

# JAGAN WOULD WIN HANDS DOWN

**I**F a general election were to be held in British Guiana today, there is not the slightest doubt that it would be won by the People's Progressive Party.

After 12 months of suppression, jailings, intimidation by British military forces and close censorship, the people of British Guiana still refuse to be cowed.

But all the Tory Government's accusations about "Communist plots" to burn down Georgetown and establish dictatorship have been proved to be empty, lying inventions.

A year ago, on October 9, 1953, the P.P.P. Government, elected by popular vote, was deposed by British troops and, on the direction of the British Government, an autocratic administration was set up to stifle any demands for democratic self-expression.

Nearly every leader of the P.P.P., including Dr. Jagan, the former Prime Minister, was imprisoned, meetings were forbidden, publications were censored and a wide range of political literature was banned.

All this was enforced by British troops and local police. Then a new stooge party, the National Democratic Party, was organised to combat the appeal of the P.P.P. But now what is the result?



The Times is no friend of the people of British Guiana, but in a recent article its correspondent in Guiana admitted that the P.P.P. was still "deeply entrenched" and that its influence had in no way diminished. It added:

"There is little doubt what the result of another general election would be. The P.P.P. remains the only organised political body in the sugar estates and the villages. The new party, the National Democratic Party, has made little impact and is almost unknown in many places."

"Thunder," the weekly newspaper of the P.P.P., has a circulation of 16,000, which is more than that of any of the three capitalist daily papers in the Colony.

The penalties imposed by the administration on those who oppose its decrees indicate its fear of the people.

The common crime has been disorderly conduct and leading illegal processions. In one prosecution a man was even charged with the offence of announcing

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British troops arrive in British Guiana . . . but for their presence the People's Progressive Party would now be governing the country.

the arrest of 17 of his colleagues; presumably that was "disorderly conduct." His punishment was a fine of 40 dollars or two months imprisonment. He chose jail.

The Governor, Sir Alfred Savage, tried to prevent May Day demonstrations, but he was completely unsuccessful—demonstrations took place everywhere, from Georgetown, the capital, to small villages.

At one small village in the Corentyne the constituency of Dr. Jagan, 65 people were tried for "illegal processioning." Next of kin attending the trial numbered 800—nearly the whole population.

The Governor has banned 22 publications, and a jail sentence of 12 months or a fine of 500 dollars may be imposed on anybody caught reading one of these.

Mrs. Jagan is now on trial for possessing two copies of Soviet News, a publication freely available in Britain. Dr. Lachmansingh, the former Minister of Health, was imprisoned for three months in August for possessing a "subversive" publication entitled "The World Trade Union Movement."



The Caribbean News, which can be bought in Britain, is high on the list of banned publications.

Under a decree issued in June the advocacy of peaceful civil disobedience is an offence. And nobody in British Guiana may say what he thinks about the army of occupation for it is a crime to "foster ill-will" against British troops.

The success of an appeal by the

P.P.P. for funds to support the fight for restoration of the 1953 Constitution was so great that the Government introduced yet another decree.

This was actually an "Ordinance to Regulate and Control the Collection of money or the sale of articles for charitable purposes from house to house and in public places."



The Governor has not only failed to destroy the P.P.P.; he has also failed miserably to control the economic forces that are impoverishing the colony.

The Daily Chronicle, a newspaper that represents the big sugar estates and is not likely to exaggerate the extent of unemployment, admits 50,000 unemployed between the ages of 16 and 25. This is in a labour force of no more than 150,000.

Leaders of 50,000 organised workers are supporting a programme which demands:

1. The establishment of democratic rights, civil liberties and representative government.
2. The recognition of trade unions that are fully representative of the workers.
3. Increased pay to meet the high cost of living.
4. Support for colonial and other workers fighting oppression and exploitation.
5. Formation of a strong central trade union council representing the trade union movement.

These are demands that every democratic organisation in Britain should support.

**Billy Strachan**

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