

JAGDEO AND BURNHAM AWARDS -UNEQUAL TREATMENT?

Errol Harry-UK-April 2013

Since unfortunately Guyanese Professors Kimani Nehusi and Clem Seecharran seem to be otherwise engaged (writing books about Struggle?) African people especially but all Guyanese out of Guyana have no alternative but to call upon Jamaica's Prof's Horace Campbell and Rupert Lewis to now redouble their efforts and mobilise internationally to ensure that

Forbes 'Let them make their wills' Burnham in Death is not treated in any way differently from ex-Guyanese President Bharrat 'India is alive and well in Guyana' Jagdeo -who is alive.

Jagdeo on top of the UK Dec 12 UCLAN Honorary Degree is now being awarded another Honorary Degree in June at the University of Trent in Canada. .

If Walter Rodney was alive he would be in the front line of local and International Protests and Struggle on behalf of , not only Africans to be sure, but on behalf of all Working People in Guyana .

Like Burnham's Tambo Award, this new Jagdeo Award must not be accepted without protest at the risk of legitimate accusations being levelled by some Pan-Africanist elements of

Double-Standards, Hypocrisy and even

African Self-Hate and Willie Lynch Syndrome.

At a risk of sounding heretical, a US study in the 1980's found black cops tend to shoot blacks quicker than white cops-exactly as at Linden and Marikana;

And as Brother Omowale in the UK has pointed out it was in fact disenchanted black US Marxists who responded to racism in the US Communist Party by coming 'back home' to the Garveyite Movement and introducing the idea of 'Race First'..

While today's Guyanese the Race Firsters need to get a serious grip on Class Struggle, Crude Economistic black Marxists who ignore Culture and the psychological impact upon African minds of 400 years in solitary confinement, need to re-read Harold Cruse's 'The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual' -(if you can still get it).

Of course ,it is not being suggested that the ANC Govt -even after Marikana is to be compared the University Administrators in the West, but ex-President Jagdeo's record and Environmental credentials need serious scrutiny and comparison with Burnham's.

It was Burnham, Guyana's First 'Environmentalist' President who famously proclaimed 'Blood is a good fertiliser of the Soil'

This was directed to Walter Rodney and the WPA. However , Jonestown, where hundred of Africans were brought secretly from the US and murdered in Guyana by Burnham's fellow CIA Agent Jim Jones (Read about Jim Jones's Senior aide Bonnie 'Burnham 'in 'Was Jonestown a CIA Medical Experiment'), also is part of the Burnham's 'African' legacy.

Race first, Non-Marxist Pan Africanists please note.When the axe came into the Forest the Leader of the Trees said to his followers

'Brothers and Sisters (1) do not be afraid. look at the handle of the axe. He is one of us' No one survived.(Iran Proverb)

The ppp's Jagdeo has apparently listened carefully to Burnham and learnt a lot about Soil Fertilisation.

It is now established that his ppp Regime in Guyana was responsible (one way or another and not far from Drug-Czar Roger Khan's Phantom death squads for literally hundreds of deaths of young African males in Guyana.200-500 .Just like Water Rodney.

WITHOUT ANY INQUESTS.This actually makes Burnham's eight year delay for the Walter Rodney

Inquest-look impressive..

We must now ensure that Bharrat 'India is alive and well' Jagdeo is not treated in any way differently than Forbes Burnham.

Errol Harry-London UK April 2013.

(1)Apologies and Correction:

Last year outside the ppp Low commission in London Brother-man Jinnah 'Mike' Rahman (Walter Rodney WPA activist and Treason accused by Burnham) was given his turn with the Megaphone to chant down our old anti-Burnham/PNC friend-now ppp enemy and Lo Commissioner Lall Singh secreted inside.

.We were there to protest Linden, the Guyanese Marikana, Agricola, a tortured 14 year old black boy, the Freddie Kissoon Dismissal from the University, and other low crimes against the people.

As soon as Jinnah began: 'Brothers and sisters..a female voice bawled him out 'SISTERS AND BROTHERS !!' Mike didn't miss a beat :The Shout was repeated. It belonged to an elderly white woman who just happened to be the ex-wife of CLR James-Selma.

At a previous demo she had also objected to a placard declaring in RED : 'PPP RACIST MURDERERS.' held up by a rather large Black man but this time Dr Michelle Asantewa a sista who also happens to be Black and proud and Guyanese 'let her have it /did not forget her' as we used to say in Guyana....

They join our struggle strictly on their disrespectful white womanish/bossy terms; Of course we welcome them but not as Leaders .Do they not imagine that those who feel it also know it.?.reminds me of Janet Jagan...CLR must be now resting in Peace.

Incidentally Junah Rahman holds the distinction of being the very first Indo-Guyanese in 7 demos on the London picket line.

Burnham award

April 28, 2013 · Guyana Stabroek news

A mere matter of weeks after the family of the late President Forbes Burnham had been informed that he was to be given the Order of the Companions of

O R Tambo by South Africa, persistent reports began to circulate that the award had been withdrawn. The understanding was that this was not expressed in so many words by the South Africans, and that indefinite deferment was the preferred formulation for imparting the news. It would, however, still amount to a rescission.

If indeed this is true, one would have expected that it would be a great source of embarrassment for the South African government, which having made the announcement and put the arrangements in place, then proceeded to backtrack. At the very least it would suggest a certain lack of thoroughness in their explorations on the subject of the possible reactions to Mr Burnham being conferred with the Order. If it is not the case, it is a puzzle why neither it nor the family have issued any statement quashing the stories in circulation.

