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Georgetown & New Amsterdam

INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains nine articles written in 1967 by the Leader of the People's Progressive Party Dr. Cheddi Jagan for the 'Mirror' newspaper in his regular Sunday column entitled 'STRAIGHT TALK'.

We have considered them worthy of reprint in booklet form because of the basic truths contained and the fact that time has not altered the accuracy of Dr. Jagan's analyses.

Dr. Jagan discusses a number of issues ranging from the phoney promises of the People's National Congress and United Force at the last elections and their inability to fulfil them, the so-called de-colonization of sugar policy propounded by the P.N.C. and the land monopolization which the Coalition Government has aided and encouraged. He deals with the tie-up of our natural resources, the disastrous decisions of the Government which have harmed the rice industry, the political strings which have tied Guyana to the foreign and domestic policies dictated by Washington and the many steps taken by the Government to deny the rights of Guyanese and establish a dictatorship. "No one can be safe" warns Dr. Jagan in discussing the National Security Act and he calls for vigilance and the mobilization of our forces to work for the removal of those who would destroy our liberties.

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HIGHWAY TO HAPPINESS

"Highways to Happiness" is inexorably becoming "Highways to Hell." All the fantastic promises made in the United Force manifesto remain paper promises.

Let us take a look at the manifesto. On page 91 of "Highways to Happiness," we read:—

The seven important features of our economic plans for Guyana are, in fact steps towards true democracy.

- 1) A plan to create full employment by creating 60,000 new jobs within 6 years.
- 2) A positive policy to improve wages and conditions of employment for Guyanese.
- 3) A plan to burst open the treasure chest of our interior by driving a network of roads through it; this we call our 'Magic Circle' road development.
- 4) A plan to give 30,000 farmers approximately of bona fide land.
- 5) Positive action to assist and encourage workers to own their own homes.
- 6) A blueprint to obtain and use \$900m. for the economic and social development of Guyana.
- 7) A positive policy to establish capital ownership among all people of Guyana.

What is the result so far? The \$900 million blueprint was for six years. But the coalition government's new \$300 million D-plan is for seven years — a reduction by more than two-thirds.

Instead of creating 10,000 new jobs per year, unemployment is actually increasing. Apart from unemployment due to mechanisation of the sugar industry, school leavers are swelling the ranks of the unemployed.

The latest man-power survey shows that there are over

30,000 children aged 14 and over in government primary, all-age and secondary schools.

Because the government has decided to reduce free education in these schools from the GCE level to that of College of Preceptors, these boys and girls will soon be leaving school and looking for work.

On wages, the United Force manifesto stated:—

1. Immediate minimum wage of \$4.00 per day.
2. Minimum annual increment.

At the street corners during the 1964 election campaign, the workers were told that their wages will be between \$5 — \$10 per day. But what does Mr. D'Aguiar, the leader of the United Force, now say?

Addressing the Post Office Workers' Union, he warned against agitation for higher wages. He said that increased wages for workers must go hand-in-hand with increased productivity or else "you will soon be driving the country's economy into a state of bankruptcy."

Talk about productivity is now very popular in ruling circles. All the sins of the government are to be forgotten and the workers are constantly being reminded that they are lazy and that they must work harder.

CAPITALIST GOVERNMENT

D'Aguiar went on to remind the Trade Union leaders that in their demand for higher wages, they tended to reduce profits and thus in turn effect reductions in revenue paid to government.

D'Aguiar has here let the cat out of the bag — the government has a vested interest in profits. From this flows the obvious corollary — the government will back the employers in any struggle by the workers for a greater share of the profits. The emphasis seems to be—nothing must be done to affect government revenue

D'Aguiar's philosophy clearly means that the government and

the capitalists will become partners in the exploitation of the workers. Of course, D'Aguiar is a Minister of Finance who must be concerned about the financial state of the country. But it must not be forgotten that he is a capitalist first, and a Minister second. One can thus appreciate his defence of profits.

D'Aguiar then followed on his Prime Minister's theme — "Eat less, sleep less and work harder." He said that additional expenditure next year is likely to be \$5 million. This he calls expense of independence for the Guyana Defence Force, United Nations membership and foreign embassies.

What is the point about telling us about an additional \$5 million expenditure? As Minister of Finance he has done nothing to prevent the squandermania for government officers and offices in London, New York and Washington, the fabulous spending for the Prime Minister's home and office and the ever expanding Ministries and bureaucracy.

Even his party paper, the SUN, has queried the apparent helplessness of its leader as Minister of Finance. Had D'Aguiar not abolished in favour of the rich the taxes imposed by the PPP government, and had he taken definite steps to curb excessive spending, the government would not have been in the serious financial plight it is in today.

PAYMENTS DEFICIT

D'Aguiar also referred to balance of payments deficit. This, he said, is likely to reach \$15 million this year. He went on to urge his listeners to depend less on imported goods and to consume more local products. This is the same gentleman who fought against the 1962 PPP budget, one of the objectives of which was to anticipate the same problem of balance of payments.

The problem of balance of payments deficit is not only a question of consuming less foreign goods. There is also the question of profits earned by foreigners and exported abroad. These are estimated to be about \$50 million per year.

There are other additional factors such as debt charges and

the outflow of savings. Debt charges are a rapidly increasing factor, amounting in 1966 to \$11½ million out of a total expenditure of about \$84 million. In another two years, debt charges are likely to mount to \$17 million. Needless to say, most of these debt charges are paid abroad.

Then there is a drain out of the country of savings in one form or another. Two foreign companies, the Demerara Tobacco Company Limited and Diamond Liquors Limited, recently sold \$1½ million of shares. The removal of Exchange Control has permitted the easy outflow of savings which could be used for development here.

