

THE THINKER

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**CHEDDI JAGAN:
THE DEVELOPMENTALIST**

Page 1

**THE ANC, THE GNU AND
ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION**

Pg 13

**DEMOCRACY AND
DEVELOPMENT**

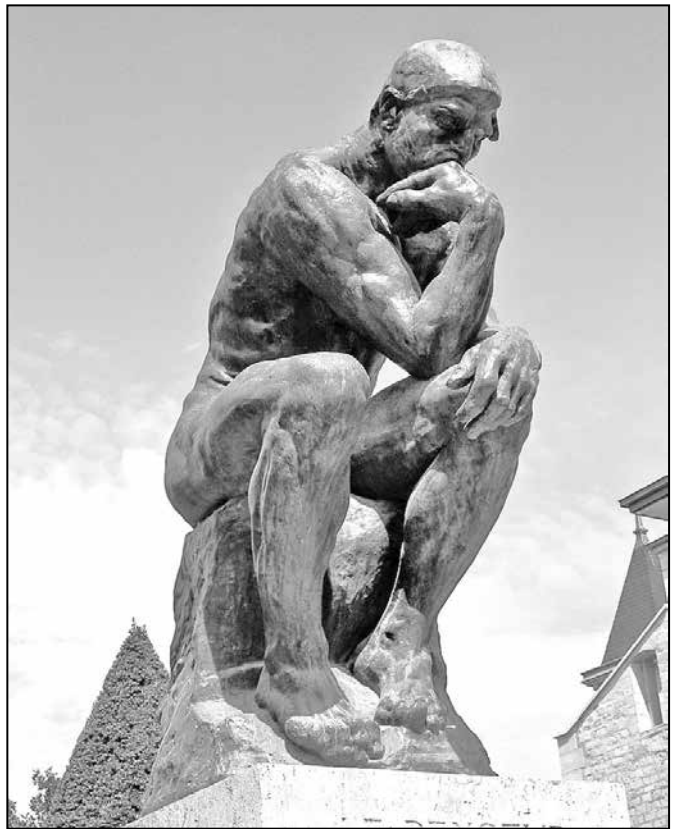
Page 25

**BOOK REVIEWS - JANET JAGAN:
FREEDOM FIGHTER OF GUYANA**

Page 34

Table of Contents

Editorial	iii	Dave Martins – A Cultural Titan.....	48
		<i>Donald Ramotar</i>	
Cheddi Jagan – The Developmentalist.....	1	Parbu Dial Sattan:	
<i>Donald Ramotar</i>		Militant, Rebel, Foot-Soldier and Grass Roots PPP Activist	50
		<i>Eddie Rodney</i>	
Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Guo Haiyan	10		
<i>GUO Haiyan</i>			
The ANC, the GNU and Economic Transformation	13		
The Promise of Gene Editing Treatment for Human Illness: Curing Sickle Cell Disease	20		
<i>Dr. Jacquelyn Jhingree</i>			
Democracy and Development	25		
<i>Hydar Ally</i>			
Democracy Can Save Economy.....	27		
Lula: A Leader for the People	28		
<i>Harry Narine Nawbatt</i>			
Internet Modern History Sourcebook	32		
Book Reviews: Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana	34		
Book Review: Cheddi Jagan and the Cold War	37		
<i>Hydar Ally</i>			
Ameena Gafoor and the Ameena Gafoor Institute for the Study of Indentureship and its Legacies	40		
<i>David Dabydeen</i>			



The Thinker (French: Le Penseur) is a bronze sculpture by Auguste Rodin.

EDITORIAL

This edition of the Thinker coincides with a number of significant developments both at the national and international levels.

At the international level, the war in Palestine has now spread to the wider Middle East, including Lebanon. The killing of top leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah by the Israeli has triggered a missile attack on Israel by Iran which is fraught with new dangers.

This edition also coincides with the 32nd Anniversary since the return of democracy to Guyana after 28 years of PNC dictatorial ruling. Some of the articles focus on this anniversary including a Straight Talk article by Dr. Cheddi Jagan which is reprinted because of its relevance. It also coincides with the launch of a new publication, Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana, at the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre on October 18, 2024.

The United Nations has recently concluded its General Assembly which at a time when the international situation is pregnant with change on the one hand and on the other hand it has never been so dangerous. Since the Cuban missiles crisis in October 1962, the world has never been so close to a nuclear catastrophe.

At the same time a genocide of the Palestinian people is taking place in full view of the entire world. The Israeli apartheid fascist regime has already murdered more than forty thousand Palestinian civilians. The majority, some seventy percent were children and women in their reproductive age. The rest are the old and a few young men.

Journalist have become prime targets as the regime tries desperately to blindfold the world. At least one hundred and thirty-four were murdered by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). Indeed, the journalism profession is one of the most dangerous in Palestinian. Even during the Second World War journalists were not killed to the same extent. In fact, no one ever accused anyone of targeting the press in the six years of war.

The tragedy of all of this is the fact that most of the Western “democracies,” led by the United States are supporting the terrible massacre of the Palestinian people. They are the ones supplying the regime with the bombs, the most modern warplanes and tanks to attack the mainly civilian population. Their weapons are destroying schools, hospitals and other infrastructure such as homes, almost 90% of which have been turned into rubble, water and electricity.

Palestinian doctors, health workers and other emergency workers such as ambulance, brigades, fire and other emergency responders are also being intentionally killed. Cultural edifices are also being erased.

By their military and diplomatic support, western governments are putting many international institutions into crisis. Their very existences are now being questioned. This is not only a humanitarian disaster, but also a moral degeneracy of the entire human race. It is a testimony of an international economic and political order that has outlived its usefulness.

The situation in Russia/ Ukraine is approaching a most dangerous stage. As the Ukrainian forces are being defeated by the Russian army, the West, particularly NATO forces are pumping more destructive weapons to their corrupt, proxy regime in Ukraine. NATO is fighting Russia to the last Ukrainian.

This is pushing the world into a very dangerous position. Many of those involved in this conflict are in possession of nuclear weapons. These include Russia, United States, United Kingdom and France. We are on the brink of a global holocaust! Anytime those weapons are used it would mean the end of life on earth.

The solutions to these two most pressing situations in our world could be solved if only we take each others interests into consideration and summon the political courage to do so.

In the case of Russia, NATO powers must realise that they can't have security at the expense of Russia's. It is in the best interest of all that Ukraine remains a neutral state. Russia cannot agree to it joining NATO and placing weapons on its territory which has a two thousand kilometres border with Russia.

This is not an unreasonable proposition. It is in the best interests of all those states involved and the world as a whole.

In relation to Palestine there is only one solution as well. That is those people must have an independent state on their historical lands where they can enjoy all the rights and responsibilities of a Free People!

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Cheddi Jagan – The Developmentalist

Introduction

Much has been written about Dr. Cheddi Jagan since he began his political career in the mid 1940s. His appearance on the political scene in the then British Introduction

Much has been written about Dr. Cheddi Jagan since he began his political career in the mid 1940s. His appearance on the political scene in the then British Guiana disrupted the monotony in the colony and captured the imagination of the Guyanese working people.

This was particularly true since his election to the Legislative Assembly in 1947. His use of that body continues to serve as an example of how even such a place dominated by the colonial officers and the big capitalist elite, could be used in the struggle of the working people.

For the first time in the history of our country the ordinary working people attended the sittings of the legislative committee to hear Dr. Jagan's defence of them and to listen to his assault on the colonial state.

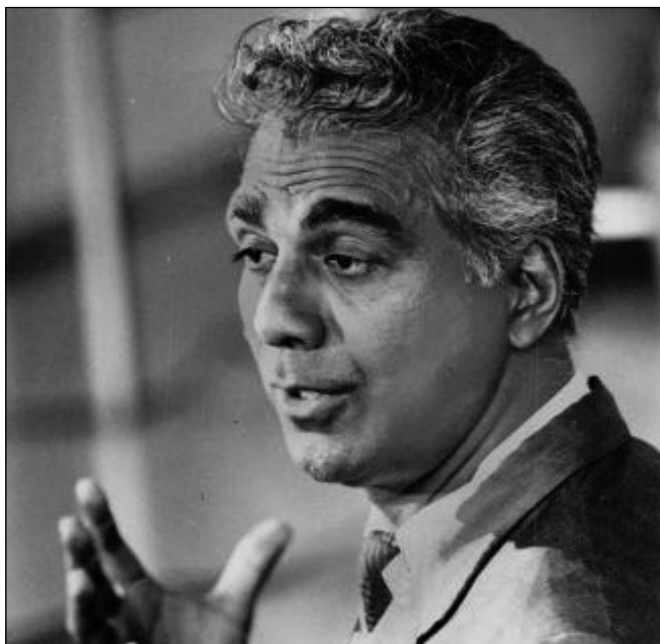
He did not confine himself to the august Chamber of the Assembly, but in his own words, he "took the parliament to the street corners and the street corners to the Parliament..."

He really burst on the international scene in 1953 after the victory of the Party he founded and led, the Peoples Progressive Party, won the elections of April 1953 in a landslide victory obtaining eighteen of the twenty-four seats.

That was the first time that elections were conducted under the system of universal adult suffrage. It was a massive success and a demonstration of how far the PPP succeeded in damaging the colonial mentality that existed.

Unfortunately, that first democratically elected government only lasted for one hundred and thirty-three days. Coming almost like a bolt from the clear blue sky, the British Colonial Office landed troops and removed the PPP from power. The excuse then was that there was a communist plot to take over the country.

It was this event and Dr. Jagan's fight against the invasion of the colony by British troops in which he sought international solidarity that propelled him into the



centre stage of international politics. The PPP and Dr. Jagan occupied among the largest portion of the media reports internationally.

So popular he had become that one American journalist, Arthur Sutton, said of him "... (he) is one of the most colourful, controversial, and yet personable politicians in the Western Hemisphere... His stage is limited, but he makes the most of what he has to work with. He is world famous..."

Then he went on to ask, "... who knows the name of Argentina's Chief Executive or Jamaica's or for that matter Brazil's..." People the world over knew Dr. Cheddi Jagan.

By then he was regarded amongst the foremost anti-colonial freedom fighters of the times, 1950s to 1960s. That reputation, which he earned because of his passionate advocacy for freedom/ independence obscured another vital aspect of his life, that of a developmentalist.

Indeed, his anti-colonial struggles for independence was not seen by him as an end in it-self, but a means to an end. He was a very profound thinker and had innovative ideas of development for his country, region and even how all of those fitted into the international environment. All his struggles were conducted to allow him and his comrades to develop Guyana and the Guyanese people.

It is this aspect of his life as a Developmentalist that is being examined today.

Conditions for Development

To appreciate his accomplishments as an administrator in our country it is necessary to have an understanding of the environment he was forced to work under and to appreciate the socio-economic conditions of that period, 1957-1964.

In August of 1957, elections were held again in British Guiana. This was after the British felt that Dr. Jagan could have been defeated.

They thought so because they had jailed him and many of his most trusted and capable colleagues. They worked hard and managed to split the party.

They even did a lot of gerrymandering of the electoral boundaries to make it heavily weighted against the PPP. As an example, let me say that they made constituencies where the PPP was strong very large and in the areas where the opposition dominated, they made small.

However, despite all the manipulation and machination of the colonial authorities the PPP secured another very impressive victory. It obtained nine (9) of the fourteen seats.

A reflection of the extent of the manipulation was the fact that the votes that Dr. Jagan got was more than all the votes that the combined opposition obtained.

That election was followed closely throughout the world. It was welcomed by all the anti-colonial fighters in Africa, Asia and by the progressive forces in the Caribbean.

It was welcomed by progressive people in the developed world as well. *Le Monde*, the French newspaper hailed it as an important victory. It urged the British to change its attitude to Dr. Jagan and to work with him.

British Attitude

The British had other plans. While it congratulated the PPP and announced that it would cooperate with the PPP, it had no intention to do so.

Indeed, the colonial power decided to turn the PPP's victory into a defeat. They were in a very good position to do great harm to the party.

This time they would not resort to brute force as they did with the suspension of the Constitution in 1953. On this occasion they decided to use administrative measures to advance their agenda.

Indeed, even though they did a great deal of manipulation to defeat the PPP at the 1957 elections, they put other measures in place just in case their plan did not work.

The main measure that they took was to give British Guiana a new constitution that was far inferior to the

1953 constitution. A vast amount of authority was retained by the Governor.

The PPP'S Position

The PPP was faced with a very difficult situation. It was the last party to announce its participation in the election and the last to submit its list of candidates. This was because the party and Dr. Jagan in particular was working and hoping for a united front against colonialism. It tried with an all-party conference in 1956, when that failed it made public and private overtures to the main group of the opposition. It was only when all of that failed that it submitted its list.

It now had to decide whether it would participate in the government with the British holding and retaining such great powers.

It decided that it had to, for two main reasons. In the first place the enthusiasm of the people shown by the size of its victory (9 of 14 seats). Had it not gone into the government it would have been a great disappointment for the masses. That was a compelling reason for its decision.

The second reason was that if it did not form the government the British would have run the affairs as a dictatorship and the party would have been blamed for that particularly after such a huge mandate.

In going into the government, the party had no illusions. Indeed, Dr. Jagan later described the situation as a 'forced marriage'.

Having a hostile "coalition" partner which had control of the Ministry of Finance, the Attorney General, and the Police was only one of the negative factors.

