

GUYANA — A NEW STAGE

— by CHEDDI JAGAN

The US gangland-style gunning down of Dr. Joshua Ramsammy has brought the political development of Guyana to a new stage. From intimidation, harassment and detention of leaders and activists of the People's Progressive Party and extensive electoral fraud at the general (1968) and local (1970) elections, the PNC ruling clique has now moved to political assassination. Brute force is being used to eliminate and silence opponents.

The People's National Congress (PNC) is becoming hysterical about growing dissension within and without its ranks. A wide gap is developing between the rank-and-file and the leadership. And there are many cracks in the leadership itself because of one-man dictatorship, Machiavellian methods and manoeuvrings, changes and dismissals. The head-rollings which began with Henry Thomas as Minister of Economic Development in 1966 has now surfaced with the open criticisms of, and the near-break from, the PNC of the volatile Eusi Kwavana, one-time Secretary of the PNC and Chief Elder of the Association for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa (ASCRIA).

New opposition groupings have developed and are becoming more and more vocal — the Ratoon Group, the Movement Against Oppression (MAO), the Guyana Anti-Discrimination Movement (GADM), the Patriots.

Broadly, these groups fall within two categories—petty-bourgeois revolutionism (radicalism) and petty-bourgeois nationalism. As such they represent two current deviationist and opportunist trends in the realm of international politics which were encountered in the past inside the PPP.

In 1955, L. F. S. Burnham, Dr. J. P. Lachhmansingh, Jai Narine Singh and Clinton Wong led a rightist breakway group from the PPP. A year later, in 1956, Sydney King (Eusi Kwayana), Martin Carter and Rory Westmaas followed with an ultra-leftist split. Their opportunism surfaced later when on the basis of anti-communism, Burnham teamed up with US imperialism. King became Manager of the state trading corporation, the Guyana Marketing Corporation, and Martin Carter Minister of Information under the Burnham-led, PNC government.

More recently, Brindley Benn led an ultra-left walkout from the PPP. His line in 1964-65 not to participate in the parliamentary struggle but to carry on the struggle of 1964 (which had degenerated from an anti-imperialist into a racial war) and "to make the revolution" was more or less similar to the position of the ultra-leftists a decade earlier in 1954-1955. His unprincipled attacks (traitors, CIA spies, etc.) on some of his colleagues who did not agree with his line led to his defeat as Chairman of the PPP and the voluntary walkout of himself and his little group from the party.

This ultra-leftist walkout created a vacuum in the leadership which was filled by some rightists. Soon a rightist opportunist tendency developed within the leadership with a position clearly not Marxist-Leninist. Brindley Benn who was opposed to imperialism, underestimated in his tactical considerations the influence of race in politics. These rightists overestimated the racial factor, took the un-Marxist position that the Afro-Guyanese would *always* support Burnham and the PNC; and thus for the PPP to come to power, it must make an accommodation with Anglo-American imperialism. Consequently, it opposed the transformation of the PPP from a loose mass party into a Marxist-Leninist party and an economic programme based on the nationalization of the imperialist-owned and controlled plantations, mines, factories, banks, insurance and foreign trade. Rudy Luck was one of the champions of this group.

The rightist, opportunist tendency was roundly defeated at the Party Congress in 1968 and its Special Conference in 1969.

The Ultra-leftist "revolutionary" and rightist opportunist tendencies, having been defeated within the party, have taken organizational form outside the party.

The Guyana Anti-Discrimination Movement and the Patriots, largely led by middle-class professionals, are basically rightist and opportunist. Their opposition to the PNC regime stems not so much to its policies, domestic and foreign, of collaboration and partnership with imperialism, but to the fact that they and/or the racial and social strata they represent are not sharing in the spoils of the system. Notice that those, like the present leadership of the Maha Sabha, who have been coopted, have been silenced.

Llewelyn John, one of the leaders of the Patriots, has never at any time taken an anti-imperialist, pro-socialist line. In the old days, before he became a member and a minister of the PNC, he belonged to the racist and reactionary League of Coloured People and the rightist wing of the National Democratic, later the United Democratic Party, which opposed the PPP in the 1950's. Whatever the reasons for his break with the PNC hierarchy, it was certainly not ideological.

GADM is largely the Indo-Guyanese counterpart to the Afro-Guyanese-led Patriots. Because of their identical orientation, they should have been linked together organizationally. This may not have come about because of personal, racial and tactical considerations. The target of the Patriots is the PNC leadership, but its objective is the PNC's Afro-Guyanese supporters; the target of GADM is the PNC corrupt government, but its objective is the PPP's Indo-Guyanese supporters.

