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A Public Lecture Hosted by the University of Guyana's 60th Anniversary Committee

Topic: The Making of the National University: Historical and Prospective Notes

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The Origins and Challenges of the University of Guyana

Introduction: Salutation

The establishment of the University of Guyana is one of the most important achievements of the Guyanese people. It was truly an historic event, one that was much admired by progressive and democratic peoples and the world over. More particularly by people that, at the time, were still living under colonial domination or had only recently freed themselves from colonialist exploitation.

At that time Guyana, then British Guiana was at the forefront of anti-colonial resistance. It had occupied a significant portion of the international media.

The University of Guyana was the first and possibly the only such institution to have been established by a people still in the clutches of colonialism. I don't know of any other.

Some Background

The story of UG cannot be separated from the main struggles that were

occurring at the time. The central issue then was the right of every nation to self-determination. Independence and Freedom were the battle songs of the oppressed.

The idea and the desire of establishing a university did not appear out of the blue, rather, it evolved over the period of the independence struggle. I would date this period to the 1940s.

During the Second World War, political consciousness was aroused throughout the world, more particularly in the colonial world. By the end of the war the anti-colonial struggles became widespread. This was due to several factors. Among these was the fact that the colonial peoples were recruited to fight against fascism and were exposed to a different life in Europe. Even before the war ended the urge to be free began to make itself known.

This was manifested in all aspects of life including in education. Dr. Harold Drayton in an article entitled, “Genesis and Early Year 1963-72 recalled that in 1944 the ‘Queen’s College Old Boys’ Association in British Guiana had submitted a memorandum to the Irvine Committee.” (This was a committee sent to the West Indies in 1944 to investigate and report on the education situation in the region.)

It (the committee) recommended a small simple-campus residential university to be in Jamaica – thus the beginning of UWI.

In part the proposal was to, “...Start local students with higher studies and partly feed the new University College of the West Indies...”

This period coincided and was reflected in the growing awareness of the Guyanese people. By then, Dr. Jagan who had returned from studies in the USA, had begun to write regularly in the press on many subjects and also to hold public lectures. This gave rise to the formation of the Political Affairs Committee which published its first bulletin on November 6, 1946. That eventually led to the formation of the People’s Progressive Party (PPP) on January 1, 1950.

It set as its immediate task to fight for Independence. Those early struggles led to greater democratisation, the biggest victory being the winning of Universal Adult Suffrage in the 1953 General Elections.



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Education Programme

The manifesto of the PPP for the 1953 elections had more to do with primary and secondary education. In tertiary education, the following was promised, "...Technical schools will be established in order to train our workers to run our industries. We would train our technicians and stop importing them..." On the issue of university education, it stated, "...By means of scholarships and bursaries we will open to all who are suited, by ability and aptitude, in the field of higher education of the West Indian University and other institutions of higher learning..."

It went on to say, "... We will remodel our educational system to suit our environment and *prevent our children from developing into displaced snobs*. Civics would be taught in all schools." This was very important to the PPP from the very beginning. It was speaking of a new type of intellectual.

Needless to point out that while the PPP won the 1953 elections handsomely it only lasted for 133 days before the warships arrived from the United Kingdom (UK) and removed the first democratically elected government of our country. This occurred on the 9th of October, 1953.

The party, therefore, had no opportunity to make good on its promise. It instead had to fight for survival with a large part of its leadership being put behind bars.

Election of 1957

The next opportunity to make an impact on education arose in 1957. The manifesto for those elections reflected more or less what was promised in 1953.

However, this period witnessed a great leap forward in education and culture. The Minister of Education then was the young and vibrant Brindley H. Benn. Under his leadership education and culture as a whole experienced great improvement and expansion.

The challenges were great. One of the first major challenges was finding spaces in schools for a growing population. The election in 1957 was on the 12th of August. Ministers were sworn in on the 24th of August. On September 7, 1957, the headline of the leading article in the *Thunder* was, "Hundreds turned away from City's Primary Schools." The article went on to say that apart from the hundreds that were turned away, many who were lucky to have been admitted had to stand up in class. This was the situation in Georgetown. It was



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much worse in the countryside.

