

## **Digitalized Text**

# Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in British Guiana in February 1962

Edited by

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[Notes by Editor in the text are indicated by double asterisks (\*\*)]

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## PREFACE

In Guyana during February 1962, opposition political parties and the Trades Union Council (TUC) mounted street demonstrations against the Budget introduced by the People's Progressive Party (P.P.P.) Government led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan. These culminated in riots, arson and looting on Friday, 16 February. At that time Guyana (then known as British Guiana) was still a colony of Great Britain. Subsequently, on the request of the Government of Guyana, a Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the British Government to investigate the causes of the disturbances.

The February 1962 disturbances were part of a series of politically inspired activities which continued in 1963 and 1964 aimed at destabilising the PPP Government which was labelled as being "communist". This was during the period of the Cold War and US anti-communist trade unions and other organisations were overtly and covertly involved in providing financial and propaganda assistance to the TUC and the opposition political parties. The United States Government itself was deeply involved in the effort to replace the PPP Government, and at the highest level, it encouraged the British Government to change the electoral system which eventually in 1964 resulted in what it wanted. The declassified documents of the State Department on British Guiana released in 1995 provides interesting reading in this respect.

The Report by the Commission is reproduced in full in the first part of this publication. In the second part, two related documents are reproduced. These are the memorandum of the P.P.P. which was presented to the Commission; and a review of the findings of the Commission, which was originally published in *Thunder*, the weekly newspaper of the PPP, on 6 October 1962.

**PART I**

**REPORT**  
of a Commission of Inquiry  
into Disturbances in British Guiana  
in February 1962

*London*  
Her Majesty's Stationery Office

COLONIAL 354

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## INTRODUCTION

To the Right Honourable DUNCAN SANDYS, P.C., M.P.  
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Sir,

The appointment of this Commission was made under a Warrant signed and issued by your predecessor on May 11th, 1962, in pursuance of the provisions contained in Section 2 of The British Guiana (Commissions of Inquiry) Order in Council 1962. (\*) The Warrant set out the terms of reference as follows:

For the purpose of inquiring into the recent disturbances in British Guiana and the events leading up to them and to report thereon. ≡ [\* S.I. 1962 No. 632]

2. The members of the Commission held their first meeting in London on May 7th, 1962, at which some preliminary matters were discussed and certain details of procedure settled. On May 11th, all three members of the Commission met your predecessor and received the warrant of appointment. On the same day a second meeting of the Commission was held and some further matters of procedure were discussed and specified. Mr. D. A. Skinner was formally appointed Administrative Secretary of the Commission, and a direction was given that appropriate steps be taken in British Guiana to publicise the warrant relating to the appointment of the Commission and to invite oral or written statements and other evidence concerning the subject matter of our inquiry. The Commission learnt that Mr. Kenneth Potter would act as Counsel to the Commission during the course of the inquiry, and assist us in the matter of calling witnesses, marshalling the evidence produced and presenting the relevant facts and circumstances before us.

3. All three members of the Commission left London by air on May 17th, 1962, and reached Georgetown on the evening of the following day. Mr. Skinner, the Administrative Secretary, and Mr. Potter were already in British Guiana, having arrived there a day or two earlier and entered upon their respective duties.

4. May 18th, the day of our arrival was a Friday, and Monday the 21st May had been fixed for our first sitting. We had therefore two days in which to recover from the fatigue of the extremely long and tiring journey, to review the material which had been made available to us in London and to pay a visit to the premises where the Commission was to sit and hold the inquiry. This visit, it may be mentioned in passing, was very necessary as certain minor but essential changes had to be made upon a careful inspection of the premises and the arrangements made by the official in charge. We would like to commend the manner in which the entire matter of the accommodation of the Commission and its staff and for the members of the public was handled. We particularly mention the public as the hearing of the inquiry was for the most part public and our arrival had evinced a great deal of interest among the people of British Guiana who seemed to think that the entire future of the country depended upon our deliberations, and for all the open sessions every available seat in the body of the hall was occupied.

5. On May 21st, 1962 the Commissions held its first session. After some brief preliminaries the members of the Commission were conducted to view the various places where damage to and destruction of property had been caused during the course of the disturbances of February 16th, 1962. On May 22nd, the hearing of the evidence began and the sittings continued till June 28th.

6. At the very outset the Commissions was informed that a number of political parties, and Insurance Company, and the Mayor and Town Council of Georgetown were interested in the inquiry and wished therefore to put in appearance through Counsel. The Government was represented by the Attorney-General and, as already observed, Mr. Kenneth Potter appeared as Counsel for the Commission. There was also the question of procedure

regarding the manner in which evidence was to be produced, witnesses examined, cross-examined and re-examined. Upon all these matters complete unanimity was achieved and it was agreed that the Governor of British Guiana, four political parties, the Mayor and Town Council of Georgetown and the Hand-in-Hand Mutual Fire Insurance Company, would be deemed interested parties and allowed to put in appearance through Counsel. It was also agreed that in the matter of calling the evidence the following rules would be observed:

- (1) All witnesses= statements and documents shall be submitted to Counsel for the Commission who shall adduce what he considers material.
- (2) Any person or his representative may apply to the Commission if not satisfied with the decision of Counsel for the Commission not to present to the Commission the evidence offered by that person.
- (3) After examination by Counsel for the Commission, Counsel representing the witness shall be allowed to examine the witness and so shall representatives of interested parties as satisfy the Commission that they have an interest in examining the particular witness.
- (4) Counsel for the Commission shall re-examine the witnesses after other examinations by representatives of interested parties.

7. These rules governed the procedure at the public sessions. Towards the end of the enquiry, it was found necessary to investigate a matter the discussion of which in public was considered both unnecessary and inadvisable, because the evidence bearing upon it related to intimate constitutional relations between the Head of State and the Council of Ministers. The issue involved was whether the assistance of the army to deal with the disturbances was sought and made available at the appropriate moment. Under the constitution internal law and order is the exclusive concern of the Government, i.e., the Premier and his Council of Ministers, whereas the unit of the British Army stationed in British Guiana could only be called upon to support the civil power on the authority of the Governor. The details of the discussions which took place between the Ministers and the Governor were in our view of a nature which ought not to be made the subject matter of public comment so soon after the event, thought to the future historian they might be of considerable interest. We were therefore disposed to accept the submission made by our Counsel, Mr. Potter, in this respect:

AlIt is, in my submission, not in the public interest in this, or in any other country where parliamentary and ministerial government exists, that affairs of state should be publicly investigated a matter of months after the event. The actions of governments are publicly known and may be criticised or defended, but the deliberations of Ministers and their deliberations with a constitutional Head of State and differences of opinion which may or may not have occurred are not a fit subject for public debate, but only for the researches of the historian long after the event. It is so established by wise tradition and sound practice in all countries enjoying parliamentary institutions and, in my submission, it must be so, for otherwise, Ministers and Heads of State would be fatally handicapped in the exercise of their functions if their every word and thought could be made the subject of public trial within months of the event.≡

8. We accordingly excluded the public from two sittings at which the Governor of British Guiana, the former Minister for Home Affairs and three other witnesses were examined in camera. The rules of procedure relating to these private sessions are set out in Appendix II.

9. It is convenient here to refer to a circumstance which, though it concerned a mere matter of procedure, was in the light of subsequent events, germane to the issue raised before us. The first witness to be called was Mr. Weber, the Commissioner of Police, British Guiana, and he immediately craved leave to make a personal submission. On being allowed to do so, he complained that he and, indeed, the entire Police Force suffered from the serious handicap of not being represented at the Inquiry. He apprehended that his conduct and the conduct of his subordinates in dealing with the disturbances would be subject to criticism by some of the parties who had been conceded the right of appearance before us. Anticipating this state of affairs he had made a prayer to the government department concerned for the appropriate relief, following the precedent of the 1948 inquiry into the Enmore Riots when Mr. Cabral, K.C., was engaged to represent the Police. His prayer, however, had not been granted on the present occasion. In the course of Mr. Weber=s examination it became quite clear to us that his apprehensions were amply justified, for his manner of handling the situation which arose on February 16th was subjected, it might almost be said, to hostile questioning. Even before Mr. Weber=s examination was concluded we felt the compelling necessity of giving expression to our misgivings that if the Police were to

remain unrepresented and without legal assistance we might have presented before us only a partial picture of the part played by its personnel, and of the reasons which impelled it to play that part. That being so, we might on the basis of an incomplete picture be persuaded to comment adversely and perhaps unjustly upon the conduct of the Police, an eventuality which should, according to all canons of natural justice, be avoided. We therefore deemed it just and proper to make the following statement at the commencement of the resumption of the hearing upon the following day:

AWe are gravely concerned at the circumstances that the Police as a body are not legally represented in this case. It is already apparent to us, after only one day=s hearing that the Police are and are to be subject to attack. It may well be right that this should be so. On this aspect of the matter we make no comment.

What concerns us as a matter of natural justice is that despite representations of the Commissioner of Police, no provision for the Police to be legally represented has been made. In our view, as a matter of principle, this is wrong and the attitude of the Government becomes all the more strange when the precedent of 1947 cited by the Commissioner is borne in mind when a King=s Counsel was briefed to represent the Police. We as a Commission have no power to order that the provision for the legal representation of the Police should be made. If we had that power, we should exercise it. It follows that if, event at this late hour, no such provision is made, we may well think it necessary to make this omission the subject of adverse comment in our report.≡

10. We are happy to record that Mr. Persram was briefed to watch the interest of the Police and he continued to appear before us throughout the subsequent proceedings.

11. At later stages of the inquiry prayers were made for permission to put in appearance on behalf of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, the Electricity Corporation and the British Guiana Trades Union Council. These prayers were granted and the final appearances were as follows:X

Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye, Attorney-General, instructed by Mr David Singh, for the Government.

Mr. Forbes Burnham, Q.C., with Mr. John Carter, Mr. Neville Bissember, Mr. C. J. B. Harris, instructed by Mr. C. M. Llewellyn John for the People=s National Congress.

Mr. Ashton Chase, with Mr. Miles Fitzpatrick and Mr. Derek Jagan, instructed by Mr. Sase Narine, for the People=s Progressive Party.

Mr. Gilbert Farnum, for the United Force.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh, with Mr. E. A. Triumph, for the National Democratic Party.

Mr. Desmond Hoyte, instructed by Mr. Vivian Dias, for the Georgetown Town Council.

Mr. J. A. King, for the Hand-in-Hand Mutual Fire Insurance Company, Limited.

Mr. Walter Persram, Legal Adviser for the Police.

Mr. Lionel Luckhoo, Q.C., associated with Mr. E. V. Luckhoo, and instructed by Miss Ena Luckhoo, for the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Hubert Jack, for the Electricity Corporation.

Mr. J. I. Ramphal, associated with Mr. R. H. Luckhoo, instructed by Mr. Dabi Dyal, for the Trades Union Congress.

12. 147 witnesses in all were examined by the Commission. Of these, 142 made their statements at the public sessions and 5 were examined at the two private sessions. In addition to the oral evidence laid before us, a vast quantity of other relevant material in the form of statements, statistics, newspaper cuttings, transcripts of broadcasts and speeches was produced all this was carefully examined.

13. The members of the Commission travelled back to England and had detailed discussions on July 9th and subsequent dates, when all matters arising out of the inquiry were brought under review.

14. The Report is now complete and we, Sir, submit it for your consideration.

## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL CONDITIONS

15. We begin by giving a few broad facts about British Guiana and outlining the social, political and economic background against which the events of February 1962 must be viewed in order fully to appreciate their nature and import

#### *Geographical Features*

16. The most significant feature of British Guiana is a small population comprised of several ethnic groups striving to maintain itself upon the insufficient resources of a large undeveloped, or at any rate greatly underdeveloped, country. The size of British Guiana (83,000 square miles) is a little bigger than that of Great Britain, but its total population is only a little more than half a million (590,140 on December 31st, 1961).

17. There are three distinct geographical divisions in the country:

(i) A narrow coastal belt, most of which lies below the high tide level of the sea and is protected by a costly system of sea defences and canals.

(ii) Dense forest lands which cover nearly four-fifths of the entire country. These have, for the most part, the appearance and characteristics of a primeval, impenetrable jungle, offering resistance to intrusion by man.

(iii) The Savannas, lying behind the North Eastern coastal belt and beyond the forest lands.

There are three main rivers, the Essequibo, the Berbice and the Demerara, which are navigable for a few miles only in their lower reaches, as further progress of water craft is impeded by frequent rapids.

18. It is in the narrow coastal belt that most of the population is concentrated. Georgetown and New Amsterdam, the only two towns in the country, are also situated in this region. The land for the most part lies below the high tide level, and the traveller who has the hardihood to motor over the bumpy, unmetalled road to Skeldon, the farthestmost habitation on the northern coast, will see large areas of land completely covered by water in which stand houses resting on wooden or concrete stilts. These present a dismal though strangely picturesque appearance. The soil of this region is alluvial and, therefore, rich. Most of the agriculture is undertaken in this belt, the main crops being sugar cane and rice. The cane crop feeds a number of sugar factories and is also responsible for the allied industry of rum, which is very popular commodity in the country, particularly among the labourers and working class people. The quality of rice produced is not very good, but the labours of the present Government have resulted in finding a ready market for almost all the grain produced. The planning efforts of the Government to develop agriculture further are confined to the coastal belt, though it must be borne in mind that the fight against the forces of nature is somewhat unequal, as was admirably pointed out in Rodway's History of British Guiana:

Every acre at present under cultivation has been the scene of a struggle with the sea in front and the flood behind. As a result of this arduous labour through two centuries a narrow strip of land along the coast has been rescued from the mangrove swamp by an elaborate system of dams and dykes. Centred along the rivers and creeks lie a thousand abandoned plantations most of them indistinguishable from the surrounding forest; these represent the failures of the early settlers. At first sight the narrow line of sugar estates seems but a poor showing for such a long struggle with nature, but when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, it is almost a wonder that the Colony has not been abandoned altogether.≡

19. The cost of maintaining the sea defences and drainage works is very considerable, amounting approximately to ten per cent of the total revenues of the State.

#### *Natural Resources and Communications*

20. The forest lands are almost entirely uninhabited. There are bauxite mines which are being exploited by a Canadian and an American firm. Gold and diamonds are also recovered but these make a very negligible contribution to the wealth and economy of the country, and no great attempt is being made at present to extend the efforts to recover these two commodities. There is some hope of finding oil in the country and a team of Russian oil experts was recently called in by the Government to make a preliminary reconnaissance of the possibilities of finding oil.

21. The Savannahs are not productive of any wealth, and as far as we know no serious attempt has yet been made to explore the possibility of agriculture or any other industry in the region.

22. The means of communication in the country are extremely inadequate. There are two single-track railway lines, one along the northern coast belt running for a distance of sixty miles and the other along the west coast of the Demerara River, which is only eighteen miles long. There is only one good motor road, which connects the Atkinson airfield with the capital town of Georgetown, while the other roads are for the most part long and exhausting sequences of potholes, surfaced with burnt earth. The interior of the country is approached by amphibian six-seaters and aeroplanes for which a number of landing strips have been constructed. The amphibians use natural lakes and rivers.

23. The natural resources of British Guiana, therefore, produce very little wealth. It is clear, even to a casual visitor, that a great deal of money and human effort are needed before the land can be persuaded to yield whatever riches lie buried in its bosom. It is thus with a feeling of sad disillusionment that one reads George Chapman's verses on Guiana:

“Guiana, whose rich feete are mines of golde,  
Whose forehead knockes against the roofo of starres,  
Stands on her tip-toes at faire England looking,  
Kissing her hand, bowing her mightie breast,  
And every signe of all submission making,  
Tobe her sister and the daughter both  
Of our most sacred maide . . . .”

There seems very little doubt that the poet's eye was roving in a fine frenzy rather than observing with the accuracy of a camera lens.

## Population

24. The two largest ethnic groups of the population of British Guiana are the East Indians and Africans. At the end of 1961 the East Indians formed 49 per cent of the total population and Africans 32.7 per cent. The East Indians it may be mentioned are the descendants of the indentured labour originally imported from India to work on the sugar

cane farms. More than a quarter of a million of them were brought over between 1844 and 1914, and of these 65,000 were repatriated to India, while the rest remained to make a permanent home for themselves in British Guiana. The Africans are the descendants of the slaves who were brought by European settlers to work on the land and were later emancipated. They and their descendants adopted British Guiana as their homeland. In addition to these two ethnic groups, there are some Chinese, Portuguese and Amerindians, who are the descendants of the original Red Indian residents. As is inevitable in a country of several races, there is a substantial element of what is now known as "mixed population". The East Indians are for the most part agriculturalists and, therefore, residents of villages. They work on the sugar cane and rice farms. The Africans, for the most part, are factory workers and, therefore, town dwellers. Thus we find that according to the Census of 1946 the Africans comprised 53.6 per cent of the population of Georgetown and East Indians numbered only 15.5 per cent. It would appear that a similar state of affairs also obtains in New Amsterdam. The Portuguese are mostly town dwellers and are employed in commerce, and almost all the Chinese and Europeans live in the towns. The Amerindians are to be found in the Savannahs.

25. The initial aloofness of the Indians, springing, perhaps, from a nostalgic attachment to their native land, is no longer observable and the present generation of East Indians have not only accepted British Guiana as the country which they inhabit and to which they owe allegiance, but they have without qualification or reservation identified themselves with every aspect of its life. Their inherent habits of hard work and thrift have enabled many of them to rise above the humble status of manual workers and enter the professions of law, medicine, commerce, and the civil service.

26. The Indians now take a prominent part in the social and political life of the country. There are several able lawyers, including more than one Queen's Counsel, and a number of highly qualified doctors. Dr. Jagan, the Premier and several of the Ministers in his Cabinet are East Indians.

27. With regard to the political affiliations of the various ethnic groups, although there is no sharply defined classification, the Indians, for the most part, support the People's Progressive Party, of which Dr. Jagan, the present Premier, is the leader. The Africans support, for the most part, the People's National Congress, which was inaugurated comparatively recently. Mr. Burnham, a local barrister, is the leader of this party. Until a few years ago he was a colleague and supporter of Dr. Jagan. The Portuguese, for the most part, support the party known as the United Force, of which Mr. d'Aguiar, an important businessman of Georgetown is the leader. It is difficult to escape the hypothesis that considerations of race are to some extent responsible for political affiliations and loyalties, although it must be stated that many East Indians support Mr. Burnham's party and many Africans owe allegiance to Dr. Jagan's party. The various political parties are of recent birth and, being still in the formative period, the convictions and loyalties of their members are somewhat superficial and personal.

28. We found little evidence of any racial segregation in the social life of the country and in Georgetown, East Indians and Africans seemed to mix and associate with one another on terms of the greatest cordiality, though it was clear that the recent disturbances and the racial twist given to them by some of the unprincipled and self-seeking politicians had introduced slight, but it is hoped, transient over-tones of doubt and reserve. Among the inhabitants of Georgetown there is, of course, always present the danger that hostile and anti-racial sentiments may be aroused by a clash of the hopes and ambitions of rival politicians. We draw attention to this possibility because there have been indications of such friction in the past, although, as will appear in the course of this report, 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 the Africans.

# CHAPTER II

## RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

29. The political history of British Guiana and a narrative of the constitutional development of the country are fully and admirably set out in the Report of the Constitution Commission 1950-51, presided over by Sir E. J. Waddington,\* and we need only refer to a few recent events are relevant to the subject matter and purpose of the present inquiry. [\* *Colonial No. 280*]

30. The emergence of political consciousness in British Guiana dates from 1947, when in the post war period the colonial territories elsewhere were invested with a substantial measure of self-government, and it was not unnatural for the British Guianese to hope for a share of the responsibility and fruition of government power. Dr. Jagan entered the field of politics at this time, with all the enthusiasm of a young man of 29, freshly returned from America where he had qualified as a dentist. While there he had married Janet Rosenberg, an American citizen of Czech extraction who was believed to be a confirmed communist. A few years later he formed the People's Progressive Party, popularly known as P.P.P. The party professed a leftist ideology, and to make as extensive an appeal as possible, it declared its aims to be self-government for the country and raising the standard of living of the common people. Dr. Jagan sought the support of all racial groups, and in this respect he was largely successful. One of his staunch supporters, at that time, was Mr. Burnham, a Guianese of African extraction, who is now the leader of the largest party in opposition, known as the People's National Congress. Universal adult suffrage was one of the demands made by the P.P.P.. and the Waddington Commission recognised the justness of this claim. While dealing with this matter the Commission observed:X

ASince the report of the Royal West India Commission was presented, universal adult suffrage has been in the minds of the majority of the population of the British Caribbean territories and it has indeed been introduced into many. In British Guiana, therefore, where the standards of intelligence and of articulation are in no way below those obtaining in these other territories, an indefinite deferment of its introduction would cause dissatisfaction and the arguments which could justify its being now withheld must be cogent and based upon conditions which are not to be found elsewhere."

and summed up their conclusions as follows: X

AWe therefore recognised the introduction in British Guiana of universal adult suffrage at the age of 21 years for all persons who are not subject to the customary disabilities of civic or mental incapacity."

31. This recommendation was accepted, and the general election of April, 1953, took place on the basis of a universal adult suffrage. There was, at that time, a bi-cameral legislature consisting of:

- (a) a house of Assembly composed of 24 elected representatives and 3 ex officio members;
- (b) a State Council composed of 9 members of whom 6 were appointed by the Governor in his discretion, 2 on the recommendation of the Ministers elected from the House of Assembly and 1 appointed after consultation with the independent and minority party members of the House of Assembly.

There was an Executive Council in which were vested all the essential powers under the Constitution. This Council consisted of the Governor as President, with a casting vote only, the 3 ex officio members of the House of Assembly, 6 Ministers chosen by ballot from among the elected members of the House of Assembly and a member of the State Council.

32. The P.P.P obtained a clear majority in the House of Assembly, and, owing to the peculiar composition of the Executive Council, Dr. Jagan and his council of ministers were able to dominate the proceedings and decide every issue as they wished. This is how the Robertson Commission of 1954\* described the situation: X

AIn executive matters such decisions were final and the enactment of any legislative measure decided upon in Council could be checked finally only by the interposition of the Governor's veto after passage through both houses. Thus, unless the Governor used the powers reserved to him, the Ministers were in control of the effective policy-making body and were virtually the Government. Under the Constitution Ministers could be removed from the Executive Council only by resolution of the Council itself upon the proposal of the Governor, or by resolution of the House of Assembly supported by at least two-thirds of the members. The elected Ministers were, therefore, in an impregnable position so long as party solidarity continued.≡ [\* *Cmd. 9274*]

33.A series of events which are set out in detail in the Report of the Robertson Commission necessitated the suspension of the Constitution on October 9th, 1953, and an interim Government wholly composed of ex officio and nominated members was formed. This continued until 1957, when elections were again held under the new Constitution which by an Order in Council of December, 1956 provided for:X

- (a) a Legislative Council consisting of 14 elected and 11 nominated members (instead of 24 elected as previously) and 3 ex officio members (as before);
- (b) an Executive Council consisting of 3 ex officio members and 7 elected members of the Legislative council nominated by the Governor.

It was originally hoped that by reducing the strength of elected members in the Legislative Council the risk of mischievous and irresponsible trends becoming too assertive or assuming dangerous proportions would be minimised. In fact, after the elections the Governor announced that he would nominate only 6 members to the Legislative Council and 5 to the Executive Council, all of whom would be elected members. The effect was therefore to place the elected members in an overall majority in both Councils. There had, in the meantime, been a split in the P.P.P. and Mr. Burnham, who had been Dr. Jagan's colleague and supporter since the inception of the party, separated from him in 1955, and formed his own party. He was content in the beginning to let his party carry the old designation of P.P.P. though later this name was altered to People's National Congress or P.N.C. as it is commonly referred to.

34. In the election held in 1957, Dr. Jagan's party secured 9 of the 14 elective seats, so that again it was the largest political party in the Legislature, though owing to the constitutional changes introduced by the above mentioned Order in Council of December, 1956, the party was no longer in a position effectively to carry out its programme. A constitutional conference was held in London in 1960, and it was agreed that a new constitution should be introduced in August 1961, giving British Guiana full internal self-government. The British Guiana (Constitution) Order in Council, 1961, was accordingly issued. The broad features of the new constitution promulgated under this Order and which are now in force are a bi-cameral Legislature, and almost complete autonomy in internal affairs. The two chambers are styled respectively, the Senate and the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly consists of 35 elected members, the Senate or the Upper House consists of 13 Senators of whom 8 are appointed by the Governor in accordance with the advice of the Premier and 3 are appointed by the Governor acting after consultation with such persons as, in his discretion, he considers can speak for the political points of view of groups represented in the Legislative Assembly by members constituting the minority in the Assembly A, and the remaining 2 are appointed by the Governor acting in his discretion. The executive power effectively vests in the Council of Ministers consisting of a Premier and not more than 9 other Ministers.

35. The Order in Council provided that Athe Council of Ministers shall have the general direction and control of the government of British Guiana and shall be collectively responsible therefore to the Legislature≡.

36. Elections under the new Constitution were held in August, 1961, and Dr. Jagan's party won 20 out of the 35 seats. The P.N.C. led by Mr. Burnham won 11 and the United Force, a new party inaugurated in November 1960,

and led by Mr. d=Aguiar, a prominent businessman of Georgetown, won 4. There can be no doubt at all that Dr. Jagan looked upon the result of the election as incontrovertible proof of his personal triumph and a complete approval of his policies by the electorate. He had, however, not forgotten the events of 1953 when the Government of the United Kingdom had suspended the constitution because it was feared that the party in power in British Guiana was pursuing a course which would lead to a dangerous crisis both in public order and in the economic field by the wholesale imposition of Marxist ideology on the affairs of the country. He, therefore, proceeded cautiously, limiting his activity to the seeking of foreign aid for his country's development plans. He was fully cognisant of the economic needs of British Guiana and of the inadequacy of his country's internal resources to meet them. The situation which faced him was somewhat as follows.

### *Financial Difficulties*

37. In 1956 an International Labour Office survey had revealed that 18 per cent of the labour force in the country was unemployed and 9 per cent was under-employed. A remarkable and not unnatural feature was that of the unemployed 41 per cent lived in urban areas. A development plan costing \$91 million had been prepared, but this was not considered sufficient to meet all the needs of the country; so in the summer of 1958, Dr. Jagan had suggested increasing the figure of \$91 million to \$200 million. He began to make attempts to secure the necessary funds from foreign countries. He approached a Swiss bank and obtained an offer of a loan of 6 million [pounds] sterling, provided the British Government were prepared to guarantee the loan. Unfortunately, the British Government declined to entertain the suggestion as it was against their policy to guarantee such loans for Colonial governments. Dr. Jagan was advised to go to Washington and make an application to the World Bank. To avoid delay he drafted an application while he was still in London and sent it to Washington. He made another application the same year to the United States Government for a loan from what is called the Development Loan Fund. The object of this loan was irrigation and road projects. Dr. Jagan discussed the matter with officials of the State Department in Washington, but he was told that the machinery for advancing this loan "had not yet got into full gear".

38. Towards the end of 1958 Mr. John Adler, an economist from the World Bank, visited British Guiana. In his report he approved of the steps Dr. Jagan was proposing to take for developing his country and said, "It is clear to me that the top priorities have been correctly selected. There is no question in my mind that the provision of more agricultural land through drainage and irrigation and the improvement and expansion of the transportation system, particularly through better and more roads, deserve top billing."

39. Early in 1959, United States Government officials visited British Guiana and held further discussions about the economy of the country. In the summer of 1959 the United Kingdom Government approved of a five-year plan of the order of \$110 million for 1960-64 on the advice of Mr. Berrill, a Cambridge economist, who had visited British Guiana early in 1959. Mr. Berrill's opinion was that, though the suggested plan of somewhat modest proportions could scarcely meet all the needs of the country, a bigger project necessitating the expenditure of a higher order would impose too heavy a burden upon the finances of the country and stultify itself. The United Kingdom Government also conceded that a more ambitious plan was no doubt needed, but was not practicable because:

- (a) the Government of the United Kingdom had other commitments, and
- (b) a bigger loan would become too onerous when the time for repayment came.

Dr. Jagan enquired whether a lower rate of interest to make the transaction less onerous was permissible, but was informed, he told us, that an Act of the British Parliament had fixed the rate at 6 per cent per annum, leaving no discretion in the matter to the executive authority. We are assured, however, that in this respect Dr. Jagan must have been under a misapprehension. The British Government's view was in fact that a lower rate of interest was not practicable because it would simply involve the United Kingdom Exchequer in a greater burden and would in effect be the same as increasing the amount of the grant. In any case, what was done for British Guiana would have to be done for the other territories for which Her Majesty's Government was responsible, and this could not be accepted. In the summer of 1959 there were further talks with the World Bank in the United States of America and a loan of

about U.S.\$6 to U.S.\$8 million was mentioned for road construction. The amount, however, was not advanced. Dr. Jagan requested the United States Government for the supply of food commodities such as grain, wheat flour, stock feeds, etc., on a credit basis. But this, too, was not agreed to because, according to Dr. Jagan, the Government officials expressed a point of view which was called >additionality=, that is, that they would only give you grains or whatever surpluses of food you required based on any *additional* amount which you are importing. In other words, any assistance given would have to be over and above the existing volume of imports. Dr. Jagan next sounded the Export and Import Bank for aid to equip a flour mill and a feed mill. The response was not encouraging. The answer given was that congressional interests and United States flour millers were likely to be critical of such assistance. He hoped that some economic assistance might be forthcoming for a drainage and irrigation project which he had under contemplation, but in this matter too his hopes were not realised. In 1959, the Federal Republic of Germany was also approached and there were also discussions in Italy. No substantial results followed these discussions, and all that Dr. Jagan was able to obtain was a loan of \$2.25 million which was approved by the World Bank in 1961. This amount, however, was restricted to credit in the private sector in the fields of agricultural, fishery and forestry development. In 1961, Dr. Jagan and the Minister of Trade and Industry visited Canada and the United States of America, while the Minister of National Resources visited Germany, Italy and France in search of economic aid.

40. The internal resources of the country were extremely small and wholly inadequate to meet the increasing needs of the development programmes. Foreign aid, as is obvious from the distressing narrative given above, was not forthcoming. The growing suspicion that Dr. Jagan's failure to arouse international sympathy was due to his communist leanings, made the commercial classes of British Guiana apprehensive of the country's future and of their own prospects. They began to look elsewhere for opportunities to set up and expand their businesses. Thus, a flight of capital from British Guiana started. At first, this was gradual, but soon more and more financiers were transferring their money and assets to other countries. Dr. Jagan, in the course of his statement before us, could not give the exact figure of the assets which were removed from the country. He was himself not in British Guiana at the time, but he was informed that the flight of capital was substantial, and his Government was faced with the prospect of a country depleted of its present resources and unable either to replenish its losses or to restore its economy by external aid.

#### *Measures adopted*

41. So, in December, 1961, the Government introduced stringent currency restrictions, prohibiting the export of liquid assets from the country. British Guiana forms part of the sterling area and is also a member of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Board. The currency is therefore a regional one and up to December, 1961, the holders of Eastern Caribbean dollars in British Guiana could only change them into foreign currencies in accordance with the exchange control regulations then in force in the Colony. The new regulations suspended their convertibility into sterling. Financial restrictions have been imposed and do indeed exist in many other countries, and have come to be accepted as a necessary feature of the present-day complexity of international economics. Nevertheless, the action of Dr. Jagan's Government in suspending convertibility into sterling without, it may be added, prior consultation with the Eastern Caribbean Currency Board, gave rise to considerable alarm and resentment.

42. In addition to these difficulties, the Finance Minister was faced with the immediate need for \$15 million for certain extraordinary expenses and to meet increases in the cost of certain services. The Government had agreed to increase the salaries for civil servants and for this purpose an additional sum of \$3.5 million was required. The Government also needed \$2.5 million for the repayment of certain loans, and \$1.5 million for extra expenditure on sea defences, the maintenance of roads and improvements to the aerodrome which were long overdue.

43. Provision had to be made for this money in some manner during the year 1962. At Dr. Jagan's invitation, Mr. Kaldor, a well known economist of considerable experience who had served on the United Kingdom Tax Commission and had advised the Governments of India, Ceylon, Mexico and Ghana, was invited to consider the problem and suggest ways and means of raising additional revenue. The budget for 1962 was prepared upon the basis of his recommendations and on January 31st, 1962, this budget was presented to the Legislative Assembly by Dr. Jacob, Minister of Finance, who opened his speech by observing that the ground was being laid to strengthen our economic position and raise living standards by accelerating the rate of economic growth through our own

efforts. He pointed out that, though for a poor and underdeveloped country external aid was an absolute necessity, self-help was even more important because foreign aid was no substitute for self-determination. He drew attention to the fact that the prevailing tax structure was biased in favour of the richer and propertied classes, therefore an impartial system of progressive taxation which distributes the burden equitably between those who derive income from property and those who get their incomes from work is an urgent necessity. He, accordingly, proposed some new taxes, the burden of which was to fall on the higher income groups only. He proposed a capital gains tax, an annual tax on property and a tax on gifts. In addition to these, he proposed certain measures for preventing the evasion and avoidance of taxes. He also proposed a new mode of assessing the minimum measure of income tax in respect of commercial transactions. He proposed that the minimum income of a businessman should be deemed to be 2 per cent of his annual turnover irrespective of whether his business had shown a profit or a loss, but wherever there was a loss it was to be set off against profits in the subsequent years. It will be seen, at once, that this measure was aimed at dishonest businessmen who reported a loss year after year although their business continued to flourish. Another unusual provision in the Bill was a reduction of the advertising allowance to one-quarter of one per cent of the total turnover. This was intended to prevent unnecessary waste on prestige advertising and the consequent reduction in the income tax payable. In order to increase the flow of resources for development purposes, a scheme of compulsory savings was also to be introduced. This scheme contemplated a deduction at source equivalent to a contribution of five per cent of wage and salary income in excess of \$100 a month and 10 per cent of other income in lieu of Government bonds redeemable after a period of seven years. These measures were not calculated to yield the full additional amount of \$15 million required and the balance had still to be raised. The Minister of Finance therefore proposed an increase in the import duty on certain goods which he considered were not necessities of life, e.g., alcoholic drinks, tobacco, concentrates for non-alcoholic drinks, tea, motor spirit, perfumes, cosmetics, the more expensive dress fabrics, footwear, glassware, chinaware, jewellery, radios, refrigerators and motor cars. He also proposed some increases on certain types of food for which adequate substitutes were available in the country, e.g., meat, fish, butter, cheese, fruit, fruit juices, jams, etc. There was also an increase in the excise duties on rum and other spirits, and on beer.

44. The Minister for Finance pointed out that these duties and taxes would not impose any hardship on the people of the lower income groups and that the increase in the urban consumer price index would be only one per cent. He hoped, in this manner, to increase the country's revenues by about \$8 million. He also scaled down the figure of \$15 million which in his original estimate was necessary to meet the increase in the recurrent expenditure.

