



William John Bush (1829 – 1889),
Alan Bush's grandfather



The Sugar Reapers (or Guyana Johnny): An Opera In Two Acts

by John Jordan

Background

In his third opera, Alan Bush's intention was to express, in a more modern context, the ideas of freedom, around which 'Wat Tyler' and 'Men of Blackmoor' had centred. He chose for his subject the struggle of the people of British Guiana, during the 1950s, against the oppression of the British colonial regime. The People's Progressive Party won a political victory in 1953 and, against this background, the opera unfolds as a story of true love between a young Indian woman, Sumintra, and a young African, Johnny Lucas. In his preparations for writing this opera, Alan Bush visited Guyana in 1959, accompanied by his elder daughter, Rachel O'Higgins, in order to make an intensive study of the country's music and culture.

The Workers' Music Association (WMA), under the leadership of John Jordan, has initiated an ambitious project to perform scenes from the opera, hopefully in 2007. The intention is to perform: the Overture; Act I, Scene III; the Interlude after Act II, Scene I, and Act II, Scene II. In this article, John describes the music of what is, in his view, Bush's finest opera.

Bush's Third Opera

The European opera houses that performed this work coined *Guyana Johnny* as a more easily translatable title. It is an opera in two acts, six scenes, with a libretto written by Nancy Bush. Its world premiere took place in Leipzig Opera House on 11 December 1966. The producer was Fritz Bennewitz; the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra was conducted by Rolf Reuter. There were subsequent productions in Tartu, Estonia, and Odessa, USSR. The Leipzig production was broadcast by East German Radio in 1968, and by BBC Radio 3 in 1976 with added English narration.

Quartal Harmony

For this opera, Bush has used *quartal harmony*, chords made with fourths: C F B \flat E \flat A \flat D \flat G \flat (F \sharp) B E A D G, thus, all twelve notes of the chromatic or semitonal scale can be used. With this method, the composer can go anywhere he likes. Time to modulate (change key) is not needed, thus the action is not held up.

Schönberg composed with twelve tones, the semitonal or chromatic scale, but whereas he studiously avoids chords associated with tonality (triads etc.), Bush does not, eg. B \flat D \flat G \flat or C E A. Also, Schönberg used

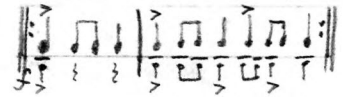
The chord consisting of C F B \flat E \flat is quite mild in effect, so for moments of greater anguish Bush uses altered note chords eg. C \sharp F B E; C \sharp F B \sharp E, or C \sharp F \flat B \sharp E \flat etc., not for mere sensationalism, but only where emotions expressed in the libretto call for such use. The chord, C F B \flat E \flat , could also be compressed to B \flat C E \flat F, or used in any order, as could the altered note chords, B \sharp C \sharp E \flat F \flat , thus increasing their intensity. A chord could also contain all twelve notes in some chosen order. There could also, of course, be two, three, four, five or more part writing as well – quite an armoury!

It is also worth noting that in triadic harmony, chords made from thirds were used all through the 20th century, for example by Benjamin Britten and many others. A four part chord, say C E G C, has one letter name repeated, whereas a four part quartal chord, C F B \flat E \flat , does not. Bush did not believe in repetition (for example, see his piano piece 'The Cruel Sea Captain' from *Two Ballads of the Sea*). This may have led him eventually to use fourth chords; he does use octaves however. To go beyond the triad without repeating a note, Britten used sevenths, C E G B \flat , and ninths, C E G B \flat D. A thirteenth is as far as one can go, C E G B \flat D F A, without repeating a note, seven notes in all, whereas by using fourth chords, Bush could use all twelve notes in a chord without repeating a note.

This is not meant as a composer comparison. After all, Beethoven often used sevenths, but rarely ninths, which have only five different notes (usually the minor version, C E G B \flat D \flat). To properly assess Bush we need to see and hear his operas – he wrote four of them – at Covent Garden, say!

Uplifting and Heroic

The story of *The Sugar Reapers* is about British Guiana in 1953, before independence and at the time of its first democratic election. The opera opens with an **overture** which has a three four bar followed by a three two bar almost all the way through. After four bars of percussion only, we get:





Alan Bush Music Trust

Patrons: Dr John Amis, Dr Timothy Bowers, Professor Edward Gregson,
Dr Anthony Payne, Sir Curtis Price, Dr Ronald Stevenson

Nadira Jagan-Brancier,

29 October 2010

Dear Nadira,

I am sending you the copies of letters from my father, Alan Bush to your mother, Janet Jagan. I am delighted to do this. Your mother, as I told you, was very kind to us when we visited British Guiana, as it was then. She provided us with transport and a very nice driver, Annibourne, and organised a house for us to rent in Georgetown. We travelled all over the country and my father was able to get information about songs and the Kwe-Kwe dance and song, which he incorporated into his opera.

