

ARMY INTERVENTION IN THE 1973 ELECTIONS IN GUYANA

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INTRODUCTION

The 1973 elections are over. The PNC has told the world that it made a "breakthrough," that it now speaks for over two-thirds of the Guyanese electorate.

This booklet sets out in detail how this 'miracle' has been achieved, how the PNC gave itself 71% of the votes cast, quite a significant 'increase' from the mere 40 per cent it secured in 1964.

In 1968, the PNC 'won' 55 per cent of the votes cast through extensive fraud by padded voters lists, local and overseas, proxy voting and the tampering with ballot boxes.

In 1973, fraud was expanded and a new dimension was added of army intervention, the seizure of and tampering with ballot boxes.

Apart from the three opposition political parties, fearless journalists — Ric Mentus, Rickey Singh, Rev. Father Wong — have outspokenly commented in Guyana on the magnitude of the fraud.

In the Caribbean, the Monthly CARIBBEAN CONTACT Moko and Tapia of Trinidad have exposed the hypocrisy of the PNC.

And further afield, the GUARDIAN and GRANADA TELEVISION "World in Action" of the United Kingdom have opened the window of the world to the sordid electoral practices of the PNC regime.

Granada Television followed up their "The Trail of the Vanishing Votes" and "The Making of a Prime Minister" of 1968 with "Mr Burnham—Does It Again" in 1973. In 1968, Granada was attacked for being "mischievous". But "The Making of a Prime Minister" won a prize for TV film reporting.

Now again, smarting under the expose, the Guyana High Commission in London has accused Granada of "devious devices" and "enduring prejudices."

Similarly, in Guyana, the PNC regime has resorted not only to attacking those who criticize it, but also putting pressures on those who have been courageous enough to expose the electoral fraud. The first casualty was the

fearless SUNDAY GRAPHIC Editor, Ric Mentus, who has been dismissed. A wave of arrests followed the July 16th elections. Hundreds have faced trumped-up police charges. Many have been victimized.

The 1973 elections will prove a watershed in Guyana's political life. It has brought the Guyanese people to a new stage in the struggle for national liberation and genuine independence.

The tactics of the PPP have proved correct in practice. Those who criticized the PPP for contesting the elections in the face of known rigging now admit that it was right. By participating in the past three general elections, the PPP leadership has helped to develop the consciousness of the masses. As a result of their own involvement they now fully grasp the realities of politics and the role of the state machine—the administrative bureaucracy, the judiciary, the police and army.

As a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, the PPP has continuously fought against opportunism, both of the 'right' and 'left'. In a situation charged with race, it has consistently taken a scientific outlook. While it concedes the racial factor in Guyana politics (and this factor should be neither underestimated nor overestimated), it has warned that the decisive factor is not race but economics, that there is an interconnection and interaction between the economic base and the political and ideological superstructure.

The PPP pointed out that as a result of the deal with Anglo-American imperialism which brought the PNC to power in 1964, the PNC-UF coalition reversed the progressive domestic and foreign policies of the PPP and embarked on a pro-imperialist course — scaling down of some, and removal of other, capital taxes on vested interests; increase of indirect taxation on consumer goods; removal of exchange control on sterling introduced in 1962; secret deal with Reynolds Metals Company making tax and other concessions and giving away vast areas of interior land for exploratory purposes; secret military pact with the United States of America concerning our airfield; breakoff of trade with Cuba and imposition of restrictions on trade with the socialist world; imperialist control through exports, advisers, Peace Corps, etc. of economic planning—that these policies inevitably would lead to a worsening of the social and

economic conditions of the people; that with growing dissatisfaction, the regime would embark on a course of denial of civil liberties, demagoguery, electoral fraud and force.

Eight and a half years and three general elections have established certain basic facts.

Firstly, the PPP is stronger than ever. Increasingly, more and more people are seeing the PPP as the only true alternative to the corrupt, neo-fascist PNC.

Secondly, the PNC is losing support. Apart from a scribe of interest at the leadership level, there are growing contradictions between the PNC leadership and rank-and-file as a result of the partnership between the ruling elite and imperialism.

Thirdly, and above all, the Guyanese people have been brought to a new level of political consciousness. In 1964 it was the imperialist-imposed change in the electoral system to proportional representation which brought the PNC to power. In 1968, the PNC used extensive fraud to remain in office. In 1973, when the people understood and were prepared to block fraud, the PNC used force.

The people now realize that it is not possible to secure people's power and to carry out a national, democratic, anti-imperialist revolution so long as the PNC controls the state apparatus—the bureaucratic machine; the judiciary; the police and the army.

In 1969, Michael Manley, then Leader of the Opposition in Jamaica, declared:

"I warn the House and I warn Jamaica that one of the greatest dangers confronting us today is a growing belief that the political system is so manipulated as to make peaceful change, accomplished through the workings of the political machinery, virtually impossible. If that notion once comes to be generally believed, democracy in Jamaica is finished, since the thrust for change will take new and dangerous forms leading inevitably either to repressive measures by those who control power or, alternatively, the overthrow of power by means that are outside of the political system."

In Jamaica, the ruling class permitted a peaceful political transition. But in Guyana, where the liberation struggle is sharper, peaceful change has been blocked. And the PNC regime resorted to violence and repressive measures before and after the elections. It has re-enacted the fascist National Security Act, which permits detention without trial and violations of the rule of law. It has intensified its campaign of demagoguery. Even the visit of Premier Fidel Castro in September 1973 was exploited to improve its image.

At the political level, the regime, lacking popular support, will rely increasingly on imperialism and the bureaucratic state machine. It will fashion closer ties so as to be able to get military and economic aid from outside while at home it will accelerate its policies of bribery of the ruling elite and the expansion of the police and army.

This then means the export to Guyana of the rampant inflation of North America and the United Kingdom. It will also mean additional taxation to meet the costs of bribery, corruption and expansion of the state apparatus.

The new \$1100 million development plan will fail as the previous plan. Their underlying economic planning strategies (Puerto Rico and ECLA models) failed in Latin America, more particularly in Chile.

The Burnham regime's 'cooperative socialism' will no more achieve its stated objectives of 'feeding, clothing and housing the nation' and 'making the small man a real man' than Hitler's 'national socialism' or Eduardo Frei's 'revolution in liberty' in Chile. The Guyanese people's living conditions will definitely worsen and the struggle will sharpen.

The PPP has embarked on a civil resistance, non-cooperation campaign, and a many-sided struggle to bring down the corrupt, demagogic and neo-fascist PNC regime.

It has called for the expansion and intensification of theoretical-ideological work and the mastering of all forms of struggle.

The PPP has called on the people to resist by all the means at their disposal and for the creation of a popular front to oppose the PNC at all levels and by all available means.

In Chile, the Military has carried out a coup to overthrow the popular, democratically-elected Allende government. In Guyana, there was a virtual army coup with the seizure of the ballot boxes.

But these manoeuvres will fail in Chile and in Guyana as they have failed elsewhere—Cuba, Pakistan, Argentina, Vietnam. Vietnam has demonstrated that with a well-directed and properly organized Marxist-Leninist Party, victory is inevitable. Even the mighty US war machine was bogged down and humbled by the courageous and heroic Vietnamese masses under the leadership of the Vietnamese Workers Party and the National Liberation Front.

Education Committee
People's Progressive Party.

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Army Intervention in the 1973 Elections in Guyana

In Guyana, the word "elections" has become synonymous with "fraud".

Nowhere in Guyana, not even among the most fanatic of PNC supporters, can anyone be found who will declare unequivocally that the 1973 elections were free or that the results represent the will of the people.

Outside of Guyana, the extent of the fraud or even the existence of the fraud may not be as well known because the People's National Congress (PNC) regime sent out a stream of propaganda long before the election, in an effort to pave the way for acceptance of the belief that the PNC was growing in popularity and that the People's Progressive Party (PPP) was disintegrating.

The propaganda was aimed not only at preparing the ground for a PNC victory, but for a special kind of victory — victory by a two-thirds majority. The PNC leadership boasted that they would obtain 38 seats — some said 42 — and to make this plausible, a carefully planned programme of pre-election propaganda was necessary. One such effort attempted to show a pattern of penetration into known areas of PPP strength. For example, in the *New Nation*, official organ of the PNC, pictures were published showing groups of Indo-Guyanese surrounding a smiling Burnham. One picture showed a group carrying placards with slogans in favour of the PNC; the caption stated that they were all from Port Mourant, the sugar-estate birth-place of the PPP General Secretary, Dr. Cheddi Jagan. The propaganda line being pushed was that even in his home-town, Dr. Jagan was rejected by the people. But the fact was that none of the persons shown in the picture was from Port Mourant

but were all employees or relatives of Mustapha Ally, a former member of the PPP and now a PNC member, a man whose support in the area in which he lives is nil.

But the pre-election boast about a two-thirds majority boomeranged. Not only did it serve as a catalyst to consolidate the support of the PPP, but it brought in much wider support than the Party had hitherto enjoyed. In fact, soon after the date of the election had been announced, it became evident that the PPP was in for a landslide victory, much greater even than its historic victory twenty years ago, in April, 1953.

The PNC's two-thirds majority call did more than that. Widely regarded as a threat, it created grave problems in the ranks of the PNC. Its supporters were unhappy about a number of things which they could not or would not voice openly. Rising unemployment, rising cost of living, and poverty were having their effect. What the PPP had said so often was true — that even though the PNC practised discrimination and took a hard line against PPP supporters, in the long run, it was the working class which was being attacked and which was bound to suffer because of the rotten and bankrupt policies of the government and its alliance with Big Business.

Added to discontent due to growing poverty and fear engendered by existing misuse of power was the greater fear if greater power was exercised by the PNC by a two-thirds majority. This fear, though not expressed openly, ran through the rank and file of the PNC as much as it did the whole area of non-PNC Guyanese. It had not become vocal. Nor had it crystallised into any form of overt action. But house-to-house canvassing by the political parties quite clearly revealed this latent dissent, which was to take the form of general apathy in areas of PNC strength on Election day, July 16. In these areas, the surveys revealed that a large percentage of voters stated quite openly that they did not intend to vote. This was proven to be accurate when on voting day the eight districts of Greater Georgetown had the lowest percentage turn out of voters in the whole country of 38 electoral districts.

The "two-thirds majority" became, therefore, a major election issue during the campaigning, with practically all of Guyana opposed to the PNC obtaining this majority, since it was interpreted as being a prelude to a dictatorial one-

party state. So strong was the feeling about this that the PNC leadership was forced to come out, on a number of occasions, to declare that it was not in favour of a one-party state and had no intention of establishing one.

To bolster its claim of having majority support, which was not evident at any level, the PNC and government propaganda machine, began to spew out talk of a "breakthrough" in the areas of PPP strength. Efforts to demonstrate this, other than the propaganda blurbs, were not easy.

The PNC leader, L.F.S. Burnham's "Meet the People" tours were barren. People refused to turn out. "Meet the People" degenerated into "Meet the Children" tours. When he visited each area, school children were required to turn out to "meet the Prime Minister".

On all these occasions, as the election date drew closer, and the people became increasingly hostile to the PNC. Party speakers had to be escorted by large bodies of army and security forces. A week before the election, an extra boat had to be requisitioned just to convey several jeep loads of soldiers and police to accompany PNC speakers to Essequibo, so insecure did they feel about the reactions of the people. In these areas no public meetings were held by the PNC, fearing, no doubt, a total boycott, which would have been devastating to its pride, damaging to the image the PNC was trying to portray, and impossible to explain in the face of the votes the party was planning to obtain.

There were other methods used in the desperate bid for votes. For years, the PNC successfully held off a claim by public servants for revisions of salaries and wages in the face of the steep rise in the cost of living. At last, just a week before the July 16 election, the government agreed to pay out some \$28 million to its employees. A few weeks earlier, great publicity was given to the proposed 5-year 1972-1976 Development Plan, calling for expenditure of \$1,100 million, nearly four times as much as the previous 6-year (1966-72) \$300 million plan.

But, as was clearly to be seen in the days before and on voting day, the people rejected all the PNC ballyhoo, all the high-sounding claims of a "breakthrough" and all the promises of a golden era. The only "breakthrough" that took place was engineered by the PNC top-brass and execu-

ted by the military: it was the breakthrough of the ballot boxes — the seizure and conveyance to GDF headquarters of, and tampering with, the ballot boxes when polling closed on July 16.

For when polling day dawned it was apparent to most observers that the people were going to vote the PNC out of office; that the PPP, despite all the padding of the voters lists, postal voting, proxy voting, persons voting several times, impersonation, the many illegalities and irregularities that preceded the election, would win the election and be able to form the next Guyana government.

In an Extraordinary issue of the Official Gazette on July 14, two days before elections, the Chief Election Officer announced that all counting of ballots, contrary to all previous arrangements for counting, would take place at three buildings, all in Thomas Lands (in the north of Georgetown) where are also to be found the headquarters of the army and police.

It was to this area, cordoned-off by the security forces that the ballot boxes were taken on July 16 and thereafter, and held for many days in the Army Compound, out of sight of election agents, candidates, counting agents, and even government-appointed election officers. It was here that the final rape of the people's votes took place, behind the guns and army equipment; in the blacked out rooms where the true ballots cast by the voters of Guyana were destroyed and replaced by those not marked or cast by the voters, but by agents of the PNC.

It was these thousands of false ballots (and there is proof in abundance, if any is needed) that gave to the PNC the 37 seats it threatened it would take. Without the false ballots, the PNC vote would have fallen well below what it obtained (40%) in the 1964 elections; before election rigging became the means for the PNC to hold power.

THE MANY WAYS OF RIGGING

The rigging of elections, which began in Guyana in 1968, when the PNC-UF coalition combined their votes in the National Assembly to introduce new election laws, took several forms. It includes the overseas vote, the postal vote, the proxy vote, the undemocratic methods of regis-

The Padding of the Voters Lists

tration, the padding of the voters lists with fictitious names, dead and underaged persons, and the deletion of names of legitimate voters.

The rigging also includes the control of the mechanics of registration and elections by hand-picked persons, the castration of the powers of the Elections Commission and the refusal to allow adequate means for opposition parties to ensure the security of the ballot boxes.

Without rigging, the PNC could not have won an election. It came into power in 1964 on a minority vote, only 40 per cent, by forming a coalition with the other minority, right-wing party, the United Force (UF). This was made possible by the Anglo-American plot to oust the PPP from office and by the introduction of proportional representation.

After the PNC had used the UF to pass legislation required for election rigging, it quickly dumped its coalition partner and gave itself a majority, from 40.5 per cent in 1964 to 56 per cent in 1968 and 71 per cent in 1973.

In its destructive course of holding on to power by corrupt means, the PNC has completely destroyed the foundations of democracy. Elections in Guyana have ceased to be based on the standard principle of "one man, one vote" or on the basic practice that each voter exercises his franchise by direct voting. By the use of the overseas postal vote, the local postal vote and the proxy, thousands of votes, real or fictitious were cast indirectly. The only acceptable indirect vote is one that must be restricted to the proxy, to be used in special circumstances only; namely, bedridden voters or those officials and candidates who, because of election duties, would be unable to vote in the district in which their vote is registered. And in these cases, the person exercising proxy must be named by the voter. In the Guyana elections of 1968 and 1973, abuse of the proxy voting system was widespread. In addition, the opposition parties were unable to inspect the lists of proxies exercised, as required by law, because the lists were not published or made available.

In examining the multiplicity of fraud in these elections, with particular preference to the July 16, 1973 election, an examination, first of all, must be made of the voters lists.

The local votes increased in 1968 by 20.9 per cent over the 1964 registered voters, or if the overseas votes are included — by the fantastic figure of 49.6 per cent. The local votes increased in 1973 by 24.5 per cent over the 1968 votes. Yet the official government statistics show an average increase in population of 2.5 per cent per year. This conclusively points to padding.

According to the Preliminary Census Report 1970, the population at the end of 1970 was 714,000. With a net population increase of 2.5 per cent per annum, the total population at mid-1973 should be 759,523. Subtracting from this total 17,500 for emigration (according to the draft Second Development Plan 1972 — 1976, net migration was over 7,000 per year in 1970) total net population at mid-1973 should be 742,023. This means a net population increase of 38,833 between 1968 and 1973 (according to the QUARTERLY STATISTICAL DIGEST of the Ministry of Economic Development, the population at the end of 1968 was 703,190). With about 60 per cent of the population below 21, a population increase of 38,833 should mean an increase in the voting population of about 15,333 (this assumes that all who reached the qualifying age of 21 were registered; in fact, many eligible persons do not appear on the lists). Yet, about 75,000 voters were added to the local electoral roll!

Two other factors must be considered in examining the immense padding of the lists. Firstly, thousands of legitimate voter's names were not on the lists, and these, it appears were PPP voters. Secondly, there has been heavy emigration during these years. But at the same time, the number of voters on the overseas list dropped by 50 per cent!

The overseas voters lists were heavily padded in 1968. This was conceded when the overseas vote was under discussion in the National Assembly. In May 1973, LFS Burnham admitted that in 1968 "there were some irregularities in the compilation of the overseas register." Mr Oscar Clarke, the Minister of Home Affairs put the blame on the registration agents, who, he claimed, were dishonest.

As a result of the expose of the overseas vote, particularly by Granada Television in England, the overseas lists were reduced. But more about this later when the overseas lists are carefully examined.

The padding of the local lists in 1968 was so glaring that in five PNC areas of strength, the votes increased by 50%.