#### *Opposition to the Budget Proposals*

45. The budget provoked fierce opposition from several quarters and was made the excuse for sustained and increasingly hostile demonstrations against Dr. Jagan and his Government. It will be seen that there was nothing deeply vicious or destructive of economic security in the budget. It had been drawn up on the advice of an experienced economist, who could not be said to have any Communist prepossessions. The budget won immediate approval from many persons. The *New York Times* said in an editorial that the budget was courageous and economically sound. *The London Times* in a leading article, observed "The immediate problem for the Prime Minister, Dr. Jagan, is how to win some acceptance for his economic proposals which are courageous and certainly not far from what Guiana must have". Sir Jock Campbell, Chairman of Booker Bros., said "It clearly was in intention a serious attempt by the Government to get to grips with the formidable economic problems of the country by a hard programme of self-help. It was radical what have the people of British Guiana got to be conservative about but not confiscatory". Senator Tasker of Bookers in British Guiana gave his own opinion about the budget by saying "We assessed it as a realistic attempt to grapple with the economic problems of British Guiana". But there was a section of the press in British Guiana itself, which was strongly, almost viciously, critical of the budget. *The Daily Chronicle*, which is under the effective control of Mr. d'Aguiar, leader of the U.F., and *Argosy*, which is also hostile to Dr. Jagan, opened their assault on the day following the introduction of the budget. *The Chronicle* said that the Government was going to squeeze dollars from the workers, and a few days later it carried a headline "Tax Avalanche will Crush Working Classes". Another headline stated "Slave Whip Budget" and went on to say "Budget is >Marxist". A vindictive and malicious spirit prowls through the Budget. A week after the introduction of the budget, *The Chronicle* printed a letter on the "Iniquitous Budget" which contained the exhortation "Stir yourselves, down with this shameful budget, down with the Government". Two days later there was another letter

proclaiming A Budget will bring misery to country and ending A This is a trodden democracy. Let us unite and fight for our rights.

46. It is unnecessary to multiply quotations, and it will be sufficient to say that in the course of the days which followed the introduction of the budget in the Assembly, the volume of opposition in a section of the press continued to increase. What was the reason and basis of this opposition? If Dr. Jagan's budget was a realistic attempt to grapple with the economic problems of his country and if it was not confiscatory, there was really no reason for such strong hostility on the part of the press and the two political parties which were arrayed against Dr. Jagan. In our view, the reason is to be sought in political rivalries and a feeling that Dr. Jagan had strong communist tendencies and that if he were left in power his Government would proceed to enact measures injurious to the proprietary rights of the upper classes and businessmen. Dr. Jagan had, with increasing vigour, dominated the political stage of British Guiana since his entry upon it in 1947. There was a certain glamour about him, emanating from his youthful exuberance and a zeal which is characteristic of dedicated men. He seemed to possess a sense of purpose and a determination to work for his countrymen's freedom and their material progress. The people voted for him and every time he stood for election, he and his party secured the largest number of seats in the Legislative Assembly. But with all his energy and his honesty of purpose he lacked the experience of a practical politician. He failed to understand that some at any rate of his supporters were not content to remain as mere adjuncts to him, they wanted the recognition of their own individual merits and longed for the fruition of political rewards. This, they must have felt, was well-nigh impossible so long as they remained Dr. Jagan's satellites. In 1953 the constitution was suspended and all political parties were obliged to take a compulsory holiday. The Interim Government, however, could not continue for ever, and sooner or later a time would come when political parties would once more be called upon to play their respective parts. It was, therefore, important to make adequate provision for that eventuality. Dr. Jagan's politics and his line of conduct had brought the country's progress to an ignominious halt and yet the P.P.P. had undoubtedly a hold upon the people. The Robertson Commission had commented upon this aspect of British Guianese politics and said A the implications of communist influence in the present leadership of the party are not yet fully understood by the ordinary people in British Guiana, and although some of the more discerning may have withdrawn their support, it is the general belief that the P.P.P. could retain all the characteristics which make it incapable of intelligent government and yet still rely on securing a majority if elections were held in the near future on a similar franchise.

47. Some people undoubtedly thought that a less ruthless type of freedom and equality might be more desirable, or at any rate, more practicable.

48. Mr. Burnham left Dr. Jagan in 1955, as the result, he told us, of a crude interpretation of ideological differences A between him and Dr. Jagan and, as far as his party is concerned, since his separation from Dr. Jagan, signs of racial awareness have been observable, though happily so far this awareness has not developed into conscious or active hostility between the East Indians and the Africans. At the general election of 1957, the phrase *Appan Jhaat* meaning A support your own people was heard for the first time, and in November, 1960, a new party, the United Force, or U.F. as it is usually referred to, was inaugurated and Mr. d=Aguiar was chosen as its leader. The political differences between the U.F. and the P.P.P. have been stated by Mr. d=Aguiar and Senator Ann Jardim. The list of their grievances against the P.P.P. is little more than a narrative of personal frustration. The U.F. was not opposed to independence, although when the proposal for appointing a Constitution Committee was mooted in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. d=Aguiar and his party staged a dramatic walk out. The U.F. wanted a referendum to be held on the question of independence. They objected to the words A Freedom Year being stamped on all letters sent through the Post Office and to 1962 being described as Freedom Year in many letters and documents issued from government offices. They also objected to the Attorney-General's seemingly arrogant attitude in reference to the draft Constitution which he had been asked to draw up. He had, on one occasion, been credited with the statement that if people did not like his Constitution they could leave the country. What he had said, in fact, was somewhat different, and much less provocative. Then again Mr. Jack Kelshall, a resident of Trinidad, who had been engaged by Dr. Jagan as his private secretary, was a source of considerable irritation because he was an outsider and also because he appears to have behaved in a somewhat arrogant manner. Another basis of the opposition to Dr. Jagan's party was a fear, indeed a conviction, that Dr. Jagan was a Communist and that the entire ideology of his party was Communist. Dr. Jagan himself had not confessed to his political beliefs in unequivocal terms but Dr. Jacob, the

Minister for Finance, had in the course of his speech in the Legislative Assembly on 9th October, 1961, expressed his own beliefs in a manner which clearly indicated that he not only believed in the Communist creed but had the same aims as the Communist Party. In the course of his speech he had said AMy honourable friend, who is a member for Georgetown Central (Mr. d=Aguiar) has attempted on the floor of this House to refute Marxism. This is a futile attempt. Learned university professors, of course of the *bourgeois* tradition, professional mercenaries, politicians, common vilifiers, have all tried to refute the unassailable logic of Marxism. They have all failed≡. He ended his speech on what he must have considered a high and piercing note of rhetoric: AWe will attempt to build a new society X a society which exists in more than one third of the world today; a society in which there will be freedom and plenty for everybody. That is a genuine socialist society≡.

49. Thus, in the beginning of February, the P.N.C. and the U.F. were ready to launch a determined opposition to Dr. Jagan.

50. The political professions of the P.N.C. were somewhat vague and amorphous. There was a tendency to give a racial tinge to its policy. Mr. Burnham expressed the opinion that it was Dr. Jagan who was responsible for this unfortunate development. He referred to the murder of an African supporter of the P.N.C. at Port Mourant, which is the birth-place of Dr. Jagan. He said that the report of this event was suppressed by the senior information officer at the request of the government. He also referred to other acts of violence against the supporters of the P.N.C., especially in the rural areas where, as we have already observed, the East Indian population was predominant. We do not, however, think that there is much substance in the contention of Mr. Burnham and it seems to that whatever racial differences existed were brought about by political propaganda. These differences do not go very deep and it is to be remarked that there are two\*\* African Ministers in Dr. Jagan's Cabinet. The counsel of the P.P.P. at the inquiry was an African barrister and some of Dr. Jagan's strongest opposition in the proceedings before us came from East Indians. Mr. Luckhoo, the counsel for the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Ramphal, the counsel for the Trade Unions and Mr. Jai Narine Singh, the counsel for the National Democratic Party, are all East Indians. One of the most vigorous opponents of Dr. Jagan is another East Indian, Mr. Sankar; the Trade Union leader. It may be argued tint politics do not enter into professional considerations when counsel undertake to appear for any party. We do not wish to imply that racial loyalties would prevent an East Indian from appearing for an African, or an African from taking up the case of an East Indian, but we are merely drawing attention to the circumstances mentioned above in order to show that there is no clear-cut division between the races and that although, broadly speaking, Dr. Jagan's supporters are for the most part East Indians and the supporters of P.N.C. are drawn mostly from the African races, the difference is not really racial, but economic and vocational. As already pointed out, East Indians are for the most part agriculturalists and they are the supporters of Dr. Jagan. In the towns the percentage of African residents is greater than the percentage of East Indians. The town dwellers support the P.N.C. not because their leader is an African, but because they do not approve of some of the socialistic policies of Dr. Jagan which are less favourable to town dwellers than to the rural population. These policies, in their turn, are dictated, not by the fact of racialism, but because in British Guiana agriculture is of primary importance and development plans tend to promote agriculture in a larger measure than industrial schemes. [\*\* *Editor's Note: This is incorrect. There were three African Ministers.*]

51. The real motive force behind Mr. Burnham's assault was a desire to assert himself in public life and establish a more important and more rewarding position for himself by bringing about Dr. Jagan's downfall. The weapon employed was the argument that the budget contained measures calculated to inflict hardship upon the working classes by increasing the cost of living. So, the argument continued, if Dr. Jagan's Government was allowed to continue in office, further and still more oppressive measures would certainly be enacted. The attitude of the U.F. was a little more honest and certainly more consistent. This party represented the businessmen and the middle classes, and these were, no doubt, adversely affected by the new taxes on capital gains, gifts and property holdings. The U.F. genuinely feared a further decline in their vested interests if Dr. Jagan's Government continued to remain in charge of the country's affairs. They naturally resented the socialistic, if not communistic, leanings of Dr. Jagan. The *Daily Chronicle* supported this campaign of criticising the budget and discrediting Dr. Jagan, and developed an increasingly hostile attack upon the Government. Mr. d=Aguiar, in the course of his statement before us, protested that he never interfered with the editorial policy of the newspaper; but the fact remains that his share holding enabled him to exercise effective control over the paper and the editor's transparent loyalty to his employer and principal compelled the latter to criticise the editor far not criticising him (Mr. d=Aguiar) enough. This reprimand was, no doubt, administered in order to remind his employee that he must at least give a semblance of being independent and not carry his argument so far into the realms of absurdity as to invite the imputation of being a mere supine hireling. Mr. d=Aguiar based his attack on arguments similar to those advanced by the P.N.C. and proclaimed that the budget was an oppressive measure and the clearest proof of Dr. Jagan's Marxist ideology and his dictatorial methods. The contradiction implicit in a measure being both Communist in substance and oppressive of the workers was not a matter which troubled Dr. Jagan's opponent, for political slogans are not infrequently lacking in logic and the multitude to whom they are addressed does not possess the faculty of discerning an incongruity or fallacy in what their leaders expound before them.

52. A passing reference may here be made to a matter which is dealt with more fully in a subsequent part of this report. The P.N.C. challenged the election of several P.P.P. candidates on grounds which are available under The Legislature (Appointment, Election and Membership Controversies) Ordinance, 1961. One of these petitions succeeded and the P.P.P. member for Houston was unseated. A by-election to fill the resulting vacancy has, however, not been held and the Premier has been exploring ways and means of validating the election of the P.P.P. candidate and thus circumventing the order of the court whereby he was unseated. This infelicitous handling of a delicate situation was an open invitation to criticism of a vituperative type.

## CHAPTER III

### ECONOMIC DISCONTENT

53. A brief reference has already been made to the rising cost of living and the inadequacy of the country's resources to finance development plans aimed at increasing the material wealth of the people and providing better amenities for them. A more detailed examination of this matter is now necessary as economic discontent played an important part in fermenting the agitation which led to the disturbances of February 16th, in Georgetown.

#### *Civil Servants*

54. Let us first take the case of the Civil Servants, who in British Guiana are members of a well-organised body called the British Guiana Civil Service Association, affiliated to the Trades Union Council. The last revision of their salaries took place in 1954 on the recommendation of the Hands-Jakeway Commission. In the course of the next three years the cost of living index rose from 277 to 300 and the British Guiana Civil Service Association (B.G.C.S.A.) asked for an increase in salaries. The Government appointed a Commission presided over by Mr. Gorsuch to enquire into the matter, but owing to a difference of opinion between the B.G.C.S.A. and the Government, the B.G.C.S.A. declined to take part in the proceedings of the Commission and rejected its recommendations. The Government, for their part, did not think it fit to implement the report and matters remained as they were for another four years. In 1961 another body, known as the Guillebaud Commission, was appointed to review Awages, salaries and conditions of service in the Public Service of British Guiana." This Commission found that there was considerable substance in the grievances of the Civil Servants and observed:

"The cost of living has increased since 1954 by something of the order of 10 per cent; there have been increases in wages and salaries in commercial and other forms of employment in the country; and the remuneration of those in the Public Service in other parts of the Caribbean has risen in many cases. . . .

"There can be no question as to the strength of the feeling of dissatisfaction which prevails throughout the Public Service in this country. We have heard much evidence on these matters not only from Staff Associations, but also from the Heads of Departments, whom we have personally and separately interviewed. As a result of this we have reached the conclusion that during the last two years there has been a widespread decline in the morale of the Service, particularly in its lower and middle sections. Much time is being wasted in the discussion and ventilation of grievances, and the efficiency of the Service as a whole is becoming impaired."

55. The Commission made a number of recommendations involving a total increase of \$2.5 million in the expenditure upon salaries and wages of Civil Servants. The report was submitted to the Government on July 29th, 1961, and was published in September the same year. The B.G.C.S.A generally accepted the recommendations. There was, however, considerable delay in implementing the suggestions regarding the increases of salaries and the final decision of the Government was postponed more than once. In the meantime the Civil Service continued to agitate for the suggested increases. In November, representatives of the B.G.C.S.A. met the

Minister for Finance. A few days later a report appeared in the newspapers that according to a spokesman of the Government the Treasury was empty, and this naturally caused consternation among the Civil Servants. The Association decided to hold what it called “whistle stop meetings” at various places. Prolonged negotiations and a period of attrition followed, but the Civil Servants were unable to obtain anything beyond promises from the Government. In December, Mr. Benn, who was acting as Premier during Dr. Jagan’s temporary absence, promised earnest consideration of the Civil Servants’ demands, but said that lack of funds was a handicap. On December 12th, the Association held a meeting which was attended by a large number of its members, and on the following day the Government announced increases in salaries with effect from 1st January, 1961. There was, however, no indication of when payment would be made and a request for interim payment was not accepted. On December 18th a general meeting was held in the Town Hall of Georgetown and those present insisted on interim payment; they even criticised Mr. Stoll, the President of the Association, for being ineffective. Mr. Stoll promptly tendered his resignation. This, however, was not accepted and he was requested to carry on negotiations on behalf of the Association. On December 21st, another deputation met the Minister of Finance. The Minister said that no interim payment was possible. Another meeting of the Association took place immediately afterwards at which it was abundantly clear that tempers were getting more and more frayed. On one occasion Mr. Stoll told Mr. Benn, the acting Premier, that the situation was very tense. He referred to the possibility of a strike and admitted that the Government was no doubt in a position to defeat the Association, but in any event a great deal of damage to both parties would result from a clash of this nature.

56. On January 2nd, 1962, there was another meeting between the Finance Minister and the representatives of the Staff Associations at which the Government conceded the salary increases recommended by the Guillebaud Commission, but at the same time made a great number of changes in its detailed recommendations which largely neutralised the good effect of its tardy decision. Even on this occasion the question of salaries was not finally disposed of. Further meetings followed but the Association failed to obtain satisfaction in respect of any of its major demands. So, at the beginning of February, the Civil Servants were in a very sullen mood. They had often thought of holding public demonstrations and even of going on strike. The Government was probably doing the best in the circumstances, but handicapped as it was by lack of funds and its incapacity to make quick and far-reaching decisions, it was unable to give adequate satisfaction to its Civil Service. It is important to note that there was a very considerable measure of deep discontent, amounting almost to a sense of resentment among the Civil Servants, and in the beginning of February they were ready to take drastic steps in order to ventilate their grievances and have them redressed.

### *Other Government Servants*

57. The lower paid Government servants had unions of their own. There were in all five separate bodies —

- (i) the Post Office Workers’ Union (P.O.W.U.)
- (ii) Medical Employees’ Union (M.E.U.)
- (iii) the Transport Workers’ Union (T.W.U.)
- (iv) the Public Works, Pure Water Supply and Sea Defence Workers’ Union (P.W.S.S.D.W.U.)
- (v) the Government Employees’ Union (G.E.U.)

These five unions comprised a Federation of the Unions of Government Employees (F.U.G.E.). Mr. Jackson was the President of this Federation and also of the P.O.W.U. The case of these employees was almost exactly similar to the case of the Civil Servants considered above. Their fortunes had passed through the same vicissitudes as the fortunes of the better paid Civil Servants. The findings of the Hands-Jakeway Commission had been applicable to them; they, too, had declined to co-operate with the Gorsuch Commission; a strike by them in 1959 had persuaded the Government to offer a slight increase in their salaries, but this was not considered adequate. Ever since 1954 the minimum day wage of a Government employee had remained stationary at the figure of \$2.52, though the cost of living had increased by about 10 per cent. In 1959, the Government proposed a revised figure of \$2.75 which would have fully counter-balanced the rise in prices, but the workers wanted to improve their standard of living and insisted on a minimum wage of \$4.50, to which the Government was not agreeable. The F.U.G.E., however, accepted the Government's offer for the time being and signed an Agreement in December, 1959. In this Agreement it was provided that the dispute regarding wages would be referred to the Whitley Council, a body which resolved trade disputes and differences between the Government and its employees. The Whitley Council gave its award in November, 1960, recommending a minimum wage of \$3.04.

58. The Government accepted the recommendation and agreed to pay \$3.04 with effect from November 29th, 1960, the date of the Whitley award. But the Federation was not satisfied with this and, taking their stand on the argument that their claim had arisen on the date mentioned in the Agreement signed in December, 1959, wanted the higher wage to become effective from April 1st, 1959. This dispute relating to the award of the Whitley Council taking effect retrospectively could not be resolved, and it remained a source of discontent and resentment. In September, 1961, came the report of the Guillebaud Commission and the Federation wanted the points of difference between the Government and its employees arising out of this report also to be referred to the Whitley Council. Negotiations continued till the end of January, 1962, without bearing any fruit, and on 31st January F.U.G.E. repeated its demands in a letter addressed to the Secretary to the Treasury. After some correspondence, the Minister for Finance agreed to meet the representatives of the Federation on 12th February, on which date he was also meeting the representatives of the Civil Service Association.

59. Therefore, at the beginning of February almost the entire body of Government employees, including the lower as well as the higher paid officials, were in a state of extreme discontent amounting almost to bitter resentment against the Government.

## Trade Employees and Factory Workers

60. In addition to the Government servants there was a vast body of trade employees and factory workers whose feelings and activities greatly contributed to the disturbances of 16th February. In

their case there appears to have been no old standing, definite and clearcut grievance against Dr. Jagan's Government and their hostility began with, and was founded upon, certain provisions of the budget which directly affected the working classes. In the beginning their criticism was confined to the scheme for compulsory savings and the additional taxes on consumer goods, though, later, income tax allowances and the reduction of advertising expenses were also taken up as objectionable items in the budget.

61. A word may now be said about the nature and implications of the savings scheme. The idea was not altogether novel and had already been exploited in certain Latin-American countries. e.g., Brazil and also in Ghana. The proposal was to the effect that every wage earner whose salary exceeded \$100 per month would be required to make a contribution of 5 per cent of his income and this amount would be credited to his account and he would be given bonds of an equal value. The bonds would carry tax-free interest at the rate of  $3\frac{3}{4}$  per cent per annum and would be encashable at the end of seven years, except in certain special cases such as the death of the contributor, when the bonds could be cashed earlier. This scheme was interpreted as a wholly unjustified incursion into personal property and individual liberty. The fact that, except in rare cases, the bonds could not be cashed till the expiry of seven years, savoured of an expropriatory measure and it was said that only slaves could be compelled to save their earnings in this manner. There were not wanting malicious critics of the Government who suggested that the bonds would ultimately be confiscated.

62. With regard to the taxes on consumer goods, no one paused to think that they entailed an increase of only 1 per cent in the cost of living, because in actual fact the situation was aggravated when most shopkeepers promptly raised the prices not only of those goods upon which the import duty had been increased, but also of other goods which had not come within the purview of the budget. Moreover, the increases were in almost every instance more than the actual increase in the import duty. The all-round higher prices were naturally ascribed to the radical provisions of the budget.

63. Increased taxes at all times and in all places bring about a stiffening of attitudes towards the Government, and Dr. Jagan and his Council of Ministers must have expected some adverse comment and even a certain measure of opposition. But the active hostility and the virulent propaganda which the budget provoked cannot be attributed entirely to an objective consideration of the new tax proposals or to their effect upon the economic life of the working classes. 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.

64. It has been proved beyond all doubt that the three most important trade unionists, Mr. Ishmael, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Sankar, were deeply involved in politics. Indeed, when Mr. Sankar, Assistant General Secretary of the Man Power Citizens Association (M.P.C.A.) was questioned upon the point, he could not deny the close connection between politics and the trade union movement. He was asked if there was good relationship between the M.P.C.A. and the P.P.P. His reply was "The M.P.C.A. tried to be realistic in its approach to the government of the

day. The P.P.P. has gone out of its way to be critical and destroy the union". A little later when he was asked if there was any introduction of politics in a meeting of the T.U.C., the witness admitted "Well, it is unavoidable, because on the General Council we have all three of the main political parties represented. We have Mr. Burnham from the P.N.C.; we have from the P.P.P. Mr. Chase, President of the Senate, and Mr. George Henry; and from the U.F. the two defeated candidates, Mr. Bolton and Mr. Critchlow". Mr. Sankar, in the course of his examination, expressed his strong sense of resentment at what he said was an attempt of the P.P.P. to influence the trade unions. It is significant that the Saw-mill and Forest Workers Union did not join the strike. The fact that the President of this Union is Mr. Henry, who stood as a P.P.P. candidate at the last election, can scarcely be a mere coincidence. The question of Mr. Henry's election will be dealt with more fully in a later part of this report, and here it is sufficient to recall that Mr. Henry was declared successful, but his election was set aside by an order of a Judge of the High Court who found upon an election petition that the election was attended with certain irregularities.

65. Mr. Jackson, the President of the F.U.G.E., used to be, as he admitted, "close to the P.P.P. He later joined the P.N.C. and became its Secretary. He resigned the Secretaryship, but his political loyalty no doubt continues, because throughout his evidence a strong anti-P.P.P. slant was noticeable. Mr. Ishmael, the President of the B.G.T.U.C. and General President of the M.P.C.A., vehemently denied any association with politics. There is, however, no doubt at all that his conduct during the period of the disturbances was actuated by a strong feeling of animosity towards the Premier and Mr. Hubbard, a Minister of Dr. Jagan's Cabinet. His dislike of Mr. Hubbard was manifested by an incident relating to the strike of the Electric Power House workers. Mr. Hubbard, who was the Minister in charge, had issued a circular to the workers telling them that they were members of an essential service and therefore it was illegal for them to strike. He made an oblique reference to Mr. Ishmael, who, however, was not named in the circular. But Mr. Ishmael was greatly piqued at the somewhat derogatory suggestion that no election of a certain trade union had been held because the President would not have been able to get a majority of votes. The words used were: "Further the M.P.C.A is unable to secure a strike of sugar workers, which constitute the bulk of its membership, and indeed its President is not able to face an election in his union". Mr. Ishmael explained that the President referred to was himself. At the Electric Power House, Mr. Hubbard tried to get the workmen to continue their work. This was a perfectly legitimate thing to do, but it seemed to have incensed Mr. Ishmael, who spoke of it in the following terms in the course of his examination:

"Mr. Hubbard was called or was informed and came up and sneaked behind me and attempted to get the workers to change their minds about not working and not going on strike. And he didn't only do that; I was very shocked when I came outside with the last one behind me to find that he had taken some of the men standing outside into the plant. Not only was he trying to tell them to work but he was saying all kinds of things. He called me a capitalist stooge. He said I was bought over by d'Aguiar and bought over by the big businesses and he told the workers to get me off the premises."

This statement shows the extent of acrimonious hostility which entered Mr. Ishmael's thoughts and actions in his dealings with the members of the Government. He could not deny that there were several prominent union leaders who are politicians. He mentioned the names of Chase, Agard, Burnham, Bolton, Henry and Kirton. Nothing illustrates more clearly the close collaboration between the trade unions and the political leaders during the disturbances than the agreement about a meeting which took place on the Parade Ground on the evening of February 14th. The trade unions had obtained a police permit to hold a meeting between the hours of 6 and 10 p.m. The P.N.C. applied for a similar permit, but were informed that a permit had already been issued to the T.U.C. Thereafter, the two bodies agreed to divide the time so that the meeting of the trade unions was from 6 to 8 p.m., and of the P.N.C. from 8 to 10 p.m. Both these meetings were aimed at securing the support of the masses for the anti-Jagan agitation. Mr. Ishmael himself made the announcement at the T.U.C. meeting that a P.N.C. meeting would follow. When questioned about this point, he said "Yes, I did [say] at the very commencement that our meeting was going to be short and the P.N.C. would be taking over the meeting. They were not to take it to mean that there was any affiliation or collaboration between the P.N.C. and the T.U.C. I mentioned that it was just a question that they had applied for permission and had been refused, that we had had permission for a long period of time and we did not need all the time, so we intended to give it to them".

66. It is needless to comment on the strain upon one's credulity exercised by Mr. Ishmael's statements. Mr. Ishmael used to be a member of the P.P.P. until 1950 and stood for the Legislative Assembly as an independent candidate in 1953. In 1961 he again offered himself as an independent candidate but withdrew before the election was held. He took part in two discussions at the headquarters of the U.F. in order to consolidate the elements opposing the Government and bring about a single Opposition Party in the country. On the morning of Black Friday (February 16th) he held discussions with Messrs. Chase, Vernon, Henry, etc., who are prominent politicians. Mr. Burnham himself is not free from a sense of loyalty to the T.U.C. Indeed, he was one of the delegates at the T.U.C. meeting. These facts make nonsense of the reiterated protests of the trade union leaders that they were at all times anxious to keep their organisation completely free from all political influences. We have drawn attention to these circumstances in order to point out the extent to which the economic discontent of the country was influenced and helped by personal and private grievances. This phenomenon, we may at once concede, is not a peculiarity of British Guianese public life and is to be observed in all parts of the world and among all peoples.

67. We therefore see that in the beginning of February there were arrayed against the Government the political parties in opposition and also a very large body of the workers and civil servants, all carrying their respective grievances against the Government. It was not long before these forces combined to form a veritable torrent of abuse, recrimination and vicious hostility directed against Dr. Jagan and his Government, and each day gave fresh vigour to the agitation.

## CHAPTER IV

### *THE DISTURBANCES*

68. At the beginning of the second week of February, there were signs of a gathering storm. There arose in certain quarters an apprehension that something untoward might follow, if not directly result, from the mounting agitation engineered by the political leaders of the opposition parties. From February 9, onward, the intensity and the frequency of anti-Government demonstrations increased and it becomes necessary from this stage to give a more detailed narrative of the events which culminated in the fierce outburst of February 16, a day which came popularly to be known as Black Friday.

69. On February 9, the Government was expected to make a statement relating to the appointment of a Committee to consider the draft Constitution for British Guiana. Long before the Assembly Session was due to begin a crowd had begun to gather in front of the Public Buildings as the Assembly Chamber is called. Assistant Commissioner of Police De Abreu saw a crowd of about 400 seeking admission to the chamber. The public gallery could accommodate no more than 118 and De Abreu had to close the door against the rest who remained standing outside,

disappointed and obviously discontented. Inside the chamber the proceedings commenced with the Minister of Finance making a statement that “in order that the Government may give careful consideration to all of the representations received, it is proposed to deter consideration of the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill to a date to be announced. Discussions will be held immediately with all persons and organisations so that the Budget may be debated in the House without undue delay”. So the debate scheduled to take place on February 12 was postponed to an unspecified date. The government hoped that this act of procrastination would, in some measure at least, allay the fears of the Opposition and placate the agitators.

70. The Premier then proceeded to move a resolution having reference to the forthcoming Constitutional Conference, due then to be held in London in May, for the purpose of fixing a date for the inauguration of independence in British Guiana. He pointed out that as suggested in a despatch by the Secretary of State for the Colonies “the Conference should be an all party Conference”, so he (the Premier) proposed a Committee of 16 members of whom eight would be drawn from the P.P.P., six from the P.N.C. and two from the U.F. In addition to these 16, the Speaker of the House would act as chairman of the Committee and this Committee would consider and report on a draft Constitution for the country, which was to be prepared in the first instance by the Attorney-General, after taking into consideration representations and suggestions made by the proposed Committee and by members of the public. The Premier’s proposal provoked a resolute indeed a defiant opposition from Mr. Burnham, leader of the P.N.C., and after delivering a long speech in the course of which he attacked the Premier and challenged his claim to speak for the people of British Guiana, Mr. Burnham walked out of the chamber, taking with him the remaining nine members of his party. At the same time almost all occupants in the public gallery also left the chamber. The simultaneous emptying of the seats occupied by a major section of the opposition and the public must have given the appearance of a pro-planned and somewhat histrionic demonstration designed to shock and humiliate the government. This impression was further strengthened when Mr. D’Aguiar, the leader of the U.F., went through an exactly similar performance by giving a speech opposing the Premier’s resolution and walking out with *his* followers. This reduced the proceedings in the Chamber to the farce of a unilateral debate solely conducted by the party in power. But to preserve an air of dignity and overcome the sense of mortification induced by the dramatic walk out, the Attorney-General who was to speak next rose to his feet and delivered a speech supporting the motion.

71. The Premier then stood up to reply to the debate but before dealing with the motion he read out a statement couched in solemn terms. The statement was a brief one and, as it adumbrated to some extent the unfortunate events which were enacted in the course of the week, it is set out below in full:

“It has come to the knowledge of the Government that violence is actually being planned on a general scale by certain elements acting for a minority group. In addition, it is understood that attempts against the Premier’s life and the lives of certain of his Ministers and supporters are contemplated.

These acts of violence are intended to secure the overthrow of the legally elected Government by force and the tax proposals in the budget are being used as a screen for the general plan.

These plotters intend to call a general strike for Monday, February 12. Since there is no likelihood of this strike call being widely supported by the workers, certain elements of the business community plan to shut down their business houses. The intention is in effect to stage a general lock-out on the excuse that the strike has created conditions which prevent continued business operations.

Every step possible is being taken to bring the Civil Service in on this strike and if these designs are successful, the total result will be to cause widespread dislocation of the Colony's economy.

Such a course of action will be very likely to end in riot and violence. The people who plan this operation must be aware of this. It seems that they are seeking to cause turmoil and unrest in order to halt our march to Independence and economic well-being for all.

This small clique is determined to preserve their positions of privilege. They want to create another Congo here. They talk-about freedom and democracy, but are determined to use unconstitutional means to achieve these ends. They feel that they can depend on foreign support.

In the circumstances the Government intends to take energetic steps to forestall this plan and I am now appealing to all reasonable public-minded citizens not to allow themselves to be persuaded or fooled into taking part in what can only be a disastrous and futile effort on the part of a small misguided and selfish element in the community to turn back the clock of history.”

72. The Premier then reverted to the motion before the House and declared that in view of the non-co-operative attitude displayed by the opposition, he craved leave of the House to withdraw the motion. This was agreed to, and the House adjourned to an unspecified date to be determined later.

73. Outside the Chamber a large crowd had collected and was waiting for the moment when the Ministers would leave for home. The demonstrators were carrying banners and slogans and as the Ministers came out they were jeered. When the Premier emerged from the Chamber the crowd became even more vociferous and impeded his departure. The Police came to his assistance by forcing a way through the crowd and bringing up an emergency vehicle to act as a shield against the onslaught of the hostile demonstrators. One of them — a Dr. Reid — pushed a banner in front of the windscreen of the Premier's motor car, obscuring the driver's view. It was after an uncomfortable moment or two that the Premier was finally able to leave. Assistant Commissioner of Police De Abreu estimated the size of the crowd at 5,000. Mr. D'Aguiar was with the crowd.

## Opposition Manoeuvres — People's National Congress

74. At This stage it is convenient to discuss the policies and immediate objectives of the two major political parties in Opposition, viz., the People's National Congress and the United Force. The energies of these parties were aimed at forcing Dr. Jagan into a position which would be wholly untenable and from which he would be compelled to resign. Mr. Burnham, while giving evidence before us, said “our tactics were to remain silent, make no public reference until the second reading on the 12th February, then we would make known our standing. It would then be a matter of prestige. They would be unable to withdraw the budget. Then Dr. Jagan would be embarrassed, his unpopularity would increase”, and he would have no choice but to resign.

75. When on February 9, the Finance Minister announced the postponement of the budget date, these plans had to be revised and a public meeting for the 12th was fixed. Mr. Burnham spoke at this meeting. He began on a note of self-pity by making an appeal for money on behalf of his party, which he said was the poor man's party with no fairy godmother or rich uncles. He went on to explain the party's stand on the question of independence and declared that the P.N.C. wanted independence immediately, and there was no question of a referendum, for it was superfluous to ask the people if they wanted to be free. He then turned his attention to Dr. Jagan and the latter's reported intention to bring his farmer supporters to Georgetown in order to provoke an outbreak of violence, so that he could justifiably call in British troops to help him. Mr. Burnham next dealt with the harsh tax measures introduced by the budget and ended his speech by working on the emotions of his audience in the manner of Mark Antony. "Comrades," he exclaimed, "the fight starts now. Tomorrow at 2 o'clock in the afternoon there is a demonstration organised by the Trade Union Congress, a demonstration against the harsh proposals of the budget, which make life unbearable. No doubt the Riot Squad will be there. Do you still want to go? . . . Comrades, remember that tomorrow Jagan's army is coming down from Cane Grove and Windsor Forest. Do you still want to go? . . . Comrades, I will be seeing you tomorrow at 2 p.m., when we will all join the demonstration. Thank you and goodnight." The next day there was a mass demonstration organised by the workers and trade unions. A procession was taken through the streets of Georgetown ending at the old parade ground where a meeting was held. Mr. Burnham arrived somewhat late at this meeting because he had been detained by professional work. On the morning of the 14th the Government issued a proclamation declaring the Public Buildings and the area around it a proclaimed area, in which public processions and meetings were forbidden. The political opponents of Dr. Jagan decided to contravene the proclamation and on the morning of the 15th a large procession was taken through the proclaimed area. This was considered a great triumph and on the evening of the 15th another meeting was held. This meeting, as already observed, was the result of collaboration between the political parties and the Trades Union Council. The Trades Union Council had agreed to give some of their own time to the political parties and in lieu of this concession, the political parties had made available to the Trades Union Council their public address system because *their* apparatus was somewhat defective. At this meeting Mr. Burnham spoke. He began by congratulating his listeners on the splendid performance of the morning when there had been a wholesale breach of the proclamation. Exhilarated and carried forward by the flow of his rhetoric, he criticised the unsympathetic attitude of the Volunteer Force and of the police. In his peroration he declared that a government could not be got rid of by merely saying "Resign" or "Down with Jagan". "Those are useful and helpful slogans, but much more than slogans are required in the present circumstances. Comrades, first of all, let me say this, that the People's National Congress sees the way clearly, step by step and phase by phase. All I can tell you is this, that it is no sense taking part in this explosion which has happened at this moment if you are going to peter out or turn back half-way. You have to see it through . . . I believe that the P.N.C. knows what we all want and knows how we will seek to achieve what we all want; but one thing I know you do not want, one thing I know the P.N.C. will not countenance, and that is violence. Comrades, violence we shall never start because we are a peaceful people. If there is to be violence, let others start it, not the People's National Congress; but comrades, they shall not pass." After this, Mr. Burnham advised his audience to take a rest on the following day, but he had by now worked them up into such a state of frenzy that they declared their firm determination to continue the agitation in the morning. There was an ominous foreboding in the promise which Mr. Burnham made in reply to the reaction of the audience to his exhortation for rest.

