Cheddi Jagan The Internationalist

by **Eddi Rodney**, MP

How can a small state economy and society sustain development in today's globalization process?

This was the question uppermost in the minds of the large, appreciative audience who gathered to listen to Prof. James Millette deliver a feature address just under a fortnight ago. The event took place at the Cheddi Jagan Research Institute and was chaired by Dr James Rose, who introduced the venerated Caribbean scholar as a "trusted friend of Dr Jagan."

President Bharrat Jagdeo, Prime Minsiter Sam Hinds and Nadira Jagan-Brancier on a tour at the opening of the Cheddi Jagan Research Center.

Clearly, there is a contemporary need to analyze all social, economic, political and ideological phenomena, the Trinidad born historian stressed. What emerged from his discourse could be summarized without, in anyway, doing an injustice to the multiple areas that were discussed.

Cheddi Jagan's **West On Trial** which predated Michael Manley's **A Voice At The Work Place**: A Jamaican Testament by more than a decade, had established the Guyanese politician, trade unionist and social activist as the **de facto** evolve of the anti-colonial struggle.

That apart from **The West On Trial**, Jagan had also adopted (based on his foreign affairs councellors) a radical position on the Federation proposal. Within this 'radicalization' the whole sphere of interest and New Mercantilist syndrome had all but undermined whatever gains the West Indian proletariat had made immediately after the defeat of German imperialism, militarism and Hitler fascism.

That Cheddi Jagan's open acceptance of Marxist categories and dialectics, including those which Lenin elaborated relative to the rights of 'Colonial and Oppressed Nations' and all Minorities, in fact set him apart from the first generation of West Indian leaders such as Dr Eric Williams, Grantley Adams and Hugh Shearer.

It was a combination of these and other objective/subjective factors that brought Jagan, Millette, Stuart Hall and other **New World** intellectuals such as Elsa Gouveia, Trevor Muntoe and Anthony La Rose together as part of the academic community's reaction to the process of disintegration in the region.

Put another way, the establishment of anti-labour legislation in Jamaica and Trinidad (in the form of the Industrial Stabilization Act and the Industrial Relations Act) had sent clear signals to the regional academics. Burnham's CIA cronies, were the same people instigating bans on University people such as Beckford, Thomas, De Castro, Rodney and Thomas. It is not surprising that Jagan and Millitte formed between them both a political relationship and a lasting friendship. Globalization, Prof. Millette argues, is all pervasive, respects no borders and is relentless in its pursuit of markets. This raised the question of the people's interests and what had to be done to protect these communities.

The recent takeovers of a leading media and recording company now acquisitioned by **America On Line-Time/Warner** would place effective control over the entertainment, promotion and record and CD market in the hands of this new megapoly. Then there was the saga of Micro-Soft and Mr Bill Gates (the richest man in the world) in an anti-trust court battle with the American government.

Cheddi Jagan, one gets the strong impression listening to Prof. Millette became an internationalist in a serious way before he was instrumental in forming the PAC and thereafter the PPP. He had experienced monopoly capitalism and racism both in his homeland and in the United States. There was no way that a small country such as Guyana could gain genuine independence unless there was a strong element of international solidarity.

Listening to Prof Millette expand on globalization was to appreciate the historical dynamic. At another level the so-called global village clearly is here to stay as more millions of people get closer to that same process: where 'nintendos,' 'pagers,' website 'hits,' disposable consumer gadgets, flavoured condoms, random recall and instant money TV programmes, as well as high cholesterol fast foods, all form the grist of globalization penetration in the uni-polar experience.