

Sabotage and Subversion

Over two-thirds of the globe, along the great area stretching from Europe to Japan, no treaty can be signed, no alliance can be forged, no decision can be made without the approval and support of the United States Government. Only the great Communist bloc is impervious.

The Times, August 29, 1951

The governments of the United States and Britain were deeply involved in the disturbances of 1962 and 1963. This was corroborated by the U.S. columnist, Drew Pearson. In a syndicated article published on March 22, 1964, headed "Castro and Jagan", Pearson said in part:

The United States permitted Cuba to go Communist purely through default and diplomatic bungling. The problem now is to look ahead and make sure we don't make the same mistake again. We are already on the way to making it in Haiti. But in British Guiana, President Kennedy, having been badly burnt in the Bay of Pigs operations, did look ahead.

Though it was never published at the time, this was the secret reason why Kennedy took his trip to England in the summer of 1963. He had promised Premier Fanfani and Chancellor Adenauer to go to Rome and Bonn, but London was added to the itinerary only because of Kennedy's haunting worry that British Guiana would get its independence from England in July 1963, and set up another Communist government under the guidance of Fidel Castro.

If this happened just before the Presidential election of 1964 and if at that time a Communist Guiana began seizing the Reynolds Metals aluminum operation and other American properties,

Kennedy knew the political effect would be disastrous.

It wasn't in the communiqué issued by the United States and England after the Kennedy-Macmillan meeting, but the main thing they agreed on was that the British would refuse to grant independence to Guiana because of the general strike against pro-Communist Prime Minister, Cheddi Jagan.

The strike was secretly inspired by a combination of U.S. Central Intelligence Agency money and British intelligence. It gave London the excuse it wanted. British Guiana has not yet received its independence and another Communist government at the bottom of the one-time American lake has been temporarily stopped.

The reference is to the 1963 strike called by the TUC and backed by the U.S. based and controlled organizations. Without their help of nearly \$100,000 per week for strike relief, the strike would have collapsed in a couple of weeks. And without the help of the Cuban government which supplied us with kerosene and gasoline, we would have been forced out of office. When the Cuban tanker arrived, there was only one day's supply left in the storage tanks of the Electricity Corporation, and the emergency supplies of the police were running low. Later in July, the Soviet ship, *Mitshwnsh* brought in wheat flour and broke the food blockade.

U.S. interference in our affairs dates back to the 1953 suspension of our constitution and more recently to the 1961 general election.

I have already explained how Serafino Romualdi, acting in October 1953 as the Inter-American representative of the American Federation of Labour (AFL) and ORIT, had helped to smash the then militant TUC.

Referring to the disbanding and reconstruction of the TUC, William H. Knowles in his book *Trades Union Movement and Industrial Relations in the BWI*, wrote:

In a move of questionable legality, the anti-Jagan non-Communist elements of the Trades Union Council voted, while supporters of the People's Progressive Party were out of the country, to dissolve the B.G. Trades Union Council.

Later, after Burnham had split the PPP in 1955, even some of the militant unions and leaders under his influence joined the new right-wing, anti-Communist TUC, Andrew Jackson and Brentnol Blackman who had been attacked by the British government became pillars of the new TUC.

How reactionary the TUC had become and what role the U.S. trade union movement was playing in British Guiana could be gleaned from a special report, *Facts on Cheddi Jagan and his Communist controlled PPP of British Guiana. Free Labour's 10-Year Struggle to Preserve Independence* by Serafino Romualdi. He reported *inter alia*:

"In order to eliminate, to all intents and purposes, the usefulness of the union (MPCA) Mrs Jagan in her role of Minister of Labour, Health and Housing, suggested the establishment of a Wages Council in the sugar industry with statutory powers to fix wages and working conditions."

Romualdi continued:

"The free labour movement bitterly opposed this measure because, once introduced in the sugar industry (with the consequent elimination of the union), it would have eventually been extended to the bauxite mines, the waterfront and other industries [*sic*]. Rupert Tello termed this Jagan proposal "especially a weapon to destroy the free trade union movement."

In their crusade to destroy Communism and the Communists, the AFL-CIO, and the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) will stop at nothing even if it means destroying the workers by making them the victims of the capitalists. They talk about democracy but oppose a poll, a common practice in the U.S.A., and a Wages Board, which was one of the main recommendations of the Venn Commission of Inquiry into the Sugar Industry after the shooting of workers at Plantation Enmore in 1948. This was not implemented by the British Guiana Sugar Producers' Association. They preferred to continue to negotiate with the company dominated-union, the MPCA.

Through the AFL-CIO and the AIFLD headed by pro-capitalist and anti-Communist George Meany and J. Peter Grace of W. R. Grace and Co., which owns shipping com-

panies, sugar haciendas, distilleries, light-bulb subsidiaries, textile plants and other enterprises in Latin America and a chemical fertiliser plant in Trinidad, U.S. trade unionists played a decisive role in the 1962 and 1963 disturbances. An unprecedented number of them had visited British Guiana to cause trouble. Some of those who visited and played active roles were:

G. O'Keefe, labour lawyer and director, Retail Clerks International Assembly of North America;

J. Philpot, collective bargaining director, Retail Clerks International Assembly of North America;

Ernest Lee, director of studies, Inter-American Representative, ICCFTE;

Morris Paladino, education director; ORIT;

William McCabe, Inter-American Representative, AFL-CIO;

Ben Segal, education director of the International Union of Electric Radio and Machine Workers, U.S.A.;

William C. Doherty (Jr.), Inter-American Representative of PTTI;

Wallace Legge, director, Caribbean Activities, PTTI;

Jack L. Bernal, Inter-American Representative of ICCFTE;

René Lioeanjié, NMU co-ordinator of organizing for Latin America;

Pat Terrill, a director, United Steel Workers of America;

Andrew McClellan, AFL-CIO Inter-American Affairs representative.

The records show that there were far more visits of U.S. trade unionists to Guiana in the 18 months following the 1961 general election than in the 18 years preceding that election! The motive behind this sudden manifestation of interest was to organize opposition by trade unionists to our government. The visitors also conducted courses and seminars at which the themes were invariably how to fight Communism and to oppose the government.

William McCabe was present during the whole course of the 1963 strike and urged the prolongation of the strike when the

British TUC representative, Walter Hood, was endeavouring to effect a settlement.

Incidentally, U.S. trade union interference was not limited only to Guiana. The Surinam government had banned the entry of U.S. trade unionists; in Trinidad, also, there had been an outcry against their interference. An editorial in the *Trinidad Guardian* of July 11, 1963, sharply criticizing the part they played in our strike said that whatever the complexion of the government, the strike was a domestic matter and the United States had no right to interfere. The editorial stated: "There have been pretty clear indications that U.S. interferences in British Guiana influenced the prolongation of the strike, whether we ascribe this to the dictates of American official policy or not. There is more than a suspicion that this policy was to some extent the driving force behind the unyielding attitude of the B.G. trade unions, who appear to have been well supplied with funds from American Labour sources. But be that as it may, it would be difficult to convince anyone who followed the trend of events in British Guiana that American unions, with their representatives exerting pressure on the spot, were not in fact that power behind the B.G. Trade Unions' determined stand against the Jagan Government."

U.S. trade union interference was not only "one-way" traffic. Leading Guyanese trade unionists were taken under the wing of the American Institute for Free Labour Development sited in Washington under the direction of Serafino Romualdi, who had previously remarked that there would be no U.S. aid for British Guiana so long as he had any say in the matter.

