



# Guianese Questions Barr's Statements

In your issues of November 16 and 20, a two-part article on British Guiana written by John J. Barr, appeared. I was first amused and then astounded at the contents of that contribution. As a Guianese who has travelled throughout Guiana, and who is informed as to the socio-political situation that obtains there, I wish through your paper to correct the misconceptions likely to be created as a result of that article.

Mr. Barr's article, lacking in both savour and substance, is without doubt, a classical masterpiece of misinformation which brings vividly to my mind the tall tales of some 19th century travellers. I noticed that he was in British Guiana for a while last summer working for a newspaper whose influence among the Guianese public has waned considerably since the leader of a political party has acquired a controlling interest in it.

Anyone acquainted with the facts would discern in that article the familiar echoes of the neo-fascist sentiments of a group connected to the paper for which he worked. What has been written is mainly what has been passed on to him by that group, and not what was objectively observed.

### FALSE PICTURE

The overall picture painted of the Guianese people is not even an honest approach to the truth. Whoever claims that Guiana has a high rate of illiteracy is obviously not familiar with the facts. Since 1876, B.G. has had compulsory primary education.

By 1951, the population was more than 80 per cent literate; and by 1960, illiteracy was reduced to less than 10 per cent. What is left of illiteracy today is found primarily among the Amerindians and the older East Indians.

In the first installment, Guianese have been depicted as a wild and woolly lot. They have been graphically portrayed fleeing before an in-rushing sea which carried all before it, and leaving behind untold damage and distress which take "months, often years" to remedy. By creating such a image, Mr. Barr has ridiculed the people of Guiana, and has done them a great disservice. What has been described as a complex of break-waters, seawalls, sluice-gates, and drainage ditches, is really a system of drainage and irrigation too complex for confused minds to comprehend or jaundiced eyes to perceive.

It is incorrect to say that what little wealth exists in Guiana has been taken in by foreign capital. I do not fully understand what the writer meant by this statement. If he meant wealth in the framework of

economics, that is, any material thing capable of being bought, sold, or stocked for future disposition, then he must be informed that besides bauxite (one-fifth of world supply produced in B.G.), the country has other mineral resources such as gold, diamond, columbite, and manganese.

In 1953, a Mission from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development which made a study of the country's economy, expressed optimism, and recommended the instituting of technical research, and geologic and other surveys, as a prerequisite to further development of its resources, and to uncover the extent and nature of mineral and other resources.

These recommendations were accepted in principle, and have been implemented as far as the country's financial capabilities permitted. The result was that oil has been found in what appears to be commercial quantities; and quite recently, indications of massive deposits of copper have been announced.

### FOREIGN CAPITAL

One cannot, however, deny that foreign capital has played an important role in exploiting and developing the country's resources. And for this, every responsible Guianese is undoubtedly thankful. We should not forget though that these investors did not invest there primarily through benevolence. I do not see anything so terribly wrong with foreign capital provided it serves the interest of the local people while providing a reasonable income for its owners. In this respect Guiana is not unique. Does Mr. Barr know what percentage of the industries of this great Canadian nation is owned by foreign concerns?

To assert that the distribution of jobs follows a racial pattern, with the whites forming the clerical and professional classes, the Africans the urban working class, and the East Indians the rural farming class, is to make a travesty of truth. So too it is to declare that frequent flare-ups occur between the different race groups. Apart from the last February disturbances, what other "flare-ups" are known to have taken place?

I should point out here, that contrary to popular belief abroad, the riot of February was NOT, and I repeat, was NOT, based on racial issues. The report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances, appointed by the British Government, though disappointing in many respects, has unequivocally made this point.

### COMMUNISM MOVING IN

As regards the Communist threat to the country, no-one should honestly deny its existence. It seems more likely though a Communist success in Guiana would mean a northward expansion into the

(British) West Indies with which the country has considerable contact, and a common language and cultural heritage; rather than expansion into South American countries with which there is little trade, and still less cultural exchange. Apart from linguistic and cultural barriers, natural barriers such as almost impenetrable jungles, swamps, mountains, and large rivers, which separate B.G. from her immediate neighbours, would make her ineffectual as a base for continental expansion.

Despite Dr. Jagan's professed ideology, he must be given the praise he deserves for his role in making the people of Guiana more politically aware. However, today, Guiana no longer needs him; for the incompetence of his government, and the doubts and lack of confidence created at home and abroad, will do that emerging nation more harm than good.

Paradoxically enough, this same political awareness which he helped cultivate, is one of the chief instruments which will thwart any attempt to impose a foreign ideology upon Guiana. I have the greatest confidence in the wisdom of the Guianese people, a majority of whom has never supported Dr. Jagan and his party.

Perhaps I should point out that though Dr. Jagan's party won 20 of the 35 seats in the House of Assembly, it won only 42.7 per cent of the total votes cast; while the main opposition party headed by Mr. Forbes Burnham, Q.C., won 41 per cent of the votes and only 11 seats.

