

# Cheddi Jagan - A Legend Lives On

by H. Z. Ally

March 6, marked three years since the passing of Dr Cheddi Jagan, undoubtedly one of the greatest of men to have lived in the 20th century. Most fittingly, the PPP, the Party he founded and led up to the time of his death, has arranged for a series of commemorative activities throughout the country, including the rally last Sunday at Babu John, Port Mourant, where his body was cremated.

The greatness of Dr Jagan was evident from the tens of thousands of people who turned up for his funeral, not to mention the unending stream of sympathizers who filed past his coffin at State House and at

the Albion Sports Complex.

Dr Jagan was immensely popular and tremendously



*Dr Cheddi Jagan*

loved and respected by all Guyanese. But the actual turnout was phenomenal and beyond expectation. The sea of people at Babu John, by far the largest concentration of people at any

place or time, spoke volumes of the high esteem in which he was held by the Guyanese masses.

Dr Jagan's popularity was almost universal. There is hardly a boy or girl in any part of Guyana who does not know the name Cheddi Jagan. From the Pakaraima mountain tops to the low

coastal plains, the name Cheddi Jagan evokes strong connotations of integrity, commitment and dedication to the cause of the freedom and liberation of the Guyanese people.

The fact is that there is hardly a nook or corner in the Guyanese community that has not experienced the touch of Dr Jagan in a tangible and positive way. It was Dr Jagan and his PPP administration that universalized social services, in particular education and health. The foundations were first laid during the late 1950s and the early 1960s when the PPP virtually transformed a backward plantation economy into a prosperous and thriving society.

The productive capacity of the economy, especially sugar and rice production, almost quadrupled during the limited period of PPP rule between 1957-1964.

It took twenty-eight years of PNC mismanagement of the country to destroy the solid foundations laid by the PPP during its 7-year rule. By the time the PNC was ousted from power in 1992, the entire social and physical infrastructure built by the first Jagan administration had been ruined. The PNC proved hopelessly incapable of even maintaining structures built by the PPP, much less building new ones. Millions of dollars were wasted in all-conceived projects, many of which never saw the light of day.

demonstrated to one and all that there is virtue in sacrifice, especially when such sacrifices are meant to advance the greater good of humanity.

Even more significantly, he excited the imagination of men and women, in particular young

<sup>1</sup> But the most destructive of all PNC sins was the virtual hijacking of the right to vote by the PNC regime. This right by the Guyanese people to exercise their franchise was fought for and won by Dr Jagan and his Party.

The PNC did a lot to undo the work of Dr Jagan especially in the area of national development and the creation of a cohesive and united society. But what it was not able to kill and destroy was Dr Jagan's ideas and vision for a better Guyana, united and free where opportunities abound for all.

Dr Jagan lived a full and productive life. He

<sup>2</sup> people, that politics and political involvement can be as rich and as rewarding as any other calling, provided either is pursued with commitment, dedication and steadfastness and with people in mind.

As someone once wrote, there is a spark of Dr Jagan in each and every one of us, in especially those who have been associated with him in one way or the other. Even with his passing, the Party which he founded, continues to go from strength to strength drawing into its ranks the best of men and women in society.

This for me is the best legacy that the nation has inherited, a committed corps of men and women determined to carry on from where he left.