In an article, Victor Riesel left little room for doubt about U.S. subversive intentions. Under the caption, "Unionists trained in U.S. to harry Jagan's Government", it went on to contend that "six courageous men" — all trade unionists — had been recently trained by the American Institute for Free Labour Development in the technique of anti-Communist campaigning. Amongst these men was "a rather fearless chap by the name of Richard Ishmael, President of the anti-Communist Sugar Workers' Union known as the Man-Power Citizens' Association". Mr. Riesel continued: "Jagan has

organized opposition groups in an effort to take over British Guiana's organized labour. If he succeeds there will be nothing to stop him from going internally Cuban. Realizing this, the American Institute for Free Labour Development — supported by U.S. labour and industry — rushed the training of six Guianese in Washington. This institute is directed by Serafino Romualdi, a veteran anti-Communist Labour Specialist. Each of the six trainees has specific tasks inside B.G. labour . . . It was in Panama City on March 9th that Ishmael met with Joe Curran's colleagues, Shannon Wall, NMU President, and René Lioeanjié, NMU Co-ordinator of organizing for Latin America. He told them that British Guiana's anti-Communist unions would try to stop Soviet gun-running. Ishmael said they would picket the Soviet and Cuban ships at the docks . . . Ishmael made good his promise last week. There was intense fighting in the dock areas. It soon spread through the city."

This was a reference to the rioting in Georgetown on April 5, 1963. Shamelessly, Riesel concluded: "It's a pleasure to report we're giving the Communists a run for their money and guns."

Actually, there were more than six who were trained in the United States at a cost of about U.S. \$60,000. Many of these "subversive" trainees were contracted to serve in the trade union movement on their return to British Guiana at a salary of \$250 per month, paid by the Institute itself. The plan was to place trainees in key positions in the trade-union movement to harass the government by go-slows, strikes, sabotage and other subversive activities and, if possible, to overthrow the government.

In a statement about these trainees made after his visit to Guiana in April 1962, Romualdi said: ". . . it appeared to me that young democratic trade union leaders would need intensive training to combat Dr. Jagan's efforts. Subsequently, eight Guianese came to Washington in June 1962, as participants in the Institute's first course. In September of that year, six of these men returned to British Guiana, supported by AIFLD internships, enabling them to put into practice, on a full-time basis, what they had learned at our school . . . When the

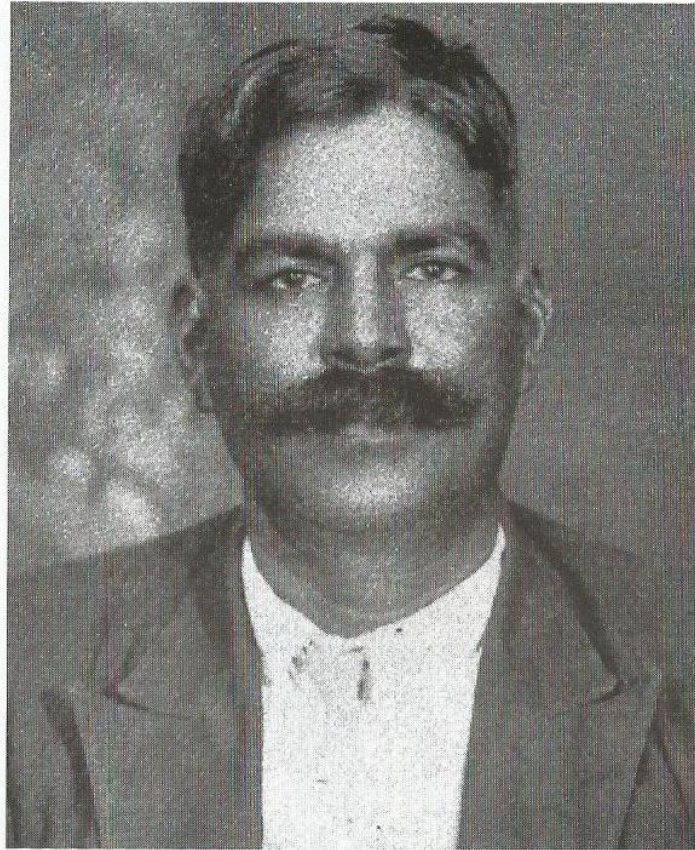
BGTUC decided to call a general strike in an attempt to put the Institute's six interns, who were working with various local unions, at the disposal of the council's strike committee . . . In agreement with the Institute's Secretary-Treasurer, Joseph A. Beirne, I instructed the interns to fully devote their efforts to supporting the strike, and extended their internships, which were scheduled to end on June 15, to August 15 . . . I would like to say that I am proud of our graduates in British Guiana. In spite of sacrifices and hardships they kept their places in the front lines of a difficult and, unfortunately, sometimes bloody battle."

Apart from money for training, other financial help was received. Richard Ishmael, in a statement reported in the *Guiana Graphic* of May 3, 1963, said: "In this connection the local trade union movement received a grant of \$5,000 (BWI) between 1958 and 1961 from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) through its regional branch ORIT and the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL). Also received was a grant \$8,500 (BWI) over the period October 1961 to May 1962, from ORIT to assist the local movement in a special organizational crash programme, primarily concerned with the organization of Clerical Workers following the strike of clerical workers at Sprostons Ltd., for recognition of their trade union."

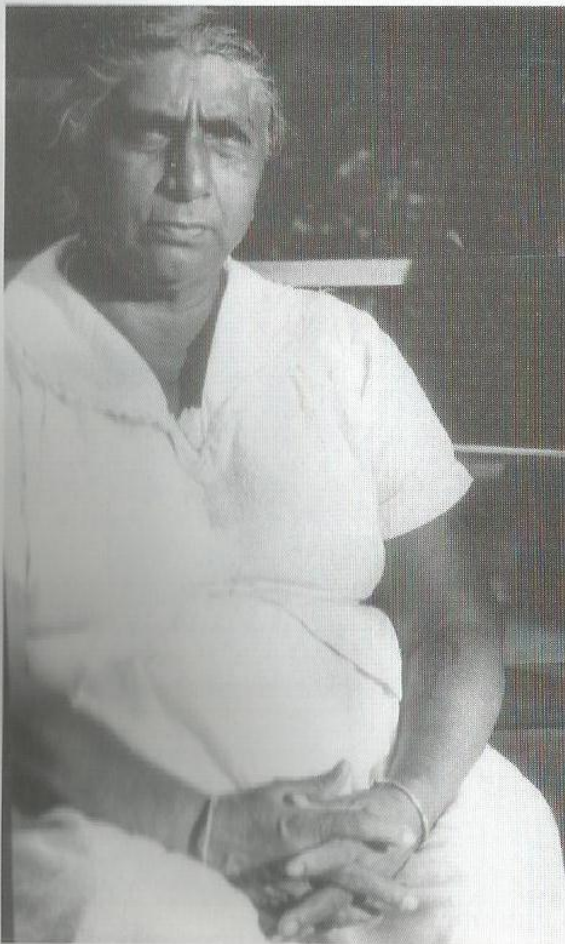
But the amounts referred to by Ishmael by no means cover all the financial assistance received by the local trade-union movement from the United States. Ishmael omitted to mention some important facts.