But it was much worse in 1973. In four out of 38 districts in the 1973 lists of registered voters — the two Upper Demerara (Linden-Christianburg-Wismar), the Northwest and Mazaruni-Potaro — the increased votes account for 37% of the total increase. This means that 10 per cent of the districts account for 37% of the increased votes and 90% of the districts for only 63% of the increased votes, an uneven "growth", not only suspicious, but clearly fraudulent.

This was not by accident, but by design. There was no perceptible movement of population to these areas. On the contrary, the number of people at Matthews Ridge in the Northwest District where the PNC had attempted to create a number of cooperatives, dwindled drastically, as is common knowledge.

These four districts, too, show an unbelievable high percentage of turnout of voters — an average of 95.87%. Yet the Mazaruni-Potaro and the Northwest Districts are the most difficult areas for persons to vote due to long distances that have to be covered by small boats or by foot through the "bush", and the scattering of people into small and remote areas, such as mining camps and isolated communities.

In the Northwest District, Electoral District No. 36, a closer look at the polling divisions shows bare-faced fraud. Polling Division No. 7 and 8 had 370 registered voters in

1968 and 2,674 in 1973. The estimate of the present population is 1,000, which includes children, so that the 1968 figure is close to the actual figure today, if we take into account a 2.5 annual growth balanced against an area where infant mortality is high.

In these two divisions a survey revealed the following:

In Pipiani, 277 voters are registered, but the place is deserted and no one lives there. A survey was carried out in 1968 in respect to manganese deposits, but since then, no one has been living in Pipiani.

In Old World where 383 are registered, the occupations of 63 are listed as seamstresses! Manganese was once prospected for in Old World, but since the closure of the manganese company in 1964, only approximately 200 adults and children live there.

In Yakisarau, one man runs a mining claim and the highest number of adults and children is 100, yet the voters' list shows 277 registered voters. There is no government school in this area, yet three teachers are listed as living there (No. 502, 507 and 510), two recorded as living in the Government school.

Baramita has 434 registered voters, 59 of whom are listed with their occupation as seamstresses. At present some 100 adults and children live at Baramita.

And at Arakaka, 340 registered voters are recorded, but half do not exist.

In these two divisions, sparsely populated areas of the interior of Guyana, 130 seamstresses are recorded.

In Division No. 6 of the Northwest District, there are 4,391 registered voters. At Betsy, there are 359 registered voters, but the total population is about twenty. At Five Star, 412 are registered, including 300 listed as operators. No work is now being done there and an estimated twenty voters only can be found. At Annie Creek which is also in Division No. 6, there are 643 registered, but only some 142 voters live there.

Throughout the Northwest District, the same pattern exists. In no way can an increase of population from 6,789 in 1968 to 13,090 be accounted for except by massive padding. As one commentator put it — "if so many people are supposed to have moved to these areas, where did they

come from? Some other area or areas would have to show a decrease." But, of course, they came from nowhere.

A scientific survey for a pure water project of the Linden-Wismar-Christianburg area, carried out by a US company, James Montgomery Consulting Engineers Inc. gives the estimated population for 1973 as 31,637. But the voters list for the two Upper Demerara districts gives the voting population as 24,968. Even if we discount a thousand (a generous figure) for those in the area not actually living at Linden-Wismar-Christianburg, we end up with a totally disproportionate figure of only, 7,660 under 21 years of age to a total population of 31,637, a preposterous situation. The average Guyanese family, according to official statistics is made up of 4.5 persons 2.5 being children. If we use that average for the two Upper Demerara districts, the voting population could not exceed 12,654, half of the number on the registered voters' lists for the area.

Reports of voting in the two Upper Demerara districts support the charges that irregular voting took place, with large numbers of underage persons exercising the franchise. There was little control at the polling stations since most of the polling agents from the three opposition parties were chased out of the polling stations, and in fact, out of the district; so vicious were the PNC strongmen.

During the elections, because of difficulties experienced by all opposition activists in the Linden area, the PPP posted out a printed letter by Dr. Jagan to voters. There were 617 of these letters sent, the names picked at random from the voters' lists for Linden. After the elections, 204 of these were returned to Dr. Jagan stamped by the Post Office in the following manner, 122 could not be found; 53 were unknown; 9, no such lot; 18 removed and 2 left the country.

The number of dead names remaining on the final lists is legend and the number of these who voted will forever remain in the minds of Guyanese.

In Western Berbice, for example, where a house to house survey was carried out, it was reported that at least 117 dead persons were on the list of electors. In District 9, Division 6, there were 29 names of dead persons; in District No. 8, Division 7, there were seven dead voters; at Rosignol division 33; at Blairmont 14; at Rampoor 4 and

at Cotton Tree 21. Also at Division 5, in Bath Settlement 40 non-existent voters were uncovered and 18 names were found to be duplicated. Western Berbice is known for these inventions. In the 1968 election the most famous was the vote cast by a hanged man!

The father of Saffee Mohammed, a PPP Counting Agent for Mahaiconv District, who died last year, was recorded as voting. As the son said at public meetings, "the PNC magic is so great that even the dead rose to vote." A PPP member in East Bank Demerara reported that when he was standing in line to vote, a woman in front of him began weeping and wailing when the Presiding Officer told her that both she and her husband had already voted. Her husband, who lived at Diamond Long Dam, died two years ago.

Bishum, also known as Bissoon, I.D. No. 137127, who died on January 3, 1973, voted by postal ballot for Polling Division 13, Division No. 2. That means that the dead man signed a postal vote application some time in June or July 1973! Also Somaria Samsarran, whose name appears on the list of voters for Electoral District No. 4, Polling Division No. 10, I.D. No. 240375, who died on September 1, 1971 was listed as a postal voter, having signed her application some time in June or July 1973! And so the list of dead who rose to vote will become part of the legends and folk lore of Guyana.

The question might be asked, to whom did these postal votes assigned to dead persons go? A majority of the postal votes were never posted direct to the names on the lists. They were sent to "accommodation" addresses, mostly post offices. Who there received them? That is a question only the PNC can answer;

But while the dead voted, some of the living were declared to be dead. Such was the monstrosity of the electoral fraud.

Harry Chitram of Montrose E.C.D. gave the following report:

"My sisters are registered to vote at Mortice, E.C.D. My sisters are Seoranie Jagessar (I.D. No. 387971) and Sahodra Jagessar (ID No. 387986). Both their names

appear on the voters' list and their I.D. card numbers correspond to those on the list. On July 16, the Presiding Officer at Mortice Government School refused to allow them to vote on the ground that they were dead

But later my sisters were advised to go to Chateau Margot to vote. They protested that their names are not on that list. However they went to Chateau Margot at 5.55 p.m. and were turned out of the Polling Station on the ground that it was one minute past 6 p.m. In this way my sisters could not have voted: They were denied their constitutional right to vote".

A footnote to this is that the voting station for Division No. 10 of La Penitence-Lodge Electoral District stayed open until after 8 p.m. in order to allow "new voters" whose names were not on the revised list of electors, to vote: But then, Chateau Margot is in a PPP stronghold and La Penitence-Lodge is in a PNC stronghold!

In the course of a house to house campaign in Ruimveldt, it was disclosed that according to the voters' list, 32 voters lived at 596 Ruimveldt Gardens, Georgetown. Careful investigation, however, revealed that only six genuine voters actually resided at that address.

And in Delph Street, Campbellville, the voters list showed that 24 seamen were living in one section of the street. A house to house investigation, however, revealed that only four of the seamen ever lived in that street. Twenty of the seamen were recorded as living in homes which are occupied by owners who have lived there for the past twenty years and have never rented their house or rooms to seamen and for that matter, never heard of those names on the electoral roll.

In Ampa Bay, a former quarry site, 46 persons were registered as living there. An on-the-spot visit revealed that no person lives at the quarry, which has been deserted for a long time.

The padding of the voters' lists was not restricted only to PNC areas of strength. There were many pockets of fictitious names uncovered in various districts — in Canals Polder, in Wakenaam, in the East Bank of Demerara, in Western Berbice, Corentyne and other areas.

These names to which no bodies could be found, were embedded in lists and could only be uncovered by careful house-to-house surveys. One example will give the picture. At New Hope, East Bank Demerara, in a small community of some 700 persons, there were 100 persons whose names were on the registered list of voters, who could not be found. Persons living in the village for twenty and more years, could not recollect ever hearing of such persons. It might be difficult to prove that one or two persons never lived in a small community, but 100 is a different matter.

When the period for objections and claims to the voters' lists was announced, the PPP challenged these 100 names. The Returning Officer for the district discounted seven applications as being incorrectly prepared, but sent out notices by registered post for the 93 remaining names to attend the hearing. In the presence of the legal representative of the PPP, Barrister-at-law Moen McDoom, the Returning Officer produced the 93 letters which were returned to him undelivered. They were stamped by the postman "Could not be found. Removed from the district". The Returning Officer refused the lawyer's request to invite the postman to the hearing for questioning as to how he came to the conclusion that they had removed from the district. The 93 objections were overruled and the names remained on the lists, despite declarations of witnesses from the area at the hearing that the persons never lived there.

This was the same pattern in other parts of the country when fictitious names were challenged. It is not irrelevant to the charge of padding the lists that a deposit of \$5 for each name challenged must be made and if the objection fails, the deposit is lost. This is why more objections were not made.

It is interesting to note that while these names remained on the list of registered voters, thousands of persons who had changed their places of address in the period from 1968 to 1973, and who were not allowed to have their names transferred to their new district, were removed from the list of voters and lost their rights to vote.

Undemocratic Registration of Voters

The Government announced in March 1973 that National Registration would take place from March 15 to 21. The short 7-day period of registration took place during a long week-end, with Monday a public holiday. On March 14, the day before the commencement of registration, the People's Progressive Party protested that up to that time no notification had been given of the names of registration officers, places and time of registration. It also disclosed that at certain places in the Essequibo and at the Georgetown Public Hospital, registration had already commenced. It had information that the PNC was already carrying out registration in such a way as to exclude many potential voters, stating that "with foreknowledge of the facts, it is engaged in registration of its own supporters. When it is recalled that there was no registration in 1972, this is a clear indication that the PNC has embarked on rigging the forthcoming elections."

The PPP called for an extension of the period of registration due to the failure of the government to give adequate information to the public and because of the short period allowed.

In a press release issued on March 24th the PPP stated:

"The refusal of the Ministry of Home Affairs to meet the request of the Leader of the Opposition for an extension of the time of registration once again demonstrates the callous disregard for democratic processes and the wishes of the majority of Guyanese people.

The PNC, forearmed with the date and period of registration, carried out an extensive campaign to get their supporters registered. Even school masters were

cajoled by PNC activists for lists of students 14 years and over. Although the regulations prohibit the giving out of such information, some have responded in the hope of getting favours.

An assertion has been made that the present exercise is not related to elections. But in view of previous experience in 1968, this was a mere technicality.

It would seem that the exercise has been so carried out as to permit mainly PNC youths to be registered: After this was accomplished and a preponderance of PNC youth clearly established, the government will most likely reduce the voting age to 18. It will then put on the pose of being progressive. It is now clear that there was a general strategy to deprive many people from getting themselves registered."

What actually took place, causing the PPP to predict that the exercise called National Registration would lead to a reduction in the age of voters, was as follows:

In known areas of PPP strength, thousands of youths went to the places of registration, day after day, and found that when they stood in line to be registered, the lines barely moved. The officers took very long periods just to register one person. And as the time each day was restricted to two hours only, on completion of the two hours, the officers closed up leaving large numbers without being registered. This went on throughout the whole period until the last day of National Registration and still thousands were not registered".

At the same time, the PNC activists were very busy collecting names and submitting these names to registration officer without the youths even attending in person.

By May, the PPP prediction proved to be correct. The PNC, which had consistently objected to the PPP's proposal to have the vote at 18 years, changed its position and brought to the National Assembly a bill to enfranchise those between 18 and 21 years of age. It was now clear that the PNC's decision of enfranchising the 18—21 year old group was taken only after disenfranchising the youths who would back the PPP, by keeping their names off the voters' lists.

It was for this reason that the PPP refused to support this amendment to the constitution which required a 2/3

majority. The PNC's plans to use this as another method of rigging elections was foiled.

The PNC had a consistent record of opposition to voting at 18. At three consecutive constitutional conferences in 1960, 1962 and 1963 in London, it opposed the PPP's demand for the lowering of the voting age. On September 26, 1962, the PNC stormed out of the Legislative Assembly when the PPP moved a motion for the vote at 18. On 31st October, 1963, in a special issue of the NEW NATION it was stated: "as the entire country knows, the PNC has fought for retention of the voting age at 21. We have got it"

When the Constitution of Guyana was being drafted in London in November 1965, the PNC did not include the vote at 18 as one of the changes for independence (the PPP was not there).

When in October, 1972, the annual Congress of the Trades Union Congress passed a resolution for voting at 18, the Guyana Labour Union, the PNC's trade union arm (LFS Burnham is President-on-Leave) was strongly opposed.

On November 22, 1972, when it was announced that the age of majority would be lowered from 21 to 18 years the PNC government did not indicate any intention of lowering the voting age to 18.

Although the National Registration was not a registration of voters, it became a voters registration list by an act of Parliament. This matter came up in 1967 when National Registration first took place and the PPP member of the Elections Commission, Janet Jagan, protested that the registration of voters should be a separate exercise from the National Registration. She referred to the Constitution which stated precisely that "The Elections Commission shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of electors."

The Elections Commission was never allowed to exercise any direction or supervision over the registration of electors. The government hand-picked all the registration officers, conducted a National Registration under the supervision of the CIA-backed Shoup Registration Systems International, and then baptised it an electoral roll.

Even the PNC member of the Elections Commission,

later to become a minister of the PNC government, had agreed with the contention of Mrs. Jagan about the question of national registration. At a meeting of the Commission held on Friday, 30th June, 1967, he said:

"IN connection with Mrs. Jagan's fears that by proceeding with the compilation of a National Register of citizens the Government was usurping or circumventing the functions of the Elections Commission—I said that I did not share Mrs. Jagan's fears inasmuch as, in my opinion, the National Register could not be the electoral roll. As I interpreted the relevant articles of the constitution, Parliament had the right to direct how the Electoral Roll was to be prepared. In other words, the procedure to be adopted and the machinery to be employed in compiling the Roll were matters exclusively within the jurisdiction and competence of Parliament. See Article 66 (4) (a) of the Constitution. Once the procedures were laid down and the necessary machinery established, the Elections Commission took control. The compilation of the Electoral Roll was a matter for the Commission who "shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of electors... Article 69 (1) (a).

In this task, as in the exercise of all its other functions under the Constitution the Commission was absolutely independent and not subject to the direction or control of any person or authority; Article 119 (1).

The Commission had nothing to do with the preparation of the National Register. Whatever might be the purpose of the Register, it certainly could not be the Electoral roll. Under the Constitution the Commission alone was charged with the function of supervising the registration of electors. It followed therefore that a Register not prepared under the general direction and supervision of the Commission could not be a register of electors for the purpose of the Constitution".

However, the National Register was to become the Electoral Roll as Mrs. Jagan had predicted.

The government for the purpose of the 1973 general election, set 12 days, from June 4 to June 15, as the period for making claims to be registered as a voter; for only one hour a day; from 4.30 to 5.30 p.m.: The announcements

concerning registration were not made widely and in fact, the places at which persons could be registered were not published until two days after the date of revision of the preliminary lists began. Preliminary lists were not available to voters except at the hours when the officers were in attendance, nor were preliminary lists made available to political parties which would be expected to get their supporters registered, until June 11, and then lists for only 21 of the 38 electoral districts were available.

The full list was not obtained until June 14. The period for placing claims was from June 4 to June 15 and for objections, from June 15 to 18. Without lists to work with, it was almost impossible to do a thorough check on voters, both real and fraudulent.

The hours allotted for registration were so restricted that in some areas it was physically impossible for persons wishing to be registered to attend at the place of registration. For example, in the Mahaica and Mahaicony Rivers, the launches carrying residents inside the river leave daily many hours before the 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. period of registration. In order for such persons to be registered, they would have to spend the night outside the river, away from home and, there are no rest houses or hotels in these areas, except Amerindian hostels restricted to Amerindians only.

Further, there were not enough locations in each electoral district to facilitate the proper revision of the lists. The Magistrates Court at Charity was the only office for the whole of the Pomeroon district, which means that persons wishing to register had to travel many miles, mostly by boat.

Another serious shortcoming of the period for the registration of voters held in June was that no voter was allowed to transfer his name to the district in which he may have moved. This led to many names being struck off the lists when the period of objections took place. The names of persons no longer living in an electoral district were struck off without the person being aware that his name was challenged, because his new address was unknown, and the objections were sent to his old address.

In a country where there is bound to be some movement of people, particularly with the fruitless search for em-

ployment, any proper revision of the voters' lists should include the right to transfer to a new district.

The following case gives an example of what took place. Oodhow Katwaroo, who was registered for the 1968 election in the Mazaruni District, went, during the March National Registration period, to the District Commissioner's Office at Vreed-en-Hoop and filled up a claim form to have his name transferred from the Mazaruni District to the Vreed-en-Hoop District. He handed his claim to the Registration Officer who informed him that it was in order and that the transfer would be effected.

