

THUNDER

Hark the rolling of the thunder!
Lo the sun! And lo there under,
Rise th' wrath, and hope and wonder.
--William Morris.

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FASCIST TYRANNY ENTERS B.G.

Making an historic and heroic one-man stand against fascist infiltration, Hon. Cheddi Jagan spoke for six hours in the Legislative Council on Feb. 27th in an attempt to filibuster and delay the passage of the "subversive literature" Bill. In one of the longest sessions of the Legislative Council lasting from 2 p.m. to 11.15 p.m. a depleted House passed the second and third readings of a Bill prohibiting the importation of undesirable publications. Conspicuous by their absence were National Democratic Party legislators J.A. Nicholson and John Carter, U.G.P. Claude Vibart Wight, Farmers Workers Party "leader" Daniel Debodin, and Dr. Gonsalves & Pat Ferriera.

For two days People's Progressive Party members picketed the Public Buildings carrying placards protesting against the Bill—"Bann War not Books". "Is the Banning of Books Part of the Declaration of Human Rights", "Oppose Fascist Bill to suppress the People's Rights", etc. Reactionary legislators, officials and the Governor were booed by the large crowds which waited in the rain until near midnight on Friday the 27th to hear the results of the debate.

ANALYSIS.

The Governor-in-Council can issue orders making it illegal to bring into the Colony any publications, recordings, films, discs, tools and postal packets. Under

Clause 3 of the Bill any person who imports, publishes, sells, offers for sale, distributes or reproduces any publication, engraving or importation of which has been prohibited, can be charged, and



CHEDDI JAGAN.

if found guilty be subject to a fine not exceeding \$500 and or to imprisonment not exceeding 12 months. In addition, the Government can seize all these prohibited articles. Another section of the Bill states that any one who without lawful excuse has in his possession any publication, engraving or disc, the importation of which has been prohibited, shall be subject to a fine of \$250 and/or imprisonment not exceeding six months. Any such article can also be confiscated.

During the debate of this Bill the Hon. Cheddi Jagan moved an amendment that anything published or recorded or filmed in the United Kingdom or allowed to be distributed in the U.K. should be allowed entry into the Colony and should not be banned. When put to the vote this amendment was lost. The Hon. Theo Lee moved another amendment that anything printed or produced in the United Kingdom should not be banned from the Colony. This also suffered defeat.

Clause 5 of the Bill states that any person who may have received from abroad without his knowledge anything which is prohibited should deliver same to the Police as soon as the nature of the contents becomes known to him; and also that anything which may have been imported before it is banned would be delivered to the Police if in the interval the particular item was prohibited. This in effect means that anyone sending valuable gifts to a person in the Colony before such items are banned can suffer a great financial loss. It also means that anyone ordering any books, records, films, etc. before they are banned can subsequently find an order issued by the Governor-in-Council **prohibiting these items which on arrival have to be delivered up to the Police.**

When this particular Clause
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was being discussed, **Dr. Jagan** moved an amendment which would allow the receiver of gifts or importations to return articles to the sender if they were declared prohibited while en route to the Colony.

Clause 5 (1) C states that any person who has any books or other publications, engraving or die or extract from any banned publication in his possession long before the order is made by the Governor-in-Council shall deliver up to the Police these prohibited articles. **Dr. Jagan** moved the deletion of this clause stating that it was contrary to the principles of law-making and justice to make illegal something which was done legally before. When put to the vote the clause was passed as printed. Anyone who contravenes any of the provisions analysed above in Clause 5 of this Bill is subject to a penalty of \$250 and or to imprisonment not exceeding six months.

OPENING OF MAIL.

The Postmaster General and the Controller of Customs are now empowered by this Bill to detain, open and examine any postal packet, letter, etc. any publication, engraving or die which they may suspect to be prohibited articles. This gives the Government extraordinary wide powers which are generally used only in times of war. The Government can now open anybody's letter in order to spy on the activities of individuals.

In one clause, Clause 7, the Government has tried to make legal something which was done illegally. They have now made law anything that was done by the Controller of Customs since

Feb. 1, 1952. It is to be recalled that the Government seized many packages of books which were imported into the Colony by **Dr. Jagan** on the flimsy excuse that he did not have licences to import these items from England. When he applied for import licences to re-import these books the applications were held up and he was informed by the Colonial Secretary that these applications would not be granted until the law banning publications was made. The Attorney General in speaking on Clause 7 of the Bill said that every government validates something which may have been done illegally by the Government, but **Dr. Jagan** pointed out the distinction between validating something which was done illegally but in the interests of the people and conferring rights to people as against validating something done illegally which is intended to take away the rights of individuals.

DENIAL OF RIGHTS.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 (of which Great Britain is a member nation) declared in Article 19—"Every one has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference & to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". This becomes a lie and a sham with the passing of the undersirable literature bill.

South Africa has banned not only Rev. Michael Scott, but his worthy publication "*Shadow*

Over Africa". It means that such publications as his and others much read and appreciated by the Guianese masses, like '*Nigeria Why We Fight For Freedom*', '*Terror In Kenya*', etc. will surely be banned from B.G. When **Dr. Jagan** spoke in the Legislative Council last year on Luckhoo's motion protesting against the treatment of non-Europeans in South Africa, he rightly reminded Luckhoo that while he was objecting to Fascism in South Africa, he was introducing it to B.G. The battle to oppose this bill which denies the people's rights has not ended. It must be taken up in the new House of Assembly. That is why it is so necessary that the P.P.P. wins a majority of seats on April 27th. Let us join hands to defeat fascism in our land.

STOP PRESS.

On Thursday, March 5, comrade Sydney King returned from his trip abroad as the representative of Peace Committee at the Vienna Peace Conference. The people of Buxton welcomed him home in one of the greatest demonstrations ever seen in B.G. Thousands of people carrying torches and banners crying 'Sydney has come back home', "*our King*" has returned "embraced him and wept with joy". He was carried through the Village and finally to a meeting near the Market. There Comrade King told of his activities abroad and the shameful behaviour of the Guianese Police who detained him for two hours at the airport while they stripped and searched his person. King displayed a new vigour and a greater maturity which has gladdened the hearts of those who are working to place him in the new House of Assembly.

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