For the year ending December 31, 1961 alone, out of an expenditure of \$15,429 by the TUC, the sum of approximately \$11,876 was obtained from overseas. In that year, its president general, Egbert Bolton of the National Union of Public Service Employees (NUPSE), was also the general secretary of the United Force. The property purchased by the British Guiana Mine Workers' Union was acquired with the help of money loaned by their friends in the U.S.A. Passages and hotel expenses were paid from American sources for several delegations of trade unionists leaving Guiana for conferences

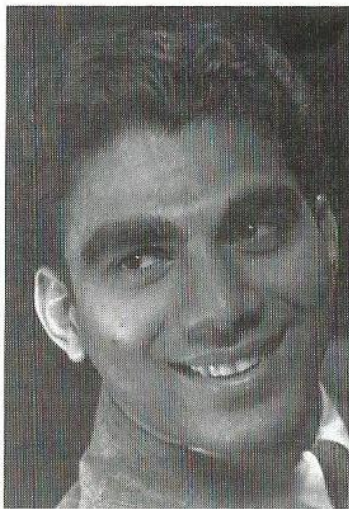
Right:
Cheddi Jagan's
father, Jagan



Bottom, left:
His mother,
Bachaoni



Cheddi Jagan, aged 18,
at Howard University,
Washington, DC



Cheddi Jagan in 1938



Cheddi and Janet Jagan on
their wedding day,
August 5, 1943



Cheddi Jagan addressing workers at Bourda Green,
Georgetown after the shooting of sugar workers at
Plantation Enmore in 1948



Above: Speaking during the 1961 election campaign

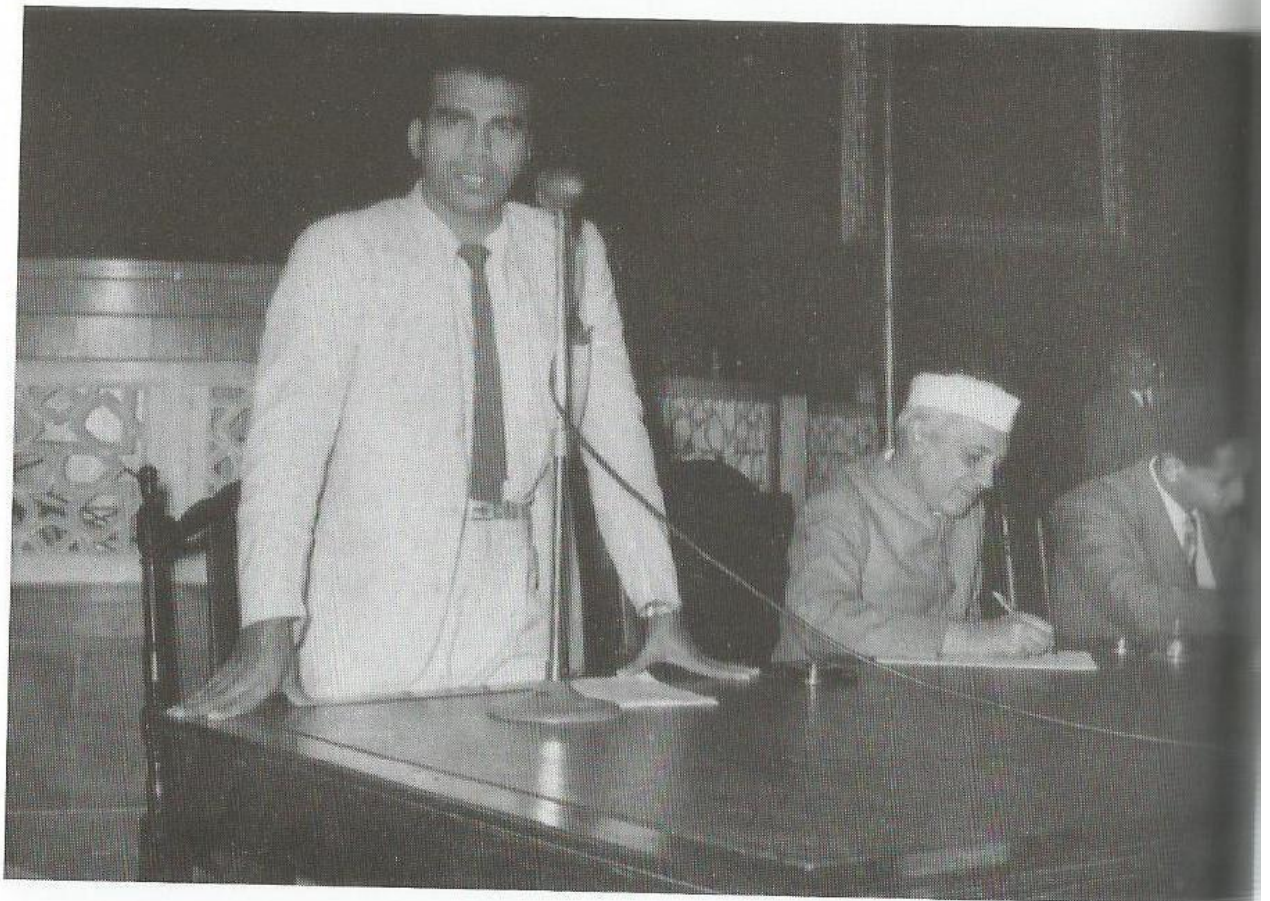
Below: Cheddi and Janet Jagan with their two children, Cheddi Jr. and Nadira in 1958





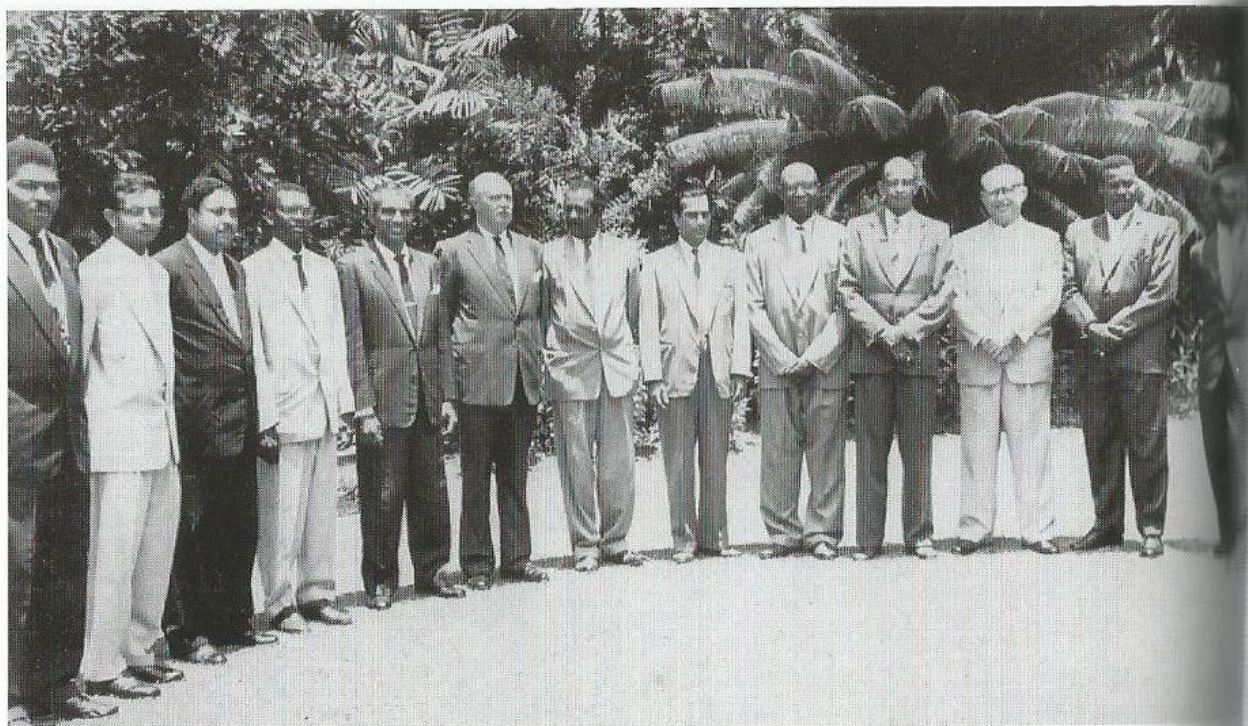
The 1953 Cabinet with Janet Jagan, Deputy Speaker