On June 5, 1973, at 4.45 p.m. he went to the District Commissioner's Office at Vreed-en-Hoop and enquired from the Registration Officer if his name had been transferred in accordance with his claim made in March. He was told that it was not there but he must return on June 7. He went back on June 7 and was told that no instructions had been given concerning his transfer and that he should return on June 9. The Returning Officer on June 9 told him to speak to another officer who was looking into the matter and he was requested to return on June 12. On June 12 he was informed that his transfer could not be granted. He was handed a postal vote application, which he refused to sign.

All advertisements in relation to registration and elections were published in all newspapers, including the PNC's official organ the *New Nation*, but not in the *Mirror*, a daily and Sunday newspaper that has the highest circulation in the rural areas of Guyana. This was done deliberately to withhold vital information.

Since the 1968 election, the whole registration and electoral machinery has been in the hands of hand-picked PNC members and officials who toe the PNC line. It was clearly seen in the 1973 registration and election that this almost 100% PNC personnel in charge of the registration and election machinery used their positions to aid the People's National Congress.

In some areas, the registration and election officials were not only uncooperative, but they could not be found at their posts when needed. Some did not even attend the one hour per day. This helped to slow up the process of registration, clearly aimed at keeping as many PPP sup-

porters off the electoral lists as possible. And in that they succeeded.

Thus the electoral roll, when finally revised, did not represent a true account of those entitled to vote. The lists were padded with fictitious names in large numbers, underage and dead voters. Many entitled to vote and some who were actually registered in 1968 and who voted that year were disenfranchised in 1973.

But this represents only a small part of the massive electoral fraud.

The Overseas Vote

The Granada Television company of England, both in 1968 and 1973, produced programmes examining voters registered on the overseas lists mainly for the United Kingdom and the United States of America. On both occasions they were able, by spot checks and house interviews, to expose the rotten system of overseas voting and to reveal the depth of rascality of those who compiled the lists.

In their 1968 film, entitled "The Making of a Prime Minister" the commentator said that "only 4,700 of 11,750 registered 'voters' in the United States and 13,050 in the United Kingdom were genuine. If all the 12,550 voters registered in the rest of the world were genuine and had voted the most generous estimate of Guyanese voters abroad should be 30,300, but 36,745 voted! Inescapably at least 6,445 were faked and that's being excessively cautious".

Visits to the addresses listed in the 1968 overseas voters register by Granada's reporters revealed that padding was heavy, that both addresses and names were frequently false. One such address produced two horses grazing in a pasture.

In a radio broadcast, on May 25, 1973, Mr. Burnham admitted that "there were some irregularities in the compilation of the overseas register". The Minister of Home Affairs tried to put the blame on the registration agents, who, he said, were paid for every name they registered. But no one had been prosecuted. The names of the agents are known to the government.

In the Elections Commission in 1968, the former PPP representative, Janet Jagan, made a list of 23 suspicious names on the overseas voter's list and on a visit to the Na-

tional Registration Centre, the registration cards were shown to her and the Chairman of the Commission. She immediately pointed out that they were obviously forged and asked the Elections Commission to request the birth certificates for these names. This was done. Later, the Registrar General replied that not one birth certificate could be found.

In view of the wide expose of the padding of the overseas lists, the Government drastically reduced the number of names on the overseas list from 68,597 in 1968 to 34,801 in 1973, but even this new list was calculably false, as the Granada Television proved.

On Monday, 23rd July 1973, Granada's "World in Action" programme accused the People's National Congress of conducting a gigantic electoral fraud. Their research revealed evidence that vote rigging on a massive scale took place among Britain's Guyanese community.

WORLD IN ACTION, which was banned from Guyana after its carefully-researched accusations of the PNC's last electoral 'victory' in 1968, said it had filmed in Britain while also circumventing the ban by sending in a team of American Television personnel to film in Guyana.

In Britain, said the Programme, the PNC's pledge that there would be no irregularities in this election appeared at first to have been borne out by the substantial cut in the number of people whose names appeared on the overseas electoral rolls.

It added that even if all the dubious cases on the overseas Electoral Rolls were in fact proved to be perfectly all right, then there would still be 8,000 bogus votes... more than enough to have ensured that the PNC got the two-thirds majority for which it campaigned.

The official electoral roll for Britain, said to have been drawn up just six months ago, contained addresses of houses pulled down years earlier. In Birmingham, where there is a strong Guyanese community, twenty nine per cent of the addresses were non-existent, said WORLD IN ACTION.

The Programme claimed that spot checks in the United States, home of Guyana's second largest overseas com-

munity, revealed similar frauds.

Numerous irregularities were found in the U.S. lists. Eight persons were listed as voters living at 60 Albany Avenue, Brooklyn. On investigation, it was ascertained that only one was eligible to vote. At 285 Bainbridge St., Brooklyn, 16 voters were listed; only four were eligible. And at 227 Bainbridge St., Brooklyn, 10 voters were registered, but a visit disclosed that only five were eligible to vote; one name being registered twice.

In Trinidad, in an examination of 57 names on the overseas register, 15 were found to be non-existent, 28 were under 21 years of age, 3 were dead and five were living outside of Trinidad.

Although the United Kingdom overseas voters' list came under such heavy attack in 1968, the preliminary list for 1973, though greatly reduced, was obviously padded. There was still to be seen, with the naked eye, gross fraud, with names being repeated twice, thrice and even four times, each time with a different identity number.

This was brought to the attention of the Elections Commission and to the press. Subsequently, the preliminary lists for the UK were revised with 1339 deletions and 18 additions.

Even with these changes, the final list for the UK remained chock full of irregularities. Here are some examples:

AGARD Ivan O. — 16 Nene St. Bradford 5 Yorkshire Electrician 813537.

AGARD Ivan N. — 16 Nene St. Bradford 5 Yorkshire Labourer 813534.

BENN David A. — 4 Grovesnor Ave. Highbury Lecturer 824017:

BENN David R. — 41 Grovesnor Ave., Lond. N: 5, Lawyer 805995:

ALLEYNE Sheila — 58 Godolphin Rd. Lond. W 6, Housewife 813834.

ALLEYNE Sheila — 58 Godolphin Rd. W1 2 Packer 823634.

ALLENYE Olga E. — 114 Perry Hill Lond: SE, 6 Dom: Servant 805980.

ALLEYNE Olga — 114 Perry Hill, Ind. SE. 6 Dom. Servant 808426.

BAPTISTE Gerry I — 2 Cantley Ave. Lond. S.W. 4 Operator 805247.

BAPTISTE Gerry — 2 Cantley Ave. Lond: SW. 4 Labourer 818660:

BENJAMIN Humphrey — 77 Chippenham Rd. Lond. N: 9 Musician 818397.

BENJAMIN Humphrey — 77 Chippenham RD. Lond. No: 9 Musician 817376.

In a letter to the editor of the *Morning Star*, a London newspaper, dated July 26, a Mr. Peter W. Ladkin of Erdington, Birmingham wrote.

"You have probably read in the *Star* of the charge of vote rigging in the recent general election in Guyana. I live at a school and receive various news bulletins from embassies and legations. From the Guyana High Commission I receive a publication called *Guyana News* fairly regularly. Imagine my astonishment two weeks ago to receive from the same source a voting paper and stamped, addressed envelope for the Guyana election, with no questions asked as to who I was, least of all a citizen of Guyana.

This illegal vote rigging against the election of the People's Progressive Party must be exposed by all fraternal parties and organisations throughout the world. This surely is another example of the ugly face of capitalism".

While the overseas lists in Canada, Trinidad, Surinam, USA, the United Kingdom and elsewhere were filled with fictitious names, dead persons and youths under 21 years of age, reports from many Guyanese living abroad revealed that thousands were deliberately left off the lists. In Surinam, for example, where many Guyanese who came from the Corentyne, a strong PPP area, are settled, very few were on the voters' list.

The overseas votes gave the PNC six parliamentary seats in 1968 and four in 1973. The PNC obtained 94.31% of the overseas votes in 1968 and 98% in 1973. This would lead one to the conclusion that only PNC supporters left Guyana for residence abroad! However, it is common

knowledge that while many PNC supporters have left Guyana in disgust, the majority leaving for permanent residence abroad come from those not supporting the ruling party, who have become fed up with discrimination and victimisation and lack of opportunities locally, or who were afraid to live in Guyana because of threats, intimidation, and hooliganism.

Apart from the question of overseas fraud, there is the more important question of the principle of giving the vote to Guyanese living permanently abroad. This is contrary to the basic tenets of democracy.

In simple terms, people vote in order to elect the government of their choice, the government under which they will live. At election time, they can through their votes register their approval or disapproval. People who live under a different government overseas do not contribute to taxation, and generally are not even aware of conditions inside Guyana. Consequently, they should not be in any position to determine the fate of the country, when they are no longer resident.

The overseas vote was introduced by the Burnham government in 1968 to give it additional voting strength which it could not muster at home. Without the overseas votes in 1968, equivalent to 6 seats and proxy voting equivalent to 3 seats, the PNC would not have won an overall majority.

The very method of voting is subject to fraud as extensive as the phoney voters' lists. All overseas ballots are posted to the offices of High Commissions and Embassies and what happens there is anyone's guess.

So indifferent were those in charge of the electoral machinery that it was not surprising to observe that on July 16, 1973, Election Agents of the three opposition parties; the People's Progressive Party, the Liberator Party and the Peoples Democratic Movement received, after 4 p.m., an official letter from the Chief Election Officer advising as follows:

"Casting of non-residents' votes received by me will commence at 2 p.m. at the Police Sports Club Pavillion, Military Road, Eve Leary, Georgetown on Monday 16th July, 1973... Only persons entitled by the relevant regulations to attend the casting and counting

of votes will be permitted to enter the places on presentation of a pass provided by me. A sufficient supply of passes is sent herewith."

The Election Agent for the PPP, who, according to the regulations, was entitled to attend the casting of the overseas ballot, received his letter, by hand, at 4.40 p.m., exactly 2 hours and 40 minutes after the commencing of the casting of votes.

The Postal Vote

Because the misuse of the proxy vote created such a scandal in the 1968 elections, with one person being allowed to vote for as many as three other persons, the PNC introduced a new form of indirect vote—the postal vote. This proved, because of massive PNC forgery, even more scandalous than the proxy vote of 1968.

No one knows the exact extent of the fraud, but it appears that some 20,000-21,000 names were forged onto applications for the postal vote. In the count of the early boxes, the postal ballots were recorded separately. Later on, in order to try to cover up the enormity of the fraud, which had caused widespread anger, the postal ballots, although in separate boxes, were thrown on to the counting tables to be mixed up with the other ballots.

In two districts, Corentyne West and North Georgetown, where the PNC took a majority, the postal votes accounted for 12 per cent of the votes cast, with 99.9 per cent of these going to the PNC.

On June 23, a writ was filed in the High Court challenging the legality of the postal vote and seeking to move the court into declaring that the regulations pertaining to the postal vote were unconstitutional. This bid failed, although the plaintiffs, on behalf of the People's Progressive Party, showed good cause why the regulations were improperly made.

Under the postal vote regulations, which were also vigorously opposed by the PPP in the National Assembly, the Chief Electoral Officer was required to publish the list of postal voters six days before elections. The regulations, however, did not give persons whose names were listed as having applied for a postal vote, the right to

challenge the appearance of their names if they had not in fact, signed an application; no method of cancelling an application, as exists in relation to the proxy vote, was provided.

Long before the date for the 1973 general election was announced, persons connected with the PNC had been going around collecting signatures to proxy applications. This had been done widely, too, in 1968, when large numbers of voters transferred their votes to PNC "proxy collectors" who used two methods—bribery and intimidation — bribery through the promise of jobs, land or other favours; intimidation through the threat of loss of jobs, licences or other "favours". This had proved fairly successful as with such widespread unemployment, a job, no matter how small, is tremendously important.

In some cases, especially through the use of religious leaders by the PNC, a number of persons were tricked into signing proxy applications.

The PPP began a campaign advising voters not to sign any application and isolating those who were using their positions to abuse the voting system. When the postal vote came into being, the PPP, along with the Liberator Party, on June 22, announced a boycott of postal voting; stating: "The two parties wish to inform the public that they will not take part in this new system of voting; which is a ruse and a fraud; the same as proxy voting inside Guyana and postal voting overseas in 1968.

"There is no conceivable need for a postal vote; its introduction is another device by the People's National Congress to enable it to hold on to its minority rule. The PNC is fully aware, as is the rest of the Guyanese population that faced with free and fair elections, its minority rule will come to an end. This device has been introduced to prevent direct voting by voters living in Guyana, and to prevent a clear and fair count of all ballots.

"The public has been told there is postal voting in England and other Commonwealth countries. But in the United Kingdom, there is only limited use of postal voting, which is a substitute for and not as in Guyana an addition to, proxy voting. And postal voting is applicable in a situation where there is general confidence in the administrative conduct of the elections.

"In Canada, postal voting is permitted to only a small category of persons — public servants and servicemen posted overseas, and veterans in government hospital.

"We believe that proxy and postal voting under the conditions existent in Guyana, with the electoral machinery under the complete control of the PNC, should be replaced as far as practicable by a system of direct voting; which would eliminate loopholes for intimidation, bribery and corruption.

"We propose that persons who are not infirm should vote directly. If for some good reason they cannot vote at the place where they are registered they should be allowed, on prior application, to vote at any other place in the country where they would be on voting day. Under the constituency first-past-the-post system; this arrangement would not be practicable; under our PR system: it is perfectly feasible.

"We call on the public to support us in our stand to ensure free and fair elections.

"We state clearly and categorically: Beware the postal vote! Don't give away your vote, don't be fooled, intimidated or bribed into signing an application for a postal vote.

"A postal vote for any opposition party will be stolen, will be converted into a vote for the PNC".

The postal vote was introduced by the PNC because it was a safer and easier method of exercising the vote for the fictitious names appearing on the voters' lists. With the proxy vote, a person had to appear at the polling station to vote for the fictitious name, and there was always the possibility of a challenge by a polling agent of one of the opposition parties. But with the postal vote, the application was submitted, accepted and the name withdrawn from the list of those who could vote on Polling Day. With the whole electoral machinery in the hands of PNC, it was an easy task to manipulate the postal vote.

Because of the PPP boycott, PPP supporters did not sign postal vote applications, even though various methods were used to induce them to do so. In one instance, a village official tried to make use of a decision to allocate

residential land plots in order to get signatures on postal vote applications. Notices were sent out to those who had applied to come to the Village Office on a particular day with their wives, fathers and mothers. The people saw through the ruse and turned up, instead, to picket him.

As soon as the election campaigning commenced in June, it became apparent to any observer that there was a new feeling in the country — a far greater unity than had been seen in the 1968 elections of all those opposed to the PNC. The PPP was drawing larger and larger crowds, which were growing more and more enthusiastic as it became apparent that it might be possible, despite widespread rigging, to oust the PNC from office.

In the face of this upsurge, the PNC sought new methods of rigging and began in earnest to work on the postal ballot as a "hedge" to fall back on should its padded and overseas lists prove inadequate.

Reports reaching the PPP indicated that the PNC was getting little or no response to its threats and bribes to get voters to sign postal vote applications, and also that key PNC activists in several districts, having failed to produce the number of postal vote applications allotted to them, were forging applications to meet their quotas.

The *Mirror* newspaper on July 10, carried a photograph and an account of what happened to two men who refused to sign postal ballot applications. The two men, Mangal Singh and Arjune, are members of the Enterprise Producers Cooperative Society. They and five other members refused to sign the applications. Messrs. Ariune and Singh stated that about three weeks before, a high official of the Society sent someone to Ariune for his Identity Card. He refused to send it. The same afternoon a Rural Constable went to him with a postal vote application from the official, with a request that he sign. He told the constable that he was not sick and would vote in person when the time came.

After that, the police began their intimidation. The police went to Mangal Singh's house and warned him that he would be charged with threatening and disorderly behaviour. Mr. Singh told the *Mirror* that his only crime was his refusal to sign the postal vote application. He was determined not to do so.

As election day approached and the time for the publication of the list of postal voters came due, the list was not made public. The PPP went to the Supreme Court with a Mandamus demanding the publication of the list. One day after the Mandamus was presented to the Supreme Court, and two days after the lists were required to be published, the government issued an order postponing the date for publication and backdated the order.

When the matter came before the Chief Justice, Senior Counsel B. O. Adams, said that the non-publication of the list as required under the Election Regulation "was a grave default which had brought about a ghastly situation, denying the electorate their right to check the bona fide of the list". Referring to the order by the Minister of Home Affairs to extend the time for the publication of the lists by another five days he said that it only sought to "validate illegality", noting that the extension of the time for the publication of the list was done after the illegality was committed.

By a deliberate peculiarity of the law, the postal ballots were posted out BEFORE the list was required to be published. This meant, of course, that with the list published, any person wishing to object to his name being on the list could do nothing about it; the ballot had already been posted.

The exercise of posting the postal ballots began at the National Registration Centre on July 5, and concluded on July 7, three days before the list of postal voters was, by law, required to be published. On July 11, one day after the list was to have been made public, and before the Minister of Home Affairs had the regulation amended to extend the period when the list was to be published, the Election Agent for the People's Progressive Party spoke by telephone to the Chief Election Officer, R. E. Butler, and asked when the list would be available. He further asked for the total number of names on the postal vote register. The Chief Election Officer refused to give any information.

Obviously, if all the postal ballots were posted out by July 7, there must have been a list for this purpose and the total number of ballots must have been known. But the government deliberately stalled the publication of the lists because it knew that there would be a hue and cry from those who had not signed postal applications. The lists

which contained some 23,000 names, were published after the matter went to the Supreme Court, but by then it was four days before elections, two days being Saturday and Sunday.

