

BROADCAST BY DR. GHEDDI JAGAN

On Monday we will all be voting to elect a peoples' government. Your vote then will decide whether this country becomes free and independent and, if so, when.

The fact that you have the right to vote at all, the fact that your vote may make you free - these are monuments to the courage and to the efforts of the PFP. Whatever our adversaries now may say, this cannot be denied. We got you the vote. We wrung, from the reluctant British, promises of that independence which we all now wish and for which we all must fight.

On the question of independence also, let your minds be clear. Our Party, and our Party only, has ceaselessly demanded independence. As recently as in 1959 when the Constitutional Committee sat, the PFP was the only major party which demanded independence.

Again in 1960 at the London Conference, we fought for independence and then at last the Secretary of State for the Colonies agreed, in principle, to our demand.

No date has yet been fixed. Independence has not yet been won but it is within our reach. Now that success is at hand, others are jumping on to the band wagon of independence and are even shouting loudest. Where were they when we fought?

We have fought for freedom, and even as we fought, we won great benefits which came as by-products of the battle. Make no mistake about this either. The fact that the sugar estate ranges have been tumbled down, that wages and conditions have somewhat improved, the fact that scholarships for your children's education are increasingly available, that your sons and daughters can now get jobs in Water Street irrespective of their colour, the fact that British money has at last begun to flow into this benighted country - all this is due to us, to the shock our masters had when you elected us in 1955. They threw us out of office by force of arms, and then proceeded to do many of the things we had demanded and had planned to do. Would they have done these things without our agitation?

But what they did was very little compared with what you need for your ease and happiness. They gave a slice of bread to some so as to save themselves the loaf. But the loaf is yours not theirs.

Why are we, then, so bitterly opposed by the other parties in this election; by the local press; ^{by} the newspapers and by some statesmen of the outside world? If you ask this question they will give a wide variety of reasons. They may say that we are wrong on Federation, that we will suppress your right to vote or to practise your religion, that we will take away your land, your money, your property, that outsiders will be afraid to lend us capital.

But are these things true? Are these the real reasons why they oppose? Let us examine what they say. Take your stand on Federation. We have always maintained that the people of this country must decide the issue by special voting on the matter at a referendum. Mr. Burnham and his Party opposed us bitterly on this, but events have proved us right. Has not Jamaica, though already in the Federation, found it necessary to hold a referendum exactly as we advocated?

They say we will suppress your right to vote or to practise your religion. What utter nonsense! Who, here, does not know that the PFP is dedicated to democracy, is itself in its day-to-day working, as a Party, a completely democratic body in

which we leaders draw our strength from the free vote of our comrades? And in religion - are we not the first government to have recognised and used the Hindu and Muslim faiths at official functions? Instead of suppressing religion, we have, indeed, extended the right and for the first time put all religions in a position of equality.

Again, they say that we will seize your money and your property. More nonsense! Our whole record shows, beyond a doubt, that we are anxious for you to have more and more. More money, more property - a higher standard of living and a fuller life. Indeed this is the basic aim and object of our party. The churchmen offer you rewards hereafter. We have no quarrel with them. They have no quarrel with them. They are entitled to their belief. But for ourselves we deal not with hereafter but with here and now. We fight to make our people rich, not poor. That is why we have passed more labour laws to raise the welfare and the wages of our workers than any other government in the history of this country. The record is there for all to see. That also, is why we have increased the funds of the Credit Corporation so that more people may borrow more money for houses, business and local industry.

Instead of taking land we give it. The fact is that during the last four years we have given out nearly one hundred thousand acres of land to peasant farmers. We have been looking everywhere for land to give.

We have passed the Land Registration Law by which farmers get good title and greater security in their holdings, simply, quickly and practically free of charge. Does all this sound like the actions of a Party which plans to take away your land?

The Interim Government which decided to take over the Electric Company passed the law to do so, but then found that they could not raise the money. We could raise the money and we did. Today we own the plant and you draw the profits.

Who are the best judges of public confidence in this Government? They are the companies already in Guiana who have had dealings with Ministers of our Party. Have they been acting as if they had no confidence? Instead of taking out their money foreign companies already here have invested nearly a hundred million dollars.