"I have heard what you have had to say, and I have noted very carefully what you prefer and want, and therefore, Comrades, you will be informed what exercises may be necessary tomorrow. Comrades, you will be informed. I do not want to make any suggestions here tonight what that exercise should be. You will be informed through the usual channel which has proved effective in spite of the fact that our comrades, the Post Office workers, are on strike, and tomorrow we shall meet again some place, somewhere, somehow."

# Opposition Manoeuvres — United Force

76. The policy of the U.F. was clear and categorical. Mr. d'Aguiar was espousing the cause of businessmen and the upper middle-class. He himself had an important stake in the country and his politics were therefore not quite free from personal motives. He told us that in 1953 he offered himself as an independent candidate for the Legislative Assembly. He was defeated and chose not to stand at the next election of 1957, because (he said) a racial element had entered the elections. In 1961 he stood and was elected as the Member for Georgetown Central. He told us that he re-entered politics because he thought it necessary to reveal to the people the dangers of Communism. He described his own function as leader of one of the Opposition parties, to "oppose, expose and depose the government". This objective he pursued with the most vigorous consistency. After staging the dramatic walk-out from the Assembly on February 9. he addressed a public meeting in the course of which he said "there is only one thing — to show your mettle, buck up and kick off the braces, unite and fight to break this bare-foot, bare-back, bare-faced budget. It is breaking already. . . . let them resign, they are, shaken by your solidarity. Do not fall back now, press on, break this budget, destroy it". He seized every opportunity of attacking Dr. Jagan's government and inciting the crowds during the week of disturbances. On the 10th and 11th February he went into the country on a speaking campaign. From Monday onwards he was in considerable prominence. He led several processions, and gave a number of speeches. Before us he posed as one of those individuals who, as Shakespeare says, have greatness thrust upon them, for he was at pains to emphasize that it was not he who led the crowd, but the crowd who wanted to be led by him. On Monday, the 12th, when he came out he saw that a large number of workers were forming small groups in the streets, instead of attending to their business. He addressed them and congratulated them. He advised them to go home, but they said that they wanted to march. So Mr. D'Aguiar led them in a procession through the streets of Georgetown, passing deliberately in front of Mr. Kelshall's house and then past the Premier's house (the Premier and Mr. Kelshall had become the two main objects of odium to the Opposition), ending at the Parade Ground where speeches were made. The supporters of Mr. d'Aguiar had taken the precaution of fitting a public address system at the Parade Ground. Here someone from the crowd shouted "Radio Moscow". This was rightly interpreted to mean "Radio Demerara" against which frequent complaints appear to have been made on account of Dr. Jagan's Marxist views having been propagated through its machinery. Mr. d'Aguiar accepted the invitation of the crowd and led the procession to "Radio Demerara" because, as he said, he wanted "to protest against the attitude of the Government in not allowing other political parties to use the Radio Station to express their views in connection with the Budget". According to law, a police permit for holding a procession in a public place was necessary and, as this had not been done, Superintendent of Police Barrow stopped the procession and pointed out that the law was being contravened. Mr. d'Aguiar replied with the specious argument that since the procession was spontaneous, no illegality [was] attached to it. He continued on his way and the police, anxious at that stage to avoid a clash, offered no further obstruction and Superintendent Barrow decided not to provoke an excited crowd by arresting Mr. d'Aguiar on the spot, but to take action against him by means of a summons, to be issued later on. The procession was brought back to Mr. d'Aguiar's premises, where he addressed them again. On the next day both Mr. d'Aguiar and Anne Jardim, another U.F. leader and a member of the Senate, went to the T.U.C. meeting at the Parade Ground after the token strike and mass demonstration. Mr. d'Aguiar gave a speech at another meeting when he called upon the Government to resign. On Wednesday, February 14th, Mr. d'Aguiar told his supporters that there would be a surprise in store for them and that they should be available in the afternoon. Mr. d'Aguiar, who had a special predilection for the spectacular and the flamboyant, had arranged a parade of his trucks bearing slogans through the streets of Georgetown. The parade did take place and we have no doubt that the population of Georgetown was duly impressed. The proclamations issued by the Government prohibiting public meetings and processions in the area around the Public Buildings had exasperated both the Opposition parties and they looked upon it as an extremely provocative move. Mr. d'Aguiar had not, like Mr. Burnham, made a decision to contravene the proclamation. He had to give a broadcast that afternoon and when he drove into the town he saw a large crowd and people asked him to join the procession which Mr. Burnham was leading into the proclaimed area. Mr. d'Aguiar

was, as he says, “propelled” forward to join Mr. Burnham, and the two leaders, followed by a large crowd, made three circuits of the Public Building. The procession ended at the headquarters of the P.N.C. where the two leaders shook hands ostentatiously and in full view of the crowd of their supporters, and were photographed doing so. In his broadcast speech that evening, Mr. d’Aguiar said “If any budget has to be substantially changed because pressure has been brought by the people who are being taxed, then it amounts to a vote of no confidence. The Government must stand or fall by its budget. In a democratic country, in such circumstances, the normal procedure would be for the Government to withdraw their budget and resign”.

77. Mr. d’Aguiar was no doubt referring to a broadcast by the Premier on Wednesday evening when he announced some modifications of the budget. The view taken by Mr. d’Aguiar was that it was not enough to make any modifications in the budget and the only course open to the Premier was to resign. He intended to use every means of bringing down the government. On the morning of Friday the 16th, he went to time Parade Ground and, seeing a crowd, had his mobile equipment for public address set up. Speeches were given by various persons and Mr. d’Aguiar himself spoke. He then went back to his office where he was told that tear gas was being used in front of the electric power station. He hurried to the power station, and there he heard that two young children had been seriously injured by tear gas fumes and taken to hospital. A crowd was standing in front of the Power Station which at that moment was being protected by a police riot squad. Mr. d’Aguiar walked through the riot squad paying no heed to the impediment — we were shown a photograph of him passing under the extended arm of a policeman. A number of persons followed him. He went to his own premises and addressed the crowd which had collected in front of his premises. Mr. d’Aguiar told us that someone passed up a note to him which said that one of the two children who had been affected by the tear gas had died in the hospital. He did not wish to incite the crowd unduly and so instead of reading the note out to them he said that the message which he had received was to the effect that one of the children was seriously ill. He advised the crowd to remain non-violent because violence led to innocent people being hurt, as the small child had been. A number of witnesses appearing before us stated that what Mr. d’Aguiar told the crowd was that the child had, in fact, died. We are inclined to take the view that Mr. d’Aguiar did not exercise any restraint upon himself and that he, in fact, announced the death of the child to the crowd and not its mere illness. We are constrained to observe that his being wedded to truth did not impose so stern a cloisteral isolation upon him as not to permit an occasional illicit sortie, in order to taste the seductive and politically rewarding adventure of flirting with half-truths. We found more than one instance of this lack of ingeniousness on his part and when he was being examined by Mr. Potter, he confessed to no less than eight occasions when the crowd compelled him to take the initiative. It is scarcely possible to believe that a leader of an opposition party, whose creed is to oppose, expose and depose the Government should be no more than a passive, if not an almost reluctant, leader of processions and initiator of political moves. Mr. d’Aguiar admitted before us that whenever an opportunity offered itself he took advantage of it in order to further his projects. The information given to him in the note regarding the death of the child must have placed far too great a strain on his perfectly natural urge as a political leader to make him suppress the information.

78. We thus see that both the political parties in opposition followed a course which was calculated to excite the mobs which were wandering about the streets of Georgetown with little to do except look for mischief. Nothing is so well calculated to drive a mob to acts of violence as a state of prolonged boredom and the continued exhortation of leaders, even though they make a pretence of pointing out the extreme desirability of everyone remaining peaceful and non-violent.

79. Something must also be said about the part taken by the members of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber was incorporated under an ordinance and one of its aims is to “promote or seek to promote, or to oppose, legislative matters and other matters relating to trade, industry and commerce”. It was natural to expect that the members of the Chamber who constitute what may be called the “big business” of Georgetown, were agitated by certain provisions of the budget which affected them adversely. On February 6 they called a meeting and passed the following resolution:—

“This Chamber, in general meeting assembled, condemns many of the most significant items of the budget which are penal in their incidence, and considered to be not in the best interest of the country as a whole, and it is also resolved that a Select Committee be appointed to thoroughly

investigate the impact of such sections on trade, industry and commerce generally, and to report back to the Chamber what action should be taken.”

In the meantime it was bruited abroad that the businessmen of Georgetown intended to close down their business and thus force an impossible situation upon the government. On February 8, the Premier’s Private Secretary spoke to Mr. Tasker, Chairman of the Booker Group of Companies, and mentioned the rumour to him. Mr. Tasker assured the Secretary that there was no question of Bookers, who constitute the largest business organisation in the country, countenancing any such move. Two days later *Thunder*, which is the organ of the P.P.P., published the following news item:—

“Water Street businesses are to close so as to force on a strike. The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce has decided on the lock-out. Indeed, there is now a formidable alliance between big business and the workers’ unions.”

The news item appeared in *Thunder* of February 10, but the paper was on sale on the previous day, that is February 9, on which day a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce was called. In this meeting the decision of a lock-out or a strike was brought up. A letter from Mr. Hubbard, the Minister of Trade and Industry, addressed to the Chamber was also considered. In his letter Mr. Hubbard had said “I have learned with a great deal of concern that a section of the commercial community is planning to close business on Monday next in protest against the government’s budget proposals.” The letter went on to say that the discussion on the budget in the Legislative Assembly had been postponed to February 12, and that the decision to take protest action without first stating the objections to the budget, was a negation of democratic processes.

80. The Chamber as a whole did not take a stand favouring the lockout, but several members were very positive about their sentiments. Their attitude was far from conciliatory or helpful. They were not desirous of offering constructive criticism and Mr. Nascimento, who is the Personal Assistant of Mr. d’Aguiar and the General Manager of the *Daily Chronicle*, which we have already observed may be considered an unashamed and remorseless protagonist of U.F., took up a very forceful attitude. He advocated that in case the workers walked out, their employers should pay them. This was tantamount to suggesting that the employers should subsidise the contemplated strike. When the question was put to the members, Mr. Figueira, another businessman, stood up to indicate that he would pay his employees if they walked out. Mr. Gajraj, another businessman, was even more positive. He advocated the cessation of all transactions in non-taxable commodities, e.g., sugar, flour, oil, and the discontinuance of all credit facilities to their customers; because these actions, he thought, would cripple the people and bring tremendous pressure on the government. This would lead to economic chaos. “People will then have to go to the banks and draw out their money and that will force government to reduce the tax on savings.” Mr. Gajraj was no doubt referring to the scheme for compulsory savings. Mr. Bettencourt-Gomes, another important businessman of Georgetown, also expressed agreement with the suggestion that if the factory and shop workers walked out they would do so with the blessings of the employers. With the exception of four firms, including Bookers and Sandbach Parker, every member of the Chamber of Commerce was in favour of paying the employees in case they went on strike. We cannot therefore escape the conclusion that there were many businessmen who were in entire sympathy with the strikers, and their attitude encouraged and fostered the strike. The Chamber as a whole was exonerated by the Premier in a letter which was issued on his behalf on March 12. This letter contained the following paragraph:—

“The Premier has never at any time alleged that a plot to use violence was formulated by the Chamber of Commerce. He has stated that certain persons in the Chamber used it as a forum to advocate a shut-down of business places, and in fact organised such a shut-down among a number of the members of the Chamber with the intention of helping a general strike planned by the T.U.C. to paralyse the business life of the community. This was done in order to force government to withdraw its budget proposals.”

We cannot, however, refrain from saying that the Chamber turned a blind eye to the attitude and intentions of its members. Mr. Steele, the President of the Chamber, when questioned on this Point, was only able to say that the Chamber being a democratic body could not regulate the individual action of its members. This lamentable confession of impotence scarcely redounds to the credit of a responsible body incorporated by special ordinance and professing the lofty aim of promoting the interests of trade and commerce. There can be no doubt at all that many members of the Chamber were happy to watch the unfolding of events as the week under review proceeded along its unfortunate course. The undertaking to pay the strikers undoubtedly encouraged them and provided the material which became more and more combustible as time went on.

81. We return to the narrative of events. After the Premier's departure the crowd around the Public Buildings slowly dispersed and melted away. Nothing further happened that day and on the following day there were several conferences and consultations. There was an emergency meeting of the Central Executive of the Clerical and Commercial Workers Union. Guy Edwards, one of the employees in Messrs. Fogarty's, saw some of his colleagues standing in front of Fogarty's stores. He thought this surprising because the workers did not usually stand at that spot. One of the men asked him what the Union had decided. Edwards, however, could give no information on this point. A decision had been made not to call a strike on Monday as originally planned, but to stage a mass demonstration on Tuesday. On Sunday the campaign was opened, and in the afternoon a large crowd of people gathered at Bourda Green, which is one of the open places in the centre of Georgetown where public meetings are held. Police permission to lead a procession from Bourda Green to the Parade Ground, another open place for holding public meetings and demonstrations, had been obtained and a large mass of people carrying anti-government placards marched along time prescribed route. The placards carried various slogans, e.g.. AXE THE TAX, CHOKE AND ROB BUDGET, SLAVERY IF JAGAN GETS INDEPENDENCE NOW. The size of the procession was assessed at 9,000 and a number of Trade Union leaders addressed it. The audience was urged to make peaceful demonstrations and demand the dismissal of Kelshall, Private Secretary to the Premier. The meeting at the Parade Ground finally dispersed at about 7 p.m.

82. Despite the decision of the Trade Union Council to call off the general strike on Monday, the supporters of the United Force were under the impression that the strike was to take effect on Monday morning and they decided to call out the commercial workers who were not members of the union, in order to lend strength to the party propaganda by synchronising it with the trade union agitation. There were indeed conflicting reports about the Trade Union plan, and the United Force thought that a strike would almost certainly take place on Monday morning. So they decided to proceed with their plans. It is somewhat strange that no one tried to secure correct information from T.U.C. headquarters. The organisers of U.F. asked the workers to assemble at 6 a.m. on Monday in front of the Public Buildings with placards and slogans, and march through Water Street. On Sunday evening, however, it was learnt that there was to be no strike on Monday, but only a mass demonstration on Tuesday afternoon. The U. F. supporters at the last moment cancelled their original plan and worked all night to send out information of the cancellation, and telling the men to go to work as usual on Monday morning.

83. Early on the morning of Monday the 12th it was noticed that small groups of shop-workers of Water Street were collecting at various points. The employees of Messrs. Fogarty were prominent among them. Some of them were carrying placards. There was a certain amount of confusion at the other stores. At J. P. Santos the workers were inside the store, but they were not attending to their business. The workers of Bettencourt had been locked out. Senator Anne Jardim, a young and attractive but by no means an unenthusiastic supporter of the U.F., tried to reassemble the broken pieces of a plan shattered by inept handling. Miss Jardim had entered British Guiana politics in "a haphazard way" in January 1961, and, a few months later, earned the distinction of being nominated a senator — as a person who could speak for the political points of view of the minority groups in the Legislative Assembly. Thus, ostensibly to prevent victimisation of the workers at the hands of their employers, but in effect to promote the agitation against Dr. Jagan, she joined the straggling groups of workers, and forming a procession, began to march up and down the streets. We have already related the story of Mr. d'Aguiar having been prevailed upon to lead the crowd of agitators past the houses of Mr. Kelshall and Dr. Jagan to the Parade Ground. and thence on further persuasion to the Radio Demerara Station in order to protest against the biased attitude of those in charge of the broadcasting programmes. It will be recalled from the brief narrative given earlier that when he arrived near the radio station Superintendent of Police Barrow met him and told him that he was leading an unlawful procession because the usual Police Permit had not been obtained for it. Mr. d'Aguiar replied

that the procession was a spontaneous one and therefore not illegal. He declared that he was going to continue on his way. The police did not want at that stage to provoke an open clash and so the Superintendent decided to issue a summons to Mr. d'Aguiar later instead of arresting him on the spot. The crowd was led back to the place from where they had started, in front of Mr. d'Aguiar's premises, and Mr. d'Aguiar addressed them once again. Later that evening Mr. d'Aguiar attended a party meeting.

84. Mr. d'Aguiar's own plant of soft drinks remained working and his men did not go on strike.

85. Groups of men had also collected and begun to agitate in other parts of the town. Small and unorganised processions were moving from one street to another and intimidating shop-workers to come out and join them. There were, however, very few defections from work and most of the shops and stores carried on in their normal manner. The Assembly was sitting and during the afternoon crowds continued to fluctuate outside and around it. When the Premier left the crowd booed him.

86. The following day, Tuesday the 13th, there was great agitation in the town, and in anticipation of the mass demonstration planned for 2 p.m., the majority of the shop employees absented themselves from work. Many of them were intimidated by the strikers to come out and join them. There were several instances of groups of strikers calling upon the businessmen to close their premises and let the employees join the strikers. The demonstration in the afternoon was a very large one and was entirely successful from the point of view of the strikers and agitators. The procession ended at the Parade Ground where a mass rally was held. Speeches were given by a number of persons, and the audience soon reached a state of excited animation.

87. It was known by now that the British Guiana Civil Service Association had declared a strike effective from 1 p.m. that day. Somebody informed one of the speakers on the rostrum that the Premier had threatened, in the course of a broadcast, to dismiss any civil servant who absented himself from his post. This matter will be dealt with more fully in a subsequent chapter, and here it is sufficient to observe that the consternation caused by this piece of news provoked the Trade Union leaders suddenly to declare an immediate strike in anticipation of ratification by the respective Executive Councils. The enthusiasm of the crowd had risen to a pitch of frenzy and the declaration of a strike by the various union leaders appears to have given complete satisfaction to everyone. A sense of triumph prevailed after the announcement had been made.

88. Later in the evening the Trade Union leaders felt that they had perhaps been too precipitate in acting upon a piece of information which perhaps was not quite reliable. Mr. Ishmael, the representative of the Trades Union Council, either experiencing a certain measure of remorse or apprehending criticism when the matter would be further considered, decided to investigate the truth regarding the Premier's broadcast. He learnt that the Premier had not threatened to dismiss any civil servant and there was some misapprehension about what the Premier had said in the course of his broadcast. Mr. Ishmael and the other Trade Union leaders must have realised the enormity of what they had done and they tried to seek justification for declaring the strike. The only issue which they had so far raised was the budget and the matter had been fixed for discussion with the Finance Minister on the 13th. It may have been good tactics to organise a mass demonstration and make an exhibition of trade union strength in order to lend weight to their argument with the Finance Minister, but it amounted to a breach of faith and a display of irresponsibility to bang the door of negotiations, as it were, in the very face of the Minister and declare a general strike. When the information regarding the broadcast was found to be false, the Trade Union leaders sought shelter behind a circular which had been issued that morning. Mr. Chase, one of the representatives at the meeting on the morning of the 14th, pointed out the impropriety of the decision and Mr. Stoll came to the rescue by saying that even though there was no threat to dismiss civil servants, the strike had in fact been declared and should continue because it was in the fitness of things that the Civil Service Association and the Trade Unions should make common cause against their common adversary.

89. Agitation had continued to increase and a large number of the shop employees were on strike.

Many of the premises were forced to close down. A number of witnesses appearing before us stated, that although their own employees were perfectly willing to go on working, the processionists continued to intimidate them, and groups of strikers frequently entered the shops and called upon the owners to close their premises. There was a partial closure of the electricity plant and a temporary cessation of the water supply. We have already related how in

the evening the government issued a proclamation prohibiting meetings and processions in the vicinity of the Public Buildings. The political opponents of Dr. Jagan, however, decided to defy this proclamation and lead a procession into the proclaimed area. This was done on Thursday the 15th. The strike on this day was almost complete and business in Georgetown had come to a standstill. Messrs. Bookers had announced their decision that employees absenting themselves from work would not be paid their wages, with effect from Thursday morning. There was a number of their employees who did not attend. Excitement had increased considerably by the evening when, as already narrated, Mr. Burnham made his somewhat mysterious and ominous announcement regarding the plans of the following day.

90. On the morning of Friday, February 16, crowd activity began at an early hour. Shopworkers of the commercial area in Water Street began to collect in small groups and Senator Anne Jardim went out with them at 7.30a.m. She exhorted them to form themselves into a procession and march to the Parade Ground. In the meantime a small crowd had collected outside the electricity power house. The men were shouting and agitating against the employment of blacklegs to work the plant. Two

members of the volunteer force were on sentry duty at the gate of the Power House and even this passive show of force irritated the crowd. Assistant Commissioner of Police De Abreu was asked to go to the Power House and when he arrived there, at 8.55 a.m., he saw a crowd of about 400 people shouting and vociferating and demanding that the blacklegs should come out and the plant be closed down. De Abreu told them that the electric plant was one of the Essential Services and its maintenance was necessary. He advised the agitators to go and consult their leaders and not intimidate workers. The crowd were, however, in an angry mood and one of them said in the local dialect "I can dead today", meaning that he was desperate enough to lay down his life for his cause. De Abreu succeeded in placating the crowd and told the men on sentry duty to go inside the gate and remain out of the view of the crowd. The crowd shortly after went to the Parade Ground where a meeting was in progress. De Abreu himself went away leaving a number of men to guard the Power House.

91. At the Parade Ground a number of speeches were made. Among the speakers were Anne Jardim who had led the crowd to the Parade Ground, and Mr. d'Aguiar who dwelt on his customary theme of opposing, exposing and deposing the government. As soon as the meeting finished someone announced that there were "scabs" working at the Electricity Power House and that voluntary pickets were needed there. A crowd again collected at the Electricity Power House and began to throw empty bottles and stones at the windows. This necessitated the calling out of the riot squads each consisting of 30 men including a team for using tear gas to disperse crowds. The size of the crowd was assessed by the policeman on duty at 1,000 but soon afterwards it swelled to about 3,000. Senior Superintendent of Police Puttock was in charge of the operations and, after giving a formal warning to the crowd to disperse, he prepared to use tear gas grenades. The warning was repeated three times, but the crowd had by now become reckless and they replied to Puttock's direction to disperse by saying "No, no. use smoke". A number of tear gas grenades were thrown at the crowd and the agitators ran back to take shelter in the "alleyways and yards" near the power house. They, however, continued to throw missiles and several windows of the power house were broken. A woman came out carrying a small child in her arms and the crowd began to chant "They killed a child, they killed a child". The child had, in fact, been only slightly affected by the fumes and on being treated at the hospital was completely restored within a short time. In the meantime, however, a wild rumour spread through the town that a child had been killed by the firing of a tear gas grenade by the police. Some persons even said that two children had died as a result of police callousness. Mr. d'Aguiar arrived on the scene and passing through the riot squad went to his premises followed by a crowd. There he addressed them through a loud-speaker calling upon them to remain peaceful. We have already related how, while he was speaking, a note was passed up to him containing the information that one of the two children had died on being affected by tear gas. Mr. d'Aguiar says that he did not communicate the full information contained in the note and contented himself with announcing that two children had been injured and that this was the result of the use of violence. Therefore, he argued, violence must be eschewed at all costs. He told the people to disperse and asked them to meet at the Parade Ground at 4 p.m. that afternoon. He added that the crowd had achieved their objective of having the Power House closed down. The Power House had in fact closed down as the result of a decision made by the officers in charge, who felt that the activity of the crowd might cause irreparable damage to the electric plant.

92. In spite of the closure of the electricity plant, a part of the crowd had continued to remain standing and shouting in front of it. A blue Volkswagen carrying a public address apparatus passed by asking the people to go to the

Parade Ground. The crowd gradually melted away and the scene of activity now moved for a brief period to the Parade Ground where a crowd of 500 persons soon collected. There was considerable restlessness amounting to a state of excitement and when a police van passed by, people threw bricks and bottles at it. The policemen in the van defended themselves by throwing out two tear gas grenades and one shell. The crowd began to swell and move to Robb Street. where Freedom House, the headquarters of the P.P.P. is situated. A large crowd of persons collected in front of Freedom House and filled the streets around it. A strong contingent of police hastened to the spot to restore order. When they arrived they found that stones and other missiles had been thrown at Freedom House. The crowds were pushed back, but by now they were in a very angry mood and had been worked up into a state bordering on frenzy by the spreading of the rumour that the police had murdered a child.

93. One contingent of police, manned by Superintendent McLeod, who was later joined by Assistant Commissioner of Police Phoenix, took up its position at a point in Robb Street, East of Camp Street. It was here that the crowd made its greatest exhibition of force. Missiles were thrown at the police officers and tear gas shells were of no avail. The response of the crowd was "We are going to murder you, we are going to eat you, we are not going to disperse". While this disturbance was in progress someone was heard to fire shots from an automatic weapon. Superintendent McLeod was hit and he fell down. He was carried away to the hospital where later he succumbed to his injury. Some more shots were fired and Phoenix was also hit. He, however, stood his ground and fired back, not indiscriminately at the crowd, but in the direction where the shots appeared to be coming. Corporal Austin, who was with him, also said that he was hit. Phoenix saw a motor vehicle being pushed forward and it seemed that two men were advancing towards him under cover of this vehicle. Believing that they intended to fire again at him, Phoenix fired back. This, however did not stop the vehicle and Phoenix was shot a second time. This injury was more serious and he had to be taken away to hospital. As he was getting into a Land Rover more shots were fired at the vehicle. In all, six police officers, including McLeod, deceased, were wounded at the spot.

94. By now, the disturbances had extended to several other parts of the town. Fires had begun and wholesale looting of shops had started. The first call for fire assistance was received at 12.51 p.m. An electric pole near the power station had been set fire to. This was a serious matter because most of the power in Georgetown is carried by means of overhead lines, and the burning of an electric pole could cause very serious interference with supplies; and indeed, the resumption of supplies was greatly hampered by the burning of a number of electric poles. Several calls for the fire brigade were received during the course of the afternoon, there being in all three major fires which spread owing to the fact that the houses in Georgetown are constructed mostly of wood and there is always a strong breeze to fan the flames. There were cases of fires jumping over streets and enveloping a number of further houses and premises. Chief Fire Officer Atkinson gave a very vivid account of the manner in which the Fire Brigade overcame what seemed almost insuperable difficulties and did their best to control the fires. He said the morale of his staff was not very high because there had been a dispute about their wages and there was present the usual danger of dealing with large fires. There was no water in the mains between 2 and 5 p.m. which was the period of acute need, because owing to the stoppage of power supply, the waterworks had ceased to operate. There were only a few fire tenders available and they were wholly insufficient to deal with the extensive fires with which they had to cope. Owing to the absence of water the mains, all that was available was 600 gallons of water in each tender. This had to be obtained from trenches and canals which were not always available where the water was most needed. There was also considerable interference from the crowds and a length of about 4,000 feet of hose was cut and lost that day. On one occasion the members of the Fire Brigade were even fired upon. In the circumstances, it must be conceded that the Fire Brigade did a magnificent piece of work in bringing the fires under control by midnight and in putting them out by Saturday morning.

95. This seems an appropriate moment to describe what has been happening at the Power House and the water supply station.

96. On the afternoon of February 12, Alexander, Mechanical Superintendent of the Electricity Works, saw a circular to the effect that the Union would be calling out the employees on strike on Tuesday afternoon. Fearing that this might entail the closure of an essential service, he called the representatives of the Union, including Mr. Ishmael, President of the Man Power Citizens Association, to come and discuss the matter with him. They accordingly met him the same afternoon. They confirmed that a partial strike had been called to take place between the hours of 2 and 4 on the afternoon of February 13. After a brief discussion, however, it was agreed to allow a skeleton staff to

continue operations in the power house during the period of the strike. Accordingly, the power house continued to send out power as usual on February 13. On the morning of February 14, there was another meeting with the Union representatives who said that the Union intended to call out all the workers on strike. Mr. Ishmael on this occasion was not prepared to allow a skeleton staff to continue working the plant. He said he wanted to withdraw his men immediately. He was told that this might cause irreparable damage because a sudden closing down of a plant of this type was liable to result in grave danger to the equipment. Mr. Ishmael relented sufficiently to allow half an hour for the purpose of making the necessary adjustments. The plant was accordingly closed down at 8.30 a.m. It was, however, restarted with the help of some departmental employees and by 10.55 p.m. the power house was in working condition once again. There was no further trouble till Friday morning when the menacing attitude of the crowd compelled those in charge of the electricity plant to close it down for reasons of safety and security. The supply was resumed between 4.30 and 6 p.m.

97. The waterworks at Georgetown are intimately connected with the power house because without electric power there can be no water supply, though in an emergency a temporary arrangement can be made by switching over to some Diesel engines. There was no trouble at the waterworks until the morning of the 14th, when the daily shift failed to arrive. Mr. Bentley, Chief Engineer of the waterworks, remained undaunted and with the help of his assistant he managed to carry on. At 8.15, however, the electric supply failed and Mr. Bentley was powerless. When the power supply was resumed the water supply machinery was restarted, though there was a short time lag owing to the technical difficulty of restarting the machines after a complete stoppage. On the morning of the 15th the usual shift did not report, but Mr. Bentley continued with the help of specially employed labour. On the morning of the 16th a large number of union men came to the waterworks and complained that Mr. Bentley had employed blacklegs. The union men demanded the immediate dismissal of these blacklegs and promised to give a skeleton staff. Mr. Bentley had no alternative but to agree to this suggestion. The skeleton staff continued working the waterworks till 10.30 a.m. when the electricity failed. The supply was switched on to the Diesel engines, but these could not give adequate supply and Mr. Bentley had to inform the mayor and the fire brigade that there was no water in the mains. The water supply remained closed between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., due to the failure of electricity, and this made the task of the fire brigade extremely difficult.

98. A word only need be said about the conditions in the Georgetown hospital. The Secretary of the Georgetown Hospital had on February 9 seen reports of unrest in the country, and fearing that they might have repercussions on the hospital, he took precautionary steps to cope with the possible emergency of having to deal with an unusually large number of casualties. He did this by reducing the number of admissions and operations which were not urgent. On February 12, he called a meeting of the departmental heads and, after conferring with them, ordered extra supplies. He was told that day at 1 p.m. that the British Guiana Civil Service Association had decided to go on strike and that the strike would affect the hospital staff also. Fortunately, however, none of the doctors absented themselves at any time, though there were many nurses and ward orderlies who remained away from duty. On Monday and Tuesday the situation was normal and there was full attendance. On Wednesday, however, only 89 out of 181 nurses reported in the morning and out of 36 ward orderlies only 8 reported. The Secretary was, however, able to get commendable assistance from the League of Friends, the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance. On the 15th, too, there were many nurses and ward orderlies absent. The work at the hospital, however, was carried on without any difficulty, even though an attempt appears to have been made on the 16th to set fire to a part of the building. A burning piece of boarding was introduced into the hospital, but it was discovered immediately and before it could do any damage it was thrown out.

99. The situation in the town worsened very rapidly and riots broke out in several streets; looting began at the same time and there were sporadic attacks upon police officials wherever they tried to control the crowd or to arrest looters. At 1.35 p.m. it became clear to Mr. Weber, the Commissioner of Police, that his men were unable to control the situation. He therefore decided to call in military aid.

100. We may pause here for a moment to narrate the events which preceded the calling in of the army. Lieut.-Colonel Warren, the Commander of the First Battalion of the Royal Hampshire Regiment, had arrived in British Guiana on Sunday, February 11. He was staying at Government House and was soon informed of the political situation in the country and more particularly in Georgetown. His subordinate, Major Wilson, told him that there was a probability of a general strike occurring within the course of the next few days. On Monday, February 12,

Colonel Warren saw the Commissioner of Police and asked him his views on the tactical point of bringing in a contingent of the army from Atkinson Field where one company of the Royal Hampshire Regiment was stationed. Atkinson Field is about 27 miles from Georgetown and so the matter had to be considered well in advance. Colonel Warren suggested that the Company could be moved into Georgetown, or at any rate one platoon. A fear was, however, expressed that to move the army at that stage might give unnecessary provocation to certain individuals and precipitate a clash. As the week advanced it was noticed that the processions of agitators and strikers were quite orderly and no clashes had taken place, and so the question of moving the army into Georgetown was deferred. On February 14, however, Mr. Rai, the Minister for Home Affairs, made a specific request that some portion of the army at Atkinson Field should be alerted to move into Georgetown. The Governor pointed out that under the terms of the Constitution then in force the Guianese Ministers were solely responsible for internal security, and that to call the assistance of the army was an extremely serious step, to be resorted to only in the case of an extreme emergency. On the evening of February 15, another consultation took place between the Governor, the Premier and Mr. Rai, the Minister for Home Affairs. The Governor was informed that there was a danger of the police and the prison officers going on strike that very night, and if that happened it would be impossible to maintain law and order in the city. The Commissioner of Police had in the meantime written a letter to the Governor which arrived while this discussion was in progress. The letter contained a definite request for army assistance. The letter was in the following terms:

“I am of the opinion, as result of the events of the past four days, the present Government can resist the demand to resign by the opposition Political Parties which have today shown definite signs of uniting, only by the ultimate use of physical force. The dispersal of a crowd by the use of tear smoke is of a temporary nature only, and will not prevent the ultimate need for the use of more extreme measures. Having reached this conclusion I must give it as my considered opinion that the only means of maintaining the Government without the loss of life will be the presence of a sufficient number of troops.”

Both the Premier and Mr. Rai asked the Governor to have the army brought in from Atkinson Field at once. The Premier's view was that the situation had reached a stage at which the Opposition were deliberately trying to throw out by force the Government established by law and he needed sufficient armed men to maintain law and order. The Governor told the Ministers that the armed services of the United Kingdom would not be used to maintain P.P.P. 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.

101. It seems to us that there was some slight misunderstanding between the Ministers, on the one hand, and the Governor and Colonel Warren, on the other. The impending, or at any rate the apprehended, strike of the Police Force and the prison officers had figured prominently in the discussions relating to the necessity and advisability of bringing in troops from Atkinson Field. The discussion had left an impression on the mind of Colonel Warren, that if no strike took place, no troops need be brought in. On the other hand, the Premier and Mr. Rai left Government House convinced in their minds that troops would be brought to Georgetown in the early hours of Friday morning. No strike of the police and the prison officers did in fact take place, although there was a highly unpleasant incident at police headquarters in the course of which some officers expressed their unwillingness to obey orders. The Commissioner of Police was, however, able to smooth things over with his characteristic tact and firmness. In any event on the morning of Friday the 16th the troops had received no instructions to move from Atkinson Field.

102. As the day proceeded the situation began to get out of hand and at about 1.30 p.m. the Commissioner of Police came to the conclusion that it was absolutely essential to have the assistance of the army. This is how he described the situation in the course of his statement: —

“At about 11.30 a.m. while at the meeting with the Hon. Minister, the Staff Officer, Deputy Superintendent Soobrian, reported in person that a crowd had tried to stop work at the Electricity Works and that the late Superintendent McLeod (Riot Unit) had dispersed it with the use of tear smoke and that the crowd had left in the direction of the Premier’s residence. I ordered a Riot Unit to proceed there. Almost immediately afterwards a note was handed to the Minister from Mr. Hubbard (Minister of Trade and Industry), which stated that tear smoke had just been used at the Power Station to disperse a very dangerous crowd. Shortly after I left the Minister for Headquarters. I proceeded along Water Street where I saw cyclists riding in a westerly direction from the area of Wellington, Robb, Regent and Church Streets, holding handkerchiefs to their faces. I visited the area at the Electricity Works and the Premier’s residence. Both were clear of persons. At 1.20 p.m. on arrival at Headquarters I spoke by radio from my office to Puttock (Riot Unit) who gave his position as the Metropole Cinema, and stated that he was endeavouring to disperse a large crowd with tear smoke. He said the situation was ‘not nice’ and that he was running out of tear smoke. I instructed him that if he or any of his party were in danger he must open fire and that he must endeavour to disperse the crowd at all costs. At 1.25 p.m. I spoke to the late Superintendent McLeod who made a similar report of being attacked with bricks and bottles by a hostile crowd which he was endeavouring to disperse with tear smoke. I gave him similar instructions to those I gave to Puttock. I spoke with Yaw, he too reported being under pressure from a hostile crowd.”

