

PAM 0070

Elections Crooked As Barbed Wire!



MEMORANDUM OF THE PCD

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June 1988.



The Army is the key in PNC organised general elections. If ballots are counted at the places of poll, the controversial role of the Army would be considerably minimised. Too, since 1970, no Local Government elections have been held in Guyana. In that year they were massively rigged.

Introduction

The journey by Guyana's President Desmond Hoyte to Mustique to confer with the West Indian leaders attending there, after his party's officially declared "victory" in the December 1985 national elections in Guyana, opened a new chapter in the development of regional concern within other Caricom countries at the degeneration of the electoral process in Guyana.

The explanations and assurances given by President Hoyte at that meeting, and the indication by some of the leaders meeting there that their concern over the situation in Guyana was an open and continuing one, together with the happy coincidence of the assembly in Guyana of West Indian or government leaders and their advisers for the Seventh Caricom Heads of Government Conference, has prompted us to submit this response of the PCD (which, with the exception of the rump of the United Force, represents the opposition parties that contested the December 9, 1985 elections), to the claim by President Hoyte, his party and government that the election was free and fair.

Some PNC "rebuttals" of the allegations that the December 9, 1985 elections were rigged, focus heavily on what they describe as "PPP allegations". The suggestion is that all or most allegations of fraud come from the PPP and that they are not supported by evidence. This focus on the PPP, to our mind, is an attempt to prejudice those sections of Caribbean opinion which are ideologically or otherwise opposed to the PPP against the allegations themselves.

The PCD states firmly that it is the position of all its member parties that the elections of December 9, 1985 were as fraudulent as those held since 1968; and that this position is based on hard evidence. The PPP is the oldest of the five parties, the only one that has taken part in all the elections since 1968, and the one which, in the 1985 elections, fielded the most agents and collected the most statements from agents. These facts are reflected throughout the present memorandum. However, the evidence from agents of other PCD parties is also used.

And this evidence shows only the tip of the iceberg. Only some of the statements of the agents of some PCD parties have been used here, with the main emphasis on Region 4, which represented 40% of the total official vote. Approaches have been made to a regional non-governmental organisation to investigate the evidence of fraud

in the 1985 elections in Guyana, and the total evidence compiled by parties of the PCD will be made available to such an investigation.

THE P.N.C. AND PREVIOUS ELECTIONS

We do not propose to cover in detail, ground that has already been well documented, concerning the history of fraudulent elections in Guyana from 1968 to 1980. The degeneration of the electoral process in Guyana under the PNC has been described in considerable detail in the following, among other, publications:—

- 1) **Army intervention in the 1973 Elections in Guyana** by Janet Jagan;
- 2) **A Report on the 1978 Referendum**, published by the Committee of Concerned Citizens;
- 3) **The Report of the International Team of Observers at the December 1980 Elections** — known as the Avebury Report; and
- 4) **The 1985 Report of the Joint Americas Watch and British Parliamentary Human Rights Group Mission (The Chitnis Mission) on Political Freedom in Guyana.**

However, this history has revealed certain notorious features to which we should draw your attention in this memorandum. They emerged from a process that had been well established by the PNC and adapted to the exigencies of the moment whilst carrying its basic character a stage further, as had been done in 1968, 1973, 1980.

This process, as it has developed over nearly 30 years can be briefly described as follows:—

- (1) Proportional Representation was submitted for the first past the post system of elections before independence, as the PPP had won the two previous elections on a plurality, but not a majority, of the votes. This change was acceptable, even desirable, to the US and Great Britain, the then colonial power, as Mr. Burnham was seen as much more "moderate" and accessible than Dr. Jagan; as a "man they could talk to". The PNC then became the larger of the two parties in government at independence in 1966 (the other being the United Force, a conservative party).
- (2) In a successful attempt to obtain absolute control of government, the PNC then introduced legislation which enabled it to create a large and hugely padded overseas voters list.

So padded were the 1968 lists that the number of

voters increased by 20.9% (local) and 49% (local and overseas) over the 1964 registered voters. In 1973, the increase was 24.5% over 1968. The padding was apparent when official statistics showed an average population increase of only 2.5% per year. In the United Kingdom, Mr. Humphrey Taylor, the director of the prestigious Opinion Research Centre, which had been commissioned by the United Force, disclosed that "the compilation of the register was a totally dishonest and corrupt operation... unprecedented for a Commonwealth country... a pretty awful and disgraceful episode."

The Centre found, from a sample of 1,000 names on the list, only 15% were eligible voters (others were children, non-Guyanese or not known at the listed address). Another overseas check, this time by the ITV producers of the television programme "The Trail of the Vanishing Voters", showed similar results when they checked the list.

The PNC also greatly altered the provisions concerning proxy voting, and the 1968 elections saw violent abuse of this system as well as widespread padding of the voters list and fraudulent voting through tampering with ballot boxes. For example, for the Pomeroon district, Essequibo, four parcels of ballot papers bound with rubber bands and marked PNC, were found in a ballot box. When the Counting Agent for the United Force, Mr. K.D. Doobay, a Barrister-at-Law, strenuously objected to the counting of this box, the Presiding Officer ordered that the ballot papers be replaced in the ballot-box and that the box be handed over to the police at the Police Station for safe custody, until he received instructions from the Chief Elections Officer in Georgetown.

This was done and the next day the Presiding Officer sent messages to the Counting Agents that he had been instructed to proceed with the count. However, on this occasion when the box was opened it was found that the parcels of ballot papers with rubber bands were no longer marked for the PNC but for the UF, but since all the ballot papers were also found to be without the official stamp, they were deemed spoilt votes.

With the use of these and other practices, the PNC gained a bare majority of seats in parliament in the 1968 elections.

(3) By the 1973 elections, however, these practices could not by themselves ensure the PNC's desired two-thirds majority, the majority which was later to be used to postpone the elections in 1978 and to

write a new Constitution in 1980 for "an Executive" President with powers even greater than those residing in the President of the United States. The scale of the operation required the seizure of the boxes by the army and the complete control of the possession and counting of the ballots by the PNC machinery of government.

So in 1973, the army intervened under the pretext of "protecting" the boxes, accompanied the boxes to Army Headquarters where they were kept for many hours, and the process of counting suddenly became an extremely long one, much of which was accompanied by a deathly silence. Opposition agents were denied access to where the boxes were kept for many hours, while the "counters" were let in and did their dirty work. When the "official" count finally began, the condition of the boxes and the ballots clearly showed that massive tampering had taken place.

Commenting on the collection of the ballot boxes at Army Headquarters and the long delays, the Chief Elections Officer, in his Report of the Guyana National Elections 1973, stated: "This resulted in many documents being misplaced and the locks of several boxes had to be broken at the places of the Count in order to remove the contents. Failure to locate all the boxes and the documents contributed to the delay in counting which commenced at various times from 11.30 p.m. on 16th to 3.30 p.m. on 19th July, 1973."

At the Counting Centre, there were countless irregularities: boxes were found to be inadequately sealed or not at all; keys were missing or mixed up; the number of votes counted did not tally with the number cast.

For example, in Demerara Coast West in Division 2, the votes cast were 531, but only 491 were in the ballot box when it finally emerged after long hours, at the counting place. Division 1 had recorded 506 votes as being polled, but the box had 527 votes! In some districts, there were more votes in the ballot boxes than electors listed as voters for the particular area. In the North West District, when the boxes were being emptied for counting, 21 wads of ballot papers, some with rubber bands and some with paper clips, were revealed. When the PPP's representative (also candidate) objected, he was warned that police would kick him out.

And in other areas, ballot papers which were officially stamped at the wrong place (on the face) in the Canals Polder Electoral District were found at the counting place

correctly stamped on the back. The army intervention and hijacking of the ballot boxes took place allegedly because of the danger to the security of the ballot boxes due to the so-called threats of the political opposition. Actually, the government had refused the demand of the opposition for a preliminary count at the place of poll. The army intervention led to massive fraud.

In his official Report of the 1973 General Election, the Chief Election Officer referred to "... the presence of a bundle of half-folded ballot papers that were taken from a ballot box... There were many such bundles in several boxes for this district..."

The PNC thus achieved its 2/3 majority in 1973. Not, however, before the first result, Werk-en-Rust in South Georgetown (declared before the army intervention and the lengthy suspension of results) showed a drop in the voter turn out in this traditional PNC stronghold.

Thus, 1973 saw the process of electoral corruption taken a stage further — the armed seizure of the boxes by forces loyal to the PNC, and their secret sequestration for long periods of time before official 'counting' began. Attention thus switched from tampering with the list of registered local and overseas voters and fraudulent voting to tampering with the votes themselves.

(4) This new style of operation meant that, whether or not voters lists in or out of Guyana were rigged, the ruling party could obtain any result it wished by tampering with or "switching" the boxes after the poll had closed. This was seen in the 1978 Referendum when, by any reputable observation, less than 20% of the voting population turned out to vote. The Committee of Concerned Citizens, which included many reputable persons and organisations not active in any political party (and on which a representative of the Guyana Council of Churches sat as an observer) estimated from its organised monitoring of the Referendum (which was made easier by the call for a boycott by the opposition) that less than 15 per cent of the voters turned out (see the Referendum Report, pages 45 and 46). The Government declared that 71.45% of the voters turned out and that 97.7 per cent voted in favour of its proposal!

The process of elections in Guyana had thus, since 1973, entered the realm of wonderland. The PNC simply organised the official result that it wanted, whatever others said, saw or did. The report of the Avebury

Commission on the 1980 election, concerning which its member observing Region 10 (containing the bauxite town of Linden/Wismar) on election day reported:—

“... My general impression of the day was, going on a continuous circuit throughout the day round and round these 42 stations, that at many of them we saw no voters going in at all. In no more than two or three instances did we see, say, 15 to 20 people queuing up waiting to vote, that is going around all day.” (Pg. 26)

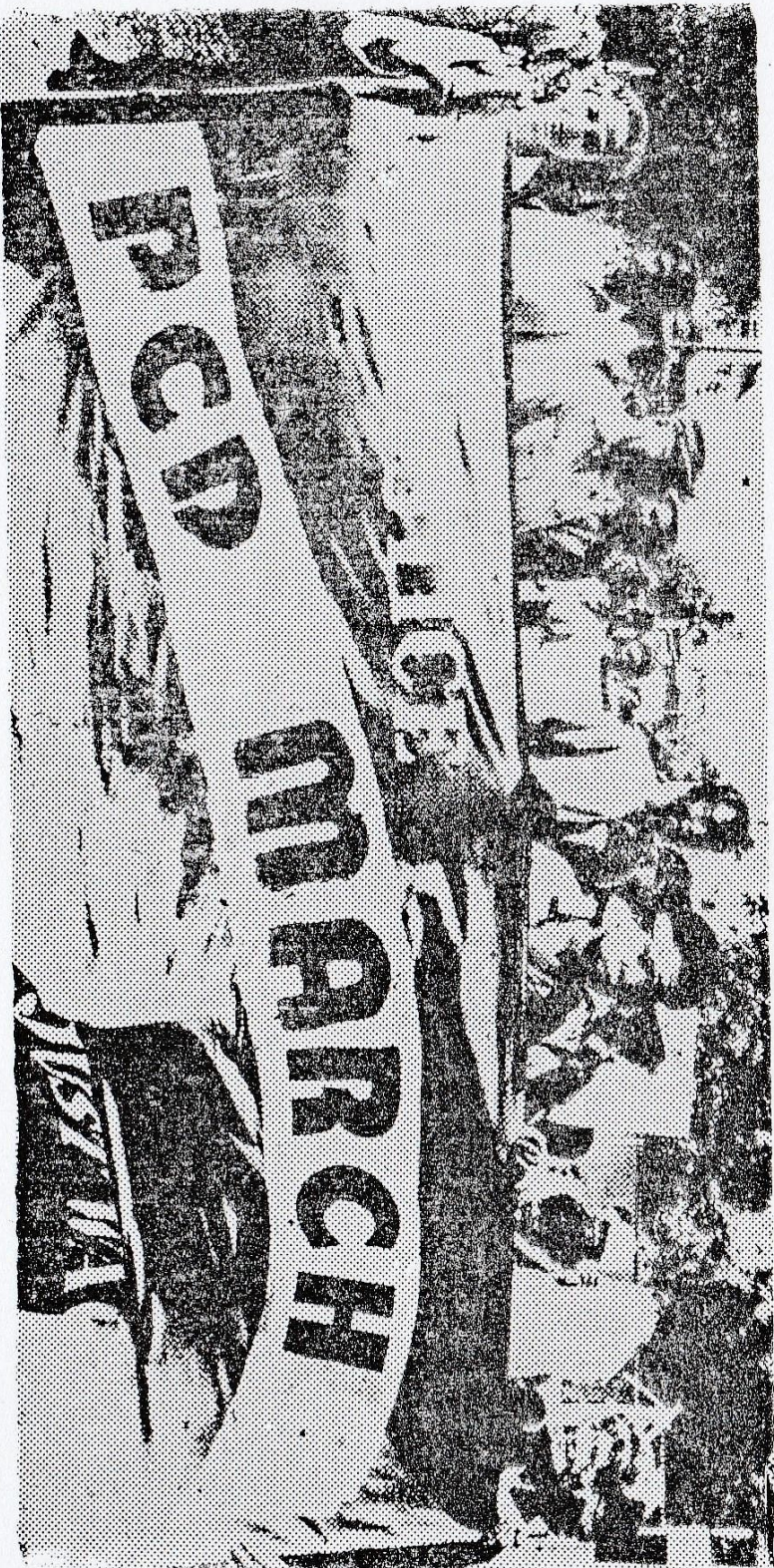
“We were now approaching 6 p.m. and we did have another last tour round to see if there was any evidence of a last minute surge to the polls. There wasn't. But it is important to remember that polling was extended for for this extra hour and we had to leave for Georgetown at 6 p.m. So I cannot swear that something quite extraordinary did not happen in the last hour, but if it did it was entirely at variance with everything we had seen during the day. Yet you will find that Region 10 polled 23,000 votes (exactly 23,000) and I am sure I did not see 23,000 people go to the poll. They have recorded something akin to an 80% poll and I just don't think that is what we saw.