I have sent you copies of the last four issues of our Newsletter, *Clarion*, which comes out once a year for your information. *Clarion 9* has an article about *The Sugar Reapers (Guyana Johnny)* which I thought you might like. I also send you the information sheet about the Trust.

I have added you to our system as a supporter, because you have kindly sent a donation to the Trust. I hope this is all right. You need do nothing more and I will send you a copy of the forthcoming Newsletter, when it comes out at the end of this year.

The Trust is quite an active organisation, which was established in 1997, two years after my father's death. The manuscripts and his correspondence are now held in the British Library, but I have copies of most of the manuscripts and a good deal of the correspondence in the Bush Archive here in Histon. I have several research workers who are working on various aspects of Alan's work and life. This year, we have been active in raising money for a CD of Alan's hitherto unpublished *Concert Suite* which was recorded in September and will be issued early next year. I am very happy to send you a complimentary copy of the CD when it is available.

With very best wishes,

Rachel

199 Charlotte St.
Georgetown
June 14, 1957

Editor
Daily Argosy
Georgetown

Sir,

Your editorial of last Sunday you not only justified the banning of Dr. Alan Bush from the shores of B.G., but also attempted to tie up his visit with the P.P.P. and the forthcoming elections. In fact, you went further and inferred that his visit may have been 'cooked up' during my recent stay in London.

Let me straightaway say that I have never met Mr. Bush. Not that I would be ashamed of meeting him. In fact I would consider it an honour to meet him, as indeed I would meeting any great artist, communist or otherwise.

What alarms me, Mr. Editor, is that you have used your eminent position to justify this ban. In this you are no different from the late McCarthy who witch-hunted a great physicist, Dr. J. Oppenheimer.

Are you leading us to enlightenment or back to darkness? Surely you must be aware that art and science can never blossom under such restrictions. Re this stupid act on the part of our Government and your justification of it, permit me to voice the sentiments of Mr. Gilbert Highet ("The Mind of Man") - "A barbarous epoch, a barbarous country is one that attempts to paralyse communications, to keep ideas locked up, to treat thoughts as magic-either deliberately held away from the many or heedlessly scorned by the many. A sign of barbarism is the closed mind, which refuses to take ideas from 'foreigners' and will not accept a thought derived from the past. Savages have narrow horizons. Civilised men see all around the planet and far into the past; perhaps even a little distance into the future".

I look forward in future to your championing of the rights of man.

Yours truly,

Cheddi Jagan

ALAN BUSH, 25 CHRISTCHURCH CRESCENT, RADLETT, HERTFORDSHIRE
RADLETT 6422

March 29th, 1963.

General Secretary,
People's Progressive Party,
British Guiana.

Dear Janet,

I think you may be interested to hear that about a fortnight ago I completed the composing of the music which accompanies the six scenes of the opera, which we have decided to call "The Sugar Reapers". At present it is written only in a kind of piano score, and I have now to start on the orchestration which I reckon will take me about six months. There is, however, the possibility that it may be ready in time for a production during the 1963/64 season, perhaps in a year from now.

Our visit to British Guiana was an indispensable factor in the creation of this opera. We heard both African and Indian songs, and these have found a place in the music which I have written. It would be a happy day for me, if a performance were ever to take place in the presence of some of the intrepid fighters of British Guiana. But this day is a long way off. As soon as I have any further news about the first production, which I hope will be in Leipzig, I will write to you about it.

With best regards, also to all the comrades
whom my daughter and I met while in your country,

Yours very sincerely

Alan Bush

January 23rd, 1960.

Hon. Mrs Janet Jagan,
97, Laluni Street,
Queenstown,
GEORGETOWN,
British Guiana.

Dear Janet,

We have heard a rumour that you and your husband will be coming to Britain some time next month. We hope very much to see you both while you are here, not only for the personal pleasure of meeting you both again, but also to hear your views on the possibility of the reverse of the enclosed synopsis of the opera.

In this connection please do not take too much notice of the Indian names, which can easily be changed. What we would like to know is whether the incidents are credible, and as far as the political events of 1953 are concerned, whether these put things in their proper order, etc.,

We would like to know the kind of things that happened after the election results in ~~XX~~ 1953 were announced.

You may think it strange that the opera finishes outside the prison, but in all such cases the struggle is incomplete, and it is a question of showing some ~~XX~~ stages of it, and of indicating the further development of it in the future. The final chorus has this object.

I also enclose a copy of a reply (very belated, I am afraid) to the article in the New Nation. I don't suppose for a moment they will print it, and it is not worth "Thunder's" while to do so.

Please remember me to the comrades, especially the Benns, Chundri Singh, Annibourne, and the ladies of the Party whom I met at your house.

Hoping to see you soon, with best regards to your husband,

Yours very sincerely,

People's Progressive Party,
FREEDOM HOUSE,
41 Robb Street,
Georgetown,
BRITISH GUIANA.

2nd March, 1960.