The other factors were, one the opposition forces were all aligned with the colonialists. Indeed, from the beginning the British saw as one of their goals, the creation of a leader to replace Dr. Jagan by the next time that the elections were held in 1961. They identified Mr. Burnham, a former chairman of the PPP who by his actions, was completely on board with the colonial project.

The second negative was the opposition outside of the Parliamentary parties. Big business which was mainly foreign, white, Portuguese and Mulatto. The old capitalist class saw themselves more as a part of the colonial structure and hated the PPP's working people's orientation.

The other serious opposition came from the British Guiana Trade Union's Congress (BGTUC) which was created after the suspension of the constitution in 1953. This needs some explanation. After the suspension of the constitution in 1953 the British disbanded the TUC. It recreated it three months later with reactionary, pro-

colonial leadership.

Those were the political forces arraigned against the PPP. The other very important factor that is not often spoken about is the psychological factor.

The public servants in particular, those in the upper echelons, ideologically were much closer to the colonial power than to the new people's government. The vast majority of those persons saw themselves as British and understood their role as serving the colonial enterprise and not a national government.

The Socio-Economic Situation at the Time

The socio-economic situation that prevailed in 1957 when the party went into office was grim.

Mr. Elsa Hayland, a Home Economist from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (UN, FAO) visited British Guiana in the 1950 and noted that she had rarely seen such terrible signs of malnutrition and was shocked to the bone.

The housing situation was really deplorable. In an article headlined "Eradicate Slums" Dr Jagan quoted from a report of the housing situation in Georgetown in 1950. He noted that "... of the 7994 houses surveyed, 2309 were considered unfit for human habitation, 5303 in need of repair and only 352 were structurally sound. The Town Planning Advisor to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies noted that "... the slum conditions in parts of Georgetown were worse than anywhere in the British Caribbean..." In Albouystown, a working-class area, as many as ten (10) and twelve (12) persons were living in single tenement rooms..."

This was in the city. The conditions on the sugar estates and rural areas were even more dismal. Here is a short quotation from the monthly paper "Thunder" of March 1950, it noted that the Venn Commission in referring to the estates in British Guiana described the situation as "The Black Holes of B.G". They said that in quite a number of the houses the corrugated iron roofs were leaking and the fabrics of the buildings were in a general state of decay. In numerous instances temporary sheets or awnings had been fixed over the beds to keep off the rains. They had mud floors and consequently, with the rain dropping from the roof these were made slippery and dangerous; in many cases we found bags laid over the floor to prevent slipping ... There are few if any proper footpaths and in the rainy weather communication is difficult. The common latrines often built over drainage trenches are frequently in a bad state of repair, with little privacy..." Schools were few, overcrowded, understaffed, and mostly dilapidated. Illiteracy was extremely high. Added to this misery was the Church control of schools which resulted in many strongly religious Hindus and

Muslims families not sending their children to schools.

The conditions in health were also in a similar state of disrepair. Water borne diseases such as gastro were high and killed a lot of children. So too were malaria, typhoid and yellow fever diseases caused by mosquitoes.

PPP In Office

At the time the PPP took office other serious issues affected the economy of the country. The price for sugar and bauxite, two of the three main pillars of the colony's economy suffered steep decline on the international market. This had a negative impact on the unemployment level which was at 18% of the workforce. The new government had to therefore tackle many important social and economic issues simultaneously.

The PPP ministers picked up from where they left in 1953. They went to the masses, keeping them informed from the very beginning as to the problems which they faced and sought the assistance of the masses of the people in resolving them.

With a serious shortage of funds, the PPP government used organisational methods to deal with the immediate problems of the communities and the individuals.

Communities were encouraged to form 'self-help groups' to build social and physical infrastructure. Several schools and health clinics were built using this method. Over the seven-year period about a thousand schools were built and a similar amount of health clinics using a variety of methods.

The self-help approach was the most popular. This is how it operated. The government provided the materials and the technical oversight of the projects while the community provided the labour. In that way they began to overcome the issue of overcrowding in the schools and medical services were provided in every nook and cranny in the colony. Very many other important infrastructure facilities were built in this way which included wharves in the riverain communities, boats to ferry government workers in health and education, among many others. At the individual level workers were encouraged to build their homes using similar methods. They banded themselves into cooperatives and were given time off to build their homes. There they helped each other. So effective was this method that it was recorded that the amount of house built in the last half of 1957 were more than all that the colonial authorities were able to build in almost a decade.

Those workers who built their homes outside of the co-ops were also helped by government making it easy for them to purchase house lots by paying down 10% of the value and the rest over a period of three years. Government also guaranteed loans for them at the banks

to build their homes. The amounts being repaid were made deductible for income tax purposes. Government built some houses too and rented to workers at very favourable rentals.

In order to increase the stock of homes government encouraged landlords to build homes and rentals were made non-taxable for those building new structures.

These organisational methods were used throughout its seven years in office, 1957-1964.

The Economy

The administration recognised that the key to success lay in the economy. The PPP focused heavily on the real economy and identified industry and agriculture as the main vehicles in advancing the fortunes of the colony.

The struggles between the PPP ministries and the colonial administrators began in earnest in 1958.

It was then that the elected members of the executive confronted the administrators as to the Development Plan which was costed at \$91 million. The PPP felt that the plan was too small to deal with the enormous socio-economic situation then in existence.

Moreover, the colonial authorities began to make their intentions pretty clear. Some of the main projects that they were committed to, The East Coast Demerara Road and the Georgetown Public Hospital, before the PPP got into office, they stopped funding.

The squeeze was on.

The PPP ministers were proposing a D-Plan of two hundred million dollars (5-years). This was blocked by the colonial secretary who after being given a presentation told the minister to come back in a year's time. Maximum administrative delays was one of the tools used to frustrate the PPP.

Having been rebuffed by the colonial authorities Dr. Jagan sought funding from other sources. The Swiss Bank in London was prepared to lend the B.G Government eight (8) million dollars. However, it needed a guarantee from the British, which was not granted.

Having seen clearly the intention of the British, Dr. Jagan decided to bring the situation to the attention of the Guianese public as well as to the British. At a press conference he held in London in August of 1958, he outlined the problems in detail and the attitude of the British. In his concluding remarks he said "... After three weeks of discussions the UK has refused our requests. Instead, they reduced the previously agreed limited program for 1959 from GUY \$21.224 million to GUY \$18.2 million, a cut of 20%..."

"The PPP government proposed an additional \$31 million for the expansion of production, drainage and irrigation, land reclamation and land settlement, credit

and public works. These were rejected. Even a request of \$2.5 million for expenses in 1959 was rejected."

This was a story that repeated itself throughout the period 1957-1964. This was how the colonial authority worked to discourage the early attempts at industrialization.

The first project was a factory to make glass from the abundance of high-quality sand in the country. Dr. Jagan managed to get many companies interested in the project, some British, American, and European. Here again the British refused to give funds as loans, or grants and whenever alternatives were found they refused to give guarantees.

The government also sought to build a factory to produce cooking oil from the by-product of rice. In this case a German Company was even willing to build the factory without the British government's guarantee, but it was stopped by the colonials.

A Hydro-Power plant at one of our falls aimed at producing cheap electricity to process our raw materials ran into the same bottle neck. The main purpose of this was to introduce the smelting of bauxite into aluminium. Some progress was made here with the PPP insisting that more value be added to the raw bauxite. They threatened the company ALCAN, to reposes some lands so that the administration would go into production itself or get other investors involved.

That forced the company to build a plant to produce alumina and they developed a new product (the first in the world) called mullite.

The PPP ministers sought to use the B.G. Legislative Council to put pressure on the colonial authority. It moved a motion seeking the approval of the Legislative Assembly to approve it going to seek funds from other sources. It was hoping for a unanimous support.

They overestimated the loyalty of the opposition in the country. Even though the motion was passed it did not have unanimous support as was hoped for. The British had the support of the opposition, the People's National Congress (PNC).

A point to be noted here was that all the projects were given approval by top experts in the field.

The one area where the PPP had great support was from the United Nations Decolonization body. This support did not come in the provisions of funds, but in technical assistance. With the help of the UN many areas for industrialisation were studied carefully.

Dr. Jagan invited private capital in the country and shared the studies with them. He urged them to invest in the projects and offered tax concessions for them to invest. Some local and foreign companies took advantage of this in furniture making and fisheries for example.

He also created a special body, Guyana Industrial

Development Corporation to provide technical advice to the private sector. It was headed by a highly qualified and Skilled Guyanese, Mr. Gavin Kennard (CEO). The Chairman of the board was a respected lawyer, a man known for his cool and matured judgment, Mr. Ashton Chase. The other members of the board came from businesspeople, mainly those in manufacturing.

The corporation created a library and circulated to the private sector literature on Business and management. Many lectures were also organised by specialist in various fields, and businesspersons were even sent abroad to learn from other's experiences.

To overcome the starvation by the British, the PPP was forced to introduce some taxation to acquire funds to finance its projects and to run the government in general. However, Dr. Jagan and his comrades were not willing to just tax the poor. They sought to have minimum taxation on goods that working people used. That attitude guided them in taxing even local companies. For instance, lower taxes were applied to locally produced alcohol example rum and beer, as compared on whiskey and other imported liquor, which were highly taxed.

Even though the taxes on locally produced good were low the one company that produced beer in the colony organised a big campaign against it.

Taxes were put on motor cars, watches, and other type of luxury items.

The government, through the IDC, prepared industrial estates to provide low rental lands to manufacturers.

However, as mentioned above, many of the projects were stifled by the colonial office. These included Hydro-Electric projects, Instant coffee factory; canning factory; glass factory; leather factory, oil brand, etc. were all frustrated.

While a new local capitalist class came into existence and invested in the economy due to the assistance given by the PPP it was not moving as fast as the PPP would have liked. The heavy hand of the British prevented rapid growth.

Despite the tremendous opposition many important gains were made. Manufacturing of some parts for the Sugar and Bauxite industries were done in British Guiana by both local small-scale producers and a big British Company that was encouraged by the government to go in that direction – Sproston.

That company grew so efficient, and the workers became so skillful that it was able to build huge passenger river steamers to ply two of our large rivers, the Malali – Essequibo River and the Torani – Berbice River.

Some smaller companies did well in the production of paint, nails, wire fencing materials, furniture among other areas.

Focus on Agriculture

Due to the great opposition of the British to halt the industrialization process the PPP government began focusing more on Agriculture. This was of great importance from the employment point of view and from the efforts to industrialise. Focus was on Agro industries. Here too Dr. Jagan had a greater degree of freedom to act.

The first thing that was done was to begin a process of diversification. At that point, the only commercial crops were sugar and rice to a lesser extent. Most farmers were engaged in subsistence farming.

The strategy used to accelerate diversification was to give farmers incentives to go into new crops. Having in its possession studies of the land in the various areas the government offered crop bonuses to encourage farmers to plant other crops. Here the United Nations helped to provide the skills to do studies on our soil so that farmers were advised on what to plant.

The government began to educate farmers in scientific techniques. It built the Guyana School of Agriculture where it trained persons to provide services and technical advice to farmers.

It trained farmers at the school in more modern and scientific methods in Agriculture. Cooperatives were encouraged. It did this by establishing large farms at the school and used that as a demonstration to farmers as to the advantages of large-scale production. Many short live-in courses were prepared for our farmers.

It established huge agricultural schemes in various parts of the country in land reclamation and Drainage and Irrigation. This opened thousands of acres of new lands to farmers. The government began re-settlement schemes as it encouraged persons to establish homesteads in the newly opened schemes.

As a result, Agri production grew in every area in both plant and livestock production. Farmers were no longer producing at subsistence level but were at a commercial stage. That happened in a relatively short period of time.

To assist the farmers the government established a marketing corporation. Farmers were feeding the nation and many once imported items were replaced by local products, these included honey, carrots, cabbages, peanuts, coffee, milk, meat, fish, poultry products, etc.

The sharp rise in production was a reflection not just of the correctness of the policies of the government but the tremendous enthusiasm of the farmers whose creativity was being unleashed. Some figures will serve to highlight the surge in production that began.

In 1957, only 700 gallons of milk was purchased by the government's owned Milk Pasteurization Plant. The administration provided transportation to farmers from

nearby rural areas and in 1958 the amount more than doubled to 1800 gallons. Production kept growing so much so that milk was supplied to our public hospitals, schools, and poor people's homes.

The production rose sharply and government was in the process of buying milk drying facilities to produce Milk Powder.

This posed a new challenge to the administration. Many products were produced in excessive quantities.

As a result, the government had to find markets. One very interesting story was in coffee production.

So much coffee was being produced that the government announced that it would have to ban the importation of instant coffee.

By the way, this was caused by the colonial authorities refusing permission for the government to make a factory producing instant coffee.

The officers from the Multi-National Nestle visited British Guiana and offered the government to buy all its beans. The conditions were that for every pound of coffee beans that they bought the government would allow for the importation of a pound of instant coffee.

The administration made a counter proposal. They proposed that it would not ban instant coffee if Nestle would take our local beans and produce Guyana Instant Coffee to compete on the local market. That was agreed on and that is how 'Guyana Instant Coffee' was born.

Many of the new agro products stimulated the growth of scores of cottage industries. Corn for instance began to grow sharply. In 1958, the country moved from producing at a small scale to commercial levels, producing one million pounds of corn. This allowed us to satisfy the local market and to create value added products, for example corn meal.