The balance of payments problem has to be looked at not in isolation. It is a product of the over-all policies pursued by the coalition government. Similar policies are plaguing many capitalist countries today with balance of payments problems. In Guyana the problem will become even more acute in the near future.

A recent White Paper has warned that the government revenues are suffering to the tune of about \$14 million per year in subsidies and losses in the Transport & Harbours Department, Marketing Division and in drainage and irrigation. The government is proposing to reduce this loss by \$3 million in the short term. Action of this kind will inevitably affect the cost of living and production.

D'Aguiar is obviously making the wrong pleas. It is not the workers, farmers and consumers who must change their ways. It is the government which must change its policies.

NEW ROAD — SUGAR

During the 1964 election campaign, the Guyanese people were told by the People's National Congress in its election manifesto, NEW ROAD that "ESSENTIAL INDUSTRIES MUST BE UNDER SOCIAL CONTROL."

But soon after, the PNC began shouting a new phrase — the de-colonisation of sugar. Now Mr. Burnham says that he will like to think of the sugar industry as a co-operative effort between those who owned it, and those who worked for it.

What does Burnham mean by "co-operative effort." The history of the sugar industry has been a history of blood and tears.

And this has not changed.

The sugar planters continue to extract and export abroad super-profits. In the face of discontinuance of payment of once-for-all bonus and refusal to implement the recommendations of the Venn Commission (1950) with regards to a pension scheme for sugar workers, the planters maintain their dividend payments.

They have by one means and another monopolized the production of sugar. Guyanese cane farmers who ventured in sugar were faced with one obstacle after another — high milling charges, land rentals, drainage and irrigation rates, supervision charges, and prices for fertilisers.

When world sugar prices were high, the sugar barons wrecked the price stabilisation fund, a fund which was meant to provide a cushion for leaner days. Now that the lean days are upon us, the planters keep shouting about low prices, high costs and the need for higher productivity.

Of course, Mr. Burnham indulges in similar language nowadays. He is fully aware of the situation in the sugar industry. But having decided to carry on as the darling of the imperialists, he now talks about co-operation where co-operation is impossible.

He brandishes high-sounding words with an emotive flavour. No wonder, he has been dubbed "Mr. Ambiguous."

If Burnham's government is interested in co-operation, the first thing which must be done is to see that the principle of collective bargaining is respected. There can be no peace, no co-operation, in the sugar industry so long as management is not prepared to negotiate with the union of the workers' choice. Burnham shared this view in the 1950's. Now that he is in a position to do so, he must show his sincerity by starting off from here.

What about de-colonisation? It seems that the term is now forgotten. Even the once-announced but totally inadequate government purchasing of a 5 per cent share in the sugar industry has apparently been shelved.

Incidentally, the coalition government talks about 5 per cent ownership while even in certain capitalist-dominated countries, governments are thinking about ownership of at least 50 per cent of the shares.

Burnham claims that his government was anxious to have integration at all levels in the sugar industry. With this, even the sugar planters have indicated agreement. On this question, there can be no disagreement — Guyanese must hold all the top jobs in the industry.

But this is not enough. Creation of a Guyanese sugar elite will not really affect the relationship between workers and employees. Workers will continue to be exploited, and the foreign capitalists will continue to drain wealth out of the country.

The PNC has clearly abandoned its pledges. It declared that essential industries must be under social control. But instead of public, government-ownership of this vital industry, the Prime Minister indulges in verbiage such as "co-operation" and "integration."

The time is long past for mere cliches. As long as 1938, Sir Arthur Lewis declared that something radical must be done if

the sugar industry was not to tear itself into pieces. He referred to the Fiji system and the proportional profit farm system of Puerto Rico.

Since then there have been new developments in Cuba, with nationalisation of sugar factories and cultivation of canes by co-operatives. Even Antigua has now nationalised the sugar industry.

In Guyana, there is urgent necessity for the nationalisation of sugar.

RESOURCES TIE-UP

One of the great social evils of South American countries is land concentration. While the majority of the people own tiny plots from which they eke out a meagre existence, a few people of power and prestige own vast estates.

In most of South America, between one-quarter to one-half of all farmland is in estates of over 2,400 acres (1,000 hectares). And these vast areas are in the hands of less than 2½ per cent of the landholders, except in Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia and the interior of Brazil where the figure varies from 4 per cent to 6 per cent. Thus the urgent need for land reform.

In discussions with my Latin American friends, I used to say that our problem is not as acute. Now I'm not so sure. Land in Guyana is becoming monopolized, is becoming more and more concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. A graphic picture of land monopolization is as follows:—

- Demerara and Berbice coastline — absentee (British) sugar companies, Bookers, Mc Connell & Co. Ltd., and Demerara Company Ltd.
- Essequibo Islands and Essequibo Coast — local landlords.
- Berbice River — Reynolds Metals Company (US) holds 1/4 million acres of bauxite lands.

- Demerara River — Demerara Bauxite Co., has huge holdings of bauxite lands on both right and left banks of the river.
- Essequibo River — vast areas of forest lands are tied up by Commonwealth Development Corporation (C.D.C.), Willems Timber Company, Charlestown Sawmills and a few other local companies.
- Pomeroon and North West District — All forests concessions to be granted to CDC which already has extensive holdings at Manaka and Winiperu, Essequibo River. A subsidiary of a US Company mines manganese in the North West District.
- Rupununi — The Rupununi Development Company mostly owned by local capitalists, and closely associated with expatriate interest has 24,000 square miles of savannah lands.

This concentration and monopolisation of our land has posed and will pose even greater problems in the future. Our development efforts will be thwarted and the Guyanese citizen will find himself at the mercy of others.

Let's look at our two main resources, bauxite and timber.

