

The National Unity Call

by Janet Jagan

The kind of shadowed, half-concealed racism that stems from the letter columns of the print media, particularly the Stabroek News and Kaieteur News is just one more way in which the media carries out its blighted propaganda. Forget the Kaieteur News which has lost all respectability and credibility, just look at Stabroek News which is more hypocritical. I use that word because it pretends to be a balanced, logical, above-board, respectable news medium free of prejudices, clean hands and all that goes with such claims. At least Kaieteur makes no pretences and is just down-right dirty and irresponsible.

Don't try to sell me the nonsense that Stabroek News is not racial. It pushes its racial line cleverly and subtly, whereas other media hands are not so delicate.

I read this letter in Stabroek News recently under the headline "Indian Leaders Must Face the Reality of Indian-on Indian crime" by one G. Nurse. The writer discusses incidents of crimes by Indians against Indians, a reality of modern day crime, which as crime escalates can be any criminal of any race killing or robbing any innocent of any race. I don't see anything unusual about it, as crime is crime and I think life teaches us that criminals are concerned with what they're after - a life, jewellery, money, whatever and race rarely affects their aims. Aside from that, we cannot overlook that there are specific political crimes as well as specific drug crimes.

At any rate, the letter writer carries on with his theme to make his (if there is such a writer) major point: "... I sense that the Indian community has become comfortable to seek shelter in the make-believe world of the PPP that all violent crimes are committed by Africans and committed for political reasons." What is this comment but blatant racism, condoned by the Editor of Stabroek News who passed it for publication?

Because some half-baked letter-writer desires to paint the PPP with a racial brush, then he has full recourse to the pages of Stabroek News which, mainly through its letter column as well as other methods, is pushing the same line.

This has been the age-old practice of those who detest the policies of the PPP, way back from the old days when the British Guiana oligarchy (to use the Latino definition of the holders of wealth and social status) ruled. Why the never-ending measures of race and character assassination, through the decades, to destroy and smear the PPP?

The reasons aren't so hard to find. The PPP led the attack on the exploitation by the sugar kings and their bosses, the British administrators who tied us down as a colony for centuries. It led the attack on the denial of civil liberties - the press for example, which had interlocking directorates; i.e, men (never women) who sat on the Board of the Argosy and sat on the Board of the Chronicle and also the Board of the radio station. All things were controlled by a group of the wealthy, the landowners, the big businessmen, the top Christian religious leaders, the media owners, etc.

Of course things have changed considerably since those days, but some of the prejudices and resentments remain, as for example, the feeling that the PPP threatens the positions that some have held, almost hereditarily.

The best form of attack is the racial one, although this has been augmented by other charges, corruption, favouritism, incompetence and so on. However, it is my view that the labelling of race on the PPP is the oldest of all and the charge concocted as long ago as sixty-odd years — Apan Jhaat - is still used as a charge, as preposterous as that may be.

One day, a historian will record and analyze these matters and I have no doubt at all that the persistent and virulent attacks as evidenced in the letter quoted above will prove to be part of a well organized, dirty campaign to destroy, belittle and stain the People's Progressive Party, the Party which has consistently, clearly and honestly called for National Unity and the coming together of Guyana's working people for the good of all.

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