

# Comments on The Political Situation

by Janet Jagan

**THE way the two opposition parties and their leaders are behaving makes one wonder if they have any idea of politics at all. Take for example the United Force's attitude to independence and the motion before the Legislative Assembly. The Leader of the United Force, Mr. Peter D'Aguiar has the stupidity of mind to suggest that a referendum must be taken on the independent issue.**

What for, any sensible person would ask. Has the issue not already been decided by the mandate given to the People's Progressive Party in the August elections? It doesn't matter how many votes the winning party gets or the opposition party gets once the majority is clear.

President Kennedy won the U.S. elections by the 'skin of

his teeth' yet his opposition knows enough about the principles of constitutional government to know that the winning party, if it wins by one vote, is the party selected by the voters to run the government.

The PPP made it abundantly clear in its election manifesto that "WE ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTIONS WE WILL TAKE STEPS TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF OUR COUNTRY WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH IN A PERIOD NOT LATER THAN ONE YEAR."

Does any one want anything clearer? The trouble is that neither Party put out a clear statement of aims and objects at the elections. Only the PPP fully stated its stand on vital issues. And the people decided by democratic vote.

## INDEPENDENCE ISSUE

The PPP also campaigned over the country and made independence a decided issue at the elections. So how on earth could anyone of any intelligence claim that the people of the country must decide the independence issue by a referendum now? The plain truth is that Mr. D'Aguiar like all his political predecessors is violently opposed to the principles of independence and political freedom.

The *Daily Chronicle* of October 22nd wrote — "The Government was not mandated to demand independence. Independence was not an issue at the last elections." What a shameful situation exists when Guianese writers could make such false claims and prostitute all their ideals in order to take battle against an issue that all peoples of all ages have fought for!

Where in the world is there another colonial territory that does not want its independence? I can recall once at a

tuent Assembly and Burnham in London didn't want independence! No! They wanted self government, but not independence. But when the issue became so hot during the elections, and everyone was jumping on the bandwagon calling for independence, Burnham and company had to get into step. So we then had the famous cry of Burnham — "When Jagan goes to London to ask for independence, I shall go on the same plane," or words to that effect.

## PNC'S NEW LINE

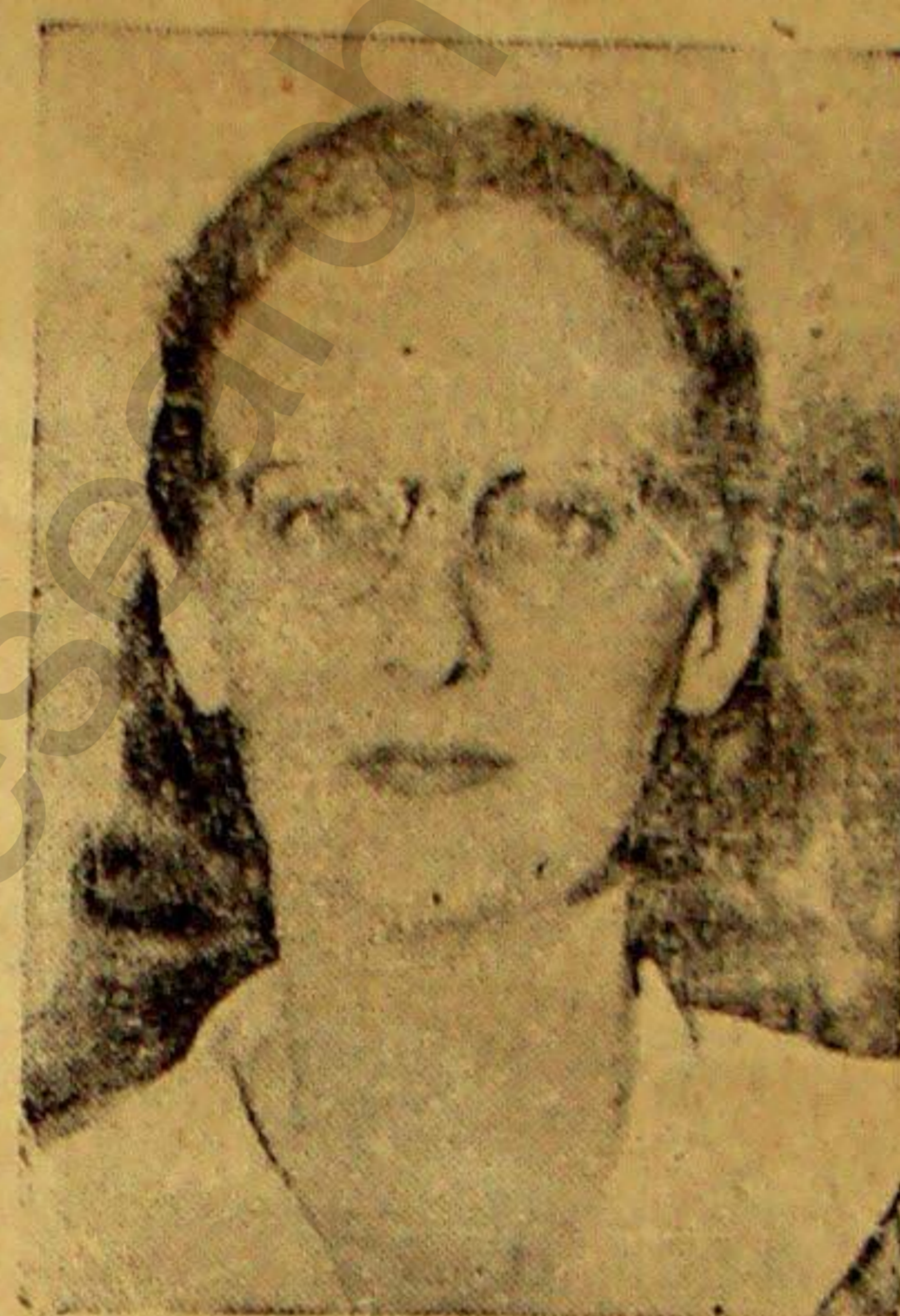
Well, all the shouting of the elections is over, and the PNC leadership, which obviously was forced into that stand during elections, so as to satisfy a section of militant and thinking following, now has a new line — "We don't want the Jagan-type independence." In reality, the PNC is little different from the United Force on the issue, for basically, the two parties are hostile to independence.