Cassava, Coconuts, Cocoa, fruits, and other ground provision began to flourish. In the case of cassava, a factory was built in the city to produce starch, faren and other by-products.

From coconut, factories were set-up to produce cooking oil, soap, fiber mattresses, etc.

Many cottage industries sprung up due to the growth of fruit production, jams, jellies, etc. were put out in large quantities.

This massive increase in production had its own impact on foreign trade. Indeed, very early Dr. Jagan had to fight with the colonial power to diversify trade. He had pointed out that we were forced to buy dear from the UK when the same products were available at much cheaper prices from other countries.

The administration had to find new markets for some of its products, beyond the Caribbean. It began by organising trade delegations to Venezuela and Brazil, our neighbours and began a brisk trade. Rice and paddy

were sold in those markets.

The government obtained a very lucrative market for rice and timber products in Cuba, and in the Eastern European countries – the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia.

Meat production (beef) shot up sharply particularly in the South of the country which was isolated from the north by a huge forest. This however, had another positive impact on the transportation sector of the economy.

The production was flown directly to markets in the Caribbean and thus began more flights into the interior which became a big industry and very thriving at this time.

The push in the productive sector allowed the government to have a healthy Balanced Budget even in the period 1962 to 1964 when we had serious riots to deal with.

Buy Local

That was not the only source of opposition. Some of it emanated internally from the opposition political parties and sometimes even from the captured Trade Union Congress.

However, this was very successful because many Guyanese began to get very valuable experience in managing government offices and public enterprises.

The administration did not confine that campaign to public offices but insisted that the same policy be followed by foreign businesses operating in the country. This applied to Bookers & Sandbatch Parker in the sugar industry, ALCAN in the Bauxite sector among others. This was really the first-time, qualified Guyanese were given the opportunity to manage in senior positions in the country.

The sharp growth in local products allowed for the changing of our own diet. The government began a campaign in the society urging persons to use more of the local products, many of which were superior to imports and provided at a cheaper price. This was the case with honey, starch, cassava products, coffee among others.

To educate the masses, Exhibitions of locally produced goods became a feature. Many locals expressed surprise at the variety and quality of the products.

In preparation for independence the PPP government had to consider the human capital needed to be prepare for the task of managing an independent country. This task the government took very seriously and took many measures to deal with it which spanned every aspect of life in the country.

Guyanization

Almost as soon as it took office in 1957 it embarked on a program called Guyanization. The role here was to replace retiring colonial officers by Guyanese who were qualified for the posts. This led to many confrontations with the Governor and his team, as was anticipated.

Human Capital

But that was not enough. The country needed more technical skills. This was reflected by the amount of technicians which Dr. Jagan had recruited with the help of the UN Decolonization body.

It was that need that pushed him to establish the University of Guyana. This was a giant step. To accelerate the establishment of that institution the PPP government used the facilities of the biggest secondary school in the city Queen College. It began classes in 1963 after three when the premises were vacant. Dr. Jagan could not wait for the new building to be built. He began immediately. Apart from training highly skilled people to manage the affairs of an independent Guyana, Cheddi Jagan had another reason. He wanted a new kind of technician, a more patriotic and people's oriented intelligencia. This was one of the very important measures he took in the process of decolonization. He wanted to create "an intellectual nucleus partly as a centre around which some systematic definition for the national purpose can take place and partly as a defence against persistent battering of external colonialist and reactionary ideas against which colonial and backward societies are so helpless..."

In concluding the address at the inauguration of U.G. Cheddi Jagan wrote "...I have stressed the function of the University of Guyana to provide the skills and higher education necessary for the economic development of this country and I have alluded to its role in developing and defining values in our society. But there are two no less important consequences which we hope will flow from the activities of the University. One of these is that every child born in the remotest settlement in the interior, or in the farthest village or sugar estate should have a real opportunity

to reach the highest position in the land. The highest position in our society must no longer be the preserve of the rich and the well-born. By bringing University education within the reach of everyone, **we have laid the foundation for the establishment of democracy in this country. The other result which we hope will flow from the establishment of the University of Guyana is the evolution of a Guyanese consciousness.** With its stress on our own area and our own needs and interests, with

its accent on Caribbean and local studies, with the study of our Amerindian languages instead of Greek and of Spanish instead of French, I have no doubt that we shall evolve a national consciousness and a national identity. We regard this as of a supreme importance, for only with the development of this national consciousness will Guyana become the great nation we would all like it to be..."

He really put a very high premium on education! As mentioned above he created the Guyana School of Agriculture and expanded the technical institutes.

He also had organized a system of Adult Education. Here he used many schools after hours to prepare some adults for secondary education and for others to teach them to read and write.

In the seven years he was in office he almost eradicated illiteracy in the country and was the only colony that had established its own university.

To feed the university Dr. Jagan had to revolutionize education. We spoke about the hundreds of new schools he built and developed new ways of increasing the quantity of qualified teachers. In the task Dr. Jagan, began to organize training in several centers throughout the country for teachers, while building a new and larger institution dedicated to train teachers.

In 1957, only 30 teachers were being trained per year. In 1958, that grew to 150 and it kept on growing throughout that period.

The government began to aim in that early period to move towards universal secondary education. To achieve this goal, they created all age schools. Those were schools where students moved automatically from primary to secondary education.

Culture

Dr. Jagan was very aware of the need to free the minds of the people from centuries of colonial domination. In this drive he placed a great emphasis on History and Culture. Immediately on taking office in 1957, a History and Cultural Committee was formed. This body was to organize events to promote our history and create the conditions for the evolution of a Guyanese Culture.

It was the PPP government that first began to teach Guyanese History in our schools, beginning from primary schools.

Public lectures were organized to commemorate important dates in our history such as the 1763 Slave Uprising in Berbice.

Music and the performing arts were encouraged. Local poets and singers were heavily promoted. The radio was used extensively to promote local culture and even festivals were organized in which local music, dances

and songs took center stage.

The administration was in the process of building a National Philomonic Orchestra when it was cruelly removed from office in 1964. Classical music and the teaching of artists to play the violin and other classical music instruments.

In order to encourage and promote Guyanese literature it started a Guyana Prize for Literature.

Local dances were promoted and emphasis was also placed on the teaching of ballet, Latin, Indian and African dances.

He had to build both physical and social infrastructure, some of which I touched on.

Infrastructure

As mentioned above hundreds of schools, hospitals and clinics were built all intended to raise the quality of the human capital for the building of a new society.

However, you would realize that the physical infrastructure was in a very poor state and extremely limited. To develop the country and open access to the lands and resources the country needed roads. The government began to undertake such projects. Two roads started from the coast with the plan to push them annually until it got to the south of Guyana. This was because it was being done with our own resources.

Natural Resources

Dr. Jagan appears to have had a preference for the development of manufacturing and seem to have a position that we should leave our mineral resources in the ground until the state was in a stronger position to get better deals for the people of the country. For him those assets were not renewable and therefore to get the maximum the state had to be in a stronger position to exploit them alone or to get more favorable deals with foreign companies.

That attitude most likely reflected what he thought the country was receiving from its Bauxite.

His attitude changed or was forced to change because of the non-cooperation which he had experienced from the British. He became anxious to get an understanding as to our mineral resources. To find out he turned to the United Nations once again.

With their technical assistance he organized an aerial reconnaissance of the country to map the mineral deposits. This was used to minimize the risk that investors would have to take and minimize the damage to the environment.

One area he was eager to get into was the exploration for oil.

The Story of Oil: The first attempt to search for oil began in July 1958. The PPP Government gave prospecting license to the "California Exploration Company" to search for oil in 16,000 square miles in British Guiana.

Under the terms of agreement British Guiana was expected to get 54% of net profit if oil was found. A certain (undetermined) amount of oil would have to be processed in the country.

Nothing came of those exploration. However, it is clear that Dr. Jagan did not believe that oil was not there. In 1964 he had the help of the UN to send geologists to look again for oil. The UN sent four geologists from USSR and their report was that there was a high confidence that oil was present in commercial quantity in the deep-water area. They were so confident that oil was there that they were prepared to invest in a refinery.

Nothing came of this because the government changed and the new regime did not show much interest in this after. It was not until 2015 that oil was finally found in high quality and in large volumes.

Innovation in Finance

One of the major challenges that plagued the government throughout the seven years was the availability of cash. As was mentioned earlier the British deliberately set out to frustrate the government with the hope of making it unpopular.

To circumvent this Dr. Jagan had to take many measures. As seen above, organizational methods such as co-ops, self-help, etc. played a big role in overcoming those challenges.

They were not enough. Dr. Jagan's government was the only administration in the English-speaking Caribbean that was faced with this massive financial squeeze. To overcome these, he floated a Bond to mobilize funds internally. He even attempted a compulsory saving. Unfortunately, due to organized opposition he could not proceed with that.

Another unorthodox measure he used to obtain loans from abroad was to establish a local private company called Guyana Import & Export Co. This company got a loan from Cuba and that company lent money to the government.

This company was also used to trade with some socialist countries because the British had banned the government from having such relations. It was through that body that rice and timber products were sold to Eastern Europe and China.

The Jagan Government was moving to establish the Bank of Guyana. That bank was envisaged to be more than just a Central Bank. It was envisaged that it would serve to provide banking services to the people, particularly in

the areas outside of Georgetown. (Banks only existed in Georgetown and they were 100% foreign owned). It was another means intended to mobilize funds for developing industries and agriculture.

Conclusion

The seven years that the PPP was in office were marked by profound challenges by the combined reactionary forces locally and internationally on the one hand. On the other it was characterized by heroic resistance and great enthusiasm of the broad masses.

In addition, it brought out the creativity of Dr. Cheddi Jagan and his team in the government and the People's Progressive Party. They had to find solutions in really difficult times.

Even though all their plans could not have been realized the achievements were really impressive.

Many industries flourished and unemployment was one of the lowest in the Caribbean.

With Industry and Agriculture, scores of new Agri and industrial products came into the market. It was in this period that Guyana got the reputation as being "the breadbasket of the Caribbean".

The country's economy became much healthier using both imports substitution, mainly in food production and export promotion as our goods began to be exported to many other parts of the world.

The government was able to have a balanced budget in most of the years it was in office.

At the social level we were able to achieve an almost 100% literacy rate and our students began topping the Caribbean in GCE 'O' and 'A' levels.

The administration put a very high premium on Education and really, we had a revolution. The University of Guyana remains the only university established by a colonial people.

It ended overcrowding in schools and really created very favorable conditions for learning.

The same could be repeated in relation to health. The PPP government was able to rid the country from Malaria, Typhoid, and other diseases. The progress made in this sector could be seen in the improvement

in life expectancy and in infant and maternal mortality. In every sector great improvements were made, in housing for instance, the government was able to get rid of the houses slaves and indentured laborers live in by opening up schemes for poor people to own their own houses.

At the beginning of this talk we saw the impression of Elsa Hayland of UN, FAO as to the overbearing poverty. We also saw the remarks by the British controller for development... that the slum conditions in Georgetown were the worse in the region.

In 1963, Pro. Peter Newman wrote "... B.G per capita income (\$350) is higher than that of many Latin American countries, and very much higher than that of most countries of Africa and Asia..."

He went on to say "... No shanty towns exist, on the scale of West Kingston in Jamaica or of the swamps of Port of Spain in Trinidad..."

That reflected the great strides made in a short but troubled seven years in office of the PPP, with very limited power.

The years which Imperialism kept Dr. Jagan out of power, robbed Guyana of his genius and as a foremost developmentalist of his time.

As a testimony of his immense work during the 28th years he was continually rigged out of government, he steered the country, when re-elected in free and fair elections in 1992, along the path of a sustainable development trajectory.



Donald Ramotar is the former President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. He also served as General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party. Mr. Ramotar is a graduate from the University of Guyana in the field of Economics. He is an avid writer, and contributes regularly to the Mirror newspaper and other publications.

Editor's Note:

The following is a speech delivered by the Chinese Ambassador H.E Guo Haiyan at a Seminar to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Guo Haiyan



This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. On June 28th, some Chinese institutions co-organized the commemorative conference in Beijing. President Xi Jinping attended the conference and delivered an important address. Around 600 representatives from more than 100 countries were present at the conference. Among them was H.E. Mr Ramotar, who was the only former Head of State from the Caribbean region to be invited to the conference and serve as a guest speaker at one of the sub-forums. We look forward to Mr. Ramotar's sharing today!

Under the theme of "From the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind", the conference offered new perspective for foreign friends to understand China's foreign policy, and new opportunities for us to jointly bolster China-Guyana relations. At the end of the Second World War, national independence and liberation movements swept across the globe, and the colonial system around the world crumbled and collapsed. At the same time, the world was shrouded by the dark clouds of the Cold War and menaced by the rampant clamors that "Might is right." Newly independent countries with different social systems aspired to safeguard their sovereignty and grow their national economy, as well as to engage with each other friendly and establish international relations on the basis of equality. Against the backdrop, Premier Zhou Enlai initiated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence for the first time, namely, mutual respect for sovereignty

and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence have garnered wide international recognition and support since they were first put forward. They have become open, inclusive, and universally applicable basic norms for international relations and fundamental principles of international law. They have made indelible historic contributions to the cause of human progress.

