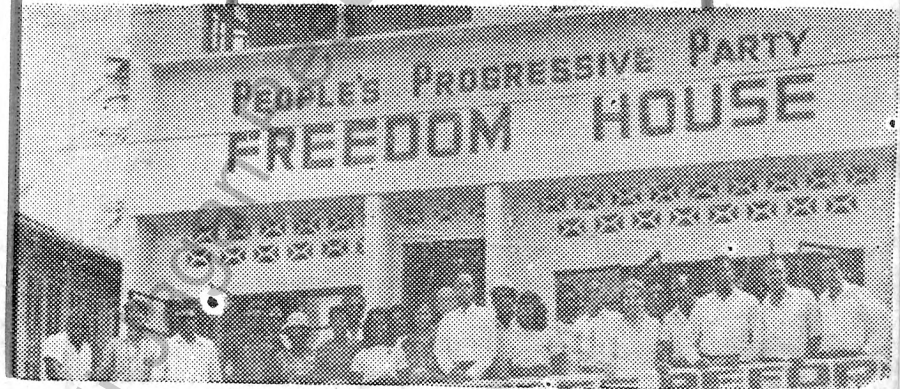


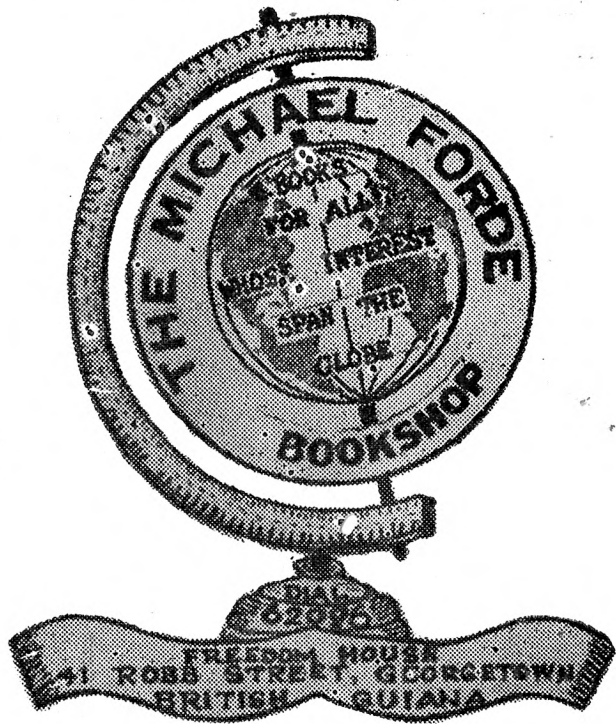
**THE STRUGGLES  
OF THE PPP  
FOR GUYANA'S  
INDEPENDENCE**



**Price 35c.**



*With Foreword by Cheddi Jagan*

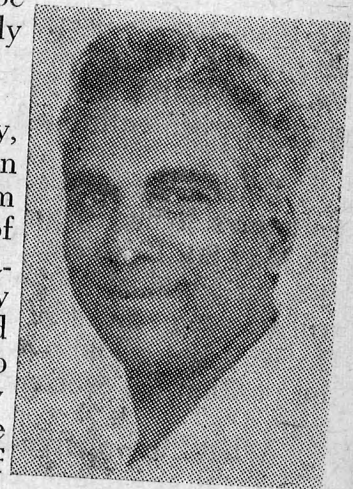


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With the exception of the primitive communal period, man's history has been a history of struggle — a struggle against exploitation, a struggle to be politically and economically free.

Our country's history, though relatively brief, has been a record of transformation from the primitive communal life of the Amerindians to the exploitative system of African slavery and Portuguese, Chinese and East Indian indentureship, to the near feudalism, particularly on the Essequibo Coast, and the capitalist-imperialist system of exploitation of the Guyanese mines and plantations.



**Introduction**  
**by**  
**Dr. Cheddi Jagan,**  
**Leader of the**  
**People's**  
**Progressive**  
**Party**

This exploitation whatever its form was buttressed by foreign political rule and economic domination which subjugated our economy, reduced our country to a status of primary producer and prostituted our culture. It was this system of rule, subjugation and exploitation that the PPP set out to bring to an end.

There are some who today are trying to re-write history to defame the PPP. But our record is clear. Whatever the Uncle Toms may say and whatever the falsifiers of history may write, they will not be able to

erase this record. The PPP stands out then and now as the only truly national liberation movement in Guyana.

Objective analysts have noted that the imperialists and their lackeys were determined that British Guiana should not attain independence under the PPP. By force and fraud, the PPP regime was undermined and puppets were enthroned in positions of authority.

Behind the facade of personal glorification and ostentatious living, there lies stark and naked betrayal. On May 26, 1966, our flag will replace the Union Jack and our National Anthem — Green Land of Guyana — will be sung and played in place of God Save The Queen. But all else will remain the same. Indeed, the position has worsened. ◊

What kind of freedom is this when foreign monopolies who own and control our plantations, mines, banks, insurance, and foreign trade will have their grip on our economy further strengthened? What kind of independence is this when our British overlords will continue to hold the dominant positions in the state machine — Governor General, the Chief of Security, the Chief of the Armed Forces, Chief of Police. What kind of independence is this when our key institutions—the Bank of Guyana and the University of Guyana are headed by sponsors of foreign governments? Where is our independence and neutrality when Guyana has now become a satellite of the U.S.A., when U.S. dictation forces Cuba and the People's Republic of China out of our list of invitees?

In the PNC manifesto (1964) **New Road**, the people were told — "Independence though emotionally satisfying, is not an end in itself. To be worthwhile, it must be an instrument for building a cohesive nation, liberating the people from the economic yoke imposed by the foreigner and establishing a prosperous, self-reliant and free society . . . Some other Guyanese are militant

and noisy in their demand for Independence from Britain, but consciously would immediately pawn Guyana, the moment after Independence, to some other foreign power. Such persons are colonial charlatans or at best, infants, the witting or unwitting tools and agents of new masters. This is the concept of new servitude not Independence."

No. May 26 will not see Guyana really free. We shall have the symbols of independence — our flag, coat-of-arms and national anthem. What we will witness will be the formal ending of colonialism. The trappings of colonialism will go but the substance will remain. We now embark on a new stage of neo-colonialism.

The Guyanese masses are today being made to pay more taxes and are asked to work harder. This they will gladly do. But they have a right to ask — for whose benefit? The 1965 and 1966 budgets have eased the rich, the high and mighty and soaked the poor. At the same time government subsidies to consumers, farmers and small producers have been removed.