If Burnham had had any political sense, instead of sitting down on the pavement and saying "Grey must go," he would have shouted — "We want full independent status. No more powers to colonial governors and no more Colonial Office Governors. In fact, we don't want any more Governors. We want a wholly elected system of Government." But no, Burnham only thought of saying "We want a Guianese Governor," when some of his following realised how utterly stupid was the cry "Grey Must Go". And this, of course, was *after* he had missed the bus.

## SILLY RUMBLING

The rumbling from the opposition is getting so silly that one wonders where they will end. We have D'Aguiar now claiming how he got the PPP to say that they would remain in the Commonwealth after independence. The trouble

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PPP meeting at Bourda Green, when PPP leaders were discussing independence, hecklers in the crowd, apparently PNC supporters, shouted 'We don't want Independence.' An overseas correspondent, not particularly sympathetic to the PPP could not help remarking that it was the first time in his life he had heard a resident in a colonial territory made such a statement.

## POOR LEADERSHIP

The pity is that such things can happen in B.G. because of the poor leadership given by some political leaders. Take another look at the PNC on the independence issue. Now they have a new line. The point really is — any line, as long as it opposes independence.

Last year and the year before, the PNC and its Consti-

## - Help Schemes

ne hundred and forty acres of land in Ebini on the Berbice River are being developed and empoldered by self-helpers of the community. They will cultivate the empoldered land and provide pasturage for cattle. Forty-seven families will benefit from the scheme which is estimated at an overall cost of just under seventeen thousand dollars.

### EBINI

of Ebini, Berbice River are now engaged in the construction of a concrete pathway for the children attending Atonement Lutheran School.

The pathway will be five hundred feet long and one hundred feet wide and the self-helpers have done half of the work already. The estimated cost of this scheme is about one thousand dollars.

### BARACARA

Dispensary and Nurse Midwife's Quarters are in course of erection at Baracara on the Berbice River. It is being built by aided self-helpers.

The workers have already made over two thousand concrete blocks, prepared the site and laid the foundation for the one flat structure. It is expected to lay the corner stone of the building shortly.

When completed more than fifty families will be provided with housing.



# POLITICAL SITUATION

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with D'Aguiar is that his is a "sometime" politician, and hasn't been around much until this year.

Maybe he should look at the January 5, 1957 issue of *Thunder* and observe a list of questions and answers given by the Party Leader — "Does your party intend to sever connections with the Commonwealth upon the achievement of independence in British Guiana?" Answer — "While we resent our present colonial status, we do not advocate severance from the British Commonwealth after our independence so long as this relationship is to our mutual advantage and benefit.

## WORLD PEACE

If the Commonwealth, with its enlarged and enlarging membership recognises the equality and complete independence of its members and consults them on all major questions of policy it can evolve into a force for good, for the preservation of world peace."

Next we have Mr. Stephen Campbell of the United Force complaining that when he goes to the Legislative Assembly and objects to the Governor's address at the opening of the Legislature, what happens? Why, he is horrified that when the vote is taken, the opposition gets the minority of votes and all is carried. After four years, one would imagine that he and his party would finally realise that democratic government is based on this very principle. If he and his party are not prepared to accept the counting of votes, then it must mean that they are in favour of dictatorship, and one fears, that is really what they believe in.

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