Those conditions reflected the grave neglect of education by the colonial authorities and their local puppets who were part of the interim Government set up by the British authorities from 1953-1957 post suspension of the constitution.

The Government was forced to introduce a shift system while it began a massive school-building programme. It was not an easy task since the PPP had to overcome a lot of obstacles. The nature of the Government of the time was a kind of collusion between the PPP and the Colonial administration. Cheddi Jagan had likened it to a, “forced marriage.”

Innovative methods were used including self-help, cooperatives and so on to build new schools among other important social and physical infrastructure.

This was successfully done and by 1961 we had a real qualitative leap in education. Teacher training increased greatly and overcrowding was drastically reduced.

For the first time, Guyanese history was being taught in schools and Adult Education, aimed at the abolition of illiteracy, grew by leaps and bounds. The public was educated using radios for instance. Cultural groups were established throughout the country and in 1958 the History and Cultural Committee was established to do mass education of our history and the promotion of our culture. The theme of the History and Culture, proposed by B.H Benn, the week of 1958 was, “One People, One Nation, One Destiny.”

By 1960, the population with secondary education had increased many folds. Our human capital was being enhanced at a rapid pace. Another policy that logically led to the creation of UG was “Guianization.”

Immediately after the 1957 elections, the PPP insisted on “Guianization.” At this time almost every top post in government was headed by someone sent from the UK. The PPP with its eyes on independence began to advocate replacing the colonials with Guyanese nationals.

In the *Thunder* of February 15th, 1958, Dr. Charles Jacob Jr. wrote an article headlined, “Guianization of Public Service.” Here is what he had to say in part, “What critics of the majority party do not seem to understand is that in territories such as ours, certain lucrative and important posts are specially reserved for importees appointed by the colonial office without reference to those running or participating in the colonial governments. This is the traditional pattern of colonial administration, and it has *aided by an educational system not geared to*



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the needs of the colonies, paid handsome dividends by keeping colonial peoples in a state of ignorance and docility so that they are unable to question their lot...” He went on to add, “... The majority party is deeply conscious of all the injustices of colonial rule and is pledged to ... institute reform now and in the future...”

While no word had yet been spoken about the establishment of a university the logic was clearly leading in that direction.

Moreover, imperialism’s intentions and actions were becoming clear, remove the PPP at all costs. This was the position of the U.S. in particular. By this time, the British were rethinking their stance and were having second thoughts about the PPP.

I believe that their (the British) working with the PPP from August of 1957 made them more appreciative of what the PPP was doing. That is why at this point they were resisting U.S. pressure to suspend the constitution once more.

This position was being pushed on the British weeks before the 1961 elections. This has been made public by the documents that were released by the British Foreign Office and the U.S. State Department.

Cheddi Jagan was aware of this as well. He raised American intervention in the 1961 elections during his meeting in the U.S. in October 1961 with President John Kennedy.

In 1961, the PPP’s Manifesto did not mention the party’s intention to establish the University. This is what it said about higher education, “ Existing scholarships and exhibitions will be continued. Loans would be made available, in keeping with financial needs, to all students who are eligible for and who desire admission to universities and other centres of higher education overseas. Plans would be worked out in collaboration with the University College of the West Indies (UCWI) for an Extra-Mural Institute which will provide courses leading to the award of an Arts Degree for a start.” The manifesto also spoke about teacher training to be done by UCWI.

By the end of September 1961, a mere month after the General Elections, the Cabinet established a working committee chaired by C.V. Nunes to examine the possibility of establishing a university.



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What Had Changed?

As I said before, the idea had to have been aroused in the minds of Dr. Jagan and his close associates sometime before the University's genesis. The thought was probably shelved on the grounds of costs. However, the political developments up to that point demonstrated to him that he had a bureaucracy that was ideologically tied to the colonial power. It was not supportive of the changes that he believed were necessary for an Independent Guyana. By then they must have realised the enormity of the problem of decolonialising the minds of government functionaries.

