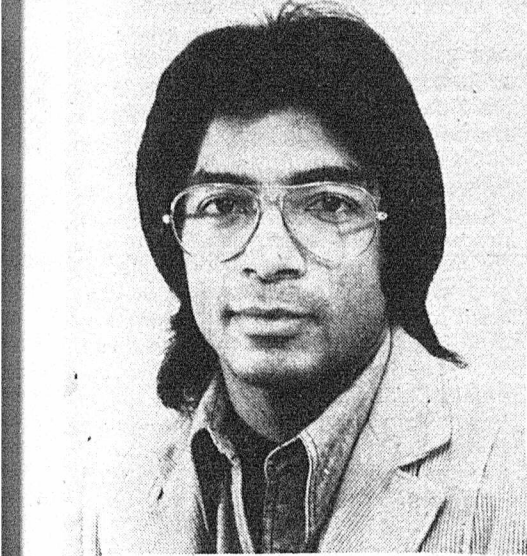


mobile travel agency?



Anthropology student Rishee Thakur

that the ethnic division of the country is along economic lines and the problem of racial animosity stems from the conscious British policy of "divide and rule." Any investigation would show that the problem was further aggravated by the massive infusion of men and money by the CIA in the 1960s.

The reference to Guyanese Prime Minister Burnham as "comrade" seems to indicate that Guyana is actively pursuing a socialist path of development. But "Comrade! Comrade!" is nothing more than Moses and the Prophets. The rigging of the election in 1968, the intervention of the army in 1973 and the national "co-operative" fraud represents another reality. In an article in the New Yorker, Sept. 1974, Jane Cramer reported: "He (Burnham) runs the country as a demagogue. He is given to the most ingenious displays of personal power, sipping his cognac from an imperial sniffer while his ministers and guests get theirs in tiny glasses... He holds elections which he then fixes. He lets the press function, and then insures its tractability with libel suits..." The opposition, Peoples Progressive Party's recent declaration of "critical support" for the government and its re-entry into parliament only serves to further legitimize the process of oppression and exploitation by the creole middle class.

Lastly, Mr. deWinter opined that the "fertile" coastal land (where over ninety per cent of the population is concentrated) is four to six feet below sea level and "a 270-mile sea wall protects these precious farm lands against flooding." A cursory glance at a drainage and irrigation map of Guyana will indicate that there is no such thing as a "270-mile long sea wall." The so-called wall was built around the commercial and industrial areas of Georgetown and New Amsterdam (once controlled by US, British and Canadian commercial houses) and the sugar estates of Bookers and Jessels of Britain. It does indeed protect these precious farm lands. There is, of course, no such protection for independent farmers. They are forced to eke out a precarious existence, protected only by a series of make-shift dams and natural barriers, haunted by the constant fear of flooding. I am sure you would understand when I say that I am somewhat concerned at the fact the deWinter is, allegedly, a fourth year agriculture student at the U of A.

Secondly, I am not sure what the precise interaction between the members of WUSC and officials of the Guyana government was, but the slide presentation on Saturday night was the perfect tourist pitch. A Guyanese

Eden" sauce. In every important way it failed to "confront Canadian students with the real situation" in Guyana. It was more a case of social and political obfuscation.

Thirdly, the sophisticated mystification of the audience by one of the speakers resulted in a rather dull affair. Even before he had finished speaking, half the audience left. His subsequent attempts to defend the government, however, proved quite revealing. Not only was he totally unaware of what was happening in Guyana, but also vehement in defending the policies of the government. Little could he say, when it was pointed out the differences in wages between workers and ministers of the government were something in the order of a little over \$1,000 for

workers as compared to \$84,000 for ministers. Further, his argument that the "Co-operative" scheme is proving successful in Guyana is nothing short of a joke. Again I quote from the article in the New Yorker: "The best that can be said for the experiment (Co-operative Republic) is that the inevitable disasters have given Guyanese something to joke about." A better title would have been the "Co-operative Fraud." "Even the ministers of Co-operatives here has a co-operative. His name is Hamilton Green and he happens to be Burnham's cousin; his co-operative, the Greenland Co-operative Society, apparently serves the family nicely as a

conduit for government contracts."

Any attempt to understand Guyanese society and indeed the entire Caribbean, must first of all recognise that the creole middle class did not simply fill the power vacuum left by the imperial powers, but came to power precisely because of imperial interests. The old adage:

*If you white, its alright
If you brown, stick around
If you black, better stay back*

may no longer readily manifest itself in the Caribbean. What is more important, however, is the increasing awareness that a black face does not necessarily represent black power.

Rishee S. Thakur

attempt would certainly not only have met with hostility but would also not have had the "Garden of

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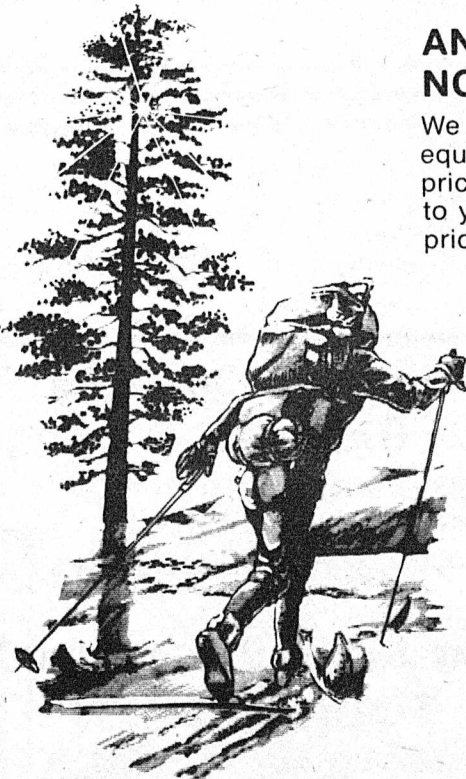
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