Cheddi Jagan with Prime Minister Nehru and Forbes Burnham in Delhi, India 1953 when addressing the Indian Parliament





Dr. Jagan was invited to the independence celebrations in Ghana in 1957.
He is seen here presenting a gift to Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah



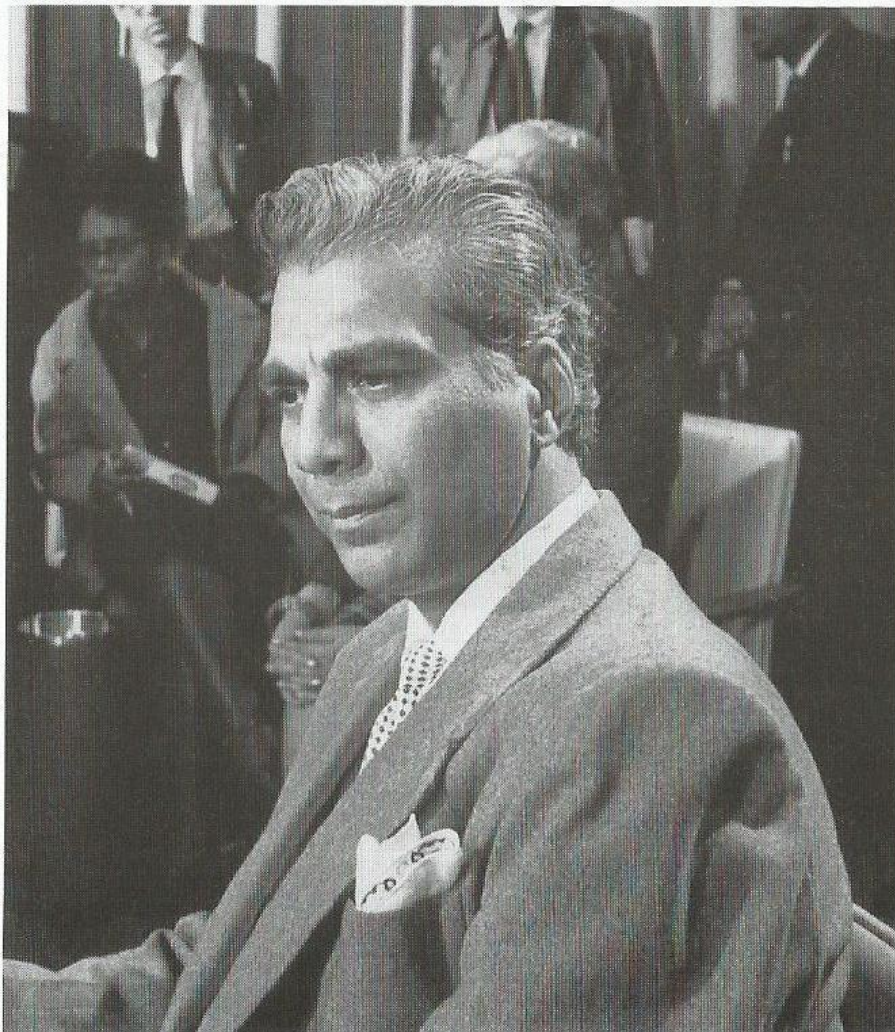
The 1961 Cabinet was photographed at Government House with the British
Governor, Sir Ralph Grey



Cheddi Jagan with his wife Janet in the 1961 victory parade

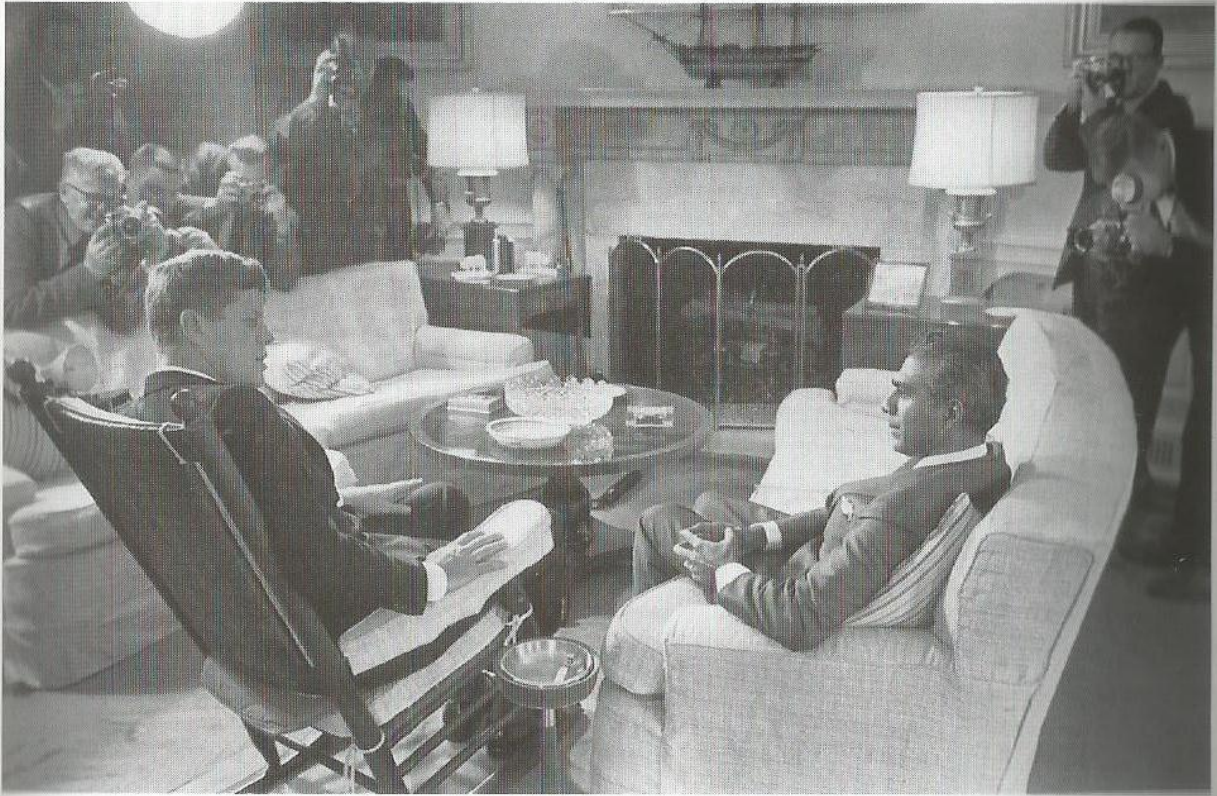
Cheddi Jagan was a great admirer of the American singer and actor Paul Robeson and was in England when Robeson was finally permitted to travel outside the United States





Above: Dr. Jagan addressed the Fourth Committee of the United Nations on December 18, 1961 calling for the independence of his country. The USA and UK delegates attempted to prevent him from addressing the Fourth Committee, but failed.

