

## **Dr Jagan — A Titan Has Gone**

**The Death of the President of Guyana, Cheddi Jagan, marks the passing of a titan in Caribbean politics. He was undoubtedly one of, if not, the most controversial of West Indian leaders of regional politics with the dawn of adult suffrage nearly half a century ago.**

**His indefatigable, courageous political struggles had earned him the reputation of the enfant terrible of British colonial politics in the 1950s when his People's Progressive Party (PPP) won the first-ever popularly elected government in then British Guiana.**

**His unrelenting commitment to a united, politically independent and socialist Guyanese society was to prove very costly for him and his wife, Janet, who was at his bedside when he died at Walter Reed Medical Centre in Washington yesterday following his heart attack on February 14. He would have been 79 years old on March 22.**

**President Jagan and his wife came to be seen as the Commonwealth Caribbean's best known pre-independence political prisoners under British colonial rule and most banned of West Indian politicians within the region.**

**He also had the unique fortune of heading a party that in its 50 years of politics never came second to any other in free and fair elections in Guyana. This uniqueness was to extend to his return to political power in October 1992, as executive president after 28 successive years in the wilderness of opposition parliamentary**

**politics.**

**Jagan's militant Marxist ideology had cast him in a sharply contrasting political mould from those of his regional contemporaries.**

**Yet, even opponents and detractors had come to recognise his outstanding contributions to the fostering of a deep sense of nationalism and pride and defence of political sovereignty.**

**Leaders of the Caribbean Community, meeting last month in Antigua, were openly expressing their sadness over his absence due to his illness. They noted how valuable have been his contributions to the future economic development of Caricom since he returned to the fold of regional politics as executive president of Guyana.**

**For all his high and low points in Guyana's turbulent political history, Jagan would, we feel, best be remembered for his humility and honesty.**

**Never one to flaunt his power, his trademark smiles and enormous capacity for dialogue and long hours of work, were as much part of his politics as his shining commitment to honesty and accountability in public affairs.**

**His passing clearly leaves a void in Guyanese politics. The Guyanese people would do well to remember him by ensuring a future based on peaceful, orderly, democratic government.**

**To his family and the government and people of Guyana, we extend our deepest condolences on the passing of a great Caribbean man.**