- (5) The 1980 elections followed the same pattern as in 1973 with the PNC giving itself yet another increase in an already unbelievably large majority — from 70% in 1973 to 78% of the official vote in 1980. At the last (reasonably) honest election, in 1964, the percentages were PPP 46%, PNC 41%, UF 12%.

This 1980 result occurred, one should remember, notwithstanding that (after many years of PNC government and in an increasingly depressed economic climate) observers noted a relatively high turn out in traditional PPP areas and a low turn out in traditional PNC areas. On this question the Avebury Commission reported as follows:—

- “1) We found a relatively high turnout of voters in some areas such as Corentyne, Cummings Lodge, Better Hope and Enmore, and a relatively low turnout in others such as Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Linden.”

The Avebury Report concluded that the Elections “were an example of the way an individual's determination to cling to power at all costs can poison the springs of democracy.”



Picture shows a PCD demonstration and march from the East Coast, Demerara, to the City, highlighting the demand for free and fair elections. It also brought into focus demands for respect for human rights and overall improvements in social conditions.

The 1985 Election

Before Polling Day.

The death of President Burnham in August 1985, some months before elections were due, led to considerable speculation. His successor, President Hoyte, then instituted certain changes in the electoral process which heightened that speculation. He virtually abolished the overseas vote, restricted proxy voting and abolished the controversial postal vote. However, the key to understanding these measures is the realisation that, since 1973, they have not been necessary for the PNC to create the result of their choice; it is instructive to note that in that year, in an attempt to placate public opinion, Mr. Burnham had himself introduced electoral reforms in the very areas later chosen by Mr. Hoyte.

The institutionalisation of the seizure of the ballots by the security forces and the secrecy of their safekeeping for many hours before the start of the official count had relegated list rigging and other practices, such as multiple voting, from the status of essential measures to that of being merely convenient. This explains why the government has consistently refused to agree to the counting of ballots at the place of poll immediately after the end of polling, which had been demanded since the rigged 1968 elections, and which was included in the list of electoral reforms in a letter of Dr. Cheddi Jagan of 26 February, 1985 to the then Prime Minister Desmond Hoyte and in a subsequent letter of November 13, 1985 sent to the Elections Commission by Dr. Jagan and Mr. Eusi Kwayana (WPA). Other opposition parties made the same demand.

Desmond Hoyte dismissed the proposal as a "red herring and an irrelevance" and "something that is logistically difficult and unacceptable."

Rumours began to circulate after Burnham's death of a split in the PNC between those who wanted to produce a more credible result, and "give" the opposition a substantial minority of seats (more than one-third) and "hard liners" who wanted, as was the practice, to "tek even more" seats, however, ridiculous that result may seem to local, regional and international opinion in the light of past electoral frauds and the economic situation inherited by Burnham's successors.

Whatever truth there might have been in these rumours, the PNC propaganda machine clearly anticipated

an even more massive "majority", in the face of the gravest economic situation ever faced by Guyana or any other West Indian country — massive, repeated and almost universal shortages in every essential consumer item (even locally manufactured export products such as sugar and rice), increased unemployment and malnutrition, serious and continuing inflation, a virtual breakdown in national educational facilities and a transportation crisis of mammoth proportions, to name some of the problems facing the nation.

Only days after his assumption of office, President Hoyte had to personally intervene (without much success), in a rice crisis that created long lines of irate consumers in Georgetown and throughout the country as this item, long produced in excess in Guyana to supply the rest of the region, became unobtainable in the shops and the markets. Yet the government media, including both radio stations and the only daily paper, kept trumpeting the PNC's claim that it would increase its already overwhelming majority.

Large crowds at opposition rallies were not reported at all by the government media. Contrastingly, the usual PNC 'rent a crowd' (a popular term used to describe the PNC's habit of "producing" a crowd by using private and state-owned vehicles to ferry government workers and their dependents to selected PNC rallies) was produced at the main PNC rallies and given saturation coverage in the government media.

The result of the election (an official vote of 228,718 for the PNC on an official turn out of 294,801 of registered voters) has, in Guyana, been claimed as free and fair by the PNC but totally rejected as fraudulent by a wide cross section of Guyanese opinion.

The Bishops of the Catholic and Anglican churches, along with other representatives of trade unions, the Bar Association and the Human Rights Association expressed their "profound disappointment" over the way the (1985) elections were held and recorded that "...the familiar and sordid catalogue of widespread disenfranchisement, multiple voting, ejection of polling agents, threats, intimidation, violence and collusion by police and army personnel characterised the poll..."

The death of President Burnham did not result in a cleaner election, even though certain West Indian leaders seem to think so.

When the history of PNC-controlled elections in Guy-

ana is taken into account, the meat of the matter remains the same as it has been since 1973:

- (1) How were the election officials selected?
- (2) How was the voting conducted?
- (3) How were the votes collected, carried and kept?
- (4) How were the votes counted?

In previous rigged elections the answers to these four questions were:—

- (1) The election officials were selected by the PNC government and appointed by a government-controlled and appointed Chief Elections Officer, and not by Elections Commission.
- (2) The voting was conducted in an atmosphere of prejudice and thuggery. Access to the process was given to the PNC by the officials at the polling stations and the police;
- (3) The boxes were taken from the polling stations by the security forces in a military operation and transported, delivered and kept without any supervision being permitted to opposition agents;
- (4) An enormous and inexplicable amount of time expired between the collection of the boxes at the close of poll and the announcement of the results.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 1985?

- (1) How were the officials selected?

It is important, when considering the role of government officials in matters of political importance to the PNC, to keep in mind that over a period of two decades Burnham and his party consistently and effectively whittled away at the independence of the public service. This was particularly so after the ruling party, in December 1974, proclaimed the doctrine of paramountcy, under which the government is deemed as the executive arm of the party, and all state institutions are subverted to serve the party. (See Appendix A).

The members of the main public commissions (the public Service Commission, the Judicial Service Commission and the Police Service Commission) are appointed by the government, so are the Chairman of the Elections Commission and Chief Elections Officer.

Thus all returning officers, presiding officers and counting clerks were appointed, not by the Elections Commission, which has independent functions under the Con-

statution but by the Chief Elections Officer.

The result was that, as Avebury noted, "the staff of the whole polling process appeared to be supporters of the PNC" (p. 24).

This, in spite of the fact that the Constitution provide, that the Elections Commission "shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of elections and the administrative conduct of all elections of members of the National Assembly;... and shall issue such instructions and take such action as appear to it necessary or expedient, to ensure impartiality, fairness and compliance with the provisions of this Constitution or of any Act of Parliament on the part of persons exercising powers or performing duties connected with or relating to the matters aforesaid".

The Constitution clearly imposed an active, and interventionist controlling role on the Elections Commission. Bollers' concept of that role, buttressed by the PNC representative is to trust those who in fact control the process of registration, the selection of election officials and the conduct of elections — and go to sleep; this is seen by his response in the following sequence of communications:—

On November 7, 1985, the PPP and WPA jointly wrote the Chairman of the Elections Commission, beginning as follows:—

"The Chairman,
Elections Commission,
Public Buildings,
GEORGETOWN.

Dear Sir,

The People's Progressive Party (PPP) and the Working People's Alliance (WPA) understand that Mr. Roy Hammond will be receiving the lists of candidates for the General Elections fixed for December 9th, 1985. On behalf of the PPP and the WPA, we the undersigned wish to enquire whether the Elections Commission appointed the Chief Elections Officers; and if so, when was the appointment made?

If the Commission was not involved in the appointment of Mr. Hammond as Chief Elections Officer, can you please say who appointed him and at what time the appointment was made?

Furthermore, could you say what will be the role of the Commission as regards the appointment of Return-

ing and Deputy Returning Officers; Election Clerks for the Districts as well as Presiding and Assistant Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks for each polling place and other staff which will be required for elections?"

On November 13th, Dr. Jagan wrote to the Chairman on the same questions, then added:

"Since I have not received a written reply from the Commission in respect of these and other matters, I take the opportunity of drawing to your attention in the meantime, the fact that already names and addresses of Returning Officers as per Polling Districts or parts of Polling Districts have been advertised in the **Guyana Chronicle** of November 13th, 1985. Not wishing to repeat the questions posed in my letter of November 7th, 1985, as regards the appointment of the Chief Elections Officer, I venture to add that the publication of the names and addresses of Returning Officers is a clear indication that the electoral machine is being set in place without due consideration to the Constitutional functions of the Elections Commission".

Sir Harold responded as follows:

"The power to supervise the functioning of an officer is not dependent on the power to appoint him. The National Registration Act, Chapter 19:08, and subsidiary legislation made under it and the Representation of the People Act Chapter 1:03, require the officers appointed under these Acts to defer to the Constitutional authority of the Commission in execution of their functions under those Acts."

It is true that Section 21(2) of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana Act 1980 speaks of a certain list deemed to be the list of electors "prepared by the Elections Commission under Article (60(2) thereof" but does not follow from this that the Elections Commission must be directly responsible for and involved in the registration of electors and appointment of registration and election personnel.

Section 21 of the Act must be read subject to the Constitution which is the supreme law, and a reference to Article 162 and Article (62(2) of the Constitution in the Section is indicative that the Elections Commission will be understood to be preparing the list of electors not directly by itself or through officers directly appointed by it, but by exercising general direction and supervision over other officers, appointed by the Public Service Commission the competent Constitutional Authority".

In other words, others can appoint the officials in charge of the election without even consulting the Elections Commission or its Chairman, others can even prepare the list of electors without even consulting the Elections Commission or its Chairman. That is OK, provided the Elections Commission retains on paper the right to direct them.

The difference between the present role of the Elections Commission and the situation before the PNC came to power is seen when one compares the passive position of Sir Harold with the operation of the Elections Commission in 1964.

That Commission appointed the major elections officers "in exercise of the power of appointment delegated to the Elections Commission by the Governor acting after consultation with the Public Service Commission" (see p. 47 of the Official Report of the 1964 elections).

The same Official Report describes how the Commissioner functioned after appointing the Returning Officers (at p. 12):

"Notification of these appointments and of the particulars of the persons so appointed were given in the Official Gazette of October 3rd. The Commission met the Returning Officers in its Main Street Office on 26th September, 1964, and handed them their letters of appointment, copies of the Election Regulations, 1964, and two booklets of instructions, one for the guidance of Returning Officers and the other for Presiding Officers and their polling place staff. The Commission then proceeded to explain and discuss with them several points in the Regulations and advised them to study the Regulations and instructions and select and appoint their polling place staff and hold instruction classes with them in preparation for polling day — 7th December, 1964."

The present Chairman's position in relation to the entire electoral process, even after the event, and his actual attitude to the use of his power to direct, are vividly illustrated by his response to a letter by the PPP representative on the Commission, Clement Rohee, requesting the numbers of counting officers in the 1985 elections. The PPP representative wrote:

"Mr. H.B.S. Bollers
Chairman,
Elections Commission,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

30th May, 1986.

Dear Comrade,

I shall be extremely grateful if you will let me know how many persons assisted the Returning Officers at each of the ten counting places when votes were counted at the close of poll for the National and Regional elections, December 9th, 1986.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,
Clement Rohee".

Sir Harold replied:

6th June, 1986.

"Cde. Clement Rohee,
People's Progressive Party,
Freedom House,
41, Robb Street,
Lacytown,
Georgetown.

Dear Cde. Rohee,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 30th May, 1986, in which you requested an answer to the question "how many persons assisted the Returning Officers at each of the ten Counting Places when votes were counted at the close of Poll for the National and Regional Elections held December 9th, 1986"? It is obvious that 1986 is a mistake and you meant 1985.

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter addressed by me to the Chief Elections Officer who I consider as the proper quarter to which your letter should have been addressed.

Yours co-operatively,
H.M. Bollers,
Chairman".

(Copy Enclosed:
"Chief Elections Officer,
National Registration Centre,
High & Cowan Streets,
Kingston,
Georgetown.

June, 1986.

Dear Cde. Hammond,

I hereby forward to you a copy of a letter addressed by Cde. Clement Rohee to the Chairman, Elections Commission in which he requested an answer to the question

"how many persons assisted the Returning Officers at each of the ten Counting Places when votes were counted at the close of Poll for the National and Regional Elections held December 9th, 1986"? It is obvious that 1986 is a mistake and it ought to be 1985.

Cde. Rohee was a member of the Elections Commission at the time of the 1985 Elections.

Yours co-operatively,
H.B.S. BOLLERS,
Chairman".)

Mr. Rohee responded:

"Mr. H.B.S. Bollers,
Chairman,
Elections Commission,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

June 10, 1986.

Dear Mr. Bollers,

Following receipt of your letter dated June 6th, 1986, informing me that you had written a letter to Mr. Hammond in respect of my question: how many persons assisted the Returning Officers at each of the ten counting places when votes counted at the close of Poll for the National and Regional Elections held on December 9, 1985? I wish to inform you that I have been following up the matter with Mr. Hammond, Chief Elections Officer.

In a telephone conversation with Mr. Hammond today, Tuesday June 10th, 1986, Mr. Hammond complained to me about the vagueness of your letter to him and your failure to direct him to provide me with the information requested in my letter of May 30th, 1986.

