

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

FJM--17 Guyana  
Jagan on the Left, Burnham on the Right

Georgetown  
Guyana

November 1, 1969

Mr. Richard H. Nolte  
Executive Director  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
535 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Mr. Nolte:

Guyana, in its fourth year of independence, is a racially tormented and politically divided country. Increasingly serious hostility between the East



Indian and Afro-Guyanese populations has made racism the dominant factor in domestic political developments--a racial polarization which has also contributed to the breakdown of what could have been the most hopeful of the leftist nationalist movements in the Caribbean.

In addition to its internal difficulties, Guyana also faces external pressures from its neighbors on both the east (Surinam) and the west (Venezuela). Border disputes have erupted at several points along Guyana's frontier and last year one upheaval resulted in an unsuccessful rebellion in one of the southern provinces called the Rupununi.



The story is not a happy one. Cold war intrigue, race riots, rebellion, rigged elections and repression are the salient points of the ordeal of Guyana--an ordeal, incidentally, exacerbated by Anglo-American foreign policy of the past twenty years.

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Guyana is a large country (83,000 square miles) with a very small population (700,000). Situated on the northern coast of South America, Guyana is bounded on the east by Surinam, on the west by Venezuela and in the south by Brazil. To the north is the Atlantic coastline extending about 270 miles. It is along this coastline and then inland on an average of two to eight miles that the majority

of the Guyanese people along the coastal belt was built and commercial and agricultural place.

Though undeveloped Guyana is very rich in there are vast forests, gold, diamonds and than any actual resource as a "breadbasket of the climate of the interior, the Savannah, is the excess populations of not lost on the govern - Already, there is a trickle of West Indians into the Guyanese interior to establish farming communities, a movement encouraged by the country's government for reasons which have political consequences as well as the more obvious economic benefits.



have settled. It is also that Georgetown, the capital, quently where most of the tural development has taken

except for the coastal belt, potential. In the interior mineral deposits of bauxite, manganese. But more important is the future of the country Caribbean." The soil and particularly what is called ideal region for settling the the smaller islands, a concept

Although Guyana is a mainland state on the South American Continent, (Sir Walter Raleigh first charted the area calling it El Dorado) the Guyanese consider themselves a Caribbean people. This is because culturally, racially and historically Guyanese society has been shaped by the same forces which operated in the islands of the British speaking Caribbean. Initially settled by Dutchmen in 1621, Guyana became a British colony (British Guiana) after the War of 1812 and the subsequent Treaty of Vienna in 1814. The usual pattern of colonial development under British rule followed: importation of slaves, a sugar monoculture, Crown colony system of government, limited franchise (property holders with land under cultivation), emancipation in 1833, indentured labor (East Indians numbering 250,000 settled prior to 1917), slow constitutional development (no less than eight Constitutional conferences were held from 1921) leading finally to national independence in 1966.

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Contemporary Guyana is in large part a result of this colonial genesis. The most important factors-- slavery, indentured labor and a plantation economy --constitute the roots of racial divisions. The East Indian and Afro-Guyanese have voted along racial lines in the past two national elections so that the electoral process has become nothing more than a form of politicized racism. The consequence of a plantation economy has been the exclusivity of control three firms--Bookers McConnell of London, Reynolds from the United States and Demerara Bauxite--exercise over the country's future. The influence these firms have, particularly Bookers in sugar (the firm owns eleven of the thirteen sugar estates operating in the country), is not despotic; just inevitable--for the time being. Besides the colonial legacy however, the cold war has accounted for much of Guyana's misery.

Beyond the Caribbean, there is a hazy notion that Guyana has been the focus of cold war conflict in the past few years, that somehow Communism has some influence in the country, that after some constitutional difficulties things

have finally settled down and the Guyanese are firmly joined with the peoples of the "free world". However, what in reality Guyana has experienced is not so simple as that.

For twenty years politics in Guyana has suffered because the country's leadership has been embroiled in the ideologies of the cold war. What could have been, and nearly was in the early fifties, a creative nationalist movement of the Guyanese people never flourished. There were two reasons for this. First, despite the ability of the radical nationalists to analyse the problems of their country, they were bound by the inflexibility of marxist ideology and hemmed in by the rhetoric and external struggles of the cold war. Second, alarmed by the marxist influence within the nationalist movement, American and British policy makers responded by employing the subtle wedge of racism and other pressures to split the country's leadership. The salient features of this story begin in 1946.

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After the Second World War, constitutional changes and independence were on the horizon for British Guiana. Recognizing this, in 1946 a small group of Georgetown professionals and intellectuals began meeting to discuss the future changes they as Guyanese would like to see effected in the event of independence. Among the organizers of these informal discussion groups were three men and a woman who would, with one additional individual, become the leading figures in the crisis of Guyanese politics for the next twenty years.

The central figure in these discussions was an Indo-Guyanese dentist, recently returned from the United States, Dr. Cheddi Jagan. The others of the core-group were Jagan's American-born wife, Janet, and two Afro-Guyanese teachers, Sidney King and Brindley Benn. The other key participant who joined the group in 1950, Forbes Sampson Burnham, was at the time in England studying law.

For the Jagans, King and Benn, the purpose of these meetings, open to anyone who wanted to participate, was to integrate all of the progressive elements of the country in order to be in a position to demand constitutional and social reforms as independence approached. Organizing themselves into a Political Affairs Committee (PAC) they began to hold forums and document their ideas so that other Guyanese might become interested or involved participants.

The PAC was expressly "nationalist" although its strategy was a Jaganite brand of Marxist-Leninism. "The struggle for independence was viewed along class lines--the workers were to be organized against the planter classes and their sugar-coated government." The group received literature and organizational advice from the British Communist Party and, some suggest, financial assistance which was alleged to have been used to publish the PAC news sheet, Thunder.

While giving shape to the PAC, Jagan contested and won a seat in the Legislative Council. As a member of the Council in 1947, he continued to be critical of the colonial regime and popularized the ideas of the PAC. Looking back on those times, one Guyanese of East India descent suggests that

"for the first time in Guyana's history, an elected representative of Guyanese descent was outspoken in his criticism of the status-quo ... Such an act of leadership more than

any other factor brought the nationalist movement to the attention of the people."

The establishment reacted bitterly. They called Jagan a "rabble rousing Communist" and the Council rejected every piece of legislation that he proposed. Some of the Guyanese intellectuals who had been active in the PAC felt a bit uncomfortable but they agreed with Jagan's essential criticisms. "It was strategy more than issues which made me feel a bit wary of Cheddi," said one of the early supporters of the PAC. However, the core of the PAC remained steadfastly loyal to Jagan.

In fact, Jagan wasn't preaching or practicing a pure Marxist-Leninist line. On the contrary, he encouraged different points of view within the group, sought free discussion, openly circulated the different ideas the group had worked out and invited others of any ideological persuasion to join the movement. The emphasis was on a common commitment to national independence and a political-cultural integration of the Guyanese people. At the time, this group finally attracted practically every Guyanese intellectual who would eventually become prominent in the political future of the country.

Then in 1950, it became clear to Jagan and the PAC that if the group was to become more than just a collection of different points of view, that if it was to develop into a political movement, an Afro-Guyanese leader was needed to balance Jagan's popularity within the East Indian community. Thus there would be bi-racial support for the movement in the event it was to act as a political force in the country. The key man to gain Afro-Guyanese support was Forbes Sampson Burnham.

The choice was an obvious one. The son of an Afro-Guyanese school teacher, Forbes Burnham had been one of the most publicized school boys in British Guiana. He had won several scholarships, the last one to study law in Britain. At London University he had become the president of the West Indian Student Union and vice-president of the London branch of the Caribbean Labour Congress. Returning to Georgetown in 1949, Burnham quickly gained a reputation as an effective barrister and eloquent public speaker. What better man to have bring the Afro-Guyanese population into the nationalist movement? With his political and professional credentials in tow, Burnham joined Jagan and the alliance was formed.