103. The Commissioner of Police tried to obtain the orders of the Governor and telephoned him in his office. The Governor, however, was not available. He therefore decided to take the initiative himself and telephoned the second in command at Atkinson Field. and was told that Colonel Warren and Major Wilson were on their way from Georgetown to Atkinson Field. The Commissioner asked for immediate despatch of a contingent of the army to relieve the situation in Georgetown. A few moments later he again telephoned Government House and this time he was able to speak to the Governor. He informed him of what he had done. The army contingent arrived in Georgetown shortly after 2.30 and was conducted to police headquarters at Eve Leary. The Commissioner of Police signed the usual form of request which was in the following terms:

“I have now come to the conclusion that the civil power is unable to control the situation and that the assistance of the military has become necessary, and I accordingly request such assistance.”

104. The part played by the army in dealing with the disturbances is quickly told. The story was narrated by Major Wilson of the Royal Hampshire Regiment who directed the entire operation, Lieut. Neville and three Non-commissioned Officers who acted under instructions issued by Major Wilson. No attempt was made to question the accuracy of any part of the depositions made by these witnesses, and this part of the evidence at least may be said to be acceptable on all sides as completely true.

105. Major Wilson established his Control Post at the Police headquarters in Eve Leary and began to post his men to the various scenes of mob activity as and when the exigencies of the situation required. He remained in continuous wireless communication with his men and also continued to receive directions from Colonel Warren who was in Government House. In addition, he was given detailed reports of what was happening throughout the disturbed area as information was received in the Force Control Room from police patrol cars or other police stations. He,

therefore, had as full a picture of the disturbances as was possible in the circumstances, and was thus in a position to give the necessary directions to his men.

106. It is scarcely necessary to describe in detail the activities of the various Army Units operating in different sections of the town. It may, however, be mentioned that of the three platoons which had been brought to Georgetown one was sent to guard the Premier's house in compliance with a specific direction given by Colonel Warren. There was no crowd or disturbance at this spot and the officer in charge took two-thirds of the platoon to clear Water Street and the landing wharf of riotous crowds to facilitate the docking of the Royal Naval vessel which had brought a naval contingent. This task was soon accomplished and the men left to guard the Premier's house, having been relieved by the naval unit, rejoined their platoon and continued to clear the streets of looters. They were compelled to open fire three times, causing the death of one looter and wounding four others. The second platoon was engaged in a similar task in the area of Camp Street, where an obstreperous mob was looting stores and shops in a most persistent fashion till one looter, after repeated warnings, was shot dead. The third platoon, which to start with had been kept in reserve, was sent to the Robb Street area to protect Freedom House which was besieged by a hostile mob. A portion of this platoon later went to protect a store owned by an East Indian..

107. By 8 p.m. quiet had been restored in most of the storm centres, though patrolling continued until the early hours of Saturday morning, by which time all that remained visible of Black Friday's events were the smouldering remains of some buildings and a few dozen shattered shop windows.

108. The total number of casualties resulting from army activity was 2 killed and 4 wounded, and this, we feel, in the circumstances of the case was not a heavy price to pay for restoring the peace of the town.

109. We may also at this stage draw attention to the strangely unreeling attitude of the political leaders when the passions aroused by them had been let loose on the town.

110. An appeal was made by the Governor to Mr. Burnham to use his influence and advise the crowds to desist from acts of violence. The Governor asked him to employ his loudspeaker system and ask the crowds to leave the streets. Mr. Burnham, however, replied that he would consult his executive. Strangely enough, the executive could not see their way to accede to the Governor's request. This is how Mr. Burnham dealt with the matter in his statement before us: —

“We could not help. There were two main obstacles, one was that we were very short of petrol and we felt that if we went all round Georgetown using up this petrol at the Governor's request, we would have no petrol for the vehicles to carry out Party work. We also considered it ill-advised to go and tell people to desist from what they were doing when we had nothing to do with the starting of it. The man who calls off the dog owns the dog.”

This callous and remorseless attitude is reminiscent of Mark Antony's observation “Mischievous thou art afoot. Take thou what course thou wilt.”

111. As regards Mr. d'Aguiar, all he could think of was to ask the Governor to give protection to his wife and family. He telephoned the Governor and said that he could not see his way to making an appeal for peace to the riotous crowds of Georgetown.

112. We find no substance whatever in the contention made on behalf of the Government that the disturbances of Black Friday were the culmination of a deliberate plan to overthrow the Government by the use of force. The Premier referred to it in unequivocal terms in a statement made on February 9. which has already been quoted *in extenso* in an earlier part of this Chapter. It will be remembered that what the Premier said was that violence was being planned by certain elements and that attempts against the Premier's life and the lives of certain of his

Ministers were contemplated. He went on to say that these acts of violence were intended to secure the overthrow of the legally elected Government by force.

113. The matter is therefore of considerable importance and it is necessary to examine it in some detail. The Premier himself was questioned on this point at some length. He had on February 6 made a somewhat similar statement in the course of a radio broadcast. What he said on that occasion was "For too many years this country has been ruled by a clique who got away with murder, who lived at the expense of the working people, and they want to continue to ride on your backs. They are planning to demonstrate. We hear rumours about shooting of Ministers".

114. Therefore, until February 6. the Premier had only heard rumours. On February 9, however, he made a categorical statement about the existence of a definite plot. In the course of his examination the Premier was asked whether he received any information between February 6 and February 9. His reply was that information was always coming to him, some from Government sources and some from private sources. He could not, however, specify the nature of this information nor its source. Questioned further, he said "I have information of various kinds, direct and indirect, which added altogether, came to the conclusion that this plot was being hatched". Nothing further could be elicited from the Premier on this subject. Dr. Jacob, the Minister for Finance, was also questioned on this point by the Counsel for the United Force and his statement was so eloquent that we set it down *in extenso* from the official transcript.

Q: Did you hear of that plot for the first time on the 9th February or did you hear of it before?

A: No. Sir, we the Ministers. . . .

Q: Must have discussed it before?

A: We had personally received threatening letters and things like that and we heard that there was this plot on foot.

Q: Thank you. Dr. Jacob, you have been very helpful. The Ministers had received threatening letters. Were they anonymous?

A: The ones I received were.

Q: You had received anonymous letters and, as far as you know, did the Premier tell you he also received anonymous letters?

A: I know the Premier had received some during that week.

Q: Anonymous letters?

A: Yes, I said they were.

Q: He told you so. He must have mentioned it?

A: I heard so. I cannot remember if he actually told me so.

Q: Then there were rumours of plots?

A: Plenty rumours.

Q: Georgetown, British Guiana, perhaps is more prone to rumours than any other place?

A: I would not say that.

Q: This is the position as I see it. On February 9, the Premier was in possession of anonymous letters. You knew that other Ministers were also in possession of anonymous letters, and there were rumours. Right?

A: Yes.

Q: You are in Government, you must know. Is it the fact then that the Premier made that public statement in the Legislative Council based upon anonymous letters and rumours?

(Objection was taken to this question, but the objection was overruled by the Commission.)

A: I did answer the question by saying no.

Q: You say there were anonymous letters, several rumours?

A: And you also have threats by the mob before the 9th. Don't forget that, please.

Q: When you say threats by the mob, what do you mean?

A: The crowds that congregated when the Duke of Edinburgh had arrived. There were violent demonstrations shouting, threats.

Q: What threats did you hear from the mob when the Duke of Edinburgh arrived?

A: There were violent demonstrations — even on the way down from the airport.

Q: Please explain what you mean when you say violent demonstrations.

A: Loud shouting when the cars of certain Ministers went through the crowd.

Q: When you said violent demonstrations you refer then to loud shouts from the crowd?

A: Threats of violence.

Q: What threats?

A: The demonstrations and gesticulations of the crowd. They were holding up their fists. I personally experienced this. They were holding up their sticks and shouting. This I took to indicate that they meant threats or violence. I had to wind up the glass of my car.

Q: Dr. Jacob, I do appreciate the lot of a politician is even harder than the lot of a policeman, but no doubt you are consoled by the fact that you are a public servant. But anyway, tell me this. There were shouts and people. . . .

A: Pushed sticks at us.

Q: This took place when?

A: On my way down from the Airport on the day the Duke of Edinburgh arrived. I experienced this. I know.

Q: Did you construe that as a threat to topple the Government?

A: That coupled with banners and placards and what was written on these placards — surely.

Q: You construed this incident of which you have told us as constituting evidence of a threat to topple the Government by force?

A: That there was likely to be trouble in the country. That appeared to me to be the beginning.

Q: What I am trying to get from you Dr. Jacob. . . . You see you told us the Premier and the Ministers discussed the situation before the Premier made his public statement. Am I correct?

A: I told you the Premier and the Ministers received threatening letters.

Q: Did the Premier and the Ministers discuss the events leading up to his statement on the 9th February?

A: I think we did, yes.

Q: It is hardly something you can forget. Now at that discussion did the Premier indicate to you what evidence he had that there was a threat to topple the Government by force, and to assassinate the Ministers?

A: We had received information and I am not in a position, I cannot disclose the source of that information.

Q: I did not ask you that. What I asked you is this, did the Premier discuss with the Ministers, the evidence which caused him to make the statement that he did on the 9th February?

A: Yes, I think so, he did.

Q: What was the evidence which he said he had?

A: If I may say so, Sir. I think you had better ask the Premier.

Q: I am asking you, what was the evidence?

A: I cannot disclose the information.

Q: I am not asking you who gave the information, I am asking you what the type of information was. Did he disclose the type of information?

A: The type of information was that Ministers were likely to be shot.

Q: Was that information conveyed by anonymous letters?

A: No, Sir, in addition to anonymous letters.

Q: Did you convey your information to the police?

A: This information was . . . .

Q: Confidential, I know, but did you convey it to the Commissioner of Police.

A: I had conveyed to the Commissioner of Police information that I had received some bullets on my desk.

Q: Did you get any threatening letters that were signed, or did you receive any warnings that were signed?

A: No, all of the threatening letters were unsigned, or signed with some fictitious name.

Q: Now did the Premier show you those letters which were signed?

A: I said I do not know whether the Premier's letters were signed or unsigned; I did not see any of them.

Q: Those you saw were unsigned?

A: I heard he received letters, and I have no reason to doubt that.

Q: I have no reason either. The Premier told you he had received letters of warning and threatening letters. You don't know if they were signed or unsigned ; you heard these rumours. Did anybody suggest at this meeting that all of these letters should be handed over to the Commissioner of Police immediately?

A: I think some of the letters were handed to the Police I cannot be sure.

Q: Were yours handed over?

A: I think I left mine with the Premier.

Q: If you can remember this detail it will be of the greatest possible assistance. Was this information about which you have given evidence received by the Premier before the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh?

A: I cannot answer that. I am not sure.

Q: It was received some days before the 9th?

A: I cannot say for sure.

Q: You do not understand the question. I do not want you to get confused, it is an easy thing to happen.

A: I am not confused.

Q: The Premier made this statement in the House of Assembly. I want you to give some idea of how long, prior to the 9th February the information was received or discussed?

A: I cannot say.

Q: Well, how long before the statement on the 9th, did you hold your discussions?

A: Oh, shortly before.

Q: Two days?

A: Possibly.

Q: Not less than two? I am not trying to tie you down.

A: I cannot be sure; it was prior to the 9th; not a very long period.

Q: Now the Duke of Edinburgh came on the Wednesday?

A: The 7th.

Q: So you could not have discussed it on the day of the Duke's arrival; that is hardly likely, but could you have discussed it the day before?

A: Possibly before.

Q: It could be the 6th?

A: Or it could be the 8th.

115. It would be superfluous to comment on the naivety of Dr. Jacob's replies, but we must draw attention to one or two other matters which are relevant to this issue. Police Commissioner Weber, when questioned about safety measures in relation to Ministers, stated before us that he was not apprehensive about the lives of the Ministers until February 16 when violence actually broke out. The Premier said that he had drawn Mr. Weber's attention to the danger which he anticipated, and if the Commissioner did not appreciate the danger the Premier could not blame him, because it was a question of values and the Commissioner could not necessarily see all the "facets of life" which came to the Premier's knowledge. This contention seems to us singularly lacking in conviction, because if the Premier had in his possession any material to support his fears, he must have brought this to the notice of the Commissioner of Police in order to convince him that measures for the safety of the Ministers were necessary. Such a step, however, does not appear to have been taken. We find that in fact no actual attempt on the life of any Ministers was made. We attach no importance to the incident which took place in front of the Public Buildings on

February 9, when the Premier was leaving the Assembly Chamber. It is said that a Dr. Reid pushed a banner in front of the wind-screen of his motor-car. This act cannot by any stretch of imagination be construed as an attempt on the Premier's life. The Premier's house did not draw the attention of the riotous mobs, even on February 16. Processions did on one or two occasions pass in front of it, and we have no doubt that critical and even hostile slogans were uttered by the passers by. But there is no evidence of any missiles having been thrown at the house, far less is there any material to support the story of an attempt on the Premier's life. The only other incident of violence in reference to a Minister is the throwing of stones at the house of the Attorney General on February 16. The Attorney-General drove back to his house and found that the members of his family had left during his absence. He was driven to the Premier's house and was at no time molested by anyone. None of the other Ministers were even mentioned in the course of the inquiry as having been targets of violence on the part of any of the demonstrators. We have already found that violence broke out on the morning of Black Friday, by the spread of a rumour that a child had died as a result of tear gas released by the police. Excitement had been mounting during the week, strikers and unemployed men with nothing to do had been marching up and down the streets, and suddenly, the hooligan and criminal elements began to loot some of the stores. Gradually, others joined in when it was realised that the forces of law and order were inadequate to control the situation. Acts of looting, throwing missiles, and arson, were the result of individual initiative, or of small gangs of hooligans who went about the streets smashing up windows and telephone booths, setting fire to motor-cars and looting property. This cannot be construed into a deliberate plan to overthrow the Government by the use of force. We find no evidence of any organised plan or concerted action

116. It must also be emphasised that the outbreak of Black Friday was not a manifestation of racial rivalry or hatred. There were no clashes between exclusively racial groups. Indeed, there was very little rioting directly aimed at causing personal injury to individuals of any particular race or group. The malice of the agitators, even at the height of the period of lawlessness, was concentrated upon looting and doing aimless damage to property. It was more an exhibition of the lowest in human beings, when they break down the restraints imposed by civilisation and begin to act like brutes. The victims were certainly not members of one race or group only, though political persuasions and the measure of sympathy expressed towards the strikers were relevant factors. The first few stores to be looted no doubt belonged to East Indians, but the reason for this was that these were stores which seemed to offer the best loot, and also they were the stores of which the employees had been extremely tardy in joining the strike. Many of these employees were not even members of a union and had for this reason kept themselves aloof from the mob activity during the earlier stages of the disturbances. The looting was done by small groups of hooligans drawn from all races. Some witnesses said that the Portuguese predominated, others said that they noticed more Africans than members of other races among the looters. Most of the witnesses, however, said that the groups were mixed, meaning that they were comprised of individuals drawn from all classes and races. There is the story of a group of hooligans led by a tall lame negro, who was called "Bonny Limpy". This group went about committing acts of hooliganism at random. Once or twice their leader said that they would burn down a car because it belonged to a coolie, which term is used in a pejorative sense in reference to Indians. The evidence of Janki Persaud, an employee of Messrs. Kirpalani, is to the effect that a crowd consisting mostly of Portuguese came to the shop on Monday and forced the proprietors to close the business. On Tuesday he saw a number of persons including Bashir Khan, Cleveland Charran, and Sankar, all East Indians, leading people to a store and one of these men pulled a shop girl out in order to stop her from working. The evidence of Widdup, the Managing Director of Messrs. Brodie & Rainer, is significant. He said that he saw a group of about 50 persons comprising all types looting the shops and they came up to loot the store of Messrs. Brodie & Rainer, but their employee, Campbell, told them that the proprietor of the store belonged to the P.N.C. On hearing this, the riotous crowd passed on without doing any harm to the store. Eventually the premises of Messrs. Brodie & Rainer were destroyed by fire which spread from a neighbouring store.

117. A careful reading of the evidence, therefore, shows that although there was a certain element of racial consciousness which promoted the tension among the different political parties, the disturbances were not racial riots in the sense that members of one race strove to do injury to the personal property of the members of the other race. The real origin of the riots lay in political rivalries and jealousies which finally found expression in the criminal acts of a few groups of hooligans.

# CHAPTER V

## SUMMING UP

118. To sum up, we find that the disturbances and acts of violence were confined almost entirely to the capital town of Georgetown, where the most active and the most clamorous section of Dr. Jagan's political opponents are to be found. The fierce violence of Black Friday, resulting in the looting of a large number of shops and the destruction by fire of 56 premises, was caused by a sudden upsurge of anger occasioned by the false rumours of the death of a child caused by tear gas fumes. This was made possible by the fact that thousands of idle persons had been marching through the streets of Georgetown with nothing to do except listen to the inflammatory speeches of the political opponents of Dr. Jagan. There had, however, prevailed for some months previously a feeling of unrest mounting in some cases to a sense of resentment which led naturally, if not inevitably, to the events of the week under review. This feeling was due to the manner in which Dr. Jagan and his Government had handled the affairs of the country.

119. The Opposition of Dr. Jagan came from five distinct sources:

- (i) the United Force led by Mr. d'Aguiar,
- (ii) businessmen and members of the propertied class,
- (iii) People's National Congress led by Mr. Burnham,
- (iv) the British Guiana Civil Service Association,
- (v) the Trades Union Council.

The United Force and the commercial people were activated by personal motives rather than ideological differences. They wanted to safeguard their interests because they felt that the policies of the government under Dr. Jagan were leading the country towards Communism. The personal political belief of Dr. Jagan is relevant only in so far as his deeds and declarations caused certain reactions among the people and brought about a state of affairs in which tensions grew and spread. In the course of his examination at the inquiry Dr. Jagan evaded answering the question whether he was a communist and began to give lengthy explanations. In his case it is true to say *qui s'explique se complique* and ultimately the discussion may be reduced to nothing more than the bathos of semantics. All that is necessary for our purpose is to say that the utterances of the Premier had conveyed to many people in British Guiana and to the outside world that he was indeed a communist, although he said at the time of the inquiry that he believed in private property and he and his government had no intention of expropriating private property without the payment of compensation, and he also believed that free and periodic elections must be held in a democratic country. There is very little doubt that many of his speeches and some of his deeds gave rise to the apprehension that despite his evasions and profession to the contrary, he was acting as a communist. On returning from a visit to Tanganyika, he said that he admired the system of one party government without an opposition. He banned the *Daily Chronicle* from government offices and, in order to exercise control over the Press, he drew up a scheme of setting up a Press Council. In July 1961 he took over as many

as 51 denominational private schools which were controlled by churches. He frequently expressed admiration for the way Russia was being governed and the way in which Fidel Castro had conducted himself in Cuba. We have already referred to the utterances of Dr. Jacob, the Finance Minister. An article was published in the *Los Angeles Times* in which Dr. Jagan was listed among the twelve most important communists of the world, including Krushchev and Mao Tse-Tung. He did not choose to deny the necessary implication of his being associated with Krushchev and Mao Tse-Tung. His wife, who is supposed to be a confirmed communist, was believed to exercise a great deal of influence on him and to shape his policies and course of action. All this naturally induced a sense of insecurity among a certain section of the people and there began a flight of capital from the country. In December the government imposed currency restrictions to counteract this flight, but inevitably, this act of the government increased the sense of insecurity. The price of property began to fall and it was stated before us that its value had decreased to almost half what it was some years ago. Depositors began to withdraw their money from the Post Office Savings Bank and also from the New Building Society. In the months of January and February \$2 million amounting to 10 per cent of the total deposits were withdrawn from the Post Office Savings Bank. The New Building Society could not meet all the demands, and as already narrated, issued a notice that they could only pay out a small proportion of the monies deposited. Young men who were members of Dr. Jagan's political party were being given scholarships and sent to Russia, Tanganyika and Cuba for training, and there were complaints that many of these persons were wholly unsuitable to receive any education, and that the sole object of sending them there was to give them some form of military training so that they could take up arms on behalf of Dr. Jagan's political party. The new budget introducing levies and taxes on the propertied classes exacerbated the feeling of discontent and provoked the members of the United Force and the business people to organise a more active form of agitation against Dr. Jagan's government. They encouraged and fostered strikes by shop assistants.

120. The leaders of the People's National Congress were actuated through the failure of their ambitions and a realisation that there was no future for them as Dr. Jagan's allies and supporters. Mr. Burnham left him in 1955 to form his own party. Another supporter of Dr. Jagan who joined the Opposition was Mr. Jai Narine Singh. The Civil Service Association were moved to action by the procrastination of the government and the unsatisfactory response they had received to their demands for higher salaries and better conditions of service. The trade unionists, although professing to be completely free from political taint, made common cause with the Civil Service Association and with the politicians, and a gathering together of all these forces was made possible by the fact that Dr. Jagan was not endowed with the breadth of vision which could have enabled him to foresee that his purpose was progressing towards a lamentable end. Nor did he possess the nimbleness of intellect or the dexterity of political manoeuvring which allows a politician to change his plan of action without incurring the odium of his supporters or inviting the derision of his opponents.

121. Thus the agitation began on Monday by a few young shop-workers developed into a mass agitation on Tuesday afternoon, when a general strike was declared. During the whole of Wednesday thousands of people were parading through the streets with placards and banners. They marched shouting slogans, held meetings and forced others to join them. There was a temporary stoppage in the working of the electricity plant and a consequent cessation of water

supply through the town. On Thursday the agitation continued and there were one or two sporadic but minor acts of violence. Some shop assistants who had not joined the strike were molested and bricks were thrown at one shop. On Friday morning the town was ready to witness a major outbreak of violence and when tear gas was used in front of the power plant and a small child was affected by it, a false rumour spread through the town and because there were not available sufficient policemen to deal with the disturbances, the criminal and hooligan elements broke loose and began to commit acts of violence which finally culminated in widescale looting and destruction. The outburst was not brought about by a deliberate plan to overthrow the government, but was the sudden and almost unanticipated result of the inflammable magazine of mob wrath having been ignited by the spark of a false rumour.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO THE DISTURBANCES**

122. We may now deal somewhat more fully with two or three matters to which a brief reference has already been made, and a fuller discussion of which was postponed to avoid a distracting interruption of the narrative of events.

### *Declaration of General Strike*

123. We first take up the sudden declaration of a general strike on the afternoon of Tuesday, February 13, on the occasion of the mass meeting at the Parade Ground after the great procession in which the Civil Servants, the Trade Unions and members of the general public took part.

124. The story put forward before us was that the unbending and indeed the provocative attitude of the government was the sole reason for the decision to call a general strike, or at any rate for precipitating that decision. We find it difficult to believe this version and we are of the opinion that the facts have been greatly distorted by the trade union leaders for the purpose of placing the responsibility of arousing the workers' hostility upon the government. As the matter is of some little importance it is necessary to examine the evidence on the point in detail.

125. The mass demonstration and procession of Tuesday afternoon ended at the Parade Ground at about 4 p.m. There was present a huge concourse of people of which the size has been assessed variously between 8,000 and 30,000. A number of speakers addressed this crowd and then at about 4.30 p.m. Mr. Hill, a resident of Georgetown, gave the information that the Premier had just given a broadcast in the course of which he had announced that all civil servants who absented themselves from their posts would be dismissed. When this information was given to the speakers on the rostrum a decision was at once taken to declare a general strike, subject to subsequent ratification.

126. Mr. Hill's story is that a casual acquaintance of his, Edmond Singh, told him that he had just heard this news on the radio. The Premier denied having made such an announcement and indeed a news item was published in the *Guiana Graphic* contradicting it. When Hill was questioned about the matter at the inquiry he said that in his opinion what Singh told him was a very important piece of information, because it was a very serious affair if civil servants who had gone on strike should lose their jobs. He therefore considered it his duty to warn the civil servants at the gathering to be careful of what they were going to do. He was doing this as a citizen who takes a lively interest in what takes place around him and he thought that not many persons at the meeting might have been as privileged as he was to know that a circular had already been sent out to civil servants that morning indicating that civil servants who went on strike were liable to be dismissed. Hill had taken the precaution of questioning Singh and asking him whether what he was saying was absolutely correct. Singh told him that he had not himself heard the broadcast but had learnt of it from someone in his house.

127. Although the trade union leaders acted upon Hill's information by making a most dramatic announcement of the strike, Ishmael, President of the T.U.C. did not leave the matter there. When he went home that evening Mr. Seymour, the Chief Government Information Officer, telephoned him and said that a false report about the Premier's broadcast had been received by him. He said the Premier wanted it to be known that he had made no such statement. Ishmael was disinclined to accept Mr. Seymour's assurance and questioned him about the matter further.

He asked him if the Premier had in fact spoken over the radio that day. Mr. Seymour replied that the Premier had spoken twice. Ishmael then asked Mr. Seymour to bring over the tapes containing the Premier's speeches and play them over to him. Mr. Seymour brought only one tape which contained nothing about civil servants on strike being dismissed. The second tape had apparently been misplaced. Ishmael, not being satisfied with this partial evidence, telephoned Hill and asked him about the source of his information. Hill mentioned Singh, and Ishmael then phoned Singh, and Singh said that his wife had heard something about the dismissal over the radio. This confusion was resolved when Mr. Seymour telephoned the radio station, and someone at the radio station read over the transcript of the Premier's second speech. In this broadcast there was something about the Minister of Education advising Principals to dismiss their schools.

128. On behalf of the government it was suggested that the broadcast which Singh is alleged to have heard may have been made by a pirate radio which was later discovered. In any event, it has been clearly established that the Premier did not make any broadcast in the course of which he said that civil servants on strike would be dismissed. Ishmael's explanation is not at all satisfactory because the Minister of Education may have advised the Principals of schools to close the institutions. He could not have used the word "dismissal" with regard to schools. On the other hand, the Government, without accepting the truth of Hill's story, ascribed the misunderstanding to a broadcast made by the pirate radio.

129. Hill himself is a wholly unreliable witness. He told us that he gave information by word of mouth, whereas the trade union leaders said that a small note was passed over. Hill said that he remained at the spot for sometime, but he did not hear the dramatic announcement of the strike by the various trade unions, although this announcement was made immediately after the note was passed up.

130. On the other hand, we know that a week before the Trades Union Council had at a meeting decided that if the Finance Minister could not give them a satisfactory reply to their demands on the 12th February, they would recommend a general strike with effect from the morning of Wednesday the 14th. No notice to government was given as required by the "Essential Services" Ordinance of 1956.\* The somewhat self-righteous explanation given of this omission was that the practice of giving notice had fallen into desuetude. The leaders had not even hesitated to call out the medical services in their entirety without leaving a skeleton staff to attend to urgent cases and helpless patients in hospital. The fact that some of the medical staff remained on duty was due not to any instructions given by the trade union leaders, but to the individual discretion of the doctors and nurses who chose out of humanitarian consideration to attend to their work as usual.

[\* *Public Utility Undertaking & Public Health Services Arbitration Ordinance No. 44 of 1956*]

131. The British Guiana Civil Service Association had, out of a sense of frustration and defeat, following the long and inconclusive negotiations, called a strike of their affiliated unions with effect from 1 p.m. on Tuesday the 13th. Their decision was made at 11.30 a.m. They also took part in the mass demonstration jointly with the Trades Union Council from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and the civil servants may be assumed to have mixed freely and exchanged views with the members of the trade unions. So that when the meeting at time Parade Ground started, almost everybody

must have been aware of the fact that civil servants were on strike and intended not to resume work until they had received satisfaction with regard to their various demands. The Trades Union Council must have felt that the Civil Service had displayed courage and a sense of honour in defying the government. The suggestion of defiance could not have escaped the trade union leaders because the decision to strike coming as a sharp retort to the morning's circular savoured of a retaliatory measure. So it was natural that at the meeting there prevailed a feeling of being only a second best and a realisation that inaction would be construed as a display of timidity.

132. Earlier, Ishmael had been told "to do something". His followers were restive and straining for some kind of positive action and a release from time unrewarding discipline of debate and negotiation. A dozen speakers had already employed their oratory to whip up the passions of the large gathering and as emotions mounted reason diminished. In this state no external stimulus was needed to prod the trade union leaders into following the course taken by their more courageous brethren of the Civil Service. We have no doubt at all that the inevitable, perhaps the ineluctable, consequence was a declaration of a general strike, despite the lack of authority vesting in those who made these dramatic decisions. When the legality of these decisions was questioned at a meeting on the following day, the leaders countered the objection and satisfied their conscience by saying that the declaration of the strike was not caused by a rumour, but was the result of the issue of the circular by the government on Tuesday morning, as this circular contained a threat of dismissal by drawing attention to General Order 95 which said that a person who is absent from his work is liable to dismissal and which easily could be construed as victimisation.

133. From the above discussion it is quite clear that the trade union leaders were determined to declare a strike, and the decision was precipitated not so much by any false information of a broadcast made by the Premier, but because of the decision taken by the Civil Service and the desire of the trade union leaders to appear as bold and decisive as the Civil Service.

### *Houston By-election*

134. A word or two must be said regarding the unsavoury episode of the Houston by-election, though the narrative will take us beyond the date of the disturbances under review. At the general election held in August 1961, Mr. G. M. Henry, the P.P.P. candidate, was declared elected by a majority of 448 votes over the P.N.C. candidate, Mr. H. Green. It was a three-cornered contest, but the U.F. candidate received very few votes. The P.N.C. candidate filed an election petition challenging the validity of Mr. Henry's election, on the ground that his election was accompanied by corrupt and illegal practices. The matter was enquired into by Mr. Justice Fraser, of the Supreme Court of British Guiana, who giving judgement on 27/11/1961, held that Mr. Ashton Chase, an agent of Mr. Henry, had been guilty of corrupt practice inasmuch as he had been a party to an act of impersonation on the part of one of the voters. The election of Mr. Henry was accordingly declared void, and as a consequence of this decision Mr. Chase became incapable of remaining a member of the Senate. Subsequently action was taken against Mr. Chase and he was tried before a Judge and Jury for the offence of impersonation. He was, however, acquitted of this charge on a unanimous verdict of the jury on March 8, 1962. Mr.

Chase now moved that the incapacity attaching to him by virtue of the order of Mr. Justice Fraser should be removed because he had been acquitted of the charge of impersonation by a competent court. The matter went before Mr. Justice Fraser, who, by his order of April 28, 1962, removed the incapacity and reported his finding to the Speaker under Section 37 of the Legislature (Appointments, Election and Membership Controversies) Ordinance, 1961.

135. Although the election of Mr. Henry had been declared void at the end of November, 1961, no steps were taken by the government to hold a by-election. Indeed, no by-election has been held to the present day. Dr. Jagan was questioned upon this point and his reply was that since Mr. Chase had been acquitted of the offence of impersonation it was morally in the fitness of things that the original election should be held to be a good one, because the reason upon which his incapacity was founded no longer subsisted. The government was therefore finding ways and means of restoring Mr. Henry's election, or at any rate validating it. This had naturally given rise to a great deal of resentment on the part of the P.N.C. and Dr. Jagan was charged with flouting the decision of Mr. Justice Fraser in the election petition. We do not wish to offer any further comment on this matter because the question of validating the original election has not been finally resolved, and we merely wish to draw attention to the sense of resentment created by the refusal, or at any rate the reluctance of the government to hold a by-election and give the P.N.C. an opportunity of adding to their strength in the Legislative Assembly, in the event of the election going in favour of the P.N.C.

### *Part taken by the Police*

136. We have next to consider the promptness with which the police made their sorties and the adequacy of the steps taken by them. There is no indication of any delay on the part of the police to arrive at the various places where demonstrations or disturbances took place. Indeed, the evidence points to the most commendable vigilance at all relevant times. Meetings, even peaceful ones, were attended by police officers especially detailed for the purpose and processions were invariably escorted. On February 12, the Police Emergency Plan was put into action. This meant the cancellation of leave and the ordering to duty of all police personnel. On the next day a special constabulary force of 26 was called out. The same day a request for embodying the British Guiana Volunteer Force was sent out by the Council of Ministers. Three special riot squads of thirty men each were kept in constant readiness. There is further abundant evidence to show that when violence broke out in various parts of the town on February 16, patrols both on foot and in motor drawn vehicles were organised. There was continuous communication between these patrols and the Central Control room at Police Headquarters and every possible effort was made to send immediate assistance wherever it was needed.

137. But the resources of the police were insufficient to meet the situation. The effective strength of the police force in Georgetown on February 16, was 200 subordinate officers and constables, 26 special constabulary, and 25 Mounted Police and three riot squads of 30 men each.\* Also the fact must be recorded that there was an element of discontent among the members of the force, which stemmed from a feeling that their salaries were inadequate. This discontent found

expression in a lamentable incident at Police headquarters when two subordinate officers refused to obey orders and one of them made a distressing exhibition of cowardice. The Commissioner of Police was, however, able to deal with the refractory element firmly and tactfully and after he had spoken to his men there was no further display of recalcitrance or dereliction of duty. To add to the difficulties of the police there were repeated requests from officials and private individuals for personal protection. The crowds in Georgetown were bigger than ever seen before, and though in the earlier stages they were peaceful, their formidable size was pregnant with a foreboding of evil. [\* *The figures originally given by the Commissioner of Police in his public examination were subsequently corrected by him.*]

138. With regard to the steps taken by the police, it must be borne in mind that the task of the police, upon occasions of this nature, is an extremely difficult one. They have, when faced by a hostile and menacing mob, to avoid alike the Scylla of vicious retaliation and the Charybdis of seeming timidity. A too hasty step may arouse and exacerbate the latent wrath of a sullen crowd and provoke its members to commit acts of open violence, and yet a period of prolonged inaction may be mistaken for a display of cowardice, and encourage wanton breaches of the law.

139. After a very careful and anxious consideration of the evidence led before us, we are satisfied that the police officers of Georgetown conducted themselves with courage worthy of the highest traditions of any police force and exercised a measure of restraint which is in itself proof of their deep sense of responsibility and the fearlessness with which they discharged the onerous burden of their duties. They had to cope with political demonstrators, members of Trade Unions, Civil Servants, commercial employees, the unemployed, and hooligan and criminal elements. The Commissioner of Police stated before us that he “did not want a clash between the police and the public, unless it became absolutely necessary. The crowds although they were technically breaking the law” by making an entry into the proclaimed area, remained peaceful. “It is very unwise in these circumstances to attempt arrest, very unwise because inevitably it brings about clashes. When you have got thousands of people and a handful of police, such action would not be advisable.”