Very few persons, however, whose names were on the lists, actually received postal ballots. Most ballots were sent to accommodation addresses. However, there were bound to be errors, and many indignant persons produced postal ballots, denying vociferously that they ever signed applications. These persons refused to use the postal ballot, knowing that their votes would not be recorded as marked.

When the list was published, it was not really available for scrutiny. The long list of 23,000 names was hung on a wall at the National Registration Centre and could not be properly examined.

Also, the list deliberately contained only the address to which the postal ballot was sent, not the actual address of the voter. Thus in the few days left, it was impossible to trace names appearing on the lists in order to find out if they had really signed postal vote applications.

In the case already referred to in the section on padding of the voters' list, Bishun, also known as Bissoon, was listed as a postal voter, but he died on January 3, 1973. His name appeared on the list of postal voters for Electoral District No. 13, Demerara Coast East, which was available on voting day at polling station No. 2. However, the address given for the posting of his ballot was Eccles Old Road, East Bank Demerara, in another electoral district.

On that same list, to show how corrupt the postal voters list was, there are two votes listed — one as Abdul, Gaffoor c/o Buxton Post Office and another as Gaffoor, Abdul c/o Buxton Post Office — two votes for one person, and both sent to an accommodation address, the Buxton Post Office. Abdul, Gaffoor's vote was registered for Polling Division No. 2 and Gaffoor, Abdul's at Polling Division 2B.

Here are some reports of what took place on voting day. Angelina Elizabeth Nero, on the voters list as residing at 116 Herstelling, but now living at No. 1 Canal Polder, Vauxhall, went to vote and was told that she had already voted by post. She denied ever signing an application and insisted on her right to exercise the franchise. She was put out of the polling place and then went to the Providence

THE ELECTION REGULATIONS 1984

LIST OF POSTAL VOTERS

ELECTION DAY: 16TH JULY, 1973

Polling District: ...

This list of names has been issued to the undersigned persons whose applications have been accepted. These persons are not entitled to vote in person or by proxy, and the printed names of every voter in the relevant List.

Name of Voter (Surname First)	Postal Address	Series
ABDUL, GAFFOOR	c/o Buxton P.O.	2
ABDUL, GAFFOOR	c/o Buxton P.O.	2
ABDUL, RAJIB	123 Jersey St., Georgetown	4
BISHUN A/K BISHOON	Keeler Old Road, E. B.	13
BAWIB, ANDREW	123 Waterlooville, E. B.	133
PRASAD, RAMSINGH	123 Waterlooville, E. B.	234
ROBERT	677, Hill, Thames Road	234
BANERJEE, DEBENDRA	123 Waterlooville, E. B.	235
BARTON, ALAN	c/o Buxton, 77 Buxton Post Office, E. B.	237
BROWN A/K BROWN	123 Buxton, E. B.	238
BROWN A/K BROWN	147 Waterlooville, E. B.	244
CHRISTOPHER, ALBERT K.	123 Waterlooville, E. B.	245
CHITRAL, RAJESH	212 Waterlooville, E. B.	247
GILFILLAN, JOHN	c/o Buxton P.O.	2

THE official list of postal voters for one division including the name of Bishun who died six months before elections. To be on this list, a voter had to sign, in person, an application.

Police Station to report the matter. The police officer asked her whom she wanted to vote for and she said "Cheddi". He told her he could do nothing.

Another report concerned the name of Chamdalie Seamber, I.D. No. 368298 of Little Diamond whose name the PPP Polling Agent saw on the list of postal voters. Chamdalie died on January 7, 1969.

Thousands of persons who went to vote on July 16 were told that they had already voted by postal ballot. Many have signed declarations stating that at no time did they ever sign any application to be treated as postal voter.

Here are some of the names of those who have signed declarations — Latchmin of Brikerly, East Bank Demerara I.D. No. 369259; Hardeen Deonarine, 1 Supply, East Bank Demerara I.D. No. 369221; Kalwattie, Supply, E. B. Demerara I.D. No. 368546; Toolsie of Pln. New Hope, EBD; Bibi Yassin of 33 Grove Housing Scheme, I.D. No. 315442; Seebarran of 388 Grove Housing Scheme, I.D. No. 370192; Etwarie of 275 Grove Housing Scheme I.D. No. 370101. And on and on the list grows.

The PNC apparently used a number of tricks to get names for the postal votes. In house-to-house surveys, notes were made of those who had left the country but whose names were still on the voters lists. These names they forged onto postal vote applications. For example the mother of Goordat P Misir who left for the USA since March 1971, and has not returned, swore to these facts in a statutory declaration — how could her son's name be on the list of postal voters unless he had signed an application, and he was not in Guyana to perform that act.

Wives, mothers and other relatives of persons who had departed from Guyana long before the period when postal vote applications were available for signature, attest to the fact that they had not been in Guyana during the period. The PNC in its haste to make use of these votes, forged the name of one voter who had gone abroad and was abroad when the house-to-house canvassing took place. But he returned to Guyana before election, and name on the list of postal voters, signed a statutory declaration that he had not applied for a postal ballot.

The postal vote fraud touched many people, and because it was so widespread, provoked throughout Guyana intense anger — anger almost as great as that of the seizure of the ballot boxes by the army.

GUYANA:
COUNTY OF BERBICE:
AFFIDAVIT:

ONE of several affidavits which prove the scandalous forgery of thousands of postal votes. In this case, the voter had not been in Guyana for a long period and could not have signed the postal vote application.

I, BOSSILLA..... of Bloomfield Village
Parityne Coast, Demara, being duly sworn make oath and
say as follows:-
1. That I am the mother of GOORDAT P. MISIR, described in the Electoral List for Electoral District No. 4 (four) Polling Division No. 10 (ten) and whose number is 110, Identification Card No. 082501, has departed Guyana for The United States of America since March, 1971, and has not returned to Guyana since.
2. I make this declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and in accordance with the Statutory Declarations Ordinance, Chapter 36.
Sworn to
at New Amsterdam, Berbice,
dated this day of July, 1973.
Before me
.....
Commissioner of Oaths.
I hereby certify that the foregoing was explained and read over by me to the deponent who seems fully to understand same and to sign her name in my presence.

The Proxy Vote

In the 1968 election, coercion and bribery were the main methods used to get signatures on blank proxy forms. Proxy voting was so widely abused that it became a national scandal. The sight of one PNC member armed with three proxy votes, casting them along with his own vote thoroughly discredited the PNC and made a mockery of the principle of one man one vote.

Also, because the proxy fraud was so rampant in 1968, the PNC could not produce, without creating more problems for itself, the list of those voters whose names were listed, and refused to fulfill the legal requirement of publishing the proxy lists four days before elections.

Following the failure of the Elections Office to produce the Proxy Lists, PPP Opposition Leader Cheddi Jagan spoke to the Chief Election Officer on December 16 election day, asking about the list. The Chief Election Officer promised that the lists would be made available within three days, but this was not done.

Then Mrs. Jagan, a member of the Elections Commission, on December 21, 1968 asked for the list of proxies, reminding the Commission that it had not been provided according to law.

The Chairman of the Election Commission replied that he was informed by the Chief Election Officer that the list could not be produced because the packets had been sealed in accordance with the Elections Regulations and he had no power to order them opened.

Mrs. Jagan reminded the Chairman that under the Constitution the Elections Commission had the power to order the opening of the packets. She wrote: **"The duty and power of the Commission is to ensure that the elections were properly conducted and it could issue the neces-**

sary directions to cause the packets to be opened. The Commission's power, resting as it does on the Constitution itself, is based on a higher law than the Election Regulation 1964 as amended. And the latter must give way to it."

But nothing was done and the list of proxies used in the 1968 elections was never produced for public examination.

With all of this, Mr Burnham, in an interview with the FINANCIAL TIMES of London August 25, 1972 was asked: "In the past, the electoral usage in this country has been under attack; particularly the use of the postal vote and the overseas postal vote and proxy voting. Can you foresee any changes in the electoral techniques in the next election which would quieten the fears which have been expressed of possible misuse?" Mr Burnham replied — "I can see no change in the electoral structure... the submission of a proxy is done under the law and there is opportunity to inspect proxies and challenge them, so I don't see what changes are indicated."

We wonder what opportunity anyone had to inspect the proxy lists in the 1968 elections, of which he was speaking, when they were never made available.

According to the official Report of the 1968 elections 19,287 proxy applications were made.

In the 1970 local government elections, the proxy vote was again widely abused. A PPP candidate, Mr. John Christian, who went to vote was told that he had already voted by proxy!

Although there is a provision in the law which allows persons who have applied for proxies to cancel such applications, those whose names have been forged or obtained by false means, could not cancel the applications because the names of the persons authorised to vote for these persons are unknown. The law requires the name of the person authorised to vote on behalf of another to be stated in the cancellation form.

But the person whose name has been forged on to a proxy application form, or who has been coerced into signing a blank application form, never knows who is voting for him. Thus the voter could not recover the vote that was stolen from him and the cancellation form was useless.

For the 1973 elections, in an attempt to appear to be bowing to public criticism, the PNC went back to the 1961 practice in the use of proxy vote; namely, to limit it to persons who, due to illness, could not attend the place of poll, or for officials and security personnel on duty in other places on polling day.

Although the 1973 proxy application forms state clearly the limitations of its use, as voting day came closer and as the PNC saw its electoral position worsening it began to abuse the proxy as it had in the 1968 general and 1970 local government elections.

Even though July 6 was the last day for the filing of proxy applications, these were still being collected up to polling day. Able-bodied persons voted by proxy, and the proxy vote was used up to late hours of July 16 to record votes of recalcitrant PNC voters who refused to turn up at the polls.

When the PPP General Secretary Cheddi Jagan was standing in line to vote at Bel Air at about 7.30 a.m., a young lady ran up to another young woman three places ahead of him in the line and pulled her out saying "You already voted by proxy, come out of the line." But that was only one of hundreds of such examples.

Joshua Etwaroo and his wife Rajmat Etwaroo, now living at Devonshire Castle, Essequibo, were registered as voters at Hackney Polling Division No. 2, in the Pomeroy River, a considerable distance from his new address, but within the same electoral district.

On July 16, he and his wife went there to vote, travelling the many miles to Charity, Pomeroy River and then by boat to Hackney, miles from Charity. When they went to the Polling Station they were told by the Presiding Officer that their votes had already been cast by proxy. They demanded the names of the persons who cast their ballots, but the information was refused. Both voters declared that they did not sign any application to transfer their votes and charged forgery.

Many of these irregularities and the shameful theft of votes arose because those in charge of the elections did not make any attempt to fulfill the requirement of publication of the lists before elections. PPP candidate Yacoob

Ally declared that he made five attempts before polling day to see the proxy and postal vote lists without success.

No figures were given as to the total number of proxies exercised in the 1973 elections. The number of proxies used was not as large as the number of postal votes, but the following figures will give some idea of numbers:— New Amsterdam District—839; Kitty — 839; Georgetown North — 872; Georgetown Central — 523; Werk-en-Rust — 263; Most of the proxies, of course, were cast for the PNC.

The People's Progressive Party wrote to the Elections Commission on June 15, 1973 making the following proposals in relation to proxy voting:—

1. In the case of forgery of an authority to exercise a proxy, the voter whose constitutional right is thus being corruptly usurped should be able, by swearing to an affidavit, to thwart such efforts;
2. The Commission should take the necessary steps to ensure that the lists of proxies are published 4 days before polling day at the forthcoming general election, as the law requires.

The Elections Commission, impotent as it was since it was first established, did nothing.

The proxy vote arrangements were so carelessly performed that some forms were signed for certificates of employment without even filling in the names of the persons who were being certified as being on duty.

A copy of one such form is reproduced to give an indication of the way things were done during the elections.

THE ELECTION REGULATIONS, 1963

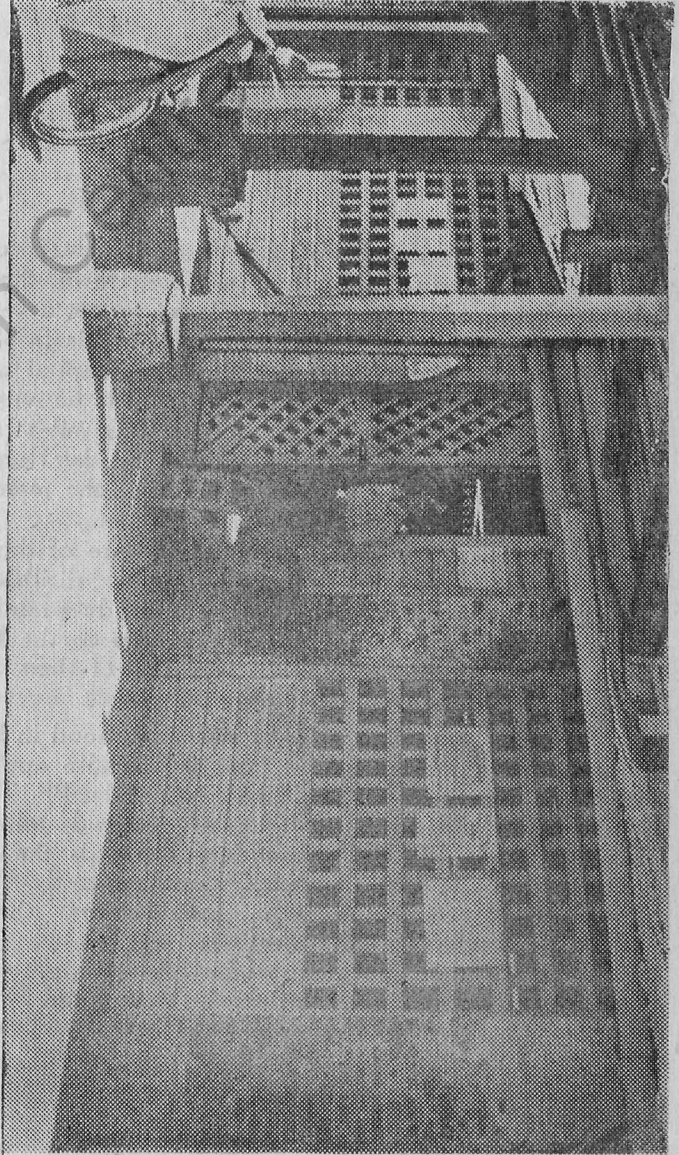
CERTIFICATE OF EMPLOYMENT

In the Polling District
 I certify that (name)
 who holds registration card No. and is
 registered under serial No. in the No.
 Polling Division of the
 Polling District is likely to be unable to go in person to
 the Polling Place allotted to him for the election to be held
 on the day of 19..... by
 reason of his employment on that date at the
 Polling Place
 as a
 Date

Signed
 Returning Officer

THIS "Certificate of Employment" for use in proxy voting, was signed without filling in the name of the person certified. Obviously any name could be inserted.

A Georgetown Polling Station photographed during the hours of poll on July 16. Most of the city polling stations were similarly empty, Georgetown having the lowest turn-out of voters.



'The 'New Voters'

The PNC must have been gravely upset over the unusually low turnout of voters in Georgetown, the citadel of its strength. Also, with their plans to get a two-thirds majority, it would be difficult to explain this in the light of what could be seen by everyone in the capital city, that the polling stations were empty after a little activity in the morning. On the other hand, only a few miles from the city, there were long lines of voters all day long, and these as everyone knew well, were in the main, PPP voters.

The PNC should have been fully aware of the apathy of its former supporters, brought about by disillusionment over growing poverty in the face of ready promises and balanced against many years of loyalty to the PNC. A great number took the simplest way out of their dilemma by not going out to vote.

The PPP had bumped into this new mood in its house-to-house work in Georgetown and it was also apparent at the public meetings, both of the PNC and PPP. The PNC city meetings did not draw the large crowds which were expected, while the PPP drew larger crowds than before. Even though the PPP meetings were frequently disrupted by hooligans, it could be seen that hecklers, the stone and bottle throwers at the meetings were just a few who had come for that purpose, while the majority of the people were listening. The key to the new mood in Georgetown was that the people were now listening to what the PPP had to say. Clearly, in their own lives, they were looking for a way out of their hardships. The PPP was pointing the way.

One more dirty aspect of rigging must be added to the long list. On voting day, July 16, voting rights were

given to an unknown number of persons. The exact number will probably never be known for they were well buried in the count of votes cast.

Some time after midday on July 16, but closer to 4 p.m., a number of persons whose names were not on the final electoral register, but who carried pieces of white paper issued by the National Registration Centre that day, descended on several of the polling stations, mainly in George own and in a few PNC strongholds on the East Coast of Demerara.

Reports from Victoria, ECD stated that a very large number of persons, many of them appearing to be under 21 years, were transported by bus to Victoria and rushed into the polling station. Polling agents of the PPP, LP and PDM, who attempted to enquire about the new voters whose names were not on the lists, were brutally evicted from the polling station.

Reports from PPP Polling Agents give the picture of what took place. At Friendship in Electoral District No. 14, Jagdat Budhram reported that at 5.30 p.m. on July 16 an officer came to the polling station and said that anybody can vote whether their names were on the list or not and that he had just received a paper from the Elections office to that effect; the paper was not shown to any of the party agents. He said: "from then on everyone that was near the station started to vote. I was obliged to leave the polling place".