I was told that in the absence of any clear directive to him from you, he will not be able to provide me with the information I requested. I understand that Mr. Hammond is to write you a letter requesting that he be instructed by you to provide the information requested.

I trust that you will issue the necessary instructions to Mr. Hammond and that I will be facilitated with the information requested at the earliest opportunity.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,
Clement Rohee".

This information has not yet been obtained!

It is clear that Sir Harold doesn't know how many

"counters" there were or who they were. This after three elections in which the whole integrity of the Count has been seriously questioned in Guyana, in the West Indies and in the world at large. Little wonder that the Avebury report referred to the Elections Commission as a "toothless poodle".

There had been many demands that appointments of officials be agreed upon. For example, in his letter of February 26th, 1985, to then Prime Minister Desmond Hoyte, Dr. Cheddi Jagan had called for "an agreed-on impartial Elections Commission Chairman and Chief Elections Officer". The PPP subsequently introduced in the National Assembly a motion of no-confidence in the Chairman of the Elections Commission.

In mid-1985, the Chitnis Mission, made up of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group and the Americas Watch, reported:

"The members of the mission concluded that unless this year's election is administered by all the parties or by a completely non-partisan body, another fraudulent election is highly likely We regret that the Guyana government did not see fit to co-operate with our mission. We left Port-of-Spain profoundly pessimistic about the future of democracy in Guyana under the present regime. We will await with interest the results of any reaction to the forthcoming elections".

The new President did nothing about opposition demands for new officials to be appointed. The effect of PNC control over the electoral process is seen by the contemporaneous reports of the opposition agents.

In Region 4, for instance, which represented 40 per cent of the total official vote and included the capital Georgetown, hostility, partiality and/or obstructive behaviour towards opposition polling agents and representatives (or simply abandonment of their official responsibilities) were reported by well over half of the opposition agents who sent in written reports. Three examples of excerpts taken from polling agents' reports will suffice here:—

- 1 The PPP Polling agent at a station in West Ruimveldt, Georgetown, (Richard Kanhai) noted, according to his report, : "active involvement between PNC candidates and polling clerks senior PNC woman moving up and down and regularly whispering to PNC agents and polling clerks. Polling clerks were leaving their desks and going out of their sights. They were writing names on their palms. Because I

was objecting to them to call names of voters promptly they made things difficult for me by asking voters names in a whisper and got annoyed when I asked for names so that I can tick them off my voters list”.

2) WPA Polling agent Colin Adams, stationed at a polling station in Ann's Grove, East Coast, Demerara, reported the following experience: “....when I was about to leave, the Presiding Officer went for the same police constable, to tell him I must not leave with my notes, I then objected and say that the Presiding Officer did not provide any material for me to take notes and she has no right to take my notes. The Police then take them out from my hip pocket and give them to the PO to hold. When I was about to take them from her, she told me that at that moment she is having more power than the police who was there”.

3) The DLM Polling agent (Raphael Mearns) at a Polling Station in East Ruimveldt, Georgetown, reported that at about 12:35 hours, 8 to 10 men arrived, led by a well known thug. They entered the polling station. I was scrambled by my neck and pulled across the table, at which I was sitting. I asked the thug the reason why he did that and he pulled out a gun, put it to my temple and threatened to shoot me. He pushed me down the steps and I had to walk away....”

Polling agents at many other stations in Region 4 (and elsewhere) noted that the officials were either known PNC activists and/or actively pro-PNC in the polling stations.

These are only brief examples from the wealth of reported irregularities. Other irregularities involving election officials are also referred to later under various events.

(2) How was the voting conducted?

The atmosphere on election day in Guyana, since the PNC took full power, has been discussed many times before by politicians, commentators and journalists. Terror and open fraud: These words occur again and again in describing the 1973 and 1980 elections and the 1978 Referendum. The army deploys in full battle array, as if engaged in pacifying a hostile foreign populace, the PNC displays all its arrogance and vulgarity with impunity, and the “officials” supposedly in charge take part in these exercises or stand mute.

Yet, as in all human panoramas the pattern is not free from variety. Election day in Georgetown is not exactly the

same as election day on the Corentyne. In the thickly populated urban areas, such as South Georgetown, the PNC thugs are rampant and their supporters are free to vote as many times, as they please. On the Corentyne, a traditional stronghold of the opposition, the army is the key. There are few PNC activists here, and the party depends on the armed forces to deploy, move in, and seize the boxes. Interference with polling is usually limited to excluding as many presumed opposition supporters as possible from voting.

Even within this overall contrast, there are individual variations. Here and there in Georgetown, a presiding officer reveals the traditional virtues; in the rural areas, in a traditionally PNC village, violence against opposition representatives occurs. But the overall pattern remains.

The 9th December, 1985 elections, contrary to the hopes of many Guyanese, did not reveal any departure from the patterns of behaviour in 1973 and 1980. The army was out again in full battle array, seizing boxes in many parts of the country, particularly in the rural areas. Thugs once more had the run of the polling stations in urban areas and at some places in the countryside as well. Countless violations occurred in and around the polling stations, which were, at worst, committed and at best ignored, by elections officials and the police. The boxes once again "vanished" into the secret back rooms for many hours. One can go on and on.

Indeed, the 1985 elections were in many ways even worse. For, as the government itself admitted, there was no threat, real or pretended, to their peaceful progress. As the Ministry of Information analysis of the elections* which was distributed to Embassies and High Commissions in Guyana and to institutions abroad, but which was not otherwise distributed in Guyana, stated: "The December 1985 campaign was the most peaceful and orderly one that Guyana had witnessed for over three decades" (paragraph 33 (i)).

Indeed, some days prior to the elections, at the public request of the leading Christian Churches, the main opposition parties pledged themselves and their supporters to uphold the principles of non-violence during the elections. The PNC did not respond to the same public appeal.

And yet, in spite of the total absence of any threat to the peace on the part of the opposition, the PNC's armed forces, from GDF soldiers to its street thugs, came

out in full force to do their dirty work, as the dirty events recorded hereunder will show:

(a) **Violent evictions of opposition agents from polling stations:**

As regards these allegations, the same Ministry of Information document stated:

"There is not a scintilla of truth in any of these allegations; and remarkably enough, the PPP has not essayed any proof of them More specifically, with respect to allegations (that PPP polling agents were prevented from performing their legitimate duties by violence), it is untrue that Presiding Officers refused to allow PPP polling agents to take up their positions or that any of these agents was expelled or threatened as alleged, or at all" (para. 37(1) and (2)a).

What were the facts? According to reports made soon after the events in question, the Georgetown polling stations from which PPP agents were evicted and had their documents seized by thugs on polling day, and the the times the reports stated that such evictions took place, were:

Georgetown Polling Station No.	Name of PPP Polling Agent making report	Reported time of eviction
(63.	West Ruimveldt Terrence Gonie @	4.00 p.m.
(65.	West Ruimveldt *Richard Kanhai	11.30 a.m.
(66.	West Ruimveldt Heeralall Persaud	11.35 a.m.
(68.	West Ruimveldt *Ariune Carpen	11.40 a.m.
(69.	East Ruimveldt Lalman Ramchan	12.30 p.m.
(70.	East Ruimveldt Permanand	12.10 p.m.
(71.	East Ruimveldt Mohan Sahadeo	12.20 p.m.
(74.	Houston Rhola Persaud	4.15 p.m.
(75.	Houston Ramnarine Singh	4.00 p.m.
(85.	Albouystown Bunny Persaud	11.30 a.m.
(86.	Albouystown Rooplall Kisson	11.30 a.m.
(87.	Albouystown Parmanauth Deodnauth	11.30 a.m.
(88.	Albouystown Lakeraj Raghurir	11.30 a.m.
(89.	Albouystown Haniff Mohamed	11.30 a.m.
(90.	Charlestown Bibi Nazella Abdool	12.50 p.m.
(91.	Charlestown *Harrichand Deonarine	2.00 p.m.
(92.	Charlestown Phulmattie Sanichar	2.00 p.m.
(93.	Charlestown Roopan Singh	1.50 p.m.

(105. Werk-en-Rust	*Kamladevi Ross	5.35 p.m.
(109. Lodge	Lalta Roopnarine	1.00 p.m.
(140. Kitty	Chabiram Deoraj	1.15 p.m.
(145. Kitty	*Rohan Roopnarine	p.m.
(146. Kitty	Deoram Deoraj	1.10 p.m.
(147. Kitty	*Nandranie Pariag	2.00 p.m.

(Those names marked with asterisks have their statements attached to this document as Appendix B).

On the same day of the elections, Mrs. Janet Jagan of the PPP informed the Commissioner of Police by telephone and in writing of the violent eviction of fifteen PPP agents from Polling Stations in or around Georgetown. This was done at about 2 p.m. At all of the stations listed by her, such evictions had clearly taken place. Yet President Hoyte relies on a document prepared by his Ministry of Information stating that the Commissioner, after investigating, concluded that no such violations had occurred, and that the Chairman of the Elections Commission, Sir Harold Bollers; had neither seen nor heard anything about them.

WPA polling agents also reported being physically evicted by thugs from polling stations in East Ruimveldt, Houston, Albouystown and Werk-en-Rust. We attach the statements by WPA agents Brentol Holder, Sewnandan Suriypaul, Danuta Radzik and Brian Rodway. (See Appendix C).

In addition to these evictions in Georgetown, opposition agents at Eccles on the East Bank, Demerara, near to Georgetown and at Haslington and Nabaclis, on the East Coast, Demerara, were also violently evicted. Not to be overlooked is the extent of the threats used against polling agents. One PPP agent, after being kicked out was told: "If you come back you'll have your grave here".

The incident at Haslington, (which received some international publicity) was of such seriousness that British journalist Anthony Jenkins thought he was "in danger of being lynched" when he and Dr. Cheddi Jagan were mobbed by gun-toting PNC thugs.

The statement of the PPP polling agent at Haslington, Deepaul Sewlall, dated the same day of the election, gives a good idea of the extent of the thuggery. Dr Jagan had entered (the polling station) with Moses Nagamootoo and a body guard. She (the P/O) then went to the window and shouted to some people downstairs to go and tell "the group" that Dr. Jagan was here to make disturbance. A group of men then came into the building and attacked

Dr. Jagan. There was one policeman on duty; he just stood there all the time”.

In addition to denying that the evictions occurred, the Ministry of Information document goes on to mount a second line of defence, just in case those for whose eyes the document was intended — persons outside of Guyana — found out that such violent events did occur:—

“But even if one assumed that PPP agents were ejected from 39 polling places, it is difficult to see how this could have had any effect on the outcome of the elections, since there were 807 polling stations throughout the country and 39 would represent less than 5 per cent of the total number of polling stations”. (para. 39(2)).

This ingenious statement was meant to divert attention from the real significance of the evictions in Region 4. That significance lies partly in the fact that opposition agents were evicted from at least twenty-four (24) stations in Georgetown, representing more than one-quarter of the voters in the Capital .

Most of the evictions were in effect from some of the most highly populated working class areas of South Georgetown, where in the elections of the 1950s and 1960s the PNC drew its greatest support. But, they are precisely the areas most hit by the economic disasters that have befallen Guyana under the PNC. A low turn out of voters, or any other indication that the people in these areas were not supporting the PNC would prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the PNC had lost the election.

It was from this area that in 1973 the first evidence of a PNC loss of support among the urban Afro-Guyanese working class emerged — when the early declaration of the result for Werk-en-Rust in South Georgetown showed a low poll. As a result, the announcement of results was suspended for many hours while the boxes were rigged, and figures then emerged that “corrected” this first impression! This “pause” is famous in Guyana, as marking the beginning of total electoral rigging.

Since President Burnham’s death, the PNC propaganda machine had worked overtime to persuade the population that the economy would improve and elements in the PNC hoped that with a new image the “old” PNC vote would turn out. It took only a couple of hours of voting in the morning to reveal that this was a pipe dream. The turn out in South Georgetown was poorer than ever. Slow polling was reported at most stations. So the thugs went into action evicting those who could have

recorded and reported the number of persons voting at each polling station, and the attempts at massive recycling that had by now become a traditional method by which attempts are made to hide the withdrawal of its erstwhile supporters.

That these acts were not sporadic or spontaneous eruptions is shown by the systematic way in which the thugs operated. They used the same vehicles to move from one set of polling stations to another, evicting the opposition agents as they went.

Motor vehicles numbers are mentioned in opposition agents' reports as moving these thugs from one polling station to another, from Kitty in North Georgetown to West Ruimveldt in South Georgetown, to Houston and Eccles, south of the city. One for instance, appeared at Eccles, south of Georgetown, at around 4 p.m and then at Houston (nearby) soon after. One vehicle appeared with its load of thugs at West Ruimveldt in South Georgetown around 4 p.m. and at Houston, South of Georgetown at around 4.15 p.m. Another appeared at Kitty in North Georgetown just after midday and at Houston, south of the city later that afternoon (4.15 p.m.).

- (b) In addition to the violent evictions noted above, PPP polling agents, reported being refused entry at 18 polling stations in Region 4 — on the East Bank, Georgetown and the East Coast.
- (c) In addition to those opposition agents, whose documents were seized by the thugs who evicted them from their polling stations, there were other reports of seizure and/or switching at polling stations of all documents (such as voters' lists) and paper taken into the polling stations by opposition agents. They would sometimes be handed another voters' list by an official, who would then take it back just before the polling agent left the station and hand back the papers brought in by the agents. This occurred too regularly to be merely accidental errors of procedure.

Clearly this was part of an organised attempt to prevent opposition agents from departing with their notes or other written record of their observations, thus making statistical information difficult to acquire. In addition to those polling stations already mentioned in which the papers of opposition agents were snatched from them by thugs, the seizure or switching of documents by Presiding Officers themselves was reported at eight polling stations.