The TUC which was expected to support the changes championed by the PPP was captured by the British and had adopted a pro-colonial and pro-imperialist stance following its dissolution in October 1953 and its recreation months after.

In addition, racism began to raise its head and was becoming a real threat to the unity of the country. Dr. Jagan and the PPP believed that education would be important in fighting against racism. A special course was planned for the summer of 1964 but did not materialise due to internal disagreement between the Vice-Chancellor and his Deputy.

Added to this was the increasing cost that the UCWI was charging. It appears that the mass training that the PPP wanted to do would have become too expensive for the country if it depended only on UCWI and foreign scholarships. At the same time, the changes made in education were producing large amounts of qualified people. Primary schools were converted to all-age schools which included secondary education. We became one of the colonies in the region with the highest passes at GCE "O" and "A" levels.

By this time too Dr. Jagan and his closest colleagues became convinced that the UCWI would not produce the human capital needed to build the kind of society they believed the country should be. Recall the earlier observation by Brindley Benn and C.R. Jacobs with regard to snobbery. The few persons that were university educated appeared to suffer from a superiority complex. That strata of society were largely not sympathetic to the workers and farmers of the country and were on the side of the colonial powers.

They wanted an intelligencia with strong sympathies for the working class of the country. They wanted an intellectual class that was patriotic and pro-working



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people.

They were convinced that the UCWI and British Education would perpetuate dependence and a colonial mentality.

Moreover, very soon after the August 1961 elections the PPP began to evaluate its developmental plans. It had to begin to prepare a new budget. The dearth of skills and university-educated persons must have hit them like a physical blow.

Most of the people who had been trained abroad, including at UCWI, never returned to the country. In some ways it showed that our educational system was not producing patriots, but black and brown English people. This was a deliberate policy of the British.

In preparing the Budget, Dr. Jagan approached the United Nations decolonisation committee for assistance. Note here that he did not ask the British due to their negativism in the earlier period and his belief that their interests did not coincide with that of our country. He obviously felt that the UN would provide him with people who were not colonially inclined and were progressive in outlook.

It was that body that recommended Dr. Nicolos Kaldor to Dr. Jagan in 1961. He was a distinguished economist and a specialist in taxation issues. That was a big issue here since many of the rich were (still are) specialised in evading taxes.

The Nunes Committee which was set up in September 1961 finished its work in less than three months and concluded that a university would be feasible. The Cabinet adopted Nunes report on December 6th, 1961. It now had to act on it.

Dr. Jagan writing in the *Mirror* in 1983 on the 20th anniversary of UG wrote the following, which in a small way reflected his thinking at that time. He said, "... As Premier I sought advice from UNESCO. After studying the problem, the specialist had indicated that it would take almost three years to establish the University. That period, we were told was required to get the necessary buildings and to secure academic staff. We were not happy with the advice and said so bluntly to the advisors. We wanted to make a quick start..."

The Cabinet wanted to have classes beginning in September/October 1962. In the article Dr. Jagan continued, "... We succeeded in setting up the University within a year on an evening school basis ... This was based on my experience as a student in the USA. While a full-time day student at North Western University Dental School, I did simultaneously a social science degree course at the YMCA College (Now Roosevelt College) in Chicago by attending

evening classes...”

Actually, it took the Government two years because of the riots of 1962.

Dr. Jagan had to take the leading role at the beginning because he had many contacts internationally and perhaps was the only one in his Cabinet to have had experience at day and night universities. An important factor too was that Dr. Jagan was the only leader in the Caribbean that was not contaminated by colonial education. Thus, he appreciated the importance of freeing the mind from colonial thinking.

While it must have taken the effort of very many people working together to realise this very important project including every member of the Cabinet among others, three names stand out for the roles they played which were all extremely large. These were: Cheddi Jagan, C.V. Nunes and Prof. Harold Drayton.