Dear Friend,

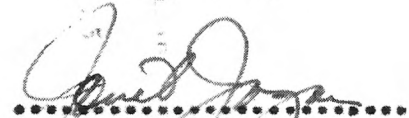
The Eighth Annual Congress of the People's Progressive Party will take place this year on March 26th and 27th in Georgetown at our newly acquired headquarters - "FREEDOM HOUSE".

We know that you have followed developments in the political situation here keenly and have a deep and sympathetic interest in our people. Our members would be happy to receive greetings from you to be read at our Congress.

By the time you receive this letter, constitutional talks should have commenced in London with the Secretary of States for the Colonies. Our Party is demanding Independence for Guiana and it is our fervent hope that our leaders at the London talks will succeed in carrying us forward to reach this goal. Our Congress this year will be held as the delegation returns to the country. The key note of the Congress will be the Independence issue. We know that you are with us in our aspirations and know that our members would want to hear from you.

Hoping to hear from you early and with sincerest good wishes.

Yours fraternally,



.....
Janet Jagan
General Secretary, P.P.P.

March 14th, 1960.

The General Secretary,
The People's Progressive Party,
FREEDOM HOUSE,
41, Robb St,
Georgetown,
BRITISH GUIANA.

Dear Comrade Janet Jagan,

In reply to your letter of March 2nd, I have the greatest pleasure in wishing the People's Progressive Party every success at its forthcoming Congress and in its future work in leading the people of British Guiana to independence and social advance.

The People's Progressive Party has a glorious history; it is a shining example to all parties in colonial countries struggling for independence. The People's Progressive Party explains to the people the true basis of capitalist and imperialist society, and points the way to progress and happiness through successive stages of political liberation and social advance. Its leaders have shown themselves to be incorruptible, either by intimidation or by the bribery of careerism, which would be open to them if they betrayed the cause of the people, a path embraced by some individuals in all colonial countries, British Guiana not excepted.

Unity of all the people of British Guiana in the struggle for independence and social advance, that is the watchword of the People's Progressive Party. I wish its Congress and its future work every success. May it enjoy ~~that~~ wholehearted support of the people of British Guiana which its policy deserves.

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

General Secretary,
The People's Progressive Party,
73, Wellington St,
Georgetown,
British Guiana.

November 29th, 1960.

Dear Jenet,

I was very interested to read in "THUNDER" of October 29th, about the folk-singers, Jim and John Holder. I would very much like to correspond with these two, and especially to receive a copy of John Holder's song "Guiana". This would be very interesting here in Britain; I am sure that we could get performances of it, and perhaps include it in a forthcoming TOPIC gramophone record. Would you please convey this to John Holder and ask him to write to me as soon as possible.

It was very fine to read the message from Jim Caraw, and I am going to try and get to know him, as it appeared from the article in Thunder some weeks ago that he is living in London.

My second opera "MEN OF BLACKWOOD" is being produced by the Oxford University Opera Club for four performances, beginning to-morrow. This is quite an event and has aroused a great deal of interest here. People are coming from quite long distances to Oxford to hear it; one person is even coming from Glasgow! Next summer I shall begin to compose the opera about British Guiana.

We were very delighted that we were able to send the printing press off, and I look every number of "Thunder" through in the hope of hearing that it has arrived safely.

With every good wish to your husband and yourself, and for the ever growing success and development of the P.P.P.,

Yours,

P.S. Please give my best regards to Neville Annibourae.

PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY

CABLE ADDRESS: "PPP"

FREEDOM HOUSE

41 ROBB STREET, LACYTOWN, GEORGETOWN,
BRITISH GUIANA.

TEL. 61202

Chairman—B. H. BENN

Treasurer—RAM KARRAN

General Secretary—JANET JAGAN

5/12/62

Dear Alan,

I am so happy to receive your letter.
I will relay your message to the Halden Brothers.
Their record is charming & we will send you
one.

I trust the performance of your opera
was successful. I am glad so much interest
was shown.

I thought you would like Jim Carew's
address (It's Jim, not Jim) - 58 Ridgway
Place, Wimbledon, London SW19. He has
written two novels of B. G. - "Black Mides"
and "The Wild Coast".

Did you note the excitement we had when
Anthony Williams' painting "Revolt" was
banned by our Royal Academy & Government
Society. It created quite a stir & succeeded
in creating great interest in the painting &
the artist.

The press has arrived safely. We
cannot install it yet as Freedom House is
being renovated to have the printing
downstairs. It looks like we'll finish in
a couple of weeks.

You may see Annibronn in London as
he has been abroad attending a conference.

With best regards,
Fraternally,
Joan

General Secretary,
The People's Progressive Party,
Freedom House,
41, Robb St,
Lacytown,
GEORGETOWN,
British Guiana.

December 18th, 1960.

My dear Janet,

Many thanks for your letter of December 5th. Thank you very much for Jan Carew's address. Nancy and I went to see him and his wife last night, and I hope that we shall get to know one another really well. As far as I am concerned, I took to them both and I think we can help one another with our work, which I would very much welcome. He is indeed a true friend of the P.P.P.!

