

PNC WANTS GERRYMANDERED CONSTITUTION

"Its draughtsmen will have to devise a system to contain the peculiar forces of disruption being indoctrinated in our midst."

Believe it or not, this is the tailpiece of an editorial of the Daily Chronicle of September 1. It is speaking about the new Constitution for British Guiana.

This is the organ which loudly proclaims that the P.P.P. is out to destroy democracy and democratic liberties in British Guiana. Yet, it should be clear from those words that it is the Chronicle which is out to destroy democracy.

The P.P.P. has said time and again that it wants a Constitution which will function democratically and which will safeguard the liberties of all. It is a Party which has a democratic Constitution. Yet, the Chronicle now advises that a Constitution should be so devised as to defeat the P.P.P. at the next election. In other words, open force and intimidation having failed, during the period 1953 to 1957 to destroy the PPP, the new Constitution must now be designed to thwart not only the PPP, but the wishes of the majority of Guianese citizens who support it. What kind of

STRAIGHT TALK by Cheddi Jagan

democracy is the Chronicle advocating?

GERRYMANDERING

The Editor supports the call for Proportional Representation which is strongly advocated by the P.N.C. and other reactionary elements in our midst. But, it does not stop there. It supports the so-called Constituent Assembly, which is nothing more than the P.N.C., in its demand for a new form of gerrymandering. The country is to be divided into three constituencies—the municipal areas of Georgetown and New Amsterdam being one, the rural areas comprising the eighteen Marshall Districts being the second and the interior areas being the third. It proposes representation for these in the following order—Municipal ten seats; rural sixteen; and interior, ten.

THWART WISHES

It is patent that the deliberate aim of these recommendations is to thwart the wishes of the people. Let us compare the PNC's proposed distribution of seats with

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the Waddington Constituency's twenty four boundaries of 1953. Of the twenty-four seats six were allocated to Georgetown and New Amsterdam, four to the interior and fourteen to the rural areas. The latter was carefully gone into by a Commission. That arrangement is now to be completely distorted in favour of town and interior. The object is clear—the P. N. C. and their lackeys can win more seats than they deserve. The Chronicle calls this democracy. I call it a different form of gerrymandering.

Tool

The Constituent Assembly (P.N.C.) in its report states that it is not a tool of the imperialists but is it a coincidence that it reflects so closely the views of Bookers and other vested interests. The imperialists and other agents in British Guiana clearly require a weak Government which will permit them through the Colonial Office and the whole state apparatus to continue to exert their influence on the lives of the Guianese people. When there is need for swift and quick action, as all underdeveloped territories need, the P.N.C. pro-

poses an Upper House of Nominated Members which will delay legislation. The P.N.C. proposes Proportional Representation which can only result in a coalition of reactionary forces. An examination of the three constituencies and the number of seats in each clearly indicates the intention.

With History

In spite of the attempts of the P.N.C. to fool the people and to hold back the political advancement and economic development of British Guiana, the P.P.P. will move forward in its call for independence with the full knowledge that it is moving with the tide of history and with the support not only of the majority of people in this country but also of the majority of countries outside.

South Africans Resist

Africans in Durban have repeatedly offered resistance to acts of suppression by the White Government police recently.

On the evening of September 2, about 150 Africans in a residential area on the outskirts of Durban staged a demonstration protesting against the unreasonable arrest of an African woman selling meat in the street. When the police sent in reinforcements, the indignant demonstrators bravely resisted. Stones, bricks and bottles were used and eventually the police were forced to withdraw. Later, further police reinforcements were called in and one African woman was arrested.

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