

15362

NATIONAL LIBRARY  
OTTAWA



BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE  
OTTAWA

NAME OF AUTHOR... *ANDRA P. THAKUR* .....

TITLE OF THESIS... *GUYANA: The Politics of Race  
and Class 1953-68* .....

UNIVERSITY.....

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED... *M.A.* .....

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED..... *1973* .....

Permission is hereby granted to THE NATIONAL LIBRARY  
OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies  
of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and  
neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be  
printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's  
written permission.

(Signed) *Andra P. Thakur* .....

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

*No. 67 Village* .....

*Corentyne Berbice* .....

*Guyana* .....

DATED *April 19* ..... 1973

NL-91 (10-68)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

GUYANA: THE POLITICS OF RACE AND CLASS 1953-64

by



ANDRA P. THAKUR

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1973

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Guyana: The politics of race and class 1953-64" submitted by Andra P. Thakur, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

*David G. Shi*  
.....  
Supervisor

*Henry G. Lewis*  
.....

*Anthony M. Mancera*  
.....

Date: *March 16, 1973*

Dedicated to my Mudda and Daddie who have made so many sacrifices that we, their children, may escape the drudgery of poverty and ignorance, and to those friends who wanted a "break" but were denied.

## ABSTRACT

This study strongly rejects the applicability of the plural thesis to contemporary Guyanese society, which argues that due to racial and cultural diversity "party politics" have been polarised along racial lines. The differences between the various ethnic groups are over-emphasised and turned into stereotypes by the pluralists. There are, in fact, more cultural similarities than differences between the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. In this study, the class model has been substituted since it serves as a more effective tool for analysing this complex society.

This analysis is based on a study of race relations, class and politics, with emphasis on a historical development and an examination of the internal and external variables that gave rise to the conflicts.

Since the end of the Second World War many colonies began agitating for political independence. In 1953, British Guiana was granted "adult suffrage" when a socialist government was elected. The British Government suspended the colony's constitution, imprisoned its leaders and later helped to "engineer" a split within the Party.

The three successive election victories of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and its declared commitment to socialism not only aggravated the British Government and British investors in the colony but also alarmed the United States' interests, and they both vowed to prevent the establishment of another Cuba in the Western Hemisphere. The imperialist powers were encouraged and supported by the national bourgeois of British Guiana.

In order to defeat the PPP Government, racial strike was fomented, election boundaries were manipulated, and constitutional changes engineered. A concerted effort was made by both the internal opposition and the imperialist powers to oust the PPP Government. These attacks were primarily ideological--not racial. A detailed examination of the period, based on personal experience as well as on the data available, leads to the conclusion that the violence which occurred during the period 1962-1964 was not motivated by racial animosities.

## PREFACE

This thesis is written as an anthropological study. However, the writer has a strong personal involvement in many of the events described and analysed. He regards his participation on the whole as something which gives him an insight into the subject studied which is not available to the detached observer. The following biographical material is given to make known to the reader the nature and extent of this involvement.

I was born on a sugar plantation, Albion, in the county of Berbice, and spent my early years there. This gave me a first-hand experience of the plantation way of life and of the relationships between managers and workers. Also, long, regular visits to my maternal grandparents at Rose Hall Village, Berbice (one of Guyana's most heterogeneous villages), showed me the friendly relations between the various ethnic groups. My father's intense dissatisfaction with the conditions of life on the plantation led him to move the family to a village.

I left school at an early age (11 years) to assist in the rice fields during the crop season, and also to apprentice to a tailor, thus participating in two different worlds of work. I was fortunate to travel frequently from Charity on the Essequibo Coast to Skeldon on the Corentyne Coast to sell mass-produced wearing apparel. Later, I worked in Georgetown for three years (1959-1961 and 1964). These experiences helped me to come closer to the burning problem of the division between rich and poor.

From 1960 until leaving for Canada in 1966, I had been actively involved with the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha (a Hindu organisation) and also with the PPP. Thus, I feel that my early life has helped greatly to enrich my understanding of Guyana's problems (as I see them) with which I am still struggling to come to grips.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Scores of people have contributed to the completion of this thesis. I am very much indebted to Dr. David Bai, chairman of my thesis committee, whose friendly assistance was invaluable. I am also greatly indebted to Drs. H. T. Lewis and A. M. Mardiros, both of whom have made valuable comments and criticisms.

Special thanks must be given to my brothers (especially Rishi (Karl), who understands my problems and is always ready to enter into a dialogue) who in more than one way assisted me.

No less important are my friends in the Department who have, over the years, repeatedly discussed my problems with me. Dennis Bartels and Ken Lukhardt have made valuable editorial comments. Barbara Spronk, Max Headly and Herman Springer, among others, were also of invaluable assistance in this respect. I wish to thank Dr. Richard Frucht, who, in absentia, made valuable comments. I also wish to thank Dr. Joseph Landis who was generous enough to send me a copy of his Ph.D. dissertation, "Race Relations and Politics in Guyana."

Finally, I wish to thank Ms. Eleen Lee and Ms. Wendy Walker who have assisted in proofreading, and Ms. Diana Zaiffdeen, my friend and typist, whose patience in deciphering my handwriting must be commended.

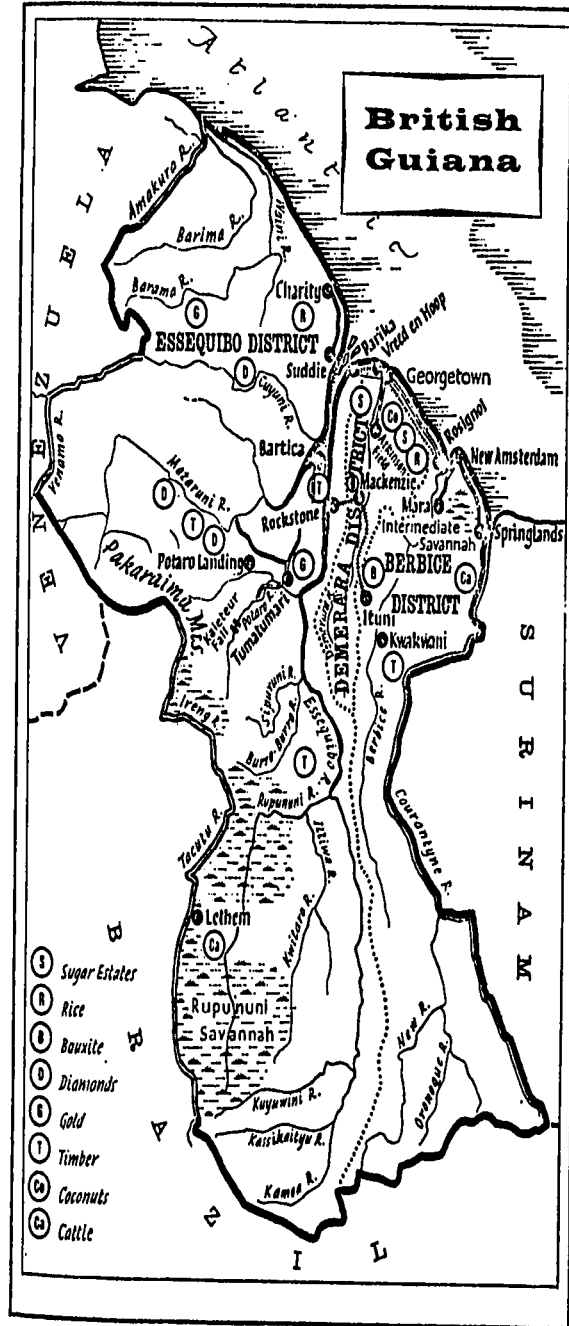
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. SOME THEORETICAL DISCUSSION . . . . .	6
A. Structural-Functional Model . . . . .	6
B. Secondary Acculturation Model . . . . .	9
C. Criticism of the Plural Model . . . . .	11
D. A Concept of Racial Classification . . . . .	18
E. Indices of Social Mobility . . . . .	22
Education . . . . .	23
Language . . . . .	24
F. A Concept of Social Class . . . . .	27
III. BACKGROUND TO DEMOGRAPHY, RACE RELATIONS, ECONOMICS AND POLITICS . . . . .	31
A. Geography, Climate and Demography . . . . .	31
B. Slavery . . . . .	34
C. Immigrants . . . . .	43
D. Post-Immigration Period . . . . .	49
E. Some Constitutional Changes . . . . .	58
IV. CONTEMPORARY PERIOD . . . . .	67
A. Democracy: British Style . . . . .	68
B. The Split . . . . .	75
C. The 1961 Election Campaign and its Results . . . . .	83
D. The Kaldor Budget and its Aftermath . . . . .	90

Chapter	Page
E. The Labour Relations Bill . . . . .	95
F. The GAWU Strike and the PR Elections 1964 . . . . .	108
V. CONCLUSION . . . . .	123
* * *	
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	129
APPENDIX . . . . .	138
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. British Government's reason for suspending British Guiana's Constitution</li> <li>II. Telegrams from British Guiana to Her Majesty's Government supporting the suspension of the Constitution</li> <li>III. Conflicting reports on sensational headlines in Britain after the suspension of the Constitution</li> <li>IV. Wills Settlement Proposal</li> <li>V. Training of Guianese trade unionists in the USA who attempted to subvert Jagan's Government</li> <li>VI. Letter to Duncan Sandys from the leaders of the three political parties</li> </ul>	

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Racial distribution . . . . .	7
II. Indo-Guyanese religious affiliation . . . . .	17
III. Estates in operation, 1832, and commodities produced . . .	37
IV. Population distribution by ethnic origin, status and county, at the time of unification, 1831 . . . . .	41
V. Arrival of immigrants to British Guiana from 1835 to 1928 .	44
VI. Interest paid and losses sustained by RDC . . . . .	52
VII. Bauxite price . . . . .	55
VIII. Race and vote in 1915 . . . . .	60
IX. Acts of violence committed in 1964 . . . . .	118



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years many historians and social scientists have used various hypotheses to explain social conflicts in British Guiana,\* most of which argue that the racial structure and cultural diversity have provided a framework within which political conflicts are expressed.

In this thesis an attempt will be made to develop a systematic argument against the emphasis placed on racial and cultural differences which have conveniently provided a methodological tool for analysing social conflicts in Guyana. Secondly, an attempt will be made to elucidate some of the problems of racial classification and categories, and to develop a concept of social class. A class here is seen as a group of people within a given society who share a common socio-economic interest and who occupy a distinct position in relation to the social means of production and distribution based on the division of labour, exchange, and property and power relationships, with the members of the groups being conscious of their social position--not as individuals but as members of that class. Finally, I shall analyse the period of 1953-64 as a period of colonial legacy which involves a wide and complex range of internal and external pressures. The period 1953-64 has been selected for two main reasons: first, the coming of a socialist government to office in 1953 and the internal problems that developed, and secondly,

---

\*Throughout this thesis the term "British Guiana" will be used to indicate the period prior to independence in 1966, and "Guyana" will refer to the post-independence period.

most of the anthropological literature that discusses racial and political complexity was published in the same period. Thus, it is advantageous not only to interpret the period 1953-64 but also to analyse some of the anthropological literature critically.

The three variables, race,\* class and politics, will be examined simultaneously since, I feel, they cannot be treated as separate phenomena. I will examine those causes that gave rise to the problems and how many of the problems have their genesis within British Guiana, i.e., between the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, and how many of them are directly or indirectly superimposed by the Colonial Office and later by the United States agencies.

In approaching the problems, I hope to raise a series of questions (in this introductory chapter) which would be answered throughout the thesis.

Since the end of World War II many colonial territories which have gained their political independence (India, Cyprus, Nigeria, Malaysia, Trinidad, and Guyana) have been alleged to be polarised along religious, racial, tribal, ethnic and cultural lines. Thus increasing differences between groups have led to the likelihood that mass violence will be used as the politics of last resort (Landis 1970:1). If it is true, as argued by the plural theorists, that cultural differences in the society have led to racial violence, why then is it that neighbouring Surinam and Trinidad, with similar admixture of racial composition, did not exhibit any form of overt racial violence? Why is it that nations such as Vietnam

---

\*The term "race" will be used strictly in a cultural sense, that is, as seen by Guyanese, and does not have any biological connotation.

and Korea with a homogeneous population, where "race" is not a criterion for violence, do exhibit violence? Why did British Guiana's racial violence start when the colony was at its threshold of gaining political independence and come to an end after Proportional Representation, as a new constitution was introduced by the Colonial Office?

In British Guiana the first batch of East Indian immigrants arrived in 1834; so it is reasonable to suppose that cultural differences would have been more acute then than they were one hundred and twenty-five years later. Why did it take so long before such racial violence became overt? One crucial question I shall try to answer is whether the violence was "racial violence" or whether it was merely projected to be. What then were the motives behind this projection? (See discussion on the plural theory, pp. 11-17.)

This thesis is developed on the fact that British Guiana is the only British colony in the Caribbean, and probably the only British colony, that has had a government with a Marxist ideology (see Appendix I), which attempted to develop a genuine socialist state, based not only on political independence from Britain (as in the case of Jamaica and Trinidad, both of which after independence continue towards neo-colonialism), but to change the structure of the colonial economy, that is, transferral of the "commanding heights of the economy from foreign ownership to the hands of the Guyanese people" (phrase excerpt from Jagan's public speeches). Unlike the other British colonies in the Caribbean, British Guiana could not be controlled by promises of economic aid from London and Washington (Schlesinger, Jr. 1965:775). Jagan knew that aid with "strings attached" would impede the development



of genuine economic independence. Turning his attention to the Eastern Block for assistance was seen by Britain and United States as "guarantee Soviet influence in an independent British Guiana" (ibid.:775). Thus, the contradiction that developed, both internally and externally, should be analysed in terms of its genesis.

Following this introduction, I shall briefly discuss in Chapter II some of the theoretical models used by anthropologists to explain the social conflict in recent years in British Guiana and their relevance in terms of the structural/functional model as applied by R. T. Smith (1954, 1962), the secondary acculturation theory used by E. P. Skinner (1955), and finally, the plural theory developed and applied by Leo Despres (1966). I shall attempt to demonstrate the complexity of the racial structure and the problems of classification. Further, I shall identify and discuss some indices of social mobility and reconstruct a concept of social class at different stages of Guyana's history. Finally, an outline for a plan of the thesis will be presented.

Chapter III will briefly discuss geography, climate and the historical importance of demographic patterns; the introduction of slavery and its economic function based on mono-economy; the arrival of immigrants and the impact of different cultures upon each other; the development of political systems and the rise of "party politics"; an examination of the development of the economy in the post-immigration period and the inhibition of diversification of the economy by the plantocracy; and finally, discussion of some of the constitutional changes that took place from the latter part of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

Chapter IV attempts a chronological and systematic analysis of those incidents which led to constitutional changes from 1953 onwards, racial violence and finally political independence in 1966: examination of the introduction of "adult suffrage," the results of the 1953 elections and the suspension of the Waddington Constitution; the split in the PPP, the 1957 election and its results; the 1961 election campaign, its results and the rise of "Apaan Jaht"\* politics; the Kaldor Budget 1962 and the lack of racial violence; the Labour Relations Bill 1963, the lack of racial violence in the initial stages, the role of the CIA and the Guyana Trade Union leaders; the imposition of Proportional Representation (PR) as the new constitutional system, the Guyana Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) strike in 1964, the 1964 PR election results, the coalition, defections to the majority party in government, independence, and the formation of the government by the People's National Congress--the majority party in the coalition.

Chapter V is the conclusion. It examines the social conflicts over the past two decades, in light of its historical development, and shows that it is the politics of class that was the dominant force in the society, and that racial animosity played a less significant role in shaping contemporary Guyana.

---

\*See footnote on page 25.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

In this chapter I will briefly discuss some of the theoretical models that were developed and applied by anthropologists to explain social conflicts in Guyana. I will also attempt to construct an alternative model based on social class. The model is based on a class/caste relationship within a plantation mode of production, which has laid the foundation for the development of heterogeneous groups within the society (see Table I; also Chapter II, section on racial classification).

#### A. THE STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL MODEL

Different theoretical perspectives have been brought to bear on social conflicts in Guyana by anthropologists from different schools. The structural-functional approach was first used by R. T. Smith (1954). Smith was strongly influenced by the "British school" of Radcliff-Brown, B. Malinowski, and later by Talcott Parsons and Max Weber. Professor Raymond Smith has made the most significant contribution to the understanding of social structure and racial classification in Guyanese society. He has criticised the notion that geographical units can be isolated and treated as subunits, as though each were itself a total system. He argues that:

We are now convinced that certain features of the social structure are only explicable, if seen as a part of a wider social system, which cannot be regarded as being merely "external" to the village. Consequently we shall have to deal with the features of Guianese society in its widest sense . . . [and] if we are investigating

TABLE I  
 RACIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION  
 ON 31ST DECEMBER, 1964 (PROVISIONAL)

	Males	Females	Totals	Percentage of total
Indians	162,190	157,880	320,070	50.2
Africans	90,070	102,760	199,830	31.3
Mixed Races	37,860	38,130	75,990	11.9
Portuguese*	2,870	3,510	6,380	1.0
Chinese	2,230	1,680	3,910	0.6
European	1,130	1,290	2,420	0.4
Amerindian	14,760	14,670	29,430	4.6
Totals	318,110	319,920	638,030	100.0

\*In official statistics Portuguese are classified as a separate ethnic group.

Source: 1964 (Provisional) Census Data.

certain other problems, particularly of an economic or political nature then British Guiana will have to be treated as a sub-system of a wider system or systems, such as the British Commonwealth or the West Indies (R. T. Smith 1954:4).

Smith's approach to the problem of relating "class" with "race" was developed on two bases: first, his condemnation of the Marxian (particularly pseudo-Marxian) concept of social class (R. T. Smith 1970:64), and secondly, his incorporation of Weber's (Girth and Mills 1970:181) notion of "status groups" which he uses to define social class. In his discussion on consensus and dissensus among the different social sections of the society, Smith again uses the Weberian (ibid.:181) concept of political parties and argues that not all the relevant conditions of stratification can be submerged under the categories of "social class" and "status groups."

Smith's view, like Richard Frucht's (1967:24), is quite correct in suggesting that the society is neither "peasant" nor "proletariat" and that terms such as "small farmers," "rice farmers," and "cane farmers" are much more appropriate. His analysis, however, can be further developed to show that regardless of the specificity or appropriateness in terminology, structurally there has been little change throughout the history of Guyana (discussed later in this chapter).

The basic weakness of the structural/functional model is that it implies a synchronic approach, that is, its main concern is to explain how each structure within the society functions. The functionalist's primary task is to explain how it functions and not why it functions the way it is functioning. The attempt of negating the "whys" within the society is doing injustice to the very problem one sets out to explain. The functionalist rightly posits a multiplicity of causes and effects, but

this does not explain the genesis of those causes. In order for us to explain the existence of those problems we must examine the dialectical and historical development of that society.

#### B. SECONDARY ACCULTURATION MODEL

For nearly half a century anthropologists have interested themselves in acculturation, "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact" (Herskovits 1938:10). Today, it is difficult for us to observe cultural contact between two primary cultural groups, because there are few "indigenous" groups in the world that have not, directly or indirectly, suffered the impact of western cultural influence. Ethnic or racial groups which have come into contact with Europeans have acquired, through acculturation, European or European-type cultural values and have become agents for cultural transmission of European traits to non-Europeans. Skinner (1955:1) has referred to this type of acculturation as "secondary acculturation."

In British Guiana the ex-African slaves share with the East Indian and other immigrants those dominant traits which they have acquired, either by imposition or voluntarily, from the Europeans. Skinner points out that the cultural traits of the East Indians have been greatly modified through contact with Afro-Guyanese who had already undergone the process of "primary" acculturation. To support his thesis he quotes C. F. Andrews who has written extensively on East Indian immigrations:

. . . the friendly association of the two races together in schools, and also, elementary teaching work is being done by Afro American [British Guiana blacks] teachers; for it is true that the

first impression left by good teachers in early childhood continues later in life (Andrews 1930:438).

Skinner's "secondary acculturation" model is somewhat outdated, though not entirely irrelevant, for analysing contemporary social conflicts. It might serve as a tool to analyse the concepts of social values and to identify some indices of social mobility, e.g., education, language (accent), dress style, etc. The Afro-Guyanese are anywhere between seven and ten generations removed from the emancipated African slaves, while immigration from India started in 1834 and terminated in 1917. Today it would be unlikely for one to come in contact with an East Indian indentured worker from India. What we find, then, is a conglomeration of seventh to tenth generation African descendants interacting with third and fourth generation East Indian descendants with many other cultural and mixed cultural groups seeking social and economic mobility.

Secondary acculturation theory does not help to explain the genesis of class contradiction within the society. The main concern of the proponents of the theory is to explain how newly arrived groups acquire common cultural values "through acculturation, status alignments based, not on ethnic affiliation, but on common style of life" (Skinner 1955:2). This process according to E. P. Skinner, has occurred in many parts of the world: "In Hawaii, a country almost parallel in development to British Guiana, it is called 'haoleization' or 'Americanization' whereas in British Guiana it is called 'Englishification'" (Skinner 1955:2-3).

Skinner's secondary acculturation theory was applied in British Guiana prior to the development of social conflict and was spared the task of explaining the root causes of this problem. However, his theory could have been much more useful had he pressed certain basic issues.

"Englishification" can be seen as a process whereby a certain "life style" is learned. All Guyanese may acquire certain cultural values, e.g., the positive connotation of a British accent, but not all can achieve the material goals which they have acquired, e.g., cars, fancy clothing, transistor radios, etc. Thus within the process of "Englishification" lies the genesis of class contradiction which secondary acculturation did not set itself the task of explaining.

### C. CRITICISM OF THE PLURAL MODEL

The plural theory was first developed by J. S. Furnival (1944, 1945) for the Dutch East Indies and was later developed by M. G. Smith (1965a, b) and applied to the West Indies, and subsequently elaborated by Leo Despres (1966) and applied to British Guiana. In order to understand the poverty of the plural theory in contemporary Guyana, we must first understand that the theory was developed specifically to explain "tropical colonial society" and, secondly, understand the relationship between the "coloniser" and the "colonised." The proponents of the theory argue that there is a lack of "common social will" among members of the different cultural or ethnic groups and that the society is held together by the imperial powers. Dissension among the different groups became apparent after political independence (as in the case of India and Nigeria, where the different cultural groups waged war against each other).

In retrospect, we can see that the paradigm upon which Furnival builds his theory is a shifting one. He states:

A society that is comprising two or more social orders which live side by side yet without mingling in one political unit . . . as in Western Canada where people of different racial [ethnic] origins



tend to live in distinct settlements and for example, a North European cannot find work on a railway, because this is reserved for "Dagos" or "waps" . . . there is no common will except, possibly in matters of supreme importance such as resistance to aggression from outside. In its political aspect the plural society resembles a confederation of allied provinces (Furnival 1944:446).

Although there might have been some relevance to Furnival's argument given the "time"\* and "place" in that society, in his comparative study Despres treats the Guyanese society as though it were static, which completely ignores the dynamics of cultural change and the development of new institutions within the society. According to Malinowski:

. . . the impact of the higher culture, the substance of native [African] life to which it is directed; and the phenomenon of autonomous change resulting from the reaction between the two cultures. Only by analysing the problem under these three headings and then confronting the column of European influences with that of native responses and the resulting change do we arrive at the most useful instruments for research. Far from being a mere mechanical joining of the two original influences . . . the two impinge on each other. The impact produces conflict, co-operation or compromise (1965:26).

In improvising on the plural theory, Despres incorporates Julian Steward's\*\* concept of "local institutions" in what he calls "minimal sections." Minimal sections according to Despres is a term that can be applied to a situation when an institution supports such activities that intensify differences at local level between different cultural or ethnic groups. Despres selects local government as a "minimal section" or "local institution" to fit his plural model. He selects Eversham, an "Afro"

---

\*Although I am very critical of the applicability of the plural theory to Guyanese society, Despres probably would have had a stronger argument had he restricted his discussion to up to the early 20th century when the planters kept the East Indians "locke up" within the plantation (see citation on p. 47).

\*\*For a detailed discussion on "local" and "broker institutions" see Julian Steward's *Theory of Culture Change*, pp. 43-66.

dominated village, and Cromanty, a neighbouring "Indo" dominated village on the Corentyne Coast to discuss how differences are institutionalised at the local level, then sanctified at national level. Because of his unilateral approach to the problem he fails to identify the true differences between Cromanty and Eversham. He points out that Eversham had a proprietors' committee which had an official function (Despres 1966:115) and that at Cromanty there were no local governmental activities (ibid.:116), and argues that the Afro-Guianese use local government more effectively than Indo-Guianese.

This is a classic example of how Despres obfuscates the facts. Had he investigated the economic structure of the two villages he would have found that until the mid-1960's Cromanty was owned by three families, all of whom were kinsfolk while the rest of the residents were tenants, not proprietors. In contrast, it is obvious that the committee at Eversham will be more interested and effective in local government since Eversham has over two hundred proprietors (rate payers). Why would Cromanty have a proprietors' committee, when there are only three proprietors?

Secondly, Despres again borrows Steward's concept of "broker institution" to exemplify what he calls "maximal sections." Maximal sections or national cultural institutions exist when broker institutions serve to integrate similar minimal cultural sections which allow the expression of their characteristic cultural values in national spheres of social and cultural activities (ibid.:25) (see also Appendix II).