All the bauxite lands on the right bank and left bank of the Demerara River was handed over to the Demerara Bauxite Company — DEMBA, by the Interim Government in 1956. Ten years later, the Coalition Government has handed to Reynolds Metals Company nearly a quarter million acres of land for 75 years. This means that all our bauxite lands will be tied up.

Recall that Harvey Aluminum Company was interested in establishing a bauxite mine and an alumina plant in Guyana, but it found no bauxite land. It attempted to get when the PPP Government was in office bauxite land on the left bank of the Demerara River which was held, but not worked by DEMBA. An inquiry for a release of the land eventually led to DEMBA building a bridge with the ostensible purpose of mining bauxite from this site.

But not only can competitors like Harvey Aluminum be shut out. In future, government will find any attempt to establish an aluminum smelter in Guyana frustrated. Recall that an United Nations team had reported that an aluminum

smelter could pay for itself out of profits in ten years. Any Government wishing to establish such a smelter will find itself

A look at the timber situation will also indicate future difficulties. In the early 1960's, the P.P.P. government had an offer from the Cuban Government of an initial loan of \$10 million (US) to establish a timber complex of industries which would provide Cuba with telephone poles, railway sleepers (ties) lumber and pressed board, wood pulp. The loan at 2 per cent interest was to be repaid in 12 years from profits.

Difficulty, arose, however, in finding the location to establish the factories. When the Conservator of Forests was approached he said that all the best forest lands in the Bartica Triangle were already tied up, that the only land available was about 40 miles inland from the river front. To develop such an area would require a very expensive 40-mile road.

The Conservator, therefore, suggested talks with the C.D.C. with the object of establishing a joint government — C.D.C. project based on the latter's large holdings at Mahaka and Winiperu.

Nothing eventually came out of these discussions. C.D.C. it must be remembered is one of the business arms of the British Government. And the British Government at that time was operating in collaboration with the U.S.A., which was working for the downfall of the PPP regime.

Any large scale development of timber in the public sector will meet with the same fate. Meanwhile, the country will continue to mark time.

Besides, the ordinary Guyanese citizen will be placed in a more difficult position. Many small loggers (sprinters) have been forced to pay a consideration to the big lease-holders for the privilege of cutting logs on their concerns. This foul practice is now being extended.

Recently, I found out in the Caria Caria area of the Essequibo river that small loggers are given neither leases nor permission to extract 25, 50, or 100 logs as in the past. The whole area on the left bank of the Essequibo River has been given to

an American who has been associated with the Columbian Corporation. This company had close contacts with members of the Interim Government.

Although granted a lease for five years over an extensive area in the Bartica Triangle area little work was done. I understand the lease has now been extended although the PPP government was moving to have it terminated.

One sees the same practice even on the coastland. Nothing is done by the Coalition Government to break up the monopoly of land by the sugar estates. Bookers had promised to release over 20,000 acres of land held at Kabower, at the rear of Blairmont Estate. During the PPP regime, the sugar planters had promised to release the area to government, a small portion at a time. Nearly 300 persons on the West Coast of Berbice had constituted themselves in the Greater Kabower Co-operative Society and applied for 4,000 acres of land. Instead of facilitating the Society and acquiring more land from the sugar planters to meet other needs, the government has now split the holding, giving 2,000 acres to the Society and 2,000 acres to a group of 30 persons.

Overall, the moves of the Coalition Government have ominous connotations for the future. Our independence is being bartered away; our lands and natural resources are being monopolised by foreigners, British and American.

With our natural resources tied up and our fiscal and economic policies undermined in Washington, Guyana is headed for the morass which is today Latin America. It is the duty of every Guyanese to protest against these alarming trends.

RICE

THE CONNELL DEAL

The government has given Connell Rice and Sugar Company a quarter million dollars as a retainer to dispose of surplus rice. Connell ships Guyana rice in its own bags under its own brand name "Rooster". This can do Guyana no good in the long run.

Besides, from figures available the R.M.B. will lose about \$1.49 per bag on white rice, and \$4.30 per bag on parboiled rice offered to Connell from October 1966 to January 1967.

Government's intervention in the rice industry will clearly be disastrous for the rice producers and the economy as a whole. Farmers will be paid for rice between \$3.00 to \$5.00 per bag less than before. In the Mahaicony—Abari area, where over 50% of padi produced is below grade C, farmers will be paid by the Rice Development Company \$3.70 and \$2.90 for grades C and D respectively. These prices are below costs of production and must affect output.

Mr. Burnham knows these facts. But he says the government has to be realistic. He now talks about realism, and has forgotten the promises made by the PNC and UF when in Opposition.

As long ago as 1961, we were attacked for the Cuban rice deal by Bashir Khan, PNC rice "expert". According to the Daily Chronicle of June 5, 1961, Bashir Khan claimed that Colombia had offered him \$29.20 c.i.f. for White rice 25 — 30% broken, as compared to the price of \$34.99 being paid by Cuba.

The Guyana Graphic, on November 8th, 1964 reported that the PNC assured rice producers that they would "retain the Cuban market and take immediate steps to expand Guyana's overseas rice trade, as they would be in a better position than the PPP to sell to other countries."

The United Force was not to be outdone. Its rice "expert", S. Gangadeen told rice producers, as reported in the

Daily Chronicle on November 4, 1964, that "in this time of serious world rice shortages, Guyana is forced to sell its rice at bargain prices. America and Brazil, the only large scale exporters near Guyana are getting \$10.00 a bag more than we are."

SUBSIDIES CUBA

Not only were promises made to the electorate that the Cuban market would be retained and \$10.00 per bag more will be paid. There was also talk of subsidies. This was when the electoral promises, still fresh in people's minds, could not be fulfilled.

The Guyana Graphic on Tuesday April 6, 1965 headlined: **Rice Farmers May Get Government Subsidy.** It went on to say: "The Premier, Mr. Forbes Burnham, indicated at a recent news conference the possibility of his Government's considering the question of subsidy to the farmers this year in order to get rid of the estimated 80,000 tons of surplus rice."

