

CIA exposed in Guyana

With this article we are starting a series of socio-political comments and news on GUYANA.

Five years ago the US and British governments, the CIA and the AFL-CIO ganged up on the progressive regime of Guyana's Dr. Cheddi Jagan and engineered the election of "socialist" Forbes Burnham. Last December, Prime Minister Burnham got himself fraudulently elected with the help of a US vote registration company.

Shoup Registration Systems International, which has been involved in suspect vote tabulations in Trinidad, Jamaica, Venezuela and South Vietnam, was supposed to make sure that December's elections were clean. The people who most ardently believe the election was clean can be found at places such as the US embassy and the US Information Service.

But Robert Corbin, a leader of the Young Socialist Movement, Youth Branch of Burnham's People's National Congress Party, admitted that there was fraud in the system by which appointed proxies could, for example, vote for whole families. Granada Television, of the United Kingdom, said that although there were only 30,300 overseas registered voters, 36,745 votes were received, 94% of them for Burnham.

In an interview, conservative capitalist Peter D'Aguiar of United Force, who helped bring down the Jagan government, said, "So far as I am concerned the election was a complete fraud."

The People's Progressive Party, the country's first multi-racial party, authored the movement for independence from Britain. But Burnham - a "Negro" who once flirted with the Communist Party - broke away from the PPP in 1955 to court US and British favor. Burnham went after the black vote, concentrated in urban centers. The PNC played with racism by telling blacks that Indians were exploiting them, while the real exploiters were capitalists and colonialists.

The CIA is active here. The American Institute for Free Labor Development, which receives funds from the Agency for International Development, the AFL-CIO and the CIA, has modern air-conditioned offices, a new director, and a policy of not talking to journalists.

AIFLD peddles US-style "trade unionism" in a number of Latin American countries, and has a board of directors that includes AFL-CIO president George Meany and J. Peter Grace of Grace Lines. But that's hard to sell to Guyanese workers, who have seen the cost of living go up 16% over the past 2 years and who have to pay high sales taxes to support the government's entry into the Caribbean Free Trade area (CARIFTA). More than 20% of the workers are unemployed. Here in Georgetown, unemployment is estimated at 33%.

BLFC Summer Program

The Department of Community Affairs - of the BLFC has implemented the following summer programs.

- 1) A series of Black History & Political classes - featuring: Series of Films of Afro-American History, Speakers and discussion groups.
- 2) A tutoring program - for students who are having problems relating to the present educational system. We urge both Black and White communities to send us money, donate time or provide equipment for this project.

Phone; 653-1362 and 537-5082 for further information.

The idea is to keep wages frozen and satisfy foreign investors - who send out profits of from \$50 to \$60 million annually. This is countered by nearly \$60 million in US aid since 1965, designed to benefit investors including Reynolds Aluminum and ALCOA, which were delighted with an AID-built road from Georgetown to McKenzie, site of the bauxite extracting industry.

As the British have discreetly withdrawn from their former colony, the Americans and Canadians have arrived in the best neo-colonialist fashion. Since Guyana has only 700,000 people and a not particularly strategic geographic position, the imperialist power-play can be explained only by the country's fabulous mineral wealth, which includes: bauxite, manganese, gold, diamonds, nickel, tantalite, graphite, mica, chromium, tungsten, kyanite, tin, copper, palladium, mercury, lead, fluorite, iron, zinc, silver, columbite, kaolin, merumite, and potarite (found only in Guyana) and radio-

"With the publication of the Bill it is now very clear that the right to strike, for which workers have struggled to attain in many countries during this century, will be restricted. In simple terms the Bill gives the minister the right to refer a trade dispute, whether actual or intended, to an Industrial Court if one of the two parties of the dispute report the matter to him. Thus either the employers or the workers may report a strike. Having referred the strike to the Court, it then becomes unlawful to strike, and the penalty for anyone engaging in any aspect of the strike is high - 6 months imprisonment or a fine of \$500 to boot. A strike is also unlawful if an agreement or an award exists for the matter of which a dispute arises.

"At one time the government had hinted that the legislation would provide voluntary arbitration, but it is clear that this principle has been dropped and compulsory arbitration is provided by the Bill.

"Under the Trades Disputes Bill 1969, the worker is hamstrung and will have no real means of seeking redress by collective action, as exists, but will have to depend on the decision of a court whose members are selected by means which we are already familiar - unfortunately. The Bill, in essence, has the same effect as the ISA of Trinidad.

"Now is the time for the TUC and all trade unions to make a determined stand against this flagrant violation of trade union rights. Unless this is done now, the whole trade union movement will suffer a blow from which it could never recover".

The TUC draft proposes that the Minister can only declare a strike illegal if it takes place in



Guyanese Brothers protest Canadian hypocrisy. Students in Guyana picket Canadian High Commissioner's office at the time of the Sir George Williams arrests.

active materials, according to Frank Pilgrim, Prime Minister Burnham's public relations officer.

Although Burnham's PNC claims to be "socialist", the party believes that Guyana's natural resources should be exploited by foreigners because, as Pilgrim explained, "We don't have the (necessary) capital or technical skill." The Guyana Development Corporation, whose director was trained by AID, told foreign investors, in a recent advertisement, that "We are here to make sure that your investments pay you bigger dividends."

By Alfredo Hopkins

BURNHAM'S ANTI-STRIKE BILL OPPOSED

The Trades Disputes Bill published last month by the Guyanese government has caused a great controversy in the trade union movement. The TUC has this week submitted its own draft, which considerably changes certain basic aspects of the Bill.

Commenting earlier on the Bill the PPP stated:

"The publication last week of the Trades Disputes Bill, 1969 brings to finality the Prime Minister's decision announced on May Day 1967 to introduce a law to restrict the right to strike.

"During that period there have been various pronouncements from trade union leaders, most of which were to the effect that they would not allow the right to strike to be tampered with and that they would never support any legislation which had the same effect as the Industrial Stabilization Act of Trinidad.

an industry declared to be "vital or essential". The TUC have further proposed legislation to prevent dismissal of an employee except for "justifiable reasons and connected with the capacity and conduct of an employee's work".

Meanwhile in Trinidad, at a Labour Relations and Law Conference sponsored by the Cipriani Labour College, participants called for the scrapping of the Industrial Stabilization Act, similar to the Trade Disputes Bill now being proposed in Guyana. Practically all Trinidad trade unions have opposed the Trinidad ISA which is condemned as "anti-strike" legislation.

In an advertisement by the Guyana Development Corporation to British investors, the Corporation says that "we are here to make sure that your investments pay you big dividends. Ask the other Englishmen who are here they'll tell you there's no better place for your investments than Guyana in South America."

from GUYANA INFORMATION Bulletin.

(continued next issue)

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