In conclusion, I wish to remind Mr. Barr that Communism cannot be defeated by ridicule, by inaction, or by superficial, short-term, makeshift, schemes designed primarily to safeguard the interest of a privileged few. Only a genuine concern for human well-being, and long-term action of a permanent nature founded on true christian morality, can provide the answer.

Therefore, Mr. Barr, I hereby extend to you the hand of friendship with an invitation to join me in doing something concrete which will bring an end to uncertainty, and the beginning of greater security to the "backward" people of that land of "itches, ditches, and bitches".

Desmond Anthony  
Dept. of Zoology



### NO DISCREDIT

Through the Editor To  
Mr. O. al Karmy

With regard to your letter in the last Gateway protesting the delegation of Mr. John Barr to the Laval Conference, let me say that as Mr. Barr's co-delegate I am perhaps in a better position to judge whether your "name was blackened". Furthermore, a delegate at a conference like that of Laval is not considered a representative in the parliamentary sense.

With regard to Mr. Barr's conduct at the conference, it is probably true that most of us would not agree with what he said, myself included. But, I must state categorically that nothing Mr. Barr did could bring discredit to the university in any way. In short, Mr. Karmy, I suggest you look at the events concerned before you judge.

Robin Hunter

### LOVE SONG

To The Editor:

May I submit a clarification on some remarks made by His Excellency the High Commissioner for India which appeared in the 'Gateway' of 20th November, 1962. His Excellency said that Indian troops have been stationed in Kashmir "because Pakistan is occupying Kashmir".

The Kashmir question has been thoroughly debated times out of number in the United Nations and elsewhere and the facts are by now practically well-known. The United Nations Resolution of 5th January, 1949, reads "The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm that the question of the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India and Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite."

Since then about a dozen resolutions have been adopted by the United Nations for a settlement of the dispute on the basis of a free and impartial plebiscite. Pakistan has accepted each and every one of them and India has rejected each and every one of them. It leads to only one conclusion: India's presence in Kashmir against the will of the people there can only be sustained by brute force. There is at the moment one Indian soldier for every four adult Kashmiris.

An Indian newspaper itself succinctly describes the regime in Indian-occupied Kashmir as one "which depends for its very exist-

ence on the bayonets of Indian soldiers". In any case, Pakistan has reiterated times out of number that it is for the people of Kashmir to pass the verdict.

His Excellency has also said that the United Nations is a force that one can ignore. It is not easy to reconcile this statement with India's own repeated defiance of the United Nations Resolution on Kashmir and the Indian delegate's statement in the United Nations "Charter or no Charter, Security Council or no Security Council," India had taken over Goa and that was that.

S. Irtiza Husain  
First Secretary  
Office of the  
High Commissioner  
for Pakistan

### THREE WORLD WARS???

To The Editor:

Pity, that our library was allowed to be made an instrument of the German political propaganda. For what purpose was the provocative map of "Divided Germany" displayed?

It is doubtful that a united Germany is in the interest of humanity and the world. This united Germany is a new phenomenon of the 19th century. Fruits of the unity were not the improved well-being of its people but the adoption of the old Prussian tactics and hatred and greed towards the neighboring nations. Since the unification, Germany was the cause of three world wars which submerged Europe in misery and blood. Yet before that Western Germany was a conglomeration of civilised principalities. Perhaps the present division might return Germans to their civilised role?

As to the present territories of western Poland, they were rebuilt from scratch, in 95 per cent by Poles, old inhabitants and the new who have been expelled from their own lands in the east by two accomplices: Hitler and Stalin. Historically, of course, these lands "now under Polish administration" were for centuries a theater of Prussian oppression, germanization, forced resettlements, exterminations etc.

Today, if Germany fears God, they will remember that their present calamity does not compare with the suffering past and present which they brought upon Europe and Poland in particular.

M. M. Chebda

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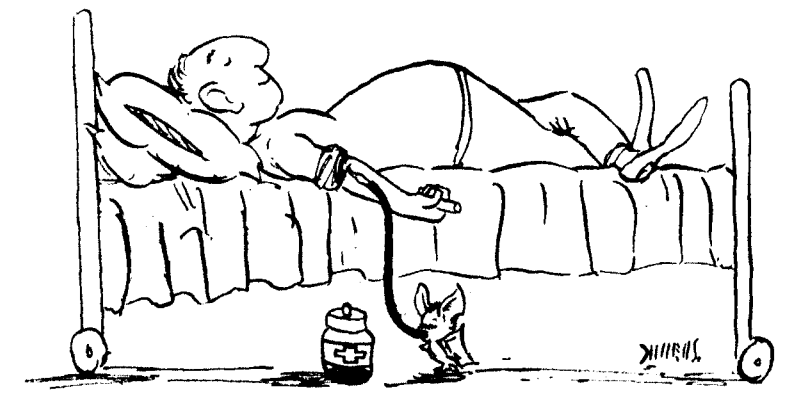
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