Another PPP Polling Agent, Hardeo Singh who worked in Polling District No. 13 Division No. 6 reported that about 5.45 p.m. on July 16, 19 persons came in with letters addressed to the presiding officer for their names to be added to the list of voters. Objections were made by party polling agents that (1) the persons were underage; (2) the names were not on the voters' list (3) there were no original signatures on the papers the persons brought (4) these persons had no identity cards. Despite the protests, they were allowed to vote.

Another PPP polling agent, Komal Ram for District 13, Division 8 reported that at 5.30 p.m. on July 16 there were only 11 voters remaining on the list who had not voted. Suddenly, he said, a large number of people came up with the PNC polling agent and told the Presiding Officer

that a supplementary list had been prepared which he would receive the next day, but that they should all be allowed to vote. Komal Ram made objections. The PNC polling agent told the presiding officer that "they are the governing party and they make the rules". He said that about 80 persons cast votes, but when he asked for their names and I.D. numbers, this was refused.

In Electoral District No. 23, La Penitence-Lodge, at Division No. 10, the polls were kept open until after 8 p.m., over 2 hours longer than the law permits, in order to allow a number of "new voters" to cast ballots. Up until the time the PPP Polling Agent was chucked out of the station, she recorded 166 "new voters". That polling station had 577 voters of which 387 only had voted up to the time the new voters started surging into the station. One hundred and ninety registered voters had not voted, but 166 (plus) unregistered voters were allowed to vote. It can be seen that this was a calculated effort to show a higher turn-out of voters. With this added amount of voters, the official returns state that 81.16% turned out to vote in Electoral District No. 23. But it is interesting to note that the total number of "new voters" are not included in the total for the list of Registered Voters. If the "new voters" were added to the list of Registered Voters, then the percentage of turn-out would be lower.

In Werk-en-Rust, Electoral District No. 21, there were 506 "new voters". The official figure for the turn-out of voters is 68.2%. But this figure is calculated without adding the "new voters" to the list of registered voters. The Werk-en-Rust returns were the only election results that came out during the five-hour radio programme starting midnight on July 16 to the early hours of July 17. When these results came out, the spokesman for the PPP, Mrs. Janet Jagan (each political party had spokesmen on this programme) asked if the figure for the number of registered voters included the additional or new voters. The answer came through that these figures were not included. When the 506 new voters are added, the percentage turn-out of 68% drops by 6% to 62%.

One other important point to examine in this low turn-out of voters is the question of direct vote, or actual physical turn-out of voters. This was even lower due to the large number of proxy and postal votes cast.

And a look at the PNC vote confirms the reason for its fears of not being able to explain a sudden rise in votes in areas where it was never before strong, balanced against its poor showing in areas where it was traditionally strong.

In the Werk-en-Rust District the PNC vote dropped from 5,894 in 1968 to 5,713 in 1973. If we take away from this figure the "new voters", the postal votes and the proxy votes (just about all PNC with the PPP getting only 3 of the 281 postal votes and surely none of the "new voters"). we end up with a figure of 4,667 direct votes for the PNC instead of 5,713.

But we can go further in this analysis of one city district which was the first district to be counted and the one we can be reasonably sure that the boxes were not tampered with.

On the radio programme, which took place from 12 a.m. to 5 a.m., the only time the political parties were allowed to participate — it became so hot that the government evidently issued a directive for the party speakers to be pulled off — Lionel Luckhoo, the PNC member on the Elections Commission and one of the two PNC spokesmen on the radio programme, boasted loudly that the Elections Commission examined the seals on a number of ballot boxes and found them to be intact. He further declared over the radio, that polling agents from the political parties were allowed to accompany the ballot boxes to the place of poll.

He could have been speaking only of the city ballot boxes, because the country boxes did not arrive for many hours, in some cases, days to the places of count. And, to be discussed later, polling agents were not allowed to accompany these ballot boxes.

Therefore, taking his word that the city boxes were not interfered with and that Werk-en-Rust in particular, being the earliest district to be counted, is a true reflection of the voting pattern, we come up with many interesting points.

If we examine the number of registered voters from 1964 to the present we discover these figures. In 1964, there were 8,079 registered voters in Werk-en-Rust. In 1968, under the PNC-controlled registration system, there were 8,871 registered voters. By 1973, the number of registered voters had increased to 10,727. Thus, the number of regis-

tered voters increased by 8.9% between 1964 and 1968, and by 17% for the period 1968 to 1973. But since there were 506 "new voters" added, these must be included and that brings the percentage of increase in the number of voters from 1968 to 1973 to 21%.

There is no plausible explanation for any other than the normal population increase for Werk-en-Rust. No special influx of people took place in Werk-en-Rust; there are no new housing schemes that could have settled in so many new people. In fact, there is no explanation at all for the 21% increase except falsification of the lists. And if the lists were falsified, it means that the PNC did not get the 5,713 votes recorded as cast for it; but considerably less. How did this extra number vote? Some by the use of proxy, some by the postal vote and others by another widely used method of electoral fraud — impersonation, and by the same person voting many times at different polling places.

In the "underworld" of electoral fraud, it was known that the PNC had a list of all the fictitious names on the electoral roll. It is from this list that it arranged impersonations, postal and proxy applications. In this "underworld", the list was offered for \$10,000; but the person offering to sell the list disappeared from the scene and was never heard or seen from that time.

However, Guyana is a small country and it is not easy to hide things for long. One well-known PNC thug was heard boasting among his cronies that he and some others each voted 30 times, going by car from Rosignol to Georgetown and dipping their inked fingers in a solution, in between polling stations, to take off the "indelible" marking.

As noted above, a close look at one electoral district, Werk-en-Rust, in the heart of the PNC's traditional area of support, the city of Georgetown, revealed that only 62% of those registered to vote, exercised the vote; that the PNC vote went down from 1968 to 1973 despite an inexplicable increase in the number of registered voters by 21% and despite the use of postal and proxy votes — with 99% of all of these going to the PNC.

With such a bad showing in its area of strength, how could anyone accept the election results which showed that the PNC doubled, tripled and even quadrupled above its

1968 votes in other areas—areas of predominant and well-known PPP strength?

In answer to a remark about the low turn-out of voters in PNC areas of strength, Mr. Luckhoo on the radio programme already mentioned, said the reason was that the PNC voters were "over-confident". Not a convincing answer for those seeking the truth about the 1973 election results.

Methods Used to Hinder the Campaigning

The Government and the PNC used a number of methods to hinder the election campaigning of the opposition parties. One of the most obvious was the long time it took for the voters lists to be produced — the preliminary lists and the revised lists.

Of course, without these, the checking of voters' names was made difficult. At the same time that the opposition parties had problems obtaining lists, PNC election workers could be seen with their own lists, which they were working with even before the date of elections was announced.

By placing restrictions on the importation of newsprint and printing equipment, the PNC regime has severely curtailed the freedom of the press. During the period from May 1972 to May 1973, the **Mirror** newspaper was forced to close down three times for a total period of 2 months because of the government's refusal and delay in granting licences for the importation of newsprint.

But even worse took place after the announcement of the date of elections. In early June, 1973, the Customs Department seized a consignment of newsprint for the **Mirror**. It was not until strong pressure and condemnation from many quarters both inside and outside Guyana took place had the Government finally released this newsprint, a few days before the election.

The PNC was trying to close down the **Mirror** newspaper, a paper closely associated with the People's Progressive Party, which has for years been a severe critic of the PNC government. Criticism of the government for this move came from the Commonwealth Press Association which condemned the control of newsprint as a form of press control. In Guyana, a petition signed by a number of

prominent citizens and published in the **Sunday Graphic** drew attention to the violation of press freedom.

During the height of the election campaign, the **Mirror** was forced to reduce its size by half and had to stop printing one day per week.

But even harsher methods were used to hinder the parties in the campaigning which took place over the seven week period. Meetings were broken up, cars smashed, speakers attacked with stones and bottles, loudspeaker equipment damaged — all of this with police standing by and not arresting anyone. On the other hand, the number of PPP activists arrested by July 16 mounted to some 120.

In a letter to the Commissioner of Police dated June 25, 1973, PPP candidate Ram Karran said: ".....last Saturday several meetings held by me in the Mahaicony area were severely interrupted, while at Central Mahaicony I was manhandled in full view of the policemen present, but no action was taken by them...it would appear from all that I saw that police action is directed against the members of the PPP while anti-PPP supporters who commit offences against the law are not pursued and held...."

In Campbellville, a week before elections, two young men were sitting on a bridge, late in the evening. A PNC jeep passed by, came back again and some men jumped out. The boys ran to a nearby house where one lived, and tried to shut the door. The thugs broke open the door, grabbed the two and threw them into the jeep. The jeep drove up the East Coast and the two young men were dumped on the public road near Liliendaal. When the boys, bruised and frightened, recovered, they found a book which had fallen out of the jeep. They picked it up; it was the vehicle's logbook. The two boys walked to the nearest police station and gave a report that evening. The next morning they brought the logbook to Freedom House, Headquarters of the People's Progressive Party. Mrs. Janet Jagan telephoned the Commissioner of Police, informed him of the incident, which he said he did not know of, and said that she had evidence to show who the culprits were and which vehicle had been used to abduct the two young men.

The log book, which was handed over to the police on July 13, was for an Austin vehicle GAA 2606. The nota-

tions in the book prove conclusively that the vehicle was used by the PNC for its various activities. To date no one has been charged for this offence.

At a PPP meeting in Buxton on June 3, stones, sticks and mud were hurled at the speakers in full view of the police and yet no arrests were made. Instead, two PPP men including a speaker were arrested.

On the same night, at a PPP meeting at Golden Grove, a windshield of one car of a PPP supporter was smashed, and another car damaged.

A gang of seven beat up PPP candidate, Kenneth Persaud, who was putting up PPP posters in the city. Llewellyn John, leader of the People's Democratic Movement accused the PNC of sending not only thugs, but top ranking members of that Party to his meetings to break them up and intimidate speakers.

At one PPP meeting in Campbellville, the police stood quietly by and allowed a vehicle with a loud-speaker (a breach of the law) blast out and interrupt the meeting; in fact, making it impossible to continue.

Ignatius Charlie, PPP candidate who lives in the Rupununi was brutally attacked one week before elections when he was campaigning in the North Rupununi area. PNC thugs hit him on the head while he was on a motor cycle and he was left unconscious for a long period. Later, he found that his motorcycle had been thrown into the Takutu River, the seat ripped and the bike badly damaged. Ignatius Charlie, an Amerindian, commented on his attack: "The PNC definitely know that they cannot get the majority of votes from the Rupununi. The people are fed up with the government and want a change. The PNC has done nothing for the people of the Rupununi. . . . Some people asked me to report the matter to the police but it's of no use." The PNC, which is detested in that area, "increased" its votes from 787 in 1968 to 3,987 in 1973, a fiction no one would believe.

There was gross discrimination in the granting of applications for public meetings. Under the law, applications must be submitted to the police for permission to hold public meetings and to use loud speakers. Frequently, opposition parties had their applications put in long in

advance brushed aside when the PNC, at a much later date, put in their applications.

Campaigning in the Amerindian areas was made difficult, and in some cases, impossible by the refusal of the Interior Department to grant the permits required for persons to visit these areas.

The visits to Amerindian areas was made even more difficult by the Government's deliberate policy of manoeuvring airflights for its own purpose. PPP General Secretary, Cheddi Jagan, had booked, over a week in advance, a flight by the Government-owned airline to Rupununi, where he had a number of speaking engagements. Two days before he was due to leave on this flight (the only means of travelling to Rupununi) he was informed that the flight was cancelled because of engine trouble. He was thus prevented from visiting the Rupununi.

Ram Karran, former Deputy Leader of the PPP, was booked and had his ticket to travel to Bartica. But in the meantime L. F. S. Burnham made arrangements to go to Bartica, and Ram Karran was told that the plane was over-booked and he could not travel. He had to spend 7 hours on a boat. Another PPP candidate, Harold Snagg was refused passage, already booked and paid for, from Matthews Ridge to Georgetown due to the "influence" of a leading PNC official in the area who was annoyed because he spoke at a public meeting there. His return to Georgetown was delayed three days.

Three weeks before elections, following a spate of arrests, police questioning and intimidation of a number of PPP activists and candidates, the police swooped down on Enmore, a strong PPP sugar estate area, arresting 42 PPP activists. These arrests followed an unsuccessful PNC election meeting which was to be held at Hope Government School with speakers including Mohammed Kasim, Minister of State for Agriculture and Leonard Durant, a defector from the PPP. The PNC carried in six jeeploads and one bus load of supporters. They were met by placard-carrying supporters of the PPP who made it clear that they stood behind the PPP.

This so enraged the PNC that they became aggressive and minor clashes took place between the supporters of the two parties, nothing very unusual in political campaign-

ing, but unusual in the 1973 campaign since the PPP and the other opposition parties had been the recipients of blows from the beginning of the campaign because of the discriminatory behaviour of the police. Just a squeak from anyone against the PNC at their meetings brought about immediate arrest by the police, while, as stated before, the police turned a "Nelson" eye on happenings at meetings of the opposition parties, even when speakers were injured.

But at Enmore, while no one was injured except one PPP supporter, and nothing violent took place, the PNC immediately called in the police and wholesale arrests and house raids began. Although one PPP man was shot in the hand and later hospitalised as a result of an attack by a PNC thug, the police never investigated the matter. When Ram Karran spoke to the Commissioner of Police the day after the incident and referred to the man, who had been shot and was hospitalised, the Commissioner said that he was unaware of anyone being shot.

In a letter to the Commissioner of Police; Ram Karran, who had himself been subjected to a search when he went to investigate the Enmore incident, a search initiated incidentally at the instruction of a civilian PNC thug to the police, wrote:

".....at Enmore peaceful picketing of the PNC was subjected to violent reaction both by the police and the PNC. Indeed, while the police were seeking out PPP members in the vicinity of the meeting, PNC activists were allowed to attack homes and persons on the roadside in which one man was shot in his hand and several injured and a number of houses damaged: At the outpost itself, several cycles were destroyed by hoodlums in full view of the policemen stationed there.

When I visited the Cove and John Police Station Sunday evening I saw a number of activists of the PPP held by the police and was amazed that out of all these incidents between the PNC and PPP that only one group of people were "responsible" and what is more PNC supporters were there at the Enmore police outpost to taunt and even to intimidate their opponents. You expressed surprise that these people were not permitted to see their lawyers. Perhaps you will

now consider issuing the necessary instructions to your subordinates to ensure that those held for any cause are not to be deprived of their rights to see their lawyers."

Despite this protest, the pattern of arresting PPP activists continued through the elections. Up to the time of elections some 120 PPP members had been arrested. After the elections, more than 250 had been arrested in the first four weeks.

On July 7, 1973; the Association of Legal Practitioners issued a statement in which it said:

"In a recent case on the West Coast of Demerara, seven persons were taken into police custody on Wednesday last at Leonora Police Station. Two days later Counsel called at the Police station to see those persons on whose behalf he had been briefed. The lawyer was refused permission to see his clients by a senior police officer of the district concerned, namely Detective Inspector Lyte, under the pretext that the Police had not completed their investigation. Forty-eight hours, it must be pointed out, has elapsed since these persons were taken into custody and they had not been charged or released on bail....."

Article 5 (3) of the Constitution of Guyana provides that "Any person who is arrested or detained shall be informed as soon as reasonably practicable in a language that he understands of the reason for his arrest or detention and shall be permitted; at his own expense, to retain and instruct without delay a legal adviser of his own choice... and to hold communication with him.... the constitutional rights of the people are paramount...."

The seven persons held in police custody were PPP activists who were being harassed in the pre-election period. Although protest had been made over the fact that lawyers were not allowed to speak to their clients following the Enmore incident, this violation of rights was repeated many times subsequently.

One of the most disgraceful incidents was the police action in respect of four sisters from Haslington (adjacent to Enmore) who were literally dragged out of

their beds on the night of the Enmore incident and carried in their night clothes to the Cove and John Police Station where they spent the night. They were not permitted a change of clothes until next day. One of the girls, Mitra Dhanraj, was only 12 years of age. **The four girls, and this is the most amazing part of the incident, were in their beds in one bedroom in the house of their parents. Without even knocking on the door, three PNC activists — NOT POLICE—entered their room, dragged them from their beds, pulled them out of the room, one by her hair and then handed them over to the police who were outside. . .**

The four Dhanraj sisters, and the 38 others arrested that night, were, the next afternoon, taken to the Sparendam Police Station. The four girls were put on bail. Up to the time of their release at 3 p.m. they had not been given a morsel to eat. Sixteen hours had passed.

When the case was called for first hearing a few days later; the magistrate refused bail for all 42 and the four girls were put into police custody, two being sent to the New Amsterdam prison, where convicted women criminals are held and two to the Belfield School for delinquent girls.

Three of the boys held were minors and instead of going to the Georgetown prison, they were placed in police custody at the Salvation Army. Under the law, however; minors cannot be convicted in a court of law. The lawyer pointed this out to the magistrate when applying for bail.

There was such a public revulsion at the refusal of bail for the four girls, and in particular at the jailing of a 12 year old, that when the 42 Enmore activists appeared in court at the end of a week; the magistrate put the four Dhanraj sisters on bail. Again they experienced the same inhuman treatment that has become part of the police methods of harassment.

The two Dhanraj sisters who were held in New Amsterdam were removed from that prison on the day before the hearing and brought to the Cove and John Police station where they spent the night. Up until the time they were put on bail they had nothing to eat or drink, for a period of 24 hours.