In his criticism of the structural-functional model, Despres rightly argues that it minimises the theoretical significance of

historically rooted subcultures (ibid.:18). However, it seems that he too has fallen prey to the stereotyped view of the different ethnic groups. Indo-Guyanese are stereotyped by both foreigners and Guianese themselves, as "money-saving maniacs," whereas the Afro-Guyanese are seen as extravagantly spending their substance on rum, women and fancy clothes. The typical form of stereotyping is exemplified by Michael Swan:

The Negro's open character arouses the Englishman's affection more easily than the quiet sometimes furtive nature of the uneducated Indian--educated Indians are among the most articulate and extrovert people in the Colony. Where the Indian is provident and saves his money cent by cent the African is improvident, spending his money as it comes; where the Indian is gregarious mainly in the market place the African sits talking or singing all night in a rum-shop; where the Indian cares little about his clothes the African will spend his last penny on a new white shirt or a shiny blue satin dress for his daughter (Swan 1957:53-54).

This view of the two major ethnic groups has also been expressed by many Royal Commissions and more recently by Constitutional Commissions which have visited the colony. This is due partly to the fact that most people who have written accounts of the society have had very short acquaintance with the country and are struck with the differences rather than the similarities and interdependence of the different ethnic groups, and partly because it is far more painstaking to make a class analysis in a society such as Guyana with a heterogeneous population, where racial and cultural diversity provides a seemingly simple interpretation and is used as a methodological tool for analysis.

It is obvious that the stereotypes are reflections of the different characteristics of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese which one hears in middle class circles in Georgetown and from expatriates who have spent little time in the country. Like all half-truths, these stereotypes are not only misleading but dangerous (both politically and psychologically where such

stereotypes are internalised and become "folk models") (R. T. Smith 1962: 135). The empirical evidence does not support these arguments. Indo-Guyanese consume as much rum as any other ethnic group, if not more, while Afro-Guyanese deposit more money in the post office--though Indo-Guyanese deposit more per capita, many of them do not deposit anything (ibid.:135). Indo-Guyanese are as fashion-conscious as Afro-Guyanese. It seems reasonable to assume that anyone who falls prey to making such generalizations will obviously fail in making any significant contribution to the understanding of social problems in Guyana.

One of the major problems with the plural theorists\* seems to be that they see certain phenomena in the society and explain them according to a predetermined set of concepts. What we must understand is how the beliefs of the people relate to the changes of the total structure of the society. Despres suggests that political changes in the society will result in violent conflict between the different cultural sections (ibid.: 19). On the contrary, racial strife between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese was experienced in British Guiana while she was still a colony. Why did violence come to an end after Jagan's Government was removed from office? Was it because the cultural differences as pointed out by the plural theorists had come to an end, or was it due to political interference by the British Government and the White House in Washington? Was it the old tactic of "divide and rule"? Was the general situation in British Guiana any different from that in India when she was approaching independence in the mid-1940's among the Hindus and Muslims, or in Cyprus in the 1950's

---

\*Among the most prominent of the plural theorists in Guyana are Leo Despres, Philip Singer and Roy A. Glasgow.

among the Greeks and Turks? This is how Ved Prakash Vatuk summarised the situation in British Guiana:

In 1943 many American papers asked India to wait for her independence. If she had not waited, if Great Britain had left at that time, she would have been spared the horror of communal riots. Had Great Britain left British Guiana in 1953, racial tensions would not have been permitted to build up to the present level. The answer to British Guiana's problem is not as the New York Times suggested in 1962 that "British Guiana must wait," but on the contrary, that Great Britain must leave as soon as possible and allow British Guiana to solve her own problems (Vatuk 1963:35).

Despres fails to make any distinction between "race" and "culture" and assumes that cultural differences equal racial differences. Unlike Raymond Smith who gives a wide range of categories for racial classification (R. T. Smith 1962:99), Despres assumes that all Indo-Guyanese are either Hindus or Muslims and all Afro-Guyanese are Christians. Because of his mechanistic treatment of the problem, he fails to explain why one out of every five Indo-Guyanese claims to be Christian (see Table II below), and why thousands do not accept any religious beliefs, but if pressured will accept the religious affiliation of their parents. Again, he fails to explain why one-tenth of the population (see Table I) claims to be of "mixed" origin, and why many individuals of "mixed" parentage claim either "Indo" or "Afro" ancestry. Individuals of "mixed" parentage choose to be either "mixed" "Indo"- or "Afro"-Guyanese depending on which group provides them with a better social status.

In conclusion, the plural theorist failed to explain the root causes of the racial violence in British Guiana. Thus, any attempt to explain why the violence came to an end in 1964 would be misleading. The plural thesis (knowingly or unknowingly) supports the perpetuation of colonialism by arguing that the society is held together by the imperial powers (Furnival 1946:446) and secondly, any changes that will occur in

TABLE II  
INDO-GUYANESE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Hindus (Orthodox)	140,400	52.4%
Hindus Arya Samaj (Protestants)	26,000	9.7%
Muslims	48,290	18.0%
Christians	53,000	19.7%
Total	267,690	100.0%

Calculated from 1960 Census Data.

the society will take a violent form (Despres 1966:19). But, as pointed out in the introductory chapter, there are many other societies with racial and cultural homogeneity which have exhibited violence. On the other hand, there are many heterogeneous societies which have not exhibited any racial violence. There are several fundamental questions which have been ignored by the plural theorists; thus they cannot come to grips of understanding the causes of the problems.

The questions raised so far are academic problems; that is, as "participant observer" certain patterns of behaviour are observed and these behaviour patterns are fitted within a theoretical framework. I am convinced that my disagreements with other theorists have two bases: (1) because our problems are not the same we do not ask the same questions; thus we do not arrive at similar conclusions; and (2) my concern is with practical and workable solutions for Guyana's problems rather than theoretical discussions.

#### D. A CONCEPT OF RACIAL CLASSIFICATION

To understand the complexity of racial categories in Guyana, we must first understand the historical context under which those terms were originated. Unlike the United States (where a "Negro" includes any individual who has among his ancestors, no matter how remotely, a black African), Guyanese have a more complex approach in explaining physical appearance with a whole range of categories based on skin colour, e.g., "white," "fair," "dark" and "black," and hair, e.g., "kinky," "curly" and straight" (R. T. Smith 1962:99). The usage of these terms came into existence during the nineteenth century when immigrants first went to the plantation.

Prior to emancipation in 1838, other categories such as "slave," "free coloured" and "white" were used. This is a reflection of the legal and institutional aspect of the society.

Older members of the contemporary generation remember the mental image they carried, correlating ethnic origin with occupation. Europeans were synonymous with authority, Chinese with small groceries, laundries and restaurants, East Indians with agriculture, Africans with the civil service dwelling in urban areas. Today, these "mental images" hardly exist. Young Guyanese know that "white" sailors who visit Georgetown do not exhibit the same life style as plantation managers and other English bureaucrats. Again, they understand the difference in occupational status in the plantation among the plantation ruling elite. It is quite noticeable that professional Guyanese who have trained abroad enjoy higher social status than "white" plantation overseers.

In terms of "racial classification" the Portuguese remain the most

interesting group. To what can we attribute the fact that they are not recognised as "whites" or Europeans? Obviously they were brought from Europe, but the historical circumstances under which they came and the role they played as a social class resulted in this special identity (ibid.:99).

The complexity of racial classification can only be grasped as the history of crossbreeding and inter-crossbreedings,\* which was connected with the economics of the plantation society. Today, there are several distinct classifications that can be added to the list. The offspring of an Indo- and an Afro-Guyanese is referred to as a "Dugla," that of an Afro- and Portu-Guyanese is referred to as a "Santantone," and there is, of course, the Mulatto, but Guyanese in all their "creoleness" are running out of names for the offsprings of crossbreedings and inter-crossbreedings. The chart below will help to explain how complicated the situation is.

Note that in diagram A there are specific names (nicknames) for the offsprings of first generation crossbreedings, whereas in B there are no specific names for any of the offsprings and all are lumped together, which explains why the ratio of the "mixed" in the population is so high (see Table I; also p. 20).

To speak of racial animosity between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese and its inevitability is a feeble attempt to explain what took place in Guyana during the early 1960's. The facts that are set in official records are not enough to explain interracial unity which went much

---

\*For a detailed discussion see V. Daley, D. Nath, E. P. Skinner and Farley.



## A HYPOTHETICAL CHART OF WHAT CONSTITUTES MIXED\*

## A: First Generation Interbreeding

I x A = "Dugla"        )  
 B x A = Mulatto        ) Mixed  
 P x A = "Santantone" )

## B: Second Generation Inter-crossbreeding

I x AM = ?        )  
 A x AM = ?        )  
 B x AM = ?        ) Mixed  
 P x AM = ?        )  
 AM x AM = ?        )

x : Mating  
 A : Afro  
 I : Indo  
 B : British  
 P : Portuguese  
 AM: Any Mixed (Dugla, Mulatto, Portu)

\*Many individuals of mixed parentage sometimes identify with one parent, depending on which one provides higher social status.

deeper. Here is some of the documentation. As late as 1962 the Wynn Parry Commission stated:

We found very little evidence of racial segregation in the social life of the country and Georgetown. East Indians and Africans seem to mix and associate with one another on terms of the greatest cordiality . . . the disturbances of February 16th did not originate in a racial conflict, nor did they develop into a trial of strength between the East Indians and Africans (Hubbard 1970:24).

The Waddington Constitution of 1950-51 reported:

We were, however, impressed by the unity with which peoples of all races live side by side in villages where mutual dependence is, of necessity, recognised. It was reassuring that racialism spoke with a hesitant voice in public and that no proposals for communal representation was made to us (ibid.:21).

The Robertson Commission of 1954 declared:

. . . except for the Europeans, the PPP could count on a substantial number of supporters among all races and all classes in British Guiana, with a bulk of its supporters naturally to be found among the ordinary working people (ibid.:25).

In every village along the coast and every street in the urban areas people of different ethnic backgrounds consort together as neighbours, friends, clubmates, worshippers, classmates, work groups and community leaders. Furthermore, the different ethnic groups and particularly the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese worked together in systems of labour exchange. They shared membership in trade unions, friendly burial societies and sports clubs (ibid.:25).

There were two exceptions to this general rule of interracial unity in Guyana. They were the sugar estates and the bauxite mines. On the sugar plantations, the Europeans lived in segregated compounds and did not admit "outsiders" unless, of course, one was a cook, butler or gardener. Notice boards were not necessary to keep non-Europeans out; watchmen were always on duty for that purpose. At the bauxite company at Mackenzie (now Lindentown) the situation was no different; the rigid colour bar (caste system) was maintained unchallenged until 1947. Sign-board warnings of "Keep Out" were quite visible at Richmond Hill which was inhabited by "whites."

Today, there are some changes: "coloured" are now permitted to live in areas which were once occupied only by "whites." Plantation compounds along the coast and Richmond Hill at Mackenzie (Lindentown) are now desegregated. Sugar estates cater specially for "junior" and "senior" staff clubs; which means that none of the field workers and few factory workers can enjoy a "drink" at any of the staff clubs. The same situation applies to the mining towns, especially since the bauxite

industry was nationalised two years ago. The positions abdicated by the "whites" are now being replaced by the middle and upper class Guyanese. What is taking place in the society is a change in the content of the social order, not the structure itself; no sooner does the caste relationship break down than the class barrier goes up.

#### E. SOME INDICES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Social mobility is an upward movement in a society of individuals or groups of individuals who, by one means or another, seek identity with members of a higher social group. Social mobility in its historical context was not open to the slaves. Institutions such as family, education and religion were denied to them. They were looked down on as heathens who were not good enough to share the knowledge of the Bible. After emancipation the ruling plantocracy saw that educational and religious institutions would serve as an effective means to help to internalise those values and beliefs which were necessary for the perpetuation of a plantation system (Bacchus, unpublished:4). A Christian education was considered the most effective means of achieving these objectives.

The arrival of the East Indians complicated the situation. Many refused to accept western civilisation, while others saw the need for "Englishification," that is, becoming Christians, changing names, wearing collar and tie, etc. It became apparent by the earlier part of this century that social mobility was possible only through those institutions that were controlled by the planters, and the majority of individuals or families that had accepted those changes have shown marked degrees of

social and economic mobility.

### Education

Because of the social and economic structure of the plantation system many workers found it difficult to escape the "trappings" of the system. Many of those who escaped and were wealthy enough refused to be Christianised. However, they recognised education as the chief vehicle for mobility and were prepared to "buy" it for their children. This is probably one explanation for many non-Christian Indo-Guyanese being among the higher rank professionals. Until the passage of the controversial Education Bill in 1961 (see Chapter IV), non-Christians were not allowed to be teachers in primary schools. Many Christians believed that if teachers did not share the same Christian philosophy and religious beliefs, an important aspect of the religion would be lost. According to one (Christian) legislator:

I admit I have never come across the appointment of a non-Christian as headmaster to a Christian school. That is not surprising . . . it is just the people in whom you have implicit faith to lead your schools. After all the morals of the children are involved and you must be assured that the teacher has accepted the moral standard of the [Christian] denomination. (Tello 1960).\*

The position of the churches (Christian) in British Guiana has forced qualified non-Christians to move to the city and become civil servants or to go abroad to further their studies if they could afford it. The passage of the Education Bill in 1961 led to a high influx of Indo-Guyanese in the teaching profession. In Guyana, as elsewhere, certain schools are looked upon as being very prestigious. Queen's College (all boys) and Bishop's High School (all girls) are the two most

---

\*Cited in Bacchus (unpublished paper), 1950.

prestigious schools in the country. Although the schools are considered "Government" not everyone can get entrance into them. Only those who win scholarships or whose parents enjoy a high social status are privileged to attend Queen's or Bishop's. A poor man's daughter from the rural district might fortunately win a scholarship to Bishop's but her family will soon find out that it is much cheaper to keep the child at home and settle for a less prestigious school.

Today, the situation has grown very complex. Professionals-- Christians and non-Christians, Indo- and Afro-Guyanese--are returning to Guyana, taking with them a host of diverse cultural values such as substituting "Scotch whiskey" for rum, American "left hand drive" cars for popular British made cars and anything that has a "foreign" look. These values have a tremendous psychological impact and are either imposed on or adopted by segments of the society and further complicate a complex society.

#### Language

Most foreigners take for granted that Guyana is an English-speaking territory and upon entering the country encounter a number of difficulties in trying to communicate with urban lower class dwellers and the majority of the rural dwellers. There are two basic problems--the urban/rural dialect and the upper/lower class accent--both of which have been ignored.

There is a built-in pressure among middle class white-collar workers to "speak proper English" both in the urban and rural areas. This, however, does not explain the basics of urban/rural dichotomy, e.g., "fe wah mek ayou ah go-go" (rural) as opposed to "fo wah alyou gaing" (urban) (why will you all be going?). Note the difference between

"fe" in the rural district and "fo" in the urban areas, and "alyou" and "ayou" which serves to distinguish a "countryman" from a "townsman." Field workers in the plantations who have been elevated to "field overseers" and "drivers" and enjoy "junior staff" privileges also feel strong pressure to "speak proper English."

"Guyanese Creolese" (talkie-talkie) can be quite ambiguous for non-Guyanese. For example, statements like "dem na abee nation" (they are not our nation) can be very misleading as the word "nation" here does not connote nationality. It is overheard in conversation when Orthodox Hindus are looking for potential spouses for their sons or daughters. In the given context, the word "nation" is expressed in terms of "caste" and the statement can be translated: "They are not our caste."

In political circles, among the lower class "dem na abee kind"\* (they are not our kind) is a popular comment. The word "kind" is an overloaded expression and has both class and racial overtones. Anyone who fails to identify with the lower class is considered "na abee kind." The Luckhoos, Adams and Ishmeils are all prominent Indo-Guyanese, yet lower class Indo-Guyanese do not consider them "abee kind." This, however, must not be explained only on the basis of their political views but also on their social life style, e.g., language (in the habit of speaking with a foreign accent), drinking whiskey instead of rum, and their

---

\*The word "kind" has been subjected to many misuses (both by Guyanese and non-Guyanese) which led to the rise of "Apaan Jaht" (own kind) in the late 1940's. There is no direct evidence when "Apaan Jaht" was first used or by whom. The Workers and Farmers Party (WFP) led by Daniel Debideen (an Indo-Guyanese) exploited the word in 1942 in order to attract Indo-Guyanese voters on the basis of "racial emotionalism." He was later joined by Lionel Luckhoo on an anti-Federation propaganda, charging that the Indo-Guyanese of British Guiana would be submerged to a predominantly Afro West Indian Federation.

general life style. On the other hand, during election campaigns many Indo-Guyanese (PPP) supporters considered Afro-Guyanese to be "abee kind," based on their social life style and value system.

The word "mati" probably has a dual derivation. It could have been derived from the English "mate" or the Hindi "mati" (earth) signifying lowness. Whatever the origin, the word (although not restricted to, but used more frequently on, the plantation) implies equal social status and is characterised by respect and consideration for the interest and well-being of the "other fellow." An example is the case where an Afro cane-cutter was abused by an Indo "driver." The Afro cane-cutter quickly reported the incident to an Indo co-worker who quickly consoled the Afro co-worker by reminding him that "dem ah all mati" (they are all of a kind). The "they" implied that the Indo "driver" had more in common with the plantation management than with the cane-cutters. The "mati" relationship is best realised at the time of scarce employment (out of crop season): after being employed for about two or three days one would stay home to give his "mati" a chance to "make a few bucks."

In general, Guyanese have had a history of expressing themselves in proverbs. These proverbs are very expressive, yet difficult to define in standard English: "When cocobay man get money, 'e shake Gubna 'an" (a man who has leprosy, but has money, he can shake hands with the Governor); "Dog gat money 'e buy cheese" (a dog that has money can buy cheese). These are a few that express the class system in the society and the power of money (Seymour 1966:79). Of course there are others, such as "cow dead, he massa cry but carrion crow laugh" and "when tiga na deh, monkey gie ball" (ibid.:79).

Although there is a lack of explanation of the origin of these proverbs, one would accept that they must have originated during the days of slavery and served the purpose of expressing the inner self of the slaves; as the "blues" in the United States and calypsoes in the West Indies.

#### F. A CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CLASS

Many social scientists are not aware of the complexity involved in defining a social class, and that the lines that are used as boundaries to separate one group from another are quite arbitrary. For instance, when Marx describes the proletariat as being a revolutionary class he does not wish to make a generalisation that every proletarian is a revolutionary, but that every proletarian within his group is a potential revolutionary. Therefore, in a Marxian sense, the term "social class" refers to the group as a whole and not to each individual in that group.

Earlier in this chapter, I indicated that my discussion throughout this thesis is based on a class analysis, i.e., a group of people within the society who share a socio-economic interest and who occupy a distinct position in that society. The system of a class, according to Jordan (1971:25), has three concepts: (1) the system of production and its social relationship and the rights or exclusion to own property; (2) the ability to compete for political power; and (3) class consciousness, that is, the ideological awareness of members of that particular class and their relative position within the society. It should be stressed that class structure is an analytical tool and thus should be judged on the



basis of its usefulness and its correspondence with reality. Secondly, this is a historically specific class structure which needs to be modified when applied to specific context.

Below is an attempt to develop a concept of social class in Guyana in its historical context. The solid lines indicate the class/caste relationship, while the broken lines indicate that, in terms of social mobility, the social group above is penetrable.

Time Period\*

Mid-16th to end  
16th century

1. White settlers and traders

Amerindians

The first "whites" that went to the colony were the explorers and traders who were later followed by settlers. It was this latter group that enslaved the natives to work on their newly introduced cotton and coffee plantations.

End 16th to early  
17th century

2. White plantocracy

Amerindians and white workers

Amerindian labour was not guaranteed, as many ran away from the plantation and settled permanently in the interior. Thus, in order to ensure cheap and continuous labour, Amerindian labour was supplemented with white convicts from the Netherlands and later from Britain.

Early 17th century  
until emancipation

3. White plantocracy

Lower class whites

Amerindians

African slaves

---

\*The time period is not specific but approximate. It serves the purpose of giving the period in discussion.

As the plantation economy became more complex and African slaves were introduced, the lower class whites, because of skin colour and cultural background, moved up the social ladder and occupied lower status jobs on the plantation such as overseers. To this point of the history of the colony a sharp caste relationship was exhibited.

Emancipation to end  
of immigration period

4. White plantocracy including other whites

Mulattoes

-----  
Africans

-----  
Immigrants

The emancipation of the slaves complicated the social structure of the society. The lower class whites moved up the hierarchy of the plantation society, which by that time had begun to operate on the basis of absentee ownership. The Mulattoes, being offsprings of the "whites," were given special privileges and occupied higher social status than the emancipated slaves. They filled the lower status jobs on the plantations, e.g., overseers. At the same time it was economically advantageous for the planters to employ Mulattoes than to bring whites from Britain. The Portuguese immigrants that were brought to the colony were socially and physically separated from the rest of the population.

Post-immigration;  
1917 onwards

5. Foreign capitalists

Local bourgeoisie (property and business owning class) who own, but do not work the means of production, including the intelligentsia, who do not own property but have political power and/or influence.

-----  
The civil servants, plantation overseers and the petty bourgeoisie (who own and also work the means of production).

-----  
The urban proletariat, peasants and sugarcane field workers

-----  
The lumpen proletarians

Here, I include the plantocracy as foreign capitalists, as the plantation economy has grown into monopoly corporations, e.g., Booker Bros. and Co., Ltd. Each social group in this section is self-explanatory.

In this section I have attempted to reconstruct the development of social class throughout Guyanese history, which I hope would serve as a model to discuss Chapter III. This would be the precursor of my discussion in Chapter IV and will serve to support my argument that racial differences throughout Guyanese history have served the purpose of maintaining the class structure of the society. I hope that my arguments would not be interpreted as a denial of the significance of racial differences in the early 1960's, but rather that they should be viewed as a variable which has been subjected to many misinterpretations with serious theoretical and practical implications.

## CHAPTER III

### BACKGROUND TO DEMOGRAPHY, RACE RELATIONS, ECONOMICS, AND POLITICS

The intent of this chapter is to discuss the historical development of the race/class problems in Guyana and how it was influenced by the climate and topography.

Problems in enslaving and preventing the escape of Amerindians forced the planters to seek alternative sources of cheap labour. Slave labour proved successful and continued for over two and a half centuries, which because of economic reasons came to an end. The emancipation of the slaves again necessitated that the planters seek a cheap and stable labour force--conditions which were met this time by the East Indians who came under a contract system which involved indentured labour and return passage to India. This came to an end after the planters realized that the immigration system could be manipulated to maintain a cheap reserve labour force.

It was due to the combination of slave labour and different ethnic groups of migrant workers who were locked into the plantation economy that the demographic pattern rose in the country.

#### A. GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE AND DEMOGRAPHY

"Guiana," an Amerindian word literally translated "land of many waters," was the name given to the territory lying between the Orinoco and the Amazon--from 3° 30' South to 8° 40' North Latitude. It is bounded

on the north by the Orinoco and the Atlantic, east by the Atlantic, south by the rivers Negro and Amazon, and west by the Orinoco and the Cassaquine. It covers an area of approximately 690,000 square miles (*Encyclopedia Britannica* XI:249). This vast territory has been divided up into Brazil (formerly Portuguese Guiana), Venezuela (formerly Spanish Guiana), Guyana (formerly British Guiana) and Dutch and French Guianas.

Guyana occupies an area of approximately 83,000 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the Atlantic, east by Dutch Guiana (Surinam--separated by the Corentyne River), south and southwest by Brazil, and west by Venezuela. It lies 0° 40' to 8° 40' North Latitude and 57° to 61° West Longitude (see map). Until 1831, the country comprised three different colonies, named after the three principal rivers which drain them--Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice. These former colonies are now called counties, with Berbice extending from the Corentyne River to the Abary Creek, which includes the Berbice River. Demerara extends from the Abary to the Bouracerie Creek, including the Demerara River, while Essequibo extends from Bouracerie to the mouth of the Waini Creek.

Guyana lies within the equatorial belt (outside of the hurricane zone) and within the sphere of the North East Trade Winds. The climate and seasonal changes are greatly influenced by the apparent migration of the sun--north to south--between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, which results in four distinct seasons: (1) a long wet season from March to July; (2) a long dry season from August to mid-November; (3) a short wet season from mid-November to January; and (4) a short dry season from January to March. The country enjoys very high precipitation, with an average of over 80 inches of rainfall annually. The temperature

is uniformly high on the coast, never falling below 60° F nor rising above 90° F. This climatic stability is due primarily to the influence of the strong North East Trade Winds. The climate in the hinterland is not as uniform as it is on the coast: rainfall is sometimes as low as 40-50 inches annually, with temperatures on mountain ranges falling as low as 25° F (Poonai 1966:166).

These seasonal changes strongly influenced the harvesting pattern and resulted in the characteristic seasonal underemployment which is due to Guyana's heavy dependence on the plantation economy.

Guyana displays a very unique demographic characteristic. Because of the historical development of the colony, based primarily on a mono-agricultural economy, the majority of the population (see map) is bottled up on the coastal belt. In 1960, 85.9 percent lived on the coastland; 1.1 percent lived on the lower banks of rivers and creeks; 2.6 percent lived on the islands at the river mouths; 2.3 percent lived on the North West District; and 8.1 percent lived in the hinterland. Guyana has two cities: Georgetown, the capital of approximately 120,000; and New Amsterdam which is located on the east bank of the Berbice River and has a population of approximately 16,000. Beyond the coastal strip, there are two populated regions: (1) Bartica, a gateway to the hinterland which became a booming town in the 1880's during the peak of the gold rush; and (2) Linden (formerly Mackenzie), the "bauxite city" of Guyana which started in the mid-1920's. Agriculture has always dominated the economy despite attempts to diversify in the direction of mining.