As President Xi puts it, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence have set a historic benchmark for international relations and international rule of law and served as the prime guidance for the establishment and development of relations between countries with different social systems. They have been a powerful rallying force behind the efforts of developing countries to pursue cooperation and self-strength through unity, and contributed historic wisdom to the reform and improvement of the international order.

The baton of history is passed from generation to generation, and the cause of human progress moves forward from one era to another as mankind seek answers to the questions of the times. Seventy years ago, our forefathers, who experienced the scourge of hot wars and the confrontation of the Cold War, concluded that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were the crucial way to safeguard peace and sovereignty.

70 years later today, although human society has made

tremendous progress in terms of economy, science and technology, it is confronted by regional disputes as well as global issues such as climate change, cybersecurity and biosecurity. The world is faced with critical choices of unity and cooperation versus division and confrontation, mutual benefit versus zero-sum game, and common security versus turbulence and warfare. In that light, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence must be strengthened, not weakened; multilateralism must be upheld, not undermined; and the process toward greater democracy in international relations must move forward, not backward. President Xi Jinping put forward the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, providing a new answer to what kind of world to build and how to build it. This is the best way to inherit, advance and enrich the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence under new circumstances.

Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is the banner and the lofty goal of China's diplomacy.

The Vision of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind carries forward the same spirit of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Both are rooted in traditional Chinese values such as "Be kind to your neighbor," "Seek amity through integrity," and "Promote harmony among all nations." Both attest to China's diplomatic tenets of self-confidence, self-reliance, justice, protection of the disadvantaged, and benevolence. Both demonstrate the broad vision of the Communist Party of China to contribute more to humanity. Both manifest China's firm resolve to follow the path of peaceful development. The Vision of Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind is the most effective move to sustain, promote and upgrade the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in the new circumstances.

The Vision captures the reality that all countries have a shared future and intertwined interests, and sets a new model of equality and coexistence for international relations. China believes that all countries, regardless of their size, strength and wealth, are equal members of the international community. They have common interests, common rights, and common responsibilities in international affairs. All countries should join hands to overcome challenges, achieve shared prosperity, build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world of lasting peace, universal security, and shared prosperity, and realize peaceful coexistence with greater security and prosperity for mankind.

The Vision responds to the world's prevailing trend of peace, development, cooperation and win-win, and opens up new prospects for peace and progress. China calls on all countries to bear in mind the future of humanity and the wellbeing of the people, and uphold

their essential commitment to equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. We should all champion the common values of humanity, promote global governance that features extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit, and cultivate a new type of international relations. We should all work together to implement the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and deliver more benefits to all peoples.

The Vision keeps pace with the historic trend toward multipolarity and economic globalization, and inspires new ways to achieve development and security. China has been working together with all sides to take profound and real measures to build a community with a shared future for mankind. We have together enabled the Vision to make historic achievements—expanding from bilateral to multilateral, regional to global, development to security, and cooperation to governance. This has guided and boosted the efforts for an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. It has given the international community broad prospects of peace and stability, and presented the world with more prosperity and development.

Looking back, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence originated in the Global South and have made historic contributions to deepening South-South cooperation and North-South dialogue and promoting human progress. Going forward, the Global South stands out with a strong momentum. Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind requires the Global South to stay ahead of the historical trend.

The Global South should be more open and inclusive, and join hands to take the lead in building a community with a shared future for mankind. Together, we should be the staunch force for peace. We should promote peaceful settlement of international disputes, and participate constructively in the political settlement of international and regional hotspot issues. Together, we should be the core driving force for open development. We should restore development as the central international agenda item, reinvigorate global partnerships for development, and deepen South-South cooperation as well as North-South dialogue. Together, we should be the construction team of global governance. We should actively participate in reforming and developing the global governance system, expand the common interests of all sides, and make the global governance architecture more balanced and effective. Together, we should be the advocates for exchange among civilizations. We should enhance intercivilization communication and dialogue, and strengthen experience sharing on governance. We should deepen

exchanges in education, science, technology and culture as well as subnational, people-to-people and youth interactions.

President Xi unveiled numerous measures in support of Global South cooperation as follows. China will establish a Global South research center. It will provide 1,000 scholarships under the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence Scholarship of Excellence and 100,000 training opportunities to Global South countries in the coming five years. It will also launch a Global South youth leaders program. China will continue to make good use of the China-U.N. Peace and Development Fund, the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, and the Climate Change South-South Cooperation Fund, and will work with interested parties to set up a tripartite center of excellence for the implementation of the Global Development Initiative, so as to facilitate growth in Global South countries. It will renew the China-IFAD South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility, and make an additional contribution equivalent to US\$10 million to support agricultural development of the Global South. China is ready to discuss free trade arrangements with more Global South countries, continue to support the WTO's Aid for Trade initiative, and renew its contribution to the WTO's China Program. It welcomes more Global South countries to join the Initiative on International Trade and Economic Cooperation Framework for Digital

Economy and Green Development. Between now and 2030, China's import from fellow developing countries is expected to exceed US\$8 trillion.

Competent authorities of the Chinese government will formulate detailed plans to implement above-mentioned measures. We welcome the Guyanese side to stay tuned and take part.

As the world's largest and fastest-growing developing countries, China and Guyana are both important members of the Global South. Over the past 52 years since our two countries established diplomatic ties, China and Guyana have been committed to mutual respect, equality and win-win cooperation. China-Guyana relations set a good example of a firm adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

Against the backdrop of emerging global challenges, China and Guyana share a wide range of common interests and a common goal to realize modernization. The two countries both perform duties in United Nations Security Council and share common stances in many international affairs. Our bilateral relations are characterized by a shared future. China stands ready to work with Guyana to build a more close-knit China-Guyana community with a shared future, jointly safeguard the overall interests of developing countries, and contribute to world peace, security, prosperity and progress.



Ambassador GUO Haiyan is the Chinese Ambassador to Guyana. She is a career diplomat and University graduate.

The ANC, the GNU and Economic Transformation



The existential challenge facing the ANC

"Men make their own history (sic), but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." Marx, the Eighteenth Brumaire. There is broad agreement on the left that the Government of National Unity (GNU) arrangement will make economic transformation.

far more difficult (some would argue impossible), given the position and interests of GNU parties on economic policy issues. The question however is what should the posture of the left be on the battle for economic transformation and social justice, in view of the fact that the GNU is now a reality that we have to deal with. In addressing the challenges of transformation arising from the GNU arrangement, progressive forces need to consider - what is the dialectic between mobilising against retrogressive economic policies and engaging with aspects of policy which hold the potential for shifting things in a progressive direction? In other words, what is the balance which avoids co-option into a right wing agenda on the one hand, or reflexive oppositionism, which marginalises the influence of the left. Under circumstances arising from the GNU, conditions for mobilisation and engagement may

have shifted, but the necessity to both mobilise and engage politically remain imperative, if the left is not to relinquish critical battles, for example, against austerity, or to abandon key opportunities to make progress in important areas of manoeuvre, such as basic income. We need to bear in mind that despite new constraints in the GNU from conservative parties in government, the ANC is now under huge pressure to deliver. This creates different conditions, both negative and positive, which require greater nuance and more sophisticated political strategies to navigate intelligently. Examples of issues which on the face of it appear to offer some prospects for advance, providing significant mobilisation and engagement takes place, include:

- The battle for basic income, particularly through improving and expanding the SRD (Social Relief of Distress) grant.
- A more active industrial strategy.
- The delivery of public health.
- Measures to bring down the prices of food and essentials.
- Expansion of public employment.

More difficult but nevertheless issues with some space for advance include:

- Pushing back against contractionary monetary policy (and lowering of inflation targets).
- Proposing coherent alternatives for the rebuilding and strengthening of SOEs (State Owned Entities).
- Building public finance institutions.
- Using unconventional financial interventions such as prescribed assets.
- Maintaining a progressive geopolitical stance and supporting the restructuring of global financial architecture (also bearing in mind South Africa's role in hosting the G20 in 2025).

Very difficult, but issues requiring creative alternatives include:

¹Of the example of Lula campaigning for the Brazilian Central Bank to lower interest rates, and the raising of some voices in South African business against our excessively contractionary monetary policy.

- Pushing back austerity, including through advancing fiscal alternatives on debt, progressive taxation, mobilising domestic resources etc. IEJ (Institute of Economic Justice) and others have made proposals on how this can be done, including through restructuring debt, use of the Public Investment Corporation, the Gold and Foreign Exchange Contingency Reserve Account (GFECRA) etc. Partial success in promoting release of GFECRA resources show that space does exist on this front- see below.

Identification of policy space above is speculative to a degree, as we don't know what commitments the ANC has given on economic policy to its coalition partners, and therefore the extent to which it is constrained. Have for example National Treasury and the DA's proposals for new fiscal rules, such as budget and debt ceilings been agreed to? If so, this would entrench and consolidate hyper austerity, and make much of the above unrealisable.

There is also insufficient clarity on how the principle of "sufficient consensus" will work in the GNU (apart from the fact that on the face of it, the DA will be able to block new policies from being adopted which it opposes, at the same time as not being able to reverse existing progressive policies) and in particular how the deadlock breaking mechanism will operate in the event that sufficient consensus can't be realised - this mechanism is only briefly mentioned in Clause 19 of the GNU Statement of Intent, but has not been clarified.

As controversial as it may be, a case can be made that the GNU, with all its inherent problems, may have certain political positives, including better governance and accountability, as a more robust parliament and political contestation between GNU partners keep political parties on their toes, as they feel greater pressure to deliver. This may ironically also make the ANC more sensitive to critiques around the negative impacts of austerity.

The jury is still out on whether these potential positives will materialise, and whether the initial honeymoon of contestation and collaboration will hold or fracture, as the inherent contradictions come to the fore, and possibly explode. If the latter, then we will enter a new terrain of struggle, including the possibility of a minority government, or even early elections.

Balance of forces after the May 2024 elections

What are the "circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past" under which we are attempting to make our own history?

Key elements of the post May 2024 environment include:

- A multipronged social and economic crisis in the country, arising directly from failed economic policies, combined with a hollowed out and dysfunctional state.
- The lack of coherent progressive options, or left political alternatives, in the face of reactionary, right wing populist agendas increasingly taking root in response to these crises.
- A demobilised and alienated population with large scale withdrawal from the political process, including by the ANC's traditional support base, many of whom decided not to vote (over 60% of the voting age population failed to vote, and 4-5 million people who had previously voted for the ANC didn't vote for them, many of whom abstained totally).
- The weakness of left elements in the Alliance, including COSATU and the SACP, and the further splintering of the ANC into populist, and predatory formations - nearly two thirds of the vote went either to the ANC, or parties historically born from the ANC, including the MK party and the EFF.

Thus the South African left confronts a hostile environment coming out of the elections, with multiple risks and dangers.

But it is also true that this situation creates new possibilities:

- The notion that neoliberal economic policies can provide an answer to the crisis has been comprehensively discredited;
- The severity of the economic crisis, and its translation into an existential threat to the liberation movement, challenges previous complacency in the political elite. This could force a focus on the need for urgent action to address crises such as rising hunger and poverty;
- Left forces are being confronted with the need to provide coherent alternatives to navigate a way out of this morass, with some calling for a popular front along the lines of the French left alternative; and
- Increased political competition could provide focus and urgency to introduce immediate measures having a material and tangible impact on people's lives, and address the need for structural economic transformation.

But the opposite is also true: we could see a doubling down on austerity economics, and the dogma of "structural reforms" as the panacea to the crisis, as well as other measures to please the markets, including

large scale privatisation and commercialisation of public services.

Which of these two trajectories dominate will in significant part be determined by how progressive forces organise themselves in society, particularly in the labour and social movements, inside the alliance, and inside the state. It remains an open question whether the left has the will and capacity to do this, as well as on the strength of the right wing project, in all its forms (such as its neoliberal, right populist, and predatory varieties). I now turn to the question of the ANC's economic legacy, the political consequences of economic policy choices, and the challenge of shifting course.

Political outcome of the ANC's economic legacy?

The shock election results are fundamentally about the failure of the last three decades of economic policies, which have not succeeded in structurally transforming the economy. These policies have instead deepened inequality, worsened unemployment, and failed to address poverty and hunger in society. The election results should thus be seen as the political expression of underlying economic realities.

Periods of modest economic improvement (for example, the mid-2000s, which were however extremely limited in scope) were achieved despite these policies, and indeed because of their partial relaxation. Although successive ANC governments have conscientiously implemented the economic policies advised by financial institutions and markets, particularly on macroeconomic policies, these policies have failed on all significant social and economic metrics, and plunged us into a low growth, and stalled development, trap.

The devastating social legacy which has resulted, is reflected not only in the collapse of the ANC's electoral support, but also the mass stayaway of the ANC's traditional constituency from the elections. This is not surprising given crises facing potential voters, such as persistent, structural youth unemployment, the GBV "epidemic" facing women and girls, collapsing infrastructure and public services, and growing hunger and poverty. The crises in society have affected all strata, particularly working class and middle class black voters, amongst whom the stayaway figures were highest.