Mr. Rudy Kendall, Minister of Trade also said as reported in the Graphic of April 11, 1965 that "the government would underwrite whatever losses the Rice Marketing Board may incur in selling the rice at world market prices."

Now Burnham says that in a predominantly agricultural country, unlike North America and Europe, the government cannot be expected to subsidize agriculture. What Burnham failed to mention was that agriculture outside of sugar earns only about 10 per cent of the gross domestic product. Clearly the other sectors, especially those owned and controlled by imperialist interests which make about \$50 million profits annually must be made to support agriculture on which the well-being of so many Guyanese in the countryside depends.

Instead the government has cut out subsidies on various crops. And the duty free gasoline concession has been abolished.

The Prime Minister justified the latter on the ground that 90% of the tractors used in the rice industry were diesel-operated. This is not true. A survey carried out by the RPA

and collated with the machinery firms shows that over 40% of these machines still use gasoline.

The time has come for the government to reverse its ruinous agricultural policies. So far, Guyana has produced reasonably well what it needs. But the danger is that we will become like Latin America, which buys, not like us only 1/5 of its agricultural needs, but almost the bulk of its foods from abroad.

THE BUBBLE WILL BURST

The coalition government can truly be said to be a bloated bubble. And the bubble will soon burst!

The bubble now shows up in the form of huge overdrafts with the banks. The central government, the Georgetown Town Council, the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Development Company are all involved.

The Minister of Finance had admitted that the government owed \$17 million at year end — \$15 million to the banks and \$2 million to individuals and business firms in the form of Treasury Bills. This is a sad state of affairs.

During the PPP regime, the limit of overdrafts with the two banks was \$5 million. And the amount borrowed had to be squared up by the end of the year.

The Georgetown Town Council is also in bad shape. Its authorised overdraft with the banks has increased from \$600 thousand in 1964 to \$725 thousand at the end of 1966.

And now the government is seeking legislative approval to increase the overdrafts for the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Development Company from \$4 million to \$10 million.

The fact is the Government, the Town Council and the RMB and RDC are near-bankrupt. The overdrafts are required to meet budget deficits and annual losses.

After showing a profit for three successive years (1961-1964), the RDC made losses of \$743,090 and \$1,053,000 in 1965 and 1966 respectively. For the RMB, losses for the corresponding years were \$4.8 million and \$3.9 million.

These losses are the results of political interference and political deals. Connel Rice and Sugar Company has been paid a fantastic sum for selling rice at a loss. Losses for less than two months from October to December 1966 amount to \$474,438.

Political appointments have led to increased overheads; inefficiency and thefts. Costs are mounting. Huge quantities of padi and rice at the RDC mills cannot be accounted for. There is no proper control of spare parts.

And now the government proposes a merger deal of the RMB and RDC.

What are the reasons for this merger? Apparently the government wishes to have centralized control of the rice industry and to regulate the milling of padi according to the marketing demands of the RMB. It is proposed that the merged RMB-RDC will buy all padi, dry and store at central points and allocate to private mills the milling of padi from time to time.

On the surface this appears to be sound. Between 2 to 4 million dollars it is claimed, will be saved from loss due to insect infestation and deterioration of padi from improper drying. But the experts who are advising government have failed to note certain recent developments.

Firstly; since the recent change in the composition of the RMB from rice producer control to government control, the Board's losses have mounted. Due to bulging bureaucracy, the cost of handling has risen by nearly 100 per cent from \$2.21 to over \$4 per bag. Further centralization will increase cost of bureaucratic control.

Secondly, there will be disruption in the whole pattern of organisation of the rice industry. The farmers net annual income would be reduced.

Presently, about 60 per cent. of padi is milled into rice by the farmers themselves. They provide their own labour inside the factory and on the "concrete". The milling fee charged is

only between \$1.50 and \$1.84 per bag of rice. As against this, the miller's margin allowed the RDC is \$4.35 for rice of No. 1 grade and below and \$5.92 for super grade. Comparable figures for private mills are \$2.50 to \$3.50 per bag. These mills can charge less because they are more efficiently managed.

Thirdly, the farmers will have to bear the losses of the RDC and to meet debt payments to the CDC (\$5 million) and also the further losses for extra transportation and handling from field to silos, and then again to mills.

The merger proposed should be shelved. Consideration should be given to it only after all aspects of the rice industry have been restored in the hands of the rice producers and the RDC has been reorganised and efficiently managed to make it a viable concern.

WHICH WAY FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE government proudly announced that it is spending on an unprecedented scale. The figures given were \$30 million by the government in 1966 and \$14 million by foreign investors in the period from 1964 to the end of 1966.

The shouting of these figures is of course to tell the people at home and abroad that Guyana under the coalition Government is doing exceedingly well. But this is far from the truth, as every Guyanese, whether he is a businessman, farmer or worker, knows.

The naked fact is that the spending of money alone does not constitute economic development. Even more important are other related questions. On what schemes is the money being spent? Is the money being properly spent? Is the money from abroad as loans or gifts being given in cash or in goods and services? Are the loans in cash or in goods and services? Are the

loans 'hard' or 'soft' loans; do we pay back in dollars and pounds or in our own currency, namely our goods?

Let's look at the first question — on what schemes is the money being spent. We have always said that the government is concentrating too heavily on infra-structure (roads, sea defences, airport, harbours and stellingen, public buildings) and social overheads (housing, schools, hospitals, etc.), that this will lead the country into grave difficulties.

Our criticism is based on solid grounds. We must not only spend; we must earn. We must aim at what is called self-sustaining growth. In other words, we must attempt to raise money at home for our own development.

If we depend only on loans and gifts from abroad, we are bound to compound our problems.