Recognizing that it cannot come out with a frontal attack against the PPP, GADM has resorted to a very subtle line. In its September 1971 issue of the *Liberator*, it spoke in glowing terms of the past performances and creditable role of the leader of the PPP, but:

"His party, now in a state of disarray, needs rejuvenation; it needs to gear its policies closer to home issues; it should spend less effort in expounding a foreign ideology that only serves to divide the forces of

opposition, and gladden the hearts of those who seek to oppress us; and, above all, there is great need to adapt its policies to the peculiar circumstances which prevail in our country.

"In the past many have suggested that the obvious solution to our problems would be a reconciliation of these two sectional leaders. Apart from the fact that this is a pipe-dream, their individual performances have been so deficient that such a reconciliation would only serve to compound our misery.

"The need of our country therefore, is for new national leadership, unfettered by recent or remote history, dedicated to searching out and implementing practical solutions with a calm and dispassionate approach".

By "foreign ideology", GADM clearly means not only communism and socialism, but also anti-imperialism. Like the United Force, it wants a foreign policy of pro-imperialism, no different from the so-called non-aligned policy of the PNC (in the May 1971 foreign policy debate in the National Assembly, the UF voted with the PNC government). When it advocates that the PPP should "gear its policies closer to home issues", it is either ignorant or dishonest or both. What home issue has not the PPP taken up? It talks of a new leadership, neither PPP nor PNC nor both together, "implementing practical solutions". What are these, please tell us gentlemen?

This sounds like the "Economic Dynamism" and "The Highway to Happiness" of Peter d'Aguiar, the one-time dynamic leader of the United Force.

Would GADM go even as far as the demagogic socialist PNC, not to speak of the PPP integrated, anti-imperialist programme which accepts as indispensable for success a domestic policy (extension of public ownership, land reform, concentration on industry and agriculture with a clean, honest government, workers control and democratic institutions) closely interlinked with a progressive foreign genuinely non-aligned, policy of aid and trade with all countries, including the socialist world? Or would it follow the UF which voted against the nationalization of the Demerara Bauxite Company?

GADM, like the U.F., sees not economic and social transformation, but clean government and capitalist charity as the solution to the ills of the Guyanese nation. Clearly, this is not the way out. The fight against discrimination and corruption is not enough. Corruption, discrimination and racism will not be eradicated until the system, of which they are integrally related (capitalism, which permits the exploitation of man by man and imperialism which permits the exploitation of nation by nation) is eradicated.

The National Labour Front, led by Lionel Luckhoo, was replaced by the United Force when the former became a spent force. Is GADM the successor to the UF, now that the latter is dying, with Dr. H. J. M. Richmond former chairman of the UF as the connecting link?

On the left, there are the Ratoon Group and the Movement Against Oppression (MAO). The leadership of Ratoon is largely drawn from a mixed bag of radical academics (Maoists, Ascians, Black Power; etc.) and students of the University of Guyana; the Ratoon provides the leadership of MAO, the rank-and-file of which comes largely from the *lumpen* proletariat — unemployed, mainly youths — of the depressed Tiger Bay area of the capital, Georgetown.

Like Brindley Benn's paper organization, the Working People's Vanguard Party, they are ultra-leftist. Their ideological orientation is a product of the "New Left" ("New World" in the Caribbean), of Maoism, of Trotskyism and neo-anarchism. From Trotskyism, and C. L. R. James, they get their anti-Sovietism, a special brand of anti-communism. From the Maoist's "two super-power" theory—socialist USSR is the same as imperialist USA; both are enemies to be destroyed — they get their anti-Sovietism. From the Maoist concept of the third world — Asia, Africa and Latin America — being the "rural areas" (in terms of guerilla warfare) encircling and defeating the "cities" — (Western Europe, USA and USSR) — has been derived the Ratoon's idea of Black power (black, brown and yellow peoples of the third world) against the white world, which lumps together the imperialist USA with the socialist Soviet Union and other Eastern European States (a position with which the PPP does not agree as was made clear when the Ratoon Group withdrew its sponsorship of Stokely Carmichael after his advocacy of separate organizational work among blacks. In-

dians, etc. The PPP's position is, like that of the World Communist movement, that there are three revolutionary streams — the national liberation movement of the third world, the socialist world system and the democratic and progressive forces, black and white, of the capitalist world — which must unite in the struggle for national liberation and socialism.