## B. SLAVERY

The history of Guyana's economy is based predominantly upon agriculture and a slave-owning economy. Immediately after the Europeans (Spanish, Dutch and British) arrived on the coast of Essequibo, they began capturing and purchasing Amerindians for use as slaves. Tribal differences were exploited in order to foster tribal warfare to help secure slaves. The Macusis were captured by the Caribs and sold as slaves to the white planters in Surinam (Farabee 1967:14). The selling of Amerindians to the white planters in Surinam was used to cope with the numerous runaway slaves who kept rejoining their tribes, and so prevented economic loss.

The continuous running away of the Amerindians created an unstable labour force for the plantation economy. Thus, the planters were forced to find an alternative solution for a cheap supply of stable labour.

African slaves have been in use since the 1620's. They created fewer problems (Glasgow 1970:20), "thus the colonies found it wise to impose additional limitations on the use of Amerindian slaves" (Landis 1970:15-16). After a number of attacks on the plantations by the Amerindians in the 1670's, the planters of Berbice and Essequibo saw it was necessary to sign treaties declaring the Amerindians "absolutely free." By the end of the seventeenth century the Amerindians were used not as slaves but as allies. They were encouraged to take up residence back of plantations--their primary task being to assist in quelling African slave revolts and to hunt down runaway slaves (Daley 1966:68).\* They became the

---

\*For further discussion see Dalton, Chap. 6, and Gravensande, Vol. II, p. 562.

police of the interior--a role that was later to be played by the "creoles" against the "coolies."

There is a common notion that whenever the term "slavery" is used we immediately have a mental image of "blacks." As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the first ethnic group that were enslaved in British Guiana were the Amerindians. Secondly, "whites" were brought from the Netherlands and Britain. They were probably convicts, who served their period of "hard labour" in the plantations in the Caribbean rather than in the prison cells of Europe. It was the influx of the African slaves that elevated the social conditions of the "whites." According to Farley:

The planter was evidently originally comprised of whites. Not all the white population were of course members of the plantocracy. Members of the white population served as plantation servants and, in 1784, *the West Indian Company devised common regulations to govern the treatment of white [labouring class] population and slaves* (Farley 1955:15-16).

It is interesting to note the semantics of the usage of the words "servants" and "slaves." It can be reasonably argued that as the demand for labourers grew and more African slaves were brought into the colony the social status of the "whites" was elevated. The situation was no different a century and a half later when the immigrants arrived in the colony. It can be seen, therefore, that in its historical context, slavery as an institution was established not as a racial phenomenon, but as an economic factor (Williams 1945:Chaps. 1-3).

Plantation agriculture did not become well established in Guyana until approximately 1650 when the Dutch were driven out of Brazil by the Portuguese, supported by the Amerindians. Many of the planters, including many Jews, fled to the Essequibo Coast, presumably bringing their slaves with them. The first shipment of sugar to Holland was made in 1661 and by



1669 over 60,000 pounds were exported.

Contrary to contemporary opinion, sugar has not always been "King." Cotton was grown, long before the Europeans arrived. The Amerindians used it for making such articles as bead strings, hammocks and aprons. By the late seventeenth century cotton was the principal crop grown in all three colonies. The cotton produced in Berbice was the finest obtainable in the Caribbean and received the highest price in the English market (Dalton 1855:181).

Although coffee had never dominated the economy, export figures indicated that by the beginning of the eighteenth century it had a prominent place as an export commodity in the economy. Table III shows that by the early nineteenth century coffee was still grown in large quantities, especially in Berbice (Farley 1955:15-16). By that time considerable amounts of ground provisions, cocoa and rice were grown in order to prevent importation and to supplement the diet of the slaves. Whether or not the Amerindians of Guyana grew tobacco is not known but samples of wild tobacco were found to be equally good in quality and flavour as that imported from Cuba (Dalton 1855:189). The only reason that prevented the diversification of the economy from the early period until a few decades ago was that production was geared to meet the needs of overseas European markets. Diversification was contrary to foreign imperialist interests, and to the capitalist mode of production (Frank 1969:Chap. I). Thus, we saw the beginning of the development of underdevelopment--over-emphasizing the export aspect of the economy with little or no consideration for local needs.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, sugar production fell drastically, due primarily to fluctuation in demands from the European

TABLE III  
ESTATES IN OPERATION, 1832, AND COMMODITIES PRODUCED  
(TONS)

Districts	Sugar	Coffee	Cotton	Farms, Plantains, Cattle, etc.	Total
<b>BERBICE</b>					
Corentyne Coast	6	0	2	1	9
East Coast	0	0	1	0	1
East Coast Canal	2	0	0	0	2
Canje Creek	8	6	0	0	14
East Side Rio Berbice	6	17	0	0	23
West Side Rio Berbice	3	17	0	0	20
West Coast	6	0	5	1	12
Totals	31	40	8	2	81
<b>DEMERARA</b>					
St. Mary	18	1	6	4	29
St. Paul	19	2	5	3	29
St. George	4	2	0	0	6
St. Matthew	16	8	0	0	24
St. Mark	13	17	0	0	30
St. Swithin	14	0	0	2	14
St. Luke	19	3	0	0	24
Totals	103	33	11	9	156
<b>ESSEQUIBO</b>					
St. Peter	26	1	0	0	27
St. James	20	0	0	0	20
St. John	21	1	0	2	24
Trinity	19	3	2	3	27
Totals	86	5	2	5	98
Grand Total	220	78	21	16	335

N.B. Of those classed as sugar estates, upwards of forty had coffee also, and a few cotton. A large number of the sugar and coffee estates had plantains also. A few wood-cutting establishments are not included in the above table.

Source: *Local Guide to British Guiana*, p. L11.

nations. New plantations that were established on the coast of Berbice and Essequibo, and planters, especially the smaller ones, were faced with an economic crisis. This led to the rise of monopoly corporations in the sugar industry. According to A. King:

A chain reaction was set up. Because of the high initial and recurrent costs of draining, small scale farming was uneconomic, and only plantation crops, because of their economies of sale, could be grown. This led to the establishment of a wealthy group of land-owners and the early stifling of the growth of a farm-owning peasant class. Perhaps most important of all it geared agricultural production to export crops, the returns on which justified considerable outlay of reclamation. Inevitably, also, it concentrated the population on the narrow coastal belt. Guyana for all practical purposes became an island, the southern boundary of which was the forest to the south of the flat coastland (1968:38).

It was not until the early part of the eighteenth century that the coastlands of British Guiana were opened up for cultivation. Once that development began it proceeded very rapidly and the area became one of African slave-operated plantations. At first each plantation was a self-contained unit independent of its neighbours. It depended on the outside world only insofar as it had to buy that which was necessary for production--slaves from Africa and skilled craftsmen and administrators from Europe--and sold that which it produced--cotton, coffee and sugar. At this point of Guianese history it would be inaccurate to talk of a "Guianese society." It would seem more fitting to use Erving Goffman's term "total institution"\* (Goffman 1961:3-5). Not only were the African slaves members of these total institutions but so also were members of the "white community," the difference being the roles they played in the institution, with a strict caste barrier.

---

\*This analogy was used by R. T. Smith in an unpublished paper.

In February, 1763, the slaves in Berbice rebelled and took control of the colony (Gravensande 1911, Vol. II:419).<sup>\*</sup> The slaves sought a treaty with the Governor, Van Hoogenheim. Cuffy, leader of the "liberated slaves," requested similar conditions as the Bush Negroes of Surinam. With the request made by the liberated slaves, one can assume that there might have been some form of communication between the slaves from Surinam and Berbice. The treaty sought by Cuffy never materialised; while Van Hoogenheim was prolonging communication with the slave leaders he was also awaiting military help from Holland. The arrival of armed support quickly led to the recapture of the slaves who were tortured in the most cruel way--roasting over slow fire was the most favoured method.

Too much has been written about the humanitarian impulses that led to the abolition of slavery; the works of the London Missionary Society, Society for the Suppression of Slave Trade and Parliamentarians such as Buxton and Wilberforce. Nath, in the opening paragraph of his book, *A History of the Indians in Guyana*, wrote:

Britain's benevolence in granting freedom to the slaves in her colonial possession will forever stand as one of the greatest acts of humanity ever done by any nation in the world. She did it not through any pressure from outside, nor from her inability to subdue the slaves; she did it on her own free will (1970:1).

It is obvious that Nath does not understand the economics of slavery, nor does he understand the history of the slaves in British Guiana. Unlike Nath, Eric Williams took a different approach in his analysis of the historical background of the slaves in British Guiana:

Emancipation was not only a moral necessity, as the humanitarian emphasised; not only an economic necessity as the capitalist insisted; it was a political necessity as the slave demanded. If the

---

<sup>\*</sup>For further discussion see Daley, pp. 120-125; and Dalton, Vol. 1, pp. 196-218.

government had not stepped in to emancipate the slaves, the slaves would have emancipated themselves (1945:375).

It is a myth to believe that there were no sexual interactions between "blacks" and "whites." There was a lack of women on the plantations. A method commonly used to meet this shortage was to encourage women from the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and Barbados, to come to settle in British Guiana, or in some cases women were purchased from these islands and made "house slaves." A newly arrived European was provided with a housekeeper, a black or Mulatto who fulfilled all the duties of a wife except sitting at the master's dinner table. According to Webber:

It is true that the white planters introduced European diseases, notably syphilis, producing sterility or high infant mortality, and that [some] Negro mothers rather than produce slave children aborted (Webber 1931:65).

By the beginning of the 1830's, many slaves had purchased their freedom (see Table IV)\* with money they had accumulated through the sale of foodstuffs they had grown. Farm grounds were cultivated early in the mornings, late in the evenings and on Sundays. Part of the produce was kept to subsidise their own diet and part was sold in the markets where slave owners and free Mulattoes were the purchasers (Farley 1955:132-150).

By 1840, six years after emancipation, a greater part of the African population was settled in separate villages which they had purchased cooperatively (Webber 1931:210-212).\*\* Traces of this early

---

\*Slaves, buying their freedom in the early 19th century, must have provided the planters with a lucrative business. Not only did they buy the slaves and exploit their free labour but then afterwards the slaves had to buy their freedom back, which means the planters appropriated whatever cash the slaves had acquired.

\*\*Also see R. T. Smith, 1962, p. 40.

TABLE IV  
 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY ETHNIC ORIGIN, STATUS AND COUNTY  
 AT THE TIME OF UNIFICATION, 1831

	WHITES		FREE COLORED AND BLACK		Total Free	SLAVES		Grand Total
	Males	Females	Males	Females		Males	Females	
Georgetown	962	658	1,625	2,743	5,988	3,209	3,407	12,604
Demerary, Country Districts	662	110	463	617	1,852	33,883	28,869	41,051
Essequebo	476	138	442	470	1,526			25,079
Total in Demerary & Essequebo	2,100	906	2,530	3,830	9,366	37,092	32,276	78,734
New Amsterdam	130	49	324	530	1,033	695	681	2,409
Berbice, Country Districts	289	55	130	177	651	10,202	8,540	19,393
Total in Berbice	419	104	454	707	1,684	10,897	9,221	21,802
Total in British Guiana	2,519	1,010	2,984	4,537	11,050	47,989	41,497	100,536

Rural population, 85,523; Town population, 15,013.

Source: Local Guide to British Guiana.

cooperation can still be seen at Fyrish Village on the Corentyne coast, Buxton on the east coast of Demerara, and Danielstown on the Essequibo coast. It is interesting to note that many of the planters had opposed emancipation on the grounds that it would lead to massive withdrawals of the African population from the coast to the jungle where they would revert to a more "primitive way of life." The results have proved otherwise (R. T. Smith, unpublished paper:5), as the emancipated slaves had already been indoctrinated to accept the European "value system" and were ambitious in terms of seeking social mobility, based on "Englishification."

One of the main reasons which led to the "concubinary system" was the legal prohibition of marriages between "whites" and "blacks" or Mulattoes. Until the end of the eighteenth century "blacks" and "whites" were prevented by law from marrying because of the heavy fees that were imposed by the Financial Secretary's office. It was not until 1812 that this rule was mitigated somewhat. The Governor of Berbice issued a proclamation allowing marriages between "whites" and free-coloured.

According to Farley:

In January 1823, Beard wrote that within the last five or six years, it was not uncommon for a most respectable white and a coloured free person to intermarry and to be introduced and admitted into the highest society, without regard to the relative nature of the society (1955:8).

Many of these relationships between whites and free-coloured may have occurred between lower class whites and free-coloured who by that time managed to secure some economic power, by becoming small traders, huckstering, etc. These relationships can also be seen as a consolidation of the middle class.

## C. IMMIGRANTS

The planters knew that if the slaves were emancipated they would resist working conditions on the plantations, which would result in a shortage of labour. Thus the planters insisted on an "apprenticeship period" (1834-1838) which would serve as a phasing out of the "system," at the same time giving the planters enough time for finding an alternative source of labour. The emancipation of the slaves did not create a shortage of labour; what it created was a shortage of cheap labour (see Table V). When in 1842 the workers went on strike because of the reduction of wages, the planters forced their workers to leave the plantation. According to Chandler:

. . . the planters formed a union to depress wages, the labourers formed a union to resist them: wages were reduced . . . . During the contest, some of the managers of the estates ejected the labourers from their dwellings and others feared that their masters would [sic] do the same (Chandler 1964:58).

Immigrants were brought from Madeira, China, Africa, the West Indies and India (see Table V). Living conditions on the plantations were so appalling that the early immigrants "turned their backs" on the plantation as soon as their contracts were terminated. The majority of Chinese and Portuguese moved out to the urban areas and established themselves as small businessmen; the majority of West Indians and Africans moved to the urban areas and the majority of East Indians returned to their homeland.

There is a general tendency to accept the notion that once the Portuguese arrived in the colony they had little or no contact with the emancipated slaves. If this were true, how can we account for our "Santantone" population (see Chap. II, p. 20)? Commenting on the social relationship between the Africans and the Portuguese, Dalton states:



TABLE V

ARRIVAL OF IMMIGRANTS TO BRITISH GUIANA  
FROM 1835 TO 1928

Year	India	Madeira	Azores	West Indies	Africa	England	China	Cape de Verde	Malta	U. S. of America	Total
1835	—	439	—	157	—	—	—	—	—	—	586
1836	—	—	—	1427	—	—	—	—	—	—	1427
1837	—	—	—	2150	—	—	—	—	—	—	2150
1838	396	—	—	1266	91	—	—	—	—	—	1763
1839	—	—	—	192	—	—	—	—	208	—	400
1840	—	—	—	2900	—	—	—	—	—	—	2970
1841	—	4297	—	2745	1102	—	—	—	—	—	8144
1842	—	432	—	506	1829	—	—	—	—	—	2767
1843	—	45	—	180	325	—	—	—	—	—	550
1844	—	140	—	125	523	—	—	—	—	—	918
1845	816	668	—	722	1425	—	—	—	—	—	3631
1846	4019	5975	—	428	1097	—	—	—	—	—	1519
1847	3461	3761	—	—	565	—	—	—	—	—	7787
1848	3545	300	—	—	1697	—	—	—	—	—	5542
1849	—	86	—	—	111	—	—	—	—	—	197
1850	—	1040	164	—	1219	—	—	—	—	—	2259
1851	517	1101	—	—	453	21	—	—	—	—	2256
1852	2805	1009	—	—	268	—	—	—	—	—	4082
1853	2021	2539	—	—	276	—	647	—	—	—	5483
1854	1562	1058	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2620
1855	2342	1055	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3397
1856	1258	180	—	—	65	—	766	—	—	—	2269
1857	2596	342	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2938
1858	1404	1484	—	—	281	—	53	—	—	—	3222
1859	3426	684	—	—	—	—	699	—	—	—	4809
1860	5450	135	—	—	625	—	1942	—	—	—	8152
1861	3737	35	—	—	40	—	3368	—	—	—	7180
1862	5625	29	—	—	558	—	2590	—	—	—	8802
1863	2354	—	—	69	373	—	396	—	—	—	3192
1864	2709	—	—	4297	390	—	509	—	—	—	7905
1865	3216	118	—	2482	42	—	1691	—	—	—	7549
1866	2526	134	—	757	—	—	789	—	—	—	4206
1867	3909	304	—	365	—	—	—	—	—	—	4568
1868	2528	219	—	599	—	—	—	—	—	—	3306
1869	7168	240	—	980	—	—	—	—	—	—	8388
1870	4943	454	—	631	—	—	—	—	—	—	6028
1871	2706	260	—	591	—	—	—	—	—	—	3557
1872	3556	367	—	2697	—	—	—	—	—	—	6620
Jan 1 to June 30, 1873	3656	26	—	2412	—	—	—	—	—	—	6094
1873-74	8301	208	—	1692	—	—	388	—	—	—	10589
1874-75	3887	164	—	990	—	—	—	—	—	—	5041

TABLE V (Continued)

1875-76	3834	100	—	414	—	—	—	—	—	4348	
1876-77	3982	90	—	606	—	—	—	—	—	4678	
1877-78	8118	203	—	1066	—	—	—	—	—	9387	
1878-79	6426	293	—	1269	—	515	—	—	—	8503	
1879-80	4506	243	—	527	—	—	—	—	—	5276	
1880-81	4355	216	—	623	—	—	—	—	—	5194	
1881-82	3166	182	—	326	—	—	—	—	—	3674	
1882-83	3016	—	—	875	—	—	—	—	—	3891	
1883-84	2731	—	—	1061	—	—	—	—	—	3792	
1884-85	6209	—	—	1123	—	—	—	—	—	7332	
1885-86	4796	—	—	509	—	—	—	—	—	5305	
1886-87	3928	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3928	
1887-88	2771	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2771	
1888-89	3573	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3573	
1889-90	3432	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3432	
1890-91	5229	—	—	267	—	—	—	—	—	5496	
1891-92	5972	—	—	707	—	—	—	—	—	5779	
1892-93	4693	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4693	
1893-94	5932	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5932	
1894-95	7114	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7114	
1895-96	1882	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1882	
1896-97	2408	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2408	
1897-98	1202	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1202	
1898-99	2399	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2399	
1899-00	4961	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4961	
1900-01	3801	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3801	
1901-02	4245	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4245	
1902-03	1947	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1947	
1903-04	2967	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2967	
1904-05	1314	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1314	
1905-06	2704	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2704	
1906-07	2257	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2257	
1907-08	1855	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1855	
1908-09	1799	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1799	
1909-10	2508	—	—	—	—	219	—	—	—	2727	
1910-11	2173	—	—	—	—	236	—	—	—	2409	
1911-12	1768	—	—	—	—	200	—	—	—	1968	
1912-13	2206	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2206	
1913-14	1346	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1346	
1914-15	819	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	819	
1915-16	2253	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2253	
1916-17	824	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	824	
1918	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
1919	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
1920	—	—	—	923	—	—	—	—	—	923	
1921	274	—	—	136	—	—	—	—	—	410	
1922	160	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	160	
1923	—	—	—	369	—	—	—	—	—	369	
1924	—	—	—	80	—	—	—	—	—	80	
1925	—	—	—	85	—	—	—	—	—	85	
1926	173	—	—	24	—	—	—	—	—	197	
1927	—	—	—	40	—	—	—	—	—	40	
1928	—	—	—	72	—	—	—	—	—	72	
Total	239,756	30,685	164	42,512	23,355	21	14,189	819	208	70	341,590

Source: Dwarka Nath, pp. 219-220.

It was a new thing for the newly emancipated slaves to find placed on the same level with himself, a stranger from a European and civilized country; to witness a white man competing with him in the labour of the cane field; and to see him subject to the same necessity of manual labour and drudgery. It was a new era in his life to test his powers of intelligence and endurance with the European labourers but still no marked feelings of distrust or jealousy were awakened in the good natured bosom of the Negro (Dalton 1855:466-467).

In an article entitled "The Riots of 1856 in British Guiana," Chan, the author, concluded that the riots could be considered nothing but "unnecessary and distressing episode in the history of the colony." The author accused John Orr (Angel Gabriel) of being the instigator of the riots for no other reason than anti-Catholicism. However, Chan did not mention whether or not it was possible to separate middle class Portuguese businessmen from Catholicism, or how many Africans who took part in the riots were themselves Catholics. Even if Orr were religiously motivated, his appeal to his followers was based on the social and economic inequality of the Africans. Chan implicitly argued that the riots had racial overtones. This seems very hollow; the riots were directed towards businessmen (who were primarily Portuguese) who were exploiting the lower class (primarily Africans).

In 1837 the British planters had learned of the success of the "hill coolies" of India as indentured plantation labourers in Mauritius and Malaya and in 1838 the first batch of immigrants from India arrived in British Guiana (Nath 1970:221). At first the East Indians were not interested in the social and political well-being of the colony (Brett 1868:11-12) and never considered it their home. Their primary concern, like other migrant workers', was to acquire as much capital as quickly as possible (Nath 1970:221).

It did not take the planters long to realise that it would be

economically profitable to encourage immigrants to remain in the colony. This, they saw, would ensure a surplus of resident cheap labour. To this end, immigrants were offered a sum of money and small plots of land on the periphery of the plantations in lieu of return passages (ibid.:221). Social conditions on the plantations were deplorable and with pressure from the Indian Government, immigration was stopped in 1917. Attempts were again made in 1921 and 1922 to get more East Indian immigrants to come to British Guiana. This, however, never materialised, primarily because it was strongly opposed by Mahatma Gandhi, based on his experience of the East Indian immigrants in South Africa.

Unlike the Africans who were robbed of their cultural heritage, the East Indians who were forced to remain on the plantations were encouraged to retain their cultural values, and warned of social problems if they interacted with members of other ethnic groups; at the same time they were bottled up on the plantations which became the main instrument of socialisation. Glasgow in a footnote cited J. B. Jenkins:

The great community . . . lives by itself, is shut in with itself, must find its news and amusement as well as its tasks out of itself. Take a large factory in Manchester, Birmingham, or Belfast, build a wall around it, shut in its working people from all intercourse, save at rare intervals, with the outside world. Keep them in absolute heathen ignorance and get all the work you can out of them, treat them not unkindly, leave their social habits and social relations to themselves, as a matter not concerning you who make money out of their labour, and you will have constituted a little community, resembling in no small degree a sugar estate village in British Guiana (1970:20).

It seems obvious that the planters were not so much interested in the retention of the East Indians' way of life; what worried the planters was possible contact between the East Indians and Africans might result in an alliance and subsequent growth of a united opposition to the plantocracy.

Upon completion of their "bound piece," the East Indians followed the pattern set by their predecessors--Africans, Chinese and Portuguese--for the same reasons. Some enjoyed higher social status--they acted as interpreters, and were given positions such as "drivers" and later promoted to "overseers." Because of the status and favour they enjoyed they were paid better salaries and thus managed to accumulate more wealth than the average individual. Unlike the Africans, East Indians never cooperated in their efforts to accumulate property. Many of them had gone to British Guiana in order to save money to purchase land on their return to India. This is one of the main reasons that it took the East Indians such a long time to accept British Guiana as their homeland.

On the other hand, East Indians who moved out of the plantations settled in predominantly African villages, working as labourers and returning to the plantations when jobs were not available in the villages. This disturbed the planters considerably as the Africans were getting to be a potential threat for absorbing their labour force--however small it might be. A witness before the Committee on Emigration from India in 1910 stated: "If you have them on the estate they work, as soon as they go out to the villages they get just like the people in the villages" (Skinner 1955:71). The accusation that the East Indians were becoming "just like the people in the villages" can mean anything, from their wanting to be independent farmers to their acceptance of the same cultural values. According to Skinner:

The Indians were becoming more educated and were demanding still more education as a means of acquiring the prestige of educated people, as well as the jobs available to them. They were willing to eschew caste rules and marry according to Christian rites (ibid.: 68-69).

There are many reasons that can be attributed for the acculturation of the East Indians to the social and cultural life style of British Guiana--they were both voluntary and involuntary (ibid.:68-69).

Commenting on the interaction between the East Indians and Afro-Guianese, the Royal Commission in 1927 reported:

. . . [they] have lost the inspiration derived from the mother countries. They are second and third generation "creoles" with common interests and common ideals. It is necessary only to attend any public meeting in any part of the colony to appreciate this. Men of all races stand on the same platform, speak in the same tongue and advocate the same common interests. Indeed, were one to close one's eyes at such meeting and judge by the sound alone, the conclusion would be drawn that all the speakers were from a common stock. Our Chinese residents have particularly forgotten their mother tongue; and it is rare indeed to find any Chinese citizens conversing in any but the English language. This is true of the Portuguese, though not to such an extent. The East Indians use English as a common vehicle of thought, not only in their daily intercourse with one another but whilst engaged in communication with members of other races (Command Paper 3047:3-4).

#### D. POST-IMMIGRATION PERIOD

In 1917, the sugar planters were faced with the most severe blow of the twentieth century. The Colonial Secretary announced that the British Government had agreed to abolish emigration to British Guiana.\* In the same year, there were greater demands for sugar in the European market. The planters were growing restless as there had been an outward movement of workers from the plantations to the rural districts, with no replacement for them. At the same time sugar prices in Europe had boomed. In 1919 and again in 1924, the British planters succeeded in sending a delegation to India in an effort to secure additional

---

\*For a detailed discussion see D. Nath, Chap. 17.

immigrants. Interestingly enough, these delegates were made up of upper and middle class East Indians.