The Guyanese people face a dim and hopeless future. They will be squeezed between two growing burdens — on the one hand an expanding bureaucracy and repressive apparatus, and on the other an increasing debt burden. Instead of hope and joy which independence should bring, we now hear about the "costs of independence". No wonder a future is foreseen of more taxes and a cut in social services and living standards already enjoyed.

To our sunshine patriots who today wave flags, but only yesterday were shouting "No Independence Under Jagan", and "No P.R. No Independence", we say: for independence to be meaningful, let there be an end to the Old Order. We must not fetter our political independence with economic chains which can only result in turn in limiting our political freedom.

When in Opposition, Mr. Burnham bravely said in the Legislative Assembly on January 11, 1963:

“If all we are going to do in this country after we have got independence is to pass a few bits of legislation and embark upon a few reforms within the framework of the existing economic and social order, we are wasting our time, and the uneasiness of the masses will certainly catch up with us, and will certainly remove us from the political scene.”

The commanding heights of our economy — sugar plantations, mines, banks, insurance companies and foreign trade — must not be used for enriching foreign monopolists. They must be nationalised and firmly placed in the hands of the government for the benefit of the Guianese people. Rigid exchange control must prevent the outflow of capital abroad. Land must belong to those who till it. There must be complete Guyanization of our services. And an end must be put to rule by emergency and detention. Guyana must be a truly democratic and liberal state.

Cheddi Jagan,  
May 1966.

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"Free the Detainees" demonstrators, being led by Dr. Jagan, proceeding to the Prime Minister's office, Public Buildings, with petitions calling for the release of the detainees on "Detainees" day, 12th May, 1966.

## THE STRUGGLES OF THE PPP FOR GUYANA'S INDEPENDENCE

Freedom and independence are slogans and demands we have all heard during the past decade and a half. When one tries to determine exactly when this began, or more specifically when the movement for independence began, one inevitably begins at the point when the People's Progressive Party was born in 1950.

But the concept of independence does not just spring out full blown at one particular moment. It is born from the ideas, aspirations and struggles of people. Just as the P.P.P. was born out of the necessity of the people to organise into a body expressing their hopes and pursuing their demands, so the concept of independence which was first articulated by the P.P.P. began really at a much earlier period. We may even trace it to the first slave revolt in Berbice when the unchained slaves began to think in terms of living independently and apart from the slave owners and their settled areas. The idea of man's right to be free and to determine the direction of life for all the people collectively must have grown in man's mind during the tense period of slavery when freedom was not just an idea but a physical problem in the truest sense.

During the years of the growing plantocracy, ferment in the sugar estates kept alive the concept of liberty and the frequent eruptions in the plantations were testimony to the striving for an end to oppression. Man has always found chains abhorrent, whether physical, economic, political or social. And that is why people throughout the ages have fought and will continue to fight for freedom.

It appears that the first known open collective advocacy of national independence was uttered in the statement of the "Aims & Programme of the People's

Progressive Party" published in April 1950, just four months after the founding of the P.P.P. In this statement, the P.P.P. declared — "The People's Progressive Party, recognizing that the final abolition of exploitation and oppression, of economic crises and unemployment and war will be achieved only by the socialist re-



Foundation members of the PAC; Messrs H. J. M. Hubbard, Ashton Chase, Mrs, Janet Jagan and Dr. Cheddi Jagan,

organisation of society, pledges itself to the task of winning a free and independent Guiana, of building a just socialist society, in which the industries of the country shall be socially and democratically owned and managed for the common good, a society in which security, plenty, peace and freedom shall be the heritage of all."

Then at the Party's first Congress on April 1, 1951, the first constitution of the P.P.P. was adopted. One of the objects stated in the constitution was "To pursue constantly a goal of national self determination and independence." And later when a preamble was inserted in the Party Constitution it read — "In the firm belief that the people of British Guiana, like peoples everywhere, are entitled to the full enjoyment of all those human rights and fundamental freedoms often proclaimed as the common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations, we, the members of the organisation hereinafter named, have resolved to combine our efforts to achieve the national independence of British Guiana, and to secure for all Guianese social progress and increasingly better standards of life."

Thus it was that the pursuit of independence for British Guiana became a key objective of the newly formed Party. This, in itself, was a great step forward. If we search our historical records, we will not find at an earlier date the concept of national independence uttered clearly in these terms.

In 1926 at a Labour Conference sponsored by the B.G. Labour Union, the first organised trade union in B.G. and the Caribbean, Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow went on record as being in favour of universal adult suffrage. At various times during his long and worthy career, he advocated adult suffrage. This was one of the earliest demands for basic constitutional reforms.

The politicians of the 1920's, J.A. Eleazar, Patrick Dargan, P. N. Browne, A. R. F. Webber, came very close to this, but did not quite enunciate it fully. They

were mainly concerned with what we might term 'national self respect.' In the memorandum of the elected members of the Combined Court submitted to the Wilson-Snell Commission of 1928, this first articulate group of Guianese politicians put their finger right on the basic problem of British Guiana's real dependence and economic enslavement. The members of the Combined Court referring to the control of sugar commented: "They would . . . again consign the Colony's destinies to the keeping of such a plantocracy referred to by them as 'the small but extremely important European class which still controls the principal agricultural and commercial activities of the Colony', a class whose horizon, for reasons stated by the Royal Commission is too frequently bounded by visions of sugar, whose policy is inspired for the most part by sugar, and which still has the 'means of influencing the Government of the different Colonies and putting pressure on the Home Government to secure attention to their views and wishes', save where such control may be modified by effective representation of the proletariat in the Legislature".

Their sagacity was demonstrated again when they referred, in the same memorandum, to the fact that much 'capital' was made of "the fact that the Combined Court imposed an additional duty of 9d. per ton on bauxite. But it must be realised that this product is in the nature of a wasting asset, and revenue once missed is irretrievably lost to the Colony".

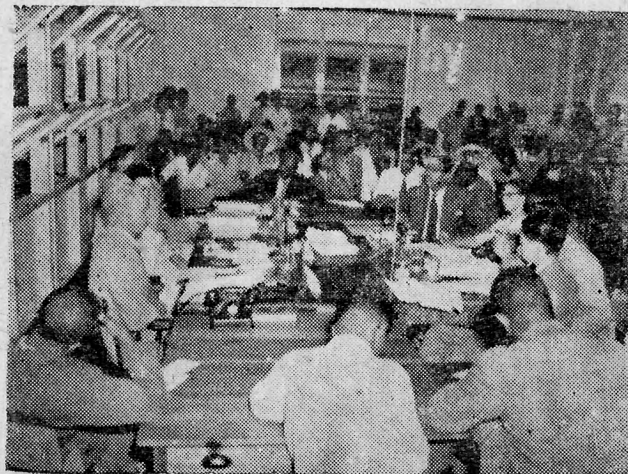
These early rebels against the established order also had fought an unsuccessful battle to bring irrigation schemes to the rural villages whose cultivations had suffered from drought. In fact, these members of the Combined Court had effectively arrived at the root of British Guiana's problem — the subservience of the whole country to sugar (and later bauxite). They fought in their own way against this, but they did not advocate a break with the imperial power. The result was that the plantocracy won; the constitution was suspended

and a new constitution which reduced the power of the electives was introduced.