THERE WILL BE STRINGS

● Firstly, there will be political strings. We have seen how the coalition government, tied to the USA, is carrying out foreign and domestic policies dictated by Washington — break of trade with Cuba; restrictions on trade with socialist bloc; approval of U.S. intervention in Vietnam and Dominican Republic; vote against the seating of China at the U.N.; amendment of I.D.C. law to prevent the government-owned corporation from establishing industries. These policies are inimical to the welfare of the Guyanese people.

● Secondly, debt payments will become a colossal burden. Latin American countries have reached the stage since the 1950's when they defaulted on debt payments. They either borrow to repay debts or beg for extension of repayment time. India is now finding herself in this position. Very soon even before double-your-money-in-nine-years loans mature, we will be in similar difficulties.

There are four broad heads of development — industry, agriculture, infra-structure and social overheads. Each is necessary and all are somewhat inter-related. And the key to

success is really not how much money is spent overall, but how much is allowed, how much is spent, on each of the four heads.

This criterion is necessary because it takes different lengths of time to generate or recover the money spent on the various heads. Naturally, the quicker the money is recovered, the healthier the country's economy will be.

Generally, money spent on industry is recovered most rapidly, between five to ten years on the average. Agriculture comes next — recovery is between 10 to 20 years. Money spent on infra-structure and social overheads is recovered most slowly, between 20 to 50 years.

In other words of vital importance is not the "quantity of expenditure" but the quality of expenditure. In any serious development programme, industry and agriculture must be given priority over expenditure on infra-structure and social overheads. This was one of the keys to the success of Soviet economic planning.

INVOLVE PEOPLE

Another ingredient, perhaps the most essential, is people. In the final analysis, it is the people who put flesh on the bare bones of money, whatever the sum, however allocated. And it is here that the coalition government has signally failed. It has not succeeded in winning the support of the people.

It talks about self-help and co-operation. But its discriminatory and intimidatory policies are leading to a "brain drain". The best qualified and experienced personnel are leaving the country. It refuses to create representative institutions. In the largest industry, sugar, the workers cannot get the union of their choice to bargain for them. The Rice Producers' Association has been emasculated.

The sooner the government becomes aware that people mean development, the better. China is a classic example of this. Here the people, virtually with their bare hands, were mobilized to build roads and bridges and to dig canals. The plain fact is China received less foreign aid than India, yet China is going ahead, and India is standing still, if not retrogressing. India is now faced with the problem of not being able to repay loans falling due.

Direct involvement of the people at all levels not only helps in the building of "social capital" in the building of roads, dams, bridges, schools, etc., but also in preventing corruption and bureaucratic waste. We have seen where only a few days ago, the Minister of Finance attacked the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics for the illegal expenditure of \$1.5 million, and for improper financial control.

The puppets who think that they do not have to achieve a consensus and to work out a political solution, but can rely on the USA for guns and dollars are mistaken. The guns are not big or powerful enough as we can see in the cruel war in Vietnam.

U.S. surplus stocks of foods are rapidly dwindling. According to a State Department Official, there will be no more surplus very soon.

And there is not much money available either. The USA is facing a recession and a huge budgetary deficit. The unjust Vietnam war is costing about \$2,000 million (U.S.) a month. There is not enough money even for the much-publicized campaign, the domestic War Against Poverty.

What is necessary in Guyana is a broad-based government with sound programmes and policies.

We must trade with, and accept aid from, all countries. The great outflow of capital in the form of profits, dividends (foreign companies make over \$50 million per year) debt payments and savings must be stopped. Fiscal and monetary measures will not be enough. The government must nationalize the commanding heights of the economy. No country can develop when about twice as much money is going out annually as is coming in.

The public sector must be expanded. And there must be strict price and rent controls to prevent the exploitation of the masses.

This is the only way forward. Sweet talk, "hold on" promises, and statistical half-truths will not suffice.

COMPULSORY ARBITRATION

The history of human society is a history of unceasing struggle, a struggle of man to be free — slaves from slave owners, serfs and tenants from feudal landlords, workers from capitalists.

In Guyana, the struggle for freedom and bread, for socialism is now sharpening.

Government has already passed the National Security Act under which it can detain and restrict persons without trial. Now it is moving to enact anti-strike legislation in the form of compulsory arbitration.

Why compulsory arbitration? Employers, the capitalist-owned Press, the Catholic Church and government ministers have been for some time working up a hysteria about the record-breaking number of strikes — 146 in 1965, 172 in 1966 and 57 up to the end of April, 1967.

The capitalist class obviously does not want to have a working class which is militant and which embarks in struggle, in strikes, to attain its objectives.

Apart from this, however, compulsory arbitration has become necessary for two other reasons. Firstly, strikes now pose a challenge to the mighty Sampson himself. Secondly, the government badly needs a scape-goat for its failures.

Two recent strikes hit not only at the bases, but at the seat of power. In one case, the Georgetown sawmill workers went out on an unofficial strike against their employers, Charlestown Sawmills.

Their union, the Guyana Labour Union, headed by L. F. S. Burnham, did not call the strike. The workers were obviously fed up with their union and their government, headed by the same person.

The union failed to lead a militant struggle to achieve the same minimum wage of \$4 per day paid to government unskilled workers. And the government fixed a minimum wage of only \$3.50 per day. At this point, the workers were incensed for during the PPP regime they had received the same minimum wage paid to government unskilled workers.

This strike is remarkable when considered against the background of events of 1963. The sawmill workers then belonged to the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union. The union had at first refused to join the CIA-fomented strikes and disturbances.

Because of this, the workers were encouraged by the PNC to leave the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union and join the then British Guiana Labour Union. Now the workers have turned a full circle; they do not want the Guyana Labour Union; they want a militant union to represent them.