When, after 25 days in prison; the others were released on bail the police then dropped all charges. The full truth was then known; there was no case against the 42, but the state machinery had been used to punish them for humiliating the PNC and for being staunch PPP adherents.

The Enmore incident was not the only one in which civilian PNC thugs were used to arrest PPP members. This unusual development fits in with the PPP charges that the PNC is following the Haiti pattern of creating Ton-Ton-Mocutes, armed civilian police used to harass those opposed to the government. It had already started in Guyana before the elections.

The Hijacking of the Ballot Boxes

A week after the announcement that General Elections would be held on July 16, a delegation of the People's Progressive Party met the Elections Commission at two sessions, on June 6 and 7. Among a number of items discussed, including the short period for the revision of the preliminary list of voters, the question of ID cards being used on voting day, the misuse of proxy and postal voting, the most important matter discussed was the security of the ballot boxes.

In a letter to the Chairman of the Elections Commission on June 15, the PPP General Secretary, Cheddi Jagan, at the request of the Commission, summarized the points made at these meetings and in reference to the security of the ballot boxes, wrote:

"The PPP had long proposed, because of the tampering with ballot boxes, that a preliminary count of ballots should be made at the polling place at which the ballots were cast. As present, the procedure is that at the close of the poll, the ballot-boxes are sealed and taken in a car in which only the officials, in some cases PNC activists, are permitted, to the counting place. There the ballots are counted in order to see whether the total number found in the box agrees with the ballot paper account. Then they are all mixed up with the ballot-papers from all the other boxes in the District and counted again, this time to ascertain the vote for each party. In the 1970 local government elections, carried out under the same conditions, 410 votes had been cast at a Kitty polling-place but only 310 were found when the box was later opened at Queen's College and there were other instances of discrepancies.

At the meeting with the PPP delegation I recalled that I spoke with you on the telephone in December 1968 about the 4 packages or wads of ballots wrapped with elastic bands, all marked PNC; which had been found in a ballot-box in the Pomeroy District; your comment was that "someone would have to answer for this", but I never heard anything more of the matter. In that election, almost invariably neither PPP nor any other Opposition agents were allowed to accompany the ballot-boxes from the polling place to the place of counting; in one District a police jeep actually stopped a PPP vehicle from following the car with the ballot-box; and the car proceeded in the opposite direction away from the counting place. The seals of many boxes were also found to have been broken.

"And even more serious, no Opposition agents were permitted in the places or rooms where the ballot-boxes were stored before counting.

"In the 1968 election, also; counting for the entire country took place at only 3 centres, whereas, in 1961, for instance, counting took place in each of the then 35 Electoral Districts. Confining the count to three centres meant that ballot-boxes had to be transported over very long distances, thus increasing the scope for the frauds which took place, as noted above.

"Another disturbing aspect is the method of counting of votes. At the 1970 local government elections, the returning officer parcelled out votes in large heaps to a number of officials, who, working at other tables, did the count for party preference with no supervision from the election agents of opposition parties. In the 1968 election, the then Leader of the United Force, Mr. Peter D'Aguiar, in the T.V. film, "The Making of a Prime Minister" publicly stated that the count was done corruptly, that many times there would be a jump in the counting from a lower number to a much higher number.

"All these procedures facilitated widespread tampering with the ballot-boxes and fraud in the counting of votes. The PPP delegation therefore proposed to the Commission that:

- (i) provision be made for the initial counting of the votes for party preference at the polling-place,

in the presence of the party election agents and counting agents;

- (ii) that opposition parties' agents be permitted to travel in the same vehicle with the ballot-box or boxes and at all times before the final count to be able to keep the boxes in full view.
- (iii) in the case of any discrepancies in the final count at the polling place, the votes should be kept separate from votes from any other polling place until the discrepancy has been satisfactorily explained;
- (iv) the count by the Returning Officer of the District should be done at one table, so that election agents or counting agents could see and hear the count;
- (v) that the counting by Returning Officers be done in each of the 38 Electoral Districts".

Then on June 20, the leaders of the three opposition parties, the People's Progressive Party, the Liberator Party and the Peoples Democratic Movement, sent a joint letter to the Chairman of the Elections Commission to discuss (1) elimination of indirect voting by the use of the proxy and postal vote (2) change in the method of counting and permitting opposition parties' agents to accompany ballot boxes to the counting places and (3) changes in the methods of sealing ballot boxes.

Delegates from the three opposition parties met the Elections Commission on June 26 and discussed a number of items, but more particularly, the security of the ballot boxes. By then there was growing consternation throughout the country that the PNC would tamper with the ballot boxes, as it was daily becoming more obvious that despite the widescale rigging, the PNC could not win the elections unless there was mishandling of the ballot boxes.

At that meeting, the opposition parties put up concrete proposals for the sealing of ballot boxes so that it would be difficult for them to be tampered with. The Elections Commission reported to the delegates that it had had discussions with the Minister of Home Affairs who had reject-

ed the proposal that polling agents of the political parties be allowed to accompany ballot boxes. It was understood that the Minister had based his rejection principally on the ground that there would be no room in the vehicles transporting the ballot boxes for so many people.

Then on July 9, the leaders of the three opposition parties wrote to the Chairman of the Elections Commission proposing that one agreed representative of the three parties could be delegated to represent the other two parties and thus the difficulty expressed by the Minister, of having too many people in the vehicle, would be overcome. The joint letter closed with these words: "We feel that the Commission would agree to this proposal to ensure the secrecy of the ballot since its implementation is in no way contrary to any existing law or regulation".

Two days later, on July 11, the PPP member of the Elections Commission, Ralph Ramkarran informed the press that he was not satisfied that the Elections Commission was prepared to do anything about protecting the secrecy of the ballot and the security of the ballot boxes. He said:

"I am not satisfied that the Commission has carried out its powers. I feel that the machinery of the election is in the hands of the government."

Mr. Ramkarran stated that the talks centred on the security of the ballot box. The opposition parties had requested that polling officers be allowed to follow the ballot boxes after polling is over. The Elections Commission took up this question with the Minister of Home Affairs; but nothing came of it.

"In carrying out its functions under the Constitution, the Commission has met on only four occasions since I became a member on the 4th May, 1973. Two of these meetings were mere formalities. People expect, especially at this election period, that the Commission should have been playing a much more substantial role in supervising the administrative conduct of the elections and issuing instructions to ensure impartiality.

"I have made several attempts to get the Commission to meet to discuss and take decisions on matters which

I consider to be of vital and immediate importance, but it was only on one occasion that I met with any success. It was not for want of efforts on my part that the Commission has not been playing a more active role at this election period.

"As a Member of the Elections Commission, I feel it is my duty to inform the public about the grave situation which is now confronting every elector and which poses very pertinent questions over the conduct of the elections".

On July 12, L.F.S. Burnham made a special radio broadcast saying that certain forces were out to disrupt the poll and were planning violence on polling day. He said that a new law was promulgated by the President setting out harsh penalties for any such offences — \$1000 fine plus one year's imprisonment and a 5-year deprivation of voting rights, including denial of the right to be a member of parliament.

In a press release on July 13, the People's Progressive Party re-stated its demands to the Elections Commission concerning the security of the ballot box and the proposal made jointly by the three opposition parties. The PPP statement said:

"This is clearly a most reasonable request! But there has been no response, because even with all the rigging— padded local and overseas voters lists proxy and postal voting and all the others dirty tricks of this election — the PNC knows it cannot win if the ballot box is not tampered with.

All the last minute manoeuvres of the PNC including the back-dating of law to protect the government from showing the postal voters list, and now the threat of imprisonment and disenfranchisement of voters indicate that the PNC is becoming hysterical in the face of a landslide support for the PPP.

There is little doubt either in the ranks of the PNC that the PPP has majority support. Any independent survey will attest to this fact.

Repeated efforts for the Election Agents of the three parties to meet with the Chief Election

officer to discuss the safety of the ballot box have met with failure.

The PNC will not allow adequate protective measures to be taken to prevent the tampering of the ballot box, for if the box is protected, the PNC will be out of office.

The PPP does not share the view that it is impracticable to make a preliminary count at each polling station.

Even if that is so, we challenge the PNC to:

1. permit the **proper and adequate** sealing of the ballot boxes.
2. allow one polling agent representing the three opposition parties to accompany the ballot boxes wherever they may be moved and wherever they may be stored from the time of closure to the time of opening for the counting.

This is the issue. If the PNC cannot agree with these conditions, there is only one conclusion the nation and the world can arrive at; namely, the PNC wants to tamper with the boxes. In that case, the PPP must take whatever measures it deems necessary to protect the ballot box".

The PPP Election Agent, Balchand Persaud, on July 13 had after days of being put off, finally obtained an interview with the Chief Election Officer at the National Registration Centre in Georgetown. In a letter to confirm the points made, Balchand Persaud wrote the Chief Elections Officer as follows:

"Further to our discussions this morning, I wish to confirm that agreement was reached on the following points:

1. That the three political parties, the People's Progressive Party, the Liberator Party and the Peoples Democratic Movement will jointly appoint one Polling Agent at each Polling Station who will accompany the ballot box from the place of poll to the Office of the Polling District and then the Candidates and Counting Agents of each political party will accompany boxes to the Central Counting Place. All such persons will

be issued with identification cards issued by you or your office.

2. That the definition of a seal for ballot boxes will include a paper band to be pasted fully around the ballot box, from top to bottom, including the four sides and to include sealing wax at various points as well as signatures of Polling Agents on the seals or bands”.

Then began two days of bobbing and weaving by the Chief Election Officer on the two crucial points of sealing the ballot boxes and having a representative of the three opposition parties accompany the ballot boxes. On July 14, just two days before elections, PPP General Secretary, Cheddi Jagan, spoke to the Chief Election Officer and on July 15, confirmed the discussions in a letter which read:

“Yesterday afternoon, in a telephone conversation, I expressed surprise that you had, apparently reversed an agreement reached with Mr. Balchand Persaud, PPP Election Agent, in his conversation with you at your office in the presence of two other persons, one of whom, Mr. Ralph Ramkarran, is a member of the Elections Commission.

“It was conveyed to me that you had, on Friday, July 13, agreed that opportunity would be provided to the opposition political parties to seal adequately the ballot boxes after the conclusion of the polls, and that one person agreed to jointly by the three opposition parties would be permitted to travel in the same vehicle transporting the ballot box from the place of poll to the office of the Polling District. From there the candidates and the Counting Agents of each political party will accompany boxes to the Central Counting Place.

“Yesterday, Mr. Balchand Persaud informed me that you had told him that you had made no such decision; thus my telephone call to you. In our telephone conversation, you said that all you had told Mr. Persaud was that you would discuss the matter with the Returning Officers. I said that it was not a matter of communicating with, but giving instructions to them.

“You indicated to me that I had taken the same matter “above your head” to the Prime Minister. I said

that I had done so only after I had received no reply either from the Elections Commission or you in response to joint letters from the three opposition parties.

“In any case, I pointed out that you, and not the Prime Minister, had the power to make the decision.

“You finally told me that you would observe the agreement reached with Mr. Balchand Persaud, and further, that you would make a public statement to this effect”.

“I hope these commitments will be fulfilled”.

On the basis of these agreements, the three opposition parties issued instructions and equipment (tapes, sealing wax and seals) to their polling agents to ensure careful sealing of the ballot boxes. The three opposition parties further submitted to the Chief Election Agent a list of the polling agents for each division who were authorised by the three parties to accompany the ballot boxes. Also, the agreed polling agents were each given an authorisation signed by the Election Agents of the three parties as being selected to accompany the ballot box.

However, at the close of poll on July 16, all of these promises were brushed aside as polling agents were, in most cases, prevented from participating in the sealing of ballot boxes. In some cases, where the boxes were sealed according to the agreement; these were later ripped off by election officers.

Only in a few cases were polling agents from any of the opposition parties allowed to accompany the ballot boxes. Apparently, in some Georgetown divisions this was permitted for Mr. Lionel Luckhoo, the PNC member of the Elections Commission made this claim over the radio some hours after the close of poll. And it is this claim that will be used later to analyse why the Georgetown ballot boxes give the only true picture of the election results.

This report by the PPP polling agent for District No. 26 Division 13 (1) is typical of what took place at the close of poll — “After the close of poll I presented my appointment certificate to the Presiding Officer who advised me to see a certain Inspector Fraser who told me that

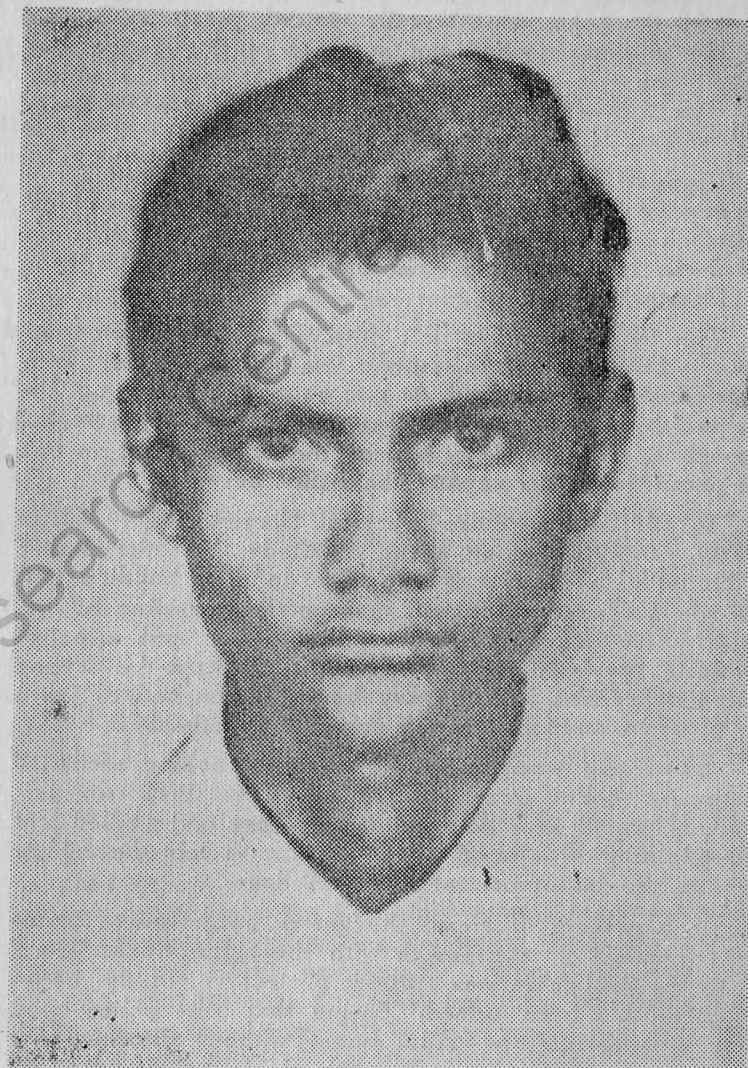
I would be allowed to accompany my box, No. 684, to the Counting Centre. When the vehicle came, the police officer No. 8060, who was inside my polling station picked up the ballot box and started to proceed towards the vehicle which was on the road. We, the police officer and myself, walked side by side until we reached the vehicle. The vehicle was not locked with a padlock. Three soldiers were at the back of the vehicle. I told one of the soldiers that I am an agent and I have permission to go with the ballot box. He then told me that I have to see the Police Inspector. When I went to see the Inspector and told him what the situation was, he just drove away. I then tried to stop the vehicle, GZ8627, which had the ballot box, by going in front of it. I was then moved by a few soldiers and the vehicle was driven away.

The PPP candidate in the Pomeroon Electoral District reported that on election day, at 4 p.m., he contacted the Returning Officer for the District and asked him about the transportation of the ballot boxes. The officer replied that he knew nothing about the matter.

The PPP candidate, Isahack Basir reported:

"At 5:55 p.m. I attempted to enter Polling Division No. 5, Charity Government School, when two GDF soldiers pointed their guns at me and ordered me not to move. A crowd of about 200, were kept at some distance. I then observed a ballot box in the army truck about 10 feet from where I was standing. I questioned a soldier and he said he would fix me up and raised the gun to my chest. At that moment I saw the Returning Officer holding a ballot box and who was escorted by two GDF soldiers. The GDF truck picked up the box and drove off abruptly.

My colleagues and I later followed the truck after it spent some time by the Charity Rest House. On our way to Hampton Court six soldiers deployed from the GDF truck held up our cars at gun point and all the occupants were made to stand outside while the car seats were ripped open. Both the Pomeroon and Suddie ballot boxes arrived at the Anna Regina Police Station after 10 p.m. Not a single polling agent of any opposition party was allowed to travel with the boxes. Several of our agents who tried to travel



Seventeen year old Jagan Ramessar and 43 year old Jack Bhola Nauth (Parmanand), the father of five, were shot dead at No. 64 Village, Corentyne on election day when the police opened fire in an incident relating to the take-over of the ballot boxes by the security forces.

Above is a photograph of young Jagan, whose life was cut short so soon by police bullets.

with the boxes were brutally ejected. At Anna Regina the soldiers blocked the entrance of the station and no one was permitted to enter, be it agent or candidate. I was pushed out by GDF soldiers when I demanded to have a look at the ballot boxes.

From 10 p.m. on Monday night to 10 a.m. on Wednesday morning, only then was I permitted to look at the Pomeroon District ballot boxes which were then lying at the Guyana Technical Institute in Georgetown."