Much of this was to be repeated in 1953 and even up to recent times when the whole electoral process was changed in order to evict from Government the Party that fought the still reigning plantocracy and other Big Business interests, now recognised as imperialist penetration and domination.

### FORMATION OF PAC

Before the PPP was formed in January 1950, the embryo of what was to emerge began some four years before with the formation of a small group calling itself the POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (P.A.C.) The PAC which issued its first publication on November 6, 1946 stated as its aims — "To assist the growth and development of the Labour and Progressive Movements of British Guiana, to the end of establishing a strong, disciplined and enlightened Party, equipped with the theory of Scientific Socialism." On the mast



*The PPP delegation stating their case for constitutional reform before the Waddington Commission in Queen's College Auditorium in 1951.*

head of this first issue were the names of the members of the Committee — Ashton Chase, Janet Jagan, H.J.M. Hubbard and Cheddi Jagan.

A year later Dr. Jagan, one of its members, was elected to the Legislative Council in an open struggle against one of the leaders of privilege and reaction in British Guiana — John Ignatius DeAguiar. That he was able to win on a restricted franchise was indicative of the force of his arguments and the desire of the electorate for change. With the entrance of Cheddi Jagan to the Legislative Council, a new era began, the era of politics of protest, — the politics of exposure. And it was in the Legislative Council that Cheddi Jagan, later to become the Leader of the People's Progressive Party, began his systematic, heroic and now historical exposures of the ruling group in British Guiana and initiated the organised protests which have ultimately brought about the changes we have observed from that date to the present. For the first time the workers



The PPP legislators proceeding to the House of Assembly. The Party won 18 out of 24 seats in the first elections under adult suffrage held in 1953.

had a voice, and it was an articulate voice which could not be bribed to silence.

A year after the elections came the Enmore massacre, when five sugar workers, striking for union recognition, better working conditions and higher wages were shot dead by the police. This incident brought to the forefront the terrible and unbearable conditions of sugar workers. It exposed their naked exploitation and the resulting Venn Commission which came to investigate eventually led to an improvement in conditions, mainly in the field of housing.

During this period a significant gain was made by the Bauxite workers at McKenzie who went on a two month strike, the main points of protest being the awful conditions of segregation there. The McKenzie Committee of Enquiry reporting in 1947 admitted that social conditions at McKenzie could not promote happy industrial relations and recommended that segregation and illegal searching of workers' homes should end. The strike and enquiry exposed the Jim Crow conditions which existed in the mining area and the first signs of change began out of the workers' protests.

In the Legislative Council during the period 1947 to 1953 the demands for change were quickening. In August 1948, two important motions moved by Theophilus Lee were hotly debated. One called for universal adult suffrage. The other motion said that "the time has arrived for the Constitution of British Guiana to be changed so as to provide for a wholly elected Legislative Council based on universal adult suffrage and the attainment of complete self government in internal affairs within five years."

Speaking on the motion for adult suffrage, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, said . . . "it is of great interest to this Council to take this matter of universal adult suffrage seriously, because it hinges very much on the question of democracy and freedom." Despite the valiant ef-

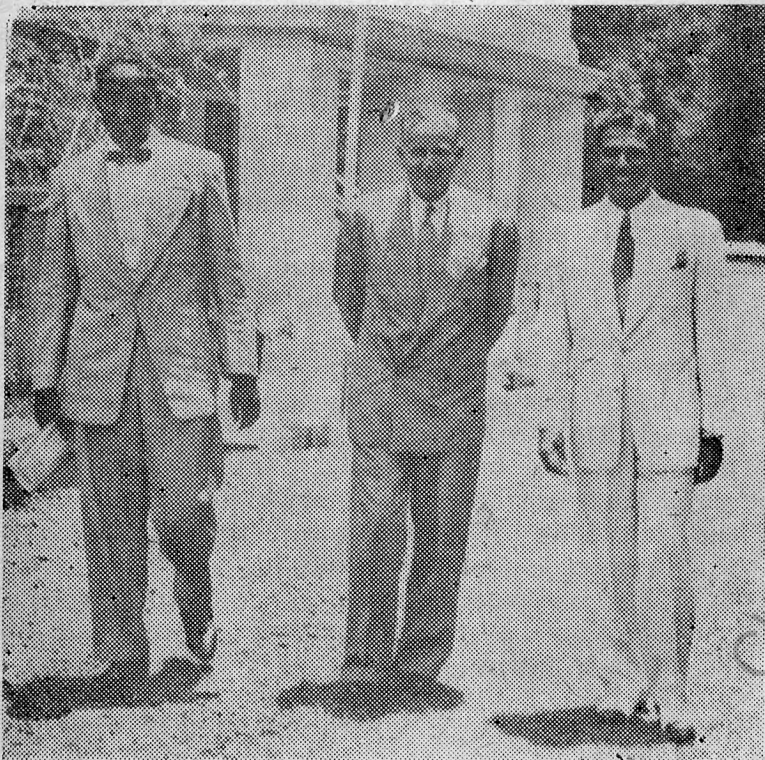


forts of a number of Legislators, the motion was defeated. It is interesting to note that a now leading PNC member and Minister of the Coalition Government was one of those who voted against the motion. The voting was as follows: —

For — Carter, McDoom, Debidin, Lee, Jagan, Coghlan, Dr. Singh.

Against — Gonsalves, Peters, Kendall, Thompson, Roth, Raatgever, Dr. Gonsalves, Dr. Nicholson, Wight.

During the motion calling for a wholly elected



*Sir Alfred Savage, Governor of British Guiana, is seen here chatting with Dr. Cheddi Jagan, leader of the PPP, and Mr. L. F. S. Burnham, on Government House lawn shortly after the PPP election victory in 1953.*

Legislature, the Hansard reports cover one of the earliest debates in which the idea of internal self government was first being discussed. Dr. Jagan went a little further when he said in August 1948: "Nevertheless, the time has come when the people should be given an opportunity of self determination."