Pretoria has certainly come under some pressure to rescind the Order, with a campaign under way involving Caribbean personalities such as Professor Horace Campbell who is based in the United States, and a strongly worded petition in circulation inviting people to become signatories. Professor Campbell's brief article on the subject mostly centres on the assassination of Dr Walter Rodney, a figure of considerable standing in Africa, of course, while the petition deems the award "an affront to the legacy and memory of Walter Rodney, Father Darke, Ohene Koama, Edward Dublin and numerous others who paid with their lives or liberty for challenging the increasing repression of the Burnham government."

The Order itself was instituted in 2002, and is conferred on foreign citizens who have "promoted South Africa's interests and aspirations through co-operation, solidarity and support." As we reported a week last Friday, Burnham was chosen as a recipient "...for his integral part in sport boycott against South Africa during the apartheid regime and support for the liberation movement and freedom fighters in South Africa."

The petition would seem, however, to be disputing the late president's credentials in that regard. It said that "Tambo, Rodney and the working peoples of Guyana... are the ones who resisted the imposed colonial racial divisions and fought apartheid in South Africa and everywhere else it cropped up... Burnham does not deserve to be mentioned in this company." In unvarnished language it refers to him presiding over a "corrupt, brutal and murderous regime," and describes him as an agent of imperialism, "associated with the foreign policy goals of the US, France and other colonial powers."

So first of all, did Forbes Burnham in fact do anything positive in relation to confronting apartheid in Southern Africa? His critics notwithstanding, the answer has to be yes; among other things, at a time when Guyana was hardly thriving economically he gave money to the liberation movements, something which was fully supported by Dr Cheddi Jagan and the PPP at the time (Dr Jagan was a recipient of the Order in 2005). Burnham's stance on the matter of apartheid was consistent, and he worked against it and spoke publicly about it in international fora, and particularly in the Commonwealth, with a view to isolating South Africa. His family in their press release announcing the award made reference to other measures he took as well.

It makes no sense to believe that Mr Burnham was not sincere in his anti-apartheid views, as the petitioners would like to suggest, and it is also quite inaccurate to claim that he was associated with the foreign policy goals of the US, France and other colonial powers. (France has no doubt been singled out because Gregory Smith, who gave Rodney the device which killed him was given sanctuary in French Guiana, which perhaps suggests some kind of concession or favour to France.)

Burnham's actions on the boycott of South Africa in sport are very well known and documented, and Guyana's own Alvin Kalicharran found his international career at an end after he went to South Africa – merely one example of Burnham's pro-active policy in this department.

When coming to their initial decision, the South African authorities might also have taken into account the fact that Oliver Tambo himself came to Guyana in July 1987 on an official four-day visit to seek support here. In our July 24 edition of that year we reported Mr Tambo as saying that he was deeply impressed with the welcome, and that the ANC would be taking up offers from the government for scholarships here for its members.

Our report continued: "The ANC has also asked Guyana to intensify its efforts with the Caribbean and Latin America 'to pursue with great vigour' the objective of mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa to end apartheid." We also reported the WPA at the time saying carefully that Tambo's visit was "a challenge to the Caribbean to find ways of giving timely support to the sacrifices of the oppressed non-whites suffering from the apartheid system." Of course, by 1987, Desmond Hoyte was in office, but he simply continued a policy originally laid down by Burnham.

The question is, if the late President Burnham did indeed support the liberation movement, etc, should his unsavoury record at home nevertheless disqualify him from receiving South Africa's award? While the abolition of apartheid inevitably involved the introduction of genuine democracy, Forbes Burnham was no democrat – at least, he was no democrat where Guyana was concerned. All that can be said is that this, in and of itself, has not proved an impediment to the South Africans conferring the Order on others who fall in a similar category, such as Nasser of Egypt, who received it posthumously in 2004, and more significantly, Sukarno of Indonesia who was given it posthumously in 2005.

Sukarno, in fact, during his period in power had proceeded much further along the road of repression than Burnham ever had, and so for that matter, had Gamal Abdel Nasser. The difference in their cases, perhaps, is that Indonesians were probably not too concerned about whether Sukarno received the award or not, while in the instance of Egypt, Nasser for all his autocratic ways is remembered in a very positive light by his countrymen, who would not have opposed the conferment. Perhaps it should be mentioned, en passant, that Sir Shridath Ramphal received the Order in 2007, presumably for his efforts on behalf of the liberation movement during his period as Commonwealth Secretary General.

The problem with Burnham is that there are few rational assessments of his period in power; perspectives tend to reflect the uncritical assumptions of one side or the other. As such, therefore, the split on the subject among Guyanese will reflect the current political divide. There is, of course, in this case, the additional dimension of Caribbean intellectuals who were close to Walter Rodney, and their views following the initial announcement may conceivably have given the South African government pause for thought, as Rodney's name has as much resonance in Africa as it does in the Caribbean.

As far as the limited criteria set forth by the South Africans are concerned, namely, the promotion of their interests and aspirations, etc, Burnham certainly meets these without question. In addition, as said above, there are autocrats who have been given the award before him whose record of repression in their homelands does not bear much scrutiny. In a purely technical sense, therefore, from the

perspective of Pretoria there was no reason not to give the Order to Burnham. From a practical point of view, however, it still cannot be done in the current climate without stirring up a hornet's nest of controversy in the region. Before it would be accepted by all groups with equanimity, a stage would have to be reached in Guyana where there could be a reconciliation at some level of the disparate accounts of our past, and which would allow for a considered evaluation of the matter. However, that stage still eludes us.