Thus, in late 1950, the Public Affairs Committee was dissolved and in its place a new political party, the People's Progressive Party, was formed. Burnham was made chairman of the party and Cheddi Jagan was made second vice-chairman. Janet Jagan was appointed as general secretary and Sidney King made her assistant. Membership in the General Council of the party was evenly distributed between East Indians and Afro-Guyanese. And it was decided that in the elections for the House of Assembly, which were to be held in 1953, ten East Indians and nine Afro-Guyanese would be the PPP candidates.

A constitution was ratified and adopted by the First Congress of the PPP in April of 1951. The PPP declared that as the first nationalist party to be organized in British Guiana, it was committed to socialism, national independence and Caribbean unity. These points were made explicit in the 1951 Constitution:

"To promote the interests of the subject peoples by transforming British Guiana into a Socialist Country...  
To stimulate political consciousness and guide political

development by the dissemination of socialist ideas...  
 To pursue constantly a goal of national self-determination  
 and independence...  
 To work for the eventual political union of British  
 Guiana with other Caribbean territories...."

Ideologically, the party was not much changed from the PAC. "The most important thing to us," said one former party minister, "was that ideological differences among the different leaders were not allowed to weaken the organization... We welcomed the support of any Guyanese nationalist." Besides, the leaders of the PPP realized that the people of the country would not be interested in ideology. It was the issue of national independence rather than any particular doctrine which predominated in the PPP at the time.

When constitutional changes and new legislative elections came in 1953, the nationalist movement under the direction of the PPP reached its zenith. Twenty four seats were up for election on the basis of universal adult suffrage. The PPP won an incredible victory, taking eighteen seats of the twenty four, eliminated all but six of the 130 other candidates for the House and captured fifty one percent of the total vote. This was remarkable considering that four other parties were competing for the same vote. Jagan became the Premier and Forbes Burnham, the Minister of Education. It was a momentous occasion for the radical socialists of the PPP and it seemed, as Jagan later described those days, "with PPP momentum...a new nation was being born."

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It was a still-birth, however. Less than six months after the 1953 electoral victories, the PPP and the nationalist movement had been confronted with a series of crippling reverses. The first of these, alienation from the Guyana labor movement, was a result of pressures arising out of cold war conflict within the international labor movement. The second blow was the suspension of the newly won constitution as a consequence of British Colonial Office policies. Finally, there were centrifugal forces at work within the PPP itself which subsequently split the movement along racial lines.

In the cold war years, particularly the fifties, international labor became the focus of conflict. This was particularly true within the Caribbean where politics and the independence movements were rooted in the labor unions. Control of the labor movement, therefore, was strategic to the ideological interests of both East and West. For the Soviet bloc, the key support organization in the international labor movement was the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) with its affiliates in the Caribbean directed by the Caribbean Labour Congress. To counter WFTU, the Western powers created the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. In the Caribbean, the ICFTU affiliate was the Inter-American Regional Workers Union which was largely funded and dominated by American labor unions and the U.S. Government.

The ICFTU was the result of an international campaign begun in 1949 "to counter any upsurge of left-wing trade unionism outside of the Communist bloc." It established "secretariats" throughout Africa, Asia and South America including the Caribbean. Financing from the United States Government was channeled to the ICFTU through a series of interlocking Funds. As director of one such Fund, Fund for International Social and Economic Education, George Cabot Lodge described the importance of the international labor movement for the U.S. policy in a book titled Spearheads of Democracy:

"The obscure trade unionist of today may well be the president or prime minister of tomorrow. In many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, trade unions are almost the only organized force in direct contact with the people and they are among the most important influences upon the people."

In Guyana, struggle for the allegiance of local labor between the American controlled ICFTU and the Soviet influenced WFTU was keyed to the Trade Union Council. The details are complex, but the situation came down to a question of swinging local trade unions and their leaders into affiliation with one side or the other.

For the ICFTU, the key figure in the country was the late Serafino Romualdi. Romualdi, from the ranks of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and an old associate of David Dubinsky, its president, was appointed director for the Inter-American Regional Workers Organization. For some idea of Romualdi's attitude toward socialism (not to mention Communism), a remark by his mentor Dubinsky might represent the ideological position of most labor "representatives" dispatched by American labor:

"I have come to the conclusion that socialism, certainly the orthodox variety, will never work...trade unionism needs capitalism like a fish needs water."

As director of the Regional Workers Organization (later the American Institute for Free Labor Development), Romualdi had great powers such that he was able single-handedly to prevent the Guyana Trade Union Council from joining the ICFTU. Romualdi rejected their first application for membership explaining that "the TUC was dominated by Communists." These objections were obviously intended to convey a message.

Shortly after Romualdi had made his point, several Guyanese labor unions met and disbanded the Trade Union Council. They reorganized, drafted new rules which excluded any local union which had affiliation with the WFTU and then resubmitted their application to Romualdi for membership in the ICFTU. The second time, the application was acceptable.

This was a most crucial development for the PPP. Jagan and his associates watched as local trade unions lined up with the ICFTU and realized that they had to make a decision. Either he would have to follow the lead the reorganized Trade Union Council had taken (cut himself off from the international communist movement) or form his own union base. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that every one of the local trade unions (with one exception) which had affiliated with the ICFTU was led by an Afro-Guyanese. Even worse, Forbes Burnham was among them.

Nevertheless, Jagan was undeterred and ideologically consistent. He decided to form a separate union base. But it was a fatal tactic, for subsequently the labor ranks of Guyana were split in two, a division soon emerged in which Burnham and the Afro-Guyanese unions found themselves in opposition to Jagan and his largely Indian-based union efforts. This was the first step in the breakdown of the nationalist cause.

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The schism in the labor movement coincided with the Constitutional crisis of 1953. After only 133 days of PPP rule, the newly won Guyanese constitution was suspended by the British Colonial Office, Jagan and his ministers were given a police escort from Government buildings and a Commission was appointed by HMG to investigate charges that Jagan's government was controlled by communists.

"Her Majesty's Government are quite satisfied that the elected Ministers and their party were completely under the control of a communist clique. From actions and public statements of these extremists it is clear that their objective was to turn British Guiana into a state subordinate to Moscow and a dangerous platform for extending communist influence in the Western Hemisphere."

The immediate cause of the constitutional suspension was the British Government's reaction to PPP legislation. Specifically, PPP proposed four pieces of legislation: (1) the repeal of the Undesirable Publications Bill; (2) the repeal of the Trade Disputes Bill; (3) an amendment to the Rice Farmers Security of Tenure Bill; and (4) the Labor Relations Bill.

These bits of PPP legislation were significant for two reasons: first, they were terribly important to the marxist wing of the PPP for the favorable effect the Jagan government hoped to induce from the ranks of Guyanese workers; second, the legislation represented a form of confrontation politics engineered by the PPP to force the reaction from the Colonial Office and the Governor.

The substance of the legislation, politically and ideologically motivated, was intended: (1) to repeal censorship which had been imposed on PPP publications; (2) to alter an old (1942) piece of legislation which prohibited strike action within certain "essential services"; (3) to provide government with the power to force landlords to make improvements on landholdings or face forfeiture of property; and (4) to empower the Minister of Labor with the right to juridicate labor disputes and election procedures for union representation. All were designed to repair PPP labor relations. Suspension precluded any intended effect.

As for HMG's case, there is little evidence that Jagan's Government was part of a Communist plot to take control of the country and make it a satellite of the Soviet Union. In view of the constitutional checks imposed on the PPP from the start, the fact that the British appointed Governor had veto powers over any PPP legislation, that the PPP was a freely elected government and that significantly the Jagan government had never once violated the country's constitution, it seems that HMG's suspension of its own constitution was an astounding over-reaction.