#### THE WADDINGTON COMMISSION

In 1950, the Labour Government sent out the Waddington Commission to take evidence and recommend changes in the Constitution, since the growing demands of the people could not be ignored. This came little over a year after the formation of the P.P.P. and its heightening agitation for constitutional reform. The demands for universal adult suffrage and an all elected Legislature were increasing as the Party organisation grew and as the political consciousness of the masses was intensified.

The Commission was made up of Sir J. Waddington, a former Colonial Secretary of British Guiana, Professor V. Harlow and Dr. Rita Hinden of the Fabian Society. When the Commission gave its report it recommended that the limited franchise based on a literacy, property and income test be swept away and that full adult suffrage and a two chamber legislative system be introduced. The House of Assembly, the lower house, was to have 24 elected members together with three ex-officio members. The State Council to be comprised of 9 members — 6 nominated by the Governor directly and 3 others appointed by him on the recommendation of the majority party and minority groups in the House of Assembly. The Executive, the policy making body, was to consist of 10 members with the Governor as chairman, six elected Ministers, three officials and one member selected by the State Council. The 3 officials were to have between them the most important portfolios — foreign and Commonwealth affairs, defence, information and broadcasting, law and order and finance.

The P.P.P. opposed the Waddington Constitution pointing out the limitations imposed by the various checks and balances and stating that these were "fundamentally designed to maintain the status quo, to protect the imperialist interests of the British Government with its need for primary products to meet Britain's dollar deficit and to protect the colony's capitalists and their profits' (Dr. Jagan in 'Forbidden Freedom.')

Speaking on the Constitutional issue in the Legislative Council in 1952, Dr. Jagan raised the question of independence when he said: "We cannot get economic viability until we get political independence."

Replying to the "speech from the throne" Dr. Jagan on June 17, 1953, referring to the Waddington Constitution said:—

"Your Excellency's optimistic views about the new Constitution and in particular the State Council have been remarked. We, however, harbour no illusions about the nominated State Council which can only serve the purpose of curbing the will of the people — a reactionary and undemocratic purpose.



Three PPP leaders, Rory Westmass, Cheddi Jagan and Martin Carter, arrested. Martin Carter and Rory Westmass were previously detained at Atkinson Field.

The presence of three Civil Servants in the House and their control of the three key Ministries in the government and the Governor's veto are an anomaly and contrary to the professed democratic principles of Her Majesty's Government. We shall continue to struggle for a democratic Constitution for British Guiana."

### PPP PARLIAMENTARY VICTORY

In 1953, the first elections under universal adult suffrage were held, five years after the first demand for this in the Legislature. The P.P.P. won a significant victory by gaining 18 out of the 24 elected seats and thus formed a majority in the House of Assembly. But the P.P.P. was in office for only 133 days. In some ways its ousting from office by the suspension of the constitution was a repetition of the suspension of the 1928 constitution. The PPP had trodden too heavily on the toes of the two forces that had wielded power unchallenged in the past — the Church and Big Business (mainly Sugar).

Two issues which apparently infuriated the former ruling clique were (1) the bill to give recognition to the trade union with the majority of members after this was ascertained by a secret poll and (2) the declaration that dual control of schools must go and church domination of the education system must end. These struck at the roots of the privileged. For with the puppet union — the M.P.C.A. — as the only recognised union in the sugar industry, "King Sugar" had easy going.

The M.P.C.A. has never put up a militant struggle for the workers. By refusing to recognise any other general union for the purpose of collective bargaining, and by introducing the check-off for the M.P.C.A. the sugar industry has cleverly maintained its exploitation of labour. With the check-off system, which immediately inflated the number of financial union members, the union maintained its fictitious numerical strength, aided and abetted by the sugar magnates. For it is common

knowledge that workers who attempt to withdraw from the check-off are immediately victimised.

The threat to end the regime of church domination of the educational system brought to the surface all the latent hate of the church for the P.P.P.

The outcome of 1953 and the years of the Police State and the Interim Government of 1953 to 1957 strengthened the resolve of the PPP that the country must be completely free. The British used every means to destroy the P.P.P., from harsh repressive measures to the tactics of destruction from within — division. The techniques of the imperialists and their puppets are almost repeated in the present period. There were divisions within the Party; so called exposes by persons who had once 'believed' and were now 'disillusioned,' there were arbitrary detentions, arrests, imprisonment, victimisation at work, police raids and general intimidation of Party adherents.

An interesting sidelight of the 1953 suspension of the constitution was the team of five who flew to London immediately after the suspension to congratulate the British on their act. The five men were John Fernandes, John Dare (of Fogarty's) Lionel Luckhoo, Rudy Kendall and John Carter. All of the last three named are prominent figures in the present Coalition Government, Messrs. Luckhoo and Carter being Ambassadors to England and USA, while Mr. Kendall who was a Minister of the Interim nominated Government of 1953-57 is now a Minister in the Coalition Government. In 1955, Mr. Burnham referred to the UDP (United Democratic Party) members who "travelled post haste to London to congratulate Lyttleton upon his rape of the rights of the Guianese" as "crawling sycophants."

Encircled by the Police, Dr. Jagan is seen here walking calmly to the Police van, having been arrested for breaking the Restriction Order which confined his activities to Georgetown only, in 1954.





*Picture shows Police lifting a clerical worker bodily from the precincts of Sandbach, Parker and Co., Ltd., on Water Street, during the Clerical Workers strike for a bigger Xmas Bonus in December 1965.*

## THE SPLIT

The split in the PPP in 1955 was of major importance. It broke the solidarity of the workers, reduced the mass support of the PPP and led to many of the problems that were to crop up in the years that followed.

Certain significant events led up to the split, the major one being opportunism. This was brought out to the surface because of promises put forward by the Robertson Commission, mainly in these statements — “We are therefore driven to the conclusion that so long as the PPP retains its present leadership and policies there is no way in which any real measure of responsible government can be restored without the certainty that the country will again be subjected to constitutional crisis” and “We would hope that in the period (of marking time) plans for social and economic development would be energetically pursued and that the gradual improvement of social and economic conditions would help to bring about a change in the political outlook of the electorate.” But more effective was the promise that if the so called extremists were thrown out of the leadership of the P.P.P., then all would be well — “We cannot estimate the length of the period which should elapse before the advance towards self government is resumed. Everything will depend upon the extent to which the people of British Guiana, including the leaders of the PPP themselves, can be brought to the realisation that the futile and deliberately disruptive policies for which the PPP at present stands are no basis for the future constitutional progress of their country . . . the extremists leaders of the PPP and the policies for which they stand are the sole barriers to constitutional progress.”