Left: A full view photograph of Dr. Jagan when he addressed the Fourth Committee of the United Nations



Shortly after winning elections in 1961, Premier Cheddi Jagan visited Washington D.C and had discussions with President John F. Kennedy



Dr. Jagan visited Cuba in the 1960s and met Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders including Che Guevara



Opposite, above
The PPP took
strong position
the Vietnam V
and picketed
US Embassy
Georgetown,
calling for a
Dr. Jagan is
photographed
one of these
demonstration

Above: At public meetings in
Guyana, Cheddi Jagan was
always showered with garlands,
some with flowers and others of
donations to the PPP in the form
of dollars



Below:
Addressing a
meeting in
the rain

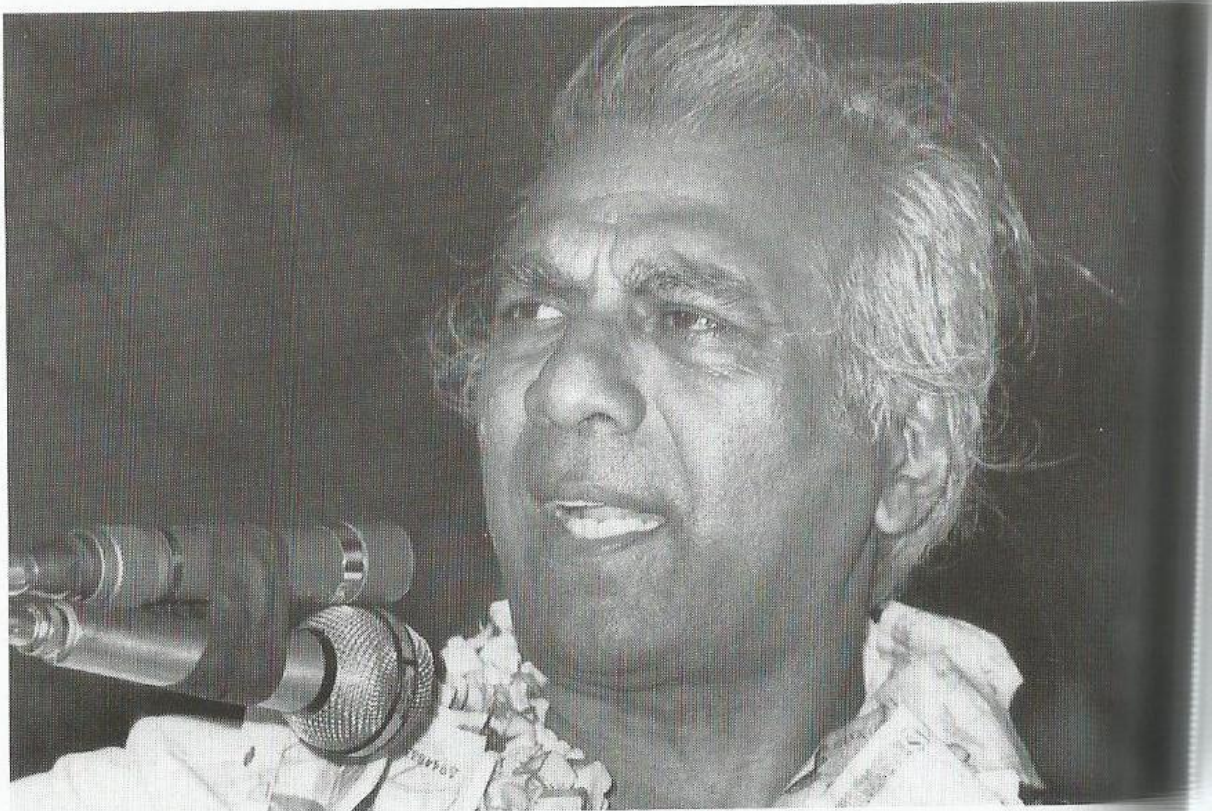


Below: Dr. Jagan met Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi in the late sixties when she visited Georgetown





Cheddi Jagan leading a march against the rigged elections during the PNC's 28 years in office



This photo hangs in the foyer of Red House, The Cheddi Jagan Research Centre in Guyana



Above: Dr. Jagan met Pope John Paul II in October 1996 while in Rome to attend the World Food Summit

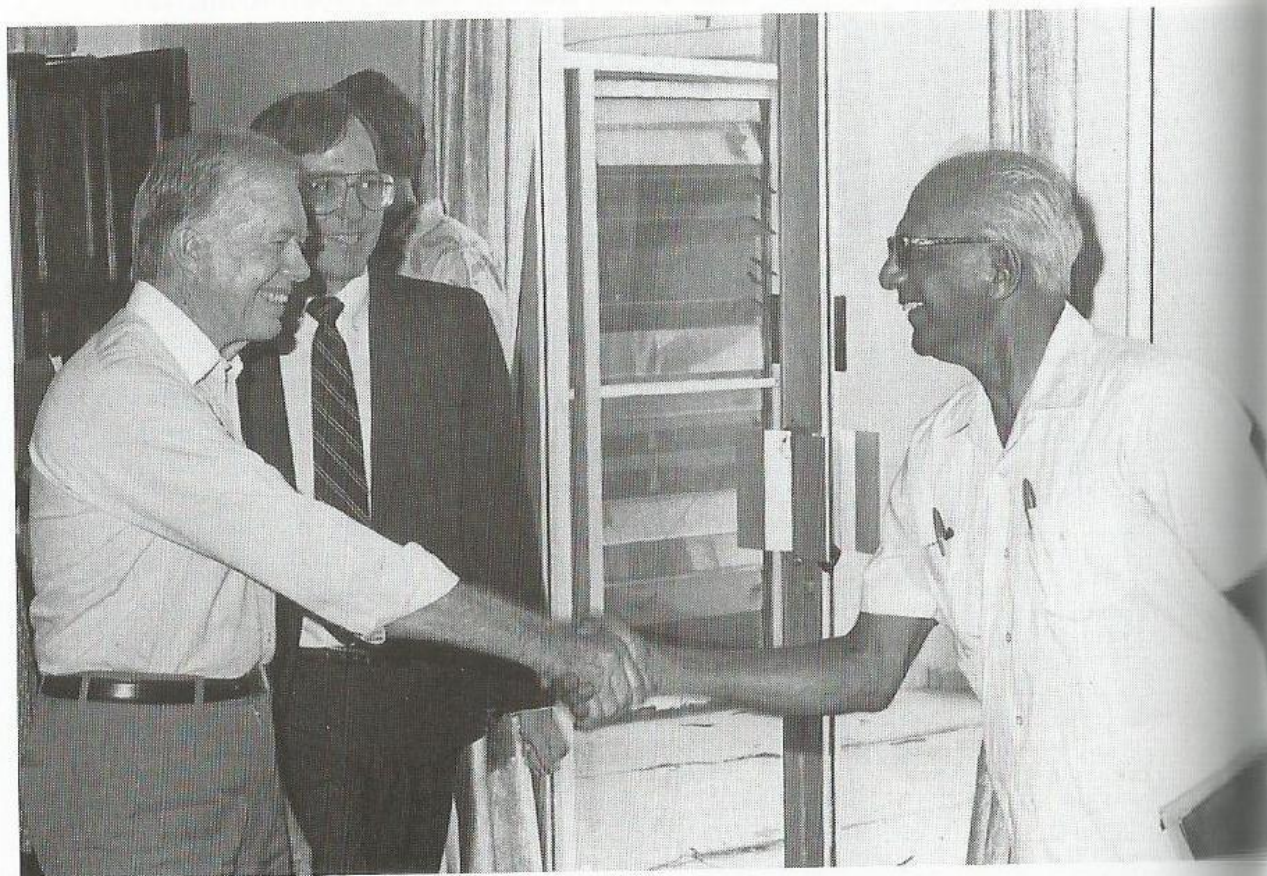
Below: In 1996, former Prime Minister of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere visited Guyana and met the country's National Poet, Martin Carter, seen to the left





Above: At one of the many grass root meetings

Below: Former President Jimmy Carter gave significant help in paving the way to restore free and fair elections in Guyana. He is seen here being welcomed by Dr. Jagan prior to the elections