If it would be at all possible, I would be very much obliged indeed if you could send me a photograph of Aubrey Williams's picture. Carew showed me a reproduction of it in some magazine, but it was very small and did not give much of an impression of it. I am hoping to get to know Aubrey Williams through Carew. I am also hoping that this example may jerk Patrick Brrington out of his aesthetic quagmire. I do not see much of him; last time I saw him I got the impression that he was not getting very far.

I was thrilled to read that the Press had arrived safely. This is grand news. Speed the day when it gets into proper working order.

I did see Annibourne one evening, and he certainly has had a wonderful trip.

Best regards all round,

Yours,

PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY

28th February, 1962.

Dear Friend,

CABLE ADDRESS: "PPP"

FREEDOM HOUSE

The Tenth Anniversary Congress of the People's Progressive Party is being held in Georgetown from the 21st to the 23rd. We are pleased to invite you to send a message to our members who will be present at this meeting.

The events of the week of February 12th to the 16th have no doubt been observed by you. During this time our country suffered a terrible set-back when fascist forces organised by the right-wing United Force, attempted to overthrow our democratically elected Government. The United Force, which won only four seats in the Legislative Assembly in August 21st last (our Party won a majority of 20 seats out of 35) has been objecting to the country's march forward to independence. Backed by Big Business interests hostile to the cause of independence and socialism, which our Party stands for, the United Force has been receiving foreign aid in its plans to forcibly oust our Government. It also controls one of the daily newspapers and influences another. These two daily newspapers and the radio have been inciting people against our Party, spreading lies and slander. Thus the forces of propaganda are united against us.

Using our budget proposals which aimed at taxing the rich propertied class, as an excuse they succeeded in getting corrupt trade union leaders backing them as well as the racist People's National Congress party of Mr. Forbes Burnham. The results were rioting, shooting, arson and looting on Feb. 16th, the loss of lives and destruction of over 60 buildings.

The plot to overthrow our Government has failed, but it has created a situation of great tension in the country. Our problems now are even greater than before. We have to strive to unify our country which has been split by the fascist forces in our midst. We have to strengthen our economy to solve the unemployment and poverty created by years of colonialism. We must achieve, this year the independence of our country, in spite of the reactionary groups which oppose it.

It is against this background that our Party Congress meet. We are certain that your message will inspire our members, and secure them in the knowledge that freedom fighters the world over are supporting our struggle.

Yours Fraternally,

Janet Jagan

The General Secretary,
The People's Progressive Party,
Freedom House,
41, Robb Street,
GEORGETOWN,
British Guiana.

March 13th, 1962.

Dear Janet Jagan,

Please convey my warmest greetings to the Comrades assembled for the 10th Annual Congress of the People's Progressive Party.

The People's Progressive Party since its foundation has led the people of British Guiana towards independence and the happy, prosperous and peaceful life for all which only Socialism can bring. The people of British Guiana have shown their love and confidence in the People's Progressive Party by voting it into power in three successive general elections. Despite the splitting off of the People's National Congress with its bankrupt policies and its immoral appeal to racial prejudice, the People's Progressive Party has gone steadily forward and was crowned with magnificent success last August, which brought it a substantial majority over all the other parties put together.

It is no wonder that Big Business is hostile to the steady and incorruptible march forward of the people of British Guiana under the leadership of the People's Progressive Party. It is, however, deeply distressing to think that so many Guianese men and women, among them workers and trade union leaders, could have been led by Big Business interests into hostile acts of violence directed against the government of the People's Progressive Party, the Party which has their interests at heart and fights for them unremittingly.

Yet through its long years of struggle waged and education spread, the People's Progressive Party has gained such deep-rooted and wide-spread support among the people, that this treacherous outbreak, carefully prepared, sudden and therefore momentarily alarming in its impact, will achieve no lasting hurt. An aggressor can always win the first round; his criminal strokes, prepared in secret, take the honest and peaceful citizen unawares. But courage, perseverance and organisation among those who work for the peace and prosperity of the people, always the watchwords of the People's Progressive Party, will bring the Comrades in the Party fresh successes and even greater strength in the fight for independence and socialism which lies before them.

Wishing your 10th Congress every success and its outcome new advances for the people of British Guiana,

Yours very sincerely,

June 10th, 1962.

General Secretary,
People's Progressive Party,
Freedom House,
41, Robb St,
Lacytown,
Georgetown,
British Guiana.

Dear Janet,

It was most interesting and inspiring to receive the programme of the 10th Annual Conference of the People's Progressive Party.

The photograph of "The Original Four" was especially interesting to me, as I had read with such great enthusiasm the marvellous P.A.C. Bulletin, and realised what an organising and educational force this remarkable publication must have been. My daughter and I met and spent a most pleasant evening with Mr and Mrs Hubbard. It is splendid to think that Mr Hubbard now enjoys the honoured place in the political life of British Guiana which his work deserves.