Incidentally, Burnham's ideological position somewhat approximates that of MAO and Katoon. At both the Lusaka Non-aligned Conference and the Singapore Prime Ministers Conference, he warned of the self interest of the super powers, and the necessity for the third world nations to come together. Little wonder that the Burnham regime has sent a trade mission to Peking instead of to Moscow and Havana. This is in keeping with US imperialist strategy and the visit to Peking by President Richard Nixon, which was arranged by Nixon's security adviser, Henry Kissinger, who as Harvard University professor in 1962 in his book, *The Necessity for Choice*, referred to "the frequently held view that we should conduct our diplomacy so as to bring about a rift between Communist China and the USSR. . . Of course, the possibility of a rift must not be overlooked. And if it occurs, we should take advantage of it rather than force the erstwhile partners into a new alliance through intransigence."

The neo-anarchist tendencies of the Ratoon and MAO are largely derived from ideologists like Hubert Marcusse who have theorized that in an "affluent society", the labour leadership has been "bourgeoisified" and the working class is no longer revolutionary; that the revolution would not be led by the working class but "from without" by peripheral sections of the population, like University academics and students, and declassed elements, the undercultured and "unintegrated"; namely, the slum dwellers of big cities and the landless rural population, whom the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin extolled as the "flower of the proletariat" and the "great popular rebels". Marcusse and the "New Left" sociologists advocate "absence of domination", the "anti-authoritarian revolution" and "the great renunciation"—renunciation of all the institutions and values of modern bourgeois society. "New Radicalism", says Marcusse "opposes both

centralised bureaucratic-Communist and semi-democratic liberal organisation. This rebellion contains a strong element of spontaneity, indeed, of anarchism. It expresses new sensitivity, the annoyance with all domination. The anarchist element is an essential factor in the fight against domination."

This is little different from the anarcho-syndicalist views of the French sociologist and philosopher, Georges Sorel, whom Lenin called a "well-known muddler." Sorel preached that the working class needed neither organization, leadership nor objective factors; all it needed for a "spontaneous explosion" was faith in revolution.

Marcusse and others have failed to note the changing role of the working class in the world situation, which is characterized by an intensification of the class struggle through a growing number of strikes and the involvement of increasing numbers of workers as seen in Italy, France and even in Spain. In the 1950's, Aneurin Bevan's challenge to the Gaitskell's right-wing leadership in Britain was defeated by the bloc vote of the TUC; today, the position is reversed with the TUC more militant than the constituency representation in the Labour Party — note that the trade unions defeated the anti-strike bill sponsored by two Bevanites, Barbara Castle and Harold Wilson in the last Labour government. In Trinidad, there is a definite shift from docile trade unions to more militant ones like the Oil-Field Workers Trade Union led by George Weekes. In Guyana, the TUC leadership reversed its position on the Burnham government's anti-strike, Trade Disputes bill, which forced the government to drop the measure.

This putschist anarchist approach characterized the NJAC outlook to revolution in Trinidad particularly in the Feb.-April 1970 events in Trinidad, and its opting out during the electoral struggle in 1971.

The Ratoon Group is also influenced by the ultra-left dogmatism of the young French intellectual, Regis Debray, who in his *Revolution In A Revolution?* sees armed struggle via the guerilla *foco* as the only revolutionary road for Latin America.

These influences prevent the Ratoon Group and MAO from taking a consistent, anti-imperialist position and from working for unity with the PPP, the truly anti-imperialist force in Guyana. Instead, the PPP is attacked for being revisionist, non-revolutionary and irrelevant. This opportunist rationalization was taken after the meeting to protest the banning of Clive Thomas by the Jamaican government was broken up with an attack on the PPP leader by PNC thugs. A majority of the UG Staff Association decided that the PPP should be kept out of any future joint action. No doubt, it was felt that this position would provide security and safety. For a while, this happened, but it is no longer so. The Ratoon leadership has not only talked about revolution but has criticized the PNC economic programme. Like the PPP, Joshua Ramsammy urged the bringing down of the puppet Establishment; Odle attacked the PNC budget in 1969; Clive Thomas criticized the 7 year (1966-72) \$300M D-Plan, which has prematurely collapsed, and the "meaningful participation" slogan for bauxite. These intellectuals also moved into Tiger Bay to mobilize PNC supporters. It was inevitable that like the PPP, the Ratoon leadership will also become the target of PNC thugs.

GADM is attacked by the PNC for different reasons. The ruling clique sees GADM and the Patriots as a third force which will receive, if not already directly or indirectly receiving, the support of US imperialism.