In his book, *The West On Trial*, Dr. Jagan paid tribute to C.V. Nunes for his outstanding tenure as Minister of Education between 1961 to 1964.

To move quickly and to keep focus, the Cabinet established a special unit inside the Ministry of Education. Dr. Jagan’s contact with many Guyanese students at UCWI (Clive Thomas, among others) and further afield was important in finding the right persons for the job. He identified Prof. Harold Drayton to head this unit. At that time Prof. Drayton was teaching in Ghana. Cheddi Jagan invited him to come home by letter dated January 4th, 1962. Drayton described this in great detail in his article, “Genesis and Early Years, 1963-72,” published by the UG Guild of Graduates - Toronto in 2003.

While Dr. Jagan and his Cabinet decided to begin University classes at Queen’s College after three in the afternoon, they began looking for a place where they would build more permanent structures. One of the areas that was considered to be the first campus was the National Park.

The park had been a golf course where the rich played, mainly senior staff from Bookers and Sandbach Parker. It was taken over by the PPP Government in 1960 by Janet Jagan as a place where the people of Georgetown would go for relaxation. The golf course was then moved to Lusignan, its present home.

That suggestion of National Park was rejected because it was felt that the University would grow, and the park had insufficient land to cater for the expansion envisaged by the founders of UG.

The matter was settled when Bookers Sugar Estate donated one hundred and thirty- five acres of land to be the permanent home of UG at Turkeyen.



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In the meantime, Dr. Jagan was contacting persons he knew from major universities abroad to help with the starting up of the University. He wrote frequently to Prof. Paul Baran of Stanford University and was a frequent contributor to *Monthly Preview* a progressive magazine in the U.S. Dr. David Gran of the London School of Economics; Bernal Paxson; Prof. Horace Davis; Dr. Glass; Prof. Alan Mac Ewan; Prof. Doxy Wilkerson (he had hoped that Doxy would have been principal); Paul Sweeny; Dr. Yussuf Dadoo of South Africa – who became the first Indian South African Executive of ANC and chairman of the Communist Party of South Africa; Neville Dawes of Ghana; and Prof. Joan Robinson, considered the foremost female economist.

He also had extensive help from Billy Strachan of the Caribbean Congress of Labor and another good friend Felix Cummings who he had appointed as B.G. representative in New York and to keep in touch with the UN decolonisation office among other duties.

Of course, this is by far not the full extent of the many who worked for the realisation of UG, but they were the most prominent.

Opposition To UG

The establishment of UG had other problems as well. It was opposed by forces inside and some outside the country.

Recall that UG's opening was delayed by a year because of the riots which took place in February 1962. The pretext for those riots was the budget. The real reason was the opposition to Independence under an administration that insisted on full sovereignty. The U.S. did not want an Independent Guyana but a neo-colonial state. That the PPP leaders of the time could never agree with or make a compromise on our sovereignty.

It has now been confirmed that the strikes and riots were financed by the CIA while the colonial authorities allowed it to escalate in order to force the resignation of the PPP Administration. Race was used to instigate violence in the country. Race was the pretext – the real reason was the nature of an Independent Guyana Government by a pro-working-class party.

Those same forces turned their attacks on the project to establish the University of Guyana. The media took the lead in denigrating the idea and some even took the anti-communist hysteria to oppose the establishment of the institution. They



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even spoke about the role of UG to “brainwash” Guyanese.

Harold Drayton captured this in his article referred to earlier, “... my work on planning the University was not without its distractions. Local and regional newspapers and even quite reputable U.S. journals carried regular items critical of “Jagan’s Night School,” (a term coined by Burnham in his derogatory attacks against the establishment of UG, in my observation) and the scurrilous allegations that the projected national University would simply be a training school for communist functionaries.”