Brindley Benn, describing the position of the PPP at the time, explained that the aim of the Jagan government was to "use the limited powers provided by the new constitution to enact as many legislative reforms as possible...It would be for the judgement of the people if the Governor constantly vetoed legislation proposed by the PPP...if nothing else it would show that the government was not free to enact the sorts of reforms the country needed."

Nevertheless, the suspension of the 1953 Constitution and the expulsion of the Jagan government achieved results from HMG's point of view. Whereas the



West Indian leaders (from left) Dr. Cheddi Jagan (Guyana), Sir Alexander Bustamante (Jamaica), Mr. Errol Barrow (Barbados), and Dr. Eric Williams (Trinidad and Tobago) meet in Jamaica in 1964. (Courtesy of Jamaican Information Service).



intervention of American labor had split the local labor unions along ideological and racial lines, the British-inspired constitutional crisis further ruptured the nationalist movement by driving a wedge between the marxist and non-marxist wings of the PPP. The marxists were blamed by the non-marxists for trying to "move too quickly" and for causing the British intervention. The marxists, on the other hand, began to view the non-marxists as traitors to the movement for "playing the British game."

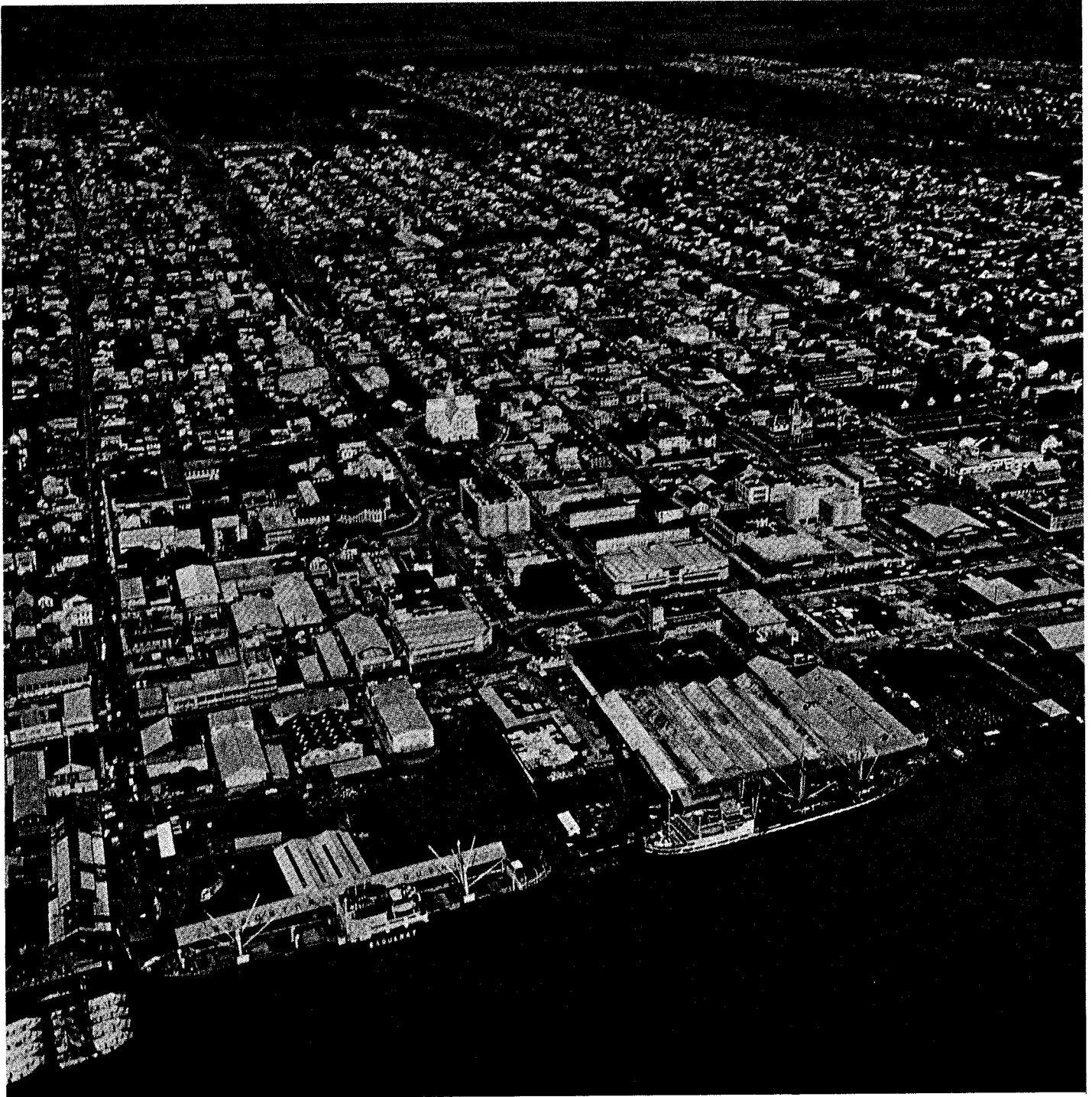
It is enlightening, for example, to explore the actions and attitudes of the British government in regard to the two wings of the PPP. In HMG's Robertson Commission report, Jagan and his wife Janet "unreservedly accept the classical communist doctrines of Marx and Lenin" while Forbes Burnham is merely "a socialist". Further, Cheddi Jagan was restricted to Georgetown and subsequently imprisoned for six months when he left the capital. Janet Jagan was given four three-month sentences for holding a meeting, for demonstrating and for passing out subversive literature. Sidney King, also a marxist, was imprisoned along with several other members of the marxist wing when he held a meeting. The non-marxists, on the contrary, were not given restrictions. None of them protested and none of them were arrested. The consequential mistrust between the two groups was inevitable.

For the Jaganites, Burnham was faulted for having taken his union, the B.G.L.U., into the ICFTU and for not supporting the more radical programmes the PPP had attempted to legislate. From Burnham's perspective, the marxist doctrine (even Jagan's flexible variety) was not entirely applicable to the Guyanese situation. Burnham did not accept the credo that Guyana was part of a world-wide movement of colonial peoples in opposition to "imperialist powers". He felt that it was more productive to remain within the Commonwealth and even maintain friendly relations with the United States. Jagan was an undoctinaire revolutionary; Burnham was a conventional evolutionist.

The Jagan-Burnham split finally became official in 1955. It was a result of all that had gone before and represented the final cleavage between the marxist and non-marxist within the PPP leadership. It was also the ultimate breakdown of the leftist nationalist movement; thereafter sectional politics, ethnic politics plagued the country.

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From the point of Burnham's departure from the PPP to the present, events in Guyana have followed the inevitable pattern politicized racism and local ideological battles create. Further splits occurred within the PPE. Among the former PAC members, Sidney King left Jagan to become an independent and eventually joined Burnham's new party, the People's National Congress. King became disgruntled with Jagan's political dependency upon the East Indian, thought that the PPE was becoming a racially defined party and as an Afro-Guyanese decided that his value had been subverted. King later formed his own Afro-Guyanese society, ASCRIA (African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa), which advocated cultural revolution among Guyanese of African descent.



A View of Georgetown

Today King is now Esui Kwayana since he changed his name and adopted the African equivalent of "Black Man of Guyana." Kwayana's newest task is as head of the Government's Marketing Corporation, a public company which buys and sells Guyanese agricultural produce. Between ASCRIA and the Marketing Corporation, Kwayana is a very busy man. He still finds time, however, to present his views in the PNC news sheet, a party organ. Kwayana writes under the nom-de-plume Michael.