It was also, I must admit, a great pleasure to see that you had considered my message of support interesting enough to print.

Nancy and I saw Cheddi for a few minutes at the Midnight Matinee, organised by Arnold Wesker in aid of his Centre 42, which he has no doubt told you about. This movement is a most promising development in our progressive cultural field.

Hoping that the 10th Congress enjoyed a successful outcome,

Yours fraterally,

March 29th, 1963.

**General Secretary,
People's Progressive Party,
British Guiana.**

Dear Janet,

I think you may be interested to hear that about a fortnight ago I completed the composing of the music which accompanies the six scenes of the opera, which we have decided to call "The Sugar Reapers". At present it is written only in a kind of piano score, and I have now to start on the orchestration which I reckon will take me about six months. There is, however, the possibility that it may be ready in time for a production during the 1963/64 season, perhaps in a year from now.

Our visit to British Guiana was an indispensable factor in the creation of this opera. We heard both African and Indian songs, and these have found a place in the music which I have written. It would be a happy day for me, if a performance were ever to take place in the presence of some of the intrepid fighters of British Guiana. But this day is a long way off. As soon as I have any further news about the first production, which I hope will be in Leipzig, I will write to you about it.

With best regards, also to all the comrades whom my daughter and I met while in your country,

Yours very sincerely,

May 10th, 1965.

The General Secretary,
The People's Progressive Party,
41, Robb St,
Lacytown,
GEORGETOWN,
British Guiana.

My dear Janet Jagan,

I think you will be interested to hear that the opera about the struggle of the Guianese people for their freedom of which Nancy wrote the libretto and I the music, and which we named "The Sugar Reapers", has been announced for the 1966/67 season by the Leipzig Opera House.

There has been some difficulty about choosing a German title for the opera, and we have at last decided upon "Guyana Johnny". Johnny is the hero of the opera, I think you may remember.

The struggle of the Guianese people, led by the People's Progressive Party, during the year 1953 is the historic subject of the opera. Leipzig may seem remote from Georgetown, but I can assure you that when the opera reaches the public, each separate member of that public will learn about the Guianese people and about the Party which has consistently led them forward.

If you would like to do so, I think it would be a very nice thing for you to write to my friend, Karl Kayser, General Intendant of the Leipzig Opera House, whose responsibility it has been to decide upon this production. I think that he would be very interested to receive a letter from you. I hope that you may decide to write to him from the People's Progressive Party. You should address the letter as follows:

Herrn Generalintendant Professor Karl Kayser,
Staedtische Theater Leipzig,
L E I P Z I G C 1,
Karl-Marx-Platz,
German Democratic Republic.

You can, of course, write the letter in English. Kayser does not himself speak English, but there are plenty of people working in the opera house who can translate your letter.

With best regards, also to Cheddi, in which Nancy joins,
Yours very sincerely,

P.S. I hope your Congress was successful.

Certificate of Posting

The undermentioned postal packet has been registered and posted here this day. (Ordinary postage.....s.....d. if parcel)

Regn. No. <u>175913</u>	Regn. fee paid	MINIMUM (1s. 6d.)
		S.....d.

People's Progress Party
41 Robb St
Georgetown B.G.

Accepting Officer's Initials

AIR
je

Date Stamp



FOR REGULATIONS SEE OVER

May 16th, 1963.

**The General Secretary,
 People's Progressive Party,
 41, Robb St,
 Lacytown,
 GEORGETOWN
 British Guiana.**

My dear Janet,

We have been reading with the greatest indignation of the renewed effort by the reactionaries of all descriptions to put the clock back in your country and of the fight of the P.P.P. to counter this treacherous action.

It is difficult to know what one can do best to help. The B.G. Freed Association has held a meeting and there has been one held, I understand by Billy Strachan, for the students of London University. There has been an important article in the Daily Worker on May 13th, which you will see in due course, when the postal system gets into operation once more.

As a token of my regard for your noble and courageous Party I am sending a donation to your funds of one hundred pounds. This is awaiting you at Barclay's Bank D.C.O., at their main branch in Water St, Georgetown. You only to go along and pick it up (only don't get bumped off on the way back Party premises). The present must have been a bad time for the PPP from organisational point of view, and even a small amount of unexpected dough help.

I shall be taking the vocal score of "The Sugar Reapers" to Leipzig June. I will tell you the results of this as soon as I know what they are.

With best regards and all good wishes for the fight of the P.P.P. for the progress and independence of British Guiana,

Yours fraternally,

PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY

CABLE ADDRESS: "PPP"

FREEDOM HOUSE

Dial 6-2096

41, ROBB STREET, LACYTOWN, GEORGETOWN,
BRITISH GUIANA, SOUTH AMERICA

Chairman—B. H. BENN
Treasurer—RAM KARRAN

General Secretary—JANET JAGAN
February 22, 1965

Dear Friend(s):

The Twelfth Conference of the People's Progressive Party will be held from April 16 to 19, 1965. As in the past, we are inviting all progressive organizations and individuals throughout the world to send Messages to the delegates who will be attending this Conference.