(d) False and/or Multiple voting (recycling of voters)

This has become a familiar practice at elections since 1968. It ranges from activists entering polling stations and taking ballot books from the officials to be filled in by them outside the polling stations, to open and repeated multiple voting over the objections of opposition agents. Such practices were reported in varying degrees by opposition agents at the thirty-six polling stations in Region 4. These stations cover the whole length of Region 4, from those up the Demerara River, through Georgetown and up the East Coast, Demerara, to the Mahaica River.

3) How were the boxes transported to and kept at the counting centres?

(1) THE ARMY'S ROLE:

In the 1973 elections, now notorious for the intervention of the army, the excuse given for that massive military operation was the existence of a threat to the security of the boxes.

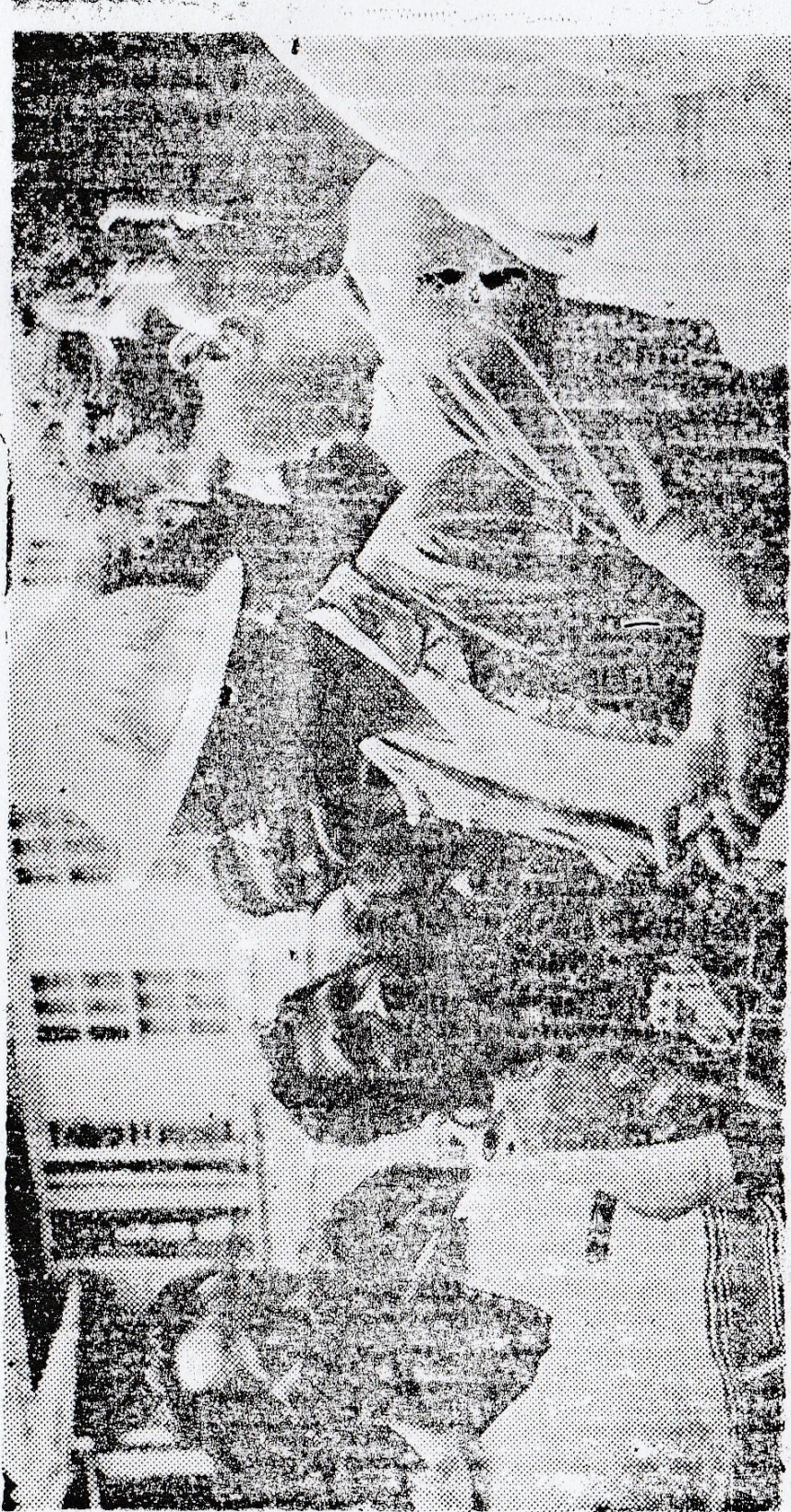
The official report of the Chief Election Officer referred to a broadcast by Prime Minister Burnham and a statement by the Minister of Home Affairs which indicated that there were "reports of organised efforts to disrupt the arrangements made for the counting of ballots in the various electoral districts". (Page 14).

This perceived "threat" was the excuse given for the refusal by the government on the day of the election to permit opposition agents to accompany the boxes, contrary to previous assurances given by the Elections Commission and the Chief Elections Officer which had been publicly announced.

As the report stated:

"Contrary to radio news flashes and press releases; because of the security arrangements to ensure the safety of the ballot boxes when they were being transported the Chief Election Officer did not permit persons other than the polling place officers and a constable to escort the boxes within the city limits for the electoral districts outside Greater Georgetown heavy security forces escorts were mounted for the conveyance of the boxes to the places of the count". (Page 16).

Please remember that, in 1973, all the central places of counting for the whole country were placed within the city limits of Georgetown. So a refusal to allow "others"



This is a scene after the incident of thugery at Haslington, in which Dr. Jagan was threatened at gunpoint, and British journalist Anthony Jenkins was mauled. Mr. Jenkins was also robbed. Dr. Jagan accompanied by the journalist had gone to the polling station to look into a complaint from a citizen, who was denied the right to vote although her name was on the list.

to accompany the boxes "within the city limits" meant in effect the removal of the boxes from the view of independent or opposition agents before they reached the counting centres. In fact, of course, the boxes were detained at Army Headquarters, for many hours.

While in 1973, the excuse given for such a wide scale "heavy" security operation was that a threat to the security of the boxes existed, in December 1985 the government itself admitted that no such threat existed. Indeed, they allege that no threat of disturbances around the polling places existed in the 1980 or in the 1985 elections. They, therefore, assert the assistance of the security forces was not required to "safeguard" the boxes, nor did they play such a role in either election. (Pages 13 and 14 of the Ministry of Information Analysis).

Yet in 1980, the Avebury Commission had reported as follows:— "The military presence in some areas was intimidating. The boxes were collected by military personnel who prevented accredited officials of the opposition, sometimes by force or the threat of force, from accompanying or following the boxes. Military personnel refused accredited representatives of opposition parties access to the Count at gunpoint in some cases".

Thus the PNC government's statement that the army played no role in 1980 is a hopeless and insulting lie. What about December 1985? The government says "there is not a scintilla of truth in any of these allegations the PPP's allegation that ballot boxes were seized by the army is ridiculous army personnel did not touch or otherwise come into physical contact with the ballot boxes, and certainly had no role and did not intervene in the electoral process in any way whatsoever". (Paragraph 40).

What was the truth?

In Region 4, polling agents reported that the boxes were taken by the GDF from up the Demerara River (on the highway to Linden) at stations stretching from station 1 on the Linden Highway up the Demerara River through to the last station — station 250 on the Mahaica River.

The PPP polling agent at station 1 (Krishna Mohabir) reported in a written statement dated the same day, the 9th of December, 1985 that: "6.07 p.m. army people came and took control of polling place. 7.00 p.m. another army officer came and took over ballot boxes to the truck. Truck collected all other boxes along Highway to place of counting."

Reports of GDF "collection" of the ballot boxes were also received from the polling agents at stations 11, 19, 20, 28, 45, (agents left before army trucks departed) 181, 200, 215, 216, 217, 219, 220, 221, 222 and 240. All these within Region 4 alone.

The PPP polling agent at station 222 in Enmore, East Coast, Demerara (Ramsammy Ramangan) reported: "Box collected 7.00 p.m. Presiding Officer fetched box about 200 metres on command from GDF soldiers in full combat uniforms. Only 4 Presiding Officers (there were 4 polling stations at that building — a Primary School) were allowed by military to go in the tray of a big army lorry with boxes. I couldn't find the Presiding Officer to ask him to accompany the boxes. I followed with the other polling agents from the school to the road. About 5 well armed soldiers actually pointed big machine guns with bayonets at the crowd. Then in a real military fashion the soldiers reversed towards their truck with their guns still pointed at the crowd and disappeared in their vehicle to follow the first truck a land rover with about 10 thugs. There were also about 12 police around them".

A WPA polling agent (Lorna Grant) in the same area Enmore — in polling station 219 at the Enmore Community Centre, reported: "Box uplifted by about 12 soldiers with additional two army land rovers".

Another WPA agent at station 212 in Enterprize also on the East of Demerara (June King) reported: "Ballot box taken by land rover with 5 persons inside 6 CID persons were in a white car and 2 persons in a Suzuki jeep. Also an open back pick-up and a Guyana Transport Bus with Tactical Service Unit (special police) and police personnel. These vehicles formed a convoy until Vigilance Police Station (about 12 miles from Georgetown) where exchange of the box with GDF soldiers who were in the street with guns. GDF trucks box with Returning Officer passed the poll agent on the road".

A third, Dwarka Persaud, stationed at polling station number 26 in Craig, East Bank Demerara noted: ". . . about 6.30 p.m. to 6.45 p.m. 15 to 18 soldiers fully armed came down on the crowd in a threatening manner to shoot which caused a panic and followed by dispersion of the crowd, the GDF soldiers took the box away 7.25 p.m."

Bissoon Rajkumar, a WPA candidate reporting for WPA Polling Agents on a section of the East Bank, Demerara. Region 4, observed: "Blue German truck 7.10 p.m. arrived at Grove School polling station accompanied by

army truck green colour with 20 soldiers heavily armed left with ballot boxes, German truck carrying them followed by soldier truck”.

The situation was the same in other regions: For example, for Region 5, the DLM Assistant Election Agent, Cecil Naraine, noted that at Rosignol, “The military personnel with their vehicles took possession of the boxes.”

For Region 2, another DLM Assistant Election Agent, reported as follows: “After polling closed some persons took the ballot boxes along with members of the armed forces who pointed guns at our agents.” (See Appendix D)

And for Region 3, Norman Dalrymple, WPA Assistant Election Agent reported: “At Patentia, thousands were on the streets looking across East to the polling station to see what will happen to the ballot box. As soon as darkness arrived, the army was there fully armed in large numbers; two big trucks; two land rovers. A white land rover received the box which was fetched by the Presiding Officer. Other PNC comrades were there in other vehicles such as the Regional land rovers and other cars. At Wales and La Grange I saw an open back truck (unknown) with ballot boxes and they were guarded by armed soldiers..”

These reports constitute only a small part of the evidence on the role played by the army in the December 1985 elections.

(ii) The GDF IN BERBICE

In the county of Berbice, which (particularly on the Corentyne coast) runs between the Berbice and Corentyne Rivers and is the most highly populated part of Berbice, the GDF were rampant. This electoral region (region 6) has traditionally been the stronghold of the PPP, whose leader Dr. Jagan, was born at Port Mourant, on the Corentyne.

The reality behind the PNC's claim to have “broken through” to widescale support among the rural East Indians is revealed in the behaviour of the GDF, and the reaction of the people of the Corentyne to it in 1973, 1980 and 1985. Having claimed a “breakthrough” in this region in the 1973 elections, the government demonstrated the hallowness of this claim when they were forced to move the famous Arnold Rampersaud trial from the Corentyne to Georgetown as a result of strong popular opinion there.

Reports by PPP agents from Berbice show a widespread military operation, very similar to 1973 and 1980, throughout the coast. From station 4 on the East Bank Berbice, and throughout the length of the thickly popu-

lated Corentyne coast, the GDF in battle array, seized the boxes. The Corentyne stretches from the Canje River on the outskirts of the town of New Amsterdam for a distance of about 40 miles to the Corentyne River — containing polling stations numbers 31 to 128 out of the total of 133 polling stations in Region 6. Written reports covering polling stations throughout the Corentyne (from Nos. 35, 42, 47, 48, 54, 55, 57, 60, 63, to 67, 69, 70, 77, 87, 89, 90, 104, 105, 106, 107, and 109 to 127) show that the boxes were taken by the GDF and/or any attempt to accompany them by opposition agents were dealt with by force.

For example, a signed account by the PPP polling agent for station 47 (P. Mohan) situated at East Canje, Berbice states that around 6.50 p.m. "army personnel ran into building while others surrounded (road was not blocked). Issued instructions saying he has 1 minute more to collect box and finish all other arrangements (6 minutes in all). Polling clerks were ordered to move quickly out of the building at gun point Box was carried away".

The overriding control of the army is shown by the report of the PPP polling agent at station number 42 (Sheet Anchor, Canje) Lall Bahadur Singh who reported that he "was told by the Presiding Officer polling agents are allowed to follow ballot boxes, however, army personnel did not allow."

A PPP organiser, R. Sakawatt wrote a statement dated 12th December, 1985 which describes how the PNC really "broke through" on the Corentyne. After watching the army "collect" the ballot boxes at Port Mourant, he wrote:

"The Army's role in the General and Regional Elections Polling. Div. 622323 (No. 69): (i) Josephine Prashad's residence Lot 262 Clifton — After the close of polling a car with police arrived and threatened the crowd to disperse. The crowd dispersed. About 23 minutes later a private truck and an Army truck arrived. The army truck was laden with soldiers who hurriedly jumped out of the truck and took up positions along the road. They were ordered by some one at the head of them.