This quiet, even ascetic looking man of many names is a powerful force among Guyanese black people. His work in the co-operative movement and his proximity to Forbes Burnham make him a feared man among his former Indian friends in the PPP. The deputy chairman of the party, in responding to the problems race has created in Guyana, noted that if Kwayana were to become the Prime Minister there would surely be race war. "He's a black fascist" was the description the worried Indian offered.

Another powerful PPP defector was Brindley Benn who left Jagan because of ideological grounds (though he too, as an Afro-Guyanese, says the PPP is an East Indian party). Benn is now chairman of a radical Maoist organization called the Working People's Vanguard Party which was founded on the first of January, this year.

In addition to splits within the PPP, the Guyana electorate itself divided politically along racial lines. Racial politics pitting East Indian against Afro-Guyanese became the central fact in all future national elections. The PPP supported by the East Indians and the PNC by Afro-Guyanese contested elections in 1961, 1965, and 1968. In each national contest, the two parties polled electoral majorities in proportion to the ethnic vote in each constituency.

The trade movement remained fragmented. Jagan-supported unions, particularly in sugar industry, have remained unrecognized by the TUC, while the council itself has come under the control of Afro-Guyanese who support the PNC.

Constitutional development came in spurts. The British Government held constitutional conferences in 1957, 1962, 1963 and 1965. Throughout, there were protests, boycotts and demonstrations by the PPP which was opposed to the procedures HMG initiated in national elections. Particularly hard to take was the imposition, with United States backing, of a system of proportional representation which denied the PPP assured majorities in Parliament.

Race riots became part of the political strategy of both parties. In February 1962, a series of strikes (in part financed by the United States Government through the Public Services International which then channeled funds to local unions) lasted eighty days. Finally a Burnham-led demonstration of 60,000, mainly Afro-Guyanese marchers, evolved into a week-long riot in which almost every East Indian shop in Georgetown was burned, many people were killed and the economy became chaotic. In December 1964, Jagan-led strikes directed at the Afro-Guyanese and the sugar industry resulted in more than 200 deaths and thousands of acres of sugar burned.

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These events nevertheless finally culminated in Guyanese Independence in May of 1966. As a sign of the times, there were nine members of the PPP in jail for their part in previous demonstrations. In 1966, however, it was not Cheddi Jagan who became head of the newly independent state. The Prime Minister and leader of a coalition government dominated by the People's National Congress was Forbes Sampson Burnham.

After exiting from the PPP, Burnham began organizing an opposition party by utilizing his Afro-Guyanese base. In the elections of 1964, with British troops keeping order, the PPP received 45.8 percent of the total vote. Burnham's party, the PNC, polled second with 40.5 percent of the total vote. But there was a third party, led by a right-wing, anti-communist Portuguese businessman, Peter D'Aguiar. D'Aguiar's party, the United Force, drew 12.4 percent of the vote. Since the new electoral procedures imposed by the British (proportional representation) called for a coalition form of government, Jagan's PPP was not allowed to govern. Instead, Burnham and Peter D'Aguiar formed a coalition in which their two parties took control of the government. Burnham became Premier and then Prime Minister when independence came in 1966.

Today, Forbes Burnham works hard, sleeps little (an average of four hours a night) and reads "copiously." For fun, he rides horses and swims. A big man, well over six feet tall, the Prime Minister must still watch his weight. He maintains a rigid diet which keeps his weight just under the 240 pound mark. He drinks goat's milk for lunch--and once in a while "for energy" perhaps a cup of coffee with a swirl of honey added. Soul music is one of Burnham's favorite forms of music and some of his friends say that he rates as "a pretty fair dancer." In sum, at 46, Forbes Sampson Burnham is today a very swinging Prime Minister.

But the first thing one remarks about Burnham's Guyana is not the fact that it "swings." In fact it doesn't swing at all--least of all for the East Indian sector of the population who feel they've been shut out by "Burnham's Afro-Guyanese government." The validity of the East Indian attitude has some foundation. Perhaps the best example of this was Burnham's method in which he won the last national elections in December, 1968.

The background to the elections was the breakdown of the Burnham-D'Aguiar coalition, D'Aguiar having become disenchanted with Burnham's rule. Specifically, D'Aguiar charged Burnham "with unconstitutional actions and electoral corruption." Consequently, the PNC would have to go it alone and win an outright majority in the forthcoming elections. The key to a winning majority was in the overseas ballot, particularly Guyanese living in Great Britain.

The overseas ballot constituted a significant number of Guyanese (18 percent of registered voters) who had emigrated for employment. Most of the emigres were Afro-Guyanese who could be counted on to vote for the PNC. Burnham rushed a bill through the Legislature validating overseas voting for the first time in Guyanese history. A national registry of Guyanese in Great Britain was compiled under the auspices of Mr. Patrick Thierens, the First Secretary of the Guyana High Commission. The register contained 43,000 names--twice the figure of Guyanese registered with the British Government. The list also included fictitious names, non-existent addresses and addresses of homes which were derelict or demolished.



Forbes Burnham swinging with the Mighty Sparrow during Trinidad's Carnival 1969

The method for casting the absentee ballot was the linchpin in the operation "postal votes can be cast by the voter, or the ballot attendant or the returning

**EVIDENCE OF OPINION RESEARCH CENTRE**

Sample of 1,000 names and addresses from the official preliminary registration list, compiled by agents appointed by the Guyana High Commission. (The sampling error using this systematic probability method is unlikely to exceed 3%.)

ERRORS	%	QUERIES	%
Not known at the address	41	Not in after four calls	2
Addresses non-existent	25	Not resident in October, but possibly resident at June 30	12
Persons resident, but below voting age	1	Correct entries	15
Not Guyanese	5	According to this survey, not more than 10,000 people on the British electoral roll were genuine eligible voters.	
<b>TOTAL ERROR</b>	<b>72</b>		

officer." Consequently, when an unopened ballot was returned to the returning officer, "address unknown", the vote could be cast as he saw fit.

Learning of the manipulations in London, Peter D'Aguiar left Guyana and went to Britain to investigate the charges himself. He hired a group of professional pollsters, Opinion Research Center, and requested that they poll the register's list. The Center found that from a sample of 1,000 names provided by the High Commission in London, total error was 72 percent. Only 15 percent were confirmed as correct. D'Aguiar went back to Guyana, protested the eventual outcome of the election and then retired from politics. Today he is acting "Patron of the U.F.", having been replaced by Marcellus Feilden Singh. (Singh is a conservative East Indian lawyer). Discussing the reasons why he had formed a coalition with Burnham's PNC, D'Aguiar said: "At the time, I thought anything was better than Communism. Well, maybe it isn't."

**EVIDENCE OF GRANADA TELEVISION**

Sample, organised by "World in Action," of names and addresses from the official preliminary registration list.

LONDON		MANCHESTER	
Sample of 551.		Sample of 346.	
Not known at the address	222	Not known at the address	124
Houses demolished, boarded up or empty	75	Houses demolished, boarded up or empty	165
Addresses non-existent	56	Addresses non-existent	19
Not in after three calls	24	Not in after three calls	5
Not Guyanese	17	Not Guyanese	14
Guyanese	117	Guyanese	19

At the same time, a Granada television team (Granada television is now banned from

Guyana) made an exhaustive study of the registration list and found devastating evidence of inaccuracy. In Wolverhampton, England, they found that the registration agent had only 41 Guyanese in his district. The official list showed more than 220 names eligible to vote. (The registration official was unable to explain the differences). In London, the team found that there were many non-existent addresses given on the list and that of 173 addresses given, 120 had no one of Guyanese nationality living there. At the same time, Granada television found that many PPP members complained that they had never even received a voting form.