This is exactly the same position with the Bookers Water Front workers. They struck recently because they did not want the Guyana Labour Union to represent them any longer. They wanted De Penna's Clerical and Commercial Workers' Union.

This development — De Peana standing up against Burnham — is even more remarkable. For De Peana is a strong government and USA backer. Note that he is head of the Guyana Assembly of Youth which is closely tied with the CIA-front organisation, the World Assembly of Youth. According to the NATIONAL GUARDIAN, the Guyana Assembly of Youth received funds from the US Foundation of Youths and Students Affairs, another CIA organisation.

De Peana played a big role in the 1963 strike which helped to place Burnham and D'Aguiar in power. His union, when headed by Samaroo as President, was opposed to the strike. So the workers were encouraged to expel Samaroo. After that the union officially joined the strike.

Why has the Government been forced to enact a National Security Act and now proposes to make legislation to provide for compulsory arbitration? For two reasons; firstly, the sharpening of the class struggle; secondly, the ruling class — big business and its financed Press, pulpit and politicians — can no longer rule in the old way. It is now disposing one by one with the freedoms and liberties which it so loudly proclaimed, and which it cannot honour when its power and rule are threatened.

Compulsory arbitration will, in effect, deny workers the right to strike. It aims to achieve the same purpose as the anti-strike law, the Industrial Stabilisation Act, of Trinidad.

Workers in Trinidad cannot strike; they are forced to put

their grievances before a Tribunal, headed by a judge. In Guyana, the Tribunal is likely to be made up of representatives of the government, employees and employers. But the end result will be the same. For under our present situation, with big business controlling the puppet government, it will mean the employers having a majority on the arbitration tribunal.

Guyanese workers must not allow themselves to be fooled. Compulsory arbitration in colonial times, in the form of the Essential Services Ordinance, was used against the workers. They could not go on strike; the government made provision for compulsory conciliation and arbitration.

Many, including FUGE and L. F. S. Burnham, were opposed to this law which restricts the right of the workers to strike. Now, as Prime Minister, Burnham proposes to enact a law for compulsory arbitration, not only for essential workers, but for all workers.

And the TUC gives its blessing. It is clear that the TUC has somersaulted. Its stiff opposition to any form of anti-strike legislation has evaporated. What seems to have happened is a deal with the government—compulsory arbitration for a closed shop.

The question of compulsory arbitration and closed shop must be looked at dialectically. In any compulsory arbitration, the main question is — who will judge? Will it be a judge who may have no sympathy with the working class? Or will it be an Arbitration Tribunal headed by three members, one each from government, employers and employees? Here enters the next key question: who does the government represent, the capitalist class or the working class?

In Colonial Guyana, the Governor resorted to the Essential Services Ordinance because he and Big Business were sure that any conciliation or arbitration committee would be packed with persons representing or stooging for big business.

This is why the position of big business was different at different times — for compulsory arbitration when the Governor ruled; against when the PPP governed; and now, for when the US and Big Business puppets are in power.

And now to the closed shop. This is something for which

American workers have been fighting for many years. But they have not succeeded. The employers do not want to make them strong. Earlier they had fought for the ending of company unionism which they succeeded in achieving.

In Guyana, we have not been able to enact a law similar to the US National Labour Relations Act which gave the US workers the right by secret ballot to have the union of their choice to bargain for them.

Yet it has been announced that we are likely to get the closed shop. Why?

It is clear, that under our conditions the closed shop is only intended to dragoon and fleece the workers, who will be forced to pay union dues to company unions like the MPCA, and unions like the Guyana Labour Union with which workers are becoming disenchanted.

These new manoeuvres of the puppet government and its backers in the TUC and CAGI will not help to solve the problems facing Guyana—rising unemployment, increasing cost of living, increasing crime and juvenile delinquency, deficits in balance of payments, etc.

In Trinidad, the advocates of the anti-strike Industrial Stabilisation Act had declared that strikes were the main cause of Trinidad's troubles. But that law has not solved anything. Actually, the situation has deteriorated further. Meanwhile, The Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams, has now made a scape-goat of his finance minister by removing him from his job. And he is chasing after other rainbows. He has joined the OAS, and is now planning to sell out public Corporations.

Manoeuvres such as these will not help. They cannot tackle the root cause of our problems. What is needed in Trinidad, Guyana and any other poor developed country are bold fiscal, trade and economic policies, based on anti-imperialism and a centrally planned socialist economy.

At the same time, provision must be made also, by law or otherwise, for democracy in the trade union movement, for ending jurisdictional disputes between company, stooge unions and genuine unions.

'NO ONE CAN BE SAFE'

The coalition government some time ago announced its intention to enact legislation for preventive detention. This has now been done by the passage in the National Assembly of a Bill under the title of National Security. What is deemed "national security" is merely an attempt by the government to rule permanently by emergency, to detain and restrict persons without trial and to silence the Opposition.

What is the reaction to this fascist measure? On the whole, the Guyanese people have been relatively silent. Some outside of PPP circles who have commented on the measure have said that there is nothing wrong with the law; that it depends on the government and the persons who will apply it. These persons are working no doubt on the assumption that nothing will happen to them.

In this context, the observation of the famous German cleric, Pastor Martin Niemuller, a strong anti-fascist, is significant. Commenting on the fact that no one is really safe under fascism, that men cannot afford to take a laissez-faire or complacent attitude, he said: "When they came for the communists, I was not a communist; when they came for the trade unionists I was not a trade unionist, when they came for the Jews, I was not a Jew; when they came for the Catholics, I was not a Catholic. And when they came for me, it was too late; no one was left to protest for me."

It is important for Guyanese to keep Pastor Niemuller's exhortation in mind. For once the downhill road of fascism is trodden no one will be really free.

There are many parallels between Guyana today and fascist Germany, between the PNC-UF coalition, and Hitlerism.

