

- Cheddie Jagan was an unusual politician for he lived the life of a humanitarian. His concern was the advancement of the people's welfare for which he worked.

Cheddie was not born a Marxist or with the belief that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. His humanity came from his own experience as a child born to labourers on the sugar plantation of Port Mourant where he grew up.

Cheddie came from strong stock. His grandmothers were widows who had the courage to leave India with their infants for an unknown land where they were indentured to work as labourers for five years on a sugar plantation. Hugh Tinker termed indentureship, "A new form of slavery."

Last year on Sunday, the 9th March, many others and I arrived in Guyana for the funeral of His Excellency, the President of Guyana, Dr. Cheddie Jagan. It was an unforgettable experience an occasion of sadness and unity that may never happen again in Guyana.

As you may know the Cremation took place at Port Mourant. On the way a day was spent at Albion. There a man told me that when Cheddie was a little boy he was returning from school walking along the dam to his home. He saw an old man who looked very tired and was lying on the bank of the trench which he had been cleaning. An overseer on his horse came by and told the man to get back into the trench. The old man was slow and the overseer kicked him into the trench. When Cheddie went home he asked his father why the overseer had done that... perhaps that incident was the awakening of Cheddie's humanity.

Cheddie did not go to Russia to learn to be a Marxist. That happened from his experience in Guyana and in the U.S. of America where he worked as a tailor, an elevator operator and a patent medicine salesman, in Harlem, to pay his fees for dentistry at Howard University.

He found his helpmate, companion and wife Janet Rosenberg, no relation of Julius Rosenberg, in Chicago. Janet, another humanitarian who at great sacrifice to her personal life and despite the datardly, racist abuse and personal attacks of the party now in opposition, continues to carry on their work for a better Guyana. God bless America for Janet. I wonder if a Guyanese born woman would have made the sacrifices for Guyana that Janet, a Guyanese citizen, has make for Guyana. I did not and would not.

In 1957 <sup>when the</sup> Peoples pProgressive Party won the elections Dr. Jagan continued to live in a little two bedroom bungalow on Laluni St.

Dr. Jagan was then termed Chief Minister and power remained in the hands

of the British Governor.

In 1961 when the P.P.P. was again the winning party Dr. Jagan was given the title Premier and the British still ruled. I was at Laluni St., when a government official came to persuade him to move to a larger official residence. It took some persuasion. Cheddie never felt the need for outriders, status and the pomposity of power.

As examples of his intelligence in being a pacifist, let me give you examples from my own experience.

One afternoon in 1962, I went to visit Janet. The opposition was then on the rampage. There were guards on the first floor of Red House who never asked for identification. The front door was always open. I walked up the stairs into the living room. No one was there. I heard voices from the study/I sat down to wait. I heard a man's voice say, "Cheddie we must fight back. We have to get guns..." Cheddie said, "No, never..." I realised a meeting was in progress and quickly left.

In 1963 when a glass container with sulphuric acid was thrown into my house my husband was burnt. The next afternoon Dr. Jagan came to offer his sympathy. While with us there was a knock on the door. Three young men said they had seen Dr.'s car and could they come in. I let them in. "Dr." said one, "We can't see we people get treat like this, We gat fa fight back." "No", said Cheddie, "there must be no violence from our side. Nothing is gained with violence. The people suffer more."

Cheddie Jagan is a man who came from the roots of the sugar cane and knew the bitterness of sugar. He came from a new form of slavery to, against all odds, be the President of Guyana.

Dr. Jagan's greatest fault was his trust in humankind - and as we know so well there were many who betrayed that trust.

Man and woman's inhumanity to man and woman was what Cheddie Jagan worked to change into man and woman's humanity to mankind.

The first paragraphs should have been better aligned.

Should have been humankind!