FAREWELL DR JAGAN

Viewpoint By VIBERT PARVATAN

In the BIBLE, it is stated in ECCLES'S ASTES:
"to everything there is a season
And a Time, to every purpose under heaven,
A Time to be born and a Time
to die....
A Time to plant and a Time
To pluck up that which is planted.....
A Time to weep,
And a Time to laugh,
A Time to mourn.....
For all. Guyanese this is a Time to mourn.
We mourn the passing of one of the greatest sons of
this land. One who dedicated most of his life
to serving his people and his country.
We mourn the passing of Dr Cheddi Jagan
who at the time of his death on Thursday - 6th
March, 1997, was President of the Co-operative
Republic of Guyana.
I learnt with profound sadness of his passing.
I join the people of Guyana and the men
and women around the world, in acknowledg-
ing Dr Jagan's significant contribution to
human development, as we mourn.
HENRY VAN KYKE an American clergy
claimed:
"Some people are so afraid to die that they never
begin to live".
Dr Cheddi Jagan lived! Cheddi Jagan was
never afraid!
He faced the challenges of life with confi-
dence, courage and conviction.
His life touched the lives of the people of
Guyana in different ways at different times.
My first glimpse of Dr Cheddi Jagan was de-
cades ago when I stood at the side of the road,
as he with other PPP Members of Parliament
walked through the streets of Georgetown. He
was bedecked, as his Comrades were, in white
shark skin suit and red tie.
My first meeting with Dr Jagan face to face
was at the Red House. Dr Jagan, then Premier,
sent me an invitation to have tea with him.
With the phobia then prevailing in our coun-
try - British Guiana about communism,
though, a young junior employee with Book-
ers, I sought permission from my employers to
attend. I rode my bicycle to his official resi-
dence, and Premier Dr Jagan received me
kindly with the courtesies.
He spoke about the rich getting richer and the
good getting poorer. He shared with me his
deep concerns about poverty, the subjugation
of people, human suffering, discrimination, ex-
ploration, imperialism and such related topics.
His warmth, friendliness, sincerity, humility, com-
mittment, determination and conviction
were all very evident.
Over the many succeeding years those unique
qualities never diminished.
My last meeting with Dr Jagan was at the Martin
Luther King brunch on 12th January this year. At
the end of that function I asked Dr Jagan to take
pictures with some friends visiting Guyana, who
expressed an interest to meet him.
In his usual accommodation manner, his un-
pretentious style and with his usual smile, he did
so willingly.
When I assumed the office of Minister of
Government (non-elected as a Technocrat,
these days its called Civic) under the Hoyte
Administration in 1986, Dr Jagan then Minor-
ity Leader, maintained his usual cordiality.
In fact, he at times congratulated me on my pre-
sentation in Parliament and endorsed some of
my points in his interventions.
In recent times the good Doctor whenever we,
met socially, spent some time telling me of his
appreciation of my weekly Viewpoints. He
lauded my efforts on human values. He ampli-
ied on many of the points I made.
SHAKESPEARE observed:
"All the world's a stage
And all the men and women
merely players;
They have their exits
And their entrances;
And one man in his time
Plays many parts."
Dr Jagan who has taken his exit of this earthly
life played many parts in his time.
Dr Jagan played the role of Freedom Fighter,
Revolutionary, Teacher, Trade Unionist, Agi-
tator, Defender, Prisoner, Survivor, Liberator, Parliamentsarian, Premier, Commander-in-
Chief; President and that of Husband, Father and
Grandfather.
He was also recognised as a Writer, Historian,
Economist and Dentist.
More importantly Dr Jagan will always be re-
membered as a humanist. He won the respect
of people. With his magnetic and infectious
smile, he also won the admiration of people.
He inspired others to higher levels of commit-
ment and achievement.
The manipulations which kept him out of of-
Ice over the many decades never changed his
personality. He remained a warm, cheerful and
caring person, committed to fighting poverty,
exploitation, bondage and inequities which plague so many countries.
We will certainly miss him;
We will miss him;
He played his many parts
With sincerity and determination.
He will be remembered in different ways.
But nothing can detract from his patriotism.
The best tribute we can pay to Dr Jagan is to
pledge ourselves as Guyanese to serve our
country and to work together in purposeful
unity to build a better Guyana.
Dr Jagan's memory will forever be fondly en-
shrined in our hearts.
May God grant him eternal rest and let perpetual
light shine upon him, and be merciful unto him.
May he rest in Peace.
Like some low and mournful spell
We whisper that sad word Farewell!
FAREWELL! FAREWELL! FAREWELL!