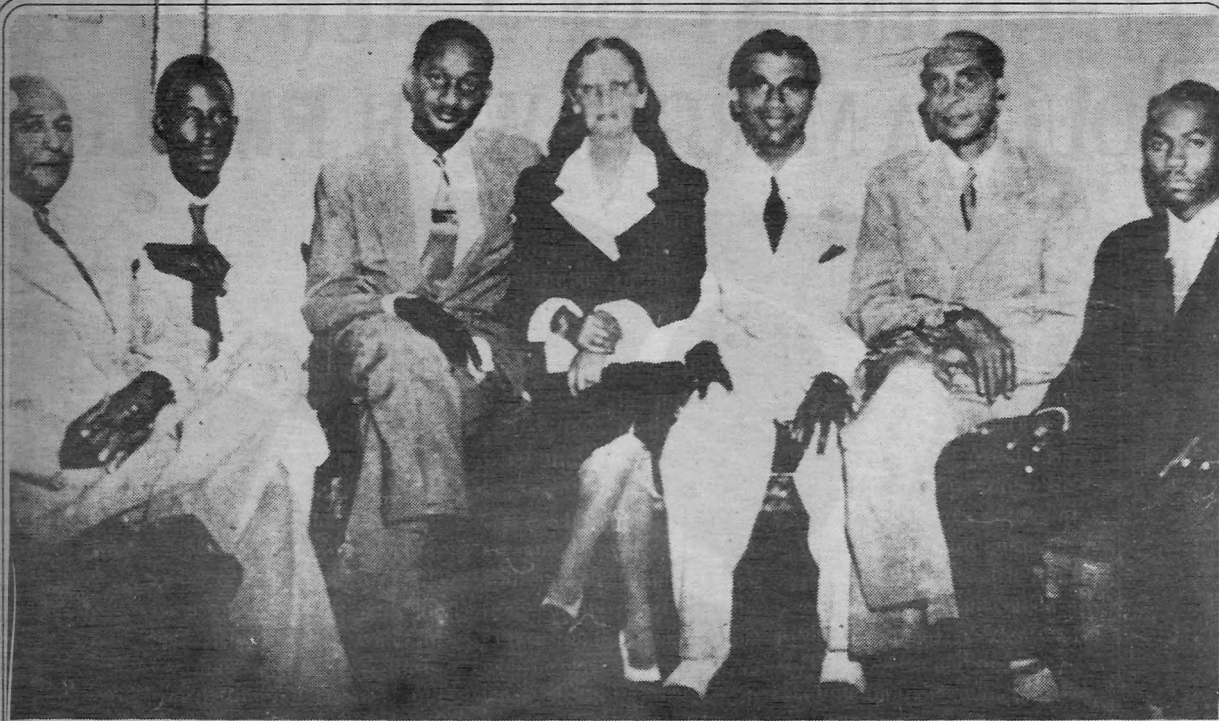


A Moment in History



The first people's victory in this century came with the success of the campaign for universal adult suffrage and the holding of the first elections ever under adult suffrage and an advanced constitution that gave executive responsibility to the people's elected representatives. The elections of 1953 were won by the People's Progressive Party which swept the polls, winning 18 out of 24 seats.

The constitution was suspended in October 1953, after the PPP had been in office a mere 4 1/2 months. Then and to this day, the White Paper which attempted to explain why the British government threw the PPP out of office, is considered rubbish. Behind the flimsy excuses made by the Churchill Government was the fact that the battle to make into law a means for unions to obtain recognition by a poll, the Labour Relations Bill, annoyed the sugar planters, who had great influence in Guiana. They preferred the company union, MPCA, over which they exercised control, to GIWU which instituted the 4 1/2 months strike on the East Coast during

which time police fired on workers at Enmore, killing five. This was followed by the Vern Commission, which also upset the Sugar Kings of Guiana.

Universal adult suffrage was the basis of free elections in Guiana until the PNC began its rigorous rigging in 1968, continuing through the 1973, 1980 and 1985 elections and the 1978 referendum.

This 39-year-old photograph shows the 6-man PPP Cabinet and the Deputy Speaker. Left to right are the late Dr. J.P. Lachmarsingh, Minister of Health; Sydney King, Minister of Communications & Works; the late L.F.S. Burnham, Minister of Education; Deputy Speaker, Janet Jagan; Cheddi Jagan, Leader of the House and Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Mines; Jainarine Singh, Minister of Local Government and Ashton Chase, Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce. This photograph, by the way, was one of the most publicised of all pictures taken during this period, being used internationally after the suspension of the Constitution.