This was followed by an open appeal from Dr. Soper, the English churchman who came to B.G. and who said quite clearly that Burnham should take over the leadership of the PPP and oust the left-wingers.

The finishing touches were made by R. B. O. Hart who was later employed as Editor of “Bookers News.” Hart said that the PPP must have a majority of “sober men” on its Executive.

The bait was put on the hook and Burnham bit it. Having failed in an effort to seize the leadership and control of the PPP in 1955, he and his group then set up a separate party, calling itself the PPP. They continued to call their party the P P P. until their defeat at the 1957 elections, at which time the breakaway party became the People’s National Congress.

Burnham’s opportunism during this period was noted in a pungent remark by Patrick Gordon Walker who visited British Guiana as Labour MP in a parliamentary delegation. He said: “his whole political approach is opportunistic and . . . he will tack and turn as advantage seems to dictate.”

With the split still relatively fresh, key PPP leaders under restriction orders, the national bribery institu-



A section of the freedom marchers with placards expressing their desire for independence in 1962.

ted by the Interim Government in full swing, it was felt that the PPP was finished as a political force. Thus in 1957 it was announced that elections would be held under the Renison Constitution.

A new party called the National Labour Front led by Lionel Luckhoo had been specially groomed for these elections. Its counterpart today is the United Force. Then, as now, it represented the privileged and Big Business community

### 1957 ELECTIONS

In spite of electoral manipulations which were to become a regular feature at future elections, the PPP won a majority of 9 seats at the 1957 general election. The Burnham party won 3 seats, the new NLF 1 seat and the dying UDP won 1 seat. The United Democratic Party led by Messrs. Carter and Kendall joined with Burnham's Party soon after the elections.

Gerrymandering at the 1957 elections was clearly demonstrated when the returns came in. PPP leader Dr. Jagan won more votes for his one Corentyne constituency than did the five non-PPP members who gained seats.

In June 1958, in a debate on Jainarine Singh's motion, which, amended by Dr. Jagan, called for independence, the Legislative Council gave unanimous approval. Speaking on this motion Dr. Jagan said — "What do the people of this country want at this phase of its history? I think that we as a people want no more and no less than the people in other countries. And if it is the birthright of peoples to be free, then it seems to me it is also the right of this colony's people to be entirely free."

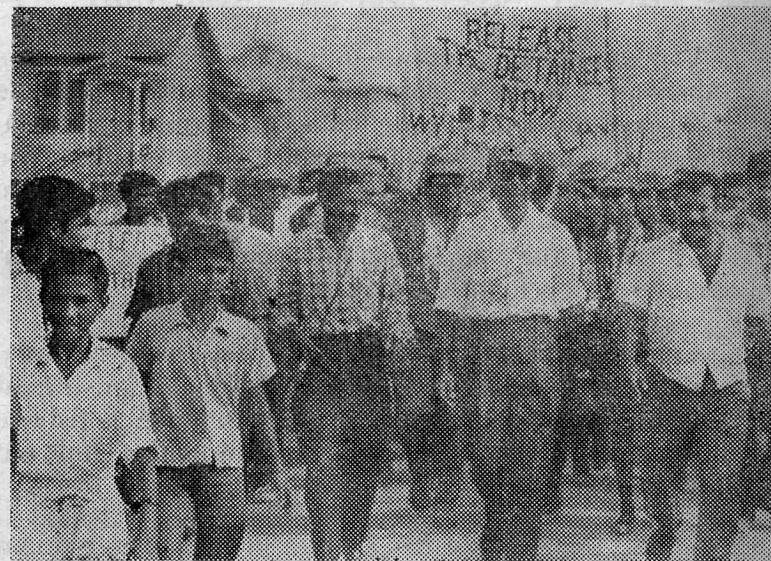
The unanimity on the independence issue was to be of short duration, for during discussions in the Constitutional Committee, Mr. Burnham, in what was to

be a characteristic attitude, completely changed his position.

In 1958 a Constitutional Committee made up of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council met for several months and in 1959 submitted a report. An examination of the report reveals that on the most important item, independence, there was no longer unanimity. Voting on Independence was as follows: —

FOR INDEPENDENCE — Cheddi Jagan, Ram Karran, B.H. Benn, E. Beharry, Janet Jagan, S.M. Saffee, Ajodha Singh, M. Fredericks, H.J.M. Hubbard, R.B. Gajraj, J.N. Singh.

Against Independence — L.F.S. Burnham, R. Kendall, A. Jackson, S. Campbell, R. Tello.



The 1965 Freedom March, called for the release of those in detention.

Also of great significance, was the fact that in this Constitutional Committee proportional representation was first raised by a nominated member, Mr. A. Tasker, a Director of Booker McConnell & Co., (the largest British investment in B.G. and owners of almost all the sugar plantations). Mr. Tasker's initiative was given vigorous support by Mr. Burnham. When the vote was taken all members except Messrs Tasker, Burnham and Jackson voted for the retention of the first-past-the-post electoral system.

Mr. Burnham at one time said that "The inalienable right to be free and to rule one's country cannot be the subject of a grant but the reward of an uncompromising struggle." (Oct. 1955.) From the records, it appears that Mr. Burnham was engaged in an uncompromising struggle against independence as his later efforts to hold back a date for independence proved.

#### PHONEY "CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY"

To counter the recommendations for independence in the report of the Constitutional Committee and the Legislative motion of June 1958 the People's National Congress set up a phoney "Constituent Assembly." The major recommendation of this bogus committee was to state that it found "no widespread or significant demand among the people for immediate or separate independence for British Guiana."

Thus the voting of the P.N.C. leadership on independence and the efforts by the P.N.C. "Constituent Assembly" to declare against independence illustrate conclusively where the P.N.C. stood on this vital national issue.

The P.N.C. made its position even more evident at the 1960 London Constitutional Conference when it issued a minority report recommending internal self government, not independence, "so that the door may



PPP supporters cheered wildly as the results of the 1961 elections showed that the PPP had won 20 out of 35 seats in the House of Assembly.

Cheddi Jagan Research Centre

be left open for joining the Federation.” At this Conference in which the P.P.P. outlined its case for immediate independence, the P.N.C. used its report of the “Constituent Assembly” that there was no demand for independence in order to give the Colonial Office the opportunity it wanted to delay independence. In his usual double-talk, Mr. Burnham said that the minimum he expected was internal self government and the acceptance of the principle of independence. However, during the course of the private discussions, Mr. Burnham’s minimum demand became his maximum.