According to an article in Daily Maverick a 2023 HSRC survey of voters found that political discontent and disillusionment "emerged as the main reason for electoral abstention". When asked what their main reason would be for not voting if the national elections were held tomorrow, 81% of people had responded, "disillusionment". Trust in political parties was at 17%. This also suggests that an increasingly large number

of people feel that none of the parties represent their interests, and there is therefore a vacuum in political representation, particularly by parties of the left and working class. This simply means that our political system is progressively losing legitimacy. It doesn't take an expert to work out that the vast majority of people did not participate in elections, because they see no prospect of improvement in their lives with stagnant wages, rising cost of living, rising unemployment, rising hunger and rising poverty, and without a viable political alternative which they trust in.

These trends raise critical questions about the future of our democracy, as well as social cohesion and development. The underlying crises giving rise to these trends mean that without a change in direction, particularly on economic policy, this trajectory will deepen. We therefore need a decisive shift, not only to address socio-economic conditions, but also to build and deepen our democracy.

The multiple socio economic crises in South Africa are also giving rise to pathologies such as ethnic chauvinism and quasi feudalism, xenophobia, and misogyny. These mirror trends in other societies facing deep economic and social stress. South Africa, which has a strong tradition of progressive left working class activism, is now seeing the alarming emergence of right wing populist elements. Historically concentrated in largely white parties, such trends are now also reflected in majority black political parties, such as the MKP, Action SA and the PA; as well as within parties, including the ANC, which is experiencing a rise in xenophobia.

The answer to such developments is not to condemn the "backwardness" of ordinary people supporting such views, but to advance coherent alternatives, on issues such as employment, immigration and other questions which lie at the root of peoples attraction to such ideas. Secondly, to implement economic policies which combat the social stress which people are experiencing, and which offer real improvements in their lives, in employment, income, living standards and so forth.

What are the key dynamics driving the ANC's economic legacy?

Fear of the power of international markets in an era of hyper globalisation, and the rolling back of the state's role in the economy, led in significant part to the displacement of the ANC's social democratic economic development programme (the RDP – Reconstruction and Development Plan), and the introduction of a conservative, World Bank-inspired macroeconomic programme (GEAR – Growth, Employment and Redistribution) in 1996. Without going into the history of economic policy making in

South Africa, this programme essentially with minor modifications, laid the basis for government's economic policy stance over the last thirty years.

Treasury has since then doggedly and dogmatically pursued this policy paradigm with total commitment, irrespective of changes in international economic thinking, or South African realities. Stripped to its essence this paradigm entailed reducing the economic role of the state and the public service, liberalisation and deregulation, the achievement of arbitrarily determined macroeconomic targets, such as deficit and debt ratios and the associated spending cuts.

Largely driven by financial sector interests, contractionary fiscal policies (stagnation or cutting of spending and investment in real per capita terms) were combined with contractionary monetary policies (involving the use of high real interest rates) leading to the choking of economic activity, deindustrialisation, and the suppression of growth. This has led to the pursuit of what economists all pro-cyclical economic policies which deepen economic contractions. This has been the general trend, but of course there have been some periods of limited deviation from the strict application of this economic paradigm, often as a result of resistance (for example, from organised labour) and as a result of contestation within the governing party and the state.

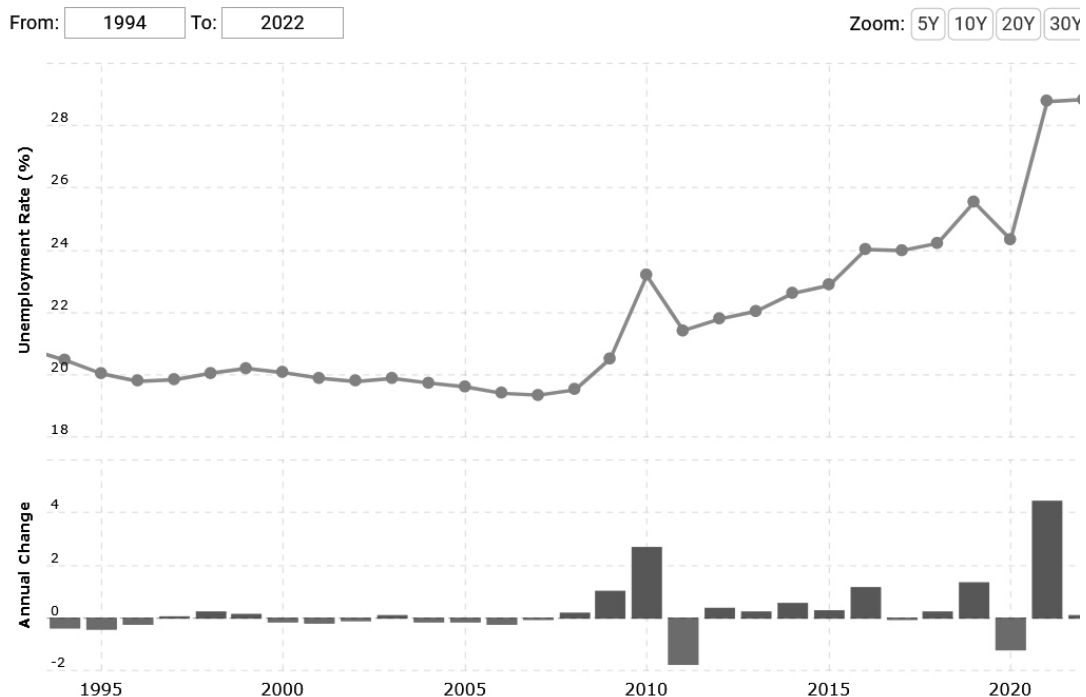
There was a period in the early 2000's, after the formal ending of the GEAR programme, of mildly expansionary macroeconomic policies - the relaxation of monetary policy combined with a moderately expansionary fiscal policy - which allowed for greater growth

and employment, although at too low a level, and insufficiently inclusive, to address our structural crises, or reduce inequality.

Over the last fifteen years this conservative fiscal stance has progressively morphed into full-blown austerity, despite denials of its existence by the economic establishment. Even the cautious Public Economy Project at Wits, led by the former head of Treasury's budget office, has argued that there have been three phases of austerity, and characterises the latest phase as "permanent".

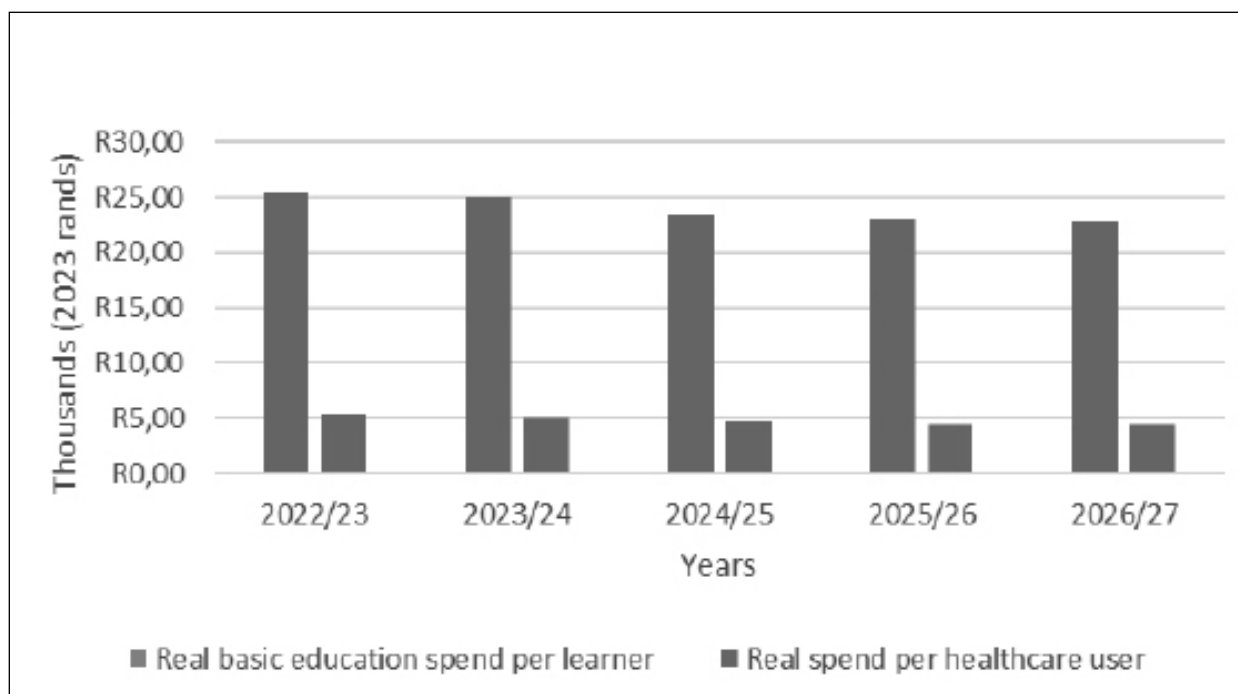
This fiscal stance driven by Treasury has been compounded by an equally contractionary stance driven by the South African Reserve Bank. The use of high real interest rates, while beneficial to the financial sector and financial speculators, has been devastating for the real economy, making it too expensive for businesses and individuals to borrow and invest in productive capacity or small businesses. This has had an extremely negative effect on investment, economic development and employment. The result of this economic policy is the highest unemployment rate globally.

Budget cutbacks have had multiple impacts, contributing to deteriorating public services in critical areas including education, health, social security and policing. Austerity simply means that while historic spending levels are already inadequate, cutbacks result in even less money being spent on every child, every patient, and every community member, leading to a crisis in key public services.



The graph below shows that because government aims to decrease real spending on basic education and healthcare by R16 and R14 billion respectively in the medium term- spending per enrolled learner will fall, in real terms, from R25 387 in 2022/23 to R23 363 in 2026/27; and while an average of R5 326 was spent on each public healthcare recipient in 2022/23, this will fall to R4 525 in real terms by 2026/27.

corporatisation, severely undermined an enterprise then rated as the top electricity utility in the world. Crucially, progressive developmental policies adopted by government, particularly since the early 2000s, including expansion of social security, activist industrial policy, worker friendly labour market interventions, etc, have been heavily constrained, and sometimes completely frustrated by the impact of contractionary macro policies.



The impact of these cutbacks is also clearly evident in undermining of key public institutions, most recently in the elections with an under resourced IEC which battled to execute its mandate; and the understaffing and resultant under-capacity in the NPA to fight crime and corruption, amongst many others. This is in stark contrast to the strong performance of SARS, which is relatively better resourced, and thus better able to exercise its mandate. These “savings” therefore come at a huge cost. It is clear that state capture over the last decade has massively worsened the impact of these misguided policies, but it would be a mistake to think that the hollowing out of state capacity is only the result of corruption and state capture. The dysfunctionality of SOEs, while accelerated by state capture, was in part the result of lack of investment in these companies, flowing directly from the macro-economic stance of government. The now infamous example of the (since retracted) apology by President Mbeki for failing to invest in expanding Eskom’s capacity, and the failed strategy of

Without these developmental policies being properly resourced, their impact of contractionary macro policies. Without these developmental policies being properly resourced, their impact has inevitably been severely limited. A backward macro-economic policy logic has therefore led to deep contradictions within government and ANC policy, whose inconsistencies have become so notorious.

Narratives attempting to justify conservative macro-economic policy

Attempts to justify austerity economics have been taken to extremes. Some even deny, in the face of all evidence, that austerity exists. Others (SARB, Treasury and their associated economists) claim that public spending doesn’t work because it has negative multipliers, meaning in crude terms that it adds less to the economy than the amount spent. This is contradicted both by the evidence, and common sense.

²IEJ submission to parliament on the MTEF, November 2023

Research by the IMF and Sao Paulo University show for example that investment in social protection has particularly high economic multipliers in unequal societies such as ours; and recent research on public employment in South Africa also indicates positive impacts. Treasury opposition to public investment strangely contradicts their emphasis on the importance of developing economic infrastructure, but supports their privatisation agenda.

In the face of the damaging effects of these misguided economic policies, Treasury and the economic establishment regularly trot out various mantras in an attempt to justify their stance. Statements about so-called fiscal prudence, lowering or capping debt, reducing consumption, achieving a budget surplus, and so on, often seem to the ordinary person to be attractive and common sense, when compared to the economic pressures on households. But the state is not a household.

The self-defeating character of Treasury's approach came into sharp focus with their decision in the budget to release R150 billion from the Reserve Bank GFECRA fund owed to the fiscus, following the IEJ's advocacy for these funds to be used for development. Treasury instead decided to deploy all the funds to retire debt, without any concomitant expansion in social expenditure. The net effect was to pump resources into the financial markets, with zero benefit to critical social needs. This is a dramatic demonstration of Treasury's skewed priorities and the interests they serve.

In reality conservative economic strategies achieve the opposite of what is claimed by their proponents, resulting in: reckless cutting of public services; increasing the risk profile of the country because of unsustainable social distress; reducing growth, and making it more difficult to contain debt to GDP levels; unnecessarily wasting resources on the financial markets, and hollowing out the real economy; the list goes on. These policies are a recipe for a downward economic spiral and social instability. This is the reality we have witnessed over the last three decades!

Despite government's clear track record of economic conservatism, and despite all evidence to the contrary, much of the financial media has claimed that the ANC government has taken radical economic positions. However prominent journalist Carol Paton recently praised the economic conservatism of the ANC in government, stating: "The hallmark of ANC rule for three decades has been pragmatic and orthodox fiscal policy... The ANC has a history of taking radical resolutions at its conferences, which the government has repeatedly failed to implement... the ANC has for 30 years fielded smart, pragmatic, and authoritative finance ministers

(sic). They have been key to steering the ship based on economic orthodoxy."