Lancelot Hogben was also attacked by the press and local opposition politicians. Hogben referred to this in a letter he wrote to Premier Jagan in April 1963. He spoke about, “... a campaign in the Guiana Graphic and Daily Chronicle, from which I have been under a barrage before arriving in British Guiana...” He went on to inform Dr. Jagan that, “... I had half a dozen long-distance calls asking whether I knew that the Government had changed its intentions of proceeding to create a university... I have little doubt that the intentions of this bombardment was to induce me to say something compromising to the Government...”

The bureaucracy, or more correctly, a part of the Civil Service was pro-colonial in mentality and even tried to sabotage the work of the Ministry of Education towards establishing UG. Harold Drayton spoke about this in the article cited earlier, “... much more difficult to cope with were quite a few documents critical of the idea of a University of Guyana, written by some senior Education Officers, but without attribution... especially noteworthy were views on the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the University of Guyana, which questioned the “capacity” of British Guiana to “absorb” 150 general degree graduates every year; and predicted that it would be impossible to ensure the maintenance of high standards for the degree of the proposed college/university...”

Drayton pointed out, “To my astonishment, that paper was distributed concurrently with the Ministry’s White Paper on Higher Education, to members of the Senate and Legislative Assembly...” No doubt this was wickedness designed to embarrass the Government. Indeed Dr. Drayton continued, “This caused no end of confusion, and also elicited the unforgettable quip by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Burnham: If the same person produced both documents, I suggest that the services of our psychiatrist at Canje be retained immediately...”

Opposition came from the Caribbean as well. Two delegations from the region



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came to meet the Government, one was led by Dr. Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, himself a distinguished scholar. He was also the Chancellor of the UCWI. The other delegation which visited the Government was from Barbados led by its distinguished Prime Minister, Mr. Errol Barrow and his Minister of Education, Mr. Cameron Trudor. Both tried to dissuade the B.G. Government to not proceed with the project.

After long discussions, the Government stood its ground.

The resistance by the Cabinet and the Committee that was headed by Dr. Drayton moved a giant step forward when on March 18th, 1963, the University of Guyana Ordinance No. 6 of 1963 was accented to by Governor Sir Ralph Gray on April 18th, 1963.

It named the first Vice-Chancellor, Lancelot Hogben, a highly accomplished academician, and the Chancellor a very distinguished Guyanese Jurist and scholar, Edgar Mortimer Duke.

On the staffing of UG, the Drayton Committee followed up on the contacts that were established by Dr. Jagan and recruited outstanding scholars from the United States, many of whom were victims of the McCarthy witch-hunt. Drayton highlighted a few of them as Horace B. Davis (Economics), Morrison Sharp (History), Alan McEwan (Botany), and Joyce Sparer (English).

Local academic staff included Lyttleton Ramsahoye (Geophysics), Clarence Drayton (Physics), Neville Trotz (Chemistry), Rudy Inshanally, and Audley Morgan (Spanish).

The opening ceremony of the University of Guyana took place on October 1st, 1963 at Queen's College. It was an impressive affair. The Vice-Chancellor, Lancelot Hogben made a very highly academic speech befitting the occasion.

Unfortunately, Premier Cheddi Jagan was not in attendance. At that time, he was in London in relation to government business and remained there for the constitutional talks which became very controversial. The Deputy Premier, Mr. Brindley Horatio Benn delivered his speech on behalf of the Government in which he captured the hopes and aspirations of his colleagues.

The University of Guyana began as an institution with the objective of developing the technical skills needed for the development of our own country. However, it had a far more important task, which was in the whole process of decolonisation to liberate the minds of our people that were polluted by

centuries of colonial domination.

In the conclusion of the speech Mr. Benn put it in the following way, "...I have stressed the function of the University of Guyana to provide the skills and higher education necessary for the economic development of this country. I have alluded to its role in developing and defining values in our society. But there are two no less important consequences which we hope will flow from the activities of the University. One of these is that every child born in the remotest settlement in the interior, or in the farthest village or sugar estate should have a real opportunity to reach the highest position in the land. The highest positions in our society must no longer be the preserves of the rich and the well-born. By bringing University education within the reach of everyone, we have laid the foundation for the *establishment of democracy in this country*. The other result which we hope will flow from the establishment of the University of Guyana is *the evolution of a Guyanese consciousness*. With its stress on our own area and our own needs and interests, with its accent on Caribbean and local studies, with the study of our Amerindian languages instead of Greek and of Spanish instead of French, I have no doubt that we shall evolve a national consciousness and a national identity. We regard this as of supreme importance, for only with the development of this national consciousness will Guyana become the great nation we would all like it to be..."