In a pamphlet entitled “The Battle for Independence in Guiana” published in 1961, this position was commented upon – “Mr. Burnham’s attitude which was fully expressed in the Constitutional Committee and the report of the “Constituent Assembly” was carried by him and his colleague, Mr. Rudy Kendall to the London Conference, of which they formed a part of the delegation. This was made full use of by the Colonial Office which then had good grounds not to entertain the “independence now” stand of the PPP delegates. Colonialism has always been nourished by stooge leaders.”

The result was a delay in the independence issue by the British Government which again felt that the P.P.P. would lose in the next elections. In fact, their plans were so well laid that they were certain that this time they could not lose. The best job of gerrymandering of seats by Britain was prepared for the 1961 elections. In the report of the 1960 Conference they glibly promised – “. . . That when another conference between Her Majesty’s Government and a delegation from British Guiana was held, there should be no question of substance for discussion save that of independence, the principle of which has been accepted in the terms of the formula set out in paragraph 12.” This formula provided that the Colonial Office would open discussions for independence after the introduction of the 1961 Constitution provided the Legis.





lative Council decides by a simple majority in favour of independence.

Again the British miscalculated and in spite of their clever plans at re-arranging the constituencies to the disadvantage of the PPP, the Party won a clear majority of 20 out of 35 seats.

Independence was a major issue at the 1961 elections and there was the clear understanding by the electorate that the Party which won would be the Party to lead the country to independence. The PNC was so certain of victory that it easily gave this promise.

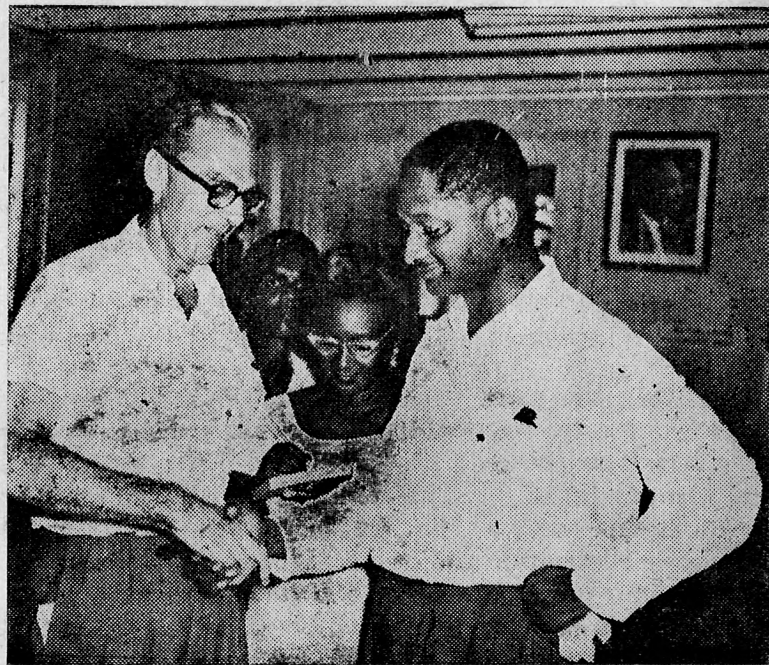
### INDEPENDENCE MOTION

In November 1961, soon after the elections, by a majority of 26 to four votes (United Force) the House of Assembly passed a resolution requesting "Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies to fix a date during 1962 when the country should be fully independent."

Thus the conditions laid down by the British at the 1960 Conference were fulfilled. But there was a secret condition which was altered — that was that the PPP and not the PNC was in office. This had become the real position of the British — that they were prepared to grant independence only if the PPP was not in office!

In December 1961 the Premier Dr. Cheddi Jagan saw the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Reginald Maulding. Maulding refused to fix either a date for independence or a date for the conference to decide the date for independence. Dr. Jagan then appealed to the United Nations for a hearing, which was granted, and addressed the Fourth Committee on the 19th December 1961. After his address, the Committee debated the resolution on British Guiana but deferred consideration until after the Christmas adjournment.

This evidently prompted the UK government to move and on January 14th, 1962, just prior to the re-convening of the Committee, it announced that it had agreed to hold a conference in May 1962 "to discuss the date and arrangements to be made for the attainment of independence by British Guiana." However, before the May conference could take place, the February 1962 riots occurred led by an alliance of the United Force and the P.N.C. to resist the proposals for a "tax the rich" budget. Thereafter there were interminable delays by the Colonial Office in fixing a date for an independence conference. The conference was finally held in October, 1962.



*Peter D'Aguiar and Forbes Burnham congratulated each other at Congress House after having led their respective supporters in a 'round-the-city' demonstration, resisting the 1962 'tax the rich' budget proposals.*

The Wynn - Parry Commission which enquired into the 1962 disturbances said that "the real motive force behind Mr. Burnham's assault was a desire to assert himself in public life and establish a more important and rewarding position for himself by bringing about Dr. Jagan's downfall. The weapon he employed was the argument that the budget contained measures calculated to inflict hardship upon the working classes by increasing the cost of living." This, the Commission said, was far from true. They pointed out that the attitude of the United Force in this matter was 'more honest' than that of the PNC, for the UF represented the businessmen and the middle classes, who were obviously affected by the new taxes on capital gains, gifts and property holdings. Mr. Burnham's attitude was called "callous and remorseless."

Commenting on the extent of the destruction which resulted from the riots, the Commission said: "In all 56 premises were destroyed by fire, 87 were damaged of which 66 were also looted. The total loss occasioned has been assessed at (B.W.I.) \$11,405,236, though it is impossible to state the exact figure with any degree of accuracy."

Playing the game the way the British wanted it, the two opposition parties took firm anti-independence stances. The United Force declared "No independence under Jagan". The PNC declared "No P.R., No Independence". The British were again backed up fully in their efforts to delay independence, in spite of their pious promises in the 1960 White Paper. The two stooge opposition parties which were by this time receiving huge sums of money from the American C.I.A. to destroy the PPP gave the Colonial Office all the excuses they needed to delay independence.

At the 1962 Conference at which a date for independence should have been fixed, the British deliberately allowed the conference to degenerate into a

squabble over the electoral system, with the PNC and UF demanding proportional representation. It eventually ended in a deadlock because for the first time the British introduced the principle that unanimity must be reached. Obviously unanimity could not be reached because the opposition parties were determined to completely change the electoral system in order to oust the PPP from office. The British had twice failed with gerrymandering of constituency boundaries, so that this time they were seeking a fool-proof method. The PPP declared that the British government, by acceding to the wishes of the opposition and insisting on the principle of unanimity, "had placed a premium on violence, looting, arson; and murder."

