THUNDER
ORGAN OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' ORGANIZATION 20-18 SATURDAY MAY 2, 1959 GEORGE TOWN, BRITISH GUIANA Price 8c

JOIN STRUGGLE FOR SELF-RULE

MAY DAY MESSAGE FROM PPP SECRETARY

TO THE WORKING PEOPLE OF BRITISH GUIANA

AS GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY I EXTEND GREETINGS TO THE WORKING PEOPLE OF BRITISH GUIANA WHO ON MAY DAY 1959 EXPRESS THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH WORKERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

SINCE THE LAST CENTURY, MAY DAY HAS BEEN THE DAY DEVOTED TO THE STRUGGLE OF WORKERS. IT HAS BEEN THE DAY ON WHICH WORKERS HAVE MARCHED WITH SLOGANS EXPRESSING THEIR DEMANDS AND AMBITIONS FOR BETTER WAGES, BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS AND SHORTER HOURS OF WORK. MAY DAY IS A DAY OBSERVED INTERNATIONALLY BY ALL WORKING PEOPLE.

Chinese Greetings

FROM Peking, China, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions has through THUNDER a message on the occasion of the international workers' holiday. May Day, dedicated to Guianese workers, the cable reads:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORT THROUGH THUNDER IN YOUR SUCCESSES FOR BETTER WORK CONDITIONS, NATIONAL LIBERATION AND WORLD PEACE.

Janet Jagan

UNITED EFFORT REQUIRED

In approaching the threshold of independence, Cheddi Jagan, Majority Leader, told a large audience at Beterranwattung, April 27, anniversary of PPP Electoral victory of 1953.

He said that on Sunday and Monday, throughout the country, carrying the torch of freedom and recapturing the spirit of the electoral victory of 1953, the PPP had a role to play in the struggle to build the new society. He declared that many of the PPP's activities had been held back under the new Government, and if the effort was to continue, the people must be united and work together.

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United Party leaders, he said, had been influenced by the economic situation, which had led to a change in the political climate. The PPP had been forced to adopt a more moderate line, and this had led to a split in the ranks of the party.

It is fitting at this time to review the activities of the trade union movement during the past year, to assess the gains made by workers through their trade-unions and to chart the course for the year ahead. It is also essential for workers to be aware of the activities of workers abroad and to appreciate that gains made in other countries will be of ultimate value to the struggle here.

Review

In most countries, the trade union movement is the backbone of the national liberation struggle. Trade unions, by the very nature of their organization and activities, must be part of the struggle for self-rule and freedom from foreign control.

It is indeed unfortunate that in British Guiana, the trade union movement as a whole has not properly seen its role, nor in fact, has it yet seen itself in proper perspective in the national activity to end colonial rule.

The major party leaders stressed the need for unity of workers. The forces which had been eliminated from the political scene by the united movement in 1953 were now being resurrected. If we continue this division, said Dr. Jagan, all of us will go wrong. It is time we all came together to build a united front against the colonial system.
May Day Message

(from page 1)

With the return to a measure of representative government at the 1957 elections a popular party with its mass membership made up of farmers and workers, won by an overwhelming majority. The P.P.P. won nine out of fourteen seats with the opposition party winning only three seats.

Certainly the balance of nine against three is sufficiently indicative of the strength of the PPP and the fact that it commands a majority. Yet in spite of these obvious facts and in spite of the attitude of the majority party in encouraging trade unionism and furthering the cause of all workers, the formal trade union movement has allowed itself to be used for petty political intrigues as a tool of the minority party.

Thus it has slipped into a most dispicable position in the country and has allowed itself to be used as a weapon against the party fighting on all fronts for the people's rights.

There is peculiarly enough a lack of unity of purpose between trade union leadership and its rank and file. This lack of unity has unfortunately made the trade union movement in B.G. what it is today, a shell of officials uttering phrases and fighting phantom enemies, yet totally removed from the ideas and opinions of the workers who make up the union.

Wake Up

It is time the trade union movement of B.G. wake up and see the light of day. May Day 1959 is a fitting day for an examination of its position and for a fearless decision to forget petty political intrigues and join wholeheartedly in the national efforts to lift B.G. from its inferior status for all round gains for the working people.