140. So it was that until Thursday the 15th, the police confined their activities to maintaining a close watch over the demonstrators while they held their meetings and marched in processions up and down the streets of Georgetown. There were several instances of intimidation of employees who had declined to join the strikers or of shopkeepers who had persisted in keeping their premises open, but the police held their hand because there was, so far, no manifestation of force or violence apart from the solitary instance of a brief spurt of stone throwing at Kirpalani Stores. On the 16th, however, when disturbances broke out simultaneously in several parts of the town, the police acted promptly and firmly, but even on that day the use of force was limited to the barest minimum required to disperse the crowds or quell their riotous activities. As already narrated, at first only tear gas was used and at the Power House this sufficed to break up the mob though not before they had pelted the building and the police personnel with stones, empty bottles and bottles filled with kerosene oil, designed to catch fire on bursting. In Robb Street the mob became uncontrollable and its fury increased with the spreading of a rumour that tear gas had mortally affected a small child. Tear gas had not proved effective at this storm centre and as

the crowd became more frenzied, someone opened fire on the police. We have already observed that several members of the police force were injured, one of them fatally. It was only then that the police felt constrained to use their fire arms in self-defence. Supt. Phoenix who was in charge of the operations was wounded by shots which were clearly aimed at him. In order to defend himself against further attack he fired back, aiming not indiscriminately at the surging crowd, but at the man who seemed to have fired the previous shots and who now appeared to be coming towards him under cover of a slowly approaching vehicle. Unfortunately the hostile firing continued and Phoenix was hit a second time. This injury was more serious and obliged him to leave his post and go to the hospital for medical attention.

141. The Robb Street score was one police officer killed and four wounded by fire arms, as against one member of the riotous mob known to be fatally wounded. The balance was thus heavily adverse to the police and it cannot be said that the police used more force than was justified by the circumstances. We are unable to subscribe to the view that the police were guilty of any dereliction of duty by being too niggardly in the use of fire arms. The crowd in Robb Street was, no doubt, riotous and violent. They were pelting the police with missiles but their objective appeared to be Freedom House and their fury was aimed at the police only in so far as their way was barred. As long as the police could succeed in keeping the mob away and as long as they could protect their own lives by using tear smoke or firing shots wide of the men facing them, they were adequately performing their duty. Supt. Phoenix's unit fired eighteen rounds and kept the crowd at bay until the arrival of the army unit at whose appearance the mob began to dissolve.

142. Another instance of shooting of the police occurred in the course of driving looters away from a store, late on the evening of February 16.

143. It could perhaps be argued that a readier and more liberal use of fire arms by the police might have reduced the incidence of looting to some extent, but we are far from convinced that the police were guilty of any culpable disinclination in defending public property and it seems to us abundantly clear that none of the fires could have been prevented by anything that the police could do with the resources at their disposal. The very paucity of their numbers, a fact obvious to everyone, was an encouraging factor to the ruffianly elements who could, with the greatest of ease, play a vicious game of hide and seek with the policemen on patrol. It was the sight of the unusual and more numerous army personnel as much as the use of force by them that emptied the streets and restored peace.

### *Arms in the Attorney-General's House*

144. A few words may be said regarding the story that a gang of toughs was brought in to guard the Attorney-General's house, which on the night of Friday the 16th, was stocked like a small arsenal with arms and ammunition. The relevant evidence on the point consists of a statement by Small who stated that when he was passing by the Attorney-General's house soon after 8.30 p.m. he was set upon and severely beaten by a group of eighteen persons, several of whom were

armed with guns. He was then dragged into the yard where he saw a motor car on the back seat of which lay a large quantity of arms and ammunition. Small went on to say that someone telephoned the police, but before the police arrived the arms and ammunition were removed. The police took charge of him (Small) and took him to the hospital where his injuries were examined by a doctor. He was then allowed to go away. Early the next morning he went to Freedom House with the object of looking for his assailant of the previous evening. He was able to recognise one whose ear had been injured by Small in the course of the scuffle. We are not at all impressed by Small's statement and his demeanour in time witness box was far from convincing.

145. The next witness we examined was Paul, the Attorney-General's chauffeur, whose straightforward testimony furnished an explanation of Small's extraordinary story. Paul said that his master's house was stoned during the day and when he drove his master back from the office in the afternoon, the house was empty save for a special constable on sentry duty. He drove the Attorney-General to the Premier's house and returned home alone. Later in the day a group of men from the country, of whom Toolsie Persaud was known to him as a supporter of the P.P.P., came to protect the house. They saw Small passing by with a box which appeared to contain looted property. They apprehended him and beat him. Small cried out for help and Paul, coming down into the yard, advised the men not to use violence, but send for the police. The police were accordingly called and Toolsie Persaud was found to be in possession of a revolver. The police took Small and Toolsie Persaud away, as also the box recovered from Small and the revolver found on the person of Toosie Persaud. Paul's story is corroborated by Police Supt. Isaacs who saw Toolise Persaud and another young mart in police custody and was informed that a loaded revolver had been recovered from Toolsie Persaud's pocket. Toolsie Persaud was also called as a witness but regarding his testimony we need say nothing more than it is a tissue of lies. Toolsie Persaud has a long criminal record and he was convicted of criminal offences upon several occasions. He, however, denied his previous convictions thinking, no doubt, that the police records were not readily available to confront him. The relevant police file was called and as soon as this circumstance became known to Toolsie Persaud he was forced to admit all his previous misdeeds.

146. We cannot give any credence to Small's story of a motor car full of guns for it is inconceivable that anyone guilty of hoarding a large quantity of unlicensed fire arms should have the temerity to summon the police for the express purpose of advertising the unlawful act of having made an unprovoked assault on an innocent passer-by. It is, therefore, more probable that Small was found carrying a box which bore the appearance of having been looted and the somewhat over-zealous farmers guarding the Attorney-General's house apprehended him and gave him one or two blows (Supt. Isaacs said that Small's arm was swollen). Small cried out and Paul stopped the unruly behaviour and sent for the police. It is unnecessary to dwell further on this unsavoury episode which has none of the significance attached to it by some of the parties at the hearing.

# CHAPTER VII

## CONCLUSIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

147. We may conclude by briefly setting out our conclusions:

(1) The disturbances of February 16 were not the result of a deliberate plan formulated by any individual or body of individuals to overthrow by force the Government of British Guiana established by law. The riots resulting in the destruction of, and damage to, property were clearly not a manifestation of rebellion or civil war.

(2) There is no evidence of the disturbances being the direct result of a racial conflict, though a certain measure of tension between the East Indian and African races which had lately become noticeable acted as a contributory factor.

(3) Political rivalries and the frustrated ambitions of some of Dr. Jagan's erstwhile supporters\*\* fostered a sense of resentment and antagonism towards Dr. Jagan and his party. Other factors which contributed to a state of mounting discontent were:

- (a) a feeling of insecurity experienced by the commercial and moneyed classes, because they believed that Dr. Jagan's political convictions were increasingly assuming a Communist pattern;
- (b) a sense of fear that the country would obtain independence under a Government with obvious Communist leanings;

(c) the failure of the Government to remove the grievances of its civil servants who were asking for higher salaries and better conditions of service;

(d) the hostility of Trade Union leaders, some of whom, e.g., Ishmael, had personal grievances against Dr. Jagan and his Ministers.

[\*\* *Editor's Note: This is illogical. The Commission apparently meant to state "opponents".*]

The disturbances were confined to Georgetown where the bulk of Dr. Jagan's political opposition, the civil servants and the trade unionists, are located. (The sugar estate workers outside Georgetown, about 20,000 in number, it will be recalled, did not strike.)

(4) The outburst of February 16, was comparable to an act of spontaneous combustion when some highly fermented substance is subjected to long pressures. The mass of discontented and idle workers on strike was inexorably driven by the sheer force of bored monotony to find release in rowdyism and rioting. The false rumour of a child's death caused by the deleterious effects of tear gas furnished the immediate stimulus to violence.

(5) The rioters were not drawn from one particular race or political party, nor were the victims chosen from any one class. The looters belonged to the category of irresponsible individuals consisting for the most part of hooligans and criminals, who in moments of excitement and mass hysteria throw away the inhibitions of a civilised society and seize the opportunity of preying upon their fellow citizens.

(6) The police performed their extremely difficult and onerous task to the best of their ability and capacity. If they failed in maintaining law and order on February 16, they cannot be blamed, for in no country is it possible to have available a police force large enough to control a sudden and extraordinary outbreak of violence on such an extensive scale.

(7) The army responded to the call with admirable promptness and handled the situation firmly and effectively without using more force than was absolutely necessary.

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

148. One policeman was shot dead by the rioters and 39 more were injured. Of the rioters and looters, four men lost their lives as a result of shooting, and 41 were injured.

149. We cannot take leave of this matter without placing on record our sense of gratitude to Mr. Kenneth Potter, Counsel to the Commission, whose indefatigable energy in securing, collating, and marshalling the voluminous evidence, both oral and documentary, won our admiration. We were extremely fortunate in having his assistance, for the task with which we were entrusted could not have been accomplished with such expedition and thoroughness.

without his clarity of mind and the unbounded energy which he bestowed upon it. We are greatly indebted to our Secretary Mr. D. A. Skinner of the Colonial Office, whose organising ability, resourcefulness and ceaseless toil were of incalculable help to us both in our work and our journeys to and from Georgetown. Mr. E. Burke, Liaison Officer and the staff under him performed their task with admirable competence. And lastly, we must acknowledge with a sense of gratitude the contribution of the Secretariat staff under the supervision of Miss Ruby Harry. Their competent and uncomplaining willingness to work late into the night made it possible for a verbatim transcript of each day's oral evidence to be made available for our study upon time following morning. This necessitated the transcribing, correcting and cyclo-styling of a hundred or more foolscap pages every day and the punctual rendering of this essential service was therefore no mean achievement.

*(Signatures)*

H. WYNN PARRY.  
E.O. ASAFU-ADJAYE.  
G.D. KHOSLA.

## **APPENDIX I**

WARRANT APPOINTING THE HONOURABLE SIR HENRY WYNN PARRY and others to inquire into certain matters concerning British Guiana.

I, the Right Honourable Reginald Maulding, Member of Parliament, one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, by virtue and in exercise of all powers enabling me in that behalf, do hereby direct and declare as follows: X

1. I HEREBY APPOINT The Honourable Sir Henry Wynn Parry, Knight, Sir Edward Asafu-Adjaye, Knight, and The Honourable Justice Gopal Das Khosla to be a Commission of Inquiry for the purpose of inquiring into the recent disturbances in British Guiana and the events leading up to them and to report thereon.

2. AND I FURTHER APPOINT The Honourable Sir Henry Wynn Parry to be Chairman of the said Commission of Inquiry.

3. The Chairman may appoint a person to be Secretary of the said Commission of Inquiry and such other persons to assist the said Commission of Inquiry as he may consider necessary.

4. Any two of the members of the said Commission of Inquiry shall form a quorum for the purpose of discharging any of the functions (other than that of reporting) of the Commission.

5. The said Commission of Inquiry may make such rules for their own guidance and the conduct and management of the proceedings before them and the times and places for their sittings as they may from time to time think fit.

6. The said Commission of Inquiry shall have the powers of the Supreme Court of British Guiana X  
(a) to summon witnesses;  
(b) to examine witnesses on oath;  
(c) to call for the production of books and documents.

7. X (1) All persons summoned to attend and give evidence, or to produce books, plans, or documents, at any sitting of the Commission, shall be bound to obey the summons served upon them as fully in all respects as witnesses are bound to obey subpoenas issued from the Supreme Court, and shall be entitled to the like expenses as if they had been summoned to attend the Supreme Court on a Criminal trial, if the same shall be allowed by the Commission, but the Commission may disallow the whole or any part of such expenses in any case, if they think fit. The procedure for the payment of such witnesses shall be the same as nearly may be for the payment of witnesses in the Supreme Court, and they shall be paid at such time and in such manner as the Commission may direct.

(2) if any person X

(a) on being summoned as a witness before the Commission makes default in attending; or

(b) being in attendance as a witness refuses to take an oath legally required by the Commission to be taken, or to produce any document in his power or control legally required by the Commission to be produced by him, or to answer any question to which the Commission may legally require an answer; or

(c) does any other thing which would, if the Commission had been a court of law having power to commit for contempt, had been contempt of that court;

The Chairman of the Commission may certify the offence of that person under his hand to the Supreme Court of British Guiana, and that Court may thereupon inquire into the alleged offence and after hearing any witnesses who may be produced against or on behalf of the person charged with the offence, and after hearing any statement that may be offered in defence, punish or take steps for the punishment of that person in like manner as if he had been guilty of contempt of the Court.

8. Any person who shall wilfully give false evidence before the said Commission of Inquiry concerning the subject matter of such inquiry shall be guilty of perjury under section 327 of the Criminal Law (Offences) Ordinance of British Guiana, and be liable to be prosecuted and punished accordingly.

9. No member of the Commission of Inquiry shall be liable to an prosecution, action or suit in respect of any thing done by him as such member.

10. No person giving evidence before the said Commission of Inquiry shall be compellable to incriminate himself, and every such person shall, in respect of any evidence given by him before the said Commission of Inquiry, be entitled to all the privileges to which a witness giving evidence before the Supreme Court of British Guiana is entitled in respect of evidence given by him before such Court.

11. X (1) Subject to the provisions of sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) of this paragraph, the Inquiry shall be held in public.

(2) If in their opinion it is expedient in the public interest so to do, the Commission may direct that any part of the Inquiry shall be held in private.

(3) The Commission shall determine who may be present at any time when any part of the Inquiry is being held in private.

12. The Commission may authorise any person giving evidence or any person who appears to them to have an interest in the subject of the Inquiry to be represented at the Inquiry or any part thereof.

13. This Warrant may be amended, added to or revoked by any further Warrant supplemental thereto under the hand of one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

Given under my hand this eleventh day of May, 1962.

*R. Maulding*

Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies.

## APPENDIX II

### BRITISH GUIANA COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

# RULES OF PROCEDURE

#### *Rules applicable to all sittings*

1. All witnesses' statements and documents shall be submitted to Counsel for the Commission, who shall adduce what he considers material.

2. Any person or his representative may apply to the Commission if not satisfied with the decision of Counsel for the Commission not to present to the Commission the evidence offered by that person.

3. Counsel representing the witness shall be allowed to examine the witness and so shall such representatives of interested parties as satisfy the Commission that they have an interest in examining the particular witness.

4. Counsel for the Commission shall re-examine the witness after other examinations by representatives of interested parties.

#### *Rules applicable to private sittings*

5. No persons shall be present other than the Commissioner, the Secretary to the Commission, Counsel for the Commission, the witness and his Counsel, and such other Counsel (or persons appearing without Counsel) as shall satisfy the Commission that they have an interest in the evidence of the particular witness.

6. Witnesses or their Counsel may apply to the Commission if they wish to exclude any person or his Counsel claiming to be interested in their evidence.

7. Each witness shall provide one copy of his statement for Counsel for the Commission at least three clear days before he gives his evidence, and Counsel for the Commission shall not at any time show that statement to any person whatsoever without the authority of the witness or his Counsel.

8. The witness's statement shall be read by Counsel for the Commission after the witness has been sworn and has tendered three copies of the statement for the use of the Commissioners. The witness shall provide one copy for himself and may (but shall not be required to) provide further copies for the use of other interested parties.

9. At the conclusion of the Inquiry Counsel for the Commission shall return to each witness Counsel's copy for his statement.

10. Examination of a witness by Counsel for other interested parties (or by an interested party in person) in accordance with Rule 3 may be allowed X

(a) upon matters arising out of the witness's statement; and

(b) upon such other matters as in the opinion of the Commission are within their terms of reference.

11. Examination of the witness by his own Counsel and re-examination of the witness by Counsel for the Commission shall be on such matters as the Commission may allow, being matters relevant to their terms of reference.

12. No note of any of the evidence shall be taken by any person other than the Commissioners, Counsel and the Secretary to the Commission.

## APPENDIX III

### LIST OF WITNESSES EXAMINED

Individuals listed who are marked with an asterisk gave their evidence in private session.

#### *I. Government Ministers and officials*

Mr. W. G. Stoll (Commissioner of Inland Revenue).

Mr. R. Singh (General Register Office).

Mr. A. I. Crum-Ewing (Clerk of Legislative Council).

Dr. C. B. Jagan, Premier.

Mr. W. P. D'Andrade (Secretary to the Treasury).

Dr. C. R. Jacob (Minister of Finance).

\*His Excellency the Governor Sir Ralph Grey.

\*Mr. B. S. Rai (Ex-Minister for Home Affairs).

#### *2. Representatives of Political Parties*

Mr. H. Green (People's National Congress).

Miss M. A. Jardim (United Force).

Mr. P. S. d'Aguiar (United Force).

Mr. L. F. S. Burnham (People's National Congress).

Dr. C. B. Jagan (People's Progressive Party).

#### *3. Police*

Mr. W. R. V. Weber, Commissioner of Police.

Acting Senior Superintendent M. L. Barrow.

Assistant Superintendent C. G. Glasgow.

Acting Assistant Commissioner (Administration) E. N. M. Isaacs.

Deputy Superintendent C. Haynes.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crime) F. T. De Abreu.

Senior Superintendent I. L. Puttock.

Senior Superintendent J. A. Phoenix.

Police Constable E. A. Forde.

Cadet Officer J. W. Lashley.

Inspector C. A. Gravesande.

Corporal C. J. Bentinck.

Assistant Superintendent W. Yaw.

Inspector S. S. Jackson.

Inspector A. Hoosein.

Inspector J. Jarine.

Corporal C. Persaud.

Special Constable G. Semple.

Detective Corporal W. Swamy.

Superintendent R. De Freitas.

Inspector St. Clair Fraser.

Assistant Superintendent C. A. Roberts.

Detective Corporal R. Jamieson.

Detective Constable M. Hoosein.

Detective Corporal N. G. Brandon.

Senior Superintendent K. Beharry Singh.  
Constable A. Aaron.  
Sergeant A. A Smith.  
Corporal W. H. Thompson.  
Constable S. Pilgrim.  
Constable P. Jagmohan.  
Sergeant E. Williams.  
Detective Constable E. McAlmont.  
Detective Constable J. Wilson.  
\*Inspector A. H. Creavalle.

#### *4. British Forces personnel*

Major M. F. A. Wilson.  
Lieutenant D. H. Neville.  
Sergeant A. M. Herbert.  
Corporal B. Restall.  
Corporal A. Hadfield.  
\*Lieutenant Colonel D. J. Warren.

#### *5. Fire Brigade*

Chief Fire Officer J. T. Atkinson.  
Sub-Officer H. Norton.  
Fireman H. Inniss.  
Fireman I. Singh.

#### *6. Electricity Corporation*

Mr. C. A. Alexander.  
Mr. P. H. Huggins.  
Mr. R. F. Moriah.  
Mr. M. Yassin.

#### *7. Water Works*

Mr. H. R. B. Bentley.

#### *8. Hospital*

Mr. I. Persaud.  
Mr. R. David.  
Mr. H. Joseph.  
Mr. T. Dyal.  
Mr. N. C. Jain.

#### *9. Commercial Community*

Mr. V. J. Fitt.  
Mr. D. Khalil.  
Mr. G. Kawall.  
Mr. C. R. Jacob.  
Mr. A. Hardinge.

Mr. W. Mongal.  
Mr. A. St. Hill.  
Mr. J. Thani.  
Mr. M. Kirpalani.  
Miss S. Wong.  
Mr. C. Mayers.  
Mr. A. Parsram.  
Mr. S. Campbell.  
Mr. R. Maraj.  
Mr. F. D. Widdup.  
Mr. G. Singh.  
Mr. A. K. Kalamudeen.  
Mr. A. Deygoo.  
Mr. G. Edwards.  
Mr. P. Soloman.  
Mr. W. Johannies.  
Senator A. Tasker.  
Mr. H. Greathead.  
Mr. J. E. Lawrence.  
Mr. B. A. Baxter.  
Mr. G. A. King.  
Mr. W. S. Gomes.  
Mr. J. St. F. Dare.  
Mr. J. Jardim.  
Mr. H. N. Couchman.  
Mr. J. Persaud.  
Mr. S. M. de Franca.  
Mr. H. L. Steele (President, Chamber of Commerce).  
Mr. F. W. V. Green (Executive Officer, Chamber of Commerce).  
Mr. C. Figueira.  
Mr. M. B. Gajraj.  
Mr. P. B. Hibbins.  
Mr. C. Bettencourt-Gomes.  
Mr. J. H. Rodrigues.  
Mr. C. Vieira.  
Senator Miss M. A. Jardim.  
Mr. P. S. d=Aguiar.

#### *10. Trade Union Representatives*

Mr. G. Edwards (Clerical and Commercial Workers Union).  
Mr. S. M. de Franca (Clerical and Commercial Workers Union).  
Mr. W. G. Stoll (Civil Servants Association).  
Mr. A. Jackson (Post Office Workers Union).  
Mr. D. P. Sankar (Man Power Citizens Association, British Guiana Headmen=s Union, Clerical and Commercial Workers Union and Trades Union Council).  
Mr. R. A. A. Ishmael (Trades Union Council).  
Mr. C. Charran (Man Power Citizens Association).  
Mr. A. P. McLean (Labour Union and Trades Union Council).  
Inspector A. H. Creavalle (Police Federation).

#### *11. Insurance Companies*

Mr. R. E. Pairaudeau.

Mr. J. H. B. Moore.  
Mr. H. A. M. Brassington.  
Mr. A. J. Hale.  
Mr. E. M. G. Austin.  
Mr. O. R. Green.  
Mr. H. McCowan.  
Mr. A. G. Fernandes.  
Mr. J. F. Ferraz.

12. *Others*

Mr. H. Singh.  
Mr. G. Sewrattan.  
Mr. R. Singh.  
Mr. D. Douglas.  
Mr. R. Griffith.  
Mrs. A. Demonick.  
Mr. C. Small.  
Mr. K. Paul.  
Mr. B. Ramsaroop.  
Mr. C. Delphin.

Mr. P. E. W. Hesketh.  
Mr. C. Nascimento.  
Mr. M. S. Vincent.  
Mr. I. Hughes.  
Mr. R. C. Hill.  
Mr. B. B. McG. Gaskin.  
Mr. P. E. Armstrong.  
Master C. Waithe.  
Mr. C. Lewis.  
Mrs. P. Hunter.  
Mr. R. Licorish.  
Mr. I. Morris.  
Mr. T. Persaud.  
Mr. E. N. W. Hutchinson  
Mr. C. A. Bourne

## APPENDIX IV

### LIST OF EXHIBITS

Date	Exhibit	
22nd May	1A	Map of part of Georgetown.
22nd May	1B	Map of part of Georgetown.
28th May	2	Copy of Circular dated 13.2.1962.
28th May	3	Letter from M.P.C.A. with circular attached.
31st May	4	Wire-mesh Mask.
6th June	5	Copy of Thunder newspaper of 10.2.1962.
6th June	6	Circular letter of United Force dated 6.2.1962.
6th June	7	Pamphlet marked D.C.O.X 16,819.
6th June	8	Pamphlet marked D.C.O.X 16,818.
7th June	9	Request for Military Assistance.
8th June	10(a)	Broadcasts of the Premier.
8th June	10(b)	Broadcasts of Dr. Jacob.
8th June	10(c)	Broadcasts of Senator Hubbard.
8th June	10(d)	Broadcasts of News Conference of Premier.
8th June	11	Copy of letter from Executive Officer of Chamber of Commerce to the Minister of Trade and Industry dated 13.3.1962.
12th June	12	Broadcast of News Item of 9.2.1962.
12th June	13	Broadcast of News Item of 12.2.1962.
12th June	14	Broadcast of Radio Talk by Mr. L. F. S. Burnham on 14.2.1962.
12th June	15	Broadcast of Radio Talk by Mr. P. S. d=Aguiar on 15.2.1962.
12th June	16	Pamphlet "If Kelshall, Benn and Jagan win, we are lost."
12th June	17	Copy of <i>Daily Chronicle</i> of 14.5.1962.
12th June	18	Copy of <i>Daily Chronicle</i> of 15.5.1962.
13th June	19	Copy of <i>Evening Post</i> of 6.2.1962.
13th June	20	Pamphlet "T.U. Leaders bought out."
15th June	21	Table of Population Statistics.
15th June	22	Insurance information from Hand-in-Hand Mutual Fire
15th June	23	Endorsement incorporating revised explosion conditions of Hand-in-Hand Mutual Fire.
15th June	24	Letter dated 28.2. 962 from Hand-in-Hand Mutual Fire to Policy Holders.
15th June	25	Insurance information from British Guiana and Trinidad Mutual Fire.
15th June	26	Endorsement incorporating revised explosion conditions of British Guiana and Trinidad Mutual Fire.
15th June	27	Insurance information from British Guiana Insurance Agencies, Ltd.
15th June	28	Insurance information from Royal Insurance Co., Ltd.
15th June	29	Insurance information from Antony Gibbs & Sons (Insurance) Ltd.

15th June	30	Insurance information from New India Assurance Co. Ltd.
15th June	31	Insurance information front Alliance Assurance Co. Ltd.
15th June	32	Insurance information from Netherlands Insurance Co. Ltd.
15th June	33	Insurance information from Caledonian Insurance Co.
15th June	34	Insurance information from Home Insurance Co.
15th June	35	Insurance information from Phoenix Assurance Co. Ltd.
18th June	36	Letter dated 2.1.1962 from Chairman P.P.P. to Group Secretaries.
18th June	37	Letter dated 19.2.1962 from Premier to the T.U.C.
18th June	38	Statement from Royal Navy signed by Commodore J. E. L. Martin and Commander J. P. Parker.
19th June	39	Extracts from Official Gazettes of 7.10.1961 and 14.10.1961.
19th June	39(a)	Map of British Guiana showing Electoral Districts.
19th June	40	Letter dated 28.11.1961 from Mr. Justice Fraser to the Speaker.
19th June	41	Letter dated 30.11.1961 from Mr. Justice Fraser to the Speaker.
19th June	42	Judgment of the Supreme Court dated 27.11.1961.
20th June	43	Letter dated 28.4.1962 from Mr. Justice Fraser to the Speaker.
20th June	44	Judgment of the Supreme Court dated 28.4.1962.
22nd June	45	Information in support of the Premier's evidence.
25th June	46	Album of photographs.
25th June	47	Financial information.

## APPENDIX V

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECHES, ETC., BY DR. JAGAN AND MEMBERS OF THE P.P.P. SHOWING  
COMMUNIST LEANINGS

Big business will always be opposed to this Government because it will mean their ultimate destruction. Ultimately we will destroy them and that is why Big Business are afraid of us.≡ (Statement by Mr. Mann, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Communications in Legislative Assembly, 15th May, 1962.)

It is easier to stop tomorrow than to stop Communism.≡ (Mr. Benn.)

To call a man a Communist is to pay him the highest compliment you can.≡ (Mr. Hubbard.)

My Hon. Friend . . . . has attempted . . . . to refute Marxism. This is a futile attempt. Learned University Professors, of course of the bourgeois tradition, professional mercenaries, politicians, common vilifiers, have all tried to refute the unassailable logic of Marxism They have all failed.≡ (Mr. Jacob, *Hansard*, 20th October, 1961.)

The poverty in this country and in countries like ours is due to the fact that the economies are tied to those of the capitalist-exploiting countries of Europe and North America.≡ (*ibid.*)

We will attempt to build a new society X a society which exists in more than one-third of the world today; a society in which there will be freedom and plenty for everybody. That is a genuine socialist society.≡ (*ibid.*)

The greatest weapon of the Fascists is anti-Communism. Hitler built up a ghastly fear of Communism. He was bitterly anti-Communist. Under the hysteria of anti-Communism, people forget the real dangers embodied in the Fascist himself.≡' (Page 6, *Hitler⇒ Force in British Guiana* by Moses Bhagwan, published by the P.P.P. from Freedom House.)

We must not be divided on the issue of Communism. Communism is winning throughout the world X it will win everywhere.≡ (Speech by Dr. Jagan to P.P.P. Annual Congress, April 1962, reported in *Sunday Times*, May 13th, p.4)

We are a Socialist party and nationalisation of the sugar industry, and indeed of all major industries, is our objective. In the interim, while British Guiana is still tied to British imperialism, with limited constitutional powers, certain reforms should be undertaken to break the back of imperialism.≡ (Page 29. *Forbidden Freedom* by Dr. C. B. Jagan, published by Lawrence and Wishart, 1954.)

## APPENDIX VI

### EXTRACTS FROM THE LOCAL PRESS CONTAINING ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA

# THURSDAY 1st February

## *CHRONICLE*

Headline

AGovernment to Squeeze Dollars from Workers.≡

## *POST*

Headline

ABudget X It's Staggering≡

Page 3 Article

ABudget is in keeping with Government X Marxist. Bottle of Rum will now cost \$3.10.≡

Town Talk

AArchangel Jacob Messenger of Death.≡ AMalice, Meanness and Malevolence thrown in by Dr. Jacob.≡

## *SATURDAY 3rd February*

## *CHRONICLE*

Front page

Letter to Burnham and d'Aguiar by E. S. Phillips AI suggest that you both appear on one platform . . . a general uprising against this budget and will force Jagan's Government to either amend their ideas or resign.≡

# SUNDAY 4th February

## *CHRONICLE*

Headline

ATax Avalanche will Crush Working Class.≡

Story

AThe small working class man to be soaked to the tune of some \$9 million.

Inner Headline

ASlave Whip Budget.≡

Leader

ABudget is Marxist.≡ A Avindictive and malicious spirit prowls through the budget.≡

## *GRAPHIC*

Article

AKeep that hand out of my pocket≡ critical.

# MONDAY 5th February

## *GRAPHIC*

Sub-headline

AThe Budget X First step Leftward.≡ Taxation of Companies will make them cut down operations and so increase unemployment.

*POST*

Editorial

AFood Tax X It cannot help hitting the poor man too hard for him to bear.≡

Page 3

Highly critical letters.

## TUESDAY 6th February

*CHRONICLE*

Leader

The entire country has been thrown in crisis bordering panic. Defenders of Freedom letter signed by C. I. Sebastian and E. N. Hutchison calls for joint action on part of P.N.C. and U.F. to Abuild and preserve a way of life such as we should be prepared to live when we become independent.≡

## WEDNESDAY 7th February

*CHRONICLE*

Letter

ANiquitous Budget≡ and AStir yourselves X down with this shameful Budget. Down with the Government.≡

Open Letter to  
Prince Philip

Jagan Government is Communist, no Independence, etc.

*POST*

Page 3

Vindictive letters. Full page.

## FRIDAY 9th February

*CHRONICLE*

Letter

ABudget will bring misery to country.≡ EndsX AThis is trodden Democracy. Let's unite and fight for our rights.≡

Letter on back page

Open letter to Burnham and d=Aguiar Aall of us are agreed that we are faced with an eventual dictatorship. Dr. Jacob=s Radical Budget bears this out in no uncertain terms, etc., etc. Unite and save us all.≡

*POST*

Page Article

ADistrust and suspicion mixed with Hate≡ headline.

## *SATURDAY 10th February*

*CHRONICLE*

Headline

AUnite and Fight≡ report on mass meeting.

Centre Page Headline

ABudget will tax food from poor man's Mouth.≡

*POST*

Headline Page 1 AJagan Government Must Resign.≡

Page 2 Editorial: Tax on rum will result in Amore broken homes and delinquent children.≡

Page 3 Anti-Government letters.

*SUNDAY 11th February*

*CHRONICLE*

Headline Page 2 AEnd-of-Election Budget.≡

AIndependence will give them the power to finish with elections for good X They are impenitently and avowedly communists. If free elections are banned the constitution will be banned too.≡ AIf we could fight together at the barricade and hold back the gathering Storm we should be able to make the country safe for our children.≡

Page 5

Commentary: ADictatorship by Budget.≡ The dictatorial purpose of Jagan=s Government is proved beyond doubt by several tax proposals in the 1962 Budget, the weight of about 90 per cent. of which will fall on the working class etc., etc. Now more than ever before the red claws of Jagan's Communism are exposed naked for all to see. And this is only the smoke, the fire comes later. If now, while Britain still exercises sovereignty here, Jagan can move openly to confiscate people's property and their money and destroy our Free Press, what wouldn't he do with the full powers of independence he brings in his Communist forces here to back up with open Communist dictatorship?

Centre Editorial ABig Shots. Little Shots≡ X If, as has been suggested the Government set out to create tension in order to underscore the poverty of the economy and incite popular clamour for independence then they shouldn't be surprised at the complete fulfilment of their expectation. Marxism believes in the inevitability of violence as the midwife of an old society when it is pregnant with a new one.

Article Page 1

AWhat the Tax Means.≡ AWhat it means is reduce all to a position of servitude so that only the State will be wealthy so that the State which now controls your money will control your services and finally your family, your children.≡

*ARGOSY*  
Headline

A Government Proposed Muzzle of Press, Radio.≡

## *WEDNESDAY 14th February*

*CHRONICLE*

Leading Article A Radio Tied or Free≡ threatens BGS if Jagan is allowed to continue its use.

*GRAPHIC*

Jackson (President, Post Office Workers' Union) says A Dr. Jagan wants to substitute British imperialism in the country with Soviet imperialism.≡

## *THURSDAY 15th February*

*CHRONICLE*

Leader

A What we think. The Only Way Out.≡ A The resignation of the Government is necessary to the restoration of the nation's normal life and the safeguarding of the working classes against victimisation.≡ Spreads rumour of dismissal of Civil Servants and refuses to accept Premier's denial . A This is a Government of foxy grey beards.≡ A This is a veteran junta misruling the country.≡

## *FRIDAY 16th February*

*CHRONICLE*

Editorial

Blames Government for the leaders breaking the ban. Declares that crowd was right.

## APPENDIX VII

### THE BUDGET

#### A. Summary of the tax proposals in the Budget Speech made by the Minister of Finance on 31st January, 1962

1. Increased import duties on not-essentials (e.g., alcoholic drinks, tobacco, concentrates for non-alcoholic drinks, tea, motor spirit, perfumery, cosmetics, dress fabrics, footwear, glassware and chinaware, jewellery, radios, refrigerators and other household electrical appliances and motor cars) and on items for which adequate substitutes could be supplied from local production (e.g., meat, fish, butter, milk (excluding condensed milk and milk-based infant foods), cheese, fruit, fruit juices, jams, coffee, confectionery, prepared paints, toilet soap, paper bags, and some varieties of clothing).

2. Introduction of export duty of about 4 per cent. f.o.b. greenheart timber.

3. Increased excise duties on rum and other spirits (from \$9.60 to \$14.40 a proof gallon) and on beer (from 75c. to \$1.40 a liquid gallon).

4. Increased licence duties for Motor Vehicle Drivers; Money lenders; Pawnbrokers; Bonded Warehouses; Liquor Licences.

5. Increased Auction dues.

6. Increased Stamp duties.

#### 7. Income Tax

##### I. PERSONAL

- (a) Reduction of personal allowance from \$900 to \$750.
- (b) Reduction of wife allowance from \$750 to \$600.
- (c) Introduction of flat rate child allowance of \$300 in place of 3-tier system of \$250/350/500 according to age.
- (d) Limitation to four of number of allowances for dependent relatives and children.

##### II. COMPANIES

- (a) Minimum income tax payment to be based on an assumed income of 2 per cent. of turnover in the case of mining, manufacturing or mercantile businesses (*not* agriculture) even where a loss occurs, but adjustable against future profits.
- (b) Restriction of provisions regarding trade losses to allow only the indefinite carry-forward of loss from the same source but disallowing the set-off of loss against other income in the same year.
- (c) Removal of present tax concessions for new enterprises and introduction of new provision under which such new enterprises as were primarily concerned with mining, manufacturing or processing activities will be allowed to write-off 70 per cent. of any capital expenditure incurred during the first five years of their operation in British Guiana as a charge on their current profit.