Like their predecessors--the Africans--the East Indians who escaped the drudgery of plantation life did all they could to avoid returning to work in cane fields. However, some were forced to return since the plantation was one of the few places where one could be employed for "cash" payments.

Rice appears to have been first introduced into the colony from Carolina in the early eighteenth century. The first recorded importation was made in 1782 from the French colony of Louisiana (Dalton 1855, Vol. II:185). Despite the fact that today rice is viewed as a "coolie crop" (ibid.:185) in Guyana, its history as a staple diet started with the runaway slaves. They grew rice in the neighbourhood of their hiding places. These crops were searched out and destroyed by "white" and Amerindian expeditions, so that they would return to their "masters" in need of food.

In 1813 rice shipment from the United States to the colony was stopped, and it was recommended that rice be grown as a commercial crop. Nothing came out of the recommendation primarily because it would have further aggravated the problems in the labour shortage. Again, in 1865, farmers were encouraged to grow rice as a food crop to prevent the necessity for the importation of a large volume of food (Nath 1970: 110-119) for the "hill coolies" who had shown a great liking for rice as their main diet.

The British Guiana Rice Marketing Board (BGRMB) was organised in 1922 for the purpose of encouraging the production of rice, and at the

same time to organise its distribution. In 1939 the BGRMB was recognised as a statutory body with representatives from the producers, millers, distributors and the government. By the end of World War II, the Board became the sole agent for buying and selling of all rice produced in the colony.

Rice has become the second most important agricultural crop--the first being sugar. In terms of acreage, rice occupies about twice as much land as sugar. This is due to the fact that unlike sugar, rice, until recently, was cultivated on an unscientific basis (based on my personal experience). Small farmers preferred to grow paddy which is more adaptive and resistant to seasonal changes, rather than experiment with more highly productive and less resistant seeds.\* At the same time many small farmers could not afford the initial output of capital for fertilizers, fernamine, etc.

Dr. O'Laughlin in her study (1959:1-104) shows that after deducting all expenses, an acre of rice gave a profit of approximately \$7.00 (BWI). This probably explains why the Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) reversed its decision to invest in the rice industry. Instead, the CDC (now Commonwealth Development Corporation) loaned the money to the Government Rice Development Corporation (RDC) and this was utilised to erect mills at Anna Regina, Mahaicony and Abary. The RDC paid to the CDC an interest rate of 6 to 8 percent which ensured a guaranteed income while the risk of rice production had to be faced by the Guianese rice farmers (see Table VI).

From 1955 to 1965 the rice farmers were struck by two blows.

---

\*Although I am quite familiar with this behaviour I am grateful to Prof. H. T. Lewis for helping me clarify it.



TABLE VI  
INTEREST PAID AND LOSSES SUSTAINED BY R.D.C.

Year	Interest paid C.D.C.	Operating Losses of the R.D.C.	Profit
1954	\$63,378.43	\$12,966.07	---
1955	112,212.00	219,746.20	---
1956	159,930.00	518,552.37	---
1957	210,048.96	224,271.25	---
1958	255,699.82	382,669.86	---
1959	279,366.00	224,581.03	---
1960	299,760.00	497,886.55	---
1961	311,020.74	56,560.02	---
1962	320,142.54	---	\$211,169.04
1963	333,360.88	---	---

Source: Rice Development Company.

First was the mechanisation of the rice industry in the late 1950's which led to the lumpen proletarianisation of many rural youths, which was coupled with the outflow of capital for the purchase of machinery, oil, etc. Secondly, the PNC/UF coalition in December 1964 severed all relations with Cuba, which had been buying all surplus rice produced in the country. This had two effects: (1) drastic reduction in rice price, and (2) a lack of immediate markets for the rice, resulting in the hoarding of large quantities in the Board's warehouse.\*

Bauxite operations in British Guiana started in 1914 when Mackenzie, an American, bought up sections of rich ore-laden lands about seventy miles down the Demerara River (see map). In 1916, Mackenzie organised the Demerara Bauxite Company (Demba), which was bought out by Alcoa the following year, and was given concession for additional ore reserves in large tracts of "crown lands," for which the government had granted exclusive permission to prospect for bauxite (*British Guiana Handbook* 1922:44). Today, Guyana is ranked third among the world's bauxite producing countries (exceeded only by Jamaica and Surinam) in quantity with the highest quality.

On a more limited scale Reynolds Metal Company operates at Kwakwani, about 100 miles down the Berbice River. Unlike Demba, Reynolds does not invest heavily and is interested solely in the extraction of profits. For eleven years they operated in British Guiana without paying any taxes (Reno 1962:98).

Both Demba and Reynolds are subsidiary companies and the bauxite price in British Guiana is controlled by the parent companies which are

---

\*For further discussion, see J. W. Ramsahoye, unpublished M.B.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1971.

international monopolies. British Guiana was the most exploited among the bauxite producing countries in the world (see Table VII). In 1961, bauxite price in Surinam went up from \$11 to \$12 (US) per ton. If British Guiana bauxite had been given the same price that year as Surinam it would have brought over \$2 million in taxes from Reynolds and Demba into the government treasury. According to Jagan:

Bauxite prices in British Guiana remained static for over twenty years. . . . From 1938 to 1959 the general United States price level rose nearly two and a half times. During this time the bauxite produced in the United States doubled. Yet the price of bauxite imported from Surinam and British Guiana was almost the same in 1959 as it was in 1938. But the fact that the companies were holding the price of imported bauxite at a dead level did not prevent them from raising the price of aluminium which went up 78% between 1948 and 1959 (1964:98-104).

The bauxite, like the sugar companies, argued that they pay 45 percent of their profits as tax to the government. There are three points that need careful consideration: (1) How many years in the initial stages have these companies been granted tax concessions? (2) The companies purchased all equipment from their parent companies at exorbitant prices and sold their primary products at the lowest possible prices to the same parent companies; and (3) Payment for all social overhead expenses was included as capital expenses (Lindquist 1972:91-92).

The bauxite companies exploited the political and racial problems of 1962-64 by arguing that because of political instability in the country the companies cannot expand, although Guyana is the only territory in the Caribbean which has available water resources for economic power generation; yet the companies never seriously consider setting up a hydroelectric plant for smelting bauxite.

TABLE VII  
BAUXITE PRICE IN U.S. DOLLARS, 1960  
(PER TON)

---

Arkansas	\$12.09
Dominican Republic	12.59
Jamaica	9.48
Haiti	8.90
Surinam	7.72
British Guiana	6.85

---

Source: Philip Reno, *Ordeal of British Guiana*, p. 101.

On July 15, 1971, after a frustrating period of fruitless negotiating, the Government of the Republic of Guyana nationalised the bauxite company at Mackenzie. The nationalisation of the industry is still in its infancy but every caution must be taken to protect its survival, not only from foreigners but also from the local capitalists and the bureaucrats. The industry will be faced with one major problem-- that of how to negotiate profitable sales of bauxite in a world monopolistic system without becoming victims of the imperialist powers. According to Burnham:

There were fears, even of our friends, as to whether we could manage the undertakings especially after Alcan has ensured all but a few of the expatriate managers will leave. Indeed, thinking about it the exodus of these expatriate managers would be a blessing in disguise for it left us with a managerial complex which was predominantly Guyanese, consisting of Guyanese of proved ability and skill who in the past could never have moved up Alcan's hierarchy (Burnham 1970:3-4).

The Government of Guyana was severely criticised in many Caribbean political circles, especially Jamaica, while praised by other Caribbean governments, many of whom are looking forward to leadership from Guyana since the recent developments of the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA). Now that the Government controls the bauxite industry it is possible that Guyana will in the near future set up her own smelting plant with a possibility of diversity in bauxite byproducts.

According to Case:

Kaolin which can be used to manufacture chinaware, glass and fillers for paper making and for rubber, white cements, and refractory products, paints, etc. is present in enormous quantities in the Mackenzie area and has been exposed by taking off overlying bauxite (1946:56).

Gold and diamond mining has made little contribution to Guyana's economy. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century gold was found in

large quantities. The gold fever in British Guiana, as elsewhere, created much excitement and public meetings were held in Georgetown to organise the building of a railroad into the interior to exploit the resources. The deposits of gold, silver and diamonds were far less than expected and by the mid-1890's returns began to decline.

Today, the gold and diamond industries are quite small, and are dominated by two or three large companies with small mines. The men who work the mines make occasional trips to the interior and are financed by merchants in the city; which indicates that the small prospectors are always at the mercy of the city merchants who finance their expeditions.

Manganese mining at Matthews Ridge started in 1960 by the Manganese Mining Company Limited and exports to Trinidad started later that year. By the end of the year British Guiana produced 122,726 tons of manganese out of which 76,765 tons were exported.

Cattle are being reared in three regions: the coastal belt, the "immediate savannah" and the Rupununi in the hinterland. Cattle rearing on the coastal belt should be considered "livestock rearing" which is carried out by small farmers with a few cattle, sheep, pigs, etc. Secondly, the "immediate savannah" are areas such as Mahaica-Abary Creek region, and "third and fourth" depth aback of Blocks 1, 2 and 3 on the Corentyne coast extending to the Manerabisie area, which is occupied by more independent farmers. And, thirdly, the Rupununi, the largest cattle rearing region in Guyana, which covers over 6,000 square miles and has all the potential to supply overseas markets. The entire Rupununi region is held on contract by four or five wealthy ranchers.

Coconuts are the third most important agricultural crop in Guyana

and are owned solely by Guyanese. There are approximately 36,000 acres under cultivation on the east coast of Demerara and the Essequibo coast. Production of crude and refined oil in 1960 totalled over 744,730 gallons. Copra produced that year was estimated at over 5,500 tons. In spite of the high production of coconuts, oil and fats have been imported to meet home consumption, which indicates that the industry is not properly organised.

The forests of Guyana are estimated to cover over 70,000 square miles (approximately 80 percent of the total area), yet only contribute 3 percent of average national income (David 1964:167). In 1959, timber exports totalled over 2.5 million cubic feet valued at approximately \$4.5 million. The bulk of the wood exported consisted of greenheart which was sent to Britain, Holland and the United States, where it was used for marine pikes and pit props (R. T. Smith 1962:70). The quality of the timbers is very high and some (especially greenheart) contain water- and fire-resistant properties. There are at least 6 billion cubic feet of saleable timber. Like every other industry, timber is still indirectly being controlled by foreign companies which are exploiting the resources to capacity. If the industry is to survive and continue to make a significant contribution to the economy, it should not be depleted. Proper scientific methods of reforestation and management are necessary for its continuance.

#### E. SOME CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Constitutional changes in British Guiana during the latter part of the nineteenth century did not keep pace with social and economic

developments. The workers, professional class, lawyers and doctors, as well as wealthy shopkeepers, were not represented in the House of Assembly. By 1880, qualifications for membership to the Court of Policy required individuals to own not less than 80 acres of land, out of which at least half had to be under cultivation--this meant that professionals and merchants were virtually excluded from office (Smith 1962:51-57). Finally, in 1891, changes to the constitution were given Royal assent, stipulating that elected representatives must be valued at least \$7,500 with a fixed income qualification for £100 (\$480 BWI) annually, which indicates that the professional class and local businessmen were eligible to be elected to the House of Assembly.

The constitution discriminated against the majority of East Indians and Africans (see Table VIII). By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century many East Indians had acquired enough money to buy small estates of their own. This, however, did not entitle them to a vote as there was not only an income/property qualification necessary but also a literacy qualification. The imposition of the three different qualifications necessary for voting was directed against the East Indian/African majority. Table VIII gives an indication of the eligibility of voters.

The most interesting phenomenon about race relations during that period is that although a large body of the Indo-Guyanese votes were restricted by the literacy qualification, this did not prevent Indo-Guyanese from being elected to the House of Assembly (see Table VIII). In terms of ethnic origin, a predominantly Afro-Guyanese electorate elected a mixed legislature with a minority of Afro-Guyanese. The



TABLE VIII  
RACE AND THE VOTE IN 1915

	Percentage of each race in the adult male population	Percentage of each race in the total electorate	Percentage of adult males of each race registered as voters
East Indian	51.8	6.4	0.6
African	42.3	62.7	6.8
Portuguese	2.9	11.4	17.7
British	1.7	17.0	46.1
Chinese	0.9	2.4	12.3

Source: Clementi's *A Constitutional History of British Guiana.*

determining consideration of the voters was based not on race but on class.

The table shows that East Indians, while constituting 51.8 percent of the total adult male population, had only 0.6 percent registered as voters. Conversely, the Africans while constituting 42.3 percent of the male adult population had 6.8 percent of the registered voters. The significant difference is that while British constituted only 1.7 percent of the total adult population, they had 46.1 percent of the adult males registered as voters. To a lesser degree the Chinese and Portuguese showed a significantly high proportion of the ratio of registered voters. The Africans constituted an absolute majority of the electorate, although only a small percentage of the African population as a whole had the right to vote. Not that the situation with the East Indians was any better. By 1917, there was a small number of merchants and professionals, precisely because the indenture system had been producing "free citizens" (Rodney 1966:34). It was of this combination of merchant/professional group among the East Indians that the East Indian Association (EIA) was born. Inasmuch as the EIA was seen as an East Indian organisation in its true sense, it was a middle class group that was seeking identity among other ethnic middle class groups. This group never championed the cause of the lower class Indo-Guianese sugar workers and small rice farmers. On the contrary, while "pressure groups" in Britain were advocating for the termination of the "immigration system" of indentured labour to the British colonies, it was the middle class East Indians (Nath 1970:164-181) of British Guiana who went to India to plead the case of the British Guiana planters who desired the continuation of immigrant labourers to the colony.

The East Indians and Africans who were qualified to vote were men of property and elected men of greater wealth who "keep dem common people in dem place."

It is naive to think that the EIA was campaigning the cause of the East Indians in the sugar plantations and the rice fields. Many did (Rodney 1966:32) and some are still trying to maintain the "English type" feudal system.\* Conversely, in many instances it was non-East Indians who were genuinely interested in the social and economic welfare of the lower class workers. As early as 1924, the Labour Union had been vigorously campaigning for "East Indians to be paid on equal basis with other labouring people of other races in the colony" (Chase 1964:67). Then, there was James Crosby, an Englishman, who was head of the Immigration Department, who prosecuted plantation overseers in court (Nath 1970:53) on behalf of East Indian immigrants. Crosby's attitude towards the planters led to a "strained relationship" between himself and Governor Hincks. Crosby, in his lifetime, became such a legend among the plantation workers that the immigration office became known as "Crosby office" and every chief immigration officer that followed was known as "Crosby Babu" (Mister Crosby).

James Crosby was succeeded by George William Des Voeux who tackled his job with the same zeal as his predecessor. He survived a period of two years as he too was considered a threat to the interest of the planters, and upon recommendation to the Colonial Office by the Governor, he was removed from the colony.

---

\*This system is still evident in Guyana today, especially on the Essequibo coast.

By 1928, the middle class Guianese wanted more power in the House of Assembly, especially over finances. This developed into a confrontation between the planter class and the Guianese middle class. Up to this time there has been no real political party; each candidate represented the interest of his constituency. The contradiction that developed in 1928 was the first "constitutional coup d'etat" which was effective in breaking local resistance in the British imperialist system (Rodney 1966: 36). This pattern was repeated 23 years later, when the People's Progressive Party came into office.

Political consciousness in British Guiana, as in the rest of the Caribbean, grew out of the labour movement. The first trade union movement in British Guiana was organised in 1922 under the dynamic leadership of H. N. Critchlow. This union, being urban based, represented the majority of the urban workers, but did support the unorganised sugar workers. It was not until the recognition of the Man Power Citizens Association (MPCA) in 1939 that the sugar workers were given direct representation (Chase 1964:87-90).

It may seem as though the trade unions were divided along racial lines but one has to understand the demography (see pp. 31-34) in order to understand the urban/rural dichotomy of the different ethnic groups. It is not that the East Indians chose to live on the rural districts while the Africans preferred the cities. It was the structure of the "plantation society" that locked the East Indians on the plantations as it had previously done to the African slaves. If physical mobility is static among Indo-Guyanese, as implied by the plural theorists, why is it that today they constitute approximately one-quarter of the

urban population as compared to one-tenth by the end of the first quarter of this century (Smith 1970:421)?

In 1938, the West India Royal Commission was appointed to carry out an investigation of the social and economic conditions in all the British Caribbean territories, following a series of disturbances in the area. A typical description of the conditions that existed is the following:

The labouring population of almost the whole area lives at a level below human decency. The outward signs of Caribbean poverty . . . are ragged clothing, bare feet, children with bloated bellies, shacks made of flattened cans and lines of unemployed workers waited at closed gates (Jagan 1966:67).

These conditions resulted in "widespread riots and disturbances on a large scale in Trinidad in 1934, St. Kitts in 1935, in British Guiana in 1935 and 1936, in Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica in 1938 and 1939."

Due to the Second World War, the findings of the Commission were not published until 1945. The British Government was forced to increase financial allowances for colonial development. In 1943 further constitutional changes were made, which reduced property qualification for candidates, removing the ban on women to vote or to hold office, reduced property and income qualifications for voters and increased the number of elected members necessary for a majority in the Legislative Assembly (R. T. Smith 1962:164). Although some changes were made there is a clear indication that the constitutional changes that were taking place in British Guiana were catering specifically for the middle class, which became the genesis of the internal contradiction between the different classes in the society.

In 1947, after twelve years, elections were held in British Guiana.

The elections were contested by four main categories of contestants:

(1) the trade unionists, who, as mentioned before, had always been involved in politics; (2) the newly formed British Guiana Labour Party headed by a conservative social reformer, Dr. J. B. Singh, who attempted to form an amalgamation of different interest groups. The attempt did not materialise and the party broke up at the end of the elections; (3) the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) which was formed in 1946 by Janet and Cheddi Jagan, J. Hubbard and Ashton Chase; and (4) a number of wealthy independent candidates.

The election results did not create too much excitement in the colony. Cheddi Jagan was the only member of the PAC who was elected.

In January 1950 the PAC had grown into the People's Progressive Party (PPP). Burnham returned from London the previous year and joined forces with the PPP and became the first chairman of the Party. The determination of the Burnham/Jagan leadership had given rise to the first organised party the country had seen. The aim of the party was clear: self-government, economic and social development, and the rapid development of a socialist state. This, however, was in contradiction with Britain's policy of gradual advancement towards self-government.

The PPP was the only organised party; thus, it attracted a wide range of individuals--from conservative nationalists, who saw that the presence of "foreigners" was impeding their upward mobility and hoped that with independence they would be able to fill the seats that would be abdicated by the "high and mighty." Initially, Burnham did not lead any faction within the Party; the right wing elements of the Party were led by Drs. Hanuman and J. P. Latchmansingh and Jainarine Singh (all Indo-Guianese) while the left wing group was led by Jagan (Indo-Guianese),

Martin Carter, Rory Westmas and Sydney King (all Afro-Guianese who understood the class contradiction within the society; yet few, if any, have ever emphasised the ideological differences among the leadership). It is this initial contradiction that set the basis for the split within the Party, which was followed by the suspension of the constitution.

The Waddington Commission visited British Guiana in 1950-51 and among other things recommended that the British Government introduce "universal adult suffrage,"\* with a bicameral legislature with a ministerial system, and with the Governor as chairman. The British Government felt obliged to accept the Commission's Report as Sir John Waddington, Chairman of the Commission, had served as a colonial official in British Guiana (Hubbard 1964:61). Besides, the Commission was of the opinion that no political party was capable to winning the majority of seats to form a majority government.

---

\*The recommendation by the Waddington Commission to introduce "adult suffrage" was met with criticism from the middle class Indo- and Afro-Guianese who argued that the illiterate masses would "elect the wrong people."

## CHAPTER IV

### CONTEMPORARY PERIOD

In this focal chapter, which discusses the contemporary period 1953-64, I will continue to argue that the problems in the colony were not the politics of race but the politics of class. The emergence of the PPP to power under the dual leadership of Jagan and Burnham was seen by both the foreign and nationalist bourgeoisie as a threat to their existence. After the suspension of the constitution in 1953, ideological differences in the Party were exploited which resulted in the "split" in 1955. It is the ideological factor that solidified the internal and external forces against Jagan's regime.

The split in the PPP did not offer the solution expected by the "governing class," as the Jaganite faction of the PPP continued to show a marked degree of political strength as demonstrated in the 1957 elections. Thus from the beginning of the 1961 election campaign racial differences were exploited to split the working class movement. From 1962 to 1964 the colony was subjected to a series of violent outbreaks, but only on two brief occasions did the violence manifest itself racially. Finally, when the British Government instituted Proportional Representation (PR) as the new electoral system for British Guiana in 1964, the violence came to an end.

Although there were many major issues from the 1955 "split" onwards, which may seem to have racial overtones, the underlying problems in the colony were between those who wanted to maintain the status quo



and those who insisted on radical changes.

#### A. DEMOCRACY--BRITISH STYLE

J. Hubbard wrote:

As the [1953] election campaign developed it became clear that the People's Progressive Party would either win the election or capture a significant number of seats to make life uncomfortable for the representative of the Colonial Power charged with the responsibility of handing out shadows while holding on to substance. In order to combat the persuasive propaganda of the PPP, that the struggle was a class struggle which could only be won by a united working class, the master race had to abandon its position of racial exclusiveness and seek class allies to answer the class challenge (1969:62).

As the 1953 election campaign intensified, the anti-communist hysteria of McCarthyism had swept across the Atlantic and established itself in British Guiana. The president of the Man Power Citizens Association (MPCA), Lionel Lukhoo, an Indo-Guianese who failed to win his seat in the 1947 election, was nominated to the Legislative Council by the Governor. Lukhoo strongly opposed Jagan's Political Affairs Committee (PAC) in the House of Assembly. In 1950, he successfully introduced the "Subversive Literature Bill" which prohibited the importation of all socialist-published material, all of which could be bought at open bookstands in North America and Britain.

Two Sundays before the election, all the three leading newspapers (*The Daily Chronicle*, *Daily Argosy* and *Daily Graphic*) circulated a four-page supplement, published by the MPCA. The supplement was "pro-nothing" and "anti-PPP." The article discussed the horrors of slave camps in Russia, the dangers of communism and the PPP plan to expropriate peasants' lands. It was widely believed by sugar and rice workers that the news supplement was paid for by the Sugar Producers' Association

(SPA). This had a serious backlash as the workers' logic was, "if they [the sugar producers] were so much against the PPP it must be good for us" (R. T. Smith 1962:107). According to the Robinson Commission Report:

. . . Indeed some of those engaged in the sugar industry were known to have provided money which had enabled the Man Power Citizens Association to issue with every news paper printed on the Sunday eight days before the elections a four page supplement in which the PPP leaders were accused of being subservient to the Soviet Union (Command Paper 1954:26).

The cooperation between the union leaders and Sugar Producer management was (is) quite blatant. It became obvious to the sugar workers that they could not expect the MPCA to bargain in their interests when they were, at the same time, receiving large sums of money from the company they were supposed to be fighting.

The only other political party that had a quasi organisation at the 1953 elections was the National Democratic Party (NDP) which was originally an offshoot of the League of Coloured People (LCP) which was comprised mainly of middle class Afro-Guianese with a few Portuguese and Indo-Guianese in the executive. Its main platform was, like that of the MPCA, anti-PPP and anti-communist. There were also the United Guiana Party and the United Farmers' and Workers' Party. Both parties were made up of Indo- and Afro-Guianese professionals and businessmen who did not associate themselves with the MPCA but joined the "band wagon" of accusing the PPP of "spreading communism." The evil "spirits" of communism were denounced not only by the Catholics and other Christian denominations but were also strongly condemned by the Hindus and Muslims. Pandits and Molvis (Hindu and Muslim priests) became part of the propaganda apparatus and began preaching about "godless Russia" (Jagan 1966:134).

As election day, April 27, 1953, approached, tension grew. The PPP nominated 22 candidates to contest the 24 seats: 10 Indo-Guianese, 9 Afro-Guianese and 3 mixed. They were faced with severe opposition from the NDP, WFP and 79 independent candidates, most of whom were backed by money (ibid.:134) and prestige. There was a total of 130 candidates contesting the 24 seats.

Contrary to many of the earlier charges that the majority of the people were illiterate or unconcerned with politics, the masses demonstrated their concern and over 70 percent turned out to vote. The election was free from any violence and disorder. The order and discipline with which the election and the campaign were conducted reflected the responsible attitude of the leaders of the Party (R. T. Smith 1962:171). At the end, the PPP gained 18 out of 24 seats. Seventy-eight candidates lost their deposits.

Leo Despres noted that the PPP nominated African candidates in predominantly African constituencies and Indian candidates in predominantly Indian constituencies and that the ethnic group that was in the minority did not vote for PPP candidates from the other ethnic group. Thus, he concluded that Indians and Africans tended to vote in 1953 as separate "national communities" (Despres 1966:193-195). Because of the inherent weaknesses of the plural theory Despres cannot explain why Fred Bowman, an Afro-Guianese who was a sugar worker in the "shovel gang" and who contested in a predominantly Indo-Guianese constituency, defeated four wealthy and prestigious Indo-Guianese candidates, including Dr. J. B. Singh. Singh had served in the Legislative Council for over fifteen years. He was a shrewd politician blending religion and medicine. He

was backed by the Hindu Maha Sabha (the leading Hindu organisation in the colony), the EIA and the Pandits' Council. Janet Jagan, American-born wife of Dr. Cheddi Jagan and secretary of the PPP, was one of the four women who contested the election on a PPP ticket and were all elected to office. Mrs. Jagan, who contested against an Indo-Guianese in a predominantly Indo-Guianese constituency, won over her opponent with a landslide.