During 1963, the UF, PNC and TUC used the Labour Relations Bill as a pretext for embarking on more violence. With the backing of the CIA through a num-



Police dogs were used to break up peaceful demonstrators who protested against the Coalition Government rice policy.

Cheddi Jagan Research Centre

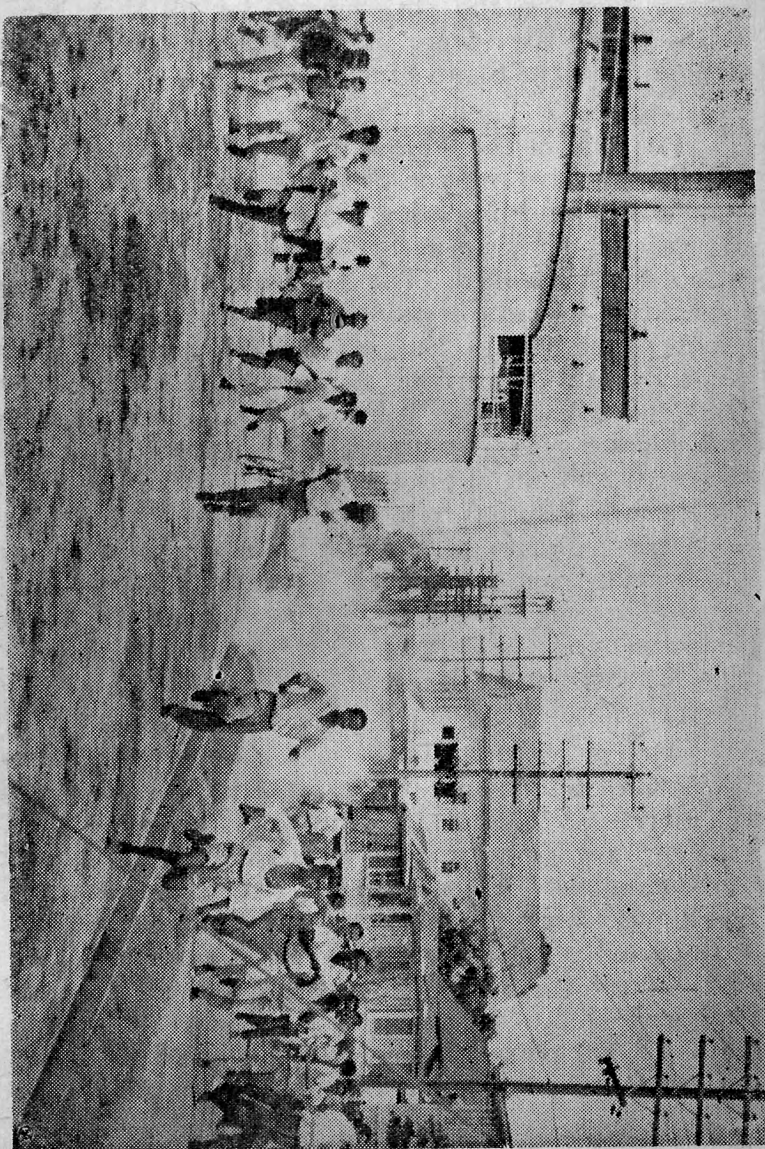
ber of American trade unions they launched and fully subsidised an 80-day protest strike. The Labour Relations Bill of 1963 bore close resemblance to the Labour Relations Bill of 1953 which was used then as an excuse to suspend the constitution. Mr. Burnham, who in 1953 had given full support for the Bill, did another about-face and was now totally against it. The T.U.C. was in the same position. It was clear that the Bill did not really bother them. What they were opposed to was the PPP in office and the likelihood of the PPP being in office at independence. They were determined to hold back independence at any and all costs. The results of the disturbances of 1962, 1963 and 1964 give evidence to the ruthlessness of these reactionary forces.

#### "FIDDLED ARRANGEMENT"

In November 1963 another Conference was held in London and again a deadlock was reached. It was at this stage that the leaders of the three political parties at the conference agreed to allow the Colonial Secretary to arbitrate. Instead of following the agreement arrived at the 1960 conference that there would be "no question of substance for discussion save that of independence", at the next conference, the Colonial Secretary used his powers of arbitration to impose a settlement completely contrary to the wishes of the majority of people of the country and one designed only to oust the PPP.

Arthur Bottomley, now a minister in the Labour Government, in a debate in the House of Commons on April 27, 1964 described the Sandys' proportional representation formula "as riddled with disadvantages and which is quite unknown in any other Commonwealth country . . . Those who support him (Sandys) have done so, not because they think this will reduce racialism but because they think it will put someone in power whom they prefer to Dr. Jagan".

The Police used  
tear smoke to  
disperse a section  
of the rioters  
who wanted to  
shut down oper-  
ation of the  
Electricity Plant  
in Kingston, in  
the February  
1962 disturbances



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Mr. Harold Wilson, now Prime Minister, in June 1964 in the House of Commons, referred to the Sandys imposition as "a fiddled constitutional arrangement". Thus, the leaders of the then opposition party in Britain in 1964 easily recognised the manipulations that were used by the Tory Government to throw out a government not subservient to their interests. However, the Labour Party in the government, for all their brave words when they were in the opposition, followed through with the Sandys imposition.

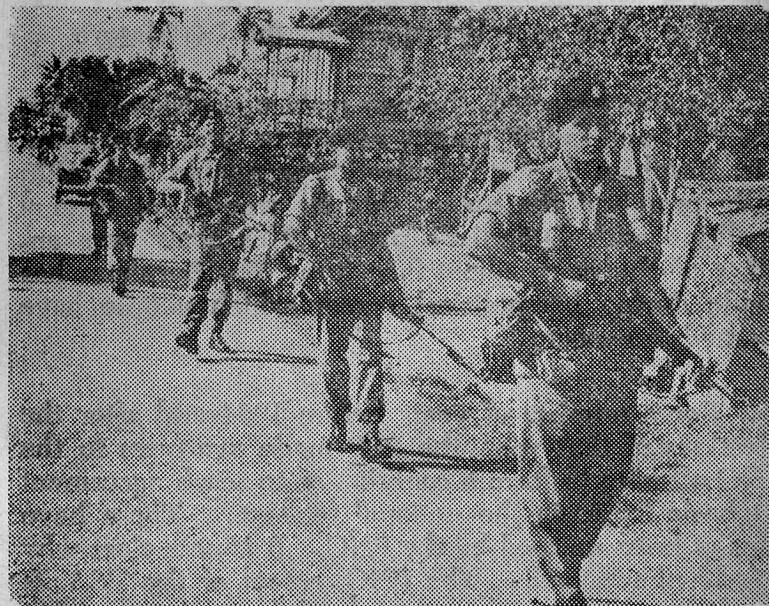
The role of the Americans in pushing the British into this decisive position of refusing independence under the PPP and preparing the ground for an anti-PPP government subservient to Anglo-American influence cannot be overlooked. The American columnist Drew Pearson in an article published in March 1964 said, among other things, that at the 1963 meeting with Kennedy and Macmillan an agreement was reached "that the British would refuse to grant independence to Guyana because of the general strike against pro-communist Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan. The strike was secretly inspired by a combination of U.S. Central Intelligence money and British Intelligence. It gave London the excuse it wanted. British Guiana has not yet received its independence and another communist government at the bottom of the one-time American lake has been temporarily stopped."

