

When I met Lyle Stewart, publisher of 'The Independent' in the lobby of the Hotel Riviera in Havana, Cuba his first words after the introduction were -"Jagan? British Guiana? I seem to remember something or other. Wasn't that the place where the British used force to oust the progressive government?"

After that, he could remember little else about B.G. That is how this article came about.

After the excitement of October 1953, when the British Government forcibly ejected our democratically elected government from office, after only 4½ months, the world press and world opinion forgot us. That is expected as British Guiana is such a little piece of the world. Situated on the northern part of South America, between Venezuela and Dutch Guiana and bordered to the south by Brazil, British Guiana with an area of 83,000 square miles contains little over a half million inhabitants. Yet it is an important area as far as its geographic position and its strategic mineral resources.

While the British were busily and efficiently wiping out democratic government in British Guiana, Mr. Batista was sentencing Fidel Castro to imprisonment, in October 1953. Shortly after that we saw the collapse of the democratic government in Guatemala. The Caribbean was becoming an important centre of activity!

The troops and the battleships arrived in B.G. Our leaders were charged for various offences, some were imprisoned and the police had a 'field' day raiding our homes and trailing us about. More important an 'Interim' ~~xxxx~~ or puppet government of persons nominated by the Governor had been established in the Legislature and as Ministers and advisers to the Governor. The Colonial Office started some heavy spending in B.G. to woo the population away from the popular People's Progressive Party, which had won the majority of seats in the 1953 elections.

After jail, we were restricted to the boundaries of the city so, without freedom of movement, it was expected that our political contacts and influence would diminish. But the trump card, as one that had always worked the best, was the intrigue of divide and ruling. They succeeded again in B.G. and finally weakened multi-racial PPP by driving a wedge between the solidarity of leadership of Burnham and Jagan. This solidarity meant much B.G. - the first close alliance of Negro and East Indian, who compose the major racial groups of the country. When this

alliance was broken in 1955, racial antagonisms rose for the first time since the P.P.P. was founded in 1950.

Because of the split in the P.P.P. and the believed weakening of the left, the Colonial Office announced that elections would be held in August 1957 - after four years of puppet rule.

Feeling confident of a P.P.P. failure after jerrymandering t



constituencies and further strengthened by the corrupt press which forecast less than three seats for the P.P.P., Government officials were in for a shock when the P.P.P. came out with a majority of nine out of 14 seats, Burnham's party gaining only three seats with two other parties winning one seat each. The Party Leader, Dr. Cheddi Jagan received in his constituency more votes than the five non-P.P.P. winners, indicating more forcibly than any other example how unfair the distribution of constituencies had been.

The constitution under which the newly elected majority party was to work was an ill-defined and 'flexible' document, allowing the Governor extraordinary powers to determine, up to a limited number, the persons he could nominate to the Legislative Council in addition to placing three of his officials there as voting members.

From 1957 to the present date the P.P.P. Majority party has been fighting a difficult battle. It has been faced with the task of trying to improve conditions in an impoverished and undeveloped colony under a hybrid system which gives its ministers some power, but not enough. The task of a progressive party working under a colonial constitution and not allowing itself to become stooges, as so many have, and yet not being sufficiently radical to allow the Colonial Office to oust it again is indeed walking a tight rope.

The Party's main stand has been one of seeking independence for the country and to this task it has devoted its full attention. The Party has met much hostility on this stand from the press and conservative political groups. As crazy as it may sound, one can read in the daily press in Georgetown constant pleas of people who want to remain under the Union Jack and the oft repeated phrase - "We are not ready for independence". The three daily newspapers carry a day by day crusade against independence, against the P.P.P. and against any progressive it may advocate.

A Five Year Development Plan which began in January 1960 gives an indication of the P.P.P.'s intentions for the development of the country. ~~xxxx~~ This plan does not have the full approval of the Majority Party for two reasons. First, in the preparation of the Plan, Dr. Jagan asked for an economic expert of his choice to guide in the preparation of the plan. Each name he put up was rejected as being too radical. Eventually the Colonial Office sent out a Cambridge economist. Secondly, the Plan is not as large as is necessary for the development of the country at this stage. When Dr. Jagan went to London for talks on the financing of the Plan, he was told that it could not be enlarged. Quite a controversy raged when he indicated that he would have to seek loans for his country outside the usual areas, if necessary.

The 1960-64 Development Programme places great emphasis on agricultural development and fairly large sums will be spent on land settlement, drainage and irrigation works and agricultural expansion. By laying greater stress on economic rather than social development, the Major



