

INDEPENDENCE

— OUR FIVE DEMANDS —

The People's Progressive Party, from its birth in 1950, has been fighting for the independence of our country. The PPP has never moved from this stand. Some say that because the PPP has enunciated its five demands it no longer fights for independence. This, of course, is not true. Our five demands are fully explained here so that the meaning of genuine independence can be understood.

① The first demand is for the release of all the detainees and the end of the Emergency.

The reason for this demand is clear. How could a country go into Independence with repressive Emergency Regulations in force which allow for the arbitrary imprisonment of political persons and for the violation of human rights viz. the extension of the period in which persons can be held for questioning by the police from 24 hours to eight days?

POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

② The second demand is for a political settlement

involving changed electoral and constitutional arrangements and new elections before independence. It is well known that the PPP fought the 1964 elections under protest because of the rigging of the electoral system. This was the fourth attempt by the British Government to oust the PPP from office. In 1953, the Tories suspended the constitution and kicked out the duly elected government of the PPP. In 1957, they introduced new constituency arrangements by which they sought to defeat the PPP. In fact, the electoral districts were so lop-sided that Dr. Jagan, PPP Leader, received more votes in his one constituency than did all of the five opposition legislators (including Mr. Burnham). In 1961, there was the Hallet Boundary Commission which again altered the constituency boundaries in an effort to defeat the PPP. When this failed, and the PPP won, the British planned the final electoral change-proportional representation to oust the PPP.

How then could the PPP which has won three successive elections, and polled

the highest popular vote in the 1964 elections, but was cheated of office by dirty manipulation, agree to independence without fresh elections? It would be inconceivable. The PPP cannot agree to the transfer of power to a puppet government which does not represent the wishes of a majority of the Guyanese people. The electoral fraud must be corrected before independence.

Voting at 18 years is one of the demands for constitutional and electoral changes. Voting at 18 years has already been accepted in some parts of the Caribbean. In a population with the ratio of youths so unusually high, it is inconceivable for the government parties to oppose the vote to youths. Youths at 18 have every right to the vote and should be given this right. Burnham was in favour of this in 1951; why not now?

LOST CONFIDENCE

③ The third demand of the PPP is for the correction of the imbalances in the security and police forces. There is nothing new in this demand which was voiced by

the PPP when preparations were at one time, before 1964, in being for independence. The experiences of 1962, 1963 and 1964, when the police showed grave signs of partisanship and lost the confidence of a great part of the population cannot be forgotten. The police and security forces must have the confidence of the majority of the population, which they do not today enjoy, because of political partisanship and a deliberately created imbalance.

④ We don't want foreign troops in our land, harrasing and persecuting the population and bolstering British imperialism in our country. They must go. And in their place must be a fairly constituted national army, formed on the basis of a broad cross-section of the country. The phoney Special Service Unit (SSU) is merely an arm of the police force and expresses all the short-comings of that body. This is the fourth demand of the PPP.

⑤ The fifth demand is for the restructuring and democratisation of governmental institutions pertain-

ing to administration, law and order. With wholesale head-rolling and favouritism in the Civil Service Guianese suffer because of the prejudices and political interference of a dictatorial and high-handed government intent on protecting their friends and persecuting their enemies. In the last few months this has come clearer and clearer in what can only be described as a shameful and shameless abuse.

NEO-COLONIALISM

Some say that it is unpatriotic to set out demands for independence. To the contrary, it would be unpatriotic to support an independence which is not genuine, but which is only a window-dressing for the introduction of neo-colonialism. Independence in name only would be another fraud perpetrated by Anglo-US imperialism.

Some say that there is no difference between "Independence under Jagan" and "Independence under Burnham". This is not true and could only be stated by per-

sons who have no real understanding of the true situation. "Independence under Jagan" means genuine economic and political independence, independence which will not result in neo-colonialism, independence which will free the country of imperialist economic subservience and which would not be a partner to Anglo-American imperialist aims. "Independence under Burnham" means strengthening the ties of imperialism, entrenching imperialism. This is why the imperialists like Sandys are now pressing for "independence under Burnham" while they opposed "independence under Jagan". A look at the US Aid Programme for B. G. with emphasis on extension and improvement of the USA 99 year leased Atkinson Field and a road to Mackenzie, owned by the Aluminum Company of Canada which is closely connected to the American cartel, ALCOA, is proof of this. America spends money abroad to strengthen and entrench its investments and bases. Economic penetration from Reynolds Metals, the oil companies, United Fruit and British American Tobacco Co., encouraged by the

coalition government, give secret deals with foreign sufficient evidence of the monopolies, the use of trend to foreign economic brute force (witness the domination, and thus-neo-police dogs episode at Public Buildings) are all evidence of this.

DICTATORSHIP

What are the fears of independence without safeguards? The fears expressed by the PPP Leader, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, that there would be the setting-up of a Latin American-type dictatorship are no mere fantasies. Already, PNC members have boldly stated that there would not be elections for twenty years, and one can little doubt the truth of this. Already the signs of dictatorship are there — the autocratic rule disguised under the high-sounding title of "Consultative Democracy" where there is no consultation on vital issues. The use of the Emergency Powers to detain, restrict, the manipulation of constitutional changes, hiring and firing of people, the

The dictatorship will be justified by the reactionary local press and the capitalist controlled foreign press as necessary means to "suppress communism". This is the pattern unfolding with alarming haste.

This is why the People's Progressive Party has clearly enunciated its five demands to be met simultaneously with the transfer of all powers to Guyana. Without it, there will be a ruthless and wholesale effort to use a so-called independence to smash the only anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist movement in B.G. This is the role of imperialism today, to use a puppet government to do its dirty deeds by the use of high-sounding phrases and fake nationalism.

RELEASE DETAINEES!

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