The "New York Times" in a series of articles on the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) wrote on April 28, 1966 — "It (the C.I.A.) provides 'technical assistance' to most Latin nations by helping them establish anti-communist police forces. It promotes anti-communist front organizations for students, workers, professional and businessmen, farmers and political parties. It arranges for contact between these groups and American labour organizations, institutes and foundations. It has poured money into Latin American election campaigns in support of moderate candidates and

against leftist leaders such as Cheddi Jagan of British Guiana".

Thus it is not hard to understand that the disturbances of the three years following the 1961 elections, during which time the independence issue should have been determined, were deliberately engineered by the C.I.A. The C.I.A. used the willing tools they found among the anti-PPP political parties and trade unions who were seeking power and prestige at any price — even the price of burning down a large part of the city of Georgetown, murdering working people and destroying government property.

Therefore the results of the 1963 Conference were a complete capitulation by the British to the pressures from the U.S.A. Instead of fixing a date for independence, the British Government decided to have elections before independence under a changed electoral



British soldiers search for firearms in Plaisance on the East Coast, Demerara, during the 1964 disturbances.

system, proportional representation, and that a date for independence would be fixed after the general election.

The People's Progressive Party, protesting against the decision and the forcible removal of the PPP from office one year before the expiry of its term of office, decided to contest the 1964 elections under protest.

### 1964 ELECTIONS

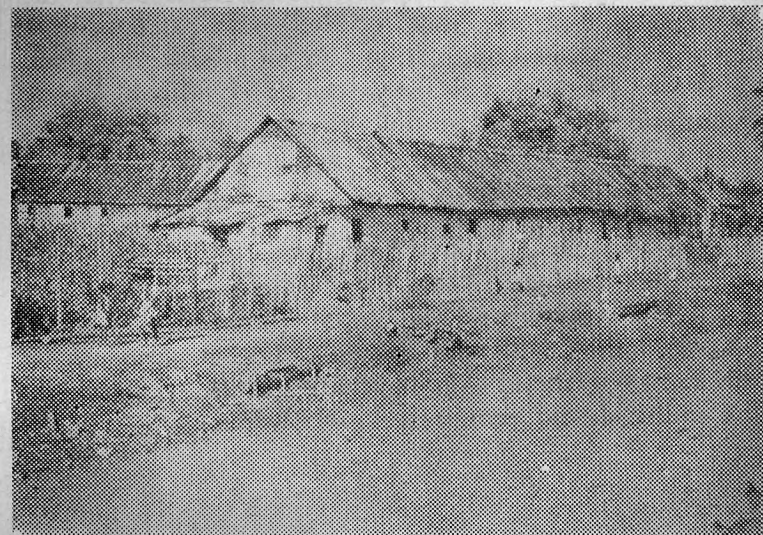
The 1964 election results proved that the PPP had gained electorally while the PNC and UF had lost. The PPP secured 46% of the votes and demonstrated that it could win back the same seats it had won in the 1961 elections, while the PNC secured only 40% of the votes and the UF 12%. The splinter and racial parties which had been encouraged to run and split votes failed to gain any support. But because of the change in the country's 67-year-old voting system from first-past-the-post to proportional representation, the PPP was deprived of an overall majority in the Legislature.

As was expected, the two main opposition parties, the PNC and the UF readily agreed to form a coalition. Mr. Burnham during the election campaign had faithfully promised the voters that he would not form a coalition with D'Aguiar's party. This again was another of the many about-face turns Mr. Burnham has made during his political career which people have learned to expect.

For a number of years before 1964 and after the elections of that year, the PPP made overtures to the PNC offering to form a coalition or to reach agreement on basic issues in the national interest. These have always been spurned by the PNC. It is now clear why this has happened. The PNC, a tool of the USA, is firmly committed to the principle of destroying the PPP. Thus a coalition would be inconsistent with this avowed aim.

### FORMAL FREEDOM

The British Government called another conference in November 1965 to finally decide on the independence issue, now that the PPP was out of office. Having failed to fulfil its earlier commitments, the British on the basis of mutual agreement with the USA, had after the 1964 elections decided that they could go ahead with independence. The PPP refused to attend the conference unless there was a just settlement of a number of issues, the main one being the release of the political prisoners held in detention and the lifting of the emergency. The PPP issued its five demands for genuine independence which also included new constitutional arrangements with a general election before independence based on a new electoral system acceptable to the majority of Guyanese; the immediate reorganisation of police and security forces; democratisation and restructuring of all government institutions dealing with law and administration and the sending home of foreign troops and establishment of a properly constituted national army.



Picture of a 'barrack' range on a sugar estate prior to the agitations of the PPP.

The five demands were ignored and the conference went ahead without the major party representing the largest section of the population taking part.

A date was fixed for independence. Despite a call from the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations for the release of the detainees and the ending of the emergency, the British and British Guiana governments have completely ignored this.

Shortly before independence, the Party leader wrote in the Party organ "Thunder", that while the PPP was happy that the Guyana flag would replace the Union Jack, it believed that "independence has meaning not only in symbolic terms. Above all we want also the substance of independence. The substance has been denied the Guyanese people".

Full powers have now been transferred to the puppets of the imperialists by a rigged constitutional arrangement. The imperialists who have a stranglehold on the country's economy are being further strengthened. Independence is being ushered in under a state of emergency. The main purpose is to silence the political opposition and intimidate the working class. Persons who have fought vigorously for independence are held in detention camp. For these reasons the PPP adopted the slogan "Independence, Yes, Celebrations, No".

The final chapter is still to be written on the struggle for the national liberation of Guyana. The struggle against colonialism has ended; the struggle against neo-colonialism will now begin. Guyanese must resolve to bring an end to puppet rule and to fight for genuine political and economic independence.