Following the election results, in which the PNC won a majority of 29 out of 53 seats in the Legislature (PPP won 20 seats and the UF only 4), Cheddi Jagan insisted that not only was there overseas manipulation of the voting lists but that "fraud was the order of the day in Guyana" as well. The Jagans point to the inflated voter lists in Burnham areas, the omission of voters in Jagan areas, the abusive use of a proxy system in which one voter could cast as many as three votes for other individuals, and finally the old standby--tampering with the ballot boxes.

So outraged were Jagan's supporters that many observers thought that riots were sure to follow. Jagan himself swore "to bring the government down." But for a man who is alleged to be a "hard-core Communist", Jagan held off his supporters, forbade violence and grudgingly accepted the electoral consequences of Burnham's victory.

So with five more years of power, Forbes Burnham began to put his own style of governing to work. For starters he announced that Guyana would become a "Co-operative Republic" in 1970. Explaining his Government's reasons for the proposed changes in Guyana's relationship to the British Crown, Burnham said that

"What we want to do here is to remove the psychological barrier which in many cases has inhibited the thinking of many Guyanese. It is a matter of mental and intellectual emancipation."

Republic Day is set for February 23, 1970, the 200th anniversary of a slave rebellion against Dutch planters. The leader of that historical rebellion, Cuffy, will be the "first national hero" of the Republic. At the same time all of the paintings of members of the Royal Family, both dead and alive, will be removed from the Parliament and kept in a special place in the Guyana museum. Burnham noted that this is going to be done so as to remind Guyanese "of a past to which we will never return." Guyana, the Prime Minister explained, "would become a Republic along the lines of India and would remain in the Commonwealth. It will also have a non-executive President who will be elected by Parliament every six years."

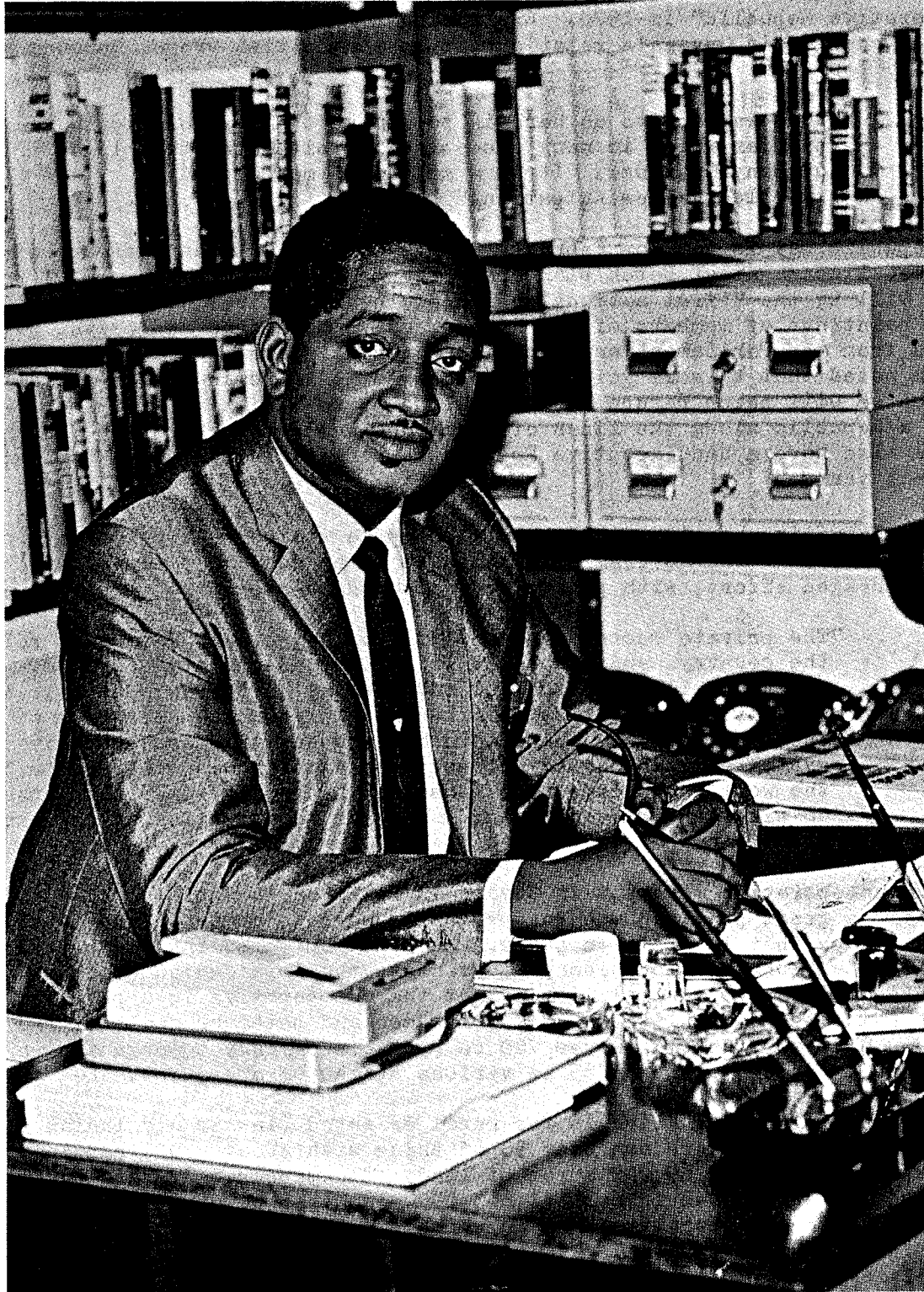
In detailing his ideas, Burnham also spoke at length about his concept of "co-operative". "The Government intends that the economy of Guyana should be a three-pronged effort, with public, private and co-operative sectors":

"The private sector can continue to play a most important role in the country, and I hope it will. The co-operative system, however, will have the fullest backing of the Government. We hope it will mobilise idle human and financial resources of the smaller man. There is a difference in the co-operative system and the forced collectivism existing in other parts of the world. We expect to persuade the people to do what others do elsewhere by compulsion. We have no intention of confiscating private property."

The co-operative movement in Guyana is really a laudable concept. Its potential is great provided the government is serious about it and is willing to actualize much that is still on paper. In some respects, the co-operative is much like the "localisation" ideas Lloyd Best, the Trinidadian economist, has been advocating. The central idea is that the co-operative is a people's movement in which the community organizes, manages and sets the goals of the local company. On paper there are over 700 co-operatives ready to organize in Guyana. Now however, there are about 265 in various stages of operation.

One sort of co-operative is the rural oriented (in largely Indian areas) Land Co-operative. There are over 90 of these with about 7,000 participants administrating roughly 69,000 acres of land. The subscribed share capital of these Land Co-operatives is over \$1,663,000. Another co-operative about to be organized is the Co-operative Bank in which the whole movement will bank its profits and draw its capital.

Apart from the co-operative movement, another favorite Burnham programme is the Interior Development scheme. The Guyanese interior is, as was suggested at the beginning of this report, a natural outlet for the growing population of



Prime Minister Forbes Burnham in his office.



the Caribbean. The Guyana Government "intends to pursue a policy of large scale migration to populate the country's rich interior in order to meet the industrial and agricultural needs of future generations." Apparently it is also as much a political move on Burnham's part as a method for developing the nation. The more West Indians of African extraction who migrate to Guyana, the more votes Burnham's PNC will be assured.