The Germans were one of the most class-conscious and ideologically developed people. Their socialist movement was well advanced. (It was because of this that Chancellor Bismarck in-

roduced social security; as he saw it, the way to defeat socialism was to reform capitalism).

The German people, however, went through a transformation. In the depression of the late 1920's and early 1930's when the working class was badly hit, Hitler rose to power. His party by a combination of promises, inflammatory emotionalism, violence and fear took complete power, suppressed the German people and nearly destroyed the world.

Many Utopian promises were made by Hitler and his National Socialist Party. The workers were led to believe that the Nazi Party was a socialist Party. Similarly in Guyana promises were made to the electorate at the 1964 election campaign by the two parties in the coalition government. And the PNC claimed that it was socialist.

VIOLENCE AND HATE

The Germans were told that the cause of their degradation and national humiliation was the Jews. Based on the theory that the Germans were master race, the passions of the German people were worked up against the Jews. In Guyana, the PNC aroused the emotions of their supporters by making the Indo-Guyanese their scapegoats — the Indo-Guyanese in Guyana became the Jews of Germany.

In Germany, violence was unleashed against the communists, trade union militants and dissenters. Fear became a weapon — you either conformed or you were treated as a communist or other non-conformist.

In Guyana, discrimination in employment practice, threats against the workers who engage in strike action, detention and restriction are some of the weapons of violence and fear which are now used against the Guyanese people as economic conditions deteriorate and the working people fight back for their rights. The new National Security Bill now introduced in Parliament is another weapon in the armoury of the neo-fascists in our midst.

It should be noted that Hitler rose to absolute power because of lack of unity and lack of good leadership. The main German parties of the working class — the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party — were severely divided. The Social Democrats, concentrating their attacks on the communists, permitted Hitler to become Chancellor even though he had won only the minority of the popular vote. Having tasted power, he abandoned the ballot box.

In Guyana, we saw where contrary to British conventions and contrary to practice in other European States, the PPP as the largest party was denied the right to form a government. Burnham, as leader of the party with only 40% of the votes was asked to form a minority government.

This government, in less than two years, is becoming increasingly unpopular. Its measures have brought the country to bankruptcy and a wide cross-section of the country to economic ruin. Under these conditions, the National Security Bill merely becomes a weapon of intimidation, and a means of perpetuating the minority in power.

Eternal vigilance, it is said, is the price of liberty. This is no time for complacency and wishful thinking. Those who say the law is good but it will depend on the government or the persons who will apply it are like ostriches, who hide their heads in the sand. The record of Burnham and D'Aguiar is clear. They stopped at nothing to secure power. Is it not reasonable to expect that they will do everything now to maintain themselves in office?

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT

THE success of the PPP at the 1957 and 1961 elections resulted in a merger of reactionary forces. From the platform, street corner and pulpit the cry went up — freedom is threatened. During the 1961 election campaign, the Defenders of

Freedom, headed by some of the most reactionary elements in the country, proclaimed that with a PPP victory individual freedom will be in jeopardy.

"Freedom" and "liberty" were on everyone's lips. In the report of the Constitutional Committee (1959), all political parties and independents declared their beliefs in fundamental human rights. Later, at joint talks under the chairmanship of the Governor, Sir Ralph Grey, at Government House on March 22, 1962, L.F.S. Burnham and P.S. D'Aguiar sought to put more teeth in the clauses of the Fundamental Rights section of our 1961 Constitution. This is what the record at that meeting stated:

"FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS"

- (1) Mr. Burnham wanted these to be generally declared and then particularized in enforceable provisions that would have to be construed liberally in the light of the general declaration. The provisions in the 1961 Constitution were acceptable but would require some minor amendments, e.g., article 5 (page 13) included a non-legal concept in the term 'democratic society' and required the Court to apply subjective tests which was undesirable.
- (2) Dr. JAGAN thought that the provisions in the 1961 constitution were basically good but required some technical amendments to produce greater clarity and eliminate doubt. He proposed, however, that the new Constitution should contain not only a general declaration of Fundamental Rights but also a statement of the general obligations of citizenship.
- (3) Mr. D'Aguiar advocated a declaration which was all-encompassing and should go beyond the 1961 provisions by including all such provisions as were embodied in Magna Carta. He mentioned particularly the right to leave and to return to the country, the right of parents to choose the type of education they wish for their children, and the unrestricted right to sue the Government.

(4) All considered some more effective provision for enforcement should be substituted for that in article 13."

During the discussions, D'Aguiar joined by Burnham, proposed abandoning the constitutional talks with the observation that it was not conducive to hold independence talks under a state of emergency. Subsequently, Guyanese saw where D'Aguiar challenged the constitutionality of the National Savings Development Levy which was introduced by the PPP government.

Such were the attitudes of the leaders of the present government when in opposition. One must not forget Burnham's earlier stand in days prior to his break with the PPP. He vigorously attacked the Subversive Literature Motion introduced by Lionel Luckhoo in the early 1950's. He fought against the suspension of the Constitution and the local lackeys who gave support to the British. He fought against restriction and detention orders imposed by the Interim Government and advised the detainees not to appear before the bogus Tribunal then appointed by the dictator Sir Alfred Savage. He not only associated with, but had as his house guest, D.N. Pritt, the famous British Barrister who came out to appear in the sedition trials against Fred Bowman and Nazruddeen. Outside of Guyana, he took a similar progressive stand against oppression. He fought, for instance, against British terror in Malaya and the imprisonment and subsequent restriction of Kenyatta. But now Burnham and D'Aguiar have somersaulted. Others have become silent.

