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2 November 1964

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Case # NLJ 94-440  
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. William Cobb  
SUBJECT : British Guiana

1. The 1 November 1964 issue of the Guiana Graphic carries the headline "Why Jagan Failed to Block PR", followed by another Smithers article. Pertinent sections are:

a. Jagan was in a mood of deep depression when he boarded a plane at London Airport yesterday for British Guiana via New York.

b. His high hopes of getting the forthcoming PR elections postponed or some of its more stringent rules modified had been killed, kindly, but firmly by Colonial Secretary Greenwood.

c. Even a 40-minute chat at Number 10 Downing Street with Harold Wilson himself produced nothing more tangible than a promise for future fair dealing.

d. The irony is that the Labour Party was as disappointed as Dr. Jagan that it was unable to mitigate some of the harsh effects of the Sandys' plan. For the Party, though not enamoured of the PPP's extreme left wing, nevertheless esteems Dr. Jagan highly.

e. It was felt by several people in a position to influence policy that the least a Labour Government could do was to write in a new clause making it necessary for a party to secure a minimum of ten percent of the votes in order to qualify for seats in the legislature. This is also something which opposition leader Burnham, at the

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time of the constitutional conference last year, had said he was prepared to accept. This new rule would virtually have eliminated what the Labour Government believes to be the most unfortunate aspect of the Sandys' plan--the emergence of religious parties which create new schisms in an already bitterly divided country. (The clear impression is that the Labour Government opposes the Justice and Guiana United Muslim Parties.)

f. The Greenwood that Jagan saw on Thursday on his return from Africa was a very different Greenwood from the man he saw on his way out to Zambia. On Thursday the Greenwood was hard faced and adamant. Documents carried by Jagan alleging that the police tolerated terrorists' plots might be impressive, anguished pleas that PR was designed only to unseat Jagan might ring the heart, nevertheless the election will go on with arrangements unchanged.

g. The best that could be promised was that Jagan would not in the long term be denied participation in government merely because he might simply fail to get 50 percent of the poll. (The wording is extremely fuzzy and vague, but still leads support to the PPP/PNC coalition idea.)

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