GUINEA MINIS APPEALS TO BRITISH STUDENTS

Exclusive Article by
Dr. Cheddi Jagan

Overseas British naval and military forces have occupied British Guiana. The constitution has been suspended. My colleagues Ministers and myself have been dismissed. Six leading members of the People's Progressive Party have been arrested. Police raids have been conducted. The House of Assembly has been pro cured and Emergency Regulations, including the banning of gatherings of more than five persons, are in force.

You will have read in the newspapers that the British Government and the Governor of British Guiana have taken these steps in order to confound a Communist plot to cause dis order and overthrow the Government.

As students who are used to studying facts and analyzing them before making up your minds. I ask you to consider the case of the elected representatives of the Guianese people.

On April 27th this year there took place for the first time in the history of my country democratic elections based on universal suffrage in a properly qualified basis. The P.P.R. won 18 out of 24 seats.

OUR POLICY

Our programme presented to the electorate was: universal adult suffrage for villages and town councils; land law, bringing about land reform and establishing land authorities; power to tax, acquire, lease and develop large estates held uncontrollably by absentee landlords; abolition of dual control (government and religious denominational) of primary schools; bulk purchasing of the colony's imports; establishment of a State Lottery; compulsory recognition by employers of Unions having the support of the majority of workers, established by the U.S. Wagner Act during the Roosevelt era.

This was the policy which ensured an overwhelming majority. In my own constituency I received a majority of over 5,000 votes.

Yet this was the basis of what has been called a Communist Conspiracy.

Thus the action of the British Government is the real challenge to the right to exercise a free vote—the very basis of democracy.

Must the people be told—yes you can vote—but you have no right to vote for a Left party or the Left wing of a party. This is the fundamental question.

DEMOCRACY ON TRIAL

Once the right to vote is restricted the basis of democracy will always be on the ground.

When the P.P.R. or any opposition is on trial to-day in Guiana, when the British Naval and Military forces are in the trial, Western democracy will stand or fall in the eyes of the world.

I am confident that every liberal-minded student will give his unstinted support to the campaign which is being developed throughout all sections of the British people to help Guiana preserve their own democracy and civilization.

Dr. Cheddi Jagan is the son of a sugar worker (his father was foreman of a field gang in a sugar estate). He worked his way to Chicago to study dentistry, and since then has practised in British Guiana.