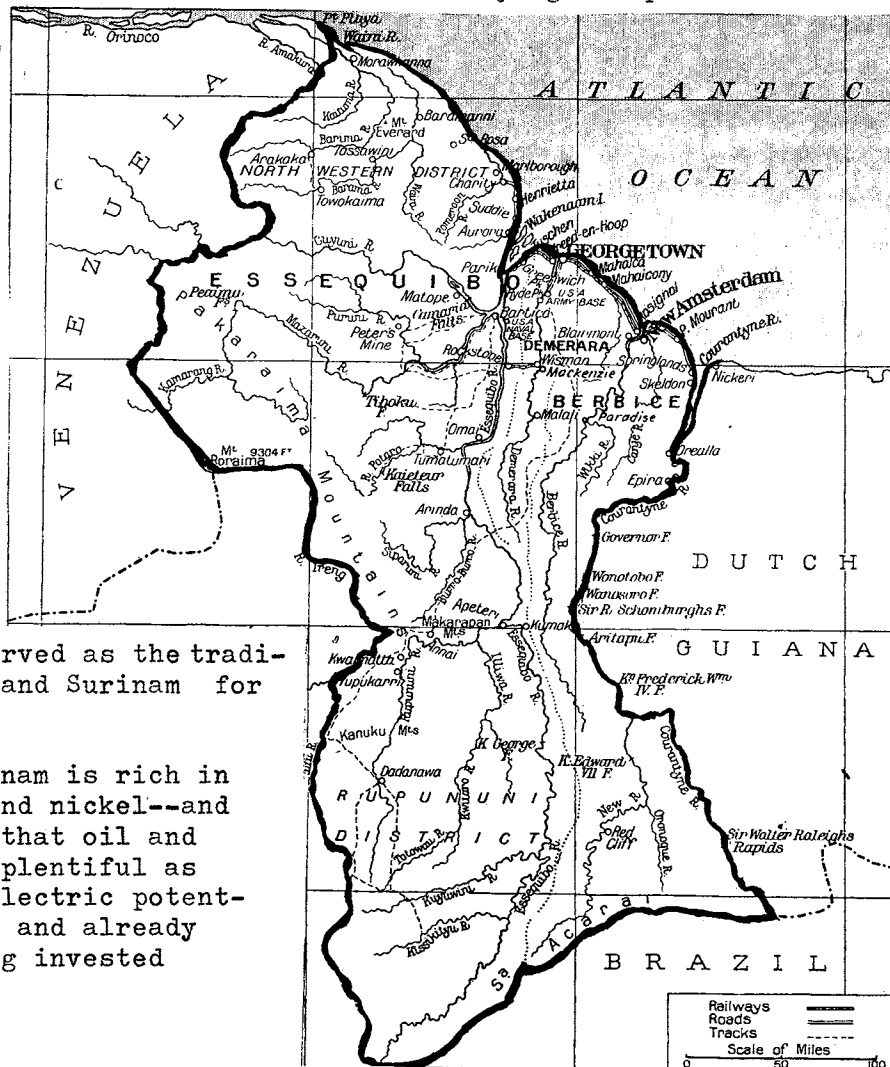
"Go West, Young Man" is the recruiting slogan the Interior Development programme is employing these days. Last week, outside of Parliament, the Prime Minister walked between assembled lines of young recruits who will be moving into the interior within the next month. In military style, Burnham walked among what the Government calls its "young pioneers" and praised them for volunteering to take on the hardships of the jungle and bush. To help open up the Guyanese interior, the United States Government has granted Burnham a five million dollar loan to explore the development of the communications and agricultural projects of the north-west sector.

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In addition to the economic and political motivation behind Burnham's scheme are rival claims to the territory made by Surinam and Venezuela. As Burnham said: "The sight of such rich and fruitful lands lying unexploited tends to excite the avarice of some covetous souls and to encourage the ambition of others." The references are intended for Guyana's nearest neighbors who realize that the undeveloped mineral and agricultural resources of these lands might, if the case were pressed, be theirs.

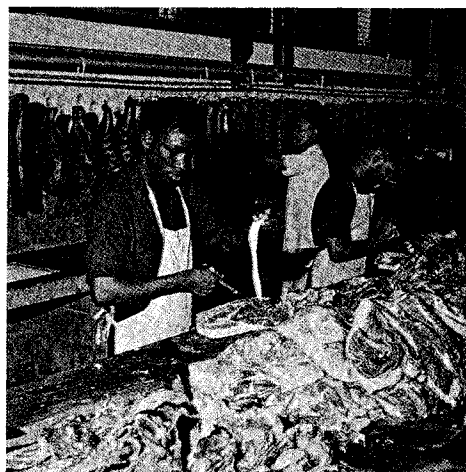
Between the two claimants, over 70 percent of Guyana's national territory is being threatened. Surinam, part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, claims nearly 6,000 square miles of Guyana's eastern boundary. The claim is based on geographical grounds focusing on the Corentyne River, which has served as the traditional border between Guyana and Surinam for 150 years.

The area claimed by Surinam is rich in minerals--bauxite, iron ore and nickel--and nearby there have been signs that oil and radio-active deposits may be plentiful as well. The timber and hydro-electric potential of the area is also great and already Surinam has admitted to having invested





Cane Farmers Co-operative



Guyanese Beef Co-operative



National Consumers Co-operative

roughly 20 million guilders in surveys of the area.

According to tradition, the border between the two countries was settled by two governors of the respective territories in an informal sort of way: over a bottle of gin. It was decided, contrary to established patterns, to make the border the Western Bank of the Corentyne rather than the middle of the river. But the difficulty is not determining the location of "the Western Bank." It is the location of the river itself which is the focus of the dispute. There are two up-stream branches which join the river Corentyne; and until the 1840's it was assumed that the eastern branch of the Kutari river was its real source. However, in 1871 an English explorer discovered a western source, the New river, which was more likely the upper extension of the Corentyne. Surinam thus contends that the land, a triangle, which lies between the New and Kutari rightfully belongs to Surinam.

In early August, the dispute became more than a series of diplomatic exchanges. Guyanese Defence forces came upon a detachment of Surinamese building an armed camp and laying foundations for an airstrip. A small skirmish developed; but the Surinam force (according to Guyanese interpretations) "quickly took to their heels" and fled to the other side of the nearby border. Since this intrusion, the Hague has made diplomatic gestures and suggested that a series of discussions on the border question might be arranged.

The more serious border dispute, however, is the Venezuelan claim to 50,000 square miles of the Essequibo area in Western Guyana. Presently, the dispute is "being negotiated peacefully in an attempt to settle the matter before 1970." Failing this, the issue is to be taken to the International Court of Justice to determine the legal validity of the 1899 Paris Tribunal decision which had originally marked the border.

Venezuela claims that the territory was unjustly awarded to Great Britain because Great Britain and the United States, who were part of the Arbitration Tribunal, were in collusion. Outlining Venezuela's position before the United Nations' General Assembly on October 6, Representative Dr. Andres Aguilar Mawdsley accused Great Britain of having caused the entire dispute.

"In the first place, Great Britain, in the last century, seized one-seventh of the territory of Venezuela. This was so notorious that even the United States intervened in application of the Monroe Doctrine. To avoid a confrontation, an agreement was reached which would enable Great Britain to retain what it had occupied in exchange for a renunciation of further conquests. To seal the agreement, the two Powers conceived of the unpardonable travesty: an arbitration to be carried out by British, Russian and American judges without any from Venezuela. That arbitration was full of flaws and lacking in legality, which made it null and void."

Dr. Mawdsley then warned "those who intend to invest in the territory" that pending a solution of the dispute, Venezuela has "more than a right,

but a duty" to reject the titles and rights that may be acquired under Guyanese law.

"Since we do not have the permissive attitude of Guyana in this regard, we might in the future, when we have restored our territorial integrity, be confronted with unacceptable claims from large international consortiums whose power is inestimable."

Mawdsley then began to counter charges of aggression Guyana's representative had made earlier:

"What then is the purpose of presenting Venezuela as an aggressor? The only explanation we can find is that the Guyana Government is endeavouring to distract its domestic public opinion. We realise that Guyana has serious domestic problems. Racial hostility inherited from colonial policy has become aggravated instead of being resolved and their economic situation is precarious."