- (d) Reduction of initial allowances for non-tax-holiday companies from 40 per cent. to 20 per cent.
- (e) Disallowance of entertainment expenditure.
- (f) Allowance on expenditure on advertising to be limited to 3 of 1 per cent. of turnover and to exclude general or "prestige" advertising.
- (e) Disallowance as an expense of any excessive charges in respect of directors' emoluments.

8. Introduction of Capital Gains Tax on net property at ordinary income tax rates with highest rate of tax fixed at 45 per cent.

9. Introduction of Annual Tax on net property at rates increasing from 2 per cent. per annum on the first \$150,000 of property in excess of \$50,000, to 12 per cent. on property in excess of \$1.

10. Introduction of a Gift Tax on transfers of property *inter vivos* at rates similar to the existing Estate Duty.

11. Introduction of compulsory savings scheme of 5 per cent. of wage and salary income and 10 per cent. of other income, the income of self-employed in excess of \$5,000 to be regarded as falling in the higher rate. Income under \$1,200 per annum to be exempt. Companies make a contribution of 10 per cent. flat on all profits with no exempt income. Government bonds to be issued to contributors, repayable at the end of seven years with tax-free interest at 3.75 per cent.

*B. Modifications announced by the Premier in his broadcast of 14th February, 1962*

1. Removal of the increase on duties on most of the imported commodities taxed. The imported commodities on which tax remained were motor-cars, spirits, tobacco, coffee extract and concentrates.

2. Modification of the Compulsory Savings Scheme by raising the lower limit from \$1,200 per annum to \$3,600 per annum.

## APPENDIX VIII

### CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE DISTURBANCES

#### 1961

Tuesday, 18th July	New Constitution came into effect (with the exception of Article 22 and Parts III and VI dealing with the Executive and the Public Service).
Friday, 4th August	Guillebaud report on Wages, Salaries and Conditions of Service in the Public Service of British Guiana submitted to Governor.
Monday, 21st August	Elections held under the new Constitution.
Tuesday, 5th September	Remainder of new Constitution brought into force by General Order No. 63 and new Constitution became fully effective.
Thursday, 14th September	Guillebaud Report released, and Unions and Staff Associations requested to submit comments by the 16th October, 1961.
Friday, 6th October	Opening of Legislative Assembly. Demonstration outside the Public Buildings. All P.N.C. members left the Chamber when the Governor began to read the speech from the throne.
Monday, 18th December	Extension of Exchange Control restrictions to payments to countries within the Sterling area.

#### 1962

Tuesday, 2nd January	Statement by Minister of Finance on the Government's decision on the Guillebaud recommendations.
Wednesday, 24th January	Meeting between Premier and representatives of Unions and Staff Associations at which the Guillebaud recommendations were discussed. Premier makes certain concessions.
Wednesday, 31st January	Minister of Finance presents Budget proposals to Legislative Assembly and announces postponement of debate thereon until 12th February, so that the public may have time to study proposals.
Sunday, 4th February	P.P.P. meeting at La Penitence Market. Premier explains Budget proposals. Hostile reception. Attacked with bottles and stones.
Monday, 5th February	Public appeal by Premier to Savings Bank depositors not to withdraw their deposits.
Tuesday, 6th February	Special meeting of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce condemns most of the Budget items and appoints committee to report on what steps to take.

Wednesday, 7th February	Arrival of Duke of Edinburgh. Meeting at Legislative Assembly. Premier met by hostile crowd on leaving Public Buildings. Large crowds demonstrate against Budget and Government with placards and posters outside Public Buildings. Press reports that the T.U.C. have denounced the Budget.
Friday, 9th February	Legislative Assembly meets and considers Constitution Committee. Opposition stage walk out. Large crowds in hostile demonstration around Public Buildings. Government announce further postponement of Budget debate to unspecified date to allow of numerous memoranda being studied and for further consultations. The Government invites the three Chambers of Commerce and T.U.C. to make representations on Budget. Press reports that the T.U.C. have decided to call all workers to ADown tools≡ as from 2 p.m. on Tuesday, 13th February. The Premier makes a statement to the House of Assembly about evidence of a plot to overthrow the Government and to assassinate himself and others of his close supporters. Premier met by hostile crowd on leaving the Public Building. U.F. meeting at Bourda Green.
Saturday, 10th February	The Premier gives Press Conference over B.G.B.S. Warns of plot to overthrow the Government.
Sunday, 11th February	C.S.A. and Government workers hold mass protest demonstration and march. Meeting at Parade Ground on their demands for wages, etc. P.N.C. hold mass meeting at Bourda Green. Press notice published calling for Trade Union ADown Tools≡ demonstrations from 2 p.m. on Tuesday, 13th February.
Monday, 12th February	Police Emergency Plan put into operation. A series of processions and meetings held by the United Force in the City, converging on the Public Buildings in the afternoon. Mass P.N.C. meeting at Bourda Green.

Tuesday, 13th February	Picketing of shops and large stores in Water Street. Civil Servants go on strike at 1 p.m. T.U.C. mass demonstration with C.S.A. participating at 2 p.m. Rumour of dismissal of Civil Servants spreads. T.U.C. calls for general strike at meeting. Premier denies rumour of dismissal of Civil Servants over B.G.B.S.
Wednesday, 14th February	General strike including essential services commences. British Guiana Volunteer Force embodied. Area around Public Buildings declared restricted by Proclamation by the Governor. Organised processions by United Force and People's National Congress. Premier announces in broadcast modifications of the Budget proposals.
Thursday, 15th February	General strike continues. Processions led by Burnham and d'Aguiar break Proclamation and march into prohibited area. Crowds dispersed only after the threat of tear smoke. T.U.C officials meet Minister of Finance and agree to submit recommendations in writing the following morning. Mass T.U.C. meeting at Parade Ground. Ishmael calls on crowd to go and picket the Electricity Corporation next morning. P.N.C. hold meeting following T.U.C. meeting.
Friday, 16th February	All shops closed. Demonstrations. Meeting at Parade Ground. Crowd marches on Electricity Corporation and Riot Squad uses tear smoke. Rumour that child has been killed starts. Electricity Corporation forced to close and Electricity supply fails. As a consequence water supply fails. Small demonstration at the Premier's house: 11.30 a.m. Between noon and 4.30 p.m. several demonstrations in the neighbourhood of Freedom House. Rifle fire used and several members of the Police Force wounded, one fatally. Between 3.10 and 4.15 p.m. three major fires started at Thani's and Kirpalani's stores. Arson and looting commences. State of Emergency proclaimed. Arrival of British troops around 2.30 p.m.

## APPENDIX IX

### BRIEF NOTES ON PERSONS WHO FIGURED IN THE INQUIRY

Dr. C. B. JAGAN. Premier and Minister of Development and Planning. Aged 44. Qualified dentist and B.Sc. Sociology (U.S. degrees). Indian. Elected Member of Legislative Council 1947, and appointed a Minister in 1953. Appointment revoked on suspension of the Constitution in 1953. Founder and leader of the People's Progressive Party. Elected Member of Legislative Council 1957 (Minister of Trade and Industry). Re-elected at 1961 elections and appointed Premier and Minister of Development and Planning.

Mrs. JAGAN. American of Czech extraction (*nee* Rosenberg). Met and married Dr. Jagan whilst he was a student in U.S.A. Former Member of Legislative Council (1950-53)\*\* and Minister (1957-61). Did not seek re-election 1961. General Secretary P.P.P.

B. H. BENN. Minister of Natural Resources. Aged 38. African Member of the Editorial Board of *Thunder*, weekly newspaper published by the People's Progressive Party. Elected Member of the Legislative Council for the Essequibo Islands and the Interior, 1957. Member of Legislative Assembly for Demerara Coast West, 1961.

B. S. RAI. Formerly Minister of Home Affairs. Aged 41. Indian. Joined British Guiana Civil Service, 1938. Resigned 1949. Elected Member of the Legislative Council for Central Demerara, 1957. Minister of Community Development and Education 1959. Elected Member of Legislative Assembly for Demerara Coast East (People's Progressive Party) 1961. Appointment as Minister of Home Affairs revoked June, 1962.

Dr. C. R. JACOB, Jr. Minister of Finance. Aged 45. Indian. Assistant General Secretary, P.P.P.; Secretary, PPP Education Trust; Press Relations Officer, P.P.P.; Member, Editorial Board, *Thunder*; Director, New Guiana Company Limited. Elected Member of Legislative Assembly for Vreed-en-Hoop (P.P.P.) 1961.

Dr. F. H. W. RAMSAHOYE. Attorney-General. Aged 32. Indian-African. Barrister. Member of Law Officers Department; then private practice with Mr. Burnham; then alone. Elected Member of Legislative Assembly for Canals Polder (P.P.P.) 1961.

L. F. S. BURNHAM, Q.C. Aged 40. African. Leader of Peoples National Congress. Elected Member, Georgetown Town Council, 1952; President, B.G. Labour Union, 1952-1956. Elected Member of the House of Assembly for Central Georgetown in 1953, and appointed Minister of Education. Appointment revoked following the suspension of the Constitution in 1953. Broke away from PPP to form his own party 1955. Elected Member of the Legislative Council for Central Georgetown, 1957. Member of Legislative Council for Central Georgetown, 1957. Member of Legislative Assembly for Ruimveldt, 1961. Mayor of Georgetown 1956-57 and 59.

P. S. D=AGUIAR. Aged about 50. Portuguese extraction. Leader of the United Force. Managing Director, d=Aguiar Bros. Ltd., Rum and Soft Drinks Merchants. Managing Director and founder of Banks Breweries, Ltd.; Chairman of Special Committee on Government Employees Wages and Member of Panel of Advisers to Labour Commissioner. Founder of Banks Brewery, Barbados. Bought *Daily Chronicle* 1961. Elected Member of Legislative Assembly for Georgetown Central 1961.

Senator A. G. TASKER, O.B.E. Aged 46. English. Director of Public Relations, Booker Group of Companies in British Guiana. Appointed to the Senate by the Governor, 1961, under Section 47 (2) (c) of the Constitution.

Senator Miss M. A. JARDIM. Aged 25. Assistant Personnel Officer, the Booker Company, 1961. Active work for the United Force. Appointed to the Senate by the Governor to represent the United Force, 1961, under Section 47 (2) (b) of the Constitution.

W. R. WEBER, Q.P.M., C.P.M. Commissioner of Police. Aged 53. Joined the British Guiana Police Force as a Sub-Inspector in 1928 and rose to the rank of Deputy Commissioner of Police in 1956. Appointed Commissioner of Police in 1959.

R. A. ISHMAEL. President, Trades Union Council, since 1960. General President, Man Power Citizens Association since 1954.

J. B. G. KELSHALL. Trinidadian. Aged 51. Private Secretary and Public Relations Officer to the Premier, 1961. Member of the General Council, P.P.P., 1961.

[\*\* Editor's Note: *The A1950-53" date in the text is incorrect. Mrs. Jagan was first elected in 1953.*]

## APPENDIX X

### STATEMENT OF TROOP MOVEMENTS

#### A. ARMY

*Friday, 16th February*

- 14.30 hrs. One Rifle Company (A Company) of the 1st Royal Hampshire Regiment stationed in camp at Atkinson Field arrived in Georgetown.
- 16.15 hrs. The first elements of reinforcements from Jamaica (Tactical Headquarters and two Rifle Companies of the 1st Royal Hampshire Regiment) arrived at Atkinson Field. These troops reached Georgetown at 19.00 hrs.

*Saturday, 17th February*

Balance of reinforcements from Jamaica arrived at Atkinson Field. The first company of the reinforcements from the United Kingdom reached Atkinson Field (Two Rifle Companies of the 1st East Anglian Regiment and one Rifle Company of the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment).

*Monday, 19th February*

United Kingdom reinforcement completed.

#### B. NAVY

*Friday, 16th February*

- 07.45 hrs. H.M.S Troubridge (Commander T. A. Q. Griffiths, R.N.) and H.M S Wizard (Commander D. J. Farquharsen, R.N. arrived outside the Abar≡ to Georgetown harbour.
- 16.45 hrs. H.M.S. Troubridge entered the harbour and secured alongside at Sprostons No. 1 jetty and immediately despatched an Internal Security Platoon to Police Headquarters.
- 17.05 hrs. H.M.S. Wizard secured alongside H.M.S. Troubridge and despatched an Internal Security Platoon to the Power Station.

*Saturday, 17th February*

16.40 hrs. H.M.S. Vigilant (Lieutenant Commander J D. B. McCarthy, R.N.) arrived and berthed alongside Sandbach Parker Wharf and despatched an Internal Security Platoon to relieve the Platoon from H.M.S. Troubridge.

18.10 hrs. H.M.S. Urchin (Captain T. T. Lewin, M.V.O., D.S.C., R.N.) berthed alongside H.M.S. Vigilant.

**APPENDIX XI**

**STATEMENT OF CASUALTIES AND DAMAGE SUSTAINED; CLAIMS MADE ON INSURANCE COMPANIES; AND TEAR GAS USED.**

**A. CASUALTIES**

*Killed*

Police			1
Civilians		4	

*Injured*

Police		39	
Civilians.		41*	

\* It should be noted that there may have been other civilian casualties which were not reported.

**B. DAMAGE**

*Business Premises*

Destroyed by fire		56	
Damaged			21
Damaged and looted		66	

*Market Stalls*

Damaged and looted		29	
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*Police Vehicles*

Damaged by fire			2 P.W.D. trucks
Otherwise damaged	3 cars		
	1 van		
	1 Land Rover		

*Private Vehicles*

Damaged by fire		5 cars	
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*Road Traffic Signs*

Damaged		51
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**C. CLAIMS MADE ON INSURANCE COMPANIES**

	\$	
Hand-in-Hand Mutual Fire Insurance	1,500,000	
B.G. and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance	2,238,814	
Royal Insurance Company		25,000
Anthony Gibbs & Son (Insurance) Ltd	5,668,543	
New India Assurance Company		942,879
Phoenix Assurance Company	1,030,000	
Total		11,405,236

**D. TEAR SMOKE USED DURING RIOT INCIDENTS**

L.R. Shells		60
S.R Shells		62
Speed heat and C.S. grenades	115	
Three-way grenades		24
1.5 Cartridges		33

# PART II

## **MEMORANDUM BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE BACKGROUND TO THE FEBRUARY 1962 DISTURBANCES**

In 1956, Mr. McGale, an expert from the I.L.O conducted a survey on unemployment and underemployment in British Guiana. He concluded that there were 18 percent of the labour force unemployed and noted that if there were no opportunities for employment, other than 7,000 new jobs arising from planned development, there could be by 1966 up to three times the number who were unemployed in 1956. This Report also disclosed that about 41 percent of the unemployed was concentrated in the urban areas. This distribution of the unemployed between town and country tended to aggravate tensions between the predominantly African urban population and the predominantly Indian rural population, especially since in the short-term period development was performed heavily concentrated on the agricultural and communication sectors (rather than on, say, industrialisation) which political leaders in the opposition criticised as a deliberate attempt to help Government supporters in the rural areas. (*See also paragraph 25 below*).

2. After the Elections in August 1957, elected Members of the Government stated publicly on several occasions both here and abroad that if the social and economic problems affecting the people of the country were not solved, an explosion would eventually occur. For example, this opinion was expressed and emphasised at a conference held in London in the summer of 1958 with the Colonial Office. (Representing British Guiana were the then Governor, Sir Patrick Renison, Financial Secretary, Mr. F.W. Essex, Minister of Trade and Industry, Dr. Jagan, and Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Edward Beharry). Because of the economic and consequential problems existing in the country, Dr. Jagan suggested that the old \$91 million 1954-1960 Development Programme should be revised and expanded to \$200 million, but his proposal was rejected. Instead it was decided that the Plan should be reviewed in the summer of the following year (1959).

3. Efforts to obtain development finance from other sources were made and the Swiss Bank in London indicated that they would be prepared to lend the British Guiana Government under a United Kingdom Government guarantee a sum amounting to 6 million pounds Sterling. The United Kingdom Government, however, stated that it was not in keeping with its policy to guarantee such loans. Following upon this refusal, Dr. Jagan sought permission of the British Government to make a direct approach for a loan to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank). This request was approved and a preliminary application was prepared at the Colonial Office and forwarded to the World Bank.

4. Dr. Jagan and Mr. Beharry (at the time Ministers of Trade and Industry and of Natural Resources respectively) then proceeded from London to Washington and had discussions with officials of the World Bank and U.S. Government agencies X the Development Loan Fund ((D.L.F.), the Export/Import Bank, International Cooperation Administration (I.C.A.), etc. Previous to this visit, an application was made in early 1958 to the D.L.F. for economic assistance amounting to US\$34 million for water control and road construction projects. Discussions of this application did not bear any fruit. The Controllers of the Fund expressed the view that the amounts involved were too large, but did not give any indication what sum was likely to be obtained and to what extent the application was to be modified. Discussions with the other agencies were equally fruitless.

5. Towards the end of 1958, an Economist from the World Bank, Mr. John Adler, visited British Guiana and in a confidential report suggested that any new Five-Year Development Programme was likely to be within \$110 million to \$125 million (B.W.I). On the eve of his departure from British Guiana, he said:

AI have been informed about the Government's tentative Development Plan for the next five- year period. It would be presumptuous for me to comment on the programme in detail but from what I have seen it is clear to me that the top priorities have been correctly selected. There is no question in my mind that the provision of more agricultural land through drainage and irrigation and the improvement and expansion of the transportation system, particularly through better and more roads, deserve top billing.≡

6. In early 1959, U.S. Government Officials from the State Department also visited British Guiana. Discussions on the Government's application for economic assistance were again held but no definite commitment was made.

7. In the summer of 1959 the present Five-Year 1960-1964 \$110 million Development Programme was approved in London. The Programme was limited to \$110 million on the advice of Mr. Berrill, a Cambridge Economist, who had come to British Guiana as an Adviser to the Government in early 1959. Mr. Berrill argued that at the then prevailing rate of interest (6 percent) British Guiana could not afford a bigger Programme and were it to embark on a larger Programme it would run into serious financial difficulties as too large a proportion of its recurrent budget would have to be devoted to the payment of debt charges (See Appendix 1). The elected Members of the Government did not share Mr. Berrill assumptions about the rate of economic growth for the future and projections of revenues and debt burden in the long-term(15-20 years) period. The Colonial Office admitted that the British Guiana Government needed a larger Development Programme to cope with its present social and economic problems, but expressed the view that neither was the British Government in a position to loan more than the sum of 8 million pounds Sterling (of which 4 million pounds was approved and 4 million pounds was to be considered later) nor was British Guiana in a position to finance a bigger programme.

8. Dr. Jagan argued for a bigger Development Programme on the basis of a lower rate of Interest. He was told that the British Government could not reduce this rate because of an Act of Parliament which determined the rate of interest on Treasury loans.

9. Dr. Jagan again visited Washington in the summer of 1959 and held talks with officials of the World Bank and U.S. Government Agencies. At a meeting with State Department officials he was told that a sum of about US\$6 million to US\$8 million would be made available to the British Guiana Government towards the cost of the construction of an interior road from Parika to Lethem. This did not in fact materialise. A request was also made to the Commodities Division Office of International Resources in the State Department in order that the country's imports of flour and stock-feed from the US (US\$3.5 million per annum) may be given under United States Public Law 480 so that the proceeds of the sale could be used for development projects. This request was turned down. It was explained that any assistance under the law must be over and above the existing value of imports. An approach was made to the Export Credit Corporation for these imports to be supplied on credit but this was also turned down on the ground that it cannot be justified since British Guiana had no currency difficulty to overcome. The Export/Import Bank was sounded out for help in financing equipment for a flour mill and a feed-mill. The response was not encouraging. The answer given was that congressional interests and U.S. flour millers were likely to be critical of such assistance.

10. At one stage a US official in British Guiana indicated that economic assistance might be forthcoming for the Tapacuma Drainage and Irrigation Project. Later, when the Project Report was ready Government was informed that assistance for this Project was not likely to be forthcoming because of possible congressional objections to a scheme which would be solely devoted to the cultivation of rice of which the U.S. has a large surplus.

11. An application to the Export/Import Bank in June 1961 for rice milling equipment X cleaning, drying and storage X amounting to about \$2 million (B.W.I.) has not yet been considered.

12. In 1959 together with the then Financial Secretary, Mr. F. W. Essex, Dr. Jagan visited the Federal Republic of Germany and held discussions there for economic assistance. In Italy discussions were held at about the

same time for economic assistance for the taking over of the Demerara Electric Company, now termed the B.G. Electricity Corporation. A small World Bank loan of \$2.25 million (B.W.I.) was approved in 1961. This was, however, to be used only for credit to private individuals and cooperative societies for the purchase of equipment and implements for agricultural, forestry and fishery development.

13. In the latter part of 1961 Dr. Jagan and the Minister of Trade and Industry visited Canada and the United States in search of economic aid. At about the same time the Minister of Natural Resources visited Germany, Italy and France for the same purpose.

14. Unfortunately, little besides technical assistance has materialised out of the Government's efforts to secure aid abroad.

One tangible offer of assistance was made. In the summer of 1960, the Cuban Government proposed a loan to the British Guiana Government of an initial sum of US\$5 million (at a rate of interest of 2 percent repayable in ten years in the form of timber products) to finance the establishment of an industrial timber project. The Cuban Government was also prepared to finance the external costs (cement, generating equipment, etc.) of a hydro-electric project estimated to cost about \$32 million (B.W.I.). There was resistance to these offers for political reasons from various quarters including the former General Secretary of the Trades Union Council (TUC). The British Government was of the view that such offers should be examined minutely and promised to pursue the matter with the Cuban Government. Unfortunately nothing more has been heard of this from the Colonial Office.

The amount of technical, as distinct from financial, assistance received from abroad, especially from the United Nations, is, however quite impressive. It included UN special fund assistance for a bar siltation project, a soil survey, an aerial magnetometer (geophysical) survey and a land development pre- investment survey. Each of these projects involved expenditure of UN funds exceeding BWI\$340,000. In addition, technical assistance in a wide field was received, e.g., in petroleum exploration, industrialisation, fiscal and financial policy, statistics, marketing, forest inventory, water resources (including hydro-electricity development, public administration and economic planning. Technical assistance in the field of social assistance, education and mineral resources development have also been approved.

#### **Contractor Finance:**

15. Having failed to obtain enough direct loans to finance the Development Programme, Government through the previous Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan) sought to obtain assistance in the form of "contractor finance". This attempt was successful to a certain degree. A Consortium made up of Associated Electrical Industries, Taylor Woodrow and International Combustion Company is financing the take-over and expansion of the Electricity Corporation. The Grupo Del Conte, a Venezuelan firm, is now engaged in the construction of a road from Parika to Makouria on the right bank of the Essequibo River as a result of a "contractor finance" arrangement with the Company.

#### **Attempts to block assistance to Government:**

16. While the Government was seeking to raise loans from abroad, attempts were and still being made to prevent such assistance being give. It has come to the knowledge of the Government that attempts have been made by persons close to the United Force to persuade the Grupo Del Conte not to undertake to finance any project here and to influence the World Bank not to grant any loans to the Credit Corporation. More recently, newspaper reports have indicated that Mr. L.F.S. Burnham, Q.C., the leader of the PNC, during his last visit to the US, some weeks ago, had urged that no US assistance should be given directly to the British Guiana Government, but rather that it should go to trade unions and cooperative societies. This is illustrative of the attitude of the opposition towards the Government's attempts to secure financial aid for the country's development.

#### **Budget:**

17. It was under these circumstances that the 1962 budget was introduced. Towards the end of 1961, it became clear that expenditure in 1962 would be much higher than the 1961 figure. Mr. Nicolas Kaldor, world

famous tax expert who had previously served on a United Kingdom Tax Commission and who had advised the Governments of India, Ceylon, Ghana, Mexico and more recently Turkey, was requested, through the United Nations to advise this Government. Most of Mr. Kaldor's recommendations were included in the budget proposals.

18. Responsible public opinion has commented very favourably on the budget. The very influential *New York Times* described the budget as Acourageous and sound.≡

Sir Jock Campbell, Chairman of Messrs. Booker Bros., McConnell and Company Limited, recently made the following comments on the budget:

AIIt clearly was, in intention, a serious attempt by the Government to get to grips with the formidable economic problems of the country by a hard programme of self-help. It was a radical budget, (what have the people of British Guiana got to be conservative about?) but not confiscatory.≡

Senator Tasker, the local Head of the Booker Group, had this to say:

AWe assessed it as a realistic attempt to grapple with the economic problems of British Guiana.≡

### **Opposition to Government and the Budget:**

19. Certain business interests, on whom the burden of taxation was likely to fall most heavily and who saw a threat to their privileged social and economic positions led an organised attack against the budget and used it as an excuse for a concerted attempt to overthrow the Government. These business interests were politically hostile to the Government as was clearly demonstrated during the 1961 election campaign. Sections of the working class who themselves would have benefitted indirectly from the fiscal measures which were proposed were used by the organisers of the disturbances. While these people claimed that they were opposing the budget, events proved that the attack on the budget was made a front for a more serious attempt to overthrow the Government by force and violence. This was clearly demonstrated after Government announced on February 14 that some of the budget proposals would to be withdrawn or modified. For the attack was then shifted from the budget to the Government itself. The overthrow of the Government was to be achieved in part by the creation of chaos and disorder. Electricity and water works, shops, stores and markets were to be closed down. The Government transport system X railways and ferries X was to come to a halt. Those who planned all of this had hoped that with the creation of chaos and disorder they would have succeeded in causing the suspension of the constitution (as in 1953) and the removal of the Government from office.

### **Outside Interference:**

20. There is also indication that there was outside interference which might have encouraged or influenced those who planned the recent disturbances. On Monday, 12th February, 1962 following a statement that the visit of the US Economic Mission was called off indefinitely, the Premier interviewed Mr. Everette Melby, American Consul General, at his office. He pointed out to him that he was perturbed as a result of a series of events which gave the impression that the Opposition, particularly the United Force, had the support of the USA at both public and private levels. The Premier cited to Mr. Melby some of the events. These were:

- (1). With the exception of Technical Assistance the request by the Government since early 1958 for economic assistance had not resulted in any material aid being given.
- (2). U.S. citizens, Schwarz and Dr. Sluis, openly interfered in the domestic affairs of the country during the 1961 election campaign when they supported the Defenders of Freedom and the United Force. They later omitted spending the sum of about BWI\$76,000 during this campaign. (It is to be noted that Section 53 of Cap.57 X the Representation of the People Ordinance 1957 X limits the expenses which may be incurred by a candidate to BWI\$1,500). Dr. Sluis visited British Guiana six times between 21st February, 1961 and 25th April 1962, including a two-month visit just prior to and during the 1961 elections.

- (3). US Government Information Services during the 1961 election campaign held film shows at street corners. The USIS had never before arranged for such shows in the public. These film shows highlighted anti-Castro and anti-communist propaganda. It happened that this line of propaganda coincided with the smear campaign then being conducted against the Government by the opposition.
- (4). While no economic assistance was given to the Government, the impression was created in the country by Mr. Peter D'Aguiar and the United Force that they would be able to secure substantial financial assistance from the US Government. A figure of one billion dollars was cited; half a billion dollars as loans to the Government for "infrastructure" development and half a billion for industrial development by private US investors.
- (5). Press reports had stated that Mr. Claude Denbow, President of the League of Coloured Peoples and close associate of the People's National Congress had contacted, during a visit to the USA immediately prior to the 1961 August elections, a group of prominent Guianese professional men now resident in New York, some of whom had interviews with State Department officials at which, it was reported, offers of assistance were made to help the opposition to "liberate" BG from the PPP Government.

21. The Premier told Mr. Melby that the impression thus created had emboldened the opposition in their acts of irresponsibility, that the announcement that the visit of the US Economic Mission was indefinitely postponed was only adding "fuel to the fire", and that all these events were likely to endanger the good relationship that existed between the British Guiana Government and the US Government. The Premier asked Mr. Melby to request his Government to indicate a date when the Mission would arrive in British Guiana (since it was expected in January) and to make a statement along the lines of a statement by President Kennedy during his interview with the Izvestia Editor to the effect that the US Government believed in non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and would maintain friendly relationship with all Governments which were elected at free and fair elections and maintained democratic liberties and practices. Mr. Melby denied that his Government was encouraging or giving succour to the Opposition and to take up with his Government the Premier's requests.

**Disturbances in relation to economic distress:**

22. The high rate of unemployment and underemployment is conducive to crime and the heightening of tensions. As long ago as 1958, the then Assistant Commissioner (Crime) Mr. David Rose, correlated the increase in the incidence of crime with the high rate of unemployment. He said:

"This sad story speaks for itself, for it shows that the bulk of the crime problem of British Guiana today is not the work of hardened criminals but it is the work of idle youth, young men taking to crime for want of anything better to do. Unemployment there undoubtedly is and there is an increasing number who turn to crime in desperation born of genuine hunger and want."

23. The correlation between periods of tension and disturbances and periods of economic distress is borne out historically as the following events show: X

- (a) The "Angel Gabriel Riots" of 1856 were caused principally by the abolition of the United Kingdom Sugar Duties in 1846, which had given a preference to colonial (including British Guiana) sugar in the United Kingdom market. The abolition of the duties resulted during the decade (1846-1856) in a fall in prices and consequently in a drop in wages, delay in making payment of wages and unemployment, etc. The Portuguese who had come to work on the sugar estates as labourers had moved out of the estates and set themselves up as shopkeepers and had begun to show signs of prosperity. People for political or religious reasons incited the Negroes against the Portuguese. A feeling of hostility grew up between the races and it was easy to stir up

the Africans to attack the Portuguese. During the “Angel Gabriel Riots”, the Africans broke into and looted Portuguese shops throughout the country. A Commission was appointed after the riots.

(b) The events of 1862 also show how bad economic conditions led to increased tension between the various communities. The preceding year had been a bad year, with loss of crops, unemployment, etc. Rumours went around that the Africans were planning to attack the Portuguese in rural districts. The latter hesitated to buy stocks for their country shops and lived in a state of fear. Explaining their grievances to Governor Hincks, the Africans of Belfield said:

- (i) Times were bad and they were suffering.
- (ii) They did not like the task-gangs.
- (iii) The import duties kept prices up and they wanted them removed.
- (iv) The Portuguese were charging high prices for provisions.

(c) The inter-racial strife of the last years of the 19th century when European bounty-fed beet sugar competed with colonial cane sugar in the British market (1887-1897) was also the result of economic distress. Beet sugar from France, Germany and Austria had been artificially forced on to the British market by bounties quite early, but in the 1880's the subsidised beet sugar began to affect British Guiana sugar seriously. The price of British Guiana sugar fell sharply, and this resulted in fall in wages and unemployment locally. Serious rioting took place and again it took the form of racial strife. In 1889 the Africans broke into, and looted, Portuguese shops throughout the country. There were else reports at the time of plots being hatched by the Negroes against Europeans. A Royal Commission was sent to British Guiana in 1897 to investigate conditions. (Bounties on beet sugar were abolished by the Brussels Convention of 1903).

(d) The period between the two world wars also was one of economic depression. The price of sugar fell to ,8. 2s. per ton and in 1936 the International Sugar Agreement imposed o limit on British colonial (including British Guiana) sugar. There was a reduction in wages and unemployment. This led to general unrest and rioting in British Guiana. However, the unrest did not have racial overtones because of circumstances at the time. The troubles resulted in the coming of a Royal Commission to British Guiana (and the West Indies) in 1938-39.

24. The recent racial antipathy between the Indian an African communities and the unrest, rioting, looting and arson were stirred up by politicians of the Opposition for their own ends. But this was made possible by unemployment and economic distress which today provides as fertile a ground for sowing racial hatred, as the distress of 1856 did for sowing the hatred which exploded in the countrywide Angel Gabriel Riots.

25. Everything the Government did was attributed to race. The Development Plan conceived in the larger interest of the country was attacked by the Opposition as racially motivated. Mr. Adler’s comments on the priorities in the Programme (*Paragraph 5 above*) are relevant in this connection. Works were concentrated mainly in the rural areas as due to several factors, the chief of which was the failure in the past to examine the possibility of industrialisation and to carry out essential industry feasibility studies and to secure a sufficient electricity supply as a power base for industry. Drainage and irrigation schemes such as the Black Bush and the Tapakuma Schemes brought direct employment to large numbers of people (drivers, mechanics and skilled workers generally, many of whom were recruited from the urban areas) and indirect employment to many more from the City of Georgetown, but were nonetheless criticised as designed in the interest of the rural, predominantly Indian community.

26. The excerpts from the press given in Appendix 2 and the full file of newspapers will show how the press used its position to stir up and foster racial strife and bitterness. The deliberate inciting of people experiencing economic distress could not fail to lead to an explosion such as occurred on 16th February.

27. The campaign of incitement of the masses coupled with exorbitant price increases by some merchants on a wide range of commodities following the announcement of the budget proposals led to heightened tensions.

28. All those factors resulted in a situation of dangerous tension. On leaving his office by the southern entrance of the Public Buildings on Wednesday, February 7th, the Premier was slapped in his face by a demonstrator while others threw stones at his car. On Friday, February 9th on leaving the Public Buildings under heavy police escort and in the presence of Police officers, Longden and Roberts, he was again assaulted by a crowd led by Mr. P. Reid, a defeated candidate of the People's National Congress and a Director of Bookers. (*See Appendix 3 X Chronological Record of February Disturbances 1962*).

### **Plan to overthrow the Government and assassinate Ministers of the Government**

29. On Friday, February 9th, 1962, the Premier made a statement in the Legislative Assembly drawing attention to an organised plan to resort to intimidation, force and violence to overthrow the Government. (*See Appendix 4*).

30. A tape (*for transcript of which see Appendix 5*) seized with an illegal transmitter found in a van owned by D=Aguiar Bros. hinted at personal violence to prominent members of the Government.

31. Statements have been made to the effect that during the unrest the Government had invited supporters in the rural areas (e.g., at Windsor Forest) to come to Georgetown in great strength to uphold the Government, and that the Premier had said that civil servants who went on strike would be dismissed, that the Treasury was empty and there was no money to pay civil servants and that civil servants would not get one penny more.

32. These alleged reports and rumours given publicity by the press are further examples of the distortions of the truth by groups opposed to the Government in order to create unrest, dissatisfaction and even fear among the people of the country, particularly those in the urban areas.

33. During the demonstrations in Georgetown against the budget, the public was led to believe that **the whole country** was against the Government and its financial policy as reflected by the budget proposals. In fact the Opposition as measured by the organised demonstrations in the city did in no way reflect the general feeling of the country as a whole. Many meetings were held in the country by Ministers and the budget proposals and criticisms of them discussed. At these meetings and particularly after the proposals were explained and distortions and misunderstandings clarified, the people generally expressed approval of the measures proposed and support for the Government. It is true that at these meetings speakers had suggested that the people who sympathised with the Government and the budget proposals should demonstrate their support in Georgetown and correct the wrong impression current in the city that there was general opposition to the Government throughout the country. Meetings were also planned in the rural areas but these were cancelled following the rioting in Georgetown. (*See extract from transcript of Governor's broadcast at Appendix 6*).

34. As to the other statements mentioned in paragraph 31 above, it is absolutely untrue that the Premier had said that civil servants who went on strike would be dismissed. When it was learnt that this rumour was being spread, immediate action was taken by the Government to nail this lie, and the GIS announced over the radio on Tuesday 13th February, 1962 that the rumour was "absolutely untrue." The gist of the statement by Miss Dolphin of the Government Information Services [GIS] is as follows: X

AIIt is absolutely untrue that the Premier made the statement in a broadcast that civil servants who go on strike would be dismissed. The rumour that civil servants on strike would be dismissed by the Premier is absolutely untrue.”

