

The Success and the Failure to Prevent the Success (Sept 2, 2006

by Janet Jagan

Well, the "uncertainty" expressed by the Stabroek News in its editorial of August 27, 2006 is over. The "uncertainty", of course, existed only in the minds of those, like horses wearing protective blinders so they cannot see to the left nor right, could not see the whole, only the part they wanted to see.

In these elections of 2006, there were successes and failures. Perhaps the greatest failure was the failure of the Alliance for Change (AFC) to prevent the People's Progressive Party/Civic from winning an outright majority. That the new party gained a fair number of votes could hardly be called a success when its whole reason for existence was to prevent the PPP/C from winning an absolute majority!

Can we accuse the hostile media, led by Stabroek News, of wrongly assessing the outcome of elections? No, I don't think they are that stupid. What we can accuse them of is deliberately falsifying the outcome of elections, which any smart analyst could have predicted, for less than honourable reasons – that is, to influence the outcome of elections by giving undue prominence to the AFC and creating an atmosphere wherein voters would be afraid to support a party that has caused a populace to be "long suffering, ripped-off, conned, hoodwinked, fed-up", to quote the Stabroek News version of the PPP/C on the day before voting began. (See Harris' foolish but utterly nasty cartoon and caption which dominated S/N's editorial page, August 27, 2006)

The Alliance failed to "produce the goods" and thus must be regarded as a failure, although I predict its overseas financiers and its local "pushers" will try to give it a more positive light. Some will have to ponder if it pushed the PNC's overall vote downwards. The PNC lost 5 seats and the AFC won 5 seats, perhaps the funniest aspect of the 2006 elections.

Stabroek News and its fulsome letter-writer Tacuma Ogunseye should "face the music" for their inflammatory publication on the day before voting and its frankly revolting racism expressed in another lengthy letter the Sunday before that. Can any legitimate media house get away with publishing such horrors as this by Ogunseye in Stabroek News of August 27: – "if the PPP/C decides to be reckless and insist that the winner take all, the PNC-R-IG and its African supporters can back up its demand for a patriotic solution by massive street protests." So, in which country in the world does the winning party not take the reins of government? Does it mean, then, that Ogunseye and Stabroek News do not accept the norms of democracy, one of its pillars being that governments are chosen at free and fair elections? Some will have a lot of answering to do. What about those hundreds of shops that were bolted down in fear of such violence?

In the same vein we should not overlook the remarks of the Media Monitoring Unit which strongly condemned the Channel 9 programme on "Black Reparation" which it noted "is likely to foment bad race relations especially between the two major races." It referred to it as being "rife with ethnically divisive comments that have the potential to promote racial stereotyping of the worst kind." And further: "that Guyanese cannot afford the consequences that these unfounded and rabidly racist remarks can redound to in both human and financial terms."

I have quoted at length on the contents of Stabroek News and Channel 9 to illustrate the depth of racial and political hatred of some media houses. They seem to have the aim of influencing and distorting public opinion to create certain "perceptions" about the PPP/C which are not only false, but maliciously aiming at divisions in our society.

The hate-mongers and would-be destroyers of peace in our society, fortunately, have failed in the sense that the elections have proven that Guyanese have voted in support of a party that

has delivered on its promises. Let no one deny that Guyanese are better off today than they were before the PPP/C came into office in 1992. Democracy has been restored and is being improved upon. There is no turning back.

The malignant hopes expressed by certain sections of the media, not the people, have failed hopelessly and it might be time, now, for a re-examination of its role – particularly in view of the tolerance shown by those who restored press freedom and all human rights in Guyana.

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