The Box was taken by the police into the private truck. The Presiding Officer and PPP polling agent also were in the truck. The two trucks reversed to the public road and drove to the next polling place. This other polling place is just one street away.

Polling Div No. 622323 (No. 70): (ii) Aladhar Bisram's residence Clifton Settlement, Port Mourant. A crowd was ordered to disperse by the soldiers in a very harsh and

(rough) cruel way. The soldiers, in the process of dispersing the crowd, made a wild cat-like howling, hitting out at the people in a hysterical way. One PPP member was butted by a soldier in to the nearby drain; while another soldier helped him (PPP member) out. One person was braced against a G.E.C. post and butted twice. In the process of clearing the crowd wild shouts of MOVE! MOVE! were heard.

While all this was going on, the polling box was taken and placed in the truck. The PPP polling agent was taken out of the truck and the one at Bilsram's residence was not allowed to go with the truck.

The same trucks drove on to Tain Government school. With their wild cat-like cry and MOVE! MOVE!, the soldiers tried to disperse the crowd that gathered nearby. An old pensioner was butted and some young people were braced and butted. . . . The box was again taken and placed in the truck.

After polling (at Miss Phoebe) — again box collected and placed in same truck and guarded by a truck load of army men armed to the teeth — with bayonets shining in the dark.”

At another polling station at Leeds Primary School in Leeds Village on the Corentyne, the PPP polling agent at station 90, Ramjattan Ganesh reported: “Voters voted peacefully during the day. Polling Agent was manhandled by soldiers, guns were placed at my neck while coming out from Polling Station. Attempt was made to snatch away my wristwatch by soldiers.”

An account of the same incident was given in a statement dated 12th December, 1985, and signed by B. Bhagdass. The statement is headed: “Information Comrades relate”, and is as follows:

“At around 8.00 pm at the polling place Leeds Polling Station, PPP polling agent Ramjattan Ganesh was representing the party. The army truck and an army jeep and another truck stopped at the gate and 4 soldiers rushed into the school while others took their positions in the school yard and around the vehicles. One of the soldiers asked who will go with the box and the PPP agent said he will accompany it. The said soldier hit him twice with the gun butt and made an attempt to pull his wristwatch away but could not manage.”

On the upper Corentyne, opposite Suriname along the Corentyne River, the same story was repeated. The situation in this area is described by K. Ramdass of Crabwood Creek in a statement signed by him and dated 10th December, 1985. It is headed “Report on conduct of

elections for Crabwood Creek-Skeldon Area". It states in part that:

"At 6.20 p.m. both myself and B. Mahadeo went to Polling Place No. 624. Whilst parked on the road the GDF truck crammed with armed soldiers along with a Land Rover marked Region 6 and another Land Rover with soldiers in it arrived at polling place No. 625 and stopped. Immediately soldiers started jumping out of the truck and ran to the back of the house encompassing the polling booth. Four soldiers along with what appeared as some PNC activist or official went into Polling Place and asked everyone out and shortly afterwards emerged with the ballot box fully guarded by 5 soldiers. In the meantime the entire road was cordoned off with soldiers stopping all traffic on the northern and southern sides of the road.

"PNC activist and Commissioner of Oaths was however allowed to handle boxes that were in the Land Rover. The same method was carried out at Polling Place No. 624. No opposition Polling Agents were allowed near the boxes, when they were being packed.

A request by PPP's Polling Agent at No. 624 to follow the box was turned down. As well as a similar request by PPP agent at No. 622 was turned down. Presiding Officer told our agent that instructions were that no one must be in the Land Rover carrying the Ballot Boxes.

Land Rover hastily drove off and was followed by our car and others that were arranged to follow the box. After driving for about 300 yards, soldiers come in front of our car and stopped us. The GDF truck then came in front of us and then continued driving.

The entire operation was repeated at polling place No. 622 and 623. with hundreds of bystanders bearing witness to the biggest fraud being perpetrated on the Guyanese nation.

Still following the GDF and its cargo of armed puppets of the PNC, with Land Rover containing the ballot boxes. The next stop was at the D.C. office Springlands. Polling Place No. 631. Using the same method cordoning off of the road at both ends. Soldiers going into the Polling Place. Coming out with Ballot Box. Placing same in Land Rover. Both vehicles drove off into the direction of New Amsterdam.

At this point we received word from one of our party's activist that we were not to follow the ballot boxes any longer. Walking back with two other activists and approaching the Springlands Police Station, we noticed that there was a road block on the northern and southern

sides of the road. Soldiers were swarming all over the road with guns in their hands. All traffic was stopped, only the GTS bus was allowed to pass there.

A hub of activity was taking place in the Police Compound. Minimum amount of light was in use at that time. The Court house's upper flat had no lights on.

Submitted by
K. Ramdass
Crabwood Creek
12. 12. 85.'

Another person who recorded the army's take over of the ballot boxes on the upper Corentyne was Chandra-shekhar, a PPP monitor on elections day, part of whose statement in his own handwriting, dated 10th December, 1985 and headed "Report on the activities of Polling Day. 9th December 1985" is photocopied and attached as Appendix E. It corroborates the statements previously mentioned as regards the activities of the GDF.

(iii) **ACCOMPANYING THE BOXES**

The statements made late in the afternoon of the day of the election by the PPP and WPA that they were withdrawing from further participation in the elections, a decision taken in response to the abuses experienced up to that point on election day, have been made much of by the PNC Government. The Minister of Information apologia states:

"The PPP's decision meant that like 'the WPA, that party was declining to participate in the crucial exercise of accompanying the ballot boxes to ensure (and confirm beyond the shadow of a doubt) that the ballot boxes reached the central places of count intact. The PPP thus positioned itself in advance to make allegations of fraud to explain its defeat at the polls.' (Para. 36 (i)).

The question of keeping the boxes in view up to and throughout the counting of the votes was widely regarded, not only by the opposition parties, as THE crucial test in this election (as in previous ones). The Guyana Bar Association, for instance, wrote Sir Harold Bollers before the elections in December 1985 urging him to strengthen his 1980 direction which merely permitted presiding officers to allow polling agents to accompany the boxes to the counting centre. The Bar Association pointed out that this direction left too much discretion in the hands of such officers, and gave no guidance concerning the observation of the boxes after they reached the counting

centre. They requested an urgent meeting with the Commission.

Sir Harold's response was to decline to meet the lawyers, but he did "issue" a directive to the effect that polling agents of the parties should be allowed to accompany the boxes. President Hoyte also gave such an assurance. Whoever Sir Harold may have sent such a directive to and whatever President Hoyte said before the election, the practice on polling day was Presiding Officers frequently refused to permit this and, even where they did, the security forces in possession of the boxes, refused to allow any such polling agents to accompany them.

On this point, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, in a letter to President Hoyte seeking clarification on the matter, attached a letter he had written to the Chairman of the Elections Commission, in which he had requested:

1. That the boxes be kept at all times between the close of polling and the end of counting in the view of the agents of the opposition parties, and that, for this purpose any boxes being moved to the counting centre must be continuously in the view of opposition parties' polling agents to the counting centre until met by opposition parties counting agents and duly appointed candidates at the counting centre.
2. That a PPP agent and at least one agent from the other opposition parties be allowed in the same vehicle, boat or aircraft, etc. conveying the ballot boxes to the place of count.
3. That the boxes must be taken straight into the area where the counting is to take place and not secluded for any time whatsoever in a back room or other area to which such opposition agents have no access.
4. That there should be no removal of the boxes from the view of opposition party agents at anytime, and particularly at the time of handover to the counting centre.

The letter to the Commission also asked that those directives should be given to the Chief Election Officer and all other electoral officers and publicised in the press and radio; further, that the Commission request from President Hoyte in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief that the armed forces and police be instructed "to permit opposition parties' polling agents to accompany ballot boxes and counting agents and duly appointed candidates to have access to the counting centres, and particularly to all areas in which ballot boxes are and may be kept at all times, both before and during the counting of ballots."

The PPP had done this, because although in the 1973 general elections the Chief Election Officer had agreed to permit a single representative of the 3 opposition parties to accompany the ballot boxes, they had not been permitted.

The President in his reply to Dr. Jagan sidetracked the issue. The Elections Commission agreed that polling agents "shall accompany" the ballot boxes, a change from "may accompany" in the 1980 elections, but there were still many reservations which provided loopholes for the military, police and election officers to frustrate the wishes of the Guyanese people that tampering with the ballot boxes must be prevented.

The late withdrawal of the PPP and WPA did not prevent the collection of abundant evidence of interference and obstruction, as their decisions concerning withdrawal from the process were only taken late in the afternoon of the election, and instructions to withdraw did not reach many polling agents until some time after the polls had closed. In many cases such instructions were not received at all.

We thus know, from their reports, as well as from reports from DLM agents, that opposition polling agents expressly reported having asked to accompany the boxes, and being denied the opportunity by the Presiding Officer or the armed forces collecting the boxes, in stations in Region 4 (East Bank, Demerara, Georgetown and East Coast, Demerara) and Region 6 (East Berbice, including the East Bank, Berbice River, New Amsterdam and the Corentyne Coast), and at stations in other regions.

At one polling station in New Amsterdam (No. 27) Region 6, the PPP polling agent was permitted to accompany the boxes in a Guymine (nationalised bauxite company) bus to the place of counting — the New Amsterdam Multilateral School. However, he was only allowed to go up to the entrance and then was told he could go no further. The boxes were then taken out of his sight.

DLM Assistant Election Agent for Region 4, Lachman Tullaram reported from Lusignan, East Coast, Demerara, "After the boxes were sealed I enquired from the army officer present about following the boxes, and he said nobody was allowed in his vehicle and that is orders from the top."

Another Assistant Election Agent for DLM, Cecil Naraine (Region 5), had a similar experience after the army took possession of the boxes at Rosignol Polling Station: "I was refused permission to accompany the

boxes. The army officers told me there was no space in their vehicle. I insisted but was pushed around by the officers. The vehicle later left for the counting centre."

A third, Hemwant Persaud, for Region 2, reported: "...Counting agent for DLM, Raymond Gill and myself rushed to the Returning Officer after this scene (removal of ballot boxes by army) to find out what was the position concerning the accompanying of ballot boxes by opposition forces. We further pointed out that the PNC Chronicle dated 8/12/85 stated clearly that opposition agents will be allowed to accompany ballot box in accordance with People's Representation Act 3:10. His reply was that he does not control the armed forces and cannot do anything about it."

DLM Polling Agent Krishna Naraine, stationed at a polling station in Windsor Forest, West Coast Demerara (Region 3) was violently prevented from accompanying the boxes by soldiers: "We were taking the President's word for granted ('polling agents are allowed to follow the ballot boxes') and were attempting to get into the army truck with the ballot boxes when a sergeant with gun in hand told us to back off the truck. I insisted in getting into the army truck, the sergeant then fired a kick at me and told me to disappear. Myself and the other agents then got into a car to follow the army truck, but was again threatened and told to keep off."

A WPA candidate, Ameer Mohamed, reporting on Region 2 stated as follows: "After the boxes were taken away by the army, no one was allowed to accompany any box." A WPA polling agent at station number 67 in Region 3, Baby Sookram, said that "There were also road blocks at Leonora, opposite the police station blocking vehicles which wanted to follow the ballot box."

Another WPA polling agent, P. Pooran, who was at Queenstown Community Centre on the Essequibo Coast (Region 2), reported: "At about 7.30 p.m. the army came at gun point, demanded the ballot box and placed it in a waiting truck. Before the army came I asked the presiding officer that according to the rules which I have received the ballot should be counted in the place of poll. Or if not I must accompany the ballot box to the place of count. The presiding officer told me that according to regulations we were not permitted and no agent is allowed to accompany the ballot box. I was turned away after the ballot box was seized by the army."

(4) HOW WERE THE VOTES COUNTED?

In spite of, or perhaps because of the fact that this is a most controversial area concerning elections in Guyana, it is the most difficult to obtain any information about. Great care has always been taken by the forces controlling the electoral process to exclude all non-PNC elements from the counting centres until the "official" time of counting is stated to have begun. This has always involved the lapse of many hours and even days between the boxes being seen to enter the counting centres and the observers of the opposition parties being allowed to do the same.

During this period of non-observation, there is much activity. Many PNC candidates may be seen entering the centres, most of them armed with the status of official "counters". What they are doing there so early, when the official count is not to start for many hours, no one can explain. Meanwhile, the army is in full control of the perimeters of the counting centres, with guns and bayonets at the ready.

The 1980 Avebury Commission report had stated: "The forceable expulsion of the opposition agents from all the places where ballot boxes were held, and the delay of at least 15 hours in the announcing of first returns of the count, undermines the credibility of this process," (Page 25)

What happened in December 1985? Again, there are enough reports on which to make the judgement that opposition agents were prevented from observing the count. For example, PPP Counting Agent (Michael Chan) for Region 9 (Upper Takatu — Upper Essequibo River) reported that while two of the PPP's polling agents were allowed to accompany the ballot boxes up to the place of counting, he, as a counting agent was not allowed into the counting centre. "...I arrived at the place of counting at approximately 7.45 p.m. on December 9, 1985. I spoke to the Returning Officer and requested to have a look at the box. This request was denied and I was advised that I can stay outside of the building at approximately 10 to 15 yards away.

At 9.23 p.m. the Presiding Officer locked the office where the boxes were stored. At 9.25 p.m. I was instructed along with PPP polling agents Alcides and Moses and UF polling agent Harripaul to get out of the compound. It was raining and I requested permission of a Police Constable to shelter until the rain stopped

ped. This he denied. The Returning Officer said he cannot guarantee my return to the compound in order to keep a watch over the ballot boxes. I left the Region at approximately 4.30 p.m. on December 11, 1985. The counting of the ballots had not started."