A Message from you at this time, when our Party has just been cheated of office as the result of a fraudulent electoral system imposed by the British Tories and acquiesced in by the Labour government, will have special significance. It will not only inspire our members and strengthen their resolve to carry on the struggle for freedom, but also provide them with certain knowledge that a majority of mankind joins with them in denouncing the political fraud perpetrated at the general election on December 7 last.

Terrorism and violence having failed to remove the thrice-elected PPP from office a few years ago, Anglo-American imperialism in conspiracy with what was then the political opposition, had our Constitution violated and our electoral system manipulated with the objective of defeating our Party. The conspiracy succeeded, and a coalition of two minority parties backed financially and otherwise by American subversive organizations now forms the government. Had the electoral system not been altered, our Party would have won an overall majority of seats for the fourth successive time.

British Guiana thus provides yet another example of British hypocrisy and injustice which makes a mockery of the concept of democracy. Because of the Tory record — and it is Labour's also — of broken faith, lies, political manoeuvres, and Machiavellian intrigue, our Party had demanded (1) New constitutional arrangements to bring about a political settlement acceptable to the great majority of the people; (2) New elections and a changed electoral system; (3) Voting at 18 years; and (4) Reconstitution of all security forces to reflect a broad cross-section of the community.

It is against this background that our Twelfth Conference will be held. Our members will be heartened by your Message, positive evidence that they are not alone in the just struggle for the triumph of liberty and human dignity over tyranny, corruption and evil.

Fraternally yours,


Janet Jagan
General Secretary

April 5th, 1965.

The General Secretary,
The People's Progressive Party,
41, Robb Street,
Lacvtown,
GEORGETOWN,
British Guiana.

Dear Comrade Janet Jagan,

It is indeed a joyful duty to send a message of greeting to the 12th Congress of the noble and unwaveringly honest and courageous People's Progressive Party of British Guiana.

The chicanery of the British imperialists, working through first the Tory Party and now the Labour Party of Britain, has disgusted honest men and women throughout the world. It is a sad thought that in many countries, struggling for their independence from their imperialist overlords, there are to be found politicians so corrupt that they unscrupulously exploit and mislead their own fellow countrymen in the interests of the imperialists. A Bustamente, a Tshombe and a Burnham will be remembered with odium for doing what the Quislings and the Laval did for their respective countries in Hitler's interest.

Your continued success in emerging still as the largest Party of British Guiana, despite every manoeuvre by Britain to rig the Constitution so as to bring about your downfall, is proof positive of the honesty and correctness of your policy in showing the way forward to independence and peace for the people of British Guiana.

I wish your 12th Congress every success, and I look forward to the time when ~~Mr~~ Burnham and his contemptible partner in the Government, d'Aguiar, will show themselves in their true colours as the willing and obsequious agents of British and American imperialism and the enemies of the people of British Guiana.

I remain,
Yours very sincerely,

PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY

CABLE ADDRESS: "PPP"

FREEDOM HOUSE

Dial 6-1202

41, ROBB STREET, LACYTOWN, GEORGETOWN,
BRITISH GUIANA, SOUTH AMERICA.

Chairman—B. H. BENN

Treasurer—RAM KARRAN

2nd General Secretary—NET JAGAN

Dear Friend,

The Eleventh Annual Congress of the People's Progressive Party is being held on the 13th to the 15th April. We are pleased to invite you to send a message to our delegates who will be present at this meeting.

During the past year, all the efforts of the PPP have been aimed at the attainment of independence for our country. Our Party has, in the last three general elections held since the introduction of universal adult suffrage, been returned as the majority party by the electorate. Because of the strong left policy of our Party, the reactionary forces have been seeking to prevent independence being granted once we are in office. This, of course, is a negation of democratic principles, since it has been the will of the electorate to support our policy and our Party.

Early last year an attempt was made to overthrow our government by force, when fascist groups here precipitated violence which resulted in the loss of lives and property. Their efforts failed. The same forces have been influential in holding back our independence. At the conference held in London in October last to discuss the issue of independence, they succeeded in delaying our independence by the introduction of a new factor - that independence should not be granted unless the system of proportional representation and new elections preceded independence. By the advocacy of proportional representation they seek to weaken the left forces of the country and divide the people in their aims of introducing socialism whenever the country is independent.

Our Party has expressed its willingness, if necessary, to go to new elections with the introduction of independence, but on the electoral system which has been used here and which is used in most of the countries of the Commonwealth. Our chief aim is the achievement of independence this year, and pressure for this must come from all sources interested in the ending of colonialism.

It is against this background that our Party Congress will be held. We are certain that your message will inspire our members and strengthen them in the knowledge that anti-colonialists throughout the world are backing them in their struggle.