In a speech delivered on Thursday, 4th of April 1964 to the graduating students of the Government Technical Institute Dr. Jagan, while insisting on academic excellence, said that our education must develop an all-round human being, he told the students, "We cannot afford... to perpetuate snobbery in education...where educational provisions are still made on a class basis." He went on to add, "At the same time we must not produce human machines. It is essential that liberal studies be included in all our training programmes."

Cedric Vernon Nunes put it in the following way, "This University ... can play an important part in the movement to set the country free from the chains of colonial ways of thinking and behaving ... and to serve as a defense against the persistent battering from external colonialist and reactionary ideas."

The first board that managed UG was an outstanding one with persons of really high caliber and about the best that we had in those times all of whom were Guyanese. They were Mr. Edgar Mortimer Duke, C.B.E., LL.B., Dr. Charles Jacob, Jnr., F.B.O.A., M.R.S.H., OD Honorary Treasurer of the University, Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, B.A., LL.M., Ph.D., Ranji Chandisingh,



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A.B., Mr. F.W.E. Case, M.A., Dr. C.C. Nicholson, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Dr. Harry Paul, B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D., D.I.C., F.R.I.C., Mr. M. Shahabudeen, LL.M., B.Sc., (Econ.), Mr. John Carter, B.A., LL.B., Q.C., Mr. J.O.F. Haynes, B.A., LL.B., Q.C., and Mr. H.R. Persaud, B.A.

The first year was outstanding despite the turmoil that the country was still going through. It showed great promise of things to come. This was captured by Harold Drayton in a brief radio address on Radio Demerara on September 11th, 1964. He spoke about what one of the external examiners, Professor Barney Childs, Prof. in English at the University of Arizona, had to say of UG, “The entire concept of the University is in the highest tradition and impressed me more perhaps than any other single experience here. The students need the University to come to it with dedication and eagerness and a desire for learning, which is intensely impressive and often very moving. A great deal of dedicated hard work has been put in this past year by instructional and administrative staff... It has been an experience which has renewed my faith in the ideals of education, which has cleared away the blasé inertia which settles inescapably on one who has been teaching for years. What is happening here is the well spring of education, uncorrupted by false ideals and diversions.”

This was an outstanding recognition to those who worked so hard to make a start and a great complement to the first students who really set the bar very high. Another recognition of the high quality of UG's work came from another external examiner in 1967. Professor John Maynard Smith, Dean of the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Sussex and an external examiner of UG wrote after a visit to UG in 1967, “...These discussions (with students and with H.D.) left me in no doubt that the Social Biology Course is performing an extremely valuable educational function, in leading students to think critically about their society, about their racial prejudices, and about their religious and philosophical views...”

Unfortunately, that trend did not continue as was hoped. With the victory of the colonial/imperialist forces in 1964 the progressive direction of the University was interrupted.

Indeed, at the end of 1964/1965, the very existence of UG was in doubt. After all the forces that took power were the very forces opposed to its establishment. The fear that the University would have been closed was real.

That did not occur because by then many had come to the realisation that the University was important. Opposition to the closure of UG did not only come



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from the PPP but even from within the PNC. Here is how Dr. Drayton put it, “...It was most interesting to learn that it was those UG students affiliated with the PNC, who denounced their Party’s preliminary plans to “wind up” the University when the Party came into power in December 1964. They have continued to be throughout all the years the University of Guyana’s stoutest defenders...”

Even though the University was saved from closure after the Government changed, the Administration moved to change the character of the institution.