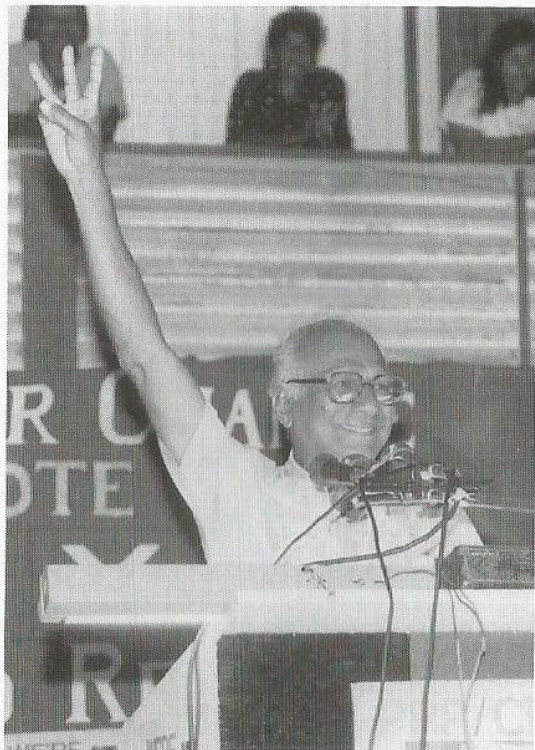


*Right: Dr. and Mrs
Jagan with their five
grandchildren at
State House in 1993*



*Below, left: Seen
making the 3 finger
PPP sign at a
political rally*

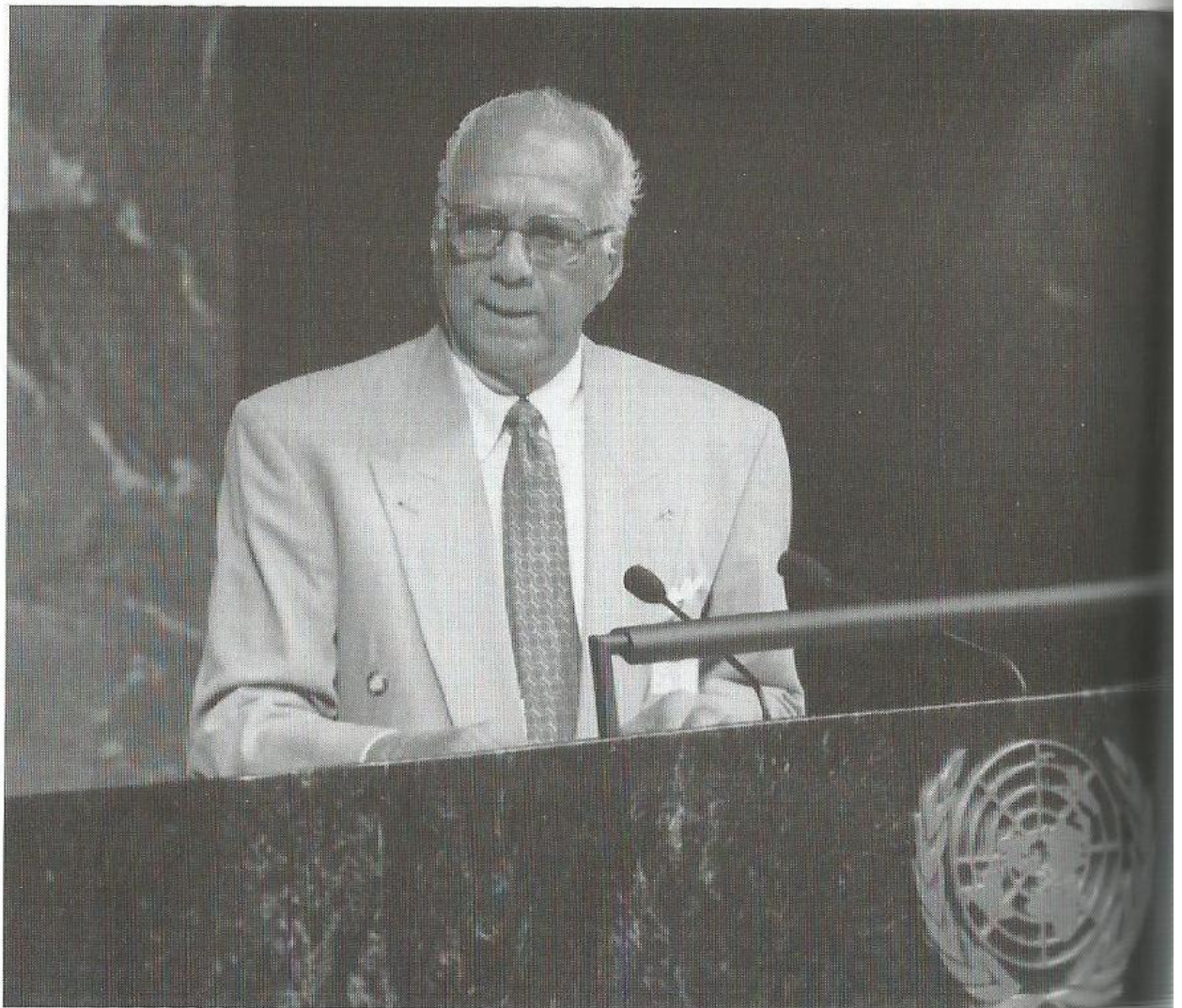
*Below, right: Cutting
sugar cane in his
backyard*





Above: Meeting President Bill Clinton in Miami at the Summit of the Americas in 1994

Below: Addressing the United Nations in 1993



abroad within 18 months following the 1961 general election.

During the 1961 general election, the U.S. Information Services departed from its usual practice of holding indoor film shows and took such shows to the street corners. These shows highlighted anti-Castro and anti-Communist propaganda which dovetailed with the smear campaign then being conducted against the government.

United States citizens, Dr. Fred Schwartz and Dr. Joost Sluis of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, openly interfered with our domestic affairs during the 1961 election campaign. Sluis visited Guiana six times between February 21, 1961 and April 26, 1962, including a two-month visit prior to and during the 1961 general election campaign.

Apart from direct intervention, there was indirect subversion. The impression was deliberately fostered that the U.S. government was hostile to us and favourable to the opposition. In a lengthy letter to President Kennedy on April 16, 1963, I set out this proposition fully. After referring to our talks in Washington in October 1961, and to his administration's promise that it would consider sympathetically our application for economic aid, I wrote:

... In the face of growing unemployment and all that it means in discontent and the waste of human resources, the political opposition and other local leaders hostile to the Government have openly charged that U.S. assistance will not be forthcoming if my Government remains in office. The long delay in the completion of the Hoffman Report has tended to lend substance to this charge. In addition, the Trades Union Council which on the whole aligns itself with the political opposition has recently announced that it has been able to arrange substantial assistance for a housing scheme through the American Institute for Free Labour Development, a body which, one senior local Trade Union official stated in a broadcast, derives the major part of its funds from the Agency for International Development. Earlier a generous Scholarship Scheme announced by the U.S. Consul General had apparently been designed to bypass my Government which had not been notified or taken into consideration.

These are only the most recent of the series of events, which

have created the impression that your Government is unwilling to assist the present elected Government of this country and has served to embolden the opposition to embark on irresponsible courses, which are aimed at the forcible overthrow of my Government, and which are likely to undermine the future of democratic government and the maintenance of peace in this country . . .

Press reports had stated that Dr. Claude Denbow, President of the League of Coloured People and close associate of the People's National Congress had contacted, during a visit to the U.S.A. immediately prior to the 1961 August elections, a group of prominent Guianese professional men now resident in New York, some of whom had interviews with State Department officials at which, it was reported, offers of assistance were made to help the opposition to "liberate" British Guiana from my Government.

Since the elections it appears to be the policy of the United States State Department to refuse visas to members and known supporters of the governing party, the People's Progressive Party, who wish to visit the United States. This has been the case even with well-known and eminently respectable members of the business community.