With best wishes.

Yours fraternally,

Net Jagan,
General Secretary,
People's Progressive Party.

PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY

CABLE ADDRESS: "PPP"

Dial 6-1202

FREEDOM HOUSE

41, ROBB STREET, LACYTOWN, GEORGETOWN,
BRITISH GUIANA, SOUTH AMERICA.

Chairman—B. H. BENN
Treasurer—RAM KARRAN

General Secretary—JANET JAGAN

12th July, 1963.

Mr. Alan Bush,
25 Christchurch Crescent,
Radlett,
Hertfordshire,
ENGLAND.

Dear Comrade Bush,

Your letter dated 16th May, 1963 was received
by Mrs. Jagan and passed on to me.

Thanks very much for the donation you sent us.
Enclosed you will find receipt for same.

I would also like to inform you that the Party
has started a "Victims Aid Fund" for all those who have suffered
in the recent disturbances in our country.

All the best.

Yours Faithfully,

Victor Downer
Victor Downer
Manager

N^o 17360

E

3rd July 1963

Received from Alan D. Bush

Four Hundred + Seventy-Eight - 25 Dollars
Donation 100

SL-TR 25

PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY

CABLE ADDRESS: "PPP"

FREEDOM HOUSE

Dial 62095 — 6 — 7

41, ROBB STREET, LACYTOWN, GEORGETOWN;
GUYANA, SOUTH AMERICA.

Chairman—C. V. NUNES

Treasurer—RAM KARRAN

General Secretary—JANET JAGAN

JJ/BS:

October 3, 1968

Mr. Alan Bush,
25, Christchurch, Crescent,
Radlett,
Hertfordshire.

Dear Alan:

Thanks so much for your letter and welcome Congress message of August 15. It was read at Congress and well appreciated.

The tape of the "Sugar Reapers" would be useful here. We could see about getting it played on the radio and use it at cultural events.

Probably, the best thing would be for you to give Billy the tape and he can give it to someone travelling here, as he always sees comrades coming and going. In that way, he could ensure the safe delivery of the tape.

With all best regards,

Yours fraternally

Janet Jagan
Janet Jagan



A Joint Disposition Receipt
The 'B' COPY, Air Letter

← second copy here →

OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL
IF IT DOES IT WILL BE RECHARGED
VIA AIR LETTER SHOULD NOT CONVIN ANY

41, ROBE STREET, LACYTOWN; GEORGETOWN;
GUYANA, SOUTH AMERICA.

Chairman—C. V. NUNES
Treasurer—RAM KARRAN

General Secretary—JANET JAGAN

JJ/BS:

August 21, 1970

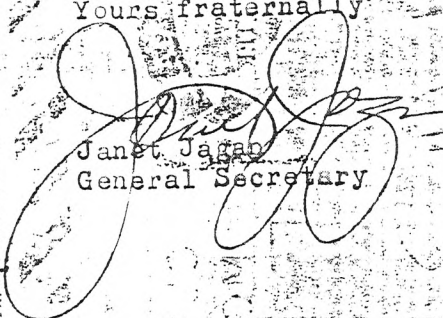
Dear Comrade:

We are pleased to inform you that the
People's Progressive Party will be holding its 16th
Congress on the 5th - 6th September, 1970.

Though belatedly, we sincerely invite
fraternal greetings from you to this most significant
and auspicious occasion to the working people of Guyana.

Best regards.

Yours fraternally


Janet Jagan
General Secretary

August 25th, 1970.

TO THE 16th CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY, GUYANA:

The fight of the Guyanese people against imperialism and for a just and prosperous society has been led by the glorious People's Progressive Party ever since its foundation. This great Party has been an example to all political parties in other countries fighting colonialism for steadfastness and political clear-sightedness throughout its history.

It is a great source of happiness to me personally that I have made its fight a vivid reality to the peoples of the German Democratic Republic and the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic through the presentation in those countries of my opera "THE SUGAR REAPERS", which tells through my wife's libretto the events of Guyanese history in the momentous year 1953.

I wish the 16th Congress of the People's Progressive Party every success and look forward to the time when the agents of U.S. and British imperialism no longer misgovern your beautiful and potentially prosperous country.

D.Mus.Lond., F.R.A.M., Professor at the
Royal Academy of Music, London., Corresponding
Member of the German Society of Arts.

PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY

CABLE ADDRESS: "PPP"

FREEDOM HOUSE

Dial 62095 — 6 — 7

41, ROBB STREET, LACYTOWN, GEORGETOWN;
GUYANA, SOUTH AMERICA.

21st June; 1974

Dear Comrade,

The 18th Congress of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) will take place from August 3-5, 1974, against a background of mounting concern over the worsening political and economic situation in Guyana since the General Election of July 16, 1973.

The declared result of that "election" introduced a new element, and erected an incomparably more massive barrier to the unity, peace, progress and prosperity of the people.