It is correct that the Premier did say that the Treasury was “practically empty” and that not a penny more would be paid to civil servants (or words to that effect) but these statements were taken out of their context and given an entirely misleading slant. The use of the words the “Treasury is empty” was clearly metaphorical, as Dr. Jagan had said at the same time that an announcement would be made shortly on the question of pay increases for public servants. The words were intended to convey the country’s pressing need for immediate financial aid to carry out its Development Programme (*See Appendix 7*). In the same sense, the words “not one penny more” were used (as long ago as 1959) and were made in reference to the recommendations of the Gorsuch Commission, which, as stated in the memorandum submitted to the Commission by the Ministry of Finance, had recommended on the average a 16 percent increase for the senior grades, about 1 percent for the clerical grades and 7 percent on the minimum wages. It will be recalled (Ministry of Finance memorandum) that Government in fact spent \$1.7 million in increased wages and salaries, following the Gorsuch Report and offered an additional sum of \$800,000 for increased salaries but this offer was rejected by staff associations.

35. Finally, the Government would like to emphasise the following points made herein and elsewhere (memoranda submitted by the Ministry of Finance and by Mr. Rai, formerly Minister of Home Affairs: X

- (i) that the racial and economic conditions in the country are such that unless immediate steps are taken to eradicate poverty and remove the threat of starvation, there is likely to be serious unrest and violence;
- (ii) that the Government has made strenuous efforts to raise funds and to obtain assistance from abroad to implement its development programme aimed at creating opportunities for employment and raising the standard of living of the people but without much success;
- (iii) that attempts to mobilise internal savings have met with opposition and violence, sparked and spearheaded by a small group whose privileged position was affected by the Government’s financial and fiscal measures.
- (iv) that the Government was willing to meet substantially the recommendations of the Guillebaud Commission as regards wages and salaries and conditions of service, other than leave and leave passages. Government’s decision on these recommendations was taken with due regard to the financial position of the country and its ability to pay. Moreover, the way was left open for negotiations to continue at Whitley Council or with the Ministry of Finance on those recommendations of the Guillebaud Commission which were not initially accepted by the Government. As a demonstration of good faith, the Government varied several of its original decisions in the Commission’s recommendations following representations by interested parties and the receipt of further information on the subjects in question (*See memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Finance and also copy of the notes of the meeting between the Premier and Staff Associations at Appendix 8*);
- (v) that the working class and public servants had no justifiable reason after the withdrawal of the budget proposals which would have affected them and the promise to continue negotiations on the Guillebaud Commission to continue their opposition.
- (vi) that interference of foreign interests in the internal political affairs of the country strengthened the opposition to the Government and encouraged the use of violence by groups which had planned to overthrow the democratically elected Government by force;
- (vii)

(vii) that certain sections of the press acted most irresponsibly by distorting the truth and publishing inflammatory and inciting propaganda (e.g., about a Cuban warship off the coast of British Guiana) at a time when the situation was most explosive and the masses in Georgetown worked up to a point of hysteria;

(viii) that the duality or division of power in the Government had caused the late arrival of the armed forces in Georgetown on Friday the 16th. Had the troops arrived earlier that day as advised and requested by the elected Government it is almost certain that the looting and rioting would not have occurred.

**18th June, 1962**

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### APPENDIX 1

#### EXTRACT FROM THE BERRILL REPORT

##### GROSS DEBT OUTSTANDING & GOVERNMENT REVENUE (\$M)

5 Year Borrowing Programme	Government Revenue	Gross Debt Outstanding			
		60	80	120	140
1954	36	X 35	X 35	X 35	X 35
1959	49	90	90	90	90
1964	64-67	148	168	208	228
1969	88-92	195	235	315	355
1974	116-122	250	310	430	490

##### GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND ANNUAL DEBT CHARGES (\$M)

	Government Revenue	Annual Debt Charge			
		60	80	120	140
1954	36	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
1959	49	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7
1964	64-67	10.0	11.3	14.0	15.3
1969	88-92	13.8	16.6	22.3	25.1

	Government Revenue	Annual Debt Charge			
		60	80	120	140
1974	116-122	18.1	22.4	31.1	35.4

In 1955-59, debt charges averaged 12 percent of revenue. In 1970-74 they would rise to 17 percent on \$60 million quinquennial borrowing, 20 percent on \$80 million, 28 percent on \$120 million and 31 percent on \$140 million. Those figures are the first indicators of which level of borrowing is more appropriate.

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## APPENDIX 2

### MEMORANDUM ON ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS IN INCITING PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST THE BUDGET

Wednesday, 31st January	Budget introduced. Postponement announced.
Thursday, 1st February	<i>CHRONICLE</i> Headline: "Government to Squeeze Dollars from Workers". <i>POST</i> Headline: "Budget X It's Staggering". Page 3 Article: A Budget is in keeping with Government X Marxist. Bottle of Rum will now cost \$3.10. Town Talk: "Archangel Jacob Messenger of Death." "Malice, Meanness and Malevolence thrown in by Dr. Jacob."
Friday, 2nd February	<i>CHRONICLE</i> Headline: "Guianese stunned by tax proposals."  <i>GRAPHIC</i> Sub-headline: "Budget will hit 95% of grocery goods." Headline: "Bombshell Budget, Big Business Recession Feared."
Saturday, 3rd February	<i>CHRONICLE</i> Front page: page: Letter to Burnham and D=Aguiar by E.S. Phillips: "I suggest that you both appear on one platform. . . , a general uprising against this budget and will force Jagan's Government to either amend their ideas or resign."  <i>GRAPHIC</i> Sub headline: "Budget is Backroad of Progress X Spence."  <i>POST</i> Headline: "Government to clamp tax on every square inch of land." Editorial: Misrepresents savings plan on 5% of \$100 minimum.
Sunday, 4th February	<i>CHRONICLE</i> Headline: "Tax Avalanche will Crush Working class". Story: "The small working class man to be soaked to the tune of some \$9 million (out of 10.5 million 90% of the increased taxation will fall on the working class people." Inner Headline : "Slave Whip Budget." Article gives Compulsory Savings Scheme as \$90 per year on \$150 per month salary. Leader: Budget is "Marxist". A "vindictive and malicious spirit prowls through the budget." Picture of GPO crowd withdrawing money.  <i>GRAPHIC</i> : Blackman=s article: "Keep that hand out of my pocket" critical.

*ARGOSY* Page 3: "What the Budget Means to the Poor Man" list of inaccurate prices. Inaccurate report on 5% of 100. "Unemployment certain."

Monday 5th February

*CHRONICLE*: Picture of line up at GPO and drawing out.

*GRAPHIC* Sub-headline: AThe Budget X First Step Leftward.≡ Taxation of Companies will make them cut down operations and so increase unemployment.

*POST* Editorial: "Food Tax X It cannot help hitting the poor man too hard for him to bear."

Page 3: Highly critical letters.

Tuesday, 6th February

*CHRONICLE*: Pictures of PO withdrawals. Big front page play up of run.

Headline: "New Building Society has no Ready Cash."

Leader: The entire country has been thrown in crisis bordering on panic.

Defenders of Freedom Letter signed by C.I. Sebastiani and E.N. Hutchison calls for joint action on part of PNC and UF to "build and preserve a way of life such as we should be prepared to live when we become independent."

*GRAPHIC*: Picture of crowd "withdrawing savings at PO Savings Bank. Report on New Building Society AFunds unavailable for withdrawal" headline.

Back page headline: "Budget may affect Sugar Report of SPA saying Budget might affect the once-for-all-bonus.

*POST* Headline Page 2: "Dr. Jagan Calls on West Coast People to come to Georgetown to Defend Government."

Wednesday, 7th February

*CHRONICLE*: Letter: "Iniquitous Budget" and "Stir yourselves X down with this Shameful Budget. Down with the Government!"

Open letter to Prince Philip: "Jagan Government is Communist X no Independence, etc."

Headline inside: "Timber Development face liquidation." Budget gives no chance of survival.

*GRAPHIC*: Bold headline: Unionists Denounce "You Must Save" Plan.

*POST* Page 3: Vindictive letters. Full page.

Thursday, 8th February

*CHRONICLE*: Leader The masses of people here have overnight to pay fabulous increases for food or failing this do without. . . . On actual fact this increase in the cost of living is between 5 and 7 percent.

*GRAPHIC*: Headline Page 5: "A few shocks for the Farmer" X claiming that farmers will be adversely affected.

Friday 9th February

*CHRONICLE*: Letter: "Budget will bring misery to country". Ends X "This is trodden Democracy X Let's unite and fight for our rights."

Letter on Back Page: Open letter to Burnham and D=Aguiar X "all of us are agreed that we are faced with an eventual dictatorship. Dr. Jacob's Radical Budget bears this out in no uncertain terms, etc., etc. Unite and save us all."

*POST*. Article: "Distrust and suspicion mixed with Hate" headline.

Saturday, 10th February

*CHRONICLE*: Headline: “Unite and Fight” report on mass meeting. Large ad. in centre by Demerara Mutual Life Assurance Co. against Budget.  
Centre Page Headline: “Budget will tax food from poor man’s Mouth.”

*POST*: Headline Page 1: “Jagan Government Must Resign.”

Page 2 Editorial: Tax on Rum will result in “more broken homes and delinquent children”.

Page 3 . Anti-Government letters.

Sunday, 11th February

*CHRONICLE*: Page 2 Headline: “End of Election Budget” X “Independence will give them the power to finish with Election for good X They are impenitently and avowedly communists. If free elections are banned the constitution will be banned too”. “If we could fight together at the barricade and hold back the gathering storm we should be able to make the country safe for our children.”

Shiv Gangadeen Page 5 Commentary: “Dictatorship by Budget” X “The dictatorial purpose of Jagan’s Government is proved beyond doubt by several tax proposals in the 1962 Budget, the weight of about 90 percent of which will fall on the working class, etc., etc. Now more than ever before the red claws of Jagan’s Communism are exposed naked for all to see. And this is only the smoke X the fire comes later. If now while Britain still exercises sovereignty here, Jagan can move openly to confiscate people’s property and their money and destroy our Free Press, what wouldn’t he do when with the full powers of independence he brings in his Communist forces here to back up with open Communist dictatorship?”

Centre Editorial: “Big Shots, Little Shots” X “If as has been suggested the Government set out to create tension in order to underscore the poverty of the economy and incite popular clamour for independence then they shouldn’t be surprised at the complete fulfilment of their expectation. Marxism believes in the ‘inevitability of violence’ as the midwife of an old society when it is pregnant with a new one.”

Page 7 Article: “What the Tax Means” X “What it means is reduce all to a position of servitude so that only the state will be wealthy so that the State which now controls your money will control your services and finally your family, your children.”

*GRAPHIC*: Page 5 Headline: “Budget on Trial. Jagan should make concessions.” “The Real Fear of Businessmen” X Businessmen see with budget the death blow to all their hopes of expansion and enterprise.

*ARGOSY*: Headline: “Government’s Proposed Muzzle of Press, Radio.”

Monday, 12th February

*CHRONICLE*: Photograph of flats where J. B. Kelshall lives.

Tuesday, 13th February\*\*

[\*\* *Editor’s Note: No press references are listed for this date.*]

- Wednesday, 14th February      *CHRONICLE*: Leading Article: "Radio Tied or Free" X threatens BGBS if Jagan is allowed to continue its use.  
 Headline Page 6: "D=Aguiar says Budget hits hardest at Poorer Classes."  
 √Mohamed Khan: Choke and Rob Budget."
- Thursday, 15th February      *CHRONICLE*: Leader: Calls on Government "resign". Governor must demand not withdrawal of Budget but resignation of Government. Spreads rumour of dismissal of civil servants and refuses to accept Premier's denial.
- Friday, 16th February      *CHRONICLE*: TUC demands published, includes "cessation of talk about nationalisation."  
 Editorial: Blames Government for the leaders breaking the ban. Declares that crowds were right.

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### APPENDIX 3

#### CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF FEBRUARY DISTURBANCES 1962

Wednesday, 31st January

Minister of Finance presents Budget proposals to Legislative Assembly and announces postponement of debate thereon until February 12, so that the public may have time to study the proposals.

Thursday, 1st February

Newspapers attack Budget.  
 PPP a meeting in Georgetown.

Friday, 2nd February

Press attack on Budget builds up.

Saturday, 3rd February:

Premier gives Press Conference over BGBS. Explains certain aspects of Budget. Meets certain Press criticisms.

Sunday, 4th February

PPP meeting at La Penitence Market. Premier explains Budget proposals. Hostile reception. Attacked with bottles and stones.  
 PPP holds eight meetings in country areas.

Monday, 5th February

Press attack continues. Grave distortions.

Tuesday, 6th February:

Special meeting of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce condemns most of the Budget items and appoints committee to report on what steps to take.

Wednesday, 7th February

Arrival of Duke of Edinburgh. Meeting at Legislative Assembly. Premier slapped and car stoned and struck by hostile crowd on leaving Public Building.

Large crowds demonstrate against budget and Government with placards and posters outside Public Building.

Thursday, 8th February

Press continues attack on budget and Government.

Friday, 9th February:

Legislative Assembly meets and considers Constitution Committee. Offers committee of 16: 8 PPP, 6 PNC, 2 UF, with Speaker as Chairman. Opposition stage walk out. Large crowds in hostile demonstration around Public Building. Disorderly scenes in Public Building from crowd of onlookers in Assembly Hall.

Government announce further postponement of Budget debate to unspecified date to allow of numerous memoranda being studied and for further consultations.

The Government invites the three Chambers of Commerce and TUC to make representations on budget.

The Premier makes a statement to the House of Assembly about evidence of a plot to overthrow the Government and to assassinate himself and others of his close supporters.

Premier assaulted by hostile crowd on leaving the Public Building. Taken out by heavy Police escort.

UF meeting ting at Bourda Green. Cheeks says "Budget conceived in Hell." D=Aguiar says "Unite and Fight." Crowd incited against J. B. Kelshall as international communist responsible for Government's action. Crowd attacks Rayman's house believing J. B. Kelshall to be there.

Saturday, 10th February

The Premier gives Press conference over BGBS. Threaten price controls. Warns of plot to overthrow the Government.

TUC replies to Government's invitation of the 9th asking to meet Minister of Finance on Thursday, 15th to put forward their views on Budget.

Georgetown and Junior Chamber of Commerce meet Minister of Trade and agree to submit their views in writing.

Georgetown Chamber of Commerce meet to discuss action against Budget. Certain local businessmen urge lock out for Monday, 12th.

Sunday, 11th February

CSA and Government workers hold mass demonstration and march. Meeting at parade Ground on their demands for wages, etc.

PNC hold mass meeting at Bourda Green.

Monday, 12th February

Lock-out commences at Fogarty's and D'Aguiar Bros. Crowds led by Peter D=Aguiar and UF leaders parade in Water Street and intimidate workers. Strikes commence as workers are locked out or walk out.

D=Aguiar addresses, crowd from balcony of his office in Brickdam. Says "Purpose of this demonstration is to bring down the Budget. Purpose of this demonstration is to bring down the Government."

Premier speaks over BGBS. Appeals to trade unions to reconsider decision to demonstrate because negotiations are still going on. Appeals to civil servants to be loyal to the country, and not to take part in political strike.

Mass PNC meeting at Bourda Green. Burnham calls on workers to "Fight for liberty and prosperity". Says "The battle for survival has begun X who is broken now is broken forever." Asks the crowd "Will you fight?" Answer "Yes." "They will bring soldiers X will you still fight?" Answer "Yes."

Tuesday, 13th February

CSA and FUGE officers informed of Government's decision to refer outstanding questions to Whitley Councils.

Civil Servants go on strike at 1.00 p.m.

TUC mass demonstration with CSA participating at 2.00 p.m. Rumour of dismissal of civil servants spread by Ishmael. TUC calls for general strike at meeting.

Premier denies rumour of dismissal of civil servants over BGBS and asks civil servants to remain loyal and not be misled.

Wednesday, 14th February

Area around Public Building declared restricted by Governor.

Premier announces decision to withdraw most of the Budget proposals (having made greater concessions than were asked for by the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce).

Thursday, 15th February

Processions led by Burnham and D=Aguiar break ban and march into prohibited area. Crowds attempt to break into Public Building area but are kept back by Police.

TUC officials meet Minister of Finance and agree to submit recommendations in writing the following morning.

Big meeting at Parade Ground. PNC and UF join. Ishmael calls on crowd to go to Electricity Corporation next morning and stop the "scabs" running the plant.

Friday, 16th February

Demonstrations. Meeting at Parade Ground. Crowd marches on Electricity Corporation and Riot Squad uses tear smoke. D=Aguiar and Ishmael present.

Attack on Freedom House and Jardim's Tractor Store.

Attack on Premier's house: 11.30.

Attack on Attorney General's house: 1.40.

Attack on Rayman's house and other Ministers' houses.

Arson and Looting.

Arrival of Army Units around 3.30

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#### **APPENDIX 4**

##### **GIS COMMUNIQUES, No. 6 X Friday, February 9, 1962.**

The Premier Dr. the Honourable C. B. Jagan made the following statement to the Legislative Assembly this afternoon:

It has come to the knowledge of the Government that violence is actually being planned on general scale by certain elements acting for a minority group. In addition, it is understood that attempts against the Premier's life and the lives of certain of his Ministers and supporters are contemplated.

These acts of violence are intended to secure the overthrow of the legally elected Government by force and the tax proposals in the budget are being used as a screen for the general plan.

These plotters intend to call a general strike for Monday, February 12. Since there is no likelihood of this strike call being widely supported by the workers, certain elements of the business community plan to shut down their business houses. The intention is in effect to stage a general lock-out on the excuse that the strike has created conditions which prevent continued business operations. Every step possible is being taken to bring the Civil Service in on this strike and if these designs are successful, the total result will be to cause widespread dislocation of the Colony's economy.

Such a course of action will be very likely to end in riot and violence. The people who plan this operation must be aware of this. It seems that they are seeking to cause turmoil and unrest in order to halt our march to Independence and economic well-being for all.

This small clique is determined to preserve their positions of privilege. They want to create another Congo here. They talk-about freedom and democracy, but are determined to use unconstitutional means to achieve these ends. They feel that they can depend on foreign support.

In the circumstances the Government intends to take energetic steps to forestall this plan and I am now appealing to all reasonable public-minded citizens not to allow themselves to be persuaded or fooled into taking part in what can only be a disastrous and futile effort on the part of a small misguided and selfish element in the community to turn back the clock of history.

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#### **APPENDIX 5**

**[Editor's Note:** *The following is the transcript of a tape found in the illegal transmitting set which was seized by the police on the Sunday 18 February 1962, two days after Black Friday. Before its seizure, an illegal radio was heard by many Guianese over the wave lengths inciting the people against the Government. This radio tape, which no doubt would have been heard, if it had not been seized, was clearly a threat against the lives of PPP leaders X namely, Dr. Jagan and Messrs. Benn, Kelshall and Jacob. It is interesting to note the false news which they were spreading, and which was meant to inflame people X that foreign ships were outside Guyana, ostensibly waiting to come in and cause trouble. What is even more significant is the line carried X "We want a new Indian leader". The voice on the tape was that of a woman.]*

This is "Free Guiana" speaking to you. "Radio Free Guiana". Listen to the truth.

Our country stands face to face with destruction and disaster. The City of Georgetown is little more than a smoking ruin. Over 60 businesses have been destroyed by fire; countless others have been looted of all that they once held. The heart of our capital city is a charred and blackened ruin.

How did it happen? All over Guiana people are asking themselves this question: How did it happen?

On Monday February 12, the first public protest against the communist budget began when workers walked out of their jobs and Water Street firms were forced to close.

From Monday to Friday demonstrations and public meetings were held to voice the mass protest against the Government's policies. These demonstrations were peaceful. There was no violence. People exercised their democratic right of protest against a Government which had ceased to act in the people interest.

On Friday, February 16, the Government instructed the Police to fire tear gas at a harmless crowd near the Electricity Corporation. An eye witness says that when the first bombs were thrown the crowd was talking and laughing. There was no violence. Women and children were in that crowd. It was not a mob bent on destruction. Houses full of innocent people were gassed by the Police on the instructions of Kelshall, Benn, Jacob and Jagan. When those bombs were thrown the Government betrayed themselves. They had proved themselves to be the ferocious communists that many people had so long suspected them to be.

The Government, by first using violence deliberately, incited violence. They smashed a democratic protest and laid the foundation of the riot which followed.

On Saturday, the *Evening Post* published this statement, and it must be remembered that the *Evening Post* has always supported the Government. The statement begins: —

"British Guiana licks its wounds today after the blackest Friday in its history. Blackened and battered by violent hands of a maddened, Georgetown presents a pitiful and painful example of what can happen when authority is misused. The blame for the mad violence which was let loose upon Georgetown yesterday, in our opinion, must be laid on the shoulders of the administration. It was thorough indiscriminate and foolish use of tear gas bombs which incensed the mob and provoked the retaliation and rage which was unleashed upon the City. It was a terrible misjudgement on their part, on the pent up fury in the hearts of the people, and their ability to meet action with counter-action. The control which the Unions and the two political parties opposed to Government had succeeded in exercising over the people maddened by the budget proposals and the turn of force in the country, was completely shattered by ill-advised action, and it will be noted that it was a certain element of the Georgetown crowd which broke loose. It was rather fortunate that they were neither aided nor abetted by the Unions or the political parties, or the blow delivered yesterday could have been country wide."

Those were the words of a newspaper which once supported the Government.

Imperialist troops are now here. The very troops Dr. Jagan scorned and vilified in 1953, he has now been forced to summon. Imperialism is now keeping him in power. This then, is a measure of his control. He cannot control this country any longer. Kelshall, Benn, Jacob and Jagan, you are communists and you have lost. Not all your imperialism will put Guiana together again. Nothing you can do will heal the wounds. We do not want you. You are responsible for the violence, the shooting and the burning. You have excited it. Your PYO thugs and criminals have looted and burnt buildings of men who opposed you. You have stirred up the

mobs who went mad because you had lost control and were desperately trying to save yourselves. You are trying to destroy us, but we will not be destroyed. You are asking the Governor to suspend the constitution because you are ignorant and afraid, and your communist friends cannot send their rockets yet. Kelshall, go back to your yacht and your palace in Trinidad. You have helped your fellow fools to ruin our country.

Five warships are now in the Demerara River. Four Dutch ships are stationed in the Corentyne, and a Cuban battleship is waiting outside. We are about to become a battle ground for the greater glory of Kelshall, Benn, Jacob and Jagan. Our lives are to be lost for the sake of these men, but these men are sick and stupid. They are not worth the life of a rat, much less the life of a man.

Kelshall, Benn, Jacob and Jagan, you have done enough. The time is late. Get out and leave us to a rebuild in the confidence that your wickedness will never rise again. We want a new Indian leader, Jagan, a man who is strong in himself, who is not dominated by a white Trinidadian and a clique of stupid self-seekers. We do not want you, or Kelshall, or Benn or Jacob. We warn you to go before the time comes when you no longer can.

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#### **APPENDIX 6**

##### **BROADCAST BY THE GOVERNOR February 17, 1962.**

The Premier, as leader of the People's Progressive Party, has asked me to include in this talk to you a statement that his Party has decided in the public interest to call off certain party meetings that had been planned for tomorrow, Sunday, February 18. These were, I understand: Port Mourant at 10 a.m.; Cotton Tree, Enmore and Farm (East Bank Demerara) all at 3 p.m.; Wales at one o'clock; Uitvlugt at two o'clock, and Enterprise (Leguan) at three o'clock, Sans Souci (Wakenaam) at ten o'clock; and Anna Regina at one o'clock.

I repeat X all these meetings are cancelled.

Dr. Jagan asks that members of his Party remain quietly at their homes or places of work and get on with their jobs and their lawful occasions.

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#### **APPENDIX 7**

##### **ATREASURY IS EMPTY**

*Guiana Graphic*, Tuesday, November 28, 1961.

The Premier, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, stressing the need for immediate financial help for British Guiana at a news conference yesterday, said that the treasury was practically empty.

He said his Government was anxious to push the country's development, but did not have the money to carry out the plans.

Dr. Jagan disclosed that an announcement would be made shortly on the question of pay increases for employees of the Public Service.

He did not, however, give any indication whether the increase would centre around the recommendation of the Guillebaud Commission.

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#### **APPENDIX 8**

Notes of a meeting held in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 24th January, 1962, in connection with the Government's proposals on the Guilleband Report concerning salaries and conditions of service in the Public Service.

**Present were X**

Dr. the Hon. C. Jagan X Premier (In the Chair)

Dr. the Hon. C.R. Jacob X Minister of Finance

Mr. W. P. D=Andrade X Secretary to the Treasury

Mr. C. C. Low-a-Chee X Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Development and Planning and Secretary to the Council of Ministers.

Mr. C. I. Mongul X Principal Establishment Officer

**Representing the Civil Service Association**

Mr. O. L. Henry

Mr. M. V. A. Spencer

Dr. Balwant Singh

Mr. F. O. Emery

Mr. I. Coleman

Mr. H. Hamilton

Mr. N. Northe

Miss W. E. Alexander

**Representing the Senior Professional and Administrative Officers' Association**

Dr. B. B. G. Nehaul

Mr. L. Searwar

**Representing the Police Federation**

Insp. Crevalle

Sgt. Bollers

Cpl. Bray

Const. Duncan

**Representing the British Guiana Teachers' Association**

Mr. B. E. Arno

**Representing the Pilots' Association**

Mr. L.C. McWatt

Mr. D. Boyce

**Representing the Senior Prison Officers' Association**

Mr. G Barkie

Mr. A. Lewis

**Representing the Prison Officers' (Subordinate) Association**

Mr. A. Humphrey  
Mr. C. Padmore

### **Representing the Postmasters' Union**

Mr. C. H. Brewster  
Mr. D. Carryl

The Honourable Premier welcomed the representatives present and then read a letter from the Federation of Unions of Government Employees in which it was intimated that the invitation from the Ministry of Finance was received too late to make arrangements for representatives to attend the meeting. Dr. Jagan stated that he was sorry about the short notice but that Government was working at top speed to get the matter settled. Indeed, he hoped that discussions could continue immediately after he had spoken so that the matter could be finalised in the shortest possible time. He then proceeded to explain the considerations which forced the Government to arrive at the conclusions. These have been included in the statement attached. He concluded his statement by saying that in the spirit of co-operation Government had agreed that the date of implementation of the new leave and leave passages conditions should now be 1st January, 1962. He then threw the meeting open for comments by the representatives.

The following points were made in discussion: X

### **By the Civil Service Association**

- (a) It was not possible to take advantage of the opportunity for discussion but pointed out that Government's decision that an Anomalies Committee should not be appointed but that appeals should be forwarded to the Ministry of Finance was not the best solution.
- (b) Whether provisional payment of salaries could not be made now.
- (c) Whether it was true that Government had intended to revise the hours of work. It was pointed out that some officers were already working for long hours.
- (d) What was the position with regard to Whitley Council in such matters X whether any matter which was in dispute with Government should not be discussed in Whitley Council.
- (e) Whether an assurance would be given that when the Association was discussing changes in conditions of service they would be doing so in the spirit of bargaining.
- (f) That Government will get a greater degree of satisfaction from the Service if the recommendations of the Guillebaud Commission Report with respect to salaries were implemented and an assurance given that the other conditions of service would be allowed to continue until a final decision was reached.

### **Replies by the Premier to points raised**

- (a) It was felt by the Government that as a decision has been reached it was not necessary for anomalies as regards gradings, etc. to be undertaken by a formal Committee but that they should be referred to the Ministry of Finance for settlement as in the past.
- (b) No formal decision was made but if the Associations accepted Government's proposals payments could be made immediately.

- (c) There has been no suggestion to increase the hours of work but it was considered that the general efficiency of the service should be improved. The Gorsuch Commission commented on this matter and it was considered that efficiency could only be improved by co-operation of the service on the whole X more efficiency would mean more money available for paying salaries, etc. He knew that some officers were working hard while others were not doing so. He asked for the co-operation of all the Associations in this matter. Co-operation was not only necessary in hours of work but in the quality and quantity of work. The Association it was felt could certainly do a lot in this respect, if brought to the attention of members and action taken to see that certain things were stopped. He asked the meeting not to believe everything they say in the press. The GIS would be starting a new programme shortly "In the Press this Week", the aim of which was to correct any distortions which appeared in the press.
- (d) He was afraid that if the matter went back to Whitley Council it would be a long drawn out affair. The matter could be settled quickly by consideration with the Finance Secretariat. On purely economic grounds Government could not afford the payment of \$2.5 million at the present time.
- (e) It all depended upon what was called bargaining. There was a difference between a trade union bargaining with a business concern and a trade union bargaining with a Government. In the former case, if the employer did not have the resources to meet the demands he could either close the business or if he did meet the demands there would most likely be a reduction in staff. In the case of the Government it was not possible to take such action.
- (f) He felt that there could not be acceptance of salaries revision with effect from 1st January, 1961, and a prolongation of a revision of conditions of service and therefore it was not possible to accept such a recommendation.

#### **By the Police Federation**

- (a) The Federation had requested clarification on the conversion tables applicable to non-gazetted ranks and in response to the Premier asked that an early meeting with the Minister of Finance be arranged, if possible the next day.
- (b) Whether the decision could be implemented separately.

#### **Replies by Premier**

- (a) The Ministers were all very busy and working long into the night but he was sure that the Minister of Finance would meet the Federation as early as possible.
- (b) It was agreed that the decision could be implemented separately if agreement was reached in each case.

#### **By Police Officers' Association**

- (a) Enquired whether Government's decision was to pay and then to negotiate about the other conditions of service.

To this the Premier replied in the affirmative.

- (b) Was it fair to expect civil servants to suffer up to a 10 percent cut in salaries because there was a short fall in revenue, i.e., something for which they were not responsible?

#### **By Postmasters' Union**

- (a) Enquired whether the interim payment requested by the Civil Service Association was something being negotiated separately by Government with them.
- (b) Suggested that a copy of the Premier's statement be sent to each Association for consideration and that the whole meeting return for a further discussion at some early and convenient date.
- (c) What would be the position if an employee was genuinely sick and utilised his 14 days full-pay sick leave, if he would be put on half-pay then it would be a considerable hardship for the subordinate ranks.
- (d) Whether Government would still cut salaries if the cost of living continued to rise during the period.

**Premier's Replies**

- (a) That the Civil Service Association had asked for a provisional payment pending the final determination of the other matters.
- (b) Agreed to send copies of the statement to the Associations and added that he would be quite willing to meet the Associations again if they consider it necessary.
- (c) There were long discussions on this subject and the Council based their decision on what happened in practice X some employees actually planned sick leave. If there were genuine cases and these were brought to the Minister's attention he felt that sympathetic consideration would be given each case on its merits. Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Department would be expected to tighten up on cases of slackness.
- (d) Much would depend on what the Association did to achieve efficiency and to effect economies and to keep expenditure at 4 percent and not 5 percent.

**By Teacher's Association**

Whether the reduction in salaries is a final decision of the Government or the matter could be reviewed.

**Reply by Premier**

He was prepared to have further discussions on the point but would be glad to have staff associations' views on how current expenditure could be held at 4 percent.

**General**

The Premier stated that great stress had been made that the Civil Service Association was a trade union but a trade union in the strictest sense in many respects could do things that could cause savings not only for its members but for the Government. He had been told that it was a waste of time bringing disciplinary action against workers, that it was better to let the matter go by as it would cost Government loss. He reiterated that as officers of the Government it was their responsibility to see that members were disciplined and worked in a disciplined manner if we were to go forward. Government was not something to fight.

Dr. Jagan then thanked representatives present for their attendance and patient hearing and the meeting was declared closed at 6.25 p.m.

## **PART III**

### **COMMENTS ON THE WYNN PARRY REPORT**

(*Thunder*, 6 October 1962)

#### **1. COMMISSION HITS AT OPPOSITION PARTIES**

The Report of the Commission of Enquiry is out. There has not been enough time to give it careful study but there are a few things which are apparent even from a cursory reading. The Commission has not probed deeply into all aspects of the disturbances and the events leading up to them, and we do not agree with some of their conclusions. But they have been able to identify those responsible for the disturbances and hold them up to public view.

2. Let us see first of all what they have said about the budget which was supposed to have been the cause of the disturbances. They have said:

"It will be seen that there was nothing deeply vicious or destructive of the economic security of the budget. It had been drawn up on the advice of an experienced economist, who could not be said to have any Communist prepossessions."

They went on to point out that the budget won immediate approval from many persons and sections of the press — Senator Tasker, Sir Jock Campbell, the *New York Times* and the *London Times*.

#### **Strenuous Efforts**

3. They have pointed out that Dr. Jagan, fully cognisant of the economic needs of British Guiana and of the inadequacy of the country's internal resources to meet them, made strenuous efforts to obtain economic aid from abroad to develop the country, but such aid was not forthcoming, and they pointed out that it was in the light of the failure to get foreign aid that the budget was introduced.

#### **Realistic Attempt**

4. The Commission agreed that the budget was a realistic attempt to grapple with the economic problems of British Guiana, but as they pointed out, "there was a section of the press in British Guiana itself which was strongly, almost, viciously critical of the budget." They pointed out that the *Daily Chronicle* "which is under the effective control of Mr. D'Aguiar, Leader of the United Force, and the *Argosy*, which is also hostile to Dr. Jagan" opened their assault on the budget on the day following its introduction.

## **Personal Frustration**

The Commission has pointed out that the opposition to the budget was motivated by political considerations. The budget was used as an excuse. Speaking of the United Force, the Commission said that the list of grievances given by Mr. D'Aguiar and Senator Ann Jardim against the PPP is "little more than a narrative of personal frustration."

Speaking of the PNC they said:

"The real motive force behind Mr. Burnham's assault (on the budget) was a desire to assert himself in public life and establish a more important and more rewarding position for himself by bringing about Dr. Jagan's downfall."

## **Businessmen Affected**

The Commission pointed out that Mr Burnham tried to say that the budget contained measures which were calculated to inflict hardships on the working classes by increasing the cost of living. This the Commission said was far from true. They pointed out that the attitude of the United Force in this matter was "more honest" than that of the PNC; for the United Force represented the businessmen and the middle classes who were obviously affected by the new taxes on capital gains, gifts and property holdings.

## **Cripple the People**

6. The Commission has also shown how on the publication of the budget many members of the commercial raised the prices not only on those goods upon which import duty had been increased but also on other goods which did not come within the purview of the budget. They pointed out moreover that the increases were in almost every instance more than the actual increase in the import duty.

They have shown how a number of businessmen, like Mr. M. B. Gajraj, advocated that businessmen should stop dealing in commodities which had not been taxed, like sugar, flour and oil, and that they should stop all credit facilities to their customers in order "to cripple the people and bring tremendous pressure on the Government."

## **Personal Animosity**

7. The Report shows that the trade union leaders were influenced in their opposition to the budget by political considerations and by personal animosity to Dr. Jagan and his Government. The Report speaks of the "acrimonious hostility" and states in no uncertain manner that the Commission did not believe Mr. [Richard] Ishmael's statements

8. The Report states that all individuals and organisations who had grievances against the Government combined "to form a veritable torrent of abuse, recrimination and vicious hostility directed against Dr. Jagan and his Government."

## **D'Aguiar Lied**

9. The Commission of Enquiry shows how the manoeuvres of the two opposition parties led directly to the events of Black Friday.