That is, counting had not started 46½ hours after the official close of the poll!

Navin Chandarpal, the PPP candidate for Region 5 (Mahaica/Berbice) which runs between Region 4 and Region 6 (Corentyne) reported as follows:

"1. I went to the gate of the Bygeval Multilateral School at 18.05 hours, along with the other PPP Counting Agent, Harrinarine. We presented our credentials to a Police Officer on duty and requested to be permitted entry to the Counting area in order to be present with the ballot boxes arriving at the Counting Centre.

2. We were refused entry and told that we can only be considered after the arrival of Mr. Mohamed Jaggernauth, the Returning Officer for Region No. 5.

3. Mr. Jaggernauth arrived at the Counting Centre at 22.15 hrs. by which time, it was useless to seek to enter to the Counting Centre since several boxes had already arrived and were being kept without any opposition polling agents permitted to remain with them.

4. Polling agents were allowed to accompany ballot boxes from the polling place but they were ejected at different points.

The polling agent from the St. Francis Mission Polling Station came with the ballot box in a helicopter which landed in the Bygeval school compound. But on arrival he along with the presiding officer were ejected from the compound. Polling agents from some polling stations were permitted to be in the vehicle with the box when it left the polling station. They were taken to the Mahaicony Police Station, where the Polling Agents were removed from the vehicle and told to go in another vehicle. The Presiding Officers were left on the road.

A few polling agents were taken in the vehicle with the boxes right on to the Bygeval School compound gate. There they were ejected and left outside of the compound while the boxes were taken into the school building."

Gerald Beaton (Assistant PPP elections agent and candidate for Region 7 — Cuyuni/Mazaruni) recorded a similar experience. He was repeatedly denied an opportunity to remain with the boxes until the counting began. He went on to say:

"On Monday 9th December, after the close of polling,

only 3 of our polling agents from the Bartica Area were allowed to accompany the ballot boxes to the store room near to the polling place. These three polling agents were required to leave the place of storage and the ballot boxes remained in the control of soldiers, policemen and PNC personnel. At 6.30 p.m. whilst in the compound of the Bartica Secondary School, the place of count, I observed that about 20 heavily armed soldiers had surrounded the school where the ballot boxes were about to arrive." (Signed Gerald Beaton), dated 12/12/85). (He also records a polling agent, Milton Innis being struck by a soldier when attempting to accompany the box.)

Joseph De Souza (a PPP candidate and Assistant Election Agent in Region 8 — Potaro/Siparuni) reported that he was permitted by a policeman to accompany the box from the polling station and enter the landrover to which the boxes had been taken. However, four minutes later another man "who was not a balloting officer" at that polling place ordered him out of the landrover, and the vehicle drove off without him. On December 10th around 6.00 p.m. he received a notice by the Returning Officer indicating that counting would take place at the Madhya Primary School on Tuesday at 8.00 p.m. When he went there on Tuesday the place was in "total darkness". He waited until 10 p.m. and left. On the 11th December he met the Returning Officer at the airstrip and was informed by him that all the boxes had not yet arrived.

Claudius London, a DLM candidate and counting agent for Region 4 reported: "I arrived at the North Ruimveldt Multilateral School at 5.30 p.m. to take my position as a counting agent for DLM. I was told by the Returning Officer to wait outside until all the ballot boxes arrived. I waited for approximately four hours by which time it became evident that most of the ballot boxes had arrived. I then enquired again.

I was again refused entry without a reason. However, I noticed that PNC officials and party supporters were allowed to enter."

Eon Halls, DLM Assistant Elections Agent in Region 10 (Wis/Mac) stated: "The Returning Officer for Linden also said that he would allow the DLM counting agent to enter, but efforts to get on to him on the said day failed and as such myself and the DLM counting agent were not allowed into the counting area by the army officers present."

In addition to these reports, a WPA counting agent for Region 10, Stanley Humphrey, reported:

"The official counting place for the area was Lichas Hall in Mackenzie. I was stopped from entering the Lichas Hall compound on the grounds that I needed a supporting letter from Hammond. One other agent who had such a letter was denied access to the counting premises."

These reports, together with the events which preceded the arrival of the boxes at the counting centres, leave no room for doubt that the procedure adopted in 1973 and 1980, as regards the removal of the boxes from independent observation for a substantial time between the close of polling and the commencement of the official count, remained unaltered in 1985.

The difference between the counting of votes in past honest elections in Guyana and the system of counting in rigged elections involves a vast difference in the time the results take to be announced.

In the 1964 pre-independence election, the first held under proportional representation, the Official Report showed that 243 counting assistants were appointed to count a national total of 247,604 votes cast. Voting in the 1964 election took place on the 7th of December, 1964. The **Daily Chronicle** of the day after the election (the 8th of December 1964) reported results having been declared for two of the (then) 35 electoral districts "at 11.30 pm last night", that is the same night of the election, and gave the results of another 18 districts which were declared after 11.30 p.m. on the night of the elections and very early in the morning of the next day including all the Georgetown districts and districts on the East Coast and West Coast of Demerara and in the county of Berbice. And in 1964, as in later elections, one should remember, the count in each district was required to wait until all the boxes for that district were in (see 1964 Election Report page 23).

This flow of results will surprise no West Indian accustomed to the counting of votes in any of the other West Indian countries, as the media reports of the recent Barbados elections will illustrate. But in Guyana such an exposure is a thing of the past. Election "results" under the PNC are only received after a disturbing length of time has elapsed. The December 9th, 1985 election was no exception.

The **Chronicle** of the 11th of December, 1985 reported that two of the regions had completed counting "early last evening" — that is on the evening of the day after the election — Region 2 (Pomeroon-Supenaam) and Region 5 (Mahaica, West Coast, Berbice). The same **Chronicle** reported "counting continuing last evening" (night of the

10th) in Region 6, 3 and 4 — the Corentyne, the West Coast, Demerara, and the most central Region 4, containing Georgetown. The same paper went on "other regions are yet to begin counting."

A "late flash" in the same *Chronicle* (11th December 1985) gave the results of Region 4. Thus, whilst in 1964 all the results for Georgetown and its surrounding areas were reported in the next day's paper, having come in throughout the night of election day from 11.30 p.m. onwards, in 1985 none of the results anywhere had come in by early evening of the day after the election (after 24 hours) and the most central region of all, Region 4, was "continuing counting" 24 hours after polls had closed.

The *Chronicle* of the day before (the 10th December 1985) had reported under the heading "counting begins" on its back page: "a staff of about 150 counting clerks has begun opening the 249 ballot boxes used in Region 4 during yesterday's general and regional elections the counting began at 02.45 hours under the supervision of Hector Bunyan a senior official at the National Registration Centre. Similar counting exercises are taking place in the other nine electoral districts."

This would mean that "counting" only started nearly nine hours after the polls closed, and continued through the day and into the evening of the next day. In other words, "counting" began 3 hours after the results for that for that area had been announced in the last honest election in 1964.

That is not all. Three days after the 1985 election, the *Chronicle* of December 12th still reported on its front page that three Regions, Nos. 7, 8 and 9, were yet to complete counting, and "among fresh returns available yesterday" were Regions 6, 10 and 3 (the Corentyne, Linden/Wismar and the West Coast, Demerara). So those regions were only declared 2 days after the polls had closed! In 1964 results for the Corentyne (the greatest PPP stronghold) had come in the same night of the election in time to be announced in the next day's paper.

When one considers that, in 1964, 243 counting assistants were used to count a national total of 247,604 votes cast (more than 1,000 votes per counter) and, according to the *Chronicle*, "about 150 counting clerks" were used to count the 119,858 votes cast in Region 4 alone (about 800 votes per counter); and that the results in 1964 were announced the night and early morning of the next day of the election, whilst in 1985 they were announced 24

hours after the polls had closed, is there reason to seek further?

The reason for the universal denial of access to the counting centres for such long periods, and the unusual length of time that elapses before the official "count" begins and the results are announced is not difficult to find. This is the one area that must be kept secret by the riggers, for it is here that the "results" must be achieved.

In spite of this great secrecy and heavy security, there are some indications of some of the methods used by the riggers. Two statements, one by a PPP activist from Cane Grove on the East Coast, Demerara and another from the WPA counting agent at Wismar/Mackenzie up the Demerara River, referred to above, reveal glimpses of some aspects of this secret process.

Harripersaud Gangaram, a PPP regional candidate of Cane Grove, East Coast, Demerara, a village on the Mahaica River about 30 miles by road from Georgetown in Region 4, reported in a statement written by him:

"On Sunday afternoon, (December 8th) about 1.30 pm, a truck came in Cane Grove with ballot boxes, one was dropped out at a P.N.C. activist House in Virginia Village, 2 at an unofficial office in Virginia Village, another one at an official's House at Virginia Village and 3 more at a state building. On Monday morning about 1.30 to 2.00 a.m. these boxes were moved out by a jeep."

Stanley Humphrey, the WPA counting agent in Region 10, in the bauxite belt, reported in a statement signed by him that:

"An unauthorised person's home was used as a "polling station" at Wisroc. During the afternoon and continuing into the night persons were in the residence filling out Ballot Books. After the close of poll, soldiers went to this unauthorised place of poll and transferred the marked ballots packed into canvas bags to a place in Third Phase in Wisroc.

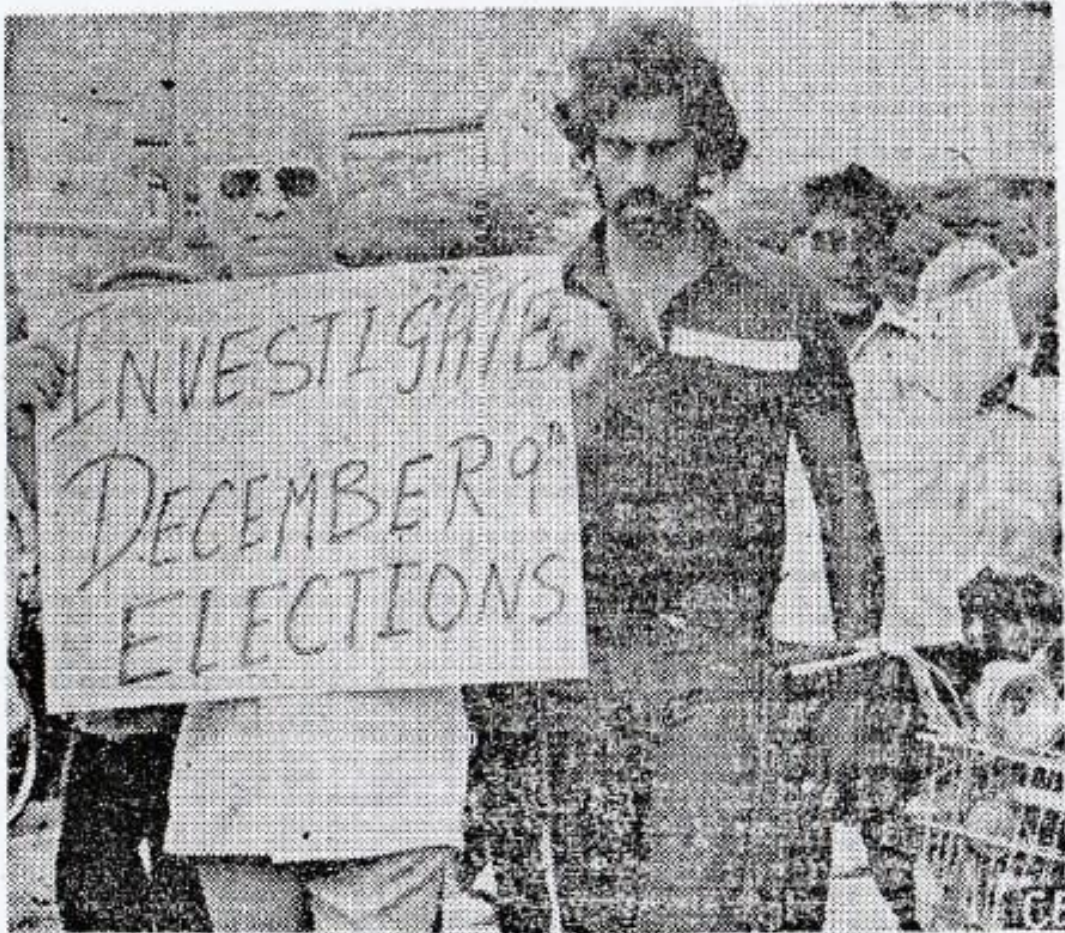
About 30 soldiers had taken up quarters here in 3 unoccupied buildings since the previous Thursday, December 5th. These unoccupied buildings are near to where I live in Wisroc.

This operation of transferring the ballots in canvas bags to these unoccupied buildings by soldiers took place around 11 p.m. A neighbour of mine who was coming home from work from the 11 o'clock shift had passed the place where the soldiers were unloading the canvas bags. He had seen a jeep parked nearby these unoccupied buildings and saw canvas bags being taken out of the jeep by soldiers

and carried into the buildings. The neighbour was 'stuck up' by the soldiers at gun point, they asked him where he lived and they followed him to where he lived."

Photocopies of both statements are attached as Appendix F.

It is these methods that produce the statistical absurdities of the PPP "winning" 123 votes in Region 1, where its list of candidates and sponsors alone totalled 136 and the DLM "winning 62 votes in Region 10, where 220 persons with ID cards sponsored its list of candidates.