The Evening Post of November 22, 1966, in an article headed "A Conspiracy of Silence" attacked these one-time "defenders of freedom." Decrying the fact that such little opposition to the National Security Bill has come from certain quarters, "Analyst" said — "Nothing in the Kaldor Budget or the Labour Relations Bill was so hostile to the liberty of the subject, so destructive of the supposedly constitutionally entrenched fundamental rights and freedoms as are some of the provisions of the National Security Bill. This palpable absence of a mobile body of public opinion in a newly independent Guyana is disturbing not only because the existence of such a body is essential for

parliamentary government, but also because majority rule is only tolerable because of the dependence of the rulers upon that body of opinion." The article went on "Clearly 'defending democracy' in the past was a subterfuge for 'intrigue and politically-inspired opposition to the last regime.'"

The question might well be asked — why is it that Burnham's coalition government is now enacting a preventive detention Bill and measures which are aimed at the denial of freedoms and liberties to which he was at one time violently opposed? Why is there so much silence? The answer is simple. Burnham is now a darling and prisoner of Big Business. He came to power with the help of "Water Street," the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, the CIA and the U.S. administration. Even Richard Ishmael in an article in the Labour Advocate on October 30, 1966 admitted "that the good old days were back" and the employers had become more difficult."

Burnham, Ramphal, Reid, D'Aguiar and apologists of government claim that there is no cause for fear, that the government is not violating the rule of law. It is pertinent therefore, to observe how there can be oppression and repression within the law.

GUILTY BY ASSOCIATION

In the USA, there was also enacted in 1950, a National Security Act similar to, but not as vicious as, our Act. This measure before it became law was opposed by the then President, Harry Truman. In his veto message, he stated,

"I am taking this action only after the most serious study and reflection and after consultation with the Security and intelligence agencies of the Government, the Department of Justice, the Department of Defence, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of State have all advised me that the Bill would seriously damage the security and the intelligence operations for which they are responsible. They have strongly expressed the hope that the Bill would not become law."

"Unfortunately, these (registration) provisions are not merely ineffective and unworkable: They represent a clear and present danger to our institutions."

Earlier this month, we launched a great crusade for freedom designed, in the words of General Eisenhower, to fight the big lie with the big truth. I can think of no better way to make a mockery of that crusade and of the deep American belief in human freedom and dignity which underline it than to put the provisions of H.R. 9490 on our statute books."

The US Act passed over President Truman's veto, spawned McCarthyism over the whole American scene; Senator Mc Carthy, through the Senate Un-American Activities Committee, known as the Subversive Activities Committee, for nearly three years, launched a veritable reign of terror. Using the weapon of smear, Americans from all walks of life were subpoenaed to appear before the Committee and threatened either to admit that they were Communists or to expose themselves to charges of perjury.

It was no longer necessary to prove that individuals had committed overt acts which threatened the security of the State. One's beliefs were questioned, and there was guilt by association. Anyone with even the remotest connection with communism or the communists was hounded.

Intellectuals, like the famous atom-scientist, Dr. Oppenheimer, were removed from their jobs. Actors, screen writers, producers, were black-listed. US civil servants in the American Administration, and even at the United Nations, were witch-hunted. The witch hunt covered universities, professors and students, Trade unionists who refused to take anti-communist "Loyal Oaths" were removed from their jobs. Libraries were purged of books written by communists, socialists, and radicals. Religious leaders engaged in peace crusades were attacked.

And every conceivable means was used in the frame-up of individuals. Paid agents became key witnesses and agents provo-

ateurs. Telephone tapping, though unconstitutional, was widely practised.

Those who say that we must trust the government are indeed very short sighted. There has clearly been in Guyana suppression through law. One has witnessed over the last year and a half crass discrimination in employment practices; use of violence against those (Dr. Chandra, Cendrecourt, etc.) to whom the regime is opposed; detention after release by the Courts; harassment, as witnessed recently by police charges, later withdrawn, against rice farmers who demonstrated at the Rice Marketing Board; refusal to grant bail; denial of the right to work and the right to earn a livelihood because of restrictions. These and many other acts loudly proclaim what unlimited powers in the hands of one individual can mean in the future to the lives of the Guyanese people.

In this respect, the observation by the former United Force Chairman and Legislator, is pertinent:

"Three years ago a majority of our people, I among them, opposed the passage of a labour bill that had the potential for Government control of the trade union movement. Then, the voices of our unions, churches, civic organisations and of all those who defend the public good, rose to meet the threat.

"The present proposals offer infinitely greater possibilities for the oppression of any citizen. Those voices that spoke then are largely silent now. The few that speak say we must trust the Government not to abuse its powers.

"What we must seek is the rule of law, not the rule of men. What we must strive for is not to pass bad laws and hope that good men will not abuse them, but to pass good laws that even the evil cannot distort too far. Let us move out of the jungle of Us and Them.

"To build a nation means that we shall have to distinguish between proposal and proposer, and between the objection and the objector.

"Preventive detention has been a constant prelude to tyranny. Power corrodes responsibility and erodes perspective. It has been by preventive detention and restriction of movement that the Government of South Africa has established its bestial control of those it does not represent."

Dr. Richmond went on to say that what is necessary in the country today are provisions and measures for the healing of wounds and for the removal of fear; that this preventive detention measure will provide fresh excuse for disharmony and anti-government feeling.

And the Evening Post observed:

"It has been asked whether Guyana wants a return to the days of 1964 with bottle bombs and vigilante committees.

"It may be asked with equal relevancy whether Guyana wants to become another Malawi, South Africa, Ghana or Southern Rhodesia.

"Neither is desirable. The absence of the National Security Bill could lead to the former; the presence of the Bill could lead to the latter. What is needed, then is legislation which can preclude the former without paying the way to the latter."

We are clearly headed for a dictatorship. Like the American people who through their courage and vigilance defeated McCarthyism, we must now mobilize our forces and work for the removal of those who would destroy our liberties.

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