The elections of 1953 were not based on ethnic alliance and religious groups, neither were they organised strictly along class lines. It must be understood that the PPP was the first highly organised political party with a serious manifesto. Its policies on nationalism appealed not only to the working class but also to the nationalist bourgeoisie who saw that a strong PPP Government would lead to an exodus of foreign capitalists, which would leave a vacuum they had hoped to fill.

The PPP through its effective propaganda apparatus had convinced the masses that they were prepared to take up the challenge of national unity based on class consciousness. Prior to the elections, sentiments of national unity transcending race or class or religious affiliation predominated (R. T. Smith 1962:171). Thus, many of the issues concerning the class consciousness of the new recruits to the leadership of the Party were never seriously discussed. This initial mistake of the leadership of the PPP was to prove detrimental to the future of the Party. In the week following the election victory, there developed within the PPP what came to be known as "crisis week." There were disagreements among some of the top executives as to ministerial selections. Burnham had insisted that Jainarine Singh and Hanuman Singh be included

in the list of ministers. Both of these men are "Indo" middle class nationalists and have no record of service in the Party. At the end of "crisis week," there was a compromise: Jainarine Singh was added to the ministers' list. The final announcement was six ministers from the PPP Government: Jagan, Jainarine Singh, Latchnar Singh (Indo-Guianese), F. Burnham, A. Chase and S. King (Afro-Guianese). If race were an issue in the Party, why did Burnham insist on having more Indo-Guianese in the Cabinet than Afro-Guianese? Burnham knew that "cabinet potentials" were limited--the majority of Indo-Guianese among the leadership were not committed to serious socialist policies; on the other hand most of the Afro-Guianese were committed to definite socialist principles. Thus, the contradiction which grew among the leaders of the Party can only be explained in ideological terms. Interestingly, after the split in 1954 the two Indo-Guianese joined Burnham's camp while the two Afro-Guianese remained with the Jagans.

Immediately upon assuming office, the PPP Government realised their limitations in tackling the social and economic problems effectively. Jagan's view of their limited power to operate within the constitution is expressed in his opening speech in the House of Assembly which was entitled "We harbour no illusions." He stated:

*We however harbour no illusions about the nominated State Council which can only serve the purpose of curbing the will of the people-- a reactionary and undemocratic purpose.*

*The presence of three Colonial Civil Servants in the House and their control of the three key Ministries in the Government and the Governor's veto are an anomaly and contrary to the professed democratic principles of Her Majesty's Government. We shall continue to struggle for a democratic Constitution for British Guiana (Jagan 1966:461).*

Eusi Kwyana (formerly Sydney King) in May 1953 stated that the PPP

ministers were not ministers of the government, but were members of the "People's Opposition" who had moved into positions of strategic advantage in the House of Assembly and in the Executive Council (Command Paper 1954:33).

Much has been written\* which need not be repeated here about the proceedings of the 133 days that the PPP spent in office which were followed by the suspension of the Waddington Constitution. Whether the inevitability of the "suspension" came about because of the rigidity of the constitution or the "inexperience" and "inability" of the PPP ministers to govern depends on whether one supports the action of the Governor which was supported by the Colonial Office, or whether one supports the PPP elected government. According to R. T. Smith:

There is absolutely no occasion where the elected ministers stepped outside the bounds of constitutional legality; the crisis they wished to provoke was one which showed what they considered to be the inherent weakness of the constitution and not one which would involve violence or illegal acts (1962:175).

It would be misleading if the idea was given that all of British Guiana protested the suspension of the constitution. There were those who opposed the introduction of adult suffrage and argued that the masses were "illiterates" and chose the "wrong people." Many wealthy individuals became self-appointed representatives of the Guianese people (many of whom had lost their deposit at the 1953 elections) and flew to London to commend Her Majesty's Government for suspending the constitution

---

\*For a detailed discussion from the election of the PPP to the suspension of the constitution, see Jagan's *West on Trial*, pp. 127-144; Command Paper 8980, pp. 31-74; Raymond Smith's *British Guiana*, Chaps. 13-14; Michael Swan's *British Guiana: Land of Six Peoples*, pp. 131-148; Jagan's *Forbidden Freedom*; and Ashton Chase's *A Hundred and Thirty-Three Days Towards Freedom*.

and "preserving law and order." Telegrams were also sent by the League of Coloured People and the British Guiana Village Chairmen's Conference (see Appendix II) praising the British Government on its decision.

To understand the nature of this support we must first understand what groups in Guiana were represented by these congratulatory messages. The League of Coloured People represented the urban-based professionals and middle class Afro-Guianese, while the British Guiana Village Chairmen's Conference represented the wealthy landlords in the rural districts. Both of these organisations opposed the PPP and supported the NDP during the 1953 elections.

During the debate in the House of Commons on the suspension of British Guiana's constitution, the situation was further aggravated by the sensationalism of some of the headlines in the British newspapers (see Appendix III). In an attempt to justify the suspension of the constitution the British Government listed eleven points (see Appendix I) to show the conduct of PPP ministers. The case presented by the British Government was not only malicious but weak. According to Harold Macmillan:

It may be true, and I think it is true, that none of these separate accusations against the People's Progressive Party leaders could be held sufficient in themselves to justify the serious course which Her Majesty's Government has adopted; but surely, taken together, they are all conclusive (cited in Smith 1962:176).

In reply to Macmillan's argument, the Labour Party spokesman, Mr. Griffiths, pointed out that "some things have been brought into this white paper which, quite frankly, I think gave the impression of scraping the barrel for evidence" (ibid.:176).

Two conclusions can be drawn from the British Government's decision to suspend the constitution. First, the British Government was

not prepared to accept the PPP's accelerated rate of establishing a socialist state. Secondly, there were many (who did not have numerical strength but had influence on Her Majesty's representatives to the colony) Guianese who disagreed with the ideology of the PPP Government and were only too glad to do anything to topple Jagan's regime. Those nationalist bourgeoisie and professionals wanted evolutionary changes by which they had hoped to fill the high places that would be abdicated by British representatives in the colony. It can be concluded that it was the internal contradiction among the different classes that gave rise to the problems. Britain supported the middle class which opposed the working class.

The Tory government's decision for suspending the constitution should be further seen as a desire to maintain economic dominance over her colonies. The words of the late Sir Winston Churchill on May 18, 1908, succinctly summed up Britain's policy:

We know what to expect when the Tories return to power--a Party of great vested interests banded together in a formidable confederation, corruption at home, aggression to cover it abroad; the trickery of tariff juggles; the tyranny of the wealthy fed Party machine; sentiments by the bucketful, patriotism and imperialism by the imperial pint; an open hand at the public exchequer, an open door to the public house; dear food for the million; cheap labour for the millionaire. That is the policy which the Tory Party offer you (cited in Jagan 1966:270).

## B. THE SPLIT

The suspension of the constitution was followed by the setting up of an Interim Government, with most of its members drawn primarily from the middle class, many of whom were defeated at the 1953 elections. This was a mockery of democracy where individuals who were rejected as



representatives of the "people" were later appointed by the Governor to represent those very people.

Following the suspension, the British Government imprisoned four of the most militant young leaders of the Party (Rory Westmas, Martin Carter, Sydney King (Afro-Guianese) and Ajodha Singh (Indo-Guianese) for over 3 months and then restricted their movements for over a year. Hundreds of other militants were also restricted. The reason for these restrictions and imprisonments of the leadership of the PPP was indirectly suggested by the Robertson Commission who concluded that:

We would also hope that the contrast presented by the rapid progress towards self government elsewhere would lead the people of British Guiana to realise that, notwithstanding the exceptional difficulties of the country, the extremist leaders of the PPP and the policies for which they stand are the sole barriers for constitutional progress (1954:70).

They further stated:

We are, therefore, driven to the conclusion that so long as the PPP retains its present leadership and policies there is no way in which any real measure of responsible government can be restored without the certainty that the country will again be subjected to constitutional crisis (ibid.:74).

This position was also emphasised by R. B. O. Hart, editor of *The Clarion*, who flatteringly appealed to Burnham:

You have done nothing to merit their [the radicals of the PPP] blind support and idolatry. How can you as a young man of any character and decency lead them astray again? You and Dr. J. P. Latchmarsingh\* would make a very effective team, and if you stood hand in hand would be able to keep the Party together, while kicking the extremists out. Latchmarsingh is no spring chicken himself but he is one of the few men in your Party of whom I would say, "He is not a communist"\* (Jagan 1966:200).

The class contradiction in the Party had sown the seeds of the

---

\*Note the emphasis of appeal is not on racial lines but on ideology.

"split" since the initial organisation. The views expressed by the Robertson Commission and R. B. O. Hart only served as fertilizers whereby the antagonism grew. Implicit in their suggestions is that there can be no constitutional progress unless the radicals of the Party were eliminated, or in other words, nurturing the division of the Party along ideological lines.

Conditions at the time in the colony were seen by the British as playing one group against the other. It should be noted that up to this point there was no question of the race issue. Mao pointed out:

. . . [as conditions] develop to the point of threatening the very existence of imperialism and its running dogs, the domestic reactionaries, imperialism often adopts other methods in order to maintain its rule; it either tries to split the revolutionary front from within or sends armed forces to help the domestic reactionaries directly (Mao 1968:53).

Both of Mao's points are applicable to the situation in British Guiana during the early 1950's. First the warships landed when the constitution was suspended in 1953, and then the revolutionary forces were split from within.

Jagan, after returning from a tour to England and India, deliberately broke the restrictions set against him and was imprisoned for five months. A few days before Jagan was released, his wife, Janet, was imprisoned for being in possession of a police riot manual and for holding a public meeting. The alleged political meeting turned out to be a Bhagwat, an Indian religious festival.

Although Burnham was restricted for a short period, most of the moderate leaders were neither detained nor restricted. They were left free to contact rank and file members, at the same time strengthening their position. In late 1954 and early 1955, when the majority of the

Marxists were either imprisoned or restricted, Burnham had the support of the majority of the executive committee. He used his majority to call a party congress in Georgetown for February 12 and 13, 1955. This would have given Burnham and the moderate leaders of the Party a chance to take control, since Georgetown was their stronghold. The attempt to hold a congress led to considerable controversy among rank and file members. Burnham and Jagan agreed that a special conference should be held on the 12th and 13th and fixed an agenda that did not include party elections of members' motions. At the special conference, Burnham accepted a motion to suspend the standing rules after the mover of the motion explained that he planned to move a motion of no confidence in the Executive Committee of the Party. At this point the Jagans walked out and were followed by about 200 of their supporters. In walking out, Janet Jagan warned Burnham that "the unity of the Party is in your hands now. If you go ahead as you are doing, the Party will split. I place full responsibility in your hands" (Simms 1966:130-151).

Burnham proceeded with the meeting with himself as leader, Latchman Singh, chairman, and Jainarine Singh, general secretary. A few weeks later, the Jaganite faction held a congress at Buxton, a predominantly "Afro" village. The meeting was chaired by Sydney King (now known as Eusi Kwyana) who was a Marxist and was still loyal to the Jagans. At this congress, the Georgetown conference was declared null and void and the Burnhamite faction was expelled. For the next two years, until the end of the 1957 elections, both parties--Jaganite and Burnhamite factions--claimed to be the true PPP.

At the time, the "split" could not have been dubbed as "racial"; Jagan wrote that "the Party leadership saw the split in the Party in

ideological terms. This is why of the eleven non-Indian members of the General Council only three joined Burnham" (Jagan 1966:211). Burnham himself has been quoted as saying that the reasons for the split were "ideological and tactical" (Command Paper 1955:26). As already mentioned, the majority of the Afro-Guyanese went with the Jaganite faction, while the majority of the Indo-Guyanese went with the Burnhamite faction.

The split in the PPP was followed by two years of uneasiness and excitement. Many rank and file members thought that the "strategy" of the Party was to outwit the British Government in order to gain independence. This would probably explain why only 55.8 percent of the electorate in the 1957 elections turned out to the polls as compared to 74.8 percent in 1953, 89.4 percent in 1961, and 96.9 percent in 1964.

Many of the leaders, in preparation for the election, thought that it was possible to conduct an election campaign in the cities. The leaders of the parties that "mushroomed" for the election had hoped to build their base in the city, then move out to the rural areas. This, however, never materialised as their "platform" did not appeal to the masses. No political party except the PPP (Jaganite) ever went out into the countryside to do any serious campaigning. According to Simms:

The PPP (Burnhamites) and the United Democratic Party (UDP) did not mind going out on Saturday and Sunday afternoon to hold meetings. But they had no organization and would have been shocked had anyone suggested that they stay overnight and build up personal contacts and get to know the people's problems (1966:134).

The lack of effective campaigning from the other parties could be due to two main factors: (1) lack of proper organisation within the parties themselves, and (2) lack of financial support. Thus the parties

were forced to concentrate their efforts within Georgetown during the weekends and evenings.

After the PPP's (Jaganite) annual convention in 1956, Jagan was accused of seeking the support of the Indo-Guianese capitalists (*ibid.*: 134) and of seeking racial reasons for opposing the West Indian Federation (*Landis 1970:42*). It was pointed out that Jagan had criticised the "African Marxists" in the Party for their ultra leftist deviant tendencies and "infantile disorder." It must be noted that the Party did not only take disciplinary action against Keith Carter (an Afro-Guianese) but also against Moses Baghwan and L. S. H. Singh (Indo-Guianese). It seemed that Jagan was being pressured by the right wing elements to censure the young radicals in the Party.\*

The 1957 elections were contested by the two PPP's--Jaganite and Burnhamite, UDP, National Labour Front (NLF) led by Lionel Lukhoo, an Indo-Guianese who appealed to the Indo-Guianese on an anti-West Indian Federation ticket. There were also several independent candidates. A strong anti-Federation feeling ran among the Indo-Guianese; they thought that if British Guiana federated with the West Indies, the country would become a "dumping ground" for the overpopulated, predominantly Afro West Indian islands, which would dominate the Indo-Guianese majority. A second rationale they used was that if the West Indies did federate, it would be the "vagabonds and the rascals that would be sent here."

Contrary to much propaganda, both internal and external (*Simms 1966:135*), the PPP did not oppose the West Indian Federation. The PPP

---

\*In discussion Jagan argued that at that time the Party needed all the support it could muster and ultra leftist tendencies were poor strategy which the Party could not afford.

manifesto states that "the PPP welcomes the new West Indian Federation." However, Jagan insisted that British Guiana would fight for "dominion status" before entering the Federation; thus, she would have bargaining powers and would not have to accept decisions handed out by the British Government through a West Indian Federal Government.

The PPP not only saw the need for a West Indian Federation based on regional and economic cooperation, but also saw that the British Government insisted on setting up the Federation based not on the needs of the West Indies but on Britain's desire to lower the financial burden of financing several colonial administrations.

The polarisation of the election along ethnic groups was reflected by the slogan "Apan Jaht" which literally means "own kind" (see Chapter I, footnote on p. 25). PPP supporters (Jaganite) were accused (Landis 1970:159) of shouting "Vote Apan Jaht" at PPP rallies. "Apan Jaht" has been in use since the 1947 election campaign. The Workers and Farmers Party (WFP) led by Daniel Debiddeen, an Indo-Guyanese, had strongly opposed the West Indian Federation in order to appeal to the middle class Indo-Guyanese, who feared that if the West Indies should federate the majority of West Indians would migrate and settle on all the unused lands along the coast, most of which were owned by Indo-Guyanese. Many Indo-Guyanese used "Apan Jaht" as a slogan in 1957, 1961 and 1964, but this term, as already explained, should not be seen only as a racial phenomenon but in class terms.

The results of the 1957 elections were as expected: the Jaganite faction of the PPP won nine out of the 14 seats, with 42.5 percent of the popular votes; the Burnhamites won 3 seats with 25 percent of the votes;

the NLF won one seat with 11.5 percent of the votes (this seat was not won by the Indo-Guianese leader, Lionel Lukhoo, but by Stephen Campbell, an Amerindian). The UDP won one seat with 8 percent of the votes. This seat was won by W. O. R. Kendall in New Amsterdam, who held that seat since 1947. Two interesting points which negate the race issue were: first, in Georgetown, Indo-Guianese candidates in two constituencies (including the one contested by Burnham) won with slender majorities in a predominantly Afro-Guianese constituency running against Lionel Lukhoo (Indo-Guianese), leader of the NLF, and John Fernandes ("honest John"), a Guianese of Portuguese origin, who contested the election as an independent candidate, both of whom were wealthy conservatives. Secondly, Fred Bowman (Afro-Guianese), a PPP (Jaganite) candidate, won against Dr. J. P. Latchmansingh (an Indo-Guianese who had joined forces with Burnham since the split in 1955) in a predominantly Indo-Guianese constituency.

After the results of the 1957 elections, Burnham felt that if he were to become a viable alternative he must change his strategy. In August, 1957, he conceded the name PPP. "Dr. Jagan is entitled to it. He won" (Simms 1966:141). Later, he announced that his party was to be named People's National Congress (PNC) and its paper, *New Nation*. In some probably serious self-criticism, he saw that Dr. J. P. Latchmansingh and Jainarine Singh (and later Neville Bissamber, Indo-Guianese) could not appeal to sugar workers' support as anticipated and that their role in the Party was to maintain a multiracial outlook. It was probably at this stage that Burnham felt that if his Party's support was to increase significantly, he had to join forces with the more conservative UDP which

was made up of the professionals and middle class League of Coloured People (LCP). In 1958, the PNC and UDP merged. Since the coalition, the majority of the former members of the UDP formed the right wing of the PNC. It was at this stage that Jainarine Singh broke away from the PNC and formed his one-man Guiana Independent Movement (GIM).

In early 1961 the PPP was again faced with internal contradictions. Edward Beharry, a wealthy Indo-Guianese and a top ranking member of Jagan's cabinet, openly began to disagree with the Government's policy of taxing big businesses. He was asked to resign. It later became obvious that the Party's economic policy was in conflict with Beharry's personal interests. Within a month after Beharry's resignation as a member of the Government, it was announced that his company had become sole distributor of Bristol Cigarettes, a subsidiary of British-American Tobacco (Jagan 1966:242). When Beharry left the Party he took with him Fred Bowman (an Afro-Guianese), a hard working, ardent supporter of the Party.

### C. THE 1961 ELECTION CAMPAIGN

#### AND ITS RESULTS

By the end of 1960 the opposition parties had gained considerable strength outside the legislature: Burnham had joined forces with the United Democratic Party whose support came mainly from middle class Afro-Guianese, and Sydney King (an Afro-Guianese and stalwart of Jagan's cabinet in 1953) had joined forces with Burnham's PNC. The National Labour Front led by Lionel Lukhoo was practically defunct and the majority of its leadership had joined forces with the newly formed United Force (UF).



The UF was organised under the leadership of Peter D'Aguiar, a wealthy Portuguese businessman whose ideology had nothing in common with either Jagan or Burnham, being far to the right of the political spectrum (R. Glasgow 1970:119). D'Aguiar's anti-communist stance and conservative economic policies attracted a number of wealthy and professional Indo- and Afro-Guianese. According to Glasgow: "It was surmised that their strong anti-communist line attracted financial and other support from abroad such as Dr. Fred Schwartz's Anti Communist Crusade (ibid.:119).\*

As the 1961 election intensified the PPP was accused of developing racial politics prior to the 1961 election (Despres 1966:246). The argument was that in order to remain strong the PPP appealed to the Indo-Guianese, regardless of their class. Two examples are usually cited: (1) reforms in the educational system, making conditions favourable for Indo-Guianese school teachers and (2) the mobilisation of Indo-Guianese rice farmers and sugarcane workers. Despres argued that the PPP Government passed the controversial Education Bill in order to win Indo-Guianese votes (ibid.:246). In early 1953, Burnham as Minister of Education had proposed to abolish "dual control" of schools (Bacchus 1965:24).\*\* The crucial question is whether the PPP passed the Education Bill because they wanted to win the support of the Indo-Guianese or whether it was because the PPP felt that under the existing system

---

\*In a footnote Glasgow (1972) also pointed out that Senator Thomas Dodd warned all and sundry against the Communist Government in British Guiana. Congressman John Roussetot of California demanded "immediate drastic and aggressive action" to keep British Guiana from going communist and the AFL-CIO stepped up their activities.

\*\*Dual control of schools was based on supervision by the specific denominational body and financial support by the Government.

non-Christians were discriminated against--or was it for both reasons? On the second point, Despres argued that in order to maintain the support of Indo-Guianese sugar workers, the local party groups in combination with Janet Jagan, Minister of Labour, operated as an informal labour union. Thus, she knew more about the problems of the sugar workers on the sugar estates than the MPCA which was supposed to represent them (Despres 1966:24).\* The problem here seems quite clear; the MPCA had had a history of opposing the PPP and was regarded by every worker as a "company union." The Berbice representative, R. Persaud, was more interested in developing his personal relationship with the elites in the SPA. The inherent contradiction here seems to be that the MPCA could not represent the workers and at the same time have a fraternal relationship with management. Despres himself later explains why the sugar workers rejected any representation from the MPCA:

Most of the workers interviewed could not even recall having voted for an officer of the MPCA and none of them could explain how its president, Richard Ishmael, had been elected. Thus, the MPCA was in no position to mandate the changes that were taking place in the sugar industry (ibid.:241).

Internally, Jagan's Government has been seen as a "Rice Government," that is, it was alleged to be making too many concessions to the rice farmers, as it initiated many new rice development schemes. Rice farmers were given special privileges: purchasing gasoline "duty free" for machinery during crop season. The situation created a dual opposition to the Government; rice was stereotyped as a "coolie crop"; the Government was making concessions to rice growers, thus the Government was making concessions to Indo-Guianese most of whom were rice growers.

---

\*For further discussion, see Landis 1970:162-163.

Coupled with this was the trade deal with Cuba (Cuba had agreed in 1960 to purchase a sizeable portion of surplus rice produced).

This argument seems very shallow. Although it may seem at first glance that the Government was creating better conditions for the rice growers, the majority of whom were Indo-Guianese, it should also be noted that much of the non-Indo-Guianese sector of the population who were employed at the Rice Marketing Board at Springlands, Stanleytown, Georgetown and Suddie derived indirect benefits.

At the international level, the PPP's plans for economic development were stultified by Britain. If the British Guiana Government were to pursue a socialist policy, as they advocated, then it would have been a contradiction to "attract foreign private capital" and grant long-term tax concession, which is the classical situation in "Third World" countries. The dilemma faced by Jagan's Government was that no foreign industry would invest in the colony without long-term (e.g., five, seven and ten years') tax concessions or that Britain would constantly refuse to sanction any loans for an industrial base (Jagan 1966:234). Thus, it was felt that since rice was the only exportable commodity that was owned and produced by Guianese and did not entail a large capital input, rice production should be encouraged, with the hope of helping to build an industrial base.

In 1959, many Portuguese and Indo-Guianese businessmen, Afro-Guianese middle class, and some of the MPCA leaders supported Peter D'Aguiar to form the United Force (UF). The groups were willing to join forces with the PNC in opposition to the PPP Government. In an attempt to merge, D'Aguiar requested nine out of fourteen seats in the PNC

executive in return for financing the PNC campaign. Many radicals in the PNC saw the attempted coalition of the PNC and the UF as an ideological contradiction (forming an alliance with socialists and capitalists). On the other hand they saw that if they accepted D'Aguiar's offer to finance the Party they would be acting according to the wishes of the capitalist class, at the same time "selling out" to the working class (Despres 1966:257).

The leadership of the UF was made up primarily of middle and upper class Indo-Guianese and Portuguese who were businessmen and "labour leaders" who had alienated themselves from the rural community. The UF, because of its middle class and Catholic outlook, hoped to attract a significant proportion of the votes from the "mixed population. D'Aguiar's strategy was to appeal to Hindu and Muslim religious leaders through which he developed a massive anti-communist campaign. In his efforts to woo Indo-Guianese votes away from the PPP in rural districts, he invited a relative of the late Mahatma Gandhi to speak on the "evils of communism." The Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, headed by Drs. Fred Schwartz and Joosf Slusis, paid six visits in the fourteen months prior to the 1961 elections and admitted spending about \$76,000 (BWI) in their anti-communist campaign.

Despres argued that the formation of the UF had forced the PNC into becoming more overtly pro-Afro-Guianese, since it became obvious that the formation of the UF did diminish any possibility of the PNC being able to woo the support of non-Afro-Guianese. In his campaign D'Aguiar attempted to cajole the middle class, both Afro- and Indo-Guianese, with his massive propaganda apparatus, at the same time using

the Catholic Church to woo Catholic supporters. If the 1961 elections were based so much along racial lines, why did D'Aguiar win his seat in Georgetown, a predominantly Afro-Guyanese constituency, over the chairwoman of the PNC, Winnifred Gaskin, an Afro-Guyanese? The point, in fact, is that D'Aguiar is seen as a successful businessman and according to the logic of the campaign "anyone who can be successful in business can also be successful in politics." He strongly argued that middle and upper class men were better politicians and drew attention to the fact that Gandhi, Nehru and Nkrumah were all from middle class backgrounds.

