to collect revenues in...I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-12.

"I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras 'right' for American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested."

In other words, the U. S., was prepared to use almost any means to see that its own interests were preserved—which means preservation of the world capitalist system and its huge investments abroad.

For instance, a U. N. Report, Foreign Capital in Latin America States:—

"U. S. investors yearly take more money out of Latin America than they put into it, and the gap is growing. From 1925 to 1929, U. S. investors collected \$100,000,000 a year more from Latin America than they put into that area in new capital. Yearly collections of dividends, interest, etc. averaged \$300,000,000, investments \$200,000,000. In 1952 such investors collected \$336,000,000, more than they invested.

"Whereas in 1929 the estimated return on U. S. investments in Latin America was about 6 per cent, in 1949 it was 14.9, in 1950 16.8 and in 1951, 20.5 per cent"

This attitude was clearly revealed in the United Nations Debate on the Declaration of Human Rights. Said Mr. Wayne Phillips in the New York Times of October 28, 1955:—"The U.S. has begun a drive to settle a section of the proposed Covenant of Human Rights that poses a threat to its business interests abroad."

Some may argue that Dr. Nkrumah achieved independence by tactical means. This is not the whole truth. Let us not forget the phase of active struggle. As Mr. Cecil Forde, General Secretary of the C. P. P. put it:—"We of the Convention People's Party were subjected to torture, persecution, long imprisonment, incredible and indescribable oppression in 1950. We were paraded almost naked in the streets, beaten up with truncheons and butts of guns or revolvers by Syrian and European police officers. We remember how our young women agitating for self government were clapped into Prison and placed in the same cell with their men folk."

And even if a tactical line succeeded in Ghana, Ghana is not Guiana. Ghana has behind it the whole of Africa- Africa is the richest prize left. After imperialist brutality in Kenya, a fascist apartheid policy in South Africa, and imposition of a Central African Federation on unwilling Africans, imperialism has made and is making strategic retreats in Ghana and other parts of Africa. As the famous American writer, John Gunther put it "If reform doesn't come in time, Africa, the greatest prize on earth, will be lost to the

West as Asia was lost.”

I admit that B. G. is isolated and weak. But this weakness will not disappear overnight with political independence. If we are too weak to fight for our political independence, then we will also be weak to fight for our economic independence. Those who attempt to divide and separate the two aspects—political and economic—of our national liberation movement are only trying to delude the people. Speaking in India, Mr. L. F. S. Burnham said that “political freedom unaccompanied by economic independence was elusive. Political independence which you win at the expense of so much blood and suffering may be in jeopardy if foreign economic strangulation continues.” (Times of India 12.1.54) Now he is singing a different tune. Knowing clearly what they want—a complete transformation of the economy for the raising of living standards—the Guianese people have to take a stand. Back-peddling and dancing to the tune of the imperialists will never do. The struggle may be long and hard, but it must be faced. Only when we enter such a struggle, and international morality is such that the big nations are prepared to respect the rights and sovereignty of small nations, will we be really free. This is the freedom which is worthwhile, which we must fight for.

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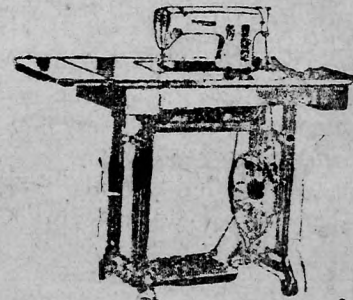
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