We need to oppose all forms of anti-constitutionalism.

Claims by parties of the right to be constitutionalists, including the DA, don't stand scrutiny. As Professor Thuli Madonsela has suggested recently, these parties are in effect economic anticonstitutionalists: They oppose key aspects of the Constitution, including action to redress historical injustices, and support economic policies, and imposition of fiscal rules, which make it impossible to give effect to the constitutional requirements on socio-economic rights.

The DA's economic paradigm would prevent realisation of sections 26-29 of the Constitution requiring government to progressively realise everybody's right to housing, health, food, water, social security and education. Nor can these rights be realised within Treasury's economic policies, which government has pursued for the last 30 years. The DA and other parties of the right, if given the power, would double down on these policies which go against the spirit of the Constitution.

Indeed the key adversary of any progressive developmental project is the DA-Treasury axis.

The DA's proposals to impose arbitrary macro-economic targets; to impose a debt ceiling; to cut back current expenditure, which they advanced as preconditions for participating in the GNU, would plunge SA into a Greek-type economic crisis, if implemented. It would destroy growth, deepen poverty, slash public services, and increase inequality and unemployment.

What are the alternatives?

If successful, the concerted push to shift the ANC even further rightwards on economic policy will only deepen its crisis, and destroy any prospect of recovering its historic position as a leading political force in society. More importantly, in the absence of a viable alternative, it would threaten to destabilise society, and give way to chaotic and unpredictable forces which would not be in the interests of ordinary working class or poor people.

The ANC is faced with a choice: double down on failed economic policies, or boldly shift direction to embrace developmental economic policies which have a proven track record. The ANC can try to make this progressive shift within the tight parameters of the GNU; or if that fails, find a different governance arrangement which makes this possible.

A progressive shift must address both elements of our

current economic crisis and the associated political economy. Developmental interventions are needed which:

- Unleash inclusive economic growth, economic diversification and employment; and
- Open avenues for economic activity, currently closed off, that are not dependent on the state for illegitimate economic accumulation.

What could such an alternative economic package look like? In brief, I have argued elsewhere that we need a package of economic measures which Stabilise, Stimulate, and Structurally Transform the economy in a carefully sequenced manner.

Fiscal resources should be mobilised to introduce high impact interventions, such as basic income which stimulate economic activity in depressed communities and generate broader economic demand and production; critical interventions to fix strategic areas of state capacity; mobilising capacity to repair and defend infrastructure; and so on. This needs to be coupled with a shift in monetary policy to spur investment in the real economy.

These interventions would aim to get the wheels of the economy moving and restore confidence, while structural economic transformation is taken forward. Some policies will take longer to roll out, including new infrastructure projects and diversification of the economy, and would need to be undertaken in parallel. Much is made of the economic limitations we face, with some even making the ludicrous claim that “we have run

out of money”. There are no doubt serious challenges, but bold and creative thinking will enable us to mobilise resources, and make high impact interventions, with the necessary political will and imagination. The IEJ and others have outlined proposals to mobilise domestic resources, and have shown that there are many examples of untapped funds, including the GFECRA fund which Treasury had previously claimed to be unavailable.

There is a strong “business case” for these economic alternatives, including the fact that such an approach would create a large demand stimulus across the economy; build important infrastructure and state capacity; stabilise society; and generate opportunities to invest in a broader range of productive activities. There is a strong “business case” for these economic alternatives, including the fact that such an approach would create a large demand stimulus across the economy; build important infrastructure and state capacity; stabilise society; and generate opportunities to invest in a broader range of productive activities. Could this constitute a basis for the proposed national dialogue?

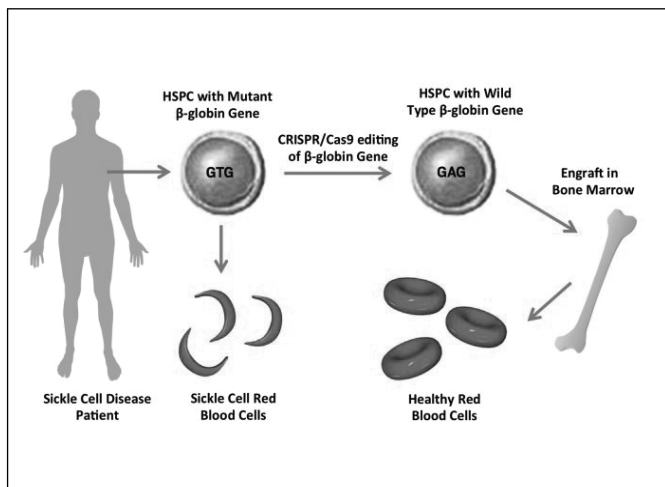
Neil Coleman August 2024

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This article is written in his personal capacity. It is a substantially revised version of an article written in Daily Maverick before the GNU was formed



The Promise of Gene Editing Treatment for Human Illness: Curing Sickle Cell Disease



Two brilliant female scientists, Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna, won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2020 for what is considered one of the biggest scientific discoveries in the last decade – the CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors. This type of (molecular) technology allows the precise modification of the human genome to bring about a therapeutic effect (treatment of disease). This breakthrough technology has paved the way for advancement in the treatment of diseases including cancer by editing/altering the human genome thereby fixing what is deemed defective DNA (1). Recently the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) made a historic decision to approve the first CRISPR gene editing treatment to alleviate human illness specifically for sickle cell disease. Prior to delving into the specifics of this

case, it is necessary to review the basics of the human genome and its genes.

The human genome and the genetic basis of disease

The flow of information in biology, which makes you what you are, starts with DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) which is copied onto RNA (ribonucleic acid) which in turn is used to make proteins (Figure 1). The terminology generally used is that DNA and RNA codes for proteins or they have encoded information used to make proteins. DNA and RNA are long strings of nucleotides (individual units joined together); a nucleotide is made of a sugar, a nitrogenous base and a phosphate group. Proteins are long strings of amino acids joined together and determine the structure and function of our cells. They are

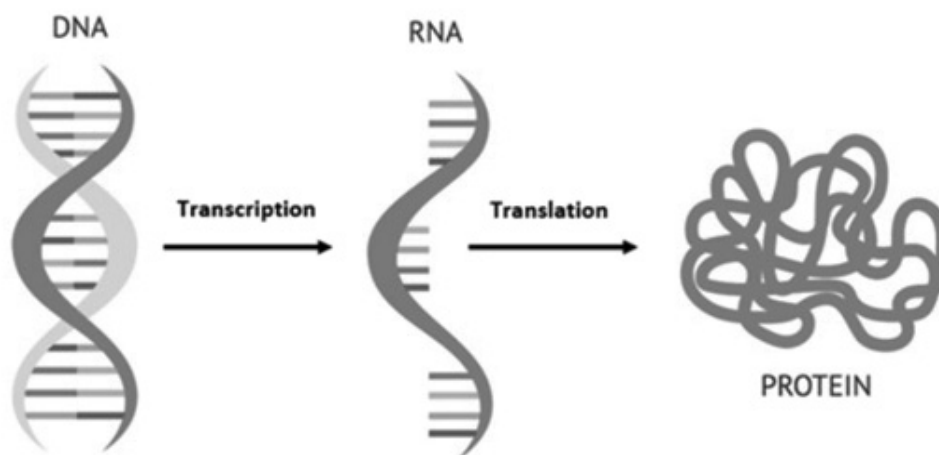


Figure 1. RNA is copied from DNA then used to make proteins (Source: <https://www.istockphoto.com/>)

the workhorses of our cells carrying out all the necessary functions for life. Any faults in this process or flow of information from DNA to RNA to protein or alterations in the structure of these molecules can lead to various diseases. The DNA and RNA nucleotides comprises four bases represented by letters – adenine (A), guanine (G), cytosine (C) and thymine (T) in DNA and, adenine (A), guanine (G), cytosine (C) and uracil (U) (Figure 2). The human genome has 3 billion of these DNA letters paired to their complement (base pairs), twisted into a helical form and tightly packed into 23 chromosomes or 30,000 genes in 23 chromosomes pairs of chromosomes in a human cell (Figure 3). Two meters (about nine feet) of DNA are packed into each of three trillion cells in humans. A gene is a basic unit with function – a piece of DNA sequence (string of nucleotides) that codes for a functional product, RNA or protein, with a specific trait that is inherited. Diseases can be caused by mutations or defects in DNA or RNA and their regulation and, faulty genes or gene sequences. Gene editing can be used to correct disease causing mutations, add genes to specific sites in the genome to fix a fault or remove harmful genes or genome sequences. This is all done at the molecular level with molecular scissors. It should be noted that gene editing is different from genetically modified organisms (GMOs). GMOs are produced by inserting genes in random and multiple locations in the genome

with a low level of efficiency while gene editing is precise where genes are edited at specific positions.

The Case of Sickle Cell Disease

Sickle cell disease is a group of blood related illnesses usually inherited. Most of us are familiar with sickle cell anaemia which is a type of sickle cell disease. In hospitals sickle cell anaemia is treated with blood transfusions and pain killers to reduce the severe pain but these symptoms usually come back within months. The disease is caused by a genetic mutation (change in the sequence of your DNA) which causes the oxygen-carrying protein, hemoglobin, found in red blood cells to be abnormal which in turn causes the red blood cells to be crescent shape (sickle). The abnormal cells are stiff and sticky and can clog arteries and vein blocking blood flow and oxygen delivery to different parts of the body for normal function (Figure 4). This results in severe pain and slow damage to the joints, liver, kidney, brain, heart, and lungs. Sickle cells also die at a faster rate than normal blood cells – 120 days for normal cells while sickle cells take 10-20 days. The liver’s filtration system struggles to keep up with the pace of dying sickle cells and so the by-product from the breakdown of red blood cells, bilirubin, begins to build up causing jaundice, another

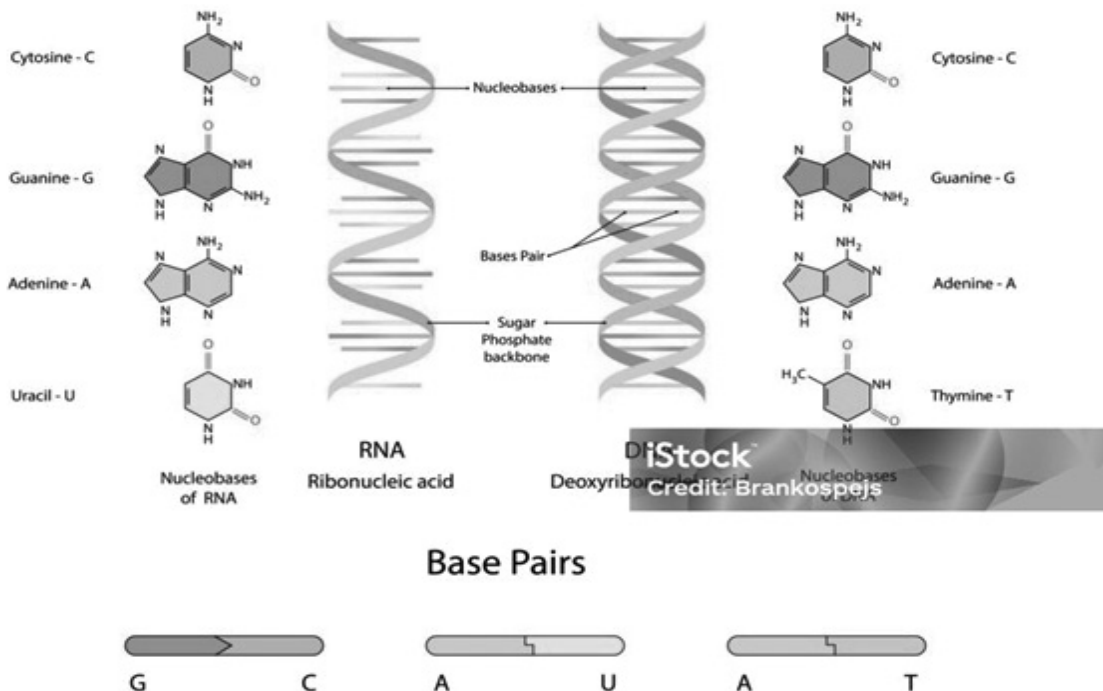


Figure 2. Structure of RNA and DNA (Source: <https://www.istockphoto.com/>)