Sydney King and certain other members of the PNC favoured an all-out campaign against the threat of "Indo" racial domination and accused Jagan of attempting to replace "white supremacy with Indian supremacy" (Landis 1970:170). Burnham had pointed out earlier that even if the PPP won the election he would work towards independence. Sydney King saw this as "dangerous to the African people" and proposed that there should be a "joint and equal prime ministership," with an Afro- and Indo-Guyanese as prime minister, and if this failed British Guiana should be partitioned into an African, Indian, and a free section (ibid.:170). This led to the immediate expulsion of S. King who went out and formed his African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa (ASCRIA).

Prior to the election campaign, the PPP had made a decision that it would not nominate candidates for the six constituencies where it was sure it would not win. Four of these seats were in Georgetown, one in New Amsterdam and one in the interior. The failure of the PPP to run candidates in these constituencies raised some doubts about the PPP's

interest in the votes of urban dwellers, and also reduced the PPP percentage of the total votes. The main reason for the PPP not contesting these constituencies is that it wanted to concentrate its scarce financial resources in constituencies where it had a chance of winning.

As the 1961 election campaign progressed, tension developed. Feelings became very hostile, not along racial, but along party lines. Rotten eggs, bricks and bottles were thrown at speakers and both PPP and PNC speakers were forced to cancel campaign rallies in strongholds of the other party. The interesting point is that Brindley Benn and Wilson, both Afro-Guianese and PPP ministers, were garlanded by Indo-Guianese in PPP strongholds, whereas Neville Bissamber, an Indo-Guianese and an executive member of the PNC, was forced to cut short his meeting because of hecklers in the same district. The evidence seems convincing that although "race" was a factor, the root causes of the problems were based on party politics.

The election results were as expected: the PPP won 20 out of the 35 seats, with 42.6 percent of the popular votes; the PNC won 11 seats with 41 percent of the votes; and the UF won 4 seats with 16.3 percent of the votes. The PPP won all its seats in the rural areas. The PNC won 8 out of 11 seats in the urban areas, while the UF won 2 of its seats in Georgetown and 2 in the interior, in predominantly Amerindian, Catholic areas.

The PNC had seen the discrepancy between the PPP's popular strength and their own parliamentary strength. It became obvious from the 1961 elections that if the opposition forces formed a coalition, they would defeat the PPP. Burnham visited the White House in May of 1962 and after talking to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., President Kennedy's special

aide, this is what he (Schlesinger, Jr.) recommended to the President:

An independent British Guiana under Burnham (if Burnham will commit himself to a multi-racial policy) will cause us fewer problems than an independent under Jagan . . . . An obvious solution would be to establish a system of proportional representation (1965:779).

This policy of proportional representation as the new electoral system, as recommended by Schlesinger, Jr., was implemented two years later by the Colonial Office.

#### D. THE KALDOR BUDGET AND ITS AFTERMATH

The 1961 election followed in an attempt by the PPP to establish an effective government. This policy was to push for independence as quickly as possible, and 1962 was called INDEPENDENCE YEAR. They also designed a budget that would generate local capital for economic development. These policies "played right into the hands" of the opposition parties which led to disturbances in February, 1962.

On January 31, the Government introduced its 1962 budget, known as the "Kaldor Budget." The budget was so called as it was prepared by Cambridge economist Nicholas Kaldor. The budget met with favourable comment from both the *London Times* and the *New York Times*, as being an economically sound but harsh budget (Jagan 1966:255-256), which was designed to generate capital for economic development. The budget (Chase 1969:278) included an increase in taxes on imported, luxury goods and a reduction in taxes on certain foodstuffs\* such as peas, flour, potatoes, and salt fish, a 5 percent compulsory saving scheme on earnings over \$100 per month. The budget would also have closed many tax loopholes;

---

\*The items listed are staple foodstuffs used primarily by lower class.

that is, by imposing a 45 percent capital gains tax, excluding property below \$35,000 and also blocking the outflow of capital (Jagan 1966:253).

Whether the budget was seen as "harsh" or not (as stated by the *New York and London Times*), depends on what class of the society one belonged to. The budget was not designed to tax all imported commodities in order to increase revenues; what it did was increase taxation on certain luxury commodities which were consumed only by the privileged class in the society. At the same time it reduced taxation on certain consumer goods, from which both the upper and lower classes benefited. It seems obvious that if the budget was "harsh," it was "harsh" only on the upper class and any attack on the budget would be a defence in the interest of the privileged class.

Both the PNC and the UF attacked the budget for being anti-working class. *The Daily Chronicle*, the UF newspaper, attacked the budget with headlines: "Taxation with Tears," "GOVT TO SQUEEZE DOLLARS FROM WORKERS," "House Wives Face Counters with Tears," "Tax Avalance Will Crush Working Class" and "Slave Whip Budget." The Chamber of Commerce, whose members were strong supporters of the UF, felt that they should put an embargo on non-taxable commodities in order to "cripple the people and bring tremendous pressure on the government" (Landis 1970:191).

On February 9, Jagan, in the House of Assembly, predicted that serious events would develop in the next week. The same day, the Trade Union Council (TUC), Civil Service Association (CSA), Federated Union of Government Employees (FUGE) and the Chamber of Commerce met and planned their strategy to protest the Government's budget outline.

So far, Burnham had stayed out of publicity and D'Aguiar (Simms



1966:160) and some Trade Union leaders were making the attacks on the Government. Burnham's position was perhaps a tactical one (Landis 1970:195). On February 13, the CSA decided at 11:30 a.m. to call a strike at 1:30 p.m. The CSA was joined by the FUGE. The TUC had planned a four-hour strike but a few hours later, joined the FUGE and the CSA. On February 15, Burnham spoke at a TUC rally. At the same time, the PPP Minister of Home Affairs met the Governor and requested that British troops that were stationed at Atkinson Field, about 25 miles from the city, be brought to Georgetown in light of the circumstances. According to the Wynn Parry Commission:

[The Governor] . . . told the ministers that the armed services of the United Kingdom would not be used to maintain PPP ministers in power, regardless of what they might say or do, and that British troops would only be used to restore and maintain law and order if all Guianese resources proved or were likely to prove inadequate (ibid.:198).

On the morning of February 16, the President of the TUC, Mr. Richard Ishmael, succeeded in withdrawing all essential services and by the early hours of the afternoon, the situation had deteriorated to the point of being uncontrollable. Fires were started simultaneously at Water and Regent Streets and, with the fire, looting began. British troops arrived in the city in the late afternoon and by 8:00 p.m., most of the city was quiet. By that time, 56 premises were destroyed by fire, 21 were damaged and 66 were damaged and looted; 5 vehicles belonging to the police were damaged. The total loss suffered was approximately \$40 million (BWI). One senior police officer and four civilians were killed, with 41 other people injured (Jagan 1966:265). The whole occurrence was less than a day's affair. Friday, February 16, 1962, has gone down in Guianese history as "Black Friday."

Would this wanton destruction of life and property have been prevented had the Governor heeded the plea by the Premier and the Minister of Home Affairs to station troops in the city?

It must be borne in mind that one of the serious problems faced by the Government was that the strength of the opposition parties, including the TUC, was urban based. Unemployment conditions, especially in the city, were high (approximately 18 percent unemployed and 26 percent underemployed); thus, it was easy for the opposition forces to muster support to harass the Government.

There is no evidence to conclude that the opposition had planned to overthrow the Government by force. The main goal of the opposition and Trade Union leaders was to create sufficient disturbances that would force the PPP to resign (Landis 1970:203). The period went through four different stages: (1) encouraging civil disobedience, (2) illegal demonstration, (3) strikes, and (4) looting and arson.

The violence was non-racial. There were no incidents where Afro-Guianese were beating Indo-Guianese or vice versa. The Wynn Parry Commission concluded:

There is no evidence of the disturbances being the direct result of racial conflict, though they contain measures of tension between the East Indian and African races which had lately become noticeable, acted as a contributory factor (Wynn Parry Commission 1962:204).

Although there is evidence or indication that the violence of Black Friday had racial undertones, there was no direct confrontation between Indo- and Afro-Guianese. The agitation from the preceding week was directed against the PPP Government which was looked upon as being elected exclusively by Indo-Guianese. The opposition forces knew that the anti-PPP sentiment could be easily excited in Georgetown where the

propaganda apparatus was very effective. Two of the main leaders of the strike were Indo-Guianese trade unionists--Richard Ishmael and D. P. Sankar. Not all the businesses that were looted or set afire belonged to Indo-Guianese. Booker Bros. sustained the highest loss. The Chamber of Commerce had agreed to join forces with the strike and agreed to close their businesses. Thus, some of the Indo-Guianese businessmen who had closed their businesses were looked upon as "anti-Government" and were spared the horror of Black Friday.

By spring in 1962, serious internal problems developed in both the PPP and the PNC. The chairmanship of the PPP was held by Brindley Benn, an Afro-Guianese and leader of the left wing element in the Party. At the Party's 1962 annual convention the chairmanship was challenged by Balsami Singh Rai, an Indo-Guianese, who had been the spokesman of the conservatives within the PPP. Rai's attempt to defeat Benn as chairman of the Party became quite controversial. The Rai/Benn issue was not only ideological but also had racial overtones. Rai, after losing the elections, accused Jagan of not only canvassing against him but also taking time off "to insult, humiliate, and slander the Hindus and Muslims of the colony and their religious organizations" (ibid.:214). Rai's popularity and influence with the rightist group in the Party was without doubt. The PPP felt that it could not afford another crisis in the Party and hoped that Rai would withdraw his statements. He refused, and finally he was expelled. This incident has come to be known as the "Rai Affair." The incident in the PNC was less traumatic. Neville Bissamber, the lone Indo-Guianese in his Party's executive, was also challenged at the Party's annual convention by John Carter, an Afro-Guianese.

Ideological differences among the contestants were not as acute as they were in the PPP; thus Burnham had managed to influence his colleagues without any major incidents.

The PPP had still to suffer another great setback. Jan Carew,\* a Guianese of "mixed" origin and Guiana's internationally known novelist, resigned as cultural adviser to the Party. He argued that there could be no cultural progress unless there were genuine solutions to the political problems that would find means to bring the two major groups together. He had long advocated a coalition or joint premiership. His resignation was followed by that of Miles Fitzpatrick, another Guianese of "mixed" origin, who had been an outspoken radical in the Party and had been a member of the executive committee since 1957.

#### E. THE LABOUR RELATIONS BILL

In this section it is necessary to discuss a large number of incidents related to the introduction of the Labour Relations Bill and the resultant strike.

The Labour Relations Bill was first introduced by Ashton Chase, Minister of Labour, in the House of Assembly in September, 1953. The purpose of the Bill was aimed at the elimination of company unions, the ending of jurisdictional disputes, and establishing democracy in the trade union movement (Chase 1969:209) whereby members of a union could

---

\*I first listened to Jan Carew at a public meeting in 1953. I met him about four years later and subsequently. I am convinced that he was anxious, as any patriotic Guyanese would be, to see a coalition between the PPP and the PNC which, hopefully, would unite the two major ethnic groups. However, I am convinced that he did not understand the class contradictions within the society and the external pressures which prevented the coalition, for which he laboured unsuccessfully.

vote for a representative of their choice (Jagan 1966:271). The Speaker thought that the Bill was too controversial and refused to allow all of it to be debated (Despres 1966:241). The suspension of the constitution in 1953 caused the Bill to lapse and the Interim Government did not proceed with it.

With some modification the Labour Relations Bill was reintroduced in 1963. Interestingly, Burnham who was Minister of Education in the 1953 PPP Government was leading spokesman in favour of the Bill. The Bill was also strongly supported by the TUC in 1953. Ten years later, the TUC argued that the Bill would give the Minister of Labour far-reaching powers which would destroy "free trade union movement." This was in alliance with the two opposition parties, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, the British Intelligence, big business and the press (see Henfry 1972).

The intention of the Labour Relations Bill, which was patterned after the "Wagner Act" of the Roosevelt administration (Jagan 1966:271), was to introduce a type of legislation which would allow the workers to elect union representatives of their choice. The PPP insisted on the reintroduction of the Bill since they argued it was embodied in their manifestos of 1953, 1957, and again in 1961. Thus the Party's insistence was based on the fact that they were elected on a mandate based on the needs for reform labour legislation (ibid.:271).

Jurisdictional disputes between labour and management have been a "chronic" disease which British Guiana and the rest of the British Caribbean territories suffered. Both Jagan and Burnham themselves have been actively involved in the labour movement, and both knew the strength

and weaknesses of the trade union movement.

Both the Government and the opposition knew that the PPP had more influence on the sugar workers than the MPCA did (numerically the MPCA as recognised by the SPA is the most powerful union in the country and is the sole bargaining agent for the sugar workers). If the PPP Government were successful in passing the Bill it would give them bargaining rights for the sugar workers and a stronger voice in the TUC.

Unlike the PPP, who were "in office but not in power," the opposition parties, especially the PNC, had several alternatives available. First, they could have sought a compromise which was offered by Jagan on several occasions and attained independence, which probably would have been the most logical thing to do in the interest of national unity. This action was opposed by many of the lower rank leaders of the PPP who feared that if such a coalition was formed they would have to abdicate their positions in favour of PNC members, while many lower rank leaders in the PNC feared that if the PNC formed any coalition they would have far less a chance of being in the limelight of a "shadow cabinet." Secondly, the PNC knew that the PPP was not favourably received in British and U.S. governments and that the CIA and the British Intelligence were at work in British Guiana, and figured they could sit back and hope the Colonial Office would make settlements favourable to them, but they also knew that the foreign agents needed local allies and if they sat back and these foreign allies joined forces with the UF, the PNC would not get any credit. Thirdly, they could stir up unrest pressuring the British Government to make conditions favourable for them. They were also aware that each of these strategies entailed certain risks (Landis 1970:224):

(1) if the opposition compromised with the PPP, then it would negate the chances of the opposition winning the next election, (2) if the opposition sat back the British might go along with the PPP Government, especially if it could be convinced that they would create fewer problems for the British Government. The opposition was blamed (Chase 1966:291) for the disturbances in 1962. The risk of creating new disturbances would probably disturb the Colonial Office which might give in to the PPP.

On April 18, 1963, the TUC called a general strike, which meant that all affiliated members felt morally bound to adhere to the desires and wishes of this council. The strike lasted for 80 days. All unions affiliated to the TUC went on strike. This did not mean that all members of the unions went on strike; there were many union members who were sympathetic to the Government and remained on their jobs. This may seem very confusing, but one has to understand the nepotism and corruption involved in the operations of "company unions" in the country.\*

The Labour Relations Bill can be viewed from two perspectives:

(1) The PPP was genuinely interested in improving labour relations in the country, especially in the sugar plantations where the PPP-supported union, Guiana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU), previously Guiana Sugar Workers Union (GSWU), was far stronger than the recognised MPCA but did not have any bargaining power since it was not recognised by the SPA. The PPP saw that the Bill was a legitimate and democratic way of overthrowing the MPCA and replacing it with the GAWU. (2) The Bill had fallen into the hands of the opposition forces. These forces were not

---

\*For a detailed discussion see Horace Davis, "The decolonisation of sugar in Guyana," 1963.

restricted to the opposition parties in the House of Assembly, the TUC and the affiliates, but also the CIA and the American-trained Guianese (see Appendix III). The records show that there were far more visits from US trade unionists to British Guiana in the 18 months following the 1961 elections than the 18 years preceding the elections (Morris 1967: 89). The motives behind the sudden manifestation of interest are not hard to find. The massive building of opposition forces was a joint effort on both money and manpower from abroad plus their local allies. The International Labour Organisation (ILO), an American-based union, was strongly supporting the TUC. The ILO threatened to relinquish the membership of any union that would handle any cargo going to British Guiana during the strike. With the exception of vehicles, loudspeakers, films and other propaganda apparatus, the general strike in 1963 cost the American taxpayers approximately \$800,000 US (or \$1,600,000 BWI) which went in the form of strike relief (ibid.:290). The role of the CIA in complacency with the British Government in British Guiana was explained in the *London Times*:

America's Central Intelligence (CIA) was working under agreement with the British Government in British Guiana in 1963. A senior British Security Officer disclosed this to the Sunday Times this week. He said the understanding was reached under the premiership of Harold Macmillan's Colonial Secretary, Duncan Sandys, and the Head of the British Security. Other cabinet ministers were not told of the decisions, and probably the secret papers were not shown to Harold Wilson on his election (London Times, April 23, 1967:4).

The role of the CIA towards the PPP Government was further discussed by George Morris:

The tactics of the "invisible" invaders (CIA) was to foster racial strife, aim for a base in the Trade Union Congress, and to paint Jagan "red." In July 1957, Federationalist Harry H. Pollack, identified as "associate inter-American representative" reported on his observations and operations in British Guiana. He labeled Jagan



a "Stalinite" and called for a "strong international trade union solidarity" to free the workers from "Stalinism," not from British rule.

After years of attack on the Jagan Government, the showdown came in 1964. Experts trained in fomenting racial strife and riots came into the country in large numbers, usually under the guise of labour representatives. An anti-government strike spread killings to many parts of the country. Government records show more visitors to that tiny country in the name of "labour solidarity" in 18 months than in the previous 18 years. Jagan disclosed the names of 11 Guianese, graduates of the AFL-CIO's America Institute of Free Labour Development (AIFLD) in Washington who were back in the country and in the midst of the anti-government strife. In the United States, the AFL-CIO protested that Jagan refused to admit Gene Meakins, a former vice-president of the American Newspaper Guild, who sought entrance "to assist anti-government forces in public relations." The Guild report said the exclusion of Meakins was an act against free "trade unionism" (1967:89-90).

Jack Woodis in his book, *Introduction to Neocolonialism* (in a footnote), further points out how United States dollars were sent to British Guiana to help overthrow Jagan's Government:

It appears that the CIA funds were channelled via an organization known as Gotham Foundation, which in turn passed on the funds to Dr. Jagan's opponents in Guiana via the Public Services International [PSI], a trade secretariat of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions [ICFTU] dominated by the American unions affiliated to this body. In February 1967 Dr. Arnold Zandar, head of the principal American union affiliated to the PSI, confessed that his own union had received considerable sums of money from the CIA between 1958 and 1964.\* Two American citizens who were seen constantly in Guyana during the 1963 "strike"--Mr. William Doherty and Mr. Howard McCabe--are both PSI officials (1967:64-65).

When the PPP first published the Bill on March 25, 1963, it was obvious that there was going to be a confrontation with the TUC. The Minister of Labour, Ranji Chandisingh, and other Government officials met with the TUC and accepted a number of amendments proposed by a joint committee and agreed to the administration of the law by a board including

---

\*Note the time period when money was "pumped" into the country. It started prior to the problems in 1962 and stopped after the PPP was evicted from office.

TUC and business representatives. The difference was who should dominate the board. According to Reno, the basis for the difference was that:

The TUC contended that a board with a majority of government employees would give the government control over the unions. The Government held that a board controlled by the TUC and the businessmen would deny workers the right to change representation from unions favoured by the TUC or businessmen (1964:53).

The TUC was tactfully prolonging discussion on the Bill which forced the situation to deteriorate. The media--newspapers and radio stations--along with the opposition parties mounted their attack on the Government. The presence of two Russian freighters loading rice at Georgetown harbour gave the pretext for violence. Rumours that there were arms aboard the ships were spread among the crowds gathered at the wharves during the labour dispute, employees of the Rice Marketing Board who were on strike. The angry crowd started throwing fire bombs, stones, bricks and bottles at the police and RMB offices. The crowd was pushed back by the police, and moved towards Water Street, breaking into stores and looting them; the result was that one boy was shot and killed, 20 people were wounded, and over one hundred arrested, with damage totalling over \$100,000.

The TUC had planned a congress to consider the Bill in early April but postponed it because of the incident at the RMB. They asked the Government to postpone debate on the Bill until after April 21, and with some hesitancy, the Government agreed. The TUC held a congress on April 18 and declared a general strike against the Bill. The TUC's role in this seems quite confusing. After requesting the Government to withhold debate until April 21, it then called a strike on the 18th. Reno (1964:54) points out that two American labour representatives, Harvard Professor Dunlop and William McCabe, flew in the night before the

strike for an all-night session with the president of the TUC, Richard Ishmael.

The first month after the strike was called, the Government and the TUC negotiated fairly regularly and agreed on many new changes in the Bill. On May 7, negotiations broke down. Charges of racism became more prominent. The absence of violence was probably due to the fact that the TUC's policy was not to hold any demonstrations. They even cancelled the May Day parade.

Racial overtones became apparent when the Government declared a state of emergency in order to maintain essential services and replacing fuel for rice farmers. The racial accusation derives from the fact that the majority of "scabs" were Indo-Guianese. The TUC and the opposition forces, including the media, did not hesitate to publicise the racial implications and charged the Government with attempting to break the strike on "racial and political grounds."

Claude Christian, who had replaced Balram Singh Rai as Minister of Home Affairs, died of a heart attack. On the day of the funeral, May 30, the *Daily Chronicle* reported:

Jagan Backs Down on Remaining Points  
Talks on Labour Bill Progressing  
TUC to Report to Special Congress (Landis 1970:233).

At the graveside ceremony of Claude Christian, bricks and bottles were thrown at the gathering and afterwards several Indo-Guianese shops were looted. This, according to Landis, was not only the *first direct racial violence between the Afro- and Indo-Guianese in the strike but also the first in Guianese history.*

The situation further deteriorated when the PPP used its emergency powers to control the distribution of incoming food supplies. The TUC

had been receiving large gifts of food from the United States Trade Unions. In May, a shipment of over 120,000 tons of food for the TUC arrived via Surinam. There were approximately 25,000 workers on strike; this means that if the food were distributed accordingly, each "striker" would have received approximately 4 tons of food. The PPP Government refused to allow the food to enter the country unless the Government Competent Authority was allowed to distribute part of it. The TUC refused to accept the Government's suggestion and accused them of attempting to starve the workers (ibid.:237).

As the strike prolonged, essential services were kept up as one-half of the TUC members were still on their jobs since they disagreed with TUC policies. Many small grocery stores in the city remained open but there was always fear of looting or being accused of being a PPP supporter. All the major airlines and shipping companies had suspended operation, though the Government managed to keep the airport at Atkinson in operation. Contacts with neighbouring Surinam and Trinidad were made by means of a Government-owned Dakota airplane. Oil and other essential supplies were running out. After all other sources failed (Jagan 1966: 277) Jagan appealed to the Cuban Government for help. The Cubans responded immediately with both oil and foodstuffs. This response by the Cuban Government was the first indication that the TUC would find it difficult, if not impossible, to topple the PPP Government. Although the response from the Cubans can be seen as a "saviour" to Jagan's Government it can also be seen as a motivating force used by the opposition forces to escalate their "anti-communist crusade."

Following the violence of May 30, the Government banned all

demonstrations in Georgetown. This was met with "passive resistance." The police attempted to prevent an "illegal passive resistance"; violence broke out and continued for 3 days. The rioters battled with the police, looted two markets and attacked Indo-Guianese. The attacks on Indo-Guianese were condemned by the TUC as a "despicable exercise of attacking and assaulting East Indians." On the afternoon of the 12th, an Afro-Guianese PPP cabinet minister was beaten when he attempted to leave his office. Hours later, while Jagan was on his way home, he too was attacked by the crowd, with showers of bricks and bottles. The body-guard, with other policemen, fired at the crowd and several people were wounded.

During the unrest in Georgetown, there were no reports of violence in the rural areas. The TUC charged the Commissioner of Police with partiality for not reporting attacks of Indo-Guianese on Afro-Guianese in the rural areas (Landis 1970:237).

A dispute between the Speaker of the House, Mr. Gajraj, and the PPP erupted. The Speaker suspended four members of the PPP including the Premier from the service of the Assembly. This constitutional crisis forced Jagan to request the Governor to prorogue the Legislature on June 18. Consequently, for the second time, the Labour Relations Bill was nullified.

The nullification of the Labour Relations Bill did not satisfy the TUC as they had fallen short of their target, that is, forcing the Government to resign. Instead of ending the strike, the TUC started making uncompromising settlement demands which included:

1. Full payment for strikers for the period the strike had lasted;

2. Dismissal of all regular employees who did not take part in the strike;
3. That the Labour Relations Bill should not be reintroduced in any form;
4. Immediate withdrawal of all emergency measures.

In the last week of June, the British Trade Union Congress sent Robert Willis, an executive of the British TUC, to use his good offices to bring about a settlement between the British Guiana TUC and the Government. Willis met separately with the TUC and the Government and worked out a settlement (see Appendix IV). The agreement was reached on Sunday, June 30. The TUC scheduled a congress to ratify the agreement for Monday. The congress was postponed until July 1, and again until July 3. Many union leaders were disappointed in that their strategy to topple the Government had failed, and they were still looking for reasons to prolong the strike. After a fruitless attempt to bring the strike to an end, Willis announced: "Sunday night I had a settlement, then the situation changed" and threatened to "leave for London and tell the whole world who are the people not cooperating to bring about a settlement" (Landis 1970:238). He further threatened to return to London and expose the British Guiana Trade Union movement and shut off their funds from ICFTU sources (Jagan 1966:296). Willis' contention was that the TUC and the U.S. labour representatives were prepared to prolong the strike so long as Jagan was in office. Willis later said: "If Dr. Jagan had called me and told me that the unions could write their own demands and he would agree to them, the TUC would still find reasons for not accepting" (Reno 1964:56). In summing up the role of the TUC in the strike, Willis stated: "Jagan made all concessions that

could have been made, but the TUC wanted to lead him in the streets with a dog chain and to have his head on a platter" (Jagan 1966:296). Willis' open criticism of the BGTUC and their American allies forced the TUC to call the strike to an end.