On March 12, 1963, William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, gave evidence before a Sub-Committee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives. When asked whether the United States government favoured my continuing as head of the government, he replied: "No, the U.S. Government does not." Elford A. Cederberg then queried why even the small amount of technical assistance was being given to British Guiana, and whether Tyler felt that this was justified in view of what he regarded as the People's Progressive Party's hostility to the U.S. "way of life", since an independent British Guiana under the People's Progressive Party "will probably vote against us in the United Nations and will probably be oriented towards the Soviet Bloc rather than towards the free world."

Tyler then replied: "I recognize the difficulty there, Mr. Congressman. I am absolutely frank to admit to you I do not think it is a clear-cut case. I think a case can be made out to

say that by doing anything for this country we are directly or indirectly improving the political chances of the Leader. On the other hand, if we do nothing, then the economic situation in that country is such that it will deteriorate and I think we will have there a condition, politically, socially and economically, which will make it easier for the Leader to consolidate his control over the country. What we would like to do is to build up what I might call an infrastructure or base of increased economic and social well-being, so that what democratic forces exist in this country have a chance in the future to gain the upper hand, when it becomes independent. I have no special claim to wisdom on this but we think that on balance, one thing is certain, that if the conditions deteriorate it will make it easier for the Leader to achieve complete control whereas if we build a base there with improvements in the situation, we do retain the hope that the Leader will be succeeded by somebody who is more favourably disposed towards the west."

When pressed further that British Guiana would soon achieve independence under the PPP government, Tyler was most revealing.

Mr. Tyler: "May I remind you, Mr. Congressman, as of now, this country is under the control of the parent government."

Mr. Cederberg: "But they can let it go at any time desired. Is that right?"

Mr. Tyler: "They can, but if I may go off the record on this?"

No doubt, Tyler was requesting permission to relate in private the sinister plot at the level of the Presidency and the U.S. State Department. During Kennedy's visit to London in May 1963 a similar point of view was expressed by the President's press secretary, Pierre Salinger, on BBC television. And Dean Rusk, U.S. Secretary of State, was reported by the London *Times* on June 29, 1963, to have urged Lord Home, the British Foreign Secretary, to suspend our constitution or hold a referendum on a new system of voting. The *Times* and the *Guardian*, commenting on the talks in May 1963 between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan, indicated that Guiana was one of the issues discussed

by the two leaders.

Pinpointing U.S. interference in our domestic affairs, even the Tory M.P. and Colonial Secretary Iain Macleod said in a debate on British Guiana in June 1964, in the House of Commons: "There is an irony we all recognize in the fact of America urging us all over the world towards colonial freedom except where it approaches their own doorstep. When I was last in America . . . I discussed with many people, including President Kennedy, this particular question which weighs anxiously on their minds, I myself think their fears (about Dr. Jagan) are exaggerated. The American attitude seems dangerous because in my experience if you put off independence because you fear you may get left-wing government, the most likely thing to happen is that you will get a government even further to the left."

Iain Macleod, who chaired the 1960 Constitutional Conference, knew that the denial of independence and the imposition of the electoral system of proportional representation in October 1963, was a breach of the formula agreed upon in 1960 for independence.

Command Paper (998) issued after the Conference stated in paragraph 12:

Her Majesty's Government accept the principle of independence for British Guiana. On the assumption that constitutional changes are introduced as a result of this Conference, then if at any time not earlier than two years after the first General Election held under the new Constitution or upon it being decided that the West Indies Federation should attain independence, whichever is the shorter, both Houses of the British Guiana Legislature pass resolutions asking Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to grant independence to British Guiana, Her Majesty's Government will early thereafter call a further Conference to consider when it would be practicable to implement this request. Provided that the new situation caused by the decision that the West Indies Federation should attain independence would not be regarded as giving ground for considering any change in the then operative British Guiana Constitution until it had been in effect for not less

than one year.

Having met the conditions set out after a date, May 31, 1962, had been fixed for the West Indies Federation, and our legislature in November 1961 had passed a resolution requesting "Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies to fix a date during 1962 when the country should be fully independent within the Commonwealth of Nations", Guiana was on the threshold of independence. All that was left to be done was to decide "when it would be practicable to implement the request."

At this point, Britain was caught on the horns of a dilemma. Not wishing to dishonour its pledges, unwilling to use the crude "big-stick" methods of 1953, and unable to stem U.S. pressure, it connived at the CIA-backed strikes and disturbances so that the world could be told that Guiana, torn by racial strife, was not ready for independence.

British connivance explains why during 1962 and 1963, our government did not get the necessary prompt, determined and effective support from the police and security forces as the interim government (1954-57) received after our forcible removal from office in October 1953. The governors, no doubt under Colonial Office instructions, played a wretched role and certainly gave us no assistance.

We were engaged in a running battle with the Governor and the Commissioner of Police to delimit the powers of the Minister of Home Affairs vis-à-vis the Commissioner of Police. We felt that the Minister could not adequately perform her responsibilities if the Commissioner, as he felt, was solely in charge of operational control of the police force without reference to the Minister. We tried to make this clear in a Miscellaneous Enactment's Bill, but the Governor refused to give his assent. Constant disagreements on this score finally led to the Minister's resignation in 1964.

It is my firm conviction that the loss of life and destruction of property could have been avoided had the Governor, Sir Ralph Grey, acted firmly and promptly in 1962. It would seem that, torn between a feeling of responsibility toward the

government and loyalty to his superiors at the Colonial Office, who were under orders from the U.S., he could only hesitate and vacillate.

At that stage when the demonstrations began to mount, he suggested to me that I should consider resignation as a way out of the deadlock. When I asked that an emergency be declared, the Governor hesitated for some time, claiming that he had to be satisfied that the conditions were such as to merit the declaration of a state of emergency. A little later, after I had requested the assistance of British troops, I was lectured on the conditions which had to be met before British armed forces would be used; I was told that British troops could not be used to aid a government which was carrying out unpopular measures. I told the Governor that in the absence of a Guiana national army, it was the duty of the British government to come to the aid of a duly elected government if it was threatened by subversion and insurrection; that it was not for military men to make political decisions. These decisions, I said, were the responsibility of the politicians and the elected representatives of the people.

The upshot was the late arrival of British troops on Black Friday, February 16, 1962. On the previous day, when the police and prison officers had threatened to go on strike, the Commissioner of Police at last reported to the Minister of Home Affairs that the position had become untenable. He stated: "I am of the opinion, as a result of the events of the past four days, that the present government can resist the demand to resign by the opposition political parties which have today shown definite signs of uniting, only by the ultimate use of physical force. The dispersal of a crowd by the use of tear smoke is of a temporary nature only, and will not prevent the ultimate need for the use of more extreme measures. Having reached this conclusion, I must give it as my considered opinion that the only means of maintaining the government without the loss of life will be the presence of a sufficient number of troops."

On the evening of February 15, at about 6 p.m., the Minister of Home Affairs, the Governor, the Commanding Officer of the

British troops and I discussed the situation at a conference at the Government House Annexe. It was agreed that the presence of troops in Georgetown was absolutely necessary. The Minister and I urged that troops be brought immediately, in view of the dangerous situation, but we were told that if they were brought in the early part of the evening, their arrival might cause some consternation in the city and untoward events might result.

Consequently, it was agreed that they should arrive at 1 a.m. on Friday, February 16, 1962. But the troops did not reach Georgetown until 3.30 p.m., long after the outbreak of serious disturbances in the city, although we had been told that with push-button contact between Georgetown and Atkinson Field, where the troops were stationed, they could be in the city within an hour. By the time the troops were brought in, fires originally started at what were considered to be the business premises of our supporters, had got out of control and began to spread to the premises of supporters of the opposition, such as Bookers, J. P. Santos, John Fernandes, Jaikaran and Son, etc.