The report from District No. 26, Lower Demerara River: "After polling finished our polling agents were treated with total disregard. At various polling places e.g. Divisions 20, 1B; 10, (1); 7 (2); etc. our agents were not allowed to affix the Party seal on the boxes. Also, no one was permitted to accompany the ballot boxes."

In the Barica-Potaro Electoral District, at St Mary's Quarry, the PPP polling agent reported: "At the closing of the poll, a security officer, came in the building and told me to leave the place, leaving the presiding officer, the PNC polling agent, the security officer and a police officer in the building. I didn't get to witness the sealing of the ballot box and the envelopes. I then had to leave the place because of threats from PNC activists."

So violent was the refusal to permit polling agents to accompany ballot boxes, that in the Corentyne, two persons, one an 18 year old lad, were shot and killed and others injured as a result of an attempt to join the vehicle carrying the ballot box at No 64 Village.

In a number of areas, the voters, apprehensive about the possibility of interference with the ballot boxes, stood by to see that there was proper protection of the ballot boxes, as had been agreed. Seeing that the police and army were seizing the ballot boxes without allowing anyone to accompany them, a number of incidents took place which led to clashes between voters and security forces.

And, as subsequent events proved, the three opposition parties and the majority of voters were correct in taking every precaution to see that the ballot boxes were not tampered with.

What happened to the ballot boxes is the key to how

the PNC obtained its infamous two-thirds majority.

To prepare the way for the army take-over of the ballot boxes; certain changes had to be made. The government deliberately made these changes at the very last moment. On the eve of the elections, on Saturday, July 14, an Official Gazette announced a new government order, directing that all the counting of ballots would take place at three counting places in the city of Georgetown, all in the area known as Thomas Lands—in the area that also contains Police and Army Headquarters!

The Official Gazette, although published on Saturday, is so restricted in distribution, that the facts of this change were not known until Sunday, the day before elections. In the 1968 elections, the counting took place in three centres, each in one of the three counties of Guyana. In the 1964 and all previous elections, counting took place in the constituencies or electoral districts, after the introduction of proportional representation in 1964.

Therefore, this change in the pattern of counting was ominous. Although it was at first denied that ballot boxes were being taken into and held at the Guyana Defence Force Headquarters in Thomas Lands instead of to the three Counting Places, it was so widely known by Tuesday, the day after polling day, that those in charge of elections stopped denying it.

During the radio programme held in the early hours of Tuesday morning, at which representatives of the four political parties were invited to comment on the election returns Janet Jagan the PPP spokesman accused those in charge of elections of seizing the ballot boxes and keeping them in the GDF compound. "Where are the ballot boxes?" she demanded. "Why are they not being taken to the Counting Centres?" To these questions, Kit Nascimento, now a Minister of the Government and Lionel Luckhoo, one time High Commissioner for Guyana in London, doubted the accuracy of her charges.

But as the hours passed, on Tuesday, it was apparent that the ballot boxes were being held for long periods at the GDF headquarters, and when they came out, it was evident that the boxes had been tampered with. Seals were broken, keys for the padlocks on the ballot boxes were mixed up or missing, ballots cast did not tally with

ballots counted, wads of ballot papers were found tied or clipped together and ballots were lightly marked, as if in a hurry. But these were not the only signs of what took place. The unbelievable results of the counting added further to all the evidence available that the ballot boxes were interfered with and that the military forces had been used to bring about the massive fraud.

At the Houston Electoral District, where the farthest point is some seven miles from Georgetown, four of the ballot boxes reached the Counting centres at 8 p.m. election night; just two hours after the close of poll. The other twenty boxes arrived at the Counting Centre 26 hours after the close of the poll!

At Vreed-en-Hoop District ballot boxes crossed the Demerara River to Georgetown at 10 p.m. on July 16. The boxes did not arrive at the Counting Centre until 5½ hours later, although the journey from the Georgetown Stelling to Thomas Lands cannot take more than 10 minutes. The key for Box 312 Goed Fortuin, a PPP stronghold, could not be found.

The Leonora ballot boxes were picked up by an airplane on Monday July 16 at 11 p.m. but did not arrive at the Counting Centre until Tuesday at 5.30 p.m., 18½ hours after the airlift, which could not have taken more than one half hour at the most, plus another half hour from the airstrip to the Counting Centre.

The Berbice West Ballot boxes left Fort Wellington at 2 a.m. Tuesday, but by 6.30 a.m. they had not arrived, although the candidates and counting agents had arrived by their own cars. The keys to four ballot boxes could not be found and one ballot box arrived with the padlock opened.

The Corentyne West boxes did not reach the Counting Centre until 9 a.m. July 17 but when counting began it was found that keys could not be found for boxes 499, 328 and 358. The locks had to be broken.

The boxes for Corentyne East did not arrive until 5.30 p.m. Tuesday, 23½ hours after the close of poll. The key for the ballot box of polling division 9 (II) could not be found and the returning officer ruled that it should be broken open. The lock for the ballot box for division No. 6 arrived unsealed.

In fact, so many boxes were seen at the counting centre with broken seals or no seals at all that it became the rule, not the exception.

All the seals were broken on the Corentyne West Central ballot boxes which arrived at the Counting Centre on Tuesday at 9.30 p.m. — 27½ hours after the close of poll.

There might be some difficulty in judging which of the electoral districts showed the greatest rigging, but certainly the Northwest District could run close for the winner. The Northwest boxes arrived 47 hours after the close of poll, giving the PNC a 550% increase over the votes it received in 1968. The number of voters doubled in that electoral district, from 6,789 in 1968 to 13,090 in 1973, most of them, as shown earlier under the section on padding of the voters' lists, were fictitious names. Also, the records show that 93.41% of the voters turned out to vote — a most unusual situation in an interior area where travel is difficult and people are scattered throughout the rivers of the district.

But more unusual occurrences took place in relation to the Northwest district. Not one PPP polling agent was accepted in any of the 41 polling stations. Due to poor communications — mails go to the Northwest District once per week — the names of polling agents did not reach the Returning Officer at the required time. The PPP Election Agent spoke to the Chief Election Officer who promised that arrangements would be made to permit the names of the 41 polling agents to be accepted for polling day. Despite several promises, this was never done.

In the Moruca area of the Northwest, voters were so angry at events that they picketed the polling station and later the police station when the PPP candidate, Basil James, was arrested for protesting against the decision not to allow PPP polling agents to attend the polling stations. And as a sign of protest, very few voted in the five polling stations of that part of the Northwest. Reports state that only about 25% of the voters there cast ballots, which must have considerably lowered the percentage of turn-out of voters.

When the counting took place, there was ample evidence of tampering of the ballot boxes. Winston Neblett,

Counting Agent for the PPP signed the following statement:

"I was a candidate on the list of the People's Progressive Party for the General Election held on 16th July, 1973.

"On Wednesday, 18th July, at about 5 p.m., I attended the count for the Northwest District No. 36 at North Georgetown School. I informed the Returning Officer Mr. Chichester that I was the PPP representative for the count.

"In the process of counting it was discovered that no record including the key for box 98 could be found and the envelope with the key for box number 67 was also missing. Four other boxes could not be opened with the keys. As a result the Returning Officer broke open the 6 boxes and hurriedly emptied the boxes in an empty carton. The ballots were divided among the fourteen counting assistants. When the last person was receiving her portion, twenty-one wads of ballot papers, some wrapped with rubber bands, and others clipped with paper pins were seen. I immediately drew the Returning Officer's attention and he said he could not explain how these ballots, in the way described, got there. These were marked ballots and the bands and pins were removed and they were counted. I objected very strongly but to no avail".

His statement is confirmed by the PDM Counting Agent who was present.

Winston Neblett's statement does not tell the whole story. When he objected strenuously to the presence of the 21 wads of ballot papers, he was told that if he continued, the police would put him out of the Counting Centre. Many of the ballot papers were only folded once, not the two folds required under the elections ordinance.

Overwhelming Evidence of Tampering of Ballot Boxes

The statement by Derek Jagan, a PPP candidate illustrates clearly that the ballot boxes were interfered with during the 15 hours they were in the GDF Headquarters. The keys for the padlocks on two ballot boxes apparently got mixed up. This could never have happened unless the keys were taken out of their sealed envelopes and used to open the ballot boxes, and then replaced in the wrong envelopes afterwards. Division 1 was a polling booth in the Enterprise Government School in the East Wing of the **upper floor** while Division No. 2 was a polling station at the Enterprise Government School in the West Wing of the **lower floor**. It would be impossible for the keys to get mixed because the two polling stations were in entirely different sections of the school and each ballot box and all keys and documents relating to that box were marked and sealed separately and by different persons. Derek Jagan's statement explains the key mix-up as well as the other election swindles — the breaching of the postal vote law and the "new voters" whose votes exceeded the lists of registered voters in a number of polling divisions.

"There were 20 polling divisions for District No. 13 Demerara Coast East. The ballot boxes were collected and taken to the GDF Headquarters at about 10.30 p.m. on the 16th July, 1973. The Counting Place was at the Technical Institute. The Returning Officer who was in charge of the counting, with his assistants, were waiting at the Technical Institute until about 5.00 a.m. on July 17 to count the votes but the ballot boxes did not arrive. He told me he was tired of waiting and left with his assistants. The ballot boxes arrived at

the counting place at about 1.30 p.m. on July 17, 1973. The keys for ballot boxes Nos. 347 and 366 for Division Nos. 1 and 2 could not open the padlocks on the ballot boxes which were tried on several occasions at about 2.30 p.m. on 17/7/73. After most of the boxes were opened, about 5.30 p.m., the Returning Officer told me he was going to the urinal and left the room. On his return the counting agent for the PNC requested the Returning Officer to try again to open the two boxes. The LP candidate Mr. Eleazer and I objected to this course. The Returning Officer said he will try again the keys. With two keys, he opened the two boxes on the very first try.

"In 5 divisions the number of the ballots in the boxes did not correspond with the figures stated on the returns by the Presiding Officers as the number of ballots that should have been in the ballot boxes.

"In one ballot box the label covering the slot was not in place and the slot through which the ballots were placed in the ballot box was exposed.

"The label covering the slot on one ballot box was not the official label that was required to seal the slot but an ordinary piece of paper which was not secured with the seal of the PPP polling agent or of the presiding officer.

"The envelope with the key to open ballot box No. 532 for Division No. 16 could not be found. The Returning Officer broke the ballot box in order to count the ballots. The number of ballots in the box were not the same as should have been there as recorded by the Presiding Officer.

"The padlocks on a majority of the ballot boxes were not sealed with the seal of the presiding officers or polling agents or at all and the padlocks could easily have been opened.

"A majority of the envelopes containing the keys to open the padlocks of the ballot boxes were not sealed with the seals of the presiding officer or the polling agents or at all and the envelopes could easily have been opened and the keys taken out to open the ballot boxes.

"The box containing the postal ballots were not sealed with the seal of the Chief Election Officer or any other person. The box contained more envelopes with ballots than should have been therein. Five of the envelopes contained not only the ballots as required by law but also the declaration of identity which was not signed by anyone. It means therefore that postal ballots were marked by persons claiming to be the voters who were not identified. The law dealing with postal voting requires the Chief Election Officer or his assistants to ensure that the declaration of identity which is not to be enclosed in the same envelope with the ballot is signed before a postal ballot is cast. It means therefore from what took place in District No. 13 that the law dealing with postal voting was not observed in the sending out and the casting of postal ballots. There was obvious fraud in connection with the postal voting.

"Many other irregularities were discovered during the counting of the votes.

"Many of the PPP polling agents told me that on July 16 from about 4.30 p.m. many youths whose names did not appear on the final list as voters and who did not have any identification cards were permitted to vote despite objections from the PPP polling agents. As a result more votes were cast than electors on the list. For example: in division No. 6 there were 254 electors but 264 voted; in division No. 7 there were 322 electors but 347 voted; in division No. 8 there were 191 electors but 244 voted; in division No. 9 A (i) there were 459 electors but 647 voted; in division No. 9 A (ii) there were 570 electors but 608 voted; in division No. 14 there were 391 electors but 422 voted; in division No. 15 there were 195 electors but 210 voted; in division No. 16 there were 533 electors, but 604 voted.

"Hundreds of PPP supporters who waited hours in queues to vote were turned away by the presiding officers who told them that they had already voted by post or proxy. The electors protested that they not only did not apply to vote by proxy or post but that they did not receive any postal ballots.

"The majority of the PPP polling agents were not permitted to affix their seals on the ballot boxes by the presiding officers."

"The PPP polling agents and I were prevented by GDF soldiers at gun point from following the ballot boxes".

Electoral District No. 29, Canals Polder is a district which the PPP has won in the elections of 1953, 1957, 1961, 1964, and 1968. Below are the voting results for the PPP and PNC for the last three elections:

	PNC	PPP
1964	2,254	3,766
1968	2,562	3,900
1973	5,477	885

This is one of the PPP strongholds that the PNC claimed to have "broken through". Before counting of votes took place the following report was received — "The Canals Polder boxes crossed over the Demerara River approximately 9.45 p.m. 16/7/73. They reached here at Georgetown Technical Institute 2 a.m. this morning (the distance from the Georgetown Stelling to the Georgetown Technical Institute is under two miles). So far counting has not begun because some envelopes for Division 6, 13 and 16B are missing. The Returning Officer R.A.A. Jacobs who went all morning in search of the envelopes arrived back here at 6.45 a.m. and informed us that counting will begin at 12 noon. He said that this is the instruction of the Chief Election Officer. At the moment the following irregularities exist — (1) 3 envelopes are missing (2) the total votes cast for divisions 6, 8, 16A and 16B are not shown on the labels on these boxes. (3) Division No. 4 envelope (package A) is open. (4) the slot of the box of Division No. 6 is covered with an unofficial piece of paper. This is all for now."

But more was to develop. The PPP Polling Agent for Division No. 10 Kawall Government School had objected, during polling, to the fact that the ballot papers were being stamped on the **inside** instead of the **outside**. He was so concerned about it, fearing that the ballots would be declared void, that he wrote on a piece of paper that the

THIS document, signed by the Polling Agents of the four political parties at Division 10 Canals Polder Electoral District is proof of ballot box tampering, showing that ballots there were being stamped on the **INSIDE**. When this box was opened for counting, **ALL BALLOTS WERE STAMPED ON THE OUTSIDE AND ALL BALLOTS WERE MARKED FOR THE PNC!**

Polling Division No. 29
 Canals Polder No. 2
 Division No. 10 Kawall G.S. School

Box No. 300, see containing
 Ballot paper papers with
 stamps on side, Mr. D. Bismarck
 object to this and the
 Returning officer said that
 nothing is wrong with
 it, in favour of all the
 electors: Bipat
 2 # Alibulla
 3 # Bismarck
 3 # Bismarck
 3 # Hamf and other
 elector officers, also police
 Constable P.C. 7566 were
 at present who noted it.

Sign: D. Bismarck
 H. P.D. Division No. 10
 2 # Bismarck
 3 # Alibulla
 H. Bismarck Division No. 10
 FOR 2 No.

BOAT

ballots were being stamped on the inside, recording the names of voters who were present when he made the objection, noting the number of the police constable on duty (PC 7566) and obtaining the signatures of the Polling Agents for the People's Democratic Movement, the Liberator Party, the People's National Congress, as well as his own.

This paper was later sent to the PPP candidate, Dalchand, and his counting agent for the district at the Counting Centre. When box No. 300 for Division No. 10 was emptied out for counting, the PPP counting agent and candidate watched carefully for the stamp imprint which should have been on the inside of the ballots. **Instead, all 511 ballots, were stamped on the outside and every ballot was marked PNC! The PPP representatives drew the Returning Officer's attention to this and he noted it, not knowing that there existed a signed statement that the ballots had been stamped on the inside. This incident has also been verified by the representative of the PDM, Mr. Carl Portsmouth.**

In another area which the PPP has won in all the elections since 1953, and in fact, where Dr. Jagan won in 1947 before the PPP was founded, Demerara Coast West, the PNC "increased" its votes from 1,936 in 1968 to 4,317 in 1973 while the PPP "dropped" its votes from 4,785 in 1968 to 2,504 in 1973.

In 1968, the results for this district were announced at 4.17 a.m., 10 hours and 17 minutes after the close of poll. In the 1973 elections, the boxes did not reach the counting centre until 19 hours and 45 minutes after the close of poll.

The PPP candidate for this district, Hublall Ramdass, reported fully on what took place. He said:

"All the ballot boxes were transported to the Beterverwagting Police Station and were put in the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics lorry GZ 9263 and left for Georgetown about 9.30 p.m. I was not permitted to travel in the truck although I protested to the Returning Officer. He told me that he had no control over that.

We left Sparendam about 10 p.m. and arrived at the entrance to the GDF Compound about 10:30

p.m. The truck with the boxes went into the GDF compound and we were prevented from entering the compound. Two lorries with PNC activists were, however, allowed to enter the compound.

We arrived at the GTI (the Counting Centre) about 10.45 p.m. The Returning Officer arrived about 11.30 p.m. with his two assistants and left about 1 a.m. in disgust after I kept asking him repeatedly for the boxes.

On July 17, at about 6 a.m. lorry GZ 9088 brought the ballot boxes for District No. 16 and among these was Box No. 171, which belonged to my District, No. 15. A half hour later they took this box away in a jeep (PZ 8819). Later that day, at about 1.45 p.m. the ballot boxes for District No. 15 arrived and then counting began.