At the end of the strike, there were many technical questions raised on the role of the trade unionist during the strike. The TUC maintained that their role was strictly "labour" while the Government argued that their role was direct involvement in politics. Many of the TUC American-trained trade unionists (see Appendix V) were also paid by the American Institute for Free Labour Development. The plan was to place three trainees in key positions to harass the Government by go-slow, strike, sabotage, and other subversive activities (Chase 1964:293). Jagan, citing Victor Reisel in an article in Washington, D.C., stated:

They [British Guiana's trade unionists] are now back in British Guiana . . . each of the six [see Appendix V] trainees has specific tasks inside British Guiana Labour Movement . . . where they are working with a rather fearless chap by the name of Richard Ishmael, president of the British Guiana Trade Union Council and general president of the anti-communist Sugar Workers Union known as the MPCA . . . Ishmael made good his promise last week. There was intense fighting in the dock areas. It soon spread through the city [The fighting is in reference to the first escalation of violence at the Rice Marketing Board on April 5, 1963] (ibid.:293).

In describing the role of the U.S. trained trade unionists, Serafino Romualdi, head of the American Institute of Free Labour Development (AIFLD), said:

In September of that year [1962], 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 have learned at our school . . . When the BGTUC decided to call a strike in an attempt to stop the passage of Dr. Jagan's labour bill, I was asked to put the Institute's six interns, who were working with various local unions, at the disposal of the council's strike committee . . . I would like to say that I am proud of our graduates in British Guiana. In spite of the sacrifices and hardships they kept their

places in the front lines of a difficult and, unfortunately, sometimes bloody battle (Jagan 1966:301).

The political involvement of the British Guiana trade unionists was further exposed by the Wynn Parry Commission when they pointed out that it had been "proven beyond all doubt that the three most important trade unionists, Messrs. R. Ishmael, D. P. Sankar (Indo-Guianese) and A. Jackson (Afro-Guianese) were deeply involved in politics" and "the hostility of the Trade Union leaders, some of whom, e.g., Ishmael, had personal grievances against Dr. Jagan and his ministers" (Chase 1966: 296). The political involvement of the Trade Union movement was summed up by the Wynn Parry Commission which was appointed by the Colonial Secretary to inquire into the root causes of the 1962 riots:

There is very little doubt that despite the loud protestations of the trade union leaders to the contrary, political affinities and aspirations played a large part in shaping their policy and formulating their programme of offering resistance to the budget and making a determined effort to change the Government in office (ibid.:296).

In conclusion, the irony of the situation can best be exemplified by D'Aguiar's action. Peter D'Aguiar is known as one of the most successful businessmen in Guyana. His "D'Aguiar Imperial House" stands as a hub of Georgetown. When the strike started in 1963, he urged employers to pay their striking men. As an opposition leader, he took most of the credit for the "abuse of Jagan's Government" during 1962, and again in 1963 felt it necessary to join forces with the TUC. It was interesting to watch the industrialist "beer baron" (D'Aguiar) not only leading demonstrations, but also singing "Solidarity Forever"--a worker's hymn.

In this section emphasis has been placed on the roles played by



the external forces in Guiana's domestic problems during that period. Given the demographic pattern of a country such as Guyana, with a high rate of unemployment and underemployment in the urban areas, it is easy to foment unrest in the cities. Anyone who is familiar with the country during the period would understand that the lumpen-proletarians participated much more actively during the strike than the strikers did. Significantly, one-half of the TUC members refused to go on strike. This explains why the Government managed to keep all essential services going.

Analysis of the events of the strike is significant in terms of the pluralistic theory and its applicability. Given the role of a foreign (colonial) power in maintaining some sort of equilibrium and on the (potentially) disruptive role of racial differences, one would expect according to this theory that the combination of British\* and American efforts to oust Jagan's Government would be a fatal one. The events and outcome of the strike refute both the predictive power and, more importantly, the applicability of plural theory to explain most or all the events.

#### F. THE GAWU STRIKE AND PR ELECTIONS 1964

In November 1963, the British Government invited the three political parties to attend an Independence Conference in London. After a series of deadlocks among the leaders of the British Guiana delegates,

---

\*Britain's role at the time in the country may seem as a neutral one but according to a citation in New York Sunday Times, U.S. involvement in British Guiana according to a British senior security officer was done with the complicity of the British Prime Minister, Colonial Secretary, and head of security (see citation on p. 99).

they agreed that the Colonial Secretary should arbitrate and settle all the outstanding differences (see Appendix VI). Jagan's agreement to sign the letter was considered not only a tactical error, but also a lack of consideration of historical circumstances and the detrimental external forces that shaped a colonial society (Glasgow 1970:126). This also seems paradoxical as Jagan has had a history of problems with the Colonial Office.

The PPP delegates preferred that the British Government impose a solution to returning home without a settlement and a date fixed for independence. They felt strongly that if they returned home without a settlement, the opposition forces would find a new pretext to start disturbances as they had done in 1962 and 1963. Jagan's expectation probably was that if the settlement imposed by the British were unfavourable to the PPP, he could appeal to the United Nations to put pressure on Britain. In explaining why he signed the letter Jagan pointed out:

Our position as a government has become unbearable and humiliating. In actual fact, although we were in office, we were without any real power which a government ordinarily has, as had been shown especially during disturbances when my Government was under siege . . . . It was [signing the letter] to me, the last straw; life was already unbearable and difficult under existing conditions (1966:321-322).

Duncan Sandys, Secretary of State for the Colonies, did not consider the PPP's two major requests: (1) he refused to lower the voting age to 18 years as requested by the PPP delegates; (2) he refused to fix a date for independence. He finally imposed the most extreme form of Proportional Representation (PR) that was advocated by the opposition parties. Sandys' rationale for imposing PR was seriously questioned by many leaders of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the British public and the media (Jagan 1966:321-322). Ian Macleod, a former Colonial Secretary

who is neither a friend of Dr. Jagan nor of the Guianese people, said that the system of PR is "rotten and abominable" (ibid.:327). Edward Gardiner, a Tory Member of Parliament, in a BBC broadcast prior to the 1963 Constitutional Conference, suggested that the implementation of PR would be tantamount to rigging the election against the PPP (ibid.:327).

Interestingly, British Guiana since 1961 has had a constitution which provides for internal self-government, one similar to that of Southern Rhodesia.\* When an opposition member of the House of Commons questioned Sandys as to why the constitution of Southern Rhodesia was not revoked, since it has minority government rule, Sandys' reply was that Rhodesia "is virtually self governing and it would be constitutionally improper and impracticable for us, without the consent of Southern Rhodesia to impose upon it a new constitution" (House of Commons Debate, November 8, 1961). Yet, in 1963 in British Guiana, another colony, this cogent argument for non-intervention in internally self-governing colonies was forgotten and the system of PR was instituted by Britain. All of this is indicative of Britain's double standard in administering her colonial affairs.

There seems to be an enormous amount of evidence that it was the U.S. and not Britain who insisted on the institution of PR in British Guiana. As early as 1954 the Robertson Commission stated:

If some system of proportional representation was not introduced, it could hardly be represented as other than a device to mitigate the present dominance of the People's Progressive Party. To enshrine in the constitution such a device would in our view be wrong and we

---

\*On several occasions after the 1961 elections, many radicals in the PPP caucus strongly argued that the Party should proceed towards Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) to which Dr. Jagan was in strong opposition.

therefore recommend no change in the present electoral system (1954:72).

It was Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. who first suggested in 1961 that "an obvious solution would be to establish a system of proportional representation" (already cited). Drew Pearson suggested that President Kennedy's "secret" reason for visiting Britain in the summer of 1963 was the haunting worry that British Guiana would set up another communist government under the guidance of Fidel Castro (Glasgow 1970:172). Kennedy had done what Guyanese would call "taking the bull by the horn." By going to Britain and persuading the British not to grant independence to British Guiana, he had prevented the development of another "Bay of Pigs" or "invasion of the Dominican Republic." The U.S. insistence on PR later became the slogan for the opposition parties at home. Sandys' solution of imposing PR was a duplicate of UF-Dean Rusk proposal: new elections and a new constitution before independence (Henfrey 1972:71).

The Colonial Secretary, like other (official and unofficial) commentators who rely on secondary sources of information, argued that the root problems of British Guiana lay almost entirely in the development of party politics along racial lines and that the implementation of PR would force coalition between political parties and make it easier for new political grouping to form on a multiracial basis (Command Paper 2204:4). Sandys erred in his predictions as most of the new parties that mushroomed immediately before elections (discussed later) were not multi-racial but were organised along racial and religious lines. For example, under the first part-the-post system, in an equally mixed (Indo and Afro) constituency, candidates could not appeal on racial sentiments and hope to win. Thus candidates were forced to discuss genuine economic and social

problems, whereas under PR the whole country became one constituency where candidates could exploit racial issues to attract voters. For example, if members of one ethnic group were scattered throughout the country (such as the Amerindians who live on reservations) candidates can now appeal to members of that ethnic group.

Although none of the leaders openly appealed to voters on racial lines throughout the campaign, there were subtle racial overtones in political speeches.

A factor that probably worsened the situation was Sandys' one-sided decision in favour of the opposition parties which alienated the PPP (Landis 1970:249) and which led to further antagonism in the country.

Early in 1964, the PPP planned a "hurricane of protests" to Sandys' proposal throughout the country. Jagan knew that if PR were introduced he would never be able to form the government. He asked Kwame Nkrumah to send a mission to British Guiana with the hope of working out some settlement before PR was introduced. The Ghanaian mission accomplished very little and after ten days, felt that their presence in the country could help very little in obviating the problems which had to be worked out by the Guianese people themselves, and left.

The PPP was determined to stop the implementation of the Sandys' plan. In its issue in February-March 1964, the Party's organ *Thunder* stated:

The Sandys Plan must be stopped and party members and supporters must understand that in order to stop the Sandys Plan they will have to make sacrifices on a scale and to a degree never required of them before. Whatever the effort and whatever the sacrifices, the Sandys PLAN MUST BE STOPPED (Glasgow 1970:127).

As indicated before, the PPP support comes mainly from the rural areas,

the majority of whom are sugarcane and rice workers. Everyone in Guyana knows that although the MPCA holds bargaining rights for the sugar workers the true strength lies with the Guiana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU, which is PPP-supported), which is unrecognised by the Sugar Producers Association (SPA).

The PPP felt that as their strength lay with the agricultural workers then it should both organise and recognise. Thus, immediately after the end of the strike in 1963, the sugar workers were encouraged by the PPP to resign from the MPCA, and to request that the estates cease to use the automatic check off system.\* The GAWU collected over 14,000 letters from workers resigning from the MPCA and requested that the SPA recognise the MPCA as a union of their choice.

At the end of January the PPP started a "Freedom March" in which two contingents started at opposite ends of the coast--Crabwood Creek and Charity--and met at a rally in Georgetown. There was a great deal of fear and anxiety\*\* that when the "marchers" (predominantly Indo-Guianese) passed through Afro villages and entered Georgetown (predominantly Afro-Guianese) this would result in violence. However, with the exception of a few minor incidents nothing serious took place.

The purpose of the "march" was for the PPP to show the British Government and the outside world\*\*\* that it was possible to organise

---

\*Under this automatic check off system union dues are automatically deducted by the sugar companies for the MPCA at the time workers are being paid.

\*\*Two days before the "marchers" arrived in Georgetown I overheard a discussion between two Afro-Guianese women at the Stabrock Market, where one said to the other: "Ah hope when dem people [marchers] come to the city dem hooligans en start noting."

\*\*\*During the week of the march there were scores of international journalists and correspondents and television in the country.

their rural-based strength in the city. Speaking to a crowd of over 10,000 supporters Jagan strongly advocated for a PPP-PNC coalition but also warned:

Let those who think that they can dominate Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Mackenzie [PNC strongholds] know that these places are not the whole of British Guiana.

Let us tell them that we also have strength. We have graphic distribution. There is no doubt that the two main crops [rice and sugar] of this country are produced by PPP.

Take away rice and you would get starvation in this country . . . including Georgetown (Landis 1970:261).

Although Jagan had managed to convince the outside world that he was still the most popular leader in the country it generated little sympathy with the Colonial Office. In that respect the "march" had failed.

In the middle of February the GAWU called a strike at Lenora, West Coast Demarara, when management had refused to negotiate workers' grievances with GAWU representatives, who according to SPA had no bargaining rights for sugar workers. By the end of the month the strike had spread to several sugar estates on the Corentyne coast. Finally on March 3, the GAWU called a general strike in the sugar industry.

If the Labour Relations Bill had been passed in 1963, the dispute between the unions could have been easily resolved. The Commissioner of Labour would have called an election and any union that pooled more than 50 percent of the votes would have been recognised as the bargaining agent for the sugar workers. The SPA, MPCA and all the other recognised unions did not want the GAWU to be recognised because of two main reasons: (1) the GAWU would have pressured the SPA to make conditions better for the workers and (2) the GAWU would have become a viable force within the TUC.

The GAWU did not realise that any attempt to gain recognition from the SPA by calling a strike would not succeed. The SPA, MPCA and TUC were prepared to fight the GAWU. Secondly, because of the large numbers of unemployed and underemployed labour force, the planters could always recruit "scabs" (mostly Indo-Guyanese). Thirdly, the GAWU, unlike other unions, did not receive any international aid and were not "management recipients," thus they could not continue a strike for a long period, as the majority of workers lived at subsistence level.

The SPA, with the help of the TUC and MPCA, were determined to break the strike by employing "scabs" and encouraging and coercing regular workers to return to work. At first, there were indirect confrontations between strikers and non-strikers; then attacks on "scabs" and non-strikers by strikers. On March 3, a non-striking worker was shot and two MPCA officials were beaten. The following day, a bomb was thrown at a truck at Port Mourant that was carrying about 35 men to work. One Indo- and one Afro-Guyanese were killed and several others injured. The violence for the first two months was not racial; the clashes were between GAWU and MPCA supporters. According to Landis:

The reason for this is that the GAWU concentrated most of its violence on Indian non-strikers and MPCA activists and vigilante groups contained more Indians than Africans. Thus most of the violence during the first two months of the strike was violence between Indians. There was a provocative situation racially since many of the strike breakers and non-striking workers (especially the sugar factory workers) were Africans and most of the police who were used to break up squatting demonstrators and protect non-striking workers were Africans. The GAWU and the PPP did not play up to those racial implications or attempt to provoke racial clashes during the first two months of the strike, perhaps because this would have brought a large number of non-sugar workers into the struggle on the side of the MPCA (1970:264).

The period March to August, for which the strike lasted, was a



period of continuous tension and violence. Although the victims of the attack were primarily among lower class Indo- and Afro-Guianese, it was by no means restricted to that class. Most of the violence took place in Georgetown, and on the east and west coasts of Demerara. An interesting question that can be raised is why is it that most of the violence that occurred was close to Georgetown. Why is it that the Corentyne and Essequibo were free from any serious violence? One answer is that Georgetown is the capital and administrative centre and most of the violence was directed towards the PPP Government through the MPCA. The areas that were subjected to violence were within close proximity to Georgetown. This can be seen as an attempt to prevent the administrative function of the Government and force the British Government to suspend the constitution.

A chronology of incidents from March to July follows:

On March 6th, a non-striking worker drove a tractor and killed a woman and injured fourteen others.

On March 23, a bomb was thrown at a schoolbus which was carrying children of the managerial staff at Plantation Enmore and a Portuguese child was killed.

Between May 22 and 24, four Indo- and three Afro-Guianese were killed on the East and West Coast Demerara.

On May 25, all the Indo-Guianese from Wismar/Mackenzie area were forced to evacuate their homes. The result was that three Indo-Guianese were beaten to death, 190 homes were destroyed by fire and one Afro-Guianese was shot by the Police (primarily because of this incident Janet Jagan resigned her position as Minister of Home Affairs and accused the Governor and the Commissioner of Police of allowing the situation to deteriorate).

On June 1, Burnham and Jagan entered into a discussion of a peace plan but this lasted only a few minutes before Burnham walked out.

On June 12, Arthur Abhram, a Portuguese senior civil servant and a known UF supporter, was burnt to death in his home together with seven of his eight children.

On June 13, the Governor announced the detention of 28 PPP activists including the Deputy Prime Minister, head of GAWU and two PNC activists. Two days later, four more PPP activists were detained including the Minister of Education.

On July 5, four Indo-Guianese were beaten to death on the East Coast Demerara.

On July 6, Guianese witnessed the worst of all the tragedies. Sun Chapman, a launch that operated from Georgetown to Mackenzie (now Linden) and Wismar sank after an explosion. Approximately 40 persons died or drowned from the explosion.

A week later, a bomb was thrown in a cinema that was showing two Indian films (I was in the cinema) where three persons were killed and several wounded.

Before the strike ended, the SPA announced that over 650 acres of cane worth over one million dollars was destroyed by arsonists.

On July 17, the leaders of the three political parties met for peace talks. No sooner had the discussion started than two "time bombs" went off simultaneously: one at PPP headquarters, Freedom House, and the second at Gimpex, a PPP trading corporation.

On July 25, the GAWU called off its recognition strike.

Ending the strike did not bring a halt to the violence. This is how Landis summarised the different stages of the violence:

During the first nine weeks of the strike the violence remained non-racial and there were only seven deaths. During the first six weeks of racial violence, some 20 people were killed. In the next three weeks, that began with the Wismar riot and ended with the detentions, 16 people were killed. In the three weeks between the detention and the sinking of Sun Chapman 23 people were killed, about 40 died in the Sun Chapman sinking and some 24 died between the sinking of the Sun Chapman and the end of the strike. About 24 more died in the five weeks after the end of the strike (ibid.:264).

Table IX gives details of deaths or injuries during the period.

The GAWU had failed in its attempt to gain recognition, neither did it convince the SPA, MPCA or their foreign allies of their (the GAWU) viable threat to change the structure of the "plantation system." The GAWU felt it necessary to end the strike; morale among the workers

TABLE IX  
ACTS OF VIOLENCE COMMITTED IN 1964

Month	Killed	Injured
January	1	1
February	1	4
March	5	84
April	8	112
May	12	250
June	30	162
July	74	166

Note: This table excludes all violence committed five weeks after the strike ended.

Source: *Commonwealth Survey XIV*, p. 1013.

was deteriorating, financial support was lacking and finally, the strike was not effective since there were enough "scabs" to replace workers. This was the end of racial violence in British Guiana. From mid-August 1964 to the date of writing, Guyana did not experience any form of racial violence. Is it that the ethnic groups have suddenly become tolerant of each other and cultural diversity and political differences cease to exist? Is it that the Burnham Government is more effective and has demonstrated its ability to govern where the PPP failed? Or is it that the opposition of 1957-64 and their foreign allies have achieved their aim--removing the PPP from office?

The Labour Party victory in October 1964 aroused Jagan's optimism. He had known Harold Wilson and the Labour "shadow" cabinet for a long time and felt sure that the Labour Government on assuming office would revoke the Tory's decision of introducing PR, since they, as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, had seriously criticised the introduction of PR. Then again, Jagan was surprised when Anthony Greenwood, an acquaintance of his who had replaced Sandys as Colonial Secretary, announced that the British Government would carry out Sandys' plans for PR elections in British Guiana.

Amidst turmoil and tension, the 1964 PR election campaign got underway. In the meantime, two new political parties had mushroomed (both predominantly Indo-Guyanese with strong racial appeal): the Guiana United Muslim Party (GUMP) headed by Hoosain Gannie whose slogan was "a vote for GUMP is a vote for Allah," and the Justice Party (JP) headed by Balram Singh Rai, onetime stalwart of the PPP who had hoped to appeal to the Arya Samaj (see Table I). It was hoped that both these

parties would appeal to the electorates on racism and would woo Indo-Guianese supporters from the PPP.

The election under PR was held on December 7, 1964. The results were as predicted: PPP 45.8 percent of the votes with 24 seats in the House of Assembly; PNC with 40.5 percent of the votes won 22 seats and UF with 12.4 percent of the votes won seven seats. Neither the JP nor the GUMP won a sufficient percentage of votes to claim a representative in the House of Assembly. It is interesting to note that the UF obtained a considerably larger percentage of the Indo-Guianese votes than both JP and GUMP pooled together. It is also interesting to note that the PPP is the only political party that increases its popular support. Those who could not identify with the PPP were conscious enough to accept D'Aguiar's class position and ideology.

The violence from March to August did not crystallise the votes along racial lines. According to Landis:

The racial violence appears to have little effect on voting behavior. Indians from rural violent areas were about as likely as Indians from peaceful areas to be non-racial voters, and Africans from rural violent areas were slightly more likely to be non-racial voters than Africans from rural peaceful areas. There was no significant difference between Indians and Africans who had and had not suffered loss or injury due to racial violence (1970:308).

The week following election was a week of uneasiness. Peter D'Aguiar refused to coalesce with Jagan and vice versa. Thus, Burnham became the centre of attraction. Internally, many left wingers from the PNC were in strong favour of coalescing with the PPP. This, however, did not materialise. If the two major parties had formed the coalition the premiership and ministerial positions would have had to be shared equally or proportionately, which meant the PPP would have had equally as strong a voice in the Cabinet. The lower ranks of the PNC leadership saw this

as a threat and opposed alliance with the PPP. At the same time, Burnham was also being pressured by the planters (who in recent years had openly supported him) to form an alliance with UF. Ideologically, the right wing elements in the PNC saw the situation as a boon to "get rid of the communists." Externally, the CIA and the British Intelligence had long fought with money and manpower to get the PPP out of office. The Macmillan and Kennedy administrations had no scruples about their dislike for Jagan's administration. The U.S. had devised the "scheme" and the British had carried it out. (The history of this manipulative combination will long be remembered by students of Guianese history.)

The Governor asked Burnham to form the government. The PNC and UF formed a coalition. It was obvious that the marriage between the two parties was an arranged one. The major factor that led to the breakup of the coalition in 1968 was the ideological differences between the conservative United Force and the "lip service" socialism of the PNC. The coalition government did not collapse after the coalition broke up. Burnham was tactful enough to entice members with ministerial and junior ministerial portfolios from both UF and PPP and by early 1968, had a majority to control the House of Assembly.

On assuming office in 1965, Burnham urged the British Government to convene a conference for independence. The Colonial Office invited delegates from the three political parties. The two ruling parties attended the conference, but the PPP refused to send any delegates and accused the British of using the conference as a form of diplomacy to sell the rights of the Guianese people while still holding 17 of the PPP

leaders in detention. Several important issues were raised at the conference; the most important of which was that it agreed that British Guiana would become independent on May 26, 1966, and would be called Guyana.

Since the end of the Second World War, Britain came under severe pressure from her colonies to grant them independence. At the same time the moral question of colonialism was seriously discussed at the United Nations. Granting independence to colonies such as British Guiana was not the same as granting it in places like Nigeria, India, Trinidad, and Jamaica where after independence British and American interest was guaranteed. In wanting to grant independence to British Guiana the British were faced with one serious problem--that the PPP were not prepared to guarantee protection for U.S. and British capital invested in the country. The ousting of the PPP from office created the right conditions for Britain to excuse herself from future moral responsibility for Guiana's domestic problems.

With the active cooperation of the United States, 170 people were killed, untold hundreds were wounded, and about £10 million worth of damage done to the economy (Jagan 1966:351-352), and independence was granted: a truly warm farewell from a dear imperial "mother country."

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

I hope, thus far, my arguments have not conveyed the impression that the cultural units in Guiana have formed a homogeneous whole. Although there are racial and cultural differences in the society, the violence that occurred during 1962-1964 cannot be explained by these differences since there are many underlying factors which are clouded by racial and cultural diversity.

Racial groups, politics, religion, social class and national liberation are complex phenomena; any attempt to explain the factors as separate entities would lead to over-simplification of the problem, would obscure the facts and would result in a mechanistic interpretation. The problem has to be viewed from its historical perspective; that is, the social and economic position of each group with a time-space relationship.

The struggle from the 1950's for national liberation from colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism and the class struggle for the establishment of a socialist state should not be clouded by the racial issues. Surely the racial factor is a problem but it should not be separated from the other variables--it must be analysed in its totality.

It may seem simple to associate racial categories with cultural differences. Racial classification in Guiana has become a complex phenomenon (see Chapter II, pp. 18-22). Despres attempts to explain the problems by using his plural model, and ignores a number of crucial



factors or subdivisions of the plural theory. These include the theory of political pluralism, the philosophy of cultural pluralism (Landis 1970:343) and democratic pluralism.\* His failure to identify these subdivisions is probably one of his main weaknesses in developing his theory.

Some of the most important interactions between the different groups in Guiana are based on social class and status levels between individuals and specific (particularly political) organisations and not simply between cultural or ethnic groups.

Repeatedly, I have argued that the problems have to be seen from a historical perspective. The Indo- and Afro-Guianese have been coexisting in British Guiana for over 125 years. The national struggle for independence after 1953 elections until the early 1960's is a clear indication that the planter class, who for over one and a quarter centuries has controlled not only the economic and political institutions but also the cultural and ideological superstructure of the society, refused to permit the development of united working class movement.