The Governor proffered an excuse to the Commonwealth Commission that the arrival of the troops at 1 a.m. was conditional on the police and prison service going out on strike!

Later, Governor Ralph Grey demurred when I wanted to have Joost Sluis declared an undesirable visitor and deported. He countered my contention that this was a matter within the constitutional competence of the government by claiming that since Sluis was a U.S. citizen and his expulsion must endanger the good relations between the United States and the United Kingdom, the matter fell within his responsibility of foreign affairs!

In 1963, the attitude of the Governor, the Commissioner of Police and the Commander of British troops was even more alarming.

Concerning the claim that the British Army could come to the aid of the civil power only after shooting had occurred and after the police had proved incapable of containing the situation, I retorted that the rules seemed to have changed, that from October 1953 to 1957, the police did not have to open

fire on anyone yet the British armed forces had operated everywhere. It was not our intention that the soldiers should shoot anyone; their mere presence in the streets, we felt, was likely to have a sobering effect on those who were determined to act as hooligans and barbarians, to maim innocent people, to start racial warfare, and to try to overthrow the government by force.

The Governor, as head of the civil service, took no disciplinary action against civil servants who were reported to have attacked and intimidated some of their colleagues who remained on duty.

I have already referred to the first major outbreak that occurred on May 30, 1963. Much of the injury and suffering could have been avoided if the Commissioner had heeded my warning and taken adequate precautionary measures during the funeral of Claude Christian. We feared that the funeral would be used as a pretext to attack our supporters and members since the press had already incited the public with a wild rumour that Christian, who died from high blood pressure, had been stabbed by my wife at Freedom House.

Earlier, on May 10, I warned the House of Assembly, that "in spite of all protestations to the contrary, my government is once again facing a situation in which violence is being planned to secure the overthrow of the legally elected government of this country by force". My warning was dismissed by the Commissioner as sensationalism although it was given after the police had found a veritable arsenal and documents including Plan X 13 at Congress Place, PNC headquarters. (This raid on the PNC would not have been carried out had it not formed part of simultaneous "lightning" police raids on the PPP, PNC and UF. The police made these raids because the PPP had complained about police discrimination. Freedom House, PPP headquarters, had frequently been raided and one member of the Security Police had actually been caught trying to spy on a member of the PPP staff. The fact that so much was found at Congress Place was an indication of the feeling of confidence and immunity in PNC circles.)

Of course, when violence increased and the crowds became

more disorderly, the Commissioner of Police excused himself for not taking stern measures by shifting the blame to the magistrates. His argument was that the job of the police was made difficult because offenders were going unpunished, that the magistrates' courts had been transformed into political forums by lawyers, and that the magistrates had allowed many deferments and imposed small fines. This contention, however, was not accepted by the Chief Justice.

Earlier, the Commissioner had urged me repeatedly to withdraw the Labour Relations Bill; that, in his opinion, was the way to bring the disturbances to an end!

Whenever I had occasion to ask the Commissioner of Police to take firm action, he always referred to our weak position and to the strength of the opposition in Georgetown. I reminded him that during the period October 1953 to 1957, the police and army had been faced with an even stronger opposition to the interim government because the PPP was then a force throughout the country; yet the law-enforcing agencies had acted firmly. And although then there had been no riots, no looting and no serious breach of the peace, leaders and activists of the PPP had been detained and restricted.

I reminded him also about Aden and Swaziland. In Aden, the then local unrepresentative government, backed by the British government, had maintained law and order in the face of a strong opposition from the TUC, the socialist party and others, all of whom had every moral justification for their demonstration — the British government had cancelled the election which was due to be held in January 1963, because it feared that the opposition would win the election and federate Aden with the Yemen, a federation to which it was opposed.

In a letter to the Commissioner dated June 21, 1963, citing the case of Swaziland, I wrote: "According to the BBC news broadcast, it was said that after four days of general strike, all the strike leaders were in gaol and units of the British army were patrolling the streets to maintain law and order. This is a striking contrast to the position taken by you and others in regard to the situation in British Guiana. In all the circumstances, it would appear that, in pursuit of British imperial

aims, human lives (of supporters of the government) in British Guiana and liberty in Swaziland, are freely expendable." In a previous letter to the Governor, on June 12, 1963, I recited a series of acts of omission and commission. The Governor and the advisory Police Service Commission had taken no disciplinary action against those officers who, during the 1962 disturbances had been guilty of insubordination and cowardice. In one exceptional case an officer was disciplined; however, he was soon reinstated.

The police took no action against L. F. S. Burnham, Peter d'Aguiar, Richard Ishmael and other well-known members of the community who, early in 1962, had led marches into the proclaimed area. A minor charge was instituted for operating an unlicensed transmitter found in a truck of d'Aguiar Bros. And in late 1962, the Commissioner failed to take effective action against an unruly crowd at a meeting on the Parade Ground in Georgetown, which I had called for the purpose of informing the Guyanese people about the outcome of the 1962 London Independence Conference. A relatively small number of opposition supporters were allowed to disrupt the proceedings. Not only was there organized interference by singing and shouting, but also stones were thrown at me, and cars were damaged, including that of the Minister of Agriculture. Several persons in the crowd were set upon and badly beaten by gangs acting together.

When I spoke to the Commissioner subsequently and asked why no effective action had been taken, he told me that he did not consider what occurred to be disorderly behaviour and a breach of the peace. This view, incidentally, was not shared by his legal adviser. Indeed, the Commissioner felt that his conception of his duty was to close down the meeting if it appeared to him to be getting out of hand. His attitude was expressed in an article in the *Sunday Graphic* of May 19, 1963, in which Steve Narine quoted him as follows: "Our duty as a police force is to keep the delicate balance between the two freedoms — freedom of speech and freedom of action. Today we find ourselves holding the ring while the politicians fight it out. We do not mind once it is only metaphorical!" The Commissioner's

attitude clearly emboldened the opposition. Demonstrators who later took part in a TUC-organised unemployment protest march were armed with offensive weapons such as sticks with nails embedded in them, motorcycle chains, and lengths of galvanized iron pipe, but were not disarmed by the police or charged. This was in marked contrast to action taken by the police against PPP members who picketed Government House in protest against the withholding of independence by the British government. When PNC members attacked the picketers and a fight ensued, it was the PPP members who had their placards seized and who were arrested by the police.

On Friday, April 5, 1963, when disturbances broke out at the Rice Marketing Board as a result of an inter-union dispute, the police once again failed to take a determined stand. After their failure to disperse an unruly mob which had attacked my wife's car and injured its occupants at the Board, the car of the president of the recognized union was burnt. Even at that stage, the Commissioner, instead of breaking up the mob, tried to persuade the chairman of the Rice Marketing Board and the late Minister of Home Affairs to discontinue the loading of the Soviet ship then in port. This inaction led to violence and bloodshed in the city later that evening.

In contrast to this inaction towards the opposition was his zealous pursuit of supporters and leading members of our party and government who were persistently harassed and persecuted. Police searches were carried out, the vast majority of them in the homes of our supporters. The home of Jack Kelshall was searched in January 1963. A search was later made of the home of the Minister of Agriculture. The intention of such actions was to bring government ministers into contempt and ridicule.

All of this was done no doubt because, as Drew Pearson had said, the strike was inspired by a combination of U.S. Central Intelligence Agency money and British Intelligence. The Anglo-American conspiracy of 1962 and 1963 failed to bring down the government. But it undermined confidence in it and encouraged and emboldened the opposition. The PNC and UF leaders were encouraged to feel that no matter how

irresponsible, illegal and violent were their acts, no effective counteraction would be taken against them. This led to their rejection of every reasonable proposal we made for a political and constitutional settlement and ultimately to the rape of our constitution in 1963.