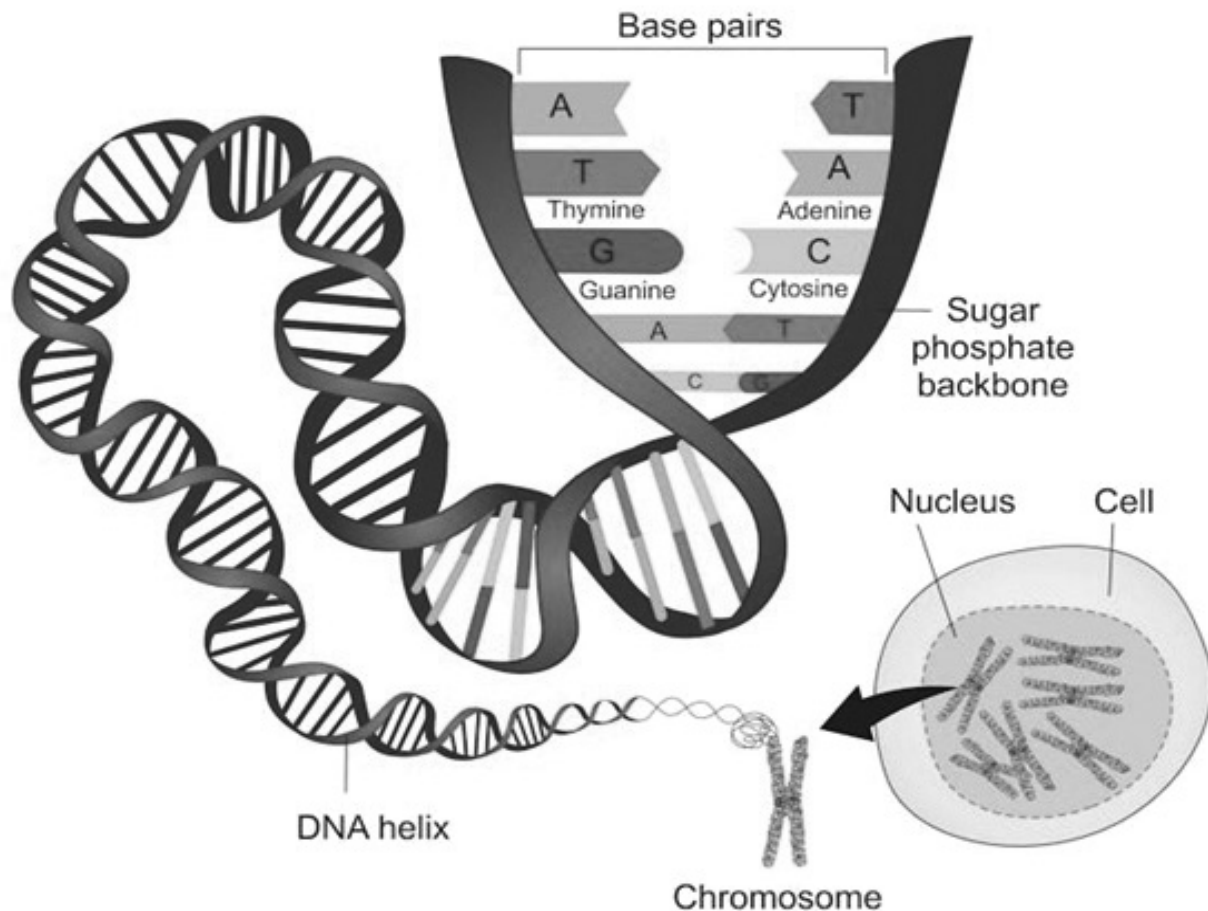


Figure 3. The packing of DNA into Chromosomes in Cells found in Humans (Source: <https://open.lib.umn.edu/>)

consequence of the disease. Hydroxyurea is the drug given to treat the symptoms of the disease but its not a cure. To date the cure is to replace abnormal stem cells in the bone marrow of a sick person with healthy ones from a matched donor which is very difficult to find. So for decades there has been an ongoing search for better cures that would fundamentally fix the problem and not just treat symptoms of the disease. One focus of research is to increase fetal haemoglobin levels which are usually high at birth and decreases as a child grows where adult haemoglobins eventually replaces most of the fetal form. Fetal haemoglobin produces normal red blood cells and so the idea is replacing fetal haemoglobin would significantly reduce the amount of sickle cells resulting in less severe symptoms of sickle cell disease. A huge breakthrough in this area came when researchers figured out that silencing a gene called BCL11A, with gene editing, stimulates the production of fetal haemoglobin in adult

cells. This discovery led to the first approved gene editing treatment for sickle cell disease – Casgevy manufactured by CRISPR Therapeutics and Vertex Pharmaceuticals (2). Both the US and UK approved this drug for the treatment of sickle cell disease in 2023.

The Genetic Basis for Sickle Cells

In sickle cell anaemia, mutations in a gene called HBB affect haemoglobin's structure leading to the sickle-like red blood cells. The HBB gene is located on chromosome 11 in our cells at a specific position and provides instructions for making a protein called beta-globin¹²³; the HBB gene codes for this protein. Beta-globin is a component of hemoglobin, which is located inside red blood cells. The mutations in the gene codes for a form of the beta-globin protein that twists around red blood cells causing it to become sickle shaped instead of normal.

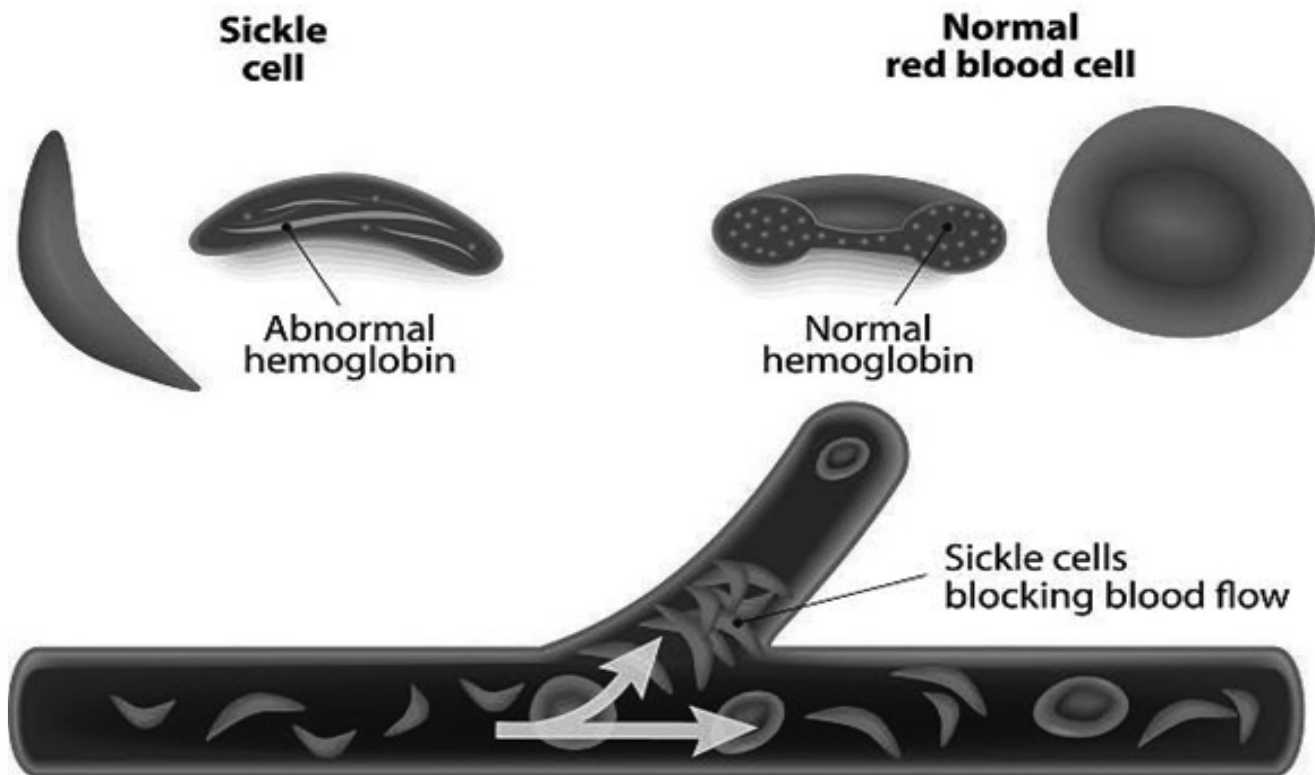


Figure 4. The shape of red blood cells in sickle cell disease (Source: <https://www.istockphoto.com/>)

How does the gene editing treatment work?

The BCL11A gene mentioned earlier usually prevents the body from making a form of haemoglobin found only in fetuses; a form that makes normal blood cells and sickle ones. Casgevy directs an enzyme called Cas9 to this gene (BCL11A) to turn it off (silencing it). Cas9 deactivates BCL11A in bone marrow stem cells (where red blood cells are made), by cutting its DNA at the precise location of the gene thereby acting like a molecular scissors. The bone marrow stem cells now start producing fetal hemoglobin and red blood cells with a normal round shape, since the gene (BCL11A) is now inactive; it cannot prevent normal blood cells from forming. In the new gene editing treatment, physicians remove a person's own bone marrow stem cells, edit them with Casgevy, destroy the rest of the person's untreated bone marrow and then reinfuse the edited cells. The edited cells are expected to repopulate the entire body creating normal shaped red blood cells and curing the disease. Thus far, the cure has lasted under two years.

How safe and effective is this treatment?

The FDA reports that ongoing studies up to two years so far show that the treatment is generally safe and well tolerated. In terms of efficacy, there are several small ongoing studies that will follow patients for up to 15 years but the most recent published data shows that for 29 of the 30 study participants who have sickle cell anemia, there was no painful episodes for 12 months after Casgevy treatments (transfusions) and no hospitalizations. Thirty-nine out of 42 beta-thalassemia patients no longer needed blood or bone marrow transplants for one year after the Casgevy treatment (3). Beta-thalassemia is the condition which sometimes accompanies sickle cell anaemia, enough haemoglobin or red blood cells isn't produced by the body. The therapy also raises fetal haemoglobin levels by 30-40%. Long term risks are unknown but with the treatment, chemotherapy is required to removed old cells and replace them with new correct ones.

Global access to gene editing treatment

The other FDA approved gene editing drug is Lyfgenia (manufactured by Bluebird Bio) which delivers the correct gene for producing healthy haemoglobin in stem cells (from a patient) in a lab before the healthy cells are returned to a patient's body. A small clinical trial showed that 32 out of 33 people with sickle cell disease treated with Lyfgenia didn't experience any painful episodes 6-18 months after treatment. To date, the US, UK, Bahrain, EU and Saudi Arabia approved at least one of these drugs for treating people 12 years and older with sickle cell disease. The price for treatment is a whopping \$2-3 million per patients making it inaccessible to most people particularly in low- and middle-income countries where the disease is prevalent. Researchers have shown that growth of the parasite that causes malaria is prohibited in sickle cells. So, the mutation that causes sickle cells evolved to help humans in places where malaria is prevalent – about half the world's sickle cell disease population lives in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and India. In July 2023, the Indian government launched a mission to limit sickle cell disease's passage to the next generation and mostly eliminate it by 2047. One of their goals is to increase awareness by 2026 and screen 70 million people in the states where the disease is prevalent. In addition, Indian researchers are focused on using the CRISPR gene editing work to correct the root cause mutation responsible for the disease and more importantly, finding a cheaper and more accessible cure, perhaps one that will be shared with the world.

Outlook

This article highlighted one example of the power of gene editing – curing sickle cell disease. While its use in treating sickle disease has not been more than two years thus far, the power of the technology lies in allowing the precise and exact manipulation of genetic material. Certainly, it is fundamental to health care systems in helping to fix the root cause of genetic disorders rather than just using treatments for alleviating symptoms. There are also ongoing investigations involving agricultural ap-

plications for its use in creating disease free crops and crops resistant to climate change given our current dilemma. Gene editing technology will only continue to be refined and improved but ethical and societal implications will remain at the forefront of discussions particularly the huge challenge of making it accessible to all. Finally, gene editing technology is vital going forward and it would be beneficial for the Caribbean to invest in this area going forward rather than rely on the current owners of the technology.

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Democracy and Development



Most development practitioners point to a positive correlation between democracy and development. In this article, I propose to examine the nexus between democracy and socio-economic development with particular reference to the second half of the 20th century when the country experienced limited self-rule and ultimate political independence in May 1966.

It is important to put in context the definitions of both democracy and development since there are varying definitions attributable to both terms based on political and ideological predispositions.

For the purpose of this discussion, democracy is defined as the will of the majority in verified free, fair and transparent elections based on the principles of political and ideological pluralism.

Development is the expansion of the economic and the consequential, social and cultural benefits to the broad masses of people consequent upon that expansion. In this regard, development must be differentiated from growth. Growth is quantitative whereas development is qualitative. It is possible to have growth without development. Economic growth is a necessary though not sufficient condition for human development.

Based on the above contextualization, it is now possible to examine economic development in Guyana during two distinct periods in our political history, namely that of PNC authoritarian rule and PPP democratic rule.

The records will show that it was under the PPP administration that real development took place in Guyana. The blueprint for such development was laid during the PPP's shortlived term in office in 1953 the

full implementation of which was aborted after the suspension of the Constitution by the British Government after a mere six months in office. It is important to point out that after the overthrow of the PPP in what is regarded as a constitutional coup, the country marked time for four years until fresh elections were held in 1957 which was again decisively won by the PPP.

It is fair to say that the first major surge in development took place during the 1957-1964 period despite the fact that the country was still under British colonial rule. The fact that such unprecedented developments took place against the background of scarce financial resources and little or no access to western capital makes it all the more remarkable.

The 1957-64 period saw an expansion and diversification of the economic base of the economy which hitherto was based on a narrow range of manufactured products mainly for the export. The country had experienced a situation where, in the words of economist Dr. Clive Thomas, 'we were producing what we were not consuming, and consuming what we were not producing.' One consequence of that developmental paradox was serious balance of payments difficulties.

