

# A Problem for Britain

Cheddi B. Jagan

# GUIANA LEFTISTS SWEEP ELECTION

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of-the-road United Democratic party. The equally middle-of-the-road National Labor front failed to chalk up any victories.

The fourteenth seat, in the remote northwestern district, is expected to go either to the Jagan or Burnham forces. Full returns are not likely to be received here before Thursday.

The leftists' victory came as no surprise in an election characterized by a low turnout of voters. The turnout was estimated at less than 60 per cent of the 212,000 registered.

But it unquestionably loomed as a defeat of Britain's efforts of the last four years to encourage the emergence of the middle-of-the-road parties here and thereby to sap Dr. Jagan's strength.

For Dr. Jagan, a 39-year-old dentist of East Indian descent, the election was a reaffirmation of his popularity despite, or perhaps because of, his ouster from office by a British military force in October, 1953. The charge against him was that he had sought to establish a Communist state in British Guiana.

For six months he had been an effective leader of the Guianese Government after his Progressives had captured eighteen out of the twenty-four seats that were then in contest.

Mr. Burnham won all three Georgetown constituencies, while Dr. Jagan's strength showed in the sugar areas populated by his fellow East Indians.

As soon as complete returns are available, British Guiana's Governor, Sir Patrick Renison, is expected to call in Dr. Jagan and possibly Mr. Burnham as leaders of the largest blocs in the new legislature to discuss the formation of a government.

If Dr. Jagan winds up with eight seats, which would be a majority of the elective seats, the Governor will have little choice but to ask him to form the Government. In that event the Governor will nominate several appointive members for the legislature to give Dr. Jagan a working majority.

Under the constitution now in effect here, the Governor can appoint up to eleven Legislature members, while three others will serve ex officio, representing the colonial Administration.

THE dentist from Northwestern University who has scored a triumph in the elections in British Guiana is a man no official in Britain's Government would call painless.

Dr. Cheddi B. Jagan (pronounced JAY-gan) has received a vote of popular confidence despite his ouster four years ago from the chief minister's post in the Crown Colony on the northern coast of South America. The British had accused him then of having tried to set up a Communist state.

As the election returns were being counted yesterday, showing that Dr. Jagan's extreme left-wing of the People's Progressive party and its call for expulsion of "British imperialism" had wide support, Gov. Sir Patrick Renison conceded that he was "thinking furiously" about what steps to take.

Dr. Jagan, a 39-year-old leader who was born in British Guiana but obtained his advanced education in the United States, is a personable and fiery dentist-politician of East Indian descent. The son of an East Indian foreman on a sugar estate in Port Mourant, in the Eastern Berbice section of the Crown Colony, Dr. Jagan as a boy was not a victim of abject poverty. But he was a resentful observer of it.

### An Engaging Personality

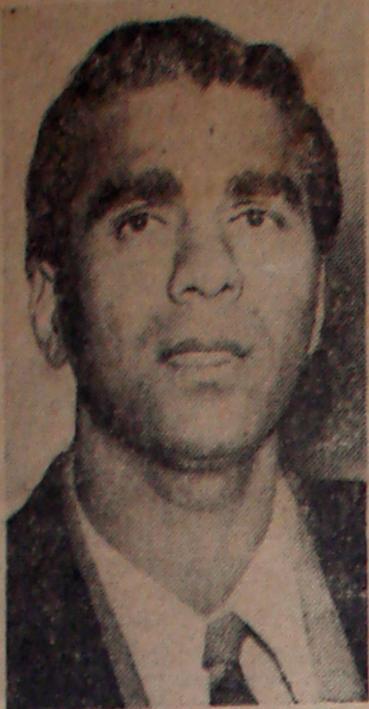
A slight, handsome man with flashing brown eyes and an engaging manner, Dr. Jagan has made himself a champion of Guiana's underprivileged, who make up the vast majority of the Crown Colony's population. The Jagan wing of the People's Progressive party has pressed for independence for British Guiana and betterment of substandard living conditions.

While Dr. Jagan's election success is creating problems for the British, it is also expected to produce problems for him. He has been called a Communist, but, it is noted, his wing of the party can hardly be called communistic. Many who voted for him and his colleagues cast their ballots on other than Marxist grounds.

Observers on the scene say that Dr. Jagan is at the crossroads of a spectacular career, where he must reconcile a requirement for political respectability with the doctrinaire radicalism with which he is identified. Moreover, Britain is committed to a policy of permitting no Communist regime in any of her colonies.