The Report deals with the contravention of the Proclamation and showed how Mr. Burnham worked his supporters up into "a state of frenzy." It shows how Mr. D'Aguiar "seized every opportunity of attacking Dr. Jagan's Government and inciting the crowds during the week of the disturbances." It points out how Mr. D'Aguiar repeatedly lied to the Commission of Enquiry. Mr. D'Aguiar told the Commission that on the morning of February 16 he did not tell the crowd that the child who had been affected by the tear gas had died. But the Commission remarked that a number of witnesses had given evidence that Mr. D'Aguiar had in fact told the crowd that the child had died.

At this stage the Commission remarked:

"We are constrained to observe that his being wedded to truth did not impose so stern a cloisteral isolation upon him as not to permit an occasional illicit sortie, in order to test the seductive and political rewarding adventure of flirting with half-truths."

They remarked also that Mr. D'Aguiar had stated under cross-examination that on eight occasions the crowd had compelled him to take the initiative.

The Commission found that the false rumour that a child had been killed by tear gas provided the immediate stimulus to violence, and that D'Aguiar had passed on the false information to the crowd.

### **Strike Encouraged**

10. The Commission goes on to deal with the Chamber of Commerce and showed how its members "encouraged and. Fostered" the strike of their employees. Mr Nascimento, personal assistant to Mr. D'Aguiar and general manager of the *Daily Chronicle*, which the Commission described as an "unashamed and remorseless protagonist of the United Force", suggested that employers should pay their employees who went on strike, thus subsidising the strike. Messrs. Figueira, Bettencourt-Gomes and Gajraj were even more enthusiastic about supporting the strike than Nascimento. The Commission pointed out that while the Chamber, as such, did not sponsor a lock-out, it "turned a blind eye to the attitude and intentions of its members." The President of the Chamber attempted to explain this by saying that the Chamber being a democratic body could not regulate the individual actions of its members. The Commission's comment on this matter is worthy of note:

"This lamentable confession of impotence scarcely redounds to the credit of a responsible body incorporated by special ordinance and professing the lofty aim of promoting the interest of trade and commerce."

### **Irresponsibility**

11. The Commission noted that though the Minister of Finance had invited the trade union leaders to discuss the budget and the meeting had been fixed for the 13th February, the Trade Union Council decided to call a general strike. The Commission described their action as "a breach of faith and a display of irresponsibility,"

### **Burnham Callous**

12. The Commission draws attention to "the strange unfeeling attitude of the political leaders when the passions aroused by them had been let loose on the town." The Governor had asked Mr. Burnham to use his influence and advise the crowds to desist from acts of violence. Mr. Burnham had refused. The Commission described his attitude as "callous and remorseless." It stated:

"We may at this stage draw attention to the strangely unfeeling attitude of the political leaders when the passions aroused by them had been let loose on the town.

"An appeal was made by the Governor to Mr. Burnham to use his influence and advise the crowds to desist from acts of violence. The Governor asked him to employ his loudspeaker system and ask the crowds to leave the streets.

"Mr. Burnham, however, replied that he would consult his Executive. Strangely enough, the Executive could not see their way to accede to the Governor's request. This is how Mr. Burnham dealt with the matter in his statement before us:—

"We could: not help. There were too main obstacles, one was that we were very short of petrol and we felt that if we went all around Georgetown using up this petrol at the Governor's request we would have no petrol for the vehicles to carry out Party work. We also considered it ill-advised to go and tell people to desist from what they were doing when we had nothing to do with the starting of it. The man who calls off the do owns the dog."

"This callous and remorseless attitude is reminiscent of Mark Antony's observation, 'Mischief, thou art afoot. Take thou what course thou wilt.'

"As regards Mr. D'Aguiar, all he could think of was to ask the Governor to give protection to his wife and family. He telephoned the Governor and said that he could not see his way to making an appeal for peace to the riotous crowds of Georgetown ."

### **Significant**

13. The Commission has mentioned how wild and false rumours were propagated by enemies of the Government. The civil servants, for instance, went on strike because of a rumour that the Premier had stated in a broadcast that all civil servants who went on strike would be dismissed.

It was established that the Premier did not make any such threat. It is significant that the persons involved in this were Mr. [Richard] Ishmael, whose statements the Commission stated that they could not believe, and one Mr. Hill, whom the Commission described as a "wholly unreliable witness." We have noted, too, that it was D'Aguiar. who gave the crowd the false

information that a child had been killed — the information that is supposed to have incited them to violence and led directly to the outbreak of violence.

### **Errors and Omissions**

14. The Commission has made many errors and omissions. They have said that they do not think that the events of February 16 were part of a plot to overthrow the Government by the use of force, overlooking all the evidence of an organised plan presented to them, and the fact that the Premier had foretold with remarkable accuracy the course of events of the week that culminated in Black Friday. They have omitted all reference to the secret transmitter, the pirate broadcasts and seditious tapes. But we shall deal in detail with these aspects of the Report in subsequent issues.

### **Dedicated man**

15. In conclusion, we can do no better than to compare the impression which the Commission had of Burnham, Ishmael, Gajraj and D'Aguiar, as given above, with the impression which they have given of Dr. Jagan, as seen in the following:

"There was a certain glamour about him, emanating from his youthful exuberance and a zeal which is characteristic of dedicated men. He seemed to possess a sense of purpose and a determination to work for his countrymen's freedom and their material progress."

(Thunder, 30 June 1962)

## 2. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY . . . .

### WHAT I BELIEVE X DR. JAGAN=S EVIDENCE

ASirs, there are various definitions of communism. If one looks at the United States Immigration Act, one finds a definition of communism there and if I were to be asked >Do I agree with this definition and would you say you are a communist?' I would say I am not a communist. In the law, the Suppression of Communist Act, in South Africa, to criticise the policy of apartheid is regarded as communism. In such a situation I would consider myself a communist.

AIf you look in a Webster dictionary, one would find there a definition of communism which will compel me to say that I am not a communist because the assumptions there are that liberties on freedoms will be denied under such a set-up. And therefore, I feel that in this complicated question of communism there are many sides, many views, but in this country the people who have been accusing us for many years on this question have always assumed that communism is evil. That is why I have always refused to give a yes or no answer to this very complicated question. I have always said that I am a Marxist, if I am to be tagged, because Marxism is a philosophy.

#### Anti-Colonialist

"Marxism is a science of the laws of development of society from one stage to the next, as was pointed out this morning. There could be various stages to this, the national democratic independence level X the stage we are on, the socialist level, and then ultimately, the so-called communist level. Now, Sir, by saying that I am a Marxist, I could be at one and the same time anti-Colonialist, an anti-Imperialist, a Democrat, a Socialist, a Humanist, and a Communist. I wish to make this very clear, because already statements are being made as a result of what I said on the last occasion to smear me.

#### End to Domination

"As a passionate anti-Colonialist, I am interested in the independence of my country X political independence; as an anti-Imperialist, I am interested in putting an end to the domination and subjection of the economy of my country; as a Democrat, I am interested in preserving the liberties and freedom of the people X not only in preserving, but in enlarging them; as a Socialist, I am interested in the creation of a new society which will lay the basis for the end of exploitation. . . "

#### Communism

Dr. Jagan X "I believe the tenets of communism to be >From each according to his ability, to each according to his need=. I believe in that."

Mr. Luckhoo [Consul for the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce] X "This is your conception of the tenets of communism and you believe in that?"

Dr. Jagan X "Yes."

Mr. Luckhoo X "That represents your communist belief."

Dr. Jagan X "Yes."

Here are some of Dr. Jagan's more important remarks to the Commission on questioning:

## **Fight Against Racialism**

"I have never subscribed to racialism in this country. I have always fought against it, and will always continue to fight against it."

## **Defenders of Freedom**

AI am referring to persons who dominate society here. For instance, there its a society here called the Defenders of Freedom. I am referring to persons like Mr. Willems who is the head of that group who, when I was President of the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union, refused to allow me, the Secretary of the Union, and others to go on Government property to organise workers to fight for workers= rights."

## **Not Today**

Mr. Luckhoo X "Before I take my seat I want to put this to you, that you primarily and your party are the cause of the disturbances of Black Friday by a course of conduct in which you and your Organisation have been following a communist pattern in which you have created fear in the minds of the people, in which they feel that their monies, their property, and their securities are going to be confiscated. The people fear their families are threatened and that growing fear all accumulated and ended with Black Friday."

Dr. Jagan X "That is not so. I would like, Sir, to elaborate on this answer. It is not today that this question of communism has come up in British Guiana. This question has been aired from the moment I entered politics in this country from 1946 when I and a few others got together and organised a Committee called the Political Affairs Committee. If there have been fears as result of our activity, day by day, or year after year to struggle for democratic liberty in this country, for people in this country, this has been due to the fact that many individuals, the press, leaders in political parties X I remember in 1953 . . . . "

Chairman X "Do not make a speech. You said no to the question. I cannot allow you to make a political speech."

Dr Jagan X "Sir, the question has taken a great deal of my time and a great deal of your time. I have to put it in its proper perspective. Mr. Luckhoo is suggesting that my party led to the disturbance."

Sir Edward Asafu-Adjaye [Member of the Commission] X "You have already said no."

Dr. Jagan X "And I wish to prove otherwise X to the contrary X that there were activities, such as ones in which Mr. Luckhoo was leader of a political party, organised these fears in the minds of the Guianese people."

## **No Bayonet**

Dr. Jagan X "Sir, it is because I have stood up for the working class, that they have voted for me. I have not put a bayonet on their backs and said 'Come vote for me.'"

## **Support Civil Power**

Counsel [for the Commission] X "If there were no division of power, as I imagine it would be after independence, do you really think that you would have been better able to deal with the situation which arose last February?"

Dr. Jagan X "Certainly."

Question X "In what respect?"

Dr. Jagan X "Under the present constitution prosecutions are in charge of the Director of Prosecutions. The question of control of armed forces is a question which is completely in the hands of the Governor, the Head of State. Under an independent constitution armed forces will be under, too, the Head of State, but he will be working with the advice of the Government."

Question X "What could you have done if there had been no division of power?"

Dr. Jagan X "I could have brought into the country at that stage immediately the armed forces which were at Atkinson Field."

Question X "On the Thursday morning?"

Dr. Jagan X "Yes, Thursday morning or evening."

Question X "Or perhaps even on Wednesday?"

Dr. Jagan X "At that stage, probably it was not reached. But as soon as it became clear that

the leaders of the people in the opposition were deliberately disregarding the law and deliberately breaking it, the situation at that stage had become very explosive and therefore I would have brought in whatever support X military support X there was for the civil power, immediately.”

### **Boycott D'Aguiar**

Mr. Farnum [Counsel for the United Force] X “Would you agree that Mr. D'Aguiar's products were to be boycotted because he opposed your views which represent the views of the people?”

Dr. Jagan X “Because he deliberately tried to use measures which were unconstitutional to overthrow a government which was a people's Government.”

Question X “And your paper *Thunder* is today urging that the boycott continue?”

Dr. Jagan X “Yes.”

Question X “It is a form X an effort to punish?”

Dr. Jagan X “Not to punish; not to support an individual to get rich and wealthy at the expense of the people whose interests he is generally against.”

(Thunder, 23 June 1962)

### 3. ISHMAEL ADMITS BEING IN CONFERENCE WITH PNC-UF LEADERS ON BLACK FRIDAY

About one hour before the arson and looting on Black Friday, Mr. Forbes Burnham, leader of the People's National Congress, Mr. Peter D=Aguiar, leader of the United Force, Mr. Richard Ishmael, President of the Trades Union Council were in conference at the Chambers of Luckhoo and Luckhoo in Croal Street.

Mr. Ishmael admitted this in evidence under cross examination by Ashton Chase, counsel for the PPP, before the Commonwealth Commission, enquiring into the February disturbances.

Present at the conference also were Mr. James Ramphal, barrister at law, and former Commissioner of Labour and Mr. Lionel Luckhoo.

Mr. Ishmael in answer to Mr. Chase said he went in search of Mr. Ramphal at his Chambers but he was not there. He learnt that he was at the chambers of Mr. Luckhoo.

AAAt the Chambers of Luckhoo, I met Mr. Burnham, Mr. D=Aguiar and Mr. Ramphal.≡

After stating that the conference was purely accidental, Mr. Ishmael said it lasted for about 45 minutes.

He admitted that the meeting was before the arson and the looting had started, having regard to the time.

Mr. Ishmael said that Mr. Ramphal was his personal adviser.

When Mr. Chase sought to cite a newspaper report about the Trades Union Council's stand on the budget, Mr. Ishmael started to speak in a loud tone of voice and the Chairman, Sir Henry Wynn Parry, had to ask him to keep quiet.

Under cross examination by the Attorney General, Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye, he said although there was not a trade dispute between the MPCA and the Electricity Corporation he did not think he was acting illegally when he went to call the workers out.

Re-examined by Mr. Kenneth Potter, Counsel to the Commission, Mr. Ishmael said he was asked by Mr. D=Aguiar whether he would help him. It was not agreed that Mr. Burnham and Mr. D=Aguiar should speak at a meeting arranged for the night.

During his evidence Mr. Ishmael referred to statements reported to have been made by the Hon. Brindley Benn. He also complained about inaccurate statements in the newspapers.

Dr. Ramsahoye asked him if he ever heard Mr. Benn speak personally and he said he never did but added that the speeches were reported in the press.

Dr. Ramsahoye: "Mr. Ishmael, you have been complaining all through about the inaccuracy of the press, couldn't Mr. Benn say the same thing?"

Ishmael: "Yes."

*(Thunder, 24 February 1962)*

Editorial:

#### **4. THEIR NEXT MOVE**

The events of last week, ending in the rioting, looting and burning of dozens of buildings are, perhaps, the most severe this country has ever seen.

It is now clear to all that these events arose out of a well-planned plot to unseat the government by causing chaos and destruction. The blame is not hard to determine. It lies directly on the backs of the opposition parties – the United Force and the People's National Congress, supported by the TUC.

The excuse given that the budget proposals were objectionable cannot hold water. The proof of this is in the fact that when the features which the demonstrators objected to were removed, the position became even worse. It was clear then that the combined opposition were annoyed that the PPP Government had removed the so-called cause of dissatisfaction. They all wanted only one thing -- and that was, the fall of the PPP Government.

That they failed to bring down the Government does not mean the end of the plot. Having used unconstitutional means, and in fact resorted to anarchy, the forces which seek to destroy democracy in BG are now moving in another direction. They are now busily preparing a Memorial to the Queen asking for the suspension of the constitution. It will be interesting to see the names of those supporting the petition. We believe that they are the same persons and groups who urged the suspension of the Constitution in 1953.

We shall fight this net move and any other activity they may concoct to unseat the PPP Government. They shall not win! They cannot win for international events and the love of people all over the world for fair play are on our side.

(Thunder, 7 April 1962)

## 5. THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY

The TUC, in an attack published in the *Daily Chronicle* of April 3rd, is annoyed that it was not consulted in the arrangement for a Commission of Enquiry which is being established to examine the events of the February riots. The *Chronicle* report states: X

ATUC President, Mr. Richard Ishmael yesterday said, 'The trade unions were involved in certain aspects of the events. And they ought at least to have had a say in settling the terms of reference. To ask Dr. Jagan to settle the terms is like asking two boxers to referee their own bout.' Some folk regard the settling of the terms as a breach of natural rights. There could be no doubt that there were several serious charges against Dr. Jagan, his Government, and his PPP. How, then, could an accused person be conceded the right to dictate the nature and substance of the charges against himself?"

This, then, is the type of twisting and malicious allegations which continue to be made. Can anyone in their right senses expect a broader term of reference than X "TO ENQUIRE INTO THE RECENT DISTURBANCES IN BRITISH GUIANA AND THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THEM AND TO REPORT THEREON≅?"

Dr. Jagan is not selecting the members of the Commission of Enquiry. The British Government is selecting the members. How then are arrangements in favour of the Government?

The *Chronicle* suggests that the wording of the terms of reference is not broad enough. Can the Commission do more than enquire into the events of the disturbances and the events leading up to these disturbances? As far as some are concerned, nothing can please them, and they look for any stupid excuse to bleat. There is just one little fact that all seem to forget and that is that Dr. Jagan's party won at the elections and that the Premier has been chosen to govern. The process of governing includes a number of functions, one of them being the making of decisions.

One can only wonder at the objections now being raised to the Commission. Is it that those who were so much involved in the events of February 16, knowing their guilt, are already trying to lay the way for protesting against what might come out in the wash when their part is exposed?

(Thunder, 26 May 1962)

## **6. THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY**

We welcome the arrival of the Commission of Enquiry appointed by the British Government to enquire into the recent disturbances. Although the People's Progressive Party objects to any attempt to use the Enquiry to delay the holding of independence discussions in London, this in no way affects our conviction that such an enquiry is necessary in order to clear the air of the suspicions, rumours and threats that have become so prevalent of late.

The terms of reference of the Commission are very wide. They are directed to X "enquire into the recent disturbance in British Guiana and the events leading up to them and to report thereon."

In order for the members of the Commission to arrive at proper conclusions it is absolutely necessary that those persons who are in a position to give evidence concerning the cause, nature and effect of the recent disturbance should come forward and do so.

Many who have lost their life's savings and could give valuable evidence might be afraid to do so. While this can be understood with sympathy, it is not the answer to the problem facing the country now. For unless those responsible for the violence and bloodshed are exposed and brought to justice there will be no end to fear.

The Commission is empowered to compel the attendance of witnesses. For the good of this country, for its future, it is imperative that the truth must be given to the Commission of Enquiry. If people who have information refuse to give this information out of fear, they must face up to the realisation that they must then assume full responsibility for the results of their action, or lack of action.

(*Thunder*, 13 October 1962)

Editorial:

## 7. PPP VINDICATED

The release of the Wynn Parry report has been used, as one might expect, by the *Chronicle* and the *Evening Post* to suit their own ends. They have headlined and printed sections which do not give the true substance of the report, and have deliberately refrained from publishing the sections which expose them for what they are.

Nevertheless, the substance of the report cannot be hidden, and the main sections of the report vindicate the PPP and condemn the other parties.

While the report does not admit a deliberate plot, the main facts in the report give the thinking person sufficient evidence that there was a plot and that the two opposition parties, supported by trade unions and business interests, tried their utmost to bring down the government by planned violence.

The report must come as a great disappointment to many politicians and groups. The efforts of the two opposition parties to call for proportional representation, implied but not stated X on the basis of minority racial groups X has been smashed to pieces. The report rightly clarifies the fact that racism in BG is not deep-rooted and that, in fact, the PNC has been responsible for encouraging it. Paragraph 50 stated X "The political professions of the PNC were somewhat vague and amorphous. There was a tendency to give a racial tinge to its policy;" and referring to Mr. Burnham's

accusation about a murder of an African supporter of the PNC at Port Mourant, they stated X AWe do not however think that there is much substance in the contention of Mr. Burnham and it seems to us that whatever racial differences existed were brought about by political propaganda. These differences do not go very deep and it is to be remarked that there are two African Ministers in Dr. Jagan's cabinet." (Actually, three Africans, one coloured and one mixed.)

This clearly weakens the case for a Cyprus-type constitution and for the contention of the opposition that the so-called minority interests require special representation.

The Trades Union Council now stands before the bar of public opinion, having been unequivocally charged with political motivations of the lowest type. The only self respecting move they can now make is to remove this charge by cleaning up their leadership. Certainly they have disappointed their international patrons who must now feel that money has been poured into a very poor venture, which has only brought discredit.

The Chamber of Commerce, in their praise for Mr. Luckhoo's advocacy of their cause before the Commission stated that they were grateful for the outstanding service he had rendered, "the commercial community at the hearings, and that they were certain of the outcome." One can only wonder how they feel now, after the Commission has recorded in rather harsh terms their activities during the disturbances.

One important result of the Commission's enquiry is the fact that the security arrangements were obviously faulty. And this, more than anything else stresses the need for a fully independent Guyana, where the elected government can have complete control in order to ensure the safety and security of the people. Much of the unfortunate occurrences of February 16th would have been avoided if duality of control of security had not existed.

Thus, it is imperative that the long awaited talks for independence which take place in little over a week are completely successful.

Let us hope that all those concerned in the preparation of the country for its independence will think in terms of the future of the country and not in terms of their own personal ambitions. Statesmanship and patriotism must be the keynote.

(*Thunder*, 20 October 1962)

## 8. REVIEW OF REPORT BY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

By Vernon Persaud Bhairam

The report by the Commission of Inquiry published in London was received more or less with coldness by the British press. Apart from the *Times*, which gave it a place in its editorial, the only other papers which mentioned the report in a few lines, were the *Daily Express* and the *Telegraph*. This is in great contrast to their explosive headlines when the riot was first reported to the British public. The reason of course was that there was nothing in the report by which they could, in the usual way, attack and discredit the Government and therefore Dr. Jagan.

The *Times* states X and by the way the *Times* is no friend of the Government X that the report "is eminently fair." If, therefore, we take this statement as a true assessment of the report, then we must conclude that the riots were caused by the "political rivalries and jealousies which ideally found expression in the criminal acts of a few groups of hooligans."

By political rivalries the Commission is referring to the PNC and United Force led respectively by Mr. Burnham and Peter D'Aguiar, who "had fostered antagonism towards Dr. Jagan and the PPP, through the failures of their ambitions and realisation that there was no future for them", once the present Government existed.

The report commends Dr. Jagan for his energy and honesty of purpose and acknowledges his protestations that he is not a Communist.

# Blameless

From an objective perusal of the report it would appear that the Government, as a political entity, was quite blameless for the series of events leading to the obnoxious occurrences of Black Friday. If blame is to be laid on Government, it must be laid, not on the political activity, but on the economic measures which it introduced to halt an economic landslide X a landslide which would have strangled the country and left it in a quite perilous position. But even so, the economic measures introduced did not cause the revolt X they only acted as a match to light a fuse which had its being in the political manoeuvres of the opposition parties.

But since the Government's economic measures have been mentioned in the report, let us take some time off to discuss it in detail. What were the motives behind the Government's economic policy? The precise answer was the political and economic blockade put on the Government by the United Kingdom, the United States and a notorious clique of Guianese traitors who "were activated by personal motives rather than ideological differences."

# New Devices

Since the suspension of the constitution in 1953, the United Kingdom Government has tried all known, novel and modified tricks to deprive the PPP from power. But every time they invented new devices X whether by jerrymandering boundaries, intimidating the Government to join the West Indies Federation or by boycotting the development policy of the Government by withholding or denying loans for expansion X their plans were always frustrated by the will of the people.

Dr. Jagan and his Government has been pointing out since the "rump Interim Government" of 1953 assumed office, the fallacy and consequences of their expenditure and development plan programme. Today, as a result of their notorious spending, and inadequate planning, a debt of \$22 million is saddled on the economy. Added to this, the white collar workers were clamouring for a rise of \$32 million which the Government agreed to pay. And to complicate the picture \$172 million had to be found for expenditures "which were long overdue."

From 1954-1957 the cost of living index jumped 23 points and by 1961 the Guillebaud Commission had observed that the cost of living had increased by 10 percent since 1954. Because of this headstrong inflation in BG, the British Government's loan of \$110 million in 1958 was automatically reduced in 1961 to less than \$100 million. Yet in spite of this, the BG Government had to pay interest at the rate of 6 percent on the original amount of \$110 million, and incur expenditure for the servicing of a loan which had lost about one-tenth of its monetary value.

## No Loans

With growing unemployment over 18 percent, and 9 percent underemployed, increase in population, no proper communications and inadequate funds, the Government first sought recourse to solve their problems by pleading to the United Kingdom, United States, World Bank, Canada, France, West Germany and Italy for loans. But in all this their efforts were in vain.

But when the Swiss Bank and Dr. Fidel Castro agreed to provide loans, the British Government declined to entertain the efforts on the shameful pretext that, "it was against their policy to guarantee such loans."

Further problems beset the Government when the propertied and commercial classes began a drain on the already "extremely small and wholly inadequate resources of the country by a substantial transference of their capital" elsewhere.

The Government, faced with the above narrative, had to employ the only means at its disposal to save the country and this took the form of stringent currency regulations to prohibit the export of liquid assets from the country.

The Budget followed and this gave food to the opposition parties and other disparate forces to bring a showdown on the Government, and this eventually culminated in the February riots.

## Praise for Policy

It is to be noted here that the Government had won immediate praise from international quarters for its courageous proposals X from among others, they include the London and New York *Times* and Sir Jock Campbell of Bookers Bros. And according to the Commission "the active hostility and the virulent propaganda which the budget provoked cannot be attributed to an objective consideration of the new tax." Since, therefore, it was not the budget which should have caused the events of Black Friday, who then should the blame be attributed to? Surely it is the work of principal characters, Burnham and D'Aguiar. The people of British Guiana must take very seriously the already assumed and now confirmed view which was expressed by the Commission of these respective leaders.

To take Burnham first, his motive for power was not in the interest of the people but "a desire to assert himself in public life and establish a more important and more rewarding position for himself". In other words, an entirely selfish attitude.

# Callous

Burnham was prepared to expand his scale of operations even at the peril of his own people. According to the Commission, he even refused the modest request of the Governor to appeal to the crowds to desist from violence on the flimsiest and barefaced excuse, that he was "short of fuel". His reaction to all that was taking place at the height of the crisis is recorded as, "callous and remorseless."

Even before the outburst of Black Friday, it appears that Burnham was prepared that the people should engage in violence, for although he states that the PNC will not start violence, he punctuated the following statement thus: violence "shall not pass." This statement was pregnant with suggestions and as the Commission remarked, "there was an ominous foreboding in the promise of that statement". It came to pass.

As for D'Aguiar, his politics were free from "personal motives". His effective control of the *Chronicle* with a "transparent editor", a mere "supine hireling", was clear.

D'Aguiar seized every opportunity of attacking the Government and inciting the crowds. He was so cowardly in his examination before the Commission that he tried to push the blame for what happened on the public for as he said, "Ait was not he who led the crowd".

The Commission pointed out that the rumour that a child had died caused a sudden upsurge of anger which led to the events of Black Friday. This piece of information was given by D'Aguiar. "We are inclined to take the view," said the Commission, "that D'Aguiar did not exercise any restraint upon himself and that he in fact announced the death of the child to the crowd and not its mere illness."

About D'Aguiar the Commission said "whenever an opportunity offered itself he took advantage of it in order to further his own objects". All that D'Aguiar could think of at the height of the crisis was to ask the Governor to give protection to his wife and family".

I leave you my fellow Guianese to draw the obvious implications of this sad statement.

In concluding this review of the report, one further point must be mentioned. Earlier during the year when the news of the riot was being so excitedly bandied around in London, the general conclusion of both press and radio seem to be that BG was faced with a social problem the magnitude of which could lead to imminent social revolution and racial Balkanisation of the territory. It is rewarding to see that the Commission thinks otherwise. We have lived peacefully in the past. We are going to do so in the future and no further propaganda to the contrary must ever be considered by our people.

(*Thunder*, 3 March 1962)

## **9. PYO REFUTES UF CHARGES**

At a Press Conference on February 24, the Progressive Youth Organisation refuted charges against it by that fascist political party the United Force that its members were responsible for the setting of fire to business places and looting during Guiana's recent crisis.

The press conference which was taken by Senator Claude Christian, Chairman, Neville Annibourne, General Secretary and Moses Bhagwan, M.L.A. and Executive member, emphatically denied these charges and declared:

"When Mr. D'Aguiar and the United Force attack us and defend the behaviour of their mobs, it is certainly not an expression of sympathy for the working people."

Following is the release:

In a, leaflet printed by the *Daily Chronicle* we presume for the United Force, two questions – "Why did members of the PYO stone the Electric Company?" and "Why were members seen in the vicinity of every deliberately set fire?" are asked. You will observe that these questions make the impossible assumption that the Progressive Youth Organisation is involved in a conspiracy of outrageous crimes perpetrated in the city during the last few days.

### **VIOLENCE**

At a press conference on Tuesday, February 20, Peter D'Aguiar, leader of the United Force stated, and we quote from the *Daily Chronicle* – "he knew for a fact the Progressive Youth Organisation . . . get into the act and was seen in places to be taking part in the looting and throwing of stones to encourage violence."

The Progressive Youth Organisation takes this opportunity to refute these fantastic accusations – accusations which are easily refutable by the mass of open evidence available and to express its profound horror and disgust at the fact that the United Force and its leader Peter D'Aguiar, could both with such facility, dare and offend the Guianese public with these wild and hysterical charges.

### **HYPOCRISY**

The hypocritical criminality of the United Force, in attempting to envelope the obvious innocence of the PYO with someone else's guilt, can compare in degree only with its first crime of setting frenzied mobs on people and property.

How docile does the United Force think the Guianese public is that it can make the amazing allegation that PYO members were stoning the Electricity Plant. The disruption of the essential services, in particular electricity was the final step to irretrievable chaos and the key to the realisation of the objective of the United Force, the resignation of the PPP Government or the suspension of the Constitution.

### **MOBS**

That is why the mobs on Friday morning, February 16<sup>th</sup> attempted to storm their way through to the power plant to force a shutdown -- a method extensively employed in many enterprises that did not "co-operate" with the United Force.

Important to note that this plant maintains operations mainly through the dedication and courage of workers loyal to the Government, the Chairman of the Electricity Corporation, Mr. M. Yassin who is also a leading member of the PPP, and through many members of the PPP Women's Section who served meals to the workers.

## AFFRONTRY

In face of these facts, and vital necessity of the operation of the plant to Government, the United Force has the affrontry to charge PYO members with stoning the power plant.

The leaflet's other ridiculous assumption that PYO members were seen in the vicinity of fires is easily debunked by asking – "how then were they not slaughtered by the angry mob?" -- when for example the stores of PPP supporters were being razed to the ground; when for another example Mr. Joseph Jardim at about the time Freedom House was being attacked and fires set to many stores, was fleeing through back windows of his house for his life, while insanely enraged UF led mobs were breaking through his store looting and attempting to set fires; when, for yet another example cars and the persons of PPP supporters were attacked in the streets.

## BAREFACED LYING

But is Mr. D'Aguiar himself who takes the cake for brazen, barefaced lying, when he claims for a fact he knows PYO members were in the riots."

In the interests of justice Mr. D'Aguiar should make a special effort to help the Police to identify these PYO members who were seen in the vicinity of the fires.

What simply Mr. Peter D'Aguiar and his fascist Party endeavours to do is to employ their whole propaganda outfit to affix guilt for the violence, fires and looting very far away from their own direction.

## TIGHT SITUATION

Mr. D'Aguiar and the United Force find themselves in a tight situation, confused and contradictory. At first at the same press conference, before the opening was given for vilifying the PYO, Mr D'Aguiar attributed the violence to two possibilities: --

1. To the effects of the use of tear gas;
2. To the effect on the city people of a rumour that the PPP were bringing thousands of its supporters to storm the city. (Interesting this is, since the rumour gained ground when a PNC speaker at a meeting projected the suggestion with the same effect on the emotions of the people, as the rumour spread on Friday morning by the United Force speakers that the Riot Squad had killed two children with tear gas).

There is the United Force and Mr. D'Aguiar scattering guilt in all directions, on the budget and the Government, on the use of tear gas, the PYO and the PPP.

#### AN EXCUSE

The budget could not be the cause of violence, though the fascists thoroughly exploited it for an excuse. Hasn't this country passed peacefully through many, many colonial budgets adored by Mr. D'Aguiar however unpopular? And wasn't this budget divested of taxes affecting the working man two days before the violence started? In fact, the TUC has finally agreed to the budget which now is the same as it was before the Premier announced the changes.

The Progressive Youth Organisation feels that if Government is to be criticised it can only be for failing to completely anticipate the bitter reaction of the propertied and capitalist class which could not bear to see itself separated from part of its wealth, ill-gotten from the same working people they organised for their battle, and for failing to observe that in competition with these vast business interests affected, the Government itself did not have the propaganda machinery, which, apart from the GIS, is controlled and owned by these same interests, with which it could fully and effectively explain the taxes affecting the working people.

#### CLASS CHARACTER

It has been stupid for opposition elements to criticise the budget on the ground taxes on the working people yielded more revenue than the taxes against the propertied interests. The class character and class interests of the budget are determined not by the total yield but by the individual impact.

It was clear that the impact of the taxes on the individual working man was extremely slight, while the effect on the individual propertied man or capitalist was apparent.

The fact that the increases in consumer items were vastly disproportionate to the taxes is simply evidence of the rapacity of the merchant class, which even raised the prices on a variety of goods not even taxed by the budget.

#### FOOL'S PARADISE

If it was a mistake to ask the working people to give even just that little for the further security of their own interests, then the mistake was swiftly corrected. Incidentally, if the PNC hopes that the country will be developed with not a single tax on the working man then it is living in a fool's paradise. And socialism does not mean that the workers will not have to pay a little whether in extra energy and enthusiasm or in taxes or both, in order to escape the poverty and terror of capitalist domination.

The violence could not be because of the use of tear gas, since crowds, defying the law (breaking the proclamation on Thursday), storming into Kirpalani on the same day, trying to force its way into the power plant on Friday morning reached the stage where gentle persuasion would have been futile.

## EMOTIONAL STRAIN

The weeks of hysteria-building, emotion-packed propaganda and demonstrations could hardly have produced anything but what it eventually did produce, a mob, mobilised under a terrifying emotional strain that would not be released until it was either shocked back to sanity or allowed to have its own.

As it turned out even the tear gas failed to bring the mob to its senses, and eventually to some degree, the mob had its way, thus the attacks on persons and buildings, the fires and the looting.

## GHOST EXCUSES

However much the United Force lies, the facts and evidence cannot be erased. Many people who participated in the whole unfortunate affair, the many workers, the civil servants, the teachers, trade unionists and Government employees, with the absence of courage will probably find it some relief that the United Force is absolving itself and at the same time handing guilty consciences ghost excuses to grab at.

The United Force, however, remains the main instigator and organisational force, with the TUC and PNC unfortunate tools behind the whole treasonable campaign to bring down the Government by force, by the subtle use of slogans which many read and chanted, but the deep sinister significance of which only the fascist and capitalists understood.

## DISMAYED

The demonstrations, strike, violence and incendiarism were planned and necessary to the suspension of the Constitution, which, however, did not materialise simply because the incendiarism and attempts at incendiarism to the dismay and confusion of the fascists went beyond Freedom House, Kissoon's, Jardim's, Kirpalani's, Thani's and Maraj's, and because the United Force did not correctly understand the position of the British Government, and failed to recognise the impregnable position of a democratically elected Government whose only "misdemeanour" was a budget that did not please the business and propertied interests.

When Mr. D'Aguiar and the United Force attack us and defend the behaviour of their mobs, it is certainly not an expression of sympathy for the working people. It is a superficial defence of the United Force, which seeks to detach itself from guilt and shame and condemnation from the involvement in this unprecedented delusion and betrayal of the working class.

## LOCKOUTS

The leaders and planners of the whole affair are clearly by the United Force. Remember when the commercial employees "struck" even the Clerical Workers' Union and Richard Ishmael denied "any knowledge of the action. Mr. Sankar himself (Secretary of the Clerical Workers' Union) stated that he personally witnessed outrageous cases of lockouts.

The “strike” of the commercial employees was palpably engineered and enforced by employers whose part in the demonstrations were so embarrassingly conspicuous. Strange it was that before the general strike, the striking commercial employees were being addressed not by union leaders but by leaders of the United Force.

The vast propaganda and organisational machinery of the United Force, the intimidatory forces of the Water Street merchants backing the United Force concentrated themselves in this all-out drive to destroy the PPP Government.

Now is the time for unity against the fascist United Force. Otherwise, it is only a matter of time when the wealth, organisation and social power will capture and destroy all PPP and other democratic opinion, in Guiana.