The church and the schools are the chief instruments which have perpetuated the ethical values and moral standards of the society. Interestingly enough, both of the major groups (especially the Africans) were at different periods of historical development, considered "heathens" and were forbidden to become active members of these institutions. However, it was later discovered that both these institutions were most effective in pacifying and later stultifying and

---

\*For a detailed discussion see Pierre Van den Berghe's *Race and Racism*, Chaps. 1, 6 and 7; also Robert Wolf's *Beyond Tolerance*, pp. 3-52.

corrupting the minds of the masses. Little should one wonder why both the churches and the planter class were so vehemently opposed to the abolition of "dual control" of primary schools in 1961 (see Chapter IV, p. 84).

The two major racial groups which comprise the majority of the "labouring class" have developed a traditional struggle against exploitation and oppression of the plantocracy. Although there have been several attempts to "divide and rule" (as was the case where East Indian immigrants were "locked" inside the plantation which became their main instrument of socialisation), it could not be considered the same as the "apartheid" division between the "whites" and the "blacks" in South Africa. The fact that both Indo- and Afro-Guianese were forced to live and work under similar conditions explains why on several occasions they joined forces and fought united battles against the plantocracy.

The focus of this thesis is that the violence of 1962-1964 among Indo- and Afro-Guianese was not motivated by racial animosity but should be seen as a power struggle between the PPP and the combined opposition forces. In all three instances, 1962, 1963 and 1964, the violence was a result of conscious manipulation of the situation. There is a great deal of evidence to support the thesis that the strikes were politically, and not racially, motivated. The opposition knew that they had the support of the planter class and their foreign allies and were strong enough to bring pressure on the British Government to change the electoral system.

Political parties and their allied trade unions mobilised supporters and demonstrators to rally to their cause. The immediate

visibility of racial groups was an important factor for both sides--the Government and the opposition--who have become obsessed with the question of "race." As a result, it becomes difficult to perceive the violence as being non-racial.

If Guianese are to develop a revolutionary consciousness (in Guiana), we must first be able to unveil the false consciousness that surrounds us. Cameron (1970:12) pointed out that if anyone could bring the two major political parties together, it would be a notable act. Not that I disagree with Cameron, or that I oppose realignment with Jagan and Burnham. Any merging of the PPP and PNC would be a boon for the Guianese people. But the problems must be viewed realistically. Any attempt to bridge the ideological differences between the left wing of the PPP and the right wing of the PNC would be avoiding the basic issues; that is, failing to understand the class interest and class contradiction between the spectrum of the two political parties.

The fact that the right wing of the PNC and their foreign allies managed to persuade Burnham not to coalesce with the PPP in 1964 will, in the future, be considered the most dangerous act that impeded racial unity and genuine economic growth in the post-war period.

Guianese must be on guard to distinguish between the nationalist bourgeoisie and a party that advocates genuine socialist policies. The nationalist bourgeois fights relentlessly to get rid of the foreign bourgeois in order to replace him. In so doing, he appeals to national sentiment with rhetoric. He develops a racial prejudice against (foreign) "white" which is a racism of defence based on fear (Fanon 1963: 164), and thrives on the reminiscence of the racist doctrines of former

representatives of the former colonial-imperialist power.

I feel strained, yet forced, to disagree with Dr. Walter Rodney's concept of "power." Power, he argues, "is kept pure milky white" (1970: 24). To me, Kirpalani's Ltd. and the Bank of Baroda (both controlled by East Indians) are no less capitalists and exploiters than Booker's and Chase Manhattan Bank. Their motives are the same. Why should we attack "white" capitalists and encourage non-white capitalists? If power is kept "milky white" how can we account for millions of "white" people the world over who live in subhuman conditions? Power is in the hands of those who control the "string of the purse."

Guianese need not borrow cultural materials to build a new ideology. It is true that they have had a legacy of exploitation and corruption throughout their history. Cultural values need not be a replica of western civilisation. Students and expatriates, after spending many years abroad need not transport with them a "blue print" of western cultural values, but should revitalise those aspects of Guianese culture that would foster cooperation between the different groups and at the same time enhance social progress. Guianese are fortunate in that they have the resource materials for developing a Guianese culture. No other country in the Caribbean has such heterogeneous cultural groups yet share so much in common (Seymour 1970:90).

Many ex-colonies have had a history of "divide and rule." This policy has been advantageous not only to the colonial power but also to the local capitalist class who serve as a base through which the foreign capitalist operates; that is, "the external causes are the conditions for change and the internal causes are the basis for change" (Mao 1968:

28). After independence the national bourgeoisie constantly demands the nationalising of the economy and its trading sector. The national "bourgeois caste" according to Fanon is:

That section of the nation which annexes for its own profit all the wealth of the country, by a kind of unexpected logic will pass disparaging judgements . . . that are more often than not reminiscent of the racist doctrines of the former representatives of the colonial power (1963:167).

To the national bourgeoisie, nationalism does not mean governing the country in the interest of the masses of the working class and reconstructing a national economy. To them, nationalisation simply means transferring into their hands the advantages they were deprived of during the legacy of the colonial era, and filling the vacancies abdicated by the colonial masters. But if nationalism is not made explicit, in the interest of the masses, if it is not enriched and deepened by rapid transformation in a consciousness of political, economic and social needs, in other words into humanism, it would lead to a blind alley (ibid.:204).

In an attempt to decolonise, Guianese leaders must first understand the historical process of colonisation, which has been the meeting of two forces; that is, the coloniser and the colonised--both opposed to each other. It was this initial contact between the natives and the Europeans that gave rise to a sort of substratification which has been nourished throughout the history. Secondly, they should be able to identify the dynamic forces that perpetuate social stratification within the society and fight against them. They should concern themselves less with international prestige and fight to give back the dignity of all citizens and create a prospect that is human because conscious and sovereign dwell therein (ibid.:205).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andrews, C. F.  
1930 India's Emigration Problem. *Foreign Affairs* VIII:430-441.
- Bacchus, M. K.  
1966 Social Factors in Secondary School Selections in British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 15(1).  
  
1969 Patterns of Educational Expenditure in an Emergent Nation - A Case Study of Guyana 1945-65. *Social and Economic Studies* 18:287-309.  
  
1970 Education and Social Cultural Integration in a "Plural Society." Occasional Paper Series, No. 6. Montreal: McGill University.
- Benedict, B.  
1970 Pluralism and Stratification. *Essays in Comparative Social Stratification*. L. Platnicov and A. Tuden, ed. University of Pittsburg Press.
- Bradley, Paul  
1961 The Party System in British Guiana and the General Elections of 1961. *Caribbean Studies* 1.
- Braitewaite, L.  
1960 Social Stratification and Cultural Pluralism. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 83:817-842.
- Best, Lloyd  
Externally Propelled Industrialization and Growth in the Caribbean [Model III - 1945-65]. *The Economy of the British Commonwealth Caribbean: An Overview*.
- Brewster, Havelock  
1969 The Patterns of Change in Wages, Price and Productivity in British Guiana, 1948 to 1962. *Social and Economic Studies* 18:107-136.
- Bronkhurst, Rev. H. V. H.  
1888 *Among the Hindus and Creoles of British Guiana*. London: T. Woolmer.
- Case, Gerald O.  
1946 Notes of the Natural Resources of B.G. *Time/ri*. Georgetown: Daily Chronicle Ltd.
- Chase, Ashton  
1953 *One Hundred and Thirty-Three Days Towards Freedom*. Kitty.  
  
1964 *A History of Trade Union Movement in British Guiana 1900-1961*. Guyana: New Guyana Co. Ltd.

- Collins, B. A. N.  
 1963 Racial Imbalance in Public Service and Security Forces. *Race* 7(3).
- 1964 The Civil Service of British Guiana in the General Strike of 1963. *Caribbean Quarterly* 10(2).
- 1965 The Three Faces of British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 14:225-230.
- Coulthand, G. R.  
 1968 Paternalism and Divergences between "Negritude" and "Indigenismo." *Caribbean Studies* 8:31-55.
- Craig, Dennis R.  
 1970 English in Secondary Education in a Former British Colony: A Case Study of Guyana. *Caribbean Studies* 10:113-151.
- Daley, Vera  
 1966 A History of the Guianese People. *Daily Chronicle*. Georgetown.
- Dalton, Henry G.  
 1855 *The History of British Guiana*. 2 vols. London: Longman, Brown and Green, and Longman.
- Davis, Horace  
 1963 The Decolonization of Sugar in Guyana. *Caribbean Studies* 7(3).
- Davis, Leo  
 1965 The East Indian Family Overseas. *Social and Economic Studies* 14:283-296.
- De Kadt, Emanuel, ed.  
 1972 *Patterns of Foreign Influence in the Caribbean*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Despres, Leo  
 1967 *Cultural Pluralism and National Politics in British Guiana*. New York: Rand McNally and Co.
- 1969 Differential Adaptations in Micro Cultural Evolution in Guyana. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 25.
- Fanon, Frantz  
 1968 *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, Inc.
- Farley, Rawle  
 1953 The Rise of the Village Settlement in British Guiana. *Caribbean Quarterly* 3:101-109.
- 1954 The Rise of Peasantry in British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 2(4):87-103.

Farley, Rawle

- 1955a The Shadow of the Substance. *Caribbean Quarterly* 4(2):132-151.
- 1955b The Unification of British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 4(2).
- 1955c The Economic Circumstances of the Annexation of British Guiana 1795-1815. *Revista de Historia de America* 36-40:21-59. Mexico.

Francis, William

- 1922 *The British Guiana Handbook 1922*. Georgetown, British Guiana: The Argosy Co., Ltd.

Furnival, J. S.

- 1944 *Netherland India*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- 1945 *An Introduction to the Political Economy of Burma*. 3rd ed. Rangoon: Burmese Press.

Frank, A. G.

- 1969a *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*. Modern Reader Paperbacks, 3rd ed.
- 1969b *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Glasgow, Roy Arthur

- 1970 *Guyana: Race and Politics Among Africans and East Indians*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Grant, C. H.

- 1965 The Politics of Community Development in British Guiana 1954-1957. *Social and Economic Studies* 14:170-182.

Gravesande, Strom Van

- 1911 *The Rise of British Guiana*. 2 vols. London: Cambridge University Press.

Green, W. A.

- 1969 The Apprenticeship of British Guiana 1834-1838. *Caribbean Studies* 9:44-66.

Gt. Britain Parliamentary Papers. Published by Her (His) Majesty's Stationery Office, London, and presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament.

- 1927 Command No. 3047.
- 1953 Command No. 8980.
- 1954 Command No. 9274.
- 1963 Command No. 2203.
- 1965 Command No. 2849.



- Halperin, Ernst  
 1965 Racism and Communism in British Guiana. *Journal of Inter-American Studies* VII.
- Harcourt, Robert  
 1926 *A Relation of a Voyage to British Guiana*. Alexander Harris, ed. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Harper-Smith, Jones W.  
 1965 The Colonial Stock Acts and the British Guiana Constitution of 1891. *Social and Economic Studies* 14:252-263.
- Hayster, Teresa  
 1971 *Aid as Imperialism*. Penguin Books.
- Herkovits, Melville J.  
 1938 *Acculturation: The Study of Culture Contact*. New York: J. J. Augustin.
- Hubbard, H. J.  
 1969 Race and Guyana. *The Daily Chronicle*. Georgetown.
- International Commission of Jurists  
 1965 *Racial Problems in the Public Service*. Report of the British Guiana Commission of Inquiry, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Jagan, Cheddi  
 1954 *Forbidden Freedom*. New York: International Publishers.  
 1964 *The Anatomy of Poverty in British Guiana*. Georgetown: People's Progressive Party.  
 1966 *The West on Trial*. London: Michael Joseph.
- Jayawardana, C.  
 1960 Marital Stability in Two Guianese Sugar Estate Communities. *Social and Economic Studies* 9:76-100.  
 1963 *Conflict and Solidarity in a Guyanese Plantation*. University of London: The Athlone Press.
- Jordon, Z. A., ed.  
 1971 *Karl Marx: Economy Class and Social Revolution*. London: Michael Joseph.
- Joseph, Cedric L.  
 1970 The Venezuela-Guyana Border Arbitration of 1889: An Appraisal Part I. *Caribbean Studies* 10:56-89.
- King, K. F. S.  
 1968 *Land and People in Guyana*. London: University of Oxford.

- Kundu, A.  
 1963 The Economy of British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 12:307-380.
- 1964 Race in the British Caribbean Islands and British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 13:243-281.
- Laing, B. M.  
 1956 Local Government in British Guiana. *Caribbean Quarterly* 3: 35-37.
- Landis, Joseph B.  
 1971 *Race Relations and Politics in Guyana*. Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University.
- Leach, Edmund R.  
 1964 Social Structure: The History of the Concept. *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* 15:482-488.
- Lewis, Gordon  
 1968 *The Growth of Modern West Indies*. New York: Modern Reader Paperbacks.
- London Times  
 1967 April 23.
- Lowenthal, David  
 1972 *West Indian Societies*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Lutchman, Harold  
 1970a The Co-operative Republic of Guyana. *Caribbean Studies* 10.
- 1970b Patronage of a Colonial Society. *Caribbean Quarterly* 16:34-50.
- 1970c Administrative Change in an Ex-colonial Setting - A Study of Education in Guyana 1961-64. *Social and Economic Studies* 19: 26-56.
- Magubane, Bernard  
 1971 A Critical Look at Indices used by Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa. *Current Anthropology* 12:419-445.
- Malinowski, B.  
 1945 *The Dynamics of Culture Change*. Yale University Press.
- Mao Tse-tung  
 1968 *Four Essays on Philosophy*. Peking: F.L.P.
- Marcus, George  
 1969 Incomplete Transformation of Social Change in a Guyana Rural Community. *Caribbean Studies* 9.

- McKenzie, H. I.  
 1966 The Plural Society Debate: Some Comment on Recent Contribution. *Social and Economic Studies* 15:53-60.
- Morris, George  
 1967 *CIA and American Labour*. New York: International Publishers.
- Morris, Stephen  
 1965 Indian and East Africa: A Study in the Plural Society. *British Journal of Sociology* 7.
- Murphy, Robert  
 1971 *The Dialectics of Social Life*. New York: Basic Books Inc.
- Nath, Dwarka  
 1950 *History of the East Indian in British Guiana*. London: Thomas Nelson and Son.
- Naipaul, Vidya S.  
 1968a *The Middle Passage*. Penguin Books.  
 1968b *An Area of Darkness*. Penguin Books.
- Newman, Peter  
 1960 The Economic Future of British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 9:263-296.  
 1964 *British Guiana*. London: Oxford University Press.
- O'Loughlin, C.  
 1958 The Rice Sector of the Economy of British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 7:115-143.  
 1959 The Economy of British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 8:1-104.
- Ramphal, S. S.  
 1962 Fundamental Rights - The Need for New Jurisprudence. *Caribbean Quarterly* 8:139-144.
- Ramsahoye, James W.  
 1970 *The Guyana Rice Marketing Board*. M.B.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Rauf, Mohammad Abdur  
 1972 *Crabwood Creek: A Study in Culture Change and Ethnic Identity*. Sacramento, California.
- Reno, Phillip  
 1964 *The Ordeal of British Guiana*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

- Rodney, Walter  
 1970 *The Groundings with my Brother*. London: Press of Villagers  
 Publication Ltd.
- Ruben, Vera, ed.  
 1960 *Caribbean Studies, A Symposium*. Seattle: University of  
 Washington Press.
- 1962 Culture, Politics and Race Relations. *Social and Economic  
 Studies* 11:433-456.
- Ruhomon, Peter  
 1947 Centenary History of the East Indians in British Guiana.  
*Daily Chronicle*, Georgetown.
- Schlesinger, A., Jr.  
 1965 *A Thousand Days*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Schomburgk, Robert H.  
 1970 *A Description of British Guiana*. London: Frank Cass and Co.  
 Ltd.
- Searwar, L., ed.  
 1970 *Co-op Republic: Guyana 1970*. Guyana: Guyana Lithographic  
 Co. Ltd.
- Simms, Peter  
 1966 *Trouble in British Guiana*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Singer, Philip  
 1967 Hinduization and Creoleization in Guyana. *Social and Economic  
 Studies* 16:221-236.
- Skinner, P.  
 1960 Group Dynamics in British Guiana. *Annals of the New York  
 Academy of Sciences* 83:904-916.
- 1967 Ethnic Interaction in a British Guiana Rural Community: A  
 Study of Secondary Acculturation 1955. Ann Arbor: University  
 of Michigan.
- Smith, M. G.  
 1965a *The Plural Society in the British West Indies*. Berkeley:  
 University of California Press.
- 1965b *Stratification in Grenada*. Berkeley: University of California  
 Press.
- Smith, R. T.  
 1956 *The Negro Family in British Guiana*. London: Raultedge and  
 Kegnpaul Limited.

- Smith, R. T.  
 1957 Economic Aspects of Rice Production in an East Indian Community in British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 6.
- 1959 Family and Marriage Amongst East Indians in British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 8.
- 1962 *British Guiana*. London: Oxford University Press.
- 1970 Social Stratification in the Caribbean. Pp. 43-75 in *Essays on Comparative Social Stratification*. L. A. Platnicov and L. Tuden, ed. University of Pittsburg Press.
- 1971 Race and Political Conflict in Guyana. *Race: A Journal of Race and Group Relations* 12. London: The Institute of Race Relations.
- Social Stratification, Cultural Pluralism and Integration in the West Indies.
- Smith, R. T., and C. Jayawardana  
 1959 Hindu Marriage Customs in British Guiana. *Social and Economic Studies* 7.
- 1967 Caste and Status Among the Indians in Guyana. *Caste in Overseas Indian Communities*. M. Barton, ed. California: Schwartz Chandler Publishing Company.
- Spanter, Joyce L.  
 1968 Attitudes Towards "Race" in Guyanese Literature. *Caribbean Studies* 8:23-63.
- Steward, Julian H.  
 1972 *Theory of Culture Change*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Van den Berghe, Pierre  
 1967 *Race and Racism: A Comparative Perspective*. New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Vatuk, Ved P.  
 1963 *British Guiana*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Wallace, Elizabeth  
 1964 British Guiana: Causes of Present Discontent. *International Journal* XIX(4).
- Webber, A. R.  
 1931 *Centenary History and Handbook of British Guiana*. Georgetown: The Daily Chronicle.

Williams, Eric

1945 Historical Background to British Guiana's Problems. *The Journal of Negro History* XXX:365.

1961 *Capitalism and Slavery*. New York: Russel and Russel.

Wolf, Robert

1967 *Beyond Tolerance. A Critique of Pure Tolerance*. Boston: Beacon Press.

APPENDIX I

REASONS GIVEN BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT  
FOR SUSPENDING THE 1953 CONSTITUTION

1. Fomenting of strikes for political ends (para. 15-18).
2. Attempting to establish trade unions by legislative actions (para. 19).
3. Removal of ban on the entry of West Indian Communists (para. 8).
4. Introduction of a Bill to repeal the undesirable Publications Ordinance and the flooding of the territory with Communist Literature (para. 8).
5. Misuse of rights of appointments to boards and committees (para. 13).
6. Spreading of racial hatred (para. 14).
7. Plan to socialize church schools and rewrite text books to give them a political bias (para. 36).
8. Neglect of their administrative duties (para. 22-23).
9. Undermining the loyalty of the Police (para. 9-11).
10. Attempts to gain control over the Public Service (para. 12).
11. Threats of violence (para. 8-33).

Source: Command Paper 8980:3-4, 1953.

## APPENDIX 11

TELEGRAMS FROM BRITISH GUIANA TO HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT  
SUPPORTING THE SUSPENSION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The telegram from the British Guiana's Village Chairmen's Conference reads:

British Guiana Village Chairmen's Conference representing unions of local authorities in rural areas, regrets setback to Colony constitutionally, but pledge full support to His Excellency the Governor and interim administration. Conference welcomes arrival armed forces to preserve law and order. Conference further takes this opportunity to affirm unqualified loyalty and allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen.

The telegram sent by the British Guiana League of Coloured People read:

I am instructed by my executive to convey to you our sense of appreciation of Your Excellency's timely action in safe-guarding the peace and welfare of this land of ours. As the premier organisation representing peoples of African descent in the community, I am also to reaffirm our unswerving loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen and pledge our unstinted support and cooperation in your efforts to bring normality back to this colony.

Source: Jagan's *West on Trial*, pp. 151-152.



## APPENDIX III

CONFLICTING REPORTS ON SENSATIONAL HEADLINES IN BRITAIN  
AFTER THE SUSPENSION OF THE CONSTITUTIONSupport

The Times of October 21 commented:

The "Communist plot" . . . is not exposed in the White Paper with the clarity and completeness that many in the country expected.

Daily Mail, October 7:

PLOT TO SEIZE BRITISH GUIANA NAVY SPEEDING TROUPS

News Chronicle, October 7:

GUIANA PLOT EXPOSED, ARMED FORCES SENT TO AVERT RED-STYLED COUP

Daily Express, October 6:

BRITISH HOMES STACK GUNS. GOVERNOR BOOED. MOBS STONE CHIEF  
ANTI-COMMUNIST M.P. WIVES TOLD, QUIT PLANTATIONS

Daily Herald, October 21:

JAGAN MEN HAD PLOT TO SET CAPITAL ON FIRE

Daily Express, October 21:

JAGANS APED MAU TERROR

Daily Mail, October 21:

GUIANA FIRE-BUG PLOT EXPOSED

Oppose

Ralph Champion, Daily Mirror correspondent, on Wednesday, October 7, reports from Georgetown:

I was the first British newspaperman to arrive in this "crisis" colony and when I flew in yesterday, I was greeted with amazement. There seemed to be little idea that there was a crisis over alleged moves by the government's People's Progressive Party to convert the colony into a Red Republic.

Another British newspaper, the Daily Mail, on October 7 reported:

Mr. Whittingham, the deputy police commissioner in British Guiana, sounded calm and unperturbed today as he spoke over the radio-telephone from the colony's capital, Georgetown, and said: "There are no demonstrations, there is no general strike, there is nothing abnormal happening here whatsoever."

I told him of reports that Communist workers were demonstrating around the Parliament buildings in Georgetown. Mr. Whittingham said: "There have been no demonstrations and no trouble whatsoever."

Source: Jagan's *West on Trial*, pp. 150-152.

## APPENDIX IV

## WILLIS SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL

The terms of settlement effected by Mr. Willis were as follows:

1. No victimisation on either side
2. Emergency measures would be withdrawn as the situation warranted
3. Immediate payment would be made of wages and salaries earned by government employees up to the time of the strike
4. Loans to be offered to government servants on strike repayable over nine months
5. Strike period not to be regarded as a break in service
6. The Labour Relations Bill 1963 not to be reintroduced in its original or in the amended form in which it was passed in the Legislature Assembly
7. Consultation with unions concerned or the TUC on matters affecting their interests. A standing joint committee to be set up on terms to be agreed on
8. Setting up of a tripartite committee of Government, the TUC and CAGI (Consultative Association of Guianese Industries) to examine existing labour laws and to make recommendations to the Government. Pending report from this committee, say in four months time, the Government would not introduce any new labour legislation

(Up to December 1964 no report was received from this committee.)

Source: Ashton Chase, op. cit., p. 288.

## APPENDIX V

TRAINING OF GUIANESE TRADE UNIONISTS IN THE U.S.A.  
WHO ATTEMPTED TO SUBVERT JAGAN'S GOVERNMENT

Mr. Arthur W. Pyle and Mr. James T. Anthon	Now organisers in the British Guiana Mine Workers' Union
Mr. N. E. Griffith	General Secretary, British Guiana Post Office Workers' Union
Mr. George DePeana	Now Secretary of Education, Clerical and Commercial Workers' Union
Mr. W. Carrington	President, Transport Workers' Union, and TUC organiser
Mr. S. Daly	Treasurer, Transport Workers' Union
Mr. D. R. Persaud	Field Secretary, Manpower Citizens' Association
Mr. Sydney Farley	MPCA
Mr. A. Critchlow	Then President, Municipal Labour Trades Union; now Industrial Relations Adviser, National Union of Public Service Employees; United Force candidate in 1961 General Elections
Mr. E. Hamilton	Research Officer, National Union of Public Service Employees
Mr. A. Perry	Secretary of the General Workers' Union and Executive Member of the TUC
Mr. Cleveland Charran	General Secretary of the MPCA
Mr. D. P. Sankar	Treasurer of the TUC and formerly Secretary of the Clerical and Commercial Workers' Union; also Assistant Secretary of the MPCA
Mr. A. McLean	General Secretary of the British Guiana Labour Union
Mr. W. Bobb	General Secretary, British Guiana Mine Workers' Union
Mr. Richard Ishmael	President, Manpower Citizens' Association; President, British Guiana Trades Union Council

## APPENDIX VI

LETTER TO DUNCAN SANDYS FROM THE LEADERS  
OF THE THREE POLITICAL PARTIES

"At your request we have made further efforts to resolve the differences between us on the constitutional issues which require to be settled before British Guiana secures independence, in particular, the electoral system, the voting age, and the question whether fresh elections should be held before independence.

"We regret to have to report to you that we have not succeeded in reaching agreement; and we have reluctantly come to the conclusion that there is no prospect of any agreed solution. Another adjournment of the Conference for further discussions between ourselves would therefore serve no useful purpose and would result only in further delaying British Guiana's independence and in continued uncertainty in the country.

"In these circumstances we are agreed to ask the British Government to settle on their authority all outstanding constitutional issues, and we undertake to accept their decisions.

Signed: Cheddi Jagan  
L. F. S. Burnham  
P. S. D'Aguiar."

Source: Command Paper 2203.