Helped by his father, young Cheddi Jagan went to high school in Georgetown, the colony's capital. Then, unlike most young East Indians of promise, who go to Britain for advanced education, he went to the United States.

He spent some time at How-



The New York Times  
At the crossroads

ard University in Washington, then went to Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., for a degree in dental surgery. In addition, he received a sociology degree from a Young Men's Christian Association college.

It was at Northwestern that Dr. Jagan met Chicago-born Janet Rosenberg, a student nurse at Cook County Hospital and a member of the Young Communist League. They were married, and in 1943 Dr. Jagan returned to British Guiana with his wife.

Mrs. Jagan, also something of an irritant to the British, made an early debut in British Guiana politics when, in 1945, she formed the Women's Political and Economic Organization. With her husband, she was one of the founders in 1953 of the People's Progressive party and has served as its executive secretary.

### Noted as a Dentist

Dr. Jagan established his dental practice in Georgetown, and still maintains it. He is considered the best dentist in town. But from the first days of the practice, he devoted considerable time away from the office to political affairs. He served for a while as treasurer of the British Guiana League of Colored Peoples and was president of a saw mill workers union.

In 1947 Dr. Jagan was elected to the colony's Legislative Council. In 1953, he was re-elected and carried with him his wife and sixteen colleagues to capture eighteen out of the total of twenty-four council seats.

He became legislative leader and Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Mines while several of his colleagues received other ministerial posts.

Dr. Jagan was, in effect, chief of the Government when he launched a program of reform that a British White Book later described as an attempt to organize a Communist state in British Guiana. Within six months he was ousted, and from that moment Dr. Jagan and his wife prepared for the comeback they now have made.

The Jagans have two children. They live in a small house in Georgetown, where Dr. Jagan has been kept under some restriction by the British.

# SAFEGUARDS IN BRITISH GUIANA ELECTIONS

## POLLING ON MONDAY

From R. H. C. STEED,  
Daily Telegraph Commonwealth  
Affairs Correspondent  
GEORGETOWN, British Guiana,  
Thursday.

General elections are to be held in British Guiana on Monday to enable a cautious resumption of the progress towards self-government that was blocked by the Communist electoral victory in 1953. Those were the first universal suffrage elections.

It was then that the People's Progressive party, led by a dentist, Dr. Jagan, his American wife Janet and Mr. Burnham, won 18 out of 24 seats. They tried to establish a totalitarian Communist type of Government.

After six chaotic months Britain suspended the new and extremely liberal Waddington constitution and vested the Governor with full powers. Monday's elections will be held under an interim constitution with many safeguards.

### JAGANS TO STAND

Fourteen members of the new House of Assembly will be elected. Three will be Government officials and up to 11 will be appointed by the Governor. Dr. and Mrs. Jagan are standing again and may well be returned at the head of the largest party group.

But splits and squabbles in their party may prevent a repetition of the 1953 walk-over. Two years ago Mr. Burnham broke with the Jagans and now leads his own wing of the party with a non-Marxist programme.

There is reason to believe that wide sections of the electorate are no longer in the irresponsible mood of 1953. One reason is that they have seen that defiance of Britain resulted in a set-back in progress towards self-government.

In addition a considerable impression has been made by the economic development programme under which about £20 million, nearly all British gifts or loans, is being spent in six years. It is a considerable figure for a country of 500,000 people.

beaten by Mr. Burnham, stressed, however, that the low poll also was due to confusion among voters.

The electoral roll was based on the list compiled in 1953, and many persons had moved from the district. Added to this polling stations had been shifted and voters did not know where to go.

## Man Charged

Arising out of yesterday's elections, a voter appeared in the city magistrates court today charged with trying to vote for a man.

Bail was fixed at \$500 and hearing will take place later this month.

This was the only untoward incident in the election which went off surprisingly quiet and orderly despite the bitter campaigning and racial tension in certain areas.

Originally it was thought that separate ballots would be issued for a referendum on the possibility of British Guiana joining the West Indian Federation. But voters were asked only to choose Legislative Council candidates.

The new constitution provides for 14 elected members, three official members and not more than 11 nominated members.

This empowers the Governor, Sir Patrick Renison, to nominate as many members as may be necessary to counterbalance a clean sweep at the polls by extremist elements.

All parties are pledged to work for the return of liberal constitution lost in 1953 and to seek the investment of foreign capital in the country.

Victory for Dr. Jagan would pose a grave dilemma for the British Colonial authorities. He

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