Here Dr. Jagan is part of a protest demonstration calling for an investigation into the malpractices uncovered in the 1985 elections. To date nothing has been done. Rather than investigate, the government hastily published a document completely white-washing the whole sordid affair.

Conclusion

**"Last night, as I was walking up the stairs,
I met a man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today.
I wish to God he'd go away!"**

To some leaders of the Caricom countries and other persons outside of Guyana, President Hoyte may be seen as "a man you can talk to". But in Guyana, whenever the national need to talk to legitimate, independent organisations arises, whether they are the Catholic or Anglican churches, Hindu or Muslim bodies, trade unions independent of PNC influence or control, or legitimate opposition parties, the President's response is not satisfactory.

The Commonwealth Caribbean is a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-party society. It has a democratic political culture. It abhors the minority dictatorship of South Africa which is based on racism and brutal military force.

Yet there appears to be some acquiescence in the continued rule in Guyana, of a minority regime which practices racial and political discrimination and depends on the support of the military to keep it in power at election time.

For the role of the army in Guyana at election time does mean, in effect, that the PNC has to rely heavily on the armed forces at these most important moments. In the case of Guyana, many West Indian leaders risk being in a position in which, having supported or even sought external intervention in one West Indian country to prevent an army dictatorship, they now seem to condone or even support a situation in Guyana which could inexorably produce the same result.

The pretence by West Indian leaders that the situation does not exist, will not help any person of goodwill in Guyana to decently resolve the situation. Any refusal by them to recognise the existence of the problem only denies Guyana — and the region — their crucial assistance in resolving it. Patriotic people, organisations and political parties of all ideological persuasions in Guyana, united on the need to put an end to the history of fraudulent elections in our country, hope that the commitment to justice, and the good sense of our fellow citizens of the

Commonwealth Caribbean will impel them to support this cause.

The emerging West Indian nation has been plagued in the past by the inability of many West Indians (not excluding Guyanese) to see beyond the needs of today. The present economic climate in the region can only reinforce that tendency. But we will never in the West Indies have other than a minimum congress of convenience unless we elevate our vision. How can that vision not include the return of Guyana to some form of democratic political process as a major priority? How this can be achieved may, and should be, the subject of much controversy. What is certain is that it will never be achieved by pretending that the "man on the stairs" is no longer there.



This is a flashback picture showing the active role of the Army in the general election. They are clearly seen removing ballot boxes from polling places, something they never did up to 1968. From 1973 to 1985 the Army was routinely engaged in moving ballot boxes at gun-point. The PCD parties are demanding that the Army remain in barracks on polling day.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

The Sixth Biennial Congress of the PNC in 1985 was well "institutionalised" according to the record in the state-owned *Guyana Chronicle*. Here are some reports from that source:

"PNC 6th BIENNIAL CONGRESS OPENS WITH POMP AND CEREMONY" (headline).

"The Guyana Defence Force Band played music befitting the occasion" (GC 1985-08-19).

"The Massed Bands rendition of the 'Song of the Revolution', the PNC's marching song" (GC 1985-08-19).

"Then came greetings from local organisations including the Young Developers, the nation's youth, trade unions and religious organisations, farmers and the Joint Services" (GC 1985-08-19).

On page 4 of the same paper, members of the Police band are photographed leading a section of the procession.

"Earlier, thousands of delegates and observers to the Congress, workers, farmers, members of the Church and cultural organisations, and of the Joint Services, led by members of the party's central executive marched from two points to the Square".
(*Guyana Chronicle*, August 26, 1985)

"Delegates and observers to the Congress will move off from the Sophia Convention Centre while farmers, workers and members of trade unions, religious groups and members of the joint services will march from Independence Park.

The Independence Park contingent will be accompanied by the Guyana Defence Force Corps of Drums, while the Guyana National Service and the Young Socialist Movement's Corps of Drums will accompany the marchers from Sophia".
(*Guyana Chronicle*, August 25, 1985)

The consequences of paramountcy, institutionalisation and political patronage run deep and wide, affecting every single institution. Only by understanding these relations, can observers understand the conflict between the complaints of the opposition and the declarations emanating from the ruling party.

APPENDIX B

Statement made by PPP Polling Agent Richard Kanhai:

We reached polling station at prescribed time and took up our positions. Voting began around 6.10 a.m. We were accommodated by presiding officer. There were at the time I left, approximately 160 votes cast. There were about 30 ineligible voters whose names did not appear on the list. I was documenting all proceedings during balloting. People were continuously coming in.

There was active involvement between PNC candidate and polling clerks. They were bringing people and verifying names on polling list.

Senior PNC woman was moving up and down and regularly whispering to PNC agents and polling clerks. Polling clerks were leaving their desks and going out of our sight. They were writing names on their palms. Because I was objecting for them to call names of voters promptly, from the list, they were making things difficult for me, by asking voters names in a whisper and were becoming annoyed when I was asking for the names so that I can tick off same on voters list.

I was documenting notes on all my observations during voting. In the midst of polling six men surged through the crowd, and rushed at me. One held me by my collar and bodily dragged me out of my chair and said he did not want me here. In the same breadth he snatch all the papers from me. I was rushed out of the building to the public road to the amusement of the voters who were waiting to cast their votes.

APPENDIX C

Statement by Harrichand Deonarine, PPP polling agent.

- 8:25 A.M. Notes taken away by Presiding Officer and policeman. I resisted, but notebook was torn away from my hand. The Presiding Officer said that no notes were allowed — no other paper except the voters list.
- 11:10 A.M. Booklet taken away by two policemen. I asked to see R.P.A., where by no other papers are allowed in polling station. Presiding Officer told me that I will see it later.

1:05 P.M. Two men asked me to pick up my papers and come with them for questioning. I asked why? They said to come along. I called out for the Presiding Officer (who looked up and saw that I was being removed). Nothing was done.

The two men took away my list of voters, my ruler and instruction papers from the Party. They told me to keep walking. As I was approaching the road one of the men said: "You better go away and don't come back before we bury you right here".

Given at 2:40 p.m on December 9, 1985.

(R.P.A — Representation of the People Act)

APPENDIX D

Statement by Arjune Kaysen, PPP polling agent:

On December 9th, Election day in Guyana. Poll opened at 6.15 hours. The box was sealed and the Party seal was affixed. As the election was commencing very slowly, I noticed young people under 18 years of age casting votes. I objected and was turned down. There were no forms of identification of voters. Whenever I made an objection, the Presiding Officer, gave no answer. The voters list which was given by our party was not allowed. The Presiding Officer took it away and said he cannot allow any list from outside.

So I requested a list from the Presiding Officer, but my request was turned down. I was working therefore without an Electors list. However, as the voters cast their votes. I began to take a record of the voters names, serial number and I.D number. The Presiding Officer said that the I.D numbers are not needed, so they stop giving information. I objected about the lack of information about five minutes later.

Two voters who had already cast votes this morning came back. Immediately, I made an objection. One of the persons came up and hit me on the left side of my face. Before I could resist, six more of these thugs came running up toward me and started to physically assault me. One held me firmly while the others punched me severely. I was then brought outside and pushed out of the place. The police woman who was there did not say

anything. Up to 11.40, only 186 votes were cast at the bottom flat of the polling station.

APPENDIX E

Statement by K.D. Ross, polling agent for PPP.

At the opening of poll at 6.15 a.m. I was present as the polling agent of the PPP. Upon opening the ballot box, I observed two irregularities:

(1) The box had space near to the lock which could permit the placing of ballots in the box.

(2) There were two differently shaped keys with the same number.

I lodged a complaint with the Presiding Officer in relation to these irregularities. I also complained about the fact that the Presiding Officer placed the keys for the box in her handbag instead of placing them in an envelope and sealing the envelope.

Throughout the day I lodged objections to a number of irregularities in relation to voting per se. These irregularities included multiple voting, voting without any identification, voting by members of the military and paramilitary services, people voting for the physically handicapped several times, (the returning officer herself voted for eleven persons). People also were voting for the dead. Other people were being denied the right to vote on the pretext that they had already voted. People also voted for those who did not turn out.

Ten Amerindian girls whose names were not on the list were produced and allowed to vote on the basis that their names were on a piece of paper sent by the PNC. There was voting by tendered ballot by people who already voted. There was also free access to the PNC polling agent by members of the public. In addition, registered voters were being turned back (names not on the list).

At about 5.35 p.m two car loads of men and women approached the polling agents, asked to speak to us urgently. We were immediately assaulted physically and were threatened to be further brutalised unless we leave. All documents and accessories were seized. I then left the polling station.

APPENDIX F

Statement by Rohan Roopnarine, PPP polling agent:—

I would just like to state concisely the incident that took place. On the Election morning everything was peaceful and tranquil.

On the latter part of the day a vehicle arrived and a thug came up and demanded the list of names which I bluntly refused to give. That later developed into a controversy between me and the other officers all of whom were hostile to me.

At that stage I proposed a question to the PNC thug, as to if the Constitution in any Chapter, or the Representation of the peoples act permit this? All during this time I was making notes of what was taking place.

And ultimately I was forced to hand over the list of names and ordered outside. I describe that act as vagabondism. Later in the afternoon, another vehicle came to collect the ballot boxes. Also the note book which I had was subsequently taken away.

APPENDIX G

Statement by Nandranie Pariag, PPP polling agent:

On December 9th, I was a polling agent. About 14.00 hrs., 3 men entered, picked up my voter's list and demanded that I leave the polling station and go home. I hesitated and they told me if I do not want anything to happen to me I might as well leave. I was pushed out by one of the men and the policeman at the door did not do anything.

While on the road I told the men I have left my bag and my flask, if I could get it. He sent one of them and they told me to get lost. A crowd had gathered and a passerby was even slapped. I then told Khame Sharma who was in the area what happened and he told me to leave. We made a statement at the Kitty Police Station and I was told to go back (Parsoon Sharma gave statement also to Kitty Police Station).

The men left the area by a Toyota Corolla vehicle, a Maroon Waggon, and a Blue Holden.

APPENDIX H

Statement by WPA polling agent, Sewnandan Surujpal:

I arrived before 6.00 a.m and took up my seat in the station. The PPP polling agent was also there.

The incident occurred around 4 to 4.15 p.m when about 12 men, all Afro-Guyanese, entered through the main door of the station. The police on duty was not in sight. People were inside the station waiting to vote. The Presiding Officer did not say anything about this intrusion. Some of the people waiting to vote went back outside when these men came in. Some others just moved back.

The men came straight up to myself and the PPP Agent, and seized our papers. They told us to get out, that if we did not move they would have to handle us and that we had done enough work for the day.

About 2 men came and lifted me off my seat and carried me out to the roadside. I saw them chucking the PPP Agent in the same way. They did not even want us to collect our food bags. They told me if I don't move they would have to shoot me that my life was short. People around us advised us just to go along for our safety.

The rest of the men remained inside the polling station which they opened about 15 minutes later. A Land Rover and two vehicles were parked outside. A blue rover and two red cars. had transported the men. One of the men had a long object wrapped up in cloth under his arm. It looked like a gun. A boy I know from Meadowbank was passing by the polling station when the men were throwing me out. He was riding a cycle and turned to a friend and said: "Shucks boy, look what going on here!"

The driver of the blue landrover, a bigskin red chap followed him to the Esso station and beat him on his face, eyes and mouth. I saw the boy later that day with his face all swollen and bruised.

This statement was made on December 10, 1985.

APPENDIX I

Statement by WPA polling agent Danuta Radzik:

At 4.00 p.m about 10-15 Afro-Guyanese men entered the polling station in the presence of about 20 voters. They came directly up to the two opposition polling agents and told us that we had to leave immediately and that we

should collect all our things. They approached the PPP polling agent first. When they came to me, I attempted to make an objection to the Presiding Officer. I was cut short immediately and told by the thugs! "Don't worry with that, get your things, collect all your things, collect your cigarettes and leave".

They waited till I put everything in my bag and I walked out with them.

The thugs stayed around the area outside for about 10-15 minutes, then got into vehicles and drove off. The voters all stayed their ground in the face of this intervention. The presiding officer, Assistant Presiding officer and Polling Clerks made no objection to this intervention.

The policewoman in the station who had been on duty all day was not present inside at the time of this invasion. I later saw her at the door of the polling station after the thugs had left. The voters remained waiting in their lines to vote; there were approximately 20 in the line and more were coming in.

OBJECTIONS FILED DURING COURSE OF DUTY

1. Both I and the PPP Agent noticed early in the day that the PNC polling agent (a woman) was making lists of what appeared to be voters who had not voted yet. She was visited fairly frequently (about 4 times) by an unknown person (no identification card was pinned to him). We jointly agreed that the objection to her making these lists should be done when she was attempting to turn them over to the unknown person. When the PPP polling agent had left the office for a short while, this same person returned to the PNC polling agent. At this time there were no voters in the building. This was the after lunch period about 1-1.30 p.m.

I got up from my chair and went to stand where I could see them. The man told me to move away. I moved but to a position from which I could still see. The woman began to fumble with the papers and finally removed them to the person. When she did this, I objected to the Presiding Officer that the PNC polling agent had been making lists continuously throughout the polling period when I as a WPA representative had been told to stop making lists early that morning. I was threatened with eviction if I continued. I said that the PNC agent had just handed over the lists to the man who had put it in his pocket and voiced my suspicion that they would be used to allow

fraud to take place.

I feel that the names and IDs of voters who had not yet voted were being compiled by this agent so as to allow PNC multiple/recycled voting. The Presiding Officer did not respond. The person took the list out with him. After 15 minutes the presiding officer called the PNC polling agent aside and spoke to her. The man continued to come in, and continued to take lists, though more discreetly. The assistant polling agent had called him and asked him to get more ink and had used his name..