It may indeed be possible that some overseas investors have been frightened by the sneer campaign against us. The very men who preach loudest about the need for private capital have worked hardest to prevent it coming. They did this so that they could say we failed. They tried this with the Grupo Del Conte and with the World Bank Mission. They failed with these but with others they succeeded. Do these people really have the interest of our country at heart or is it only their concern to defeat us because we threaten their position? This question I leave with you.

And so, it seems, there is not really solid substance in all this criticism. What, then is the real reason behind the opposition to us?

It is because we are utterly opposed to the powerful, the privileged, the few. These great men know that our programme includes reforms and far-reaching social changes. They do not want change. Why should they? For years they have enjoyed privileged positions in schools and churches, offices and clubs. They fear the competition, from their less lucky brothers, which will come with lowered barriers. And so they fight against us. They have fought us now for twelve long years - and with some success.

Between then they defeated us in 1953 when British bayonets smashed our legally elected government and saved the great men's privileges. But violence only rallied our supporters to return us to the Government when they got back the right to vote in 1957.

Our enemies changed their tactics then. They gave us office without power, plans and problems without money. They caused and fostered a racial split between the Africans and the Indians, in our unhappy country. For four long years, they directed, at our Party, a press campaign of slander and abuse which for scurrility and dishonesty could hardly ever have been equalled.

Recently the United States of America has joined the battle also. The imprint of McCarthy still lies heavy on that land. Events in Russia and in Cuba have deeply wounded their national pride and made their fear of communism psychopathic. No wonder the great politician Aneurin Bevan wrote: "Fear of Soviet communism has led the US and those who follow her to take a distorted view of the world situation and the forces which are at work in modern society". The slogan of our enemies is "The PPP is Communist". They ignore the record of our acts and deeds, the laws we passed, the plans we have in hand. They shut their eyes and ears and scream "The PPP is Communist". It paid good dividends. For money has flowed in like water. Books, pamphlets, posters, films have come pouring in from the United States - all aimed against us.

They work on your emotions - these enemies of ours. They try to frighten you about the future. Well, cast your memories back. As the colonial peoples rose to freedom, have not their leaders always been dubbed communist? Were not Nehru, Nkrumah, Soekarno, Sekou Toure, Jomo Kenyatta, Lumumba all called communists? This is an illustrious company. If these are communists, then I take my place beside them gladly.

Calling patriots bad names is no new thing. It is a custom as old as history. Roundheads, Levellers, Chartists, Republicans all received abuse. The American colonialists found this out in 1775, before ever there was a Communist Manifesto. Then an English Judge formed a society for "The Protection of Property against Levellers and Republicans".

Let me say this to those who try to frighten you. I do not propose to establish any form of dictatorial regime in British Guiana. I believe in, and will cherish, parliamentary democracy with its expression of the people's will at regular free elections. I stand by the Provision of the new Constitution by which the fundamental rights of all, including freedom of conscience, and religion, and expression are protected by the Courts. Indeed these provisions were inserted into the new Constitution at the request of my Party and for my People.

Now my friends. You must recognise what is happening. All this talk of Communism, all the bitter racial feelings are but the weapons of our enemies designed to make you split the vote.

Understand clearly that if, through prejudice, fear or loyalty to any individual, you vote against the PPP - you vote against your country. For only we can get the absolute majority needed. If you split the vote, we end with three separate parties, none of which can govern, and the imperialists will have won a further respite.

At both the past elections, our enemies conducted a similar smear campaign against us. You were not fooled then, and you voted for us. I am confident you will not be fooled today. Finally, in this last broadcast on the eve of the most important election in our history, I will repeat that which I have said so often. I believe that my first charge is to raise my people from the mire of poverty in which, for too long, they have suffered. In this great project I will look for help wherever I can find it. We reserve to ourselves the absolute right to get assistance wherever we can and from whomsoever the offer comes. This however we guaranteed, that such aid will be taken whether from the United States, Britain or Russia without committal of any sort. Our new found freedom is, to us, too dear, to be bartered even for the bread our people need.

I have never made any secret of my views. I have been thrown out of office. I am willing to face these things again, and gladly, in the fight to free my people and to aid them.

Here I stand. Here will I stand until I die. It is for you on Monday, to decide whether you will stand beside me.

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