In 1964, the ruling People's National Congress (PNC) gained office after collaborating with the CIA to overthrow the government of the PPP. British and American imperialism connived to alter the electoral process and succeeded in installing the present puppet regime, after instigating violent racial clashes.

In the election last year, on top of even more extensive fraud than that of 1968, the PNC resorted to the seizure of the ballot boxes by the Army, which held the boxes for days while they were rifled and fraudulent votes substituted before they were taken for counting. In this way the PNC allocated two-thirds of the Parliamentary seats to itself.

Public opinion was so outraged by the Army intervention that there followed immediately a campaign of civil resistance. The PPP's rejection of the election result and refusal to take up the 14 seats allocated to it was broadly supported.

The gulf between the ruling regime and the people has widened in the ensuing year. While the PNC attempts to portray, especially for overseas consumption, an image of democracy, and a radical posture in international affairs, in Guyana it pursues anti-working class policies and uses its coercive arms, the Police and the Army, and the Courts, to repress, intimidate and silence its political opponents.

Throughout this trying period, the PPP has been the vanguard of resistance to the regime, and has sustained the people's hope for a better future. At the forthcoming Congress the PPP will, in the new situation confronting the people, point the way forward — the path to Peace, Freedom and Socialism. We invite you to participate in our Congress and hope you can travel to Guyana for this occasion. Should it be impossible, we would appreciate a message.

Yours fraternally,

Jagan Jagan
International Secretary.

People's Progressive Party

CABLE ADDRESS: "PPP"

FREEDOM HOUSE

Dial 66095; 66096

41 ROBB STREET, LACYTOWN, GEORGETOWN
GUYANA, SOUTH AMERICA.

General Secretary — CHEDDI JAGAN.

February 27, 1975.

Dear Comrade Bush:

The People's Progressive Party of Guyana is this year celebrating the 25th anniversary of its formation. The official organ of the Party - Thunder - is also marking its 25th anniversary. As part of the overall plans to mark this occasion, the Editorial Board of Thunder has decided to bring out a special issue to commemorate its silver jubilee.

Our Editorial Board would be honoured to receive a message for this occasion from you which will be included in the special anniversary issue. Thunder is now a quarterly theoretical magazine, and the special issue will be dated April-June. We would therefore be happy to receive your message by early April.

Thunder started publication in 1950 as the official organ of the People's Progressive Party. The Party itself was preceded by the Political Affairs Committee which published a small bulletin called PAC Bulletin. Thunder was also for several years a small monthly, then a weekly, hand-set and printed on a small press. In 1962 Mirror began publication as a national newspaper and soon became a daily. At that point Thunder became a monthly but retained its nature as the Party's official organ. In the last few years however it was made into a quarterly theoretical magazine.

Thunder's policy and role has been to propagate the Party's position on domestic and foreign affairs. With the Party's transformation to a Marxist-Leninist party, it endeavours to maintain adherence to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Thunder directs its attention to the ideological struggle in support of the Party's stand for genuine independence, working class power and socialism. The magazine circulates not only in Guyana but is also sent abroad to individuals and friendly parties and other organisations.

It has been recognised that on a world scale the ideological struggle has assumed great importance. In Guyana, too, recent developments have brought the ideological struggle to a sharper point in the context of a complex political situation which calls for greater clarity in the face of the ruling party's adoption of socialist phraseology and certain outward forms while furthering its minority dictatorial rule. Our Party recognises this task and Thunder is conscious of its role in this respect.

We look forward to your continuing solidarity in furtherance of our common cause.

Please accept the very best wishes from our Editorial Board.

Alan Bush
25 Christchurch Crescent
Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 8AQ
England.

Fraternally,
Ranji Chandisingh
Ranji Chandisingh
Editor, Thunder.

March 29th, 1963.

General Secretary,
People's Progressive Party,
41, Robb St,
Lacytown,
GEORGETOWN,
British Guiana.

Dear Comrade Janet Jagan,

The Eleventh Annual Congress of the People's Progressive Party is an event of more than local significance. The glorious People's Progressive Party has always shown unswerving courage in the face of the difficulties created on the one hand by the colonialist policy of Great Britain (which were only to be expected) and on other hand by the treacherous opposition of some personalities and other political parties within British Guiana, who thus show themselves to be the unscrupulous enemies of the Guianese people and at the same time the miserable allies of world reaction, whether in London or New York.

No clearer proof of their desire to serve the cause of reaction is needed than their advocacy of the introduction of proportional representation in British Guiana, where it is certainly not required from any point of view, save only the wretched hope that thereby a somewhat bigger representation of reaction in the Assembly might result.

No Party in any colonial or former colonial region of the British territories has a more consistent history of struggle for the enlightenment and betterment of the people of its country than the People's Progressive Party of British Guiana. The deliberations of your Eleventh Congress will be eagerly awaited by the friends of progress, peace and socialism the world over.

Yours fraternally,