2. The PPP agent made an objection to the Presiding Officer about persons sitting outside the entrance, (the bridge of the school) with voters lists. This objection was that this was within the stipulated boundaries. I added an objection that persons and/or voters passing in the street were being called and their names being checked as to whether they had voted — or they may have been given names to vote with. After the objection was made, they moved to the end of the fence and continued their operations. Another objection was made, in this matter, and the Presiding Officer asked me whether I wanted them to go where I couldn't see them. He said that as the Presiding Officer he could not leave the building to deal with that.

APPENDIX J

Report by Brian Rodway, WPA Polling Agent:

I, Lesley Brian Rodway, residing at 185 Aubrey Barker Street, South Ruimveldt Gardens, was polling agent of the Working People's Alliance, on election day, December 9, 1985.

When I arrived at the Polling Place at 5.50 a.m, the building was in darkness. I was permitted to enter the building at 6 a.m. Candles had to be lit, because there was no electric light in the building. I was put to sit at the back of the room along with the PPP polling agent. This position was about 12 ft. away from the nearest candle. I could not see the list I had. (This list was the preliminary voters list belonging to the WPA).

For the first hour, I had to write the names and numbers of voters as best I could on a sheet of paper I could not see. I asked to be moved up closer to the ballot box so that I could have the benefit of candle light and also because where I was positioned my view of the ballot box

was blocked by a post. This request was refused by the Presiding Officer.

The PNC Polling Agent had been placed at a desk about 5 ft. in the front of myself and the PPP agent.

At about 8 o'clock the revised voters list arrived and copies were distributed by the Presiding Officer. He also then distributed yellow Polling Agent ID tags to the agents.

I noted that a number of persons (at least 20) were allowed to vote even though their names were on neither the Preliminary nor revised voters list. When challenged the Presiding Officer said he had the discretion to decide on that issue.

1.30 p.m. 4 or 5 men came into the polling station through the back door near to where myself and the PPP agent were sitting and called the PPP agent. He went up to them near the back door; they spoke. While he was talking to them, the PO told me that he had to get permission to leave his seat. He returned to his seat and seemed agitated. The PO spoke to him. He got up, crossed the room and spoke to the PO quietly and returned to his seat.

The men re-entered the station through the back door and the PO told the PPP agent that he could not leave his friends in there. The PPP polling agent replied that he had just told the PO that these men were threatening him and telling him to leave the polling station. They then seized him by the arm and dragged him from the building. The policeman on duty at the front door was nowhere to be seen. I jumped up and protested to the PO who said he saw nothing.

The policeman came back to his place inside the front door and I explained to him that the PPP polling agent had just been forcibly evicted from the station. While I was speaking to him, one of the men seized my arm while the others came around me and I was manhandled out of the station through the back door onto the street. They took me to the corner of the street and told me to get out of Albouystown.

My coat and bag were left in the station. As I reached Sussex Street a motor cyclist rode up to me with these items. All my papers had been taken out of my bag. I walked straight to the WPA centre on Croal Street and made a report of these matters.

APPENDIX K

AFFIDAVIT

I, HEMWANT PERSAUD of 12 Reliance, Essequibo Coast, being duly sworn make oath and state as follows:—

1. I was elected Assistant Elections Agent for the Democratic Labour Movement in Region 2, for the December 9th, 1985 elections.

2. There were numerous cases of voters who could not vote because their I.D number did not correspond with that on the preliminary electoral list, or because there were slight differences in the spelling of names.

3. I lodged an official complaint to the Returning Officer, Mr. A. Owen, at his office in Anna Regina and he sent a Mr. Greene with me to clarify and settle the matter. Mr. Greene and another Mr. Davidson, helped to convince the Presiding Officer that there was no legitimate reason why he shouldn't allow the brothers concerned to vote.

4. After the brothers voted, Mr. Greene and Mr. Davidson left the polling station. The Presiding Officer asked me to leave the polling station. He further remarked that I was campaigning in the polling station, (which I wasn't doing).

5. The car that I travelled with to Lodge my complaints at the Returning Officer's office was thoroughly searched by the police and the driver was warned that if he knew what was good for himself he would go home and park his car. The police further warned that he was searching the car because he (the driver) was transporting opposition activists.

6. Our polling agent assigned to St. John's Primary School was ejected from the Polling Station for about two hours without any explanation and re-admitted after the PPP and WPA polling agents made note of the incident and called upon the PNC polling agent to follow suit. A complaint concerning this matter was lodged with returning officer. He promised to look into the matter.

7. One election official of Region 2, was registered twice on the preliminary voters list.

8. After polling closed the Presiding Officer took the ballot boxes along with members of the armed forces who pointed guns at our agents.

9. Counting agent for DLM, Raymond Gill and myself rushed to the Returning Officer after this scene to find

out what was the position concerning the accompanying of ballot boxes by opposition forces. We further pointed out that the **Chronicle** dated 8/12/85 stated clearly that opposition agents will be allowed to accompany ballot boxes in accordance with the Representation of the People Act. His reply was that he does not control the armed forces and cannot do anything about it.

10. Brother Raymond Gill and myself told the Returning Officer that we were instructed to stay with the ballot boxes until counting started. He replied, counting will be started at 11 o'clock and we can go to the counting centre at that time. We waited until 11.45 before counting started. In explaining the late start of counting, Mr. Owen's excuse was that there was a mix up of the returns and boxes.

11. As Elections Agent I visited various polling stations and observed that the ballot boxes were neatly built of a whitish colour wood, while those at the counting centre were made of a roughly built brownish colour wood, most of which were not even plained. At Anna Regina Community High School, there were two neatly built white boxes numbered 079,080. **The boxes appearing at the counting centre were roughly built brown boxes.**

12. The Counting Agent for the Elections Commission broke the lock of the ballot boxes that the armed forces used at Suddie Police Station, after he could not find the right keys.

13. AND further I say not.

**H. Persaud
Deponent.**

Sworn to at Georgetown, Guyana
on this 5 day of January, 1986.

APPENDIX L

Statement by PPP agent Chandrashekar:

....From 6.00 p.m. to 6.50 p.m. the following incident occurred, which, when taken into consideration, was sufficient time to have the Ballots counted at the Polling Places and negated the claim by the PNC that it is logistically impossible to have the votes counted soon after polling closed. Residents in the surrounding area converged on their bridges, eagerly looking out for the removal of the Ballot Boxes. There was no riotous behaviour of the people; no attempt by them to block the

road or the entrance to the Polling Places Nos. 624 and 625. The crowd was very peaceful, refuting the **Chronicle's** accusation that PPP campaigners were urging PPP supporters to prevent the Ballot Boxes from being removed from Polling Places.

At 6.15 p.m., a jeep driven by a soldier — an open-back vehicle — carrying (3) three Tactical Service Unit soldiers dressed in khaki drill uniform, armed with machine guns and sten guns, drove in followed by a truck with a battalion of TSU members, similarly dressed and heavily armed, some with sten guns, some with machine guns.

Army truck No. DF 8105 arrived with a battalion of GDF soldiers, equally armed. This manoeuvre was highly provocative as the situation did not warrant such behaviour, but the people remained calm and refused to be provoked. All three of the vehicles stopped on the Public Road, at the junction of Baijnauth Sawmill, where Polling Places No. 624 and 625 are situated obliquely opposite each other in a North-South direction. The Jeep and the Truck proceeded, turned and drove out of the area, leaving GDF truck DF 8105 on the scene.

At 6.20 p.m., three soldiers with guns in hands ready for combat, descended from GDF truck DF 8105, crossed the road in an easterly direction and marched on Baijnauth Sawmill road, one following the other proceeding to the waterfront. After spending some 5 minutes, they turned around and retraced their journey, rejoining the truck where it was parked on the road.

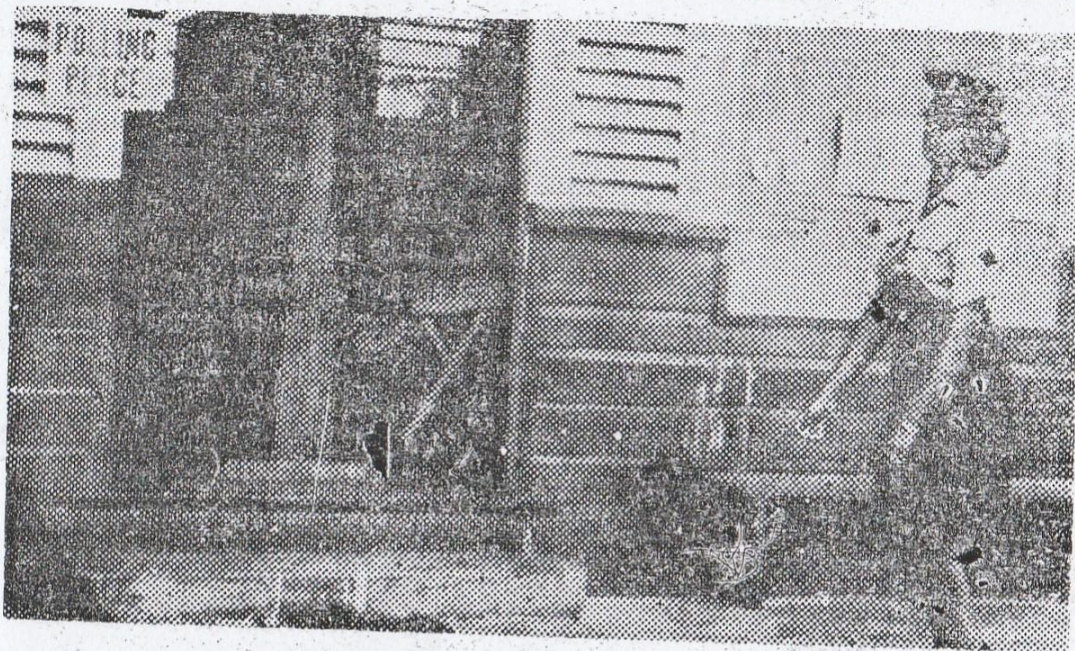
At 6.25 p.m., a Region 6 jeep No. PAA 7641 arrived followed by another jeep with the soldiers holding their guns ready for shooting followed by a truck with the battalion of TSU soldiers, still heavily armed and ready for action. The Jeep turned and parked immediately behind the truck. Cde. Boodhram Mahadeo then drove his car and parked it behind the Jeep. Cde. Mohendranauth Poonai then drove in with his car and parked behind Cde. Mohadeo's car. Both PPP candidates were witnessing the truck with guns in battle action, stood in the centre of the drama.

Immediately after that, GDF soldiers stepped off the road and blocked off the road, thus putting a halt to all moving traffic. This was ample testimony, that, from here on, the Army took complete control of the situation to seize the Ballot Boxes, for there was no ugly scene of disorder by the population, to prevent the removal of the Ballot Boxes. In fact, men, women and children stood by

their roadside bridges, most peacefully, witnessing the proceedings, as if viewing a cinema show. **This was a real drama they were witnessing for the first time.**

After the traffic was blocked, 3 soldiers descended from the GDF truck in battle gear. They entered the Polling Place. At 6.30 p.m. the Ballot Boxes from two Polling Places which were lodged there earlier, were brought out, escorted by the three soldiers and lodged in the jeep. At 6.32 p.m., three soldiers in similar style entered another nearby Polling Place. The Ballot Box did not come out of the Polling Place until 6.45 p.m. again being escorted by the three soldiers and was lodged in the jeep.

At 6.50 p.m, the jeep drove off, followed by a second jeep followed by Cde. Mahadeo in his car, Cde Poonai in his car then by TSU truck No. GBB 8941 and Army truck No. DF 8105 bringing up the rear. Thus, ended the drama of the December 9th, 1985 general elections for residents of Crabwood Creek. They had heard of the Army intervention in Guyana politics. **Today they witnessed the drama.**



This picture shows a typical polling station in an area of PNC "strength". It was deserted for most of the day. Areas like the above were therefore subjected to massive recycling of voters, and could hardly tolerate the presence of alert opposition party agents.



The picture shows a demonstration by the PCD outside Parliament Buildings denouncing the Constitution Amendment Bill 1988 which makes the rights of citizens in the Constitution (Chapter 2) inoperative and un-enforceable in a Court of Law, unless the government first passes a specific law to enable the enforcement.

What The Observers Said!

Lord Avebury of the 1980 International Observer Team, wrote scathingly of the 1980 elections; suitable

● They were a clumsily managed and a blatant fraud, designed to perpetuate the rule of the People's National Congress from which are as follows:

Congress....

● Like a voracious cayman, the People's National Congress has crunched the institutions of democracy in Guyana....

● PNC thugs attacked those attending opposition meetings, sometimes with the police standing by doing nothing....

● The charge room in Brickdam police station in central Georgetown had 17 PNC posters in it, at one stage in the campaign....

● Copies of the **Official Gazette** containing vital election information, were as rare as snow in Trinidad....

● The PNC distributed a Niagara of literature, the cost of which must have vastly exceeded the legal limit....

● The Guyana Defence Force occupied police stations, conducted military manoeuvres, stopped and harassed pedestrians and motorists during the last few days of the campaign....

● We received considerable evidence that voters in many instances had been intimidated and physically prevented from voting for opposition parties....

● The forcible expulsion of opposition agents from all places where ballot boxes were held, and the long delay in announcing the count, undermine the credibility of the counting process....

● We found polling stations in the private residences of PNC activists, and in one case of a PNC candidate. Others were in police stations, at least one with an armed guard and a locked gate....

Lord Chitnis who was a member of that 1980, Observer Team to Guyana, but who had witnessed fraudulent elections in Bolivia, had described the Bolivian elections as being "crooked as barbed wire". Those elections held in Guyana could be similarly classified **Crooked As Barbed Wire!**

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