Anglo-American imperialism was not pleased with the expulsion of the UF from the coalition government. And although it is committed to supporting the PNC, it is not happy about some of the moves of the PNC puppet regime — External Trade Bureau, dropping of the anti-strike Trade Disputes Bill, open and blatant discrimination, corruption, etc. With the virtual demise of the United Force and the weakening of the PNC, — imperialism is clearly in search of a new force, a force which it can use to keep the PNC in line or to get the PNC out. This naturally enrages the PNC top brass.

The "Patriots" has also come under attack as recently seen in Llewelyn John's dethronement as head of the Guy-

ana Association of Local Authorities (GALA). The PNC sees in him and the "Patriots" a new rallying point for some of the disillusioned and disenchanted PNC rank and file.

There is a clear need for all the genuine patriotic forces in Guyana to unite in defence of civil liberties and democracy, and to rally behind an anti-imperialist programme. In the past, when the PPP was singled out for attack, the defence of civil rights was fought for only on the theoretical-intellectual plane. Donald Trotman's Human Rights Association treated the question academically. Working as he did closely with the PNC, this was to be expected. Later, a Fundamental Rights Action Committee (FRAC), somewhat broader in scope, replaced the Human Rights Association, but with Bookers directors, Harold Davis as chairman, and Diane McTurk as Secretary, it never got off the ground; it remained a paper organization. What is now needed is a broad-based civil rights movement, not just with a handful of well-meaning individuals, but above all with mass organizations — political parties, trade unions, cooperative societies, etc., which can bring mass pressure to bear on the neo-fascist PNC regime.

Unfortunately, the new civil rights body organized after the shooting of Ramsammy, has got off to a bad start. It organized no mass meetings or strikes. By inviting the PNC controlled Young Socialist Movement (YSM), the Trade Union Youth Movement (TUYM), and the Maha Sabha and the Guyana United Muslim Party (GUMP) and excluding the PPP and the Guyana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU), the sponsors, despite their revolutionary utterances, clearly demonstrated their ineptitude. As a result, they contented themselves to meeting the Prime Minister and the Commissioner of Police!

A great opportunity was missed. Despite this, the PPP must ceaselessly work for strengthening the forces against fascism and imperialism. This must be done through unity and struggle — unity with all organizations opposed to the corrupt, pro-imperialist PNC regime, but on the basis of a principled struggle with the objective of winning the liberal, progressive elements like Cleveland Hamilton of the Patriots, Dr. M. Richmond of GADM towards a position of

anti-imperialism, and isolating and destroying the reactionary elements.

So far as the Ratoon and MAO are concerned, there can be no doubt that there are many in the leadership who want a radical transformation. They want, however, to do "their own thing". With these groups, the PPP should make the forum its battleground — arguments and discussions on topical political and ideological issues will help to bring about clarity, which in turn will help to forge anti-imperialist unity as in Chile, Ceylon and elsewhere.

One of the first things is a concrete analysis of the present situation not only to isolate causes of the ills of our society, but also to postulate what must be done—what constitutes development both with respect to domestic and foreign policies. Such an analysis will step by step show clearly that:

- (1) The erosion of living standards, unemployment and insecurity are the consequence of corruption, squandermania and a huge debt burden caused by the PNC regime carrying out an economic planning strategy and domestic and foreign policies dictated by imperialism.
- (2) Extension of public ownership by nationalization is the way to end foreign domination;
- (3) Transformaton of nationalised bauxite and sugar industries, the restructuring of the economy and the protection of Guyana's sovereignty, necessitate meaningful relations with the socialist world system;
- (4) Self-sustaining growth involved emphasis on industry and agriculture rather than on infrastructure; land reform; workers control and representative institutions.

Principled dialogue and criticisms at an objective, national level will bring about clarity, prepare the way for bridging racial and ideological barriers and creating unity at leadership and rank and file levels.

In Guyana, workers, farmers, intellectuals and students must unite and swim together or divide and sink separately. We are dealing with a ruthless enemy. In the early 1960's, the PNC showed with its "Plan X 13" and "an organized thuggery which is centrally directed" that dynamiting and murder went hand in hand with racial incitement and riots to achieve its objective — personalized political power. Today, despite its sweet tongue and honeyed words, the enemy remains unchanged — it will use the same methods to stay in power.

Hitler used the master race theory. But his target was not just the Jews. It was the communists, the labour leaders and the working class. And his method was terror — terror of the concentration camps and the gas chambers.

In the PNC, there are many budding Hitlers. The time to stand up is now. Those who think they are safe must remember Joshua Ramsammy.

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