There were two extra packages and one extra envelope marked 2 (1) with keys in it. The box for Division 2 (1) is No. 411 and Dr. Ganraj Kumar from the Liberator Party and I asked that the key be tried for the lock on that box. This was refused. However, when the counting took place, the number of votes cast and the number of votes counted did not tally with four boxes one of them being for Division 2 (1). The votes cast were 531 but only 491 were in the box. For Division No. 1, 506 votes were cast but 527 were in the box.

There were other irregularities. Box No. 542 — no ballot account was found in the envelopes. Box No. 412, no envelopes were sealed. Box No. 557, the seal on top of the slot was torn off and some ballot papers were inside which were folded only once. The envelope containing the keys for Boxes No. 545, 413, 556 and 546 were open. The seals on the locks for boxes 548, 270, 557, 554, 171, 410, 544, 411, 553; 538 and 546 were all broken. All these boxes were from our strongholds".

In another district Corentyne River, No. 1, where the PPP has strong support and has won the majority of votes since 1953, the PNC doubled its votes and the PPP went down 50%. Four ballot boxes from this district disappeared and the PNC claims that the PPP

stole the boxes — a ridiculous claim. No one in that district would swallow such a tale, particularly when it is common knowledge that the PPP has overwhelming support in the district.

Evidence of tampering of ballot boxes in this district could be seen in the now familiar pattern of broken seals on boxes, padlocks and envelopes and the number of votes counted not tallying with votes cast. There was, however, an interesting event recorded by the candidate and counting officer of the PPP. No seals were seen on Box No. 151 for Division 11 and no key could be found to open the box. The Returning Officer left the counting place for one hour and came back with a key and then opened this box. The PPP representative protested and said that two keys should be in the envelopes for each ballot box. Only one of the 21 ballot boxes for District No. 1 was found to be in the same condition, with seals and tapes, as it was when the boxes were sealed at the close of poll; that was Box 473 for Division 21.

In another area, Berbice West, where the PNC claimed to have "broken through" the PPP strength, the voting from 1964 to 1973 went like this:—

	PNC	PPP
1964	1,283	4,188
1968	1,757	4,666
1973	4,822	3,265

Postal votes accounted for 1,221 votes, 99% of these going to the PNC. In 1964, the results of this district were declared 12 hours and 43 minutes after the close of poll. In 1973, the count began 21 hours and 35 minutes after the close of poll. The keys for the padlocks for five of the ballot boxes (Nos. 606, 223, 224, 225, 556) could not be found and the boxes had to be broken open. It is significant that four of these five boxes gave 100% votes to the PNC, and these are sugar estate areas where the PPP always has and continues to be very strong. The lock for Box 612 was not on the box and there were no seals on 8 locks. In 8 of the 16 boxes, the votes were 100% for the PNC. Also the PPP candidate for the district claimed that the lock for Box 223 was different from the one which was sealed in the morning by the candidate himself.

In the Berbice River 3,866 votes were received as being cast, but 4,045 were counted. Both the PPP and the PDM counting agents attest to the fact that some ballots were seen that were not folded even once.

In the counting of the votes for South Georgetown, a certificate in the postal vote ballot box showed that 846 postal votes were issued and that 546 votes were cast. Yet, when the ballots were counted, there were 680 votes. Despite objections, the 94 extra postal ballots were recorded for the PNC.

The Boerasirie ballot boxes were taken to the Parika Police Station on Monday night and despite all efforts by the PPP candidate, Yacoob Ally to follow the boxes, soldiers held up all vehicles. However, when Mr. Ally finally got to Parika, the whole area was cordoned off by the GDF. He attempted to enter the police station compound to see about his driver, who the police had arrested, but he was not permitted to do so. Yet, he saw well known PNC members in the police compound. Boerasirie boxes were picked up that night and airlifted to Georgetown at about 10.30 p.m., but the boxes did not arrive at the Counting Centre until the following day at 2.30 p.m. The seals were intact on only two of the 22 ballot boxes. It was observed that there were deep impressions on the wood around the nails, giving the appearance that a nail extractor tool had been used. This was drawn to the attention of the three presiding officers who were present. They said that they were not responsible.

Analysing the Election Results

The so-called "breakthrough" of the PNC in areas of known PPP strength must be analysed against that Party's poor showing in the Greater Georgetown area where the ballot boxes appear not to have been tampered with. As before noted, this assumption is based on the boast over the radio by Mr Lionel Luckhoo that the Election Commission inspected the seals on the boxes of those eight electoral district and found them to be in perfect order and that polling agents were allowed to accompany the ballot boxes to the Counting Centres.

On the other hand, the evidence points conclusively to the tampering of ballot boxes from the rural and interior areas. On this basis, taking for a fact that the eight city electoral districts give a true picture, we can then see uneven results, both with the turnout of voters and the results recorded for the ballot boxes.

Totalling up the number of increased voters on the lists, comparing 1968 to 1973, there were 19,676 additional voters for the eight city lists. With this increase the PNC gained 5524 votes, the PPP lost 1005 votes. It was in the eight city districts that the largest number of "new voters" cast votes. There were 5817 postal votes sent out but the exact number cast is unknown, Nor is the number of exact proxy votes cast known.

Comparing these eight electoral districts with eight electoral districts from Cayentyne to Mahaicony, leaving out two districts where the PPP did not before win, these figures show that there were 12,803 additional voters from 1968 to 1973 with the PNC gaining 11,581 votes and the PPP losing 8,076 votes. In these eight electoral districts 6485 postal votes were

sent out, but the number cast is unknown, as is the number of proxy votes. There is no record that any "new voters" were added, no doubt because of the distance involved. The arrangements for the "new voters" were made late on election day and apparently, the Elections Office could not send out their new lists in time to reach these areas.

On this basis of comparison, it can be seen that with a much larger number of additional voters (and also including the "new voters" which are not included in this number) the PNC in Georgetown gained only 5524 votes over its 1968 showing but in the areas which the PPP had won for a number of elections, and in districts where the evidence of tampering is overwhelming, the PNC gained 11,581 votes. This indicates clearly that the pattern was uneven. If the PNC had swept the polls, as it claimed, with a 71 per cent majority, surely it would have shown a marked increase in its own traditional areas of support, the eight Georgetown electoral districts being the areas it has carried for a number of elections.

Also, the results in the three interior electoral districts where most of the polling agents of the three opposition parties were refused entrance to the polling booths, where the sealing of the boxes was done almost in all cases by Government officials and PNC polling agents and where no agents witnessed the transportation of ballot boxes, the results show that the PNC gained 19,044 over its 1968 votes and the increased number of voters was 14,138. It is useful to compare again the increase in voters in the eight city seats (19,676) with the 14,138 in three interior districts and the increased PNC votes (5524) for the Georgetown districts with the 19,044 in the three interior districts. The conclusion is obvious.

And this conclusion of massive rigging, the result of the military takeover of the ballot boxes, was widespread, and not restricted only to charges by the People's Progressive Party.

In the SUNDAY GRAPHIC of July 22, 1973, the Editor, Ric Mentus, (who has since lost his job) in his "Sunday Opinion" under the title THE MIND BOGGLES said: "In an election that was remarkable for the spate of controversy it generated from

the initial stages of registration of voters right through to the final counting of ballots, both the nature and scope of the irregularities reported are serious enough to demand an impartial inquiry into the entire electoral process.... the whole nation is perplexed over the double standards being applied to the election procedure and results. The people cannot stretch credibility far enough to embrace both the details of irregularities that they have experienced and the 'persistent' suggestion and indoctrination' that has been coming from all officials and semi-official circles. The mind boggles at the enormity of the task and the Guyanese after the election is sadder and a bit more fearful of the future.

If he dares to think about the matter at all, he cannot help coming to the conclusion that whatever was responsible for the stunning victory we have witnessed, it was not fairplay. He will most likely then ask himself, what is there in this two-thirds majority that made it necessary to go to such lengths to get it? And what kind of nation-building are we going to move into from a beginning as suspect and tense as this"

Rickey Singh, analysing the elections in the July 22 issue of the SUNDAY GRAPHIC wrote: "The highly qualified statisticians in the employ of the Government have collected data which shows that on April 7, 1973, the population of Guyana, 21 years and over was 314,564. This was the voting population at home which does not take into account emigration, even though there was some loss from this source, and therefore represents the 'maximum possible population.'

Then from June 4 to 18 we had registration of those who would have been eligible to vote at May 31, 1973. On Election Day, July 16, newsmen and broadcasters were officially given, as the eligible registered voters at home; 384,434.

This means that while the statisticians had produced a voting population up to April 7, 1973 of 314,564, those responsible for the registration of voters came up with 69,970 eligible voters at the end of May.

Where did they come from? I don't know. But this

fantastic difference in the given voting population represents at least 11 parliamentary seats.

Since Mr. Butler (Chief Election Officer) could not confirm up to last week that there were more than 22,680 postal ballots, let us accept that the postal ballots cast were disclosed.

Since it is now clear that the three opposition parties together failed to muster as much as 1000 postal votes, then it is obvious which party ran away with this category of votes.

We already know how the PNC once again, as it did in 1968, clobbered its opponents with the overseas votes, a category over which this party alone again had complete control.

Of 34,801 overseas voters 29,643 cast their ballots. The PNC secured 29,031 of these votes or 98.34 per cent of the votes cast, as compared to 94.31 per cent in 1968, when it obtained 34,429 of the registered votes.

In 1968, according to official statistics, there were some 19,000 proxy votes cast.....it seems reasonable to settle for at least 8,000 to 10,000 proxy votes in 1973. Bearing in mind that we live in a country where election statistics are now given after the elections, including proxy votes, which votes should, by law, be declared before the election takes place, it means that the PNC went into the election with a number of advantages.

To the PNC's total vote at the election (243,803) must be subtracted nearly 59,000 votes, or the equivalent of at least nine seats, cast as overseas proxy and postal votes.

We are in no position, and I doubt if we ever will be, to know the exact number of 'unregistered' votes cast on Monday on the basis of those lists of voters which were calculated only on that day.

Why bother with any attempt to analyse the election. I have been asked by those who say that the country knows what has happened' also know that Guyana is now in a deeper crisis than it was prior to Monday, July 16. The question is: From here where? The shame is greater than the victory, said one leading Guyanese writer."

The CATHOLIC STANDARD commenting on the elections, under the headline "Fairy Tale Elections" said: "The July 16 election results, to say the least, puts a severe strain on one's credibility. No one seriously believes it. That this is so must be laid firmly at the door of the government."

The conduct of the Election arrangements has been most unfortunate. The public and the Opposition parties were treated in cavalier fashion. Information, which must be provided under law, was withheld until the last moment and was often given in an incomplete form.

The law also was suddenly amended to give a semblance of legality to the situation. What is more to the point is that the staff assembled were not notable for their neutrality.

To top it all the Government ignored the straightforward and commendable request that representatives of the Opposition parties should accompany the ballot boxes to the counting centres.

In the circumstances, the failure to seal boxes, the harassment of election personnel of the other parties who tried to follow the boxes, the wholly inexplicable detention of the boxes in the Guyana Defence Force compound for a long period—all these circumstances were bound to attract suspicion.

At this time there is no rejoicing in the country at the fact that there will be a strong Government. People are fearful and the queues outside the US Embassy every morning will now grow longer.

It remains to be seen what the miniature Opposition now will do. Will they take their seats in Parliament and try "to make a go" of it? Or will they, in keeping with the rejection of the Election, refuse to take their seats?

Whatever the Opposition parties do, they will have to reckon with the feeling among some of their supporters that power can no longer be secured through the ballot box."

CARIBBEAN CONTACT, a monthly paper printed in Trinidad by the Caribbean Christian Communications

Network in its editorial of August 1973 noted: "..... Watergate is not an American experience only. Wherever men battle for power, we can expect to find contempt for other people's rights.....the same corrupt determination, the same despicable logic that the end justifies the means, appears to be behind every electoral tactic of the PNC government and it is this cynical pragmatism which has discredited the results of the general elections of 1968 and again this year.....The fact or the fiction is Mr Burnham's People's National Congress polled 244,403 votes or 70.15 per cent of the 350,181 votes allegedly cast, while Dr Jagan's People's Progressive Party was able to get only 92,368 votes or 25.51 per cent. Thirty-seven seats to the PPP's 14. It is easy to understand the incredibility the CATHOLIC STANDARD speaks of and it is not surprising, really, that Dr Jagan who challenged the PNC to go into areas "where it had defrauded the people their votes" should now decide to boycott the new Parliament. All this, unfortunately, makes some people believe that change, or, power, can no longer be secured through the ballot box. But the alternative is another form of madness".

The three opposition parties, the People's Progressive Party, the Liberator Party and the People's Democratic Movement, in a joint statement on July 21, 1973 said that they "categorically reject the results of the elections held on July 16th. What has been witnessed was not a general election, but intervention by the army and police to enable the PNC to usurp power by fraud.

There is the clearest evidence of massive irregularities, including the seizure, impounding and tampering with ballot boxes, all of which were calculated to ensure that elections were neither free nor fair.

As a result of this brazen and illegal seizure of power, there is widespread resentment and public confidence in the electoral process has been completely undermined.

We pledge to work resolutely to mobilize the people in a struggle for free and fair elections, democracy and justice."

On July 23, the three opposition parties issued the

following statement in which they announced their refusal to accept parliamentary seats.

"The People's Progressive Party, the Liberator Party and the Peoples Democratic Movement wish to reiterate that we reject the declared results of the so-called general election held in Guyana on July 16, 1973, and positively state that the allocation of seats in Parliament does not represent the will of the people.

Further, in our view, the National Assembly has been reduced by the minority PNC regime into a farce and merely serves to rubber-stamp their edicts. It is not only non-representative; it is also a waste of the taxpayers money.

It can therefore neither speak on behalf of the Guyanese people, nor serve any useful purpose at this point in our struggle for peace, freedom and plenty.

The parties which have been allocated seats by the PNC, the PPP and the LP, will not therefore take up their allocation in the National Assembly.

The three parties, the PPP, the LP and the PDM state that a new phase in the struggle for free and fair elections, democracy and justice has now been entered into: We call upon the people of Guyana to demand an end to this parliamentary farce, and to join in the struggle for free and fair elections impartially supervised."

New Stage of Struggle

Two weeks after the general elections, the PNC government re-introduced a preventive detention law which provides for detention without trial, arrest without warrant and imprisonment by police without instituting charges.

The People's Progressive Party shortly after the elections announced the launching of a Civil Resistance and Non-Cooperation Campaign declaring:—

"Throughout history, men have stood up against tyranny. In their struggle for freedom, some were put to the stake; others were banished and still others went through unspeakable suffering.

"Yet they continued their opposition. Non-cooperation with evil became a sacred duty.

"In Guyana, we fought against colonial tyranny. We struggled so that we could be free.

"But instead of freedom, an even greater tyranny has been imposed upon us. A local elite which usurped power by fraud has now perpetrated itself by fraud on an even more preposterous scale, backed up by naked military and police force.

"Our right to vote has been mocked at and cynically violated by a power-drunk, conscienceless clique; the public treasury raided and used to destroy the integrity and self respect of many; a large segment of our youth has been infected by the examples of crime and corruption in high places.

"Every day Guyanese are humiliated, intimidated, harassed, their homes invaded and individuals ar-

rested and detained without charge. The rule of law is broken by those who should enforce it and justice itself is held in pawn.

"We cannot and will not let this continue without a struggle.

"We know that the people voted for an end to corruption, an end to fear and fraud.

"We know that they voted for change, for an end to PNC misrule and for a return to self-respect and fair dealing among men.

"The PNC know this too, they know their weakness in popular support and they know our strength.

"We are the producers and the consumers of this land; with us lies the power to resist effectively.

"The PPP therefore calls upon the people to resist by all the means at their disposal and for the creation of a popular front to oppose the PNC at all levels and by all available means; including the boycott of all who aided and abetted them in this monstrous fraud.

"We must oppose them in the fields; in the factories and in the offices; we must mobilise and activate all forms of economic and social pressure; we must refuse co-operation; we must reject with scorn those who bring gifts and try to cajole and bribe; we must tighten our control of the resources we command and we must never let up or flag or falter in our efforts to end their infamous rule."

The campaign which was launched with 27 massive rallies in different parts of Guyana, includes boycotts of business establishments, religious leaders, professionals and others who helped the People's National Congress in perpetrating the fraudulent elections; it includes the boycott of the government-run newspaper, the national lottery, self-help projects, official government functions and visits and the periodic holding up of the reaping and distribution of locally grown foodstuffs, strikes and other forms of economic pressure.

A rising tide of anger is sweeping Guyana. The people have come to realize the limitations of the electoral

road to people's political power. They know now from bitter experience that the PNC is prepared to use the army and police and the judiciary not only to steal a government, but also to intimidate, harass and even murder to stay in power.

It is clear that a new stage has been reached in the struggle in Guyana for national liberation and socialism. The experiences of the 1973 election opened the door to this new stage.

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Guyana Defence Force soldiers with pointed guns, stand by while the car of Mrs. Janet Jagan, PPP International Secretary, was searched for over two hours near the Leonora Police Station. Thousands of persons from Ocean View, where she was scheduled to speak that day, had started to march on the police station shortly before the search ended. Security raids, searches, ripping open of cushions and mattresses, digging up of yards, arrests and questioning are part of the techniques used to harass and terrorize PPP members and supporters.