The progressive professors recruited were sent packing and UG turned on the path of a typical university of the more traditional/bourgeois-inspired type.

Later the hope that the institution would be one where freedom of thought would prevail began to slip.

Mr. Burnham disregarded his own advice he gave at the inaugural meeting of UG on October 1st, 1963 when he said, “...The University must be independent and free from any governmental control... Staff and undergraduates must be chosen from a wide circle. Let us not have the partnership of the would-be thought controller with some false messianic complex... When freedom of thought dies, all other freedoms die with it...”

The PNC made it an objective to seize control of the Board of Governors – began to purge the University of progressive left-wing professors. Many were pushed out or denied employment. We know of the case of Dr. Rodney and Dr. Inshanally. One was removed and the other was not allowed to take up an appointment.

As the PNC regime became more unpopular it began to hit out at any opposition to its rule. It mattered not whether they were left or right-winged. The case of Paul Tennessee demonstrated this forcefully. Tennessee was/is a right-wing pro-bourgeois in outlook but he too was crudely pushed out of UG in 1982. Stabroek News in an editorial of June 6th, 1994 recalled that “... *On March 3rd, 1982, the University of Guyana council voted unanimously to terminate the services of Paul Tennessee, a freshly-appointed Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies.*

These were the circumstances according to the Minutes of that meeting. Under the agenda item “Any other business,” a Council Member told the Board that he wished to raise a matter of grave importance. He continued that since “Cde Tennessee’s assumption of duty in January 1982, information had come to hand which led to the conclusion that he was not a fit and proper person to continue in



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the employment of the University.”

The Council Member then proceeded to propose that Tennessee’s appointment be terminated under clause three of his contract...

The Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences asked for reasons for such a proposal and said the termination of an appointment should not be taken lightly. The Dean said there appeared to be no academic reason for abrogating the appointment.

The response, in part, of some members was that the less said, the better. The one person who voted against the motion, K Juman-Yassin expressed disapproval and pointed out that a decision of this sort could affect Tennessee’s future prospects.

According to the Minutes, “he advanced the argument that Council as the body being asked to make the decision was entitled to hear the reasons for the proposal so that it could be satisfied with the objectivity of the decision.” No reasons were given, and the Minutes said there seemed to be a general demand for the motion to be put to a vote. Twenty-six members supported the motion, one voted against it, there was one abstention, and one member did not vote...”

In conclusion, let me say that despite its sometimes turbulent history the University of Guyana has achieved a lot. Emerging from a time when the colonial chains were still not broken the very fact that we celebrate its 60th Anniversary is itself an important achievement.

The main objective of UG was not just to produce highly skilled Guyanese in all important fields of human endeavours, but at the same time a human being that could be unselfish, compassionate, and share the hopes and aspirations of our working people.

To accomplish these, we must guard academic freedom and encourage debates and discussions on issues that affect our people and country.

I am staunch in my convictions that the best years of this University are still ahead of us and I am sure that all the lofty goals would be achieved.

Thank you for your attention.

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UG IN BRIEF

The University of Guyana, now in its 60th year, was founded in October 1963. “UG” as it is fondly referred to offers 160 programmes plus in over 60 disciplines in online, face-to-face or blended formats. UG delivers in a Guyana-based system across eight campuses. It is the largest, oldest, most advanced and only state University in Guyana with a student population of over 10,000.

“UG” has provided education, training and research for over 50,000 alumni over its 60-year history. UG’s national and global impact and footprint are significant. Its graduates have risen to populate the commanding heights of national, regional and international organisations of repute in over 150 different disciplines. The mission of the University is to discover, generate, disseminate and apply knowledge of the highest standard for the service of the community, the nation, and all mankind within an atmosphere of academic freedom, innovation and universal respect.

UG’s forward-thinking Blueprint 2040 is currently setting the course for the University’s future design and institutional response to the changing needs of Guyana, the region and the world. UG is currently celebrating its 60th anniversary and is stepping up its focus on becoming one of the leading and most sought-after educational institutions in the world for both staff and students.

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