

Guyanese opposition leader attacks U.S. policy

by Alan Christensen

The English speaking nations of the Caribbean are moving toward a system of Latin-American style military dictatorships as a result of American foreign policy, says Cheddi Jagan, leader of the opposition People's Progressive Party. Jagan, who was Prime Minister of Guyana from 1957 to 1964, points to Guyana as an example of this change in direction.

Guyanese President Forbes Burnham, says Jagan, is known as the "10 to 15 percent President" because his People's National Congress (PNC) is only supported by that proportion of the Guyanese population. Burnham only stays in power by rigging elections, according to Jagan who, referred to the election commission as "the PNC's toothless poodle."

Guyana is a "client state" of the United States, says Jagan, and as a result is subjected to "super-exploitation" by multinational corporations. He says that this is proven by the fact that his nation produces 86% of the bauxite used by North American industry, yet it derives only 3% of the total revenue from that industry. "In this situation," says Jagan, "the government has to build a bigger and bigger army" to prevent revolution. This type of situation is happening throughout the Caribbean and Latin America he said.

Jagan claimed that the United States is trying to "destabilize" socialist countries in the Caribbean such as Grenada in much the same way that it destabilized Chile in 1973. He said that he himself had been a victim of this process in 1964 because



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Cheddi Jagan, a former Guyanese Prime Minister, told Dalhousie faculty and students last week about the situation in his country.

of his moves against foreign companies in Guyana. They do this, he said, by cutting off economic aid while increasing aid to the army and police of the country.

The Guyanese opposition leader also stated that the United States is setting up several Caribbean nations such as Barbados as "policemen" in the Caribbean. Their job, he said, was to help suppress any rebellions in the area. Jagan pointed to a recent case where, he said, Barbados sent police to help quell a rebellion on a neighboring island.

Jagan also refuted Guyanese President Forbes Burnham's claims that he is a socialist. According to Jagan, "Burnham said he was a Marxist, a co-operative socialist, and a Christian. So when he goes to Moscow he is a Marxist, when he goes to Washington he is a co-operative socialist and when he sees the

Pope he is a Christian." In reality, he said, a new class of "petty-bourgeois" has risen to the top in Burnham's PNC and the nationalized industries are being handed back to the foreign companies.

A "broad patriotic front government of all left, democratic and progressive parties" is necessary in Guyana, claimed Jagan, if his country is going to progress. This government, states Jagan would move toward the nationalization "of the commanding heights of the economy."

"A tremendous campaign must be built up" said Jagan, in order to fight against American interference in the Caribbean and Latin America. He stated that Canadians have a "common interest" with the people of this region in opposing such a policy of interference on the part of the United States. Jagan called on Canadians to oppose this interference in Latin America and the Caribbean and to support the people of Grenada and El Salvador.

Reagan demo trail

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He had a program: he urged the government to improve assistance to the Third World, oppose intervention in El Salvador, work with Mexico to mediate in the "civil war", (quotes mine), and support any group "who stands...for human rights and democracy." It was the appropriate thing to say.

It seemed to me Ed had stolen show, although he was certainly preaching to the converted. Between the El Salvador gang, the Acid Rainers, Scallopers, and the We-Hate-Reagan-'Cause-He's-an-Imperialist-War monger gang, Ed seemed right at home.

The El Salvador gang took over again, and three speakers told us about Archbishop Oscar Romero, the four American religious workers, and the other 10,000 or 12,000 people who have been killed, probably by the notorious death squads, in the past year or so. There were at least a few concerned Latin Americans about.

All this seemed good fun. I hadn't seen a protest like this on the Hill in a long time. I ran

into classmates. I felt at home, although I'm no confirmed leftist, and neither were some others. At the time I didn't take anything that was said too much to heart; I was busy taking pictures, and somehow trying to remain detached. But now I can shed a genuine tear for innocent, illiterate Latin peasants, as well as our own lakes, tap water and scallop fishermen.

Indeed, many at the demonstration seemed moved. But I was having fun. It was my first demonstration coverage. I didn't worry much about the Ottawa-El Salvador Solidarity Committee, until they brought on the grand finale.

The man in the Klan suit and his buddy brought forward the stars and stripes and swastika, held it up high, and put a match to it. The nylon burned within a few seconds.

A lump came in my throat. I thought of the students in Teheran, how they loved to torch a stars and stripes for the TV cameras. Ohio would not like this. I wondered if they have some spare acid rain on hand.

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