In Caracas, the tone was a bit more hawkish. In an article published in Ultimas Noticias, the Government of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham was ironically accused of "giving haven to Castroite guerrillas who are fighting in Venezuela!" The daily explained that

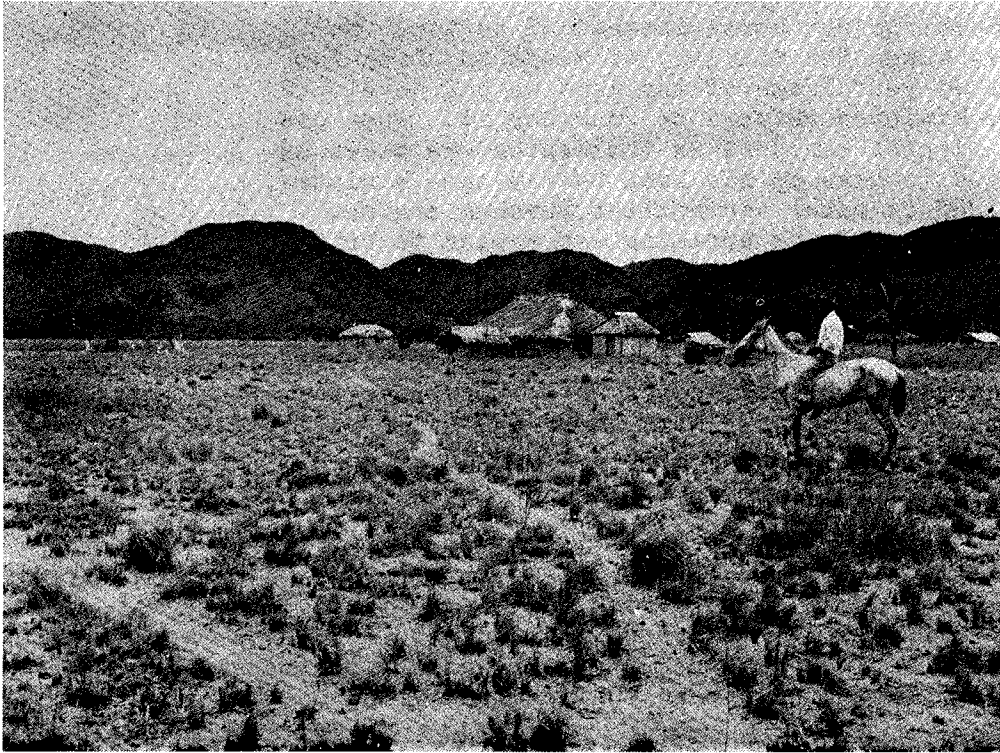
"Guyana in its dispute with Venezuela has given the green light to Castro to use its territory, not only for passing couriers and guerrilla leaders, but for introducing arms into the land of Bolivar."

In the same UN debate, Guyana's Permanent Representative countered with the charge that Venezuela's assertions of peaceful intentions inside the Assembly contradict actions outside the Assembly

"which have caused already to be launched into Guyana insurgents trained and armed in Venezuela, insurgents that country hoped would lead a vast area of Guyana into secession from the central Government... the fact is that these rebels, having fled Guyana, now live in Venezuela in villages especially created for them."

The references the Guyanese Representative made were to leaders of the Rupununi rebellion, an abortive revolt which took place on January 1. The area in which the revolt started, the Rupununi, is a vast ranching area in remote southern Guyana. The settlers there are white immigrants from the United States who had leased the land from the Guyana Government and then over a period of years developed prosperous cattle ranches. Jim Hart, a United States citizen and Korean war veteran, organized the revolt. Now living in Venezuela, Hart explained that the ranchers and some of the local people living in the Rupununi (local population is basically Amerindian) decided to revolt and join their lands to Venezuela.

"Under the colonial regime, we did not manage much progress. But when Guyana became independent from



Scene of the Rupununi Rebellion



**Guyana Coat-of-Arms**

Britain things got worse instead of better. We recently asked the Ministry of Mines and Land for another 25-year lease of the land we had developed but the Minister refused to consider it. When one of the biggest ranchers in the region was given an ultimatum to give up his land by the same Ministry, we decided to rebel against the Burnham regime. Another cause of the uprising was a plan to bring farmers from Barbados and Jamaica to settle in the area, forcing the white settlers out."

However, the revolt failed to elicit the support of the local Amerindian population and once Burnham's Defence force was called out, the situation deteriorated quickly. The rebels, 93 men, women and children, fled to Venezuela. There, Hart promised that he "plans to return to Guyana because we have properties and families there and we will do so either peacefully or fighting, whichever way Burnham wants."

Burnham's Government has, of course, no intention of allowing Hart and his family to return to the Rupununi. The region has been entirely sealed off, so much so that not even a priest from Georgetown could get into the area to visit his congregation. Court actions have been brought against the rebels caught and their properties and cattle have been confiscated by the Government.

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"To think of a West Indian nation is unrealistic. The young are not realistic. A country cannot rest in isolation. The reality of our world is in the context of the cold war. Yes, the Soviet invasion of the Czech people was necessary. Do you want Capitalism to regain a foothold in the middle of Eastern Europe?"

In the small two-storey PPP Headquarters above Georgetown's Michael Forde bookshop, Cheddi Jagan ticked off these pessimistic and bitter thoughts. The man, admirable for his dedication to moral commitments of the past, for his political accomplishments in spite of incredible foreign and domestic pressures, had, it seemed, finally reached the back wall, turned and gone to the Soviet Union for help.

In the spring of 1969, Cheddi Jagan went to Moscow. In a speech before assembled delegates of the conference of International Communist Parties, the leader of the Guyanese Communist party announced that the PPP had formally aligned itself with the Soviet bloc. In the future, Jagan explained, "the PPP will carry out a policy of unity and struggle--struggle against those who vacillate and support imperialism, and unity with those who will fight in defence of democracy, freedom and socialism."

Then Jagan faithfully lined his PPP up in support of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia which he later described as a necessary act against "deviationists from the right." Back in Georgetown, Jagan announced new organizational and

strategic directives, directives which lost him a good deal of support within his own party and in the end discredited him with the radicals throughout the Caribbean. In addition to the Soviet alignment, "the PPP was going to transform itself along scientific Marxist-Leninist lines ... the Office of Leader will be abolished and in its place the top post in the PPP will be that of General Secretary." The "new strategy" Jagan spoke of was more a matter of rhetoric. The PPP from now on "must have its supporters make a qualitative change in their outlook, not only to look at the party as an electioneering device, but to build it as a disciplined, ideologically-sound party for the purpose of waging a many-sided struggle." In coming months, Jagan said, emphasis would be placed on "mass-action and day-to-day struggles."

"The message is clear that there is no electoral road to power so long as the PNC controls the electoral machinery."

Yet in reality, from Moscow Jagan had only brought back a conventional set of ideas hardly suited to Caribbean developments. Instead of focusing his attention and effort toward developing a Caribbean strategy of change, Jagan has committed himself and his PPP to the intellectual and moral dead-end of the "Eastern alternative." Consequently, there can only be more defections from the ranks of the PPP, more ammunition in the Burnham camp for cause to shun the PPP's solutions to Guyanese problems.

In fact, already cracks are beginning to show in the PPP front. One party leader sourly remarked: "You can't change a party by baptizing it." Another strong PPP supporter added: "Jagan is more concerned with his image in the world communist movement than he is with his own people of the West Indies." And yet another PPP leader suggested that racism may play a role in Jagan's policies (a charge many PPP Afro-Guyanese have made). "Jagan has no vision of a united West Indies because perhaps he is blinded by racial fears of a black dominated region."

Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye, former Attorney General under the PPP Government and today a leader of the moderate wing of the PPP, argues with Jagan over the commitment the party should make to the Soviet Union. Ramsahoye represents a wing of the party which considers the enrolment of the PPP in the Soviet bloc as a mistake, offering "small change" in return for a significant loss of autonomy. Ramsahoye's wing of the PPP considers it poor politics to commit the party to the Soviets since the alignment provides Burnham and the United States with an opportunity to use force under the guise of Western Hemisphere security if necessary.

"If the party were to gain political power and the PPP is in the Soviet bloc, the United States would crush us. How? By simply staying silent in the face of injustices --as they do today in Greece--or with Burnham. Today Burnham's party is a minority party governing a majority with American aid. But in 1973 there will be an even greater majority of Indians of voting age. Then things will change. What will the United States do?"

Jagan's economic policies follow the standard marxist strategy for national development. Point number one of his programme called for "Nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy--foreign owned and controlled"

factories, mines, plantations, banks, insurance companies and foreign trade." Ramsahoye, on the other hand, advocates "an active partnership, not nationalization" as the answer to the presence of companies like Bookers. "We must share in the markets, personnel and techniques of the international companies." Depending on how the process of "sharing" is organized, Ramsahoye's position could be more radical (creative) than Jagan's own strategy. The issue would revolve around questions of policy control and different degrees of profit sharing that the national government would exercise.

The PNC, on the otherhand, offers no hope to East Indians as far as Ramsahoye is concerned.

"Burnham has removed all East Indians from posts of importance in Government. He has taken over all public corporations, the police and army, and placed Afro-Guyanese in charge. In other words, in the state machinery, no East Indian has any influence. I think that the Negroes have drunk the goblet of power and now see no necessity to share anything with the East Indians. By falsifying the electoral process and manipulating the state machinery, Burnham has used so-called democratic means to subordinate the East Indian people. But perhaps he has laid the framework for his own end by manipulating since he has forced us, the East Indians, to seek other means to defeat him. He will therefore become more and more repressive and then democratic processes--even their pretexts--will be totally abandoned."

These words had hardly been spoken when a week later, Dr. Jagan and several of the PEP leadership were injured by a gang of men who tried to break up a party rally. The rally had been called to protest a ban imposed on a Guyanese lecturer by the Jamaican Government. The men first threw stones at the speaker Jagan, then several others grabbed the microphone and struck the speaker in the chest. Jagan was taken to a hospital and the men ran through the back of the meeting and vanished. Eblice were unable to do anything about the incident and the next day admitted that they had no idea who the men had been.

"The police failed to act and as a result people were beaten," Jagan said after the incident. "What my party will do about such action cannot now be discussed." Another participant, an Afro-Guyanese professor at Guyana University, remarked that "it is obvious that a band of thugs was organised to disrupt the meeting--no wonder that many of our colleagues find it easier to exist in imperialist lands."

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Marcellus Feilden Singh (U.P.)



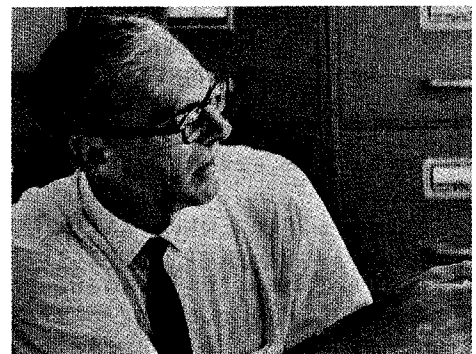
Dr. Cheddi Jagan (PPP)



Prime Minister Forbes Burnham



Dr. Eenton Ramshoye (PPP)



Mr. Peter D'Aguiar (U.P.)

Jagan's problems come not only from the right in the form of Burnham's PNC (or closer to home with Ramsahoye in the PPP), but from the left as well. Brindley Benn broke from the PPP to form a new political party, the Working People's Vanguard Party because he questioned Jagan's brand of marxism. "Dr. Jagan owes it to the Guyanese people to retrace his steps and to forsake the ways of opportunism and revisionism."

Benn operates out of a small room above a barber-shop in Georgetown. Married with seven children, he was a school teacher and a choir director before committing himself full-time to the Working People's Vanguard Party. Founded in January, 1969, the composition of party membership is kept to Benn himself. ("It is not necessary nor prudent to divulge our numbers.") But Benn is clear on his position regarding Burnham and Jagan:

"Burnham is a peddler of United States imperialism. There are U.S. advisors on the Police Force, on the Defence Force and AID is what keeps him in his place. The PPP is as racist as the PNC and a revisionist party unable to unite the workers in a socialist cause. Both parties are impediments to racial and political unity in the country."

Benn is opposed to elections. Here he and Jagan are at odds. "The biggest fraud ever perpetuated on the laboring masses is to instill in them the belief that they can wield political power through the vote." Benn thinks that the lessons of last year's elections have made this clear enough. But still, he says, some of the leaders have not grasped this fact. Another thing which divides Benn and Jagan is the allegiance Benn has for Mao-Tse-Tung. Benn views Jagan as a revisionist, a man "untutored in the history, theory and practical applications of marxist principles." Benn regards the Soviet Union as a class dominated society where differences such as Czechoslovakian "liberalisation" and the consequent Soviet invasion can occur. In China, Benn applauds the effort of the cultural revolution to eliminate any form of class. In sum, Benn is purist.

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Apart from the options proposed by the PNC, the PPP, the Working People's Vanguard and the United Force (the Portuguese businessmen's party), there is another group of Guyanese suggesting other alternatives. Instead of relying on American, Soviet or Chinese solutions to Guyanese problems, the small but significant group of journalists, University based students and lecturers are attempting to find national answers to Caribbean problems. Locke and Marx have for too long a time dominated the "action" as far as most of these men are concerned.

These men, exemplified by Maurice Odle in the University or Rickey Singh of the Guyana Graphic accentuate the need for nationalist or Caribbean-wide solutions to Guyanese problems. They represent other like-minded men throughout the region. First of all, they recognise that racism is the greatest danger to Guyana's future. Maurice Odle put it this way:

"Over-riding every other factor, racial divisions are the most dominating fact of Guyanese political

life. Anyone who would like to form a third force to forge a union based on issues rather than race must understand this."

Rickey Singh, a political reporter for the country's daily newspaper, expanded on this by pointing in the direction of racial integration:

"The key issue is to develop a national culture--not simply an Indian culture or a Creole culture--where there is an admixture of the two dominant cultures. From this point, perhaps, a national political movement can take shape. This is the way toward the breakdown of irrelevant ideologies. Meanwhile, the major factor of racial hostility means that our society is not stable, and incidentally will never be stable so long as one large sector of the population is out of power."

As near a policy statement as this type of group can make might well be the remarks Rickey Singh made in the group's monthly publication, The New World:

"After some 16 years of Dr. Jagan and Mr. Burnham, and after three years of independence, Guyana is not just in need of new political leaders. We do not only need a change of leaders who run a party as a sort of personal property or demand a type of loyalty that stultifies creative thinking. There is a need for a programme and a Movement (as distinct from a party) to end the cynicism of our leaders and the pessimism and cultural frustration of their followers."

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As Guyana proclaims itself a Co-operative Republic (the co-operative has its ironic overtones) within four months' time, the people of that country will look back on four years of independence. And before that, of the late forties and early fifties, some will reflect on what could have been a fine nationalist cause. But then there was the cold war and racial divisions which together smashed that hopeful cause. The sixties came and the violent power struggles of antagonistic political parties vying for the right to preside over burial rites. Then, in the words of one Guyanese, the "leaders ceased to be politicians and became instead tribal mumbo-jumbo men." What Guyana's future will be in the seventies remains in the heartland of its younger people who may have learned enough to avoid the mistakes of the first crop of "nationalists", soon, I think, to be passed by.

Yours,

*Frank Mc Donald*

Frank McDonald

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