

Dalhousie accused of honouring dictator

by Paul Clark

A Dalhousie professor is urging the university to revoke an honorary degree it awarded a Caribbean dictator in the fall of '78.

Dr. S. Sankar, a professor at the School of Business Administration and a Guyanese refugee, said last Monday night that Forbes Burnham, president of Guyana, has been the motivating force behind numerous political assassina-

tions, human rights violations and riggings of elections in the small Caribbean country.

Politically silent until now, Sankar said he was "propelled" into taking action after the recent assassination of Dr. Walter Rodney, a renowned history professor and leader of the Working People's Alliance, the party, according to Sankar, holding "the only credible alternative to Burnham's regime.

In light of Burnham's repressive and undemocratic rule, Sankar is asking that the Dalhousie Senate revoke the honorary degree given to the ruler. While Sankar says that he will at first approach the Senate quietly, if there is no action he plans to circulate a campus-wide petition calling for the revocation of Burnham's degree.

When Dalhousie presented Burnham with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree on October 24, 1977, they cited his service to his own country

and East Indians and was achieving wide support for its program for a "Government of National Reconstruction". At this point the government commenced a "reign of terror" which included brutal beatings, wanton arrests and a crackdown on trade unions. In response to the WPA's sporadic retaliations Burnham declared in a speech on August 26, 1979 that his opponents had "awakened a sleeping giant who... will not rest again until his enemies are crushed and utterly des-

were engaged in suppressive activities like those accused of the "House of Israel".)

Electoral Manipulation

Sankar reserved his severest criticism for the Guyanese government's "consistent rigging and manipulation of the electoral process". Quoting the London Times and a British documentary "The Trail of the Vanishing Votes" he discredited a system which included the "overseas vote, the postal vote, the proxy vote, faulty methods of registration,

Since the leader of the only "credible alternative" to Guyana's government has been assassinated, Dalhousie business prof Sankar is calling for the revocation of Dalhousie's honorary degree to Guyana's dictator Burnham.

and his contribution to establishing friendly relations between Guyana and Canada. The national anthem of Guyana was sung and Burnham gave the convocation address.

Sankar, representing the Committee for Defence of Human Rights in Guyana, also called for an embargo on economic, technical and professional assistance to Guyana recommended that the U.N. investigate the abrogation of civil liberties in the country and supervise the next Guyanese national elections.

Speaking at the Weldon Law Building on behalf of Amnesty International, Sankar presented some surprising and at times macabre facts in describing "The Guyana Tragedy: A Continuing Malaise".

Dal Grad Shot in Crackdown

Sankar said the political oppression in Guyana began to be stepped up a couple of years ago after it became apparent that Dr. Rodney's Working People's Alliance Party was gaining an immense popularity. He said the WPA, unlike Burnham's party, was able to bridge the racial divisions between the Blacks

troyed.

The ensuing governmental offensive resulted in the assassination of the WPA's leader Dr. Rodney, as well as a number of other government critics. Bernard Darke, a Jesuit priest and newspaper photographer, was killed in an anti-government demonstration in July of '79. Dr. J. Ramsammy, a Dalhousie Ph.D. graduate in Oceanography who was the chief critic of Burnham's regime prior to Rodney, was imprisoned and tortured and later gunned down in broad daylight.

American Cult Involvement

Sankar said the government carried out its attacks through the police, the army and the paramilitary. In addition, he said they relied heavily on the suppressive activities of "House of Israel", a religious cult consisting of self-exiled Americans, many of whom are sought by U.S. law enforcers.

(Two years ago Jonestown, the capital of Guyana, received international exposure when it was the site of a mass suicide initiated by Jim Jones, the leader of the "People's Temple" cult. It has since been alleged Jones' followers

the padding of the voter's lists with fictitious names, dead and underaged persons, the deletion of names of legitimate voters... and inadequate security around the ballot boxes."

Dalhousie's '77 citation to Burnham noted he had successfully retained office in successive elections from 1968 through 1973, but there is no mention that it is widely held that each one of these victories was fraudulent. He pointed to an independent researcher from Granada who commented: "the compilation of the registrar was a totally dishonest and corrupt operation. And, as we have clearly established, the great majority of people listed do not exist... it's a pretty awful and disgraceful episode."

Elections have been postponed for the last thirty months in Guyana, pending the recent passage of a constitution which, according to Sankar, makes Burnham executive president for life, renders him immune from prosecution for any crimes and empowers him to override even a two thirds majority of parliament.



Dalhousie professor S. Sankar

MacKay opposes decision to cut long-haired volleyball player

by Greg Dennis

The decision to cut Peter Jacobs from Dalhousie's varsity volleyball team because of the length of his hair was unfair, said university president Andrew MacKay. But he is unsure if it is in his jurisdiction to overrule the controversial move.

MacKay, who is also president of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, said he did not think a person's physical attributes should prohibit him or her from participation if they in no way affected athletic ability. "Personally, I wouldn't have come to the same decision," he said. "I don't see what length of hair or beard or colour of skin has to do with athletics."

Jacobs, a member of Nova Scotia's Canada Games volleyball team in 1979, tried out for

the Dalhousie Tigers in September. After two weeks of training camp, coach Al Scott told the Berwick native he could play on the team but on one condition—he would have to cut his shoulder-length hair. He refused and instead offered to tie it back or wear something over it. Scott stuck with his decision.

Scott said his decision was "individual policy" and not the general policy of Dalhousie University. "When someone tries out it is usually in anticipation of certain sacrifices or a code of rules to abide with," he said. "The basic guidelines were presented and he chose not to follow them."

Jacob's case was taken up by Shauna Sullivan, the assistant ombudsman here. On October 1 she met with Scott and Athletic Director Ken Bellemare, who "backed up

Scott 100 per cent", she said. "From my point of view, the coaches have to determine the operation of the team," Bellemare was quoted as saying in last week's *Gazette*. "I felt it was a reasonable decision".

Sullivan said Scott and Bellemare gave her two reasons why Jacobs was cut from the team, first, his hair might touch the net and have an effect on the game's outcome. (Women's coach Lois Macgregor said hair touching the net is illegal but it is a "picky call" that "depends on the umpire." Several members of MacGregor's teams have played with hair as long as or longer than Jacobs'); second, Sullivan said Bellemare told her Jacobs' hair would make for an unnecessary comment on the team. She said he drew a possible analogy to the University of Moncton's hoc-

key team. He said U de M is laughed at because they are a French team in a predominantly English league and that he feared the Tigers would be ridiculed for having a long-haired player.

"I think it is unfair," said Sullivan. "Peter would have been on the team if not wrongly dealt with. I think it reflects badly on Dalhousie."

The case was then taken to MacKay who asked Scott and Bellemare to review their decision. Bellemare said he did review it and thought the president "sounded reasonably comfortable with my decision."

However, in a telephone interview from Calgary Monday night, MacKay said he had not heard Bellemare's final decision. "I hope to follow up on it and have an opportunity to discuss it (with Bellemare) before the end of

this week." MacKay returned to Halifax Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Jacobs said even if MacKay can overturn the ruling, he doesn't think it would be possible to return this year. "None of the guys on the team talk to me," he said. "They just walk on by." He said he would like to try out for the team next year if the rule changes.

The Jacob's case is the latest of recent controversies within the school's athletic circles. In September, all-star hockey defenceman Louis Lavoie was cut from the varsity team for missing two dry-land training sessions. Last month, in separate incidents, the varsity soccer team was denied a playoff berth and the golf team was stripped of an AUAA title for the use of academically unqualified players.