This year on January 21, progressive mankind marked the centenary of the passing of Vladimir Lenin. This was Under the PPP government, there was balanced growth and development. A number of industrial estates were established and agricultural production became much more diversified. The production of milk, poultry, eggs, meat and other non-traditional crops such as cassava and plantains reached record levels.

Such was the extent of milk and cassava production that one opposition political party, the United Force promised free cassava and milk should it win the 1961 general elections!

As it turned out, although the PPP won a plurality of votes in the 1964 elections, the party was denied an opportunity to form the government in what former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson described as a 'fiddled constitutional arrangement' which saw the electoral system changed from first past the post to proportional representation. In the 1961 elections, the PPP secured 42.6 % of the votes but won 57% of the parliamentary seats. The PNC won 40.9% and the United Force 16.3% respectively. With the new electoral

system of PR, it was possible for the PNC and the United Force to enter into a coalition government which in fact happened in the 1964 elections.

One of the first actions taken by the new PNC-UF coalition was to suppress the economic, political and economic rights of the Guyanese people. This was made much easier with the booting out of the United Force on the eve of the 1968 elections. With the United Force out of the way, the PNC under Forbes Burnham was at liberty to manipulate the democratic processes through a variety of measures including a padded voters list, control of the Elections Commission and the introduction of overseas voting. In the 1968 elections, the PNC singlehandedly 'won' 55.8% of the votes, the PPP 36.4% and the United Force 7.4% respectively. In terms of parliamentary seats, the PNC 'won' 30, the PPP 19 and the United Force 4.

The rupture of the democratic fabric of the society was accompanied by a number of socio-economic problems. For most of the post 1964 period, the economy registered negative growth. The country experienced severe foreign exchange shortages due to declining exports and smuggling of goods including gold. There was an acute shortage of essential goods which were only available on the underground market and at exorbitant prices. The ordinary people were catching hell to survive and for the vast majority of the population life was a nightmare. Guyana, which was among the richest in the Caribbean during the 1960s became the poorest country in the western hemisphere by the end of the 1980s. Such was the state of the economy that the country was declared bankrupt by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and was deemed 'uncreditworthy'.

The salient point to note in the above is that there is a correlation between politics and economics. The political crisis which the country experienced due to rigged elections resulted in an economic crisis which in turn resulted in a social crisis. In other words, there was a dialectical relationship between politics and economics. The prolonged political crisis which resulted from rigged elections for close to three decades had left in its wake a devastated economy and a country that was bordering on the margins of a failed state.

With the return of democracy on October 5, 1992 the

economic fortunes of the country again changed. Under the leadership of Dr. Cheddi Jagan the country gradually regained its former status as a regional leader, a situation which became even more pronounced following the discovery of oil in commercial quantities. Guyana is now ranked among the fastest growing economy in the region due to the impact of oil revenues.

Conclusion

While there can be no doubt about the between democracy and development, the importance of good governance and respect for the norms of accountability cannot be overemphasized. When the PPP took power in 1992 it promulgated a governance approach based on lean and clean government and development with a human face. It also embraced a developmental paradigm of putting people at the centre of all programmes and policies. This approach to development has continued under all successive administrations headed by Janet Jagan, Bharrat Jagdeo, Donald Ramotar and Irfaan Ali. This is why it is so important not only to consolidate and enrich our democracy but to also pursue policies to enhance the quality of all Guyanese, especially those of the working class.



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Editor's Note:

The following article is reprinted from a Straight Talk (Mirror Newspaper, dated 7th February, 1988 to highlight the importance of democracy for economic and social development.

DEMOCRACY CAN SAVE ECONOMY

Chile under Allende provides a valuable lesson to scholars, social scientists, politicians and developmentalists who are concerned with peace and social progress.

The short-lived Popular Unity Government set an example of political and ideological pluralism, which Caricom embraces.

The multi-party Popular Unity was a coalition of different class and social forces — workers, peasants, patriotic capitalists, radical intelligentsia — brought together by their common experience of Chilean history and reality. The patriotic small and medium-sized capitalists of the Radical Party and the revolutionary-democrats (left-wing of the petty-bourgeoisie) allied themselves with socialists of Allende's Socialist Party (Marxist) and communists

of the Communist Party and accepted socialism as the ultimate goal of Chile.

The Popular Unity Government respected 'the rights of the opposition operating within the legal framework'. By agreeing to respect constitutional guarantees, President Allende's coalition though a minority in the Congress, re-

gives the lie to those who in the case of Guyana say 'better rigged elections than no elections', meaning that under Marxism-Leninism there are no elections and an electoral victory by the People's Progressive Party would mean no future elections.

BASIC DEMOCRATIC CHANGES
Popular Unity had succeeded in increasing its popu-

government was able to make great strides within a very short while. It nationalised the commanding heights of the economy, carried out an extensive land reform of large estates and implemented an extensive social and cultural programme. It improved social benefits, including half a litre of free milk for every child under twelve, the steady extension of free breakfasts and free lunches to all children in kindergartens and schools, increased family allowances, and old age pensions, rent allowances, and substantial increase of wages. With the purchasing power rising by 30 per cent and actual consumption going up by 20 per cent, the shift in the balance of income distribution was marked: the share of the national income going to the working class rose from 50 to 60 per cent.

Straight Talk By CHEDDI JAGAN

ceived a unanimous vote for the nationalisation of the foreign-owned copper companies.

The government, with marxist, socialists and communists at its head, also held free and fair elections in 1973. This incidentally

lar support in the 1973 elections, because its programme was both democratic in the fullest sense of the word and revolutionary. Its objective was not simply reformist, to make reforms within the existing system, but to carry out basic democratic transformations in the economy and in the State and political structure through a national democratic revolution, which would pave the way for socialist change.

The programme called for fundamental changes to be carried out 'on the basis of the transfer of power from the old ruling groups to the workers, peasantry and progressive sectors of the middle class in the towns and countryside', and 'to replace the present economic structure by putting an end to the power of national and foreign monopoly capital and the latifundio (large landed estates) in order to begin the building of socialism'.

To achieve these objectives the programmes provided for nationalisation (not small owners) of natural resources, large monopolies, banks and insurance companies; at the same time it encouraged substantial private initiatives in industry, trade and agriculture. The coming together of the state and private capital in joint ventures was also projected.

When the Unidad Popular came to power in 1971 the economy of the country was in chaos. Between 1955 and 1970, the GNP per capita rose by only 0.7 per cent, while the foreign debt soared from \$569 million in 1958 to no less than \$3,700 million in 1970. Prices were continually rising and unemployment was going up.

SOCIAL BENEFITS IMPROVED
Nevertheless, the Allende

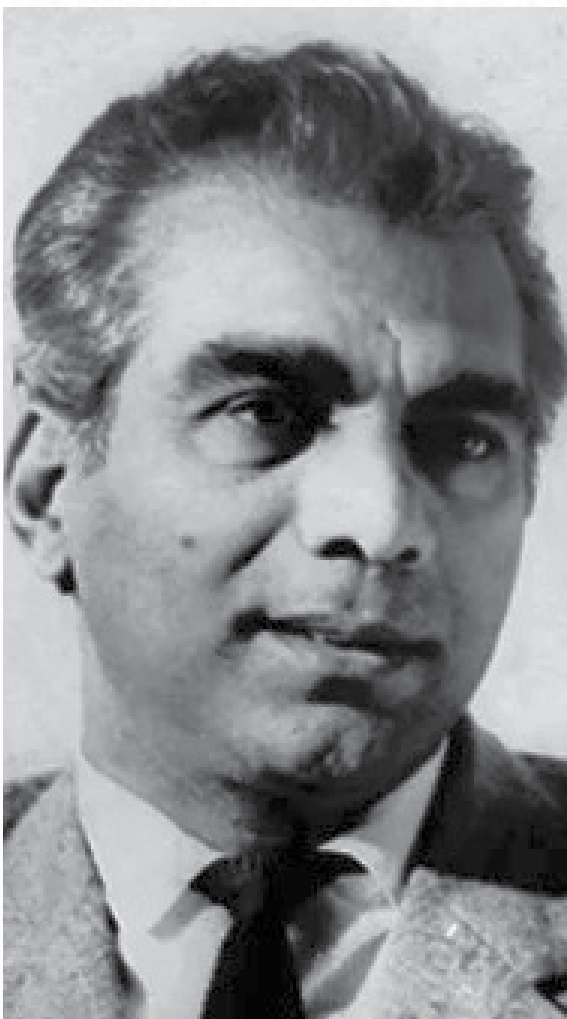
These radical changes especially in the standard of living of the people, obviously stimulated the growth of the economy. By the beginning of 1972, national productivity had risen by 9 per cent and industrial productivity by 13 per cent. The rate of unemployment went down from 8.3 per cent to 3.8 per cent.

ECONOMIC RUIN UNDER PINOCHET

Chile under the Pinochet military dictatorship is in economic ruin. The country is going through the worst ever economic crisis since 1929. Denationalisation and return of hundreds of industrial enterprises into the hands of local and foreign capital and dependence on foreign, especially American credits and loans led to a drastic decline in industrial output, steep rise in unemployment and fall in standard of living of the broad masses. Over 25 per cent of the workforce are without jobs, over 1 million people need homes.

Chile's foreign indebtedness increased from US\$4 billion during Allende's time to US\$23 billion in 1985. The Pinochet regime uses over 45.5 per cent of the export earnings to service this huge debt.

Only a return to democracy can save that country from total ruination and bankruptcy. 17. 7/2/88



Lula: A Leader for the People



LUIS INACIO LULA da SILVA, popularly known simply as "Lula," is one of the most iconic figures in modern Brazilian politics and a symbol of the socialist movement in Latin America.

Lula's name is known throughout impoverished countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and especially south and Central America: and in fact, the "corners of the earth".

His life story is not just a tale of personal resilience but also a reflection of the struggles and triumphs of Brazil's working class.

Lula's rise from extreme poverty to be elected the 35th President (in October, 2002) of the fifth largest country in the world with a population of over two hundred million people, embodies the potential for socialist ideals to create meaningful change in societies plagued by inequality, exploitation, and corruption.

Early Life and Political Awakening

Lula was born on October 27, 1945, in Caetés, a small town in the northeastern state of Pernambuco, Brazil. The northeastern region of Brazil has historically been one of the poorest and most underdeveloped parts of the country, with vast inequalities and limited opportunities for its inhabitants. Lula's family, like many others, lived in extreme poverty. At the age of seven, Lula moved with his family to São Paulo in search of a better life, a journey undertaken by millions of other Brazilians who were fleeing the drought and economic hardship of the Northeast.

In São Paulo, Lula began working at a young age (around the age of eight years) first as a shoe-shine boy and later as a metal worker in a factory. His firsthand experience with the harsh conditions faced by Brazil's working class deeply influenced his worldview. Lula's political awakening began when he joined the labor movement in the 1960s, at age 15. He became an active member of the Metalworkers' Union in the industrial city of São Bernardo do Campo, where he quickly rose through the ranks due to his leadership abilities and charisma.

The Birth of the Workers' Party

The 1970s was a tumultuous decade in Brazil, characterized by a military dictatorship that ruled the country with an iron fist. It was during this period that Lula emerged as a leading figure in the fight for workers' rights. In 1978, he led a series of massive strikes in the ABC region of São Paulo, a significant industrial hub, International companies, particularly car manufacturers. These strikes were not just about better wages and working conditions; the political and Trade Union education of the workers; they were a direct challenge to the authoritarian regime.

Lula's leadership during these strikes brought him national attention and laid the groundwork for the formation of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores - PT) in 1980. The PT was founded as a socialist political party that aimed to represent the interests of the working class, the marginalized, and the poor. It sought to build

a new type of political movement in Brazil, one that was deeply rooted in grassroots organizing, direct democracy, and socialist principles.

The creation of the PT was a significant moment in Brazilian history. It represented a break from the traditional politics dominated by elites and oligarchs. The PT provided a platform for workers, landless peasants, and progressive intellectuals to come together and push for systemic change. The party's manifesto called for an end to the exploitation of the working class, the redistribution of wealth, and the establishment of a truly democratic society where the people, not the elites, held power.

Lula's First Presidential Campaigns

Lula ran for president for the first time in 1989, in what was Brazil's first direct presidential election after the end of the military dictatorship. His campaign was a grassroots effort, heavily reliant on the support of trade unions, social movements, and ordinary Brazilians who saw in Lula a chance for real change. Lula's message was clear: Brazil needed to break free from the shackles of neoliberalism and embrace a new model of development that prioritized social justice and economic equality.

However, Lula faced a formidable challenge in the form of Fernando Collor de Mello, a candidate backed by powerful business interests and the mainstream media. The 1989 election was marked by intense polarization and a vicious smear campaign against Lula, portraying him as a radical who would plunge the country into chaos. Despite this, Lula made it to the second round of the election but ultimately lost to Collor, receiving 16.1% in the first round and 44.2% in the runoff, losing by a mere 5.7%, a remarkable achievement for a first contender for the Presidency.

Lula ran for president again in 1994 and 1998, but both times he was defeated by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a centrist who embraced neoliberal economic policies. These repeated defeats were a source of frustration for Lula and his supporters, but did not diminish their resolve. Instead, they used these experiences to strengthen the PT, build alliances, and refine their political strategy.

The Historic 2002 Victory

Lula's persistence paid off in 2002 when he finally won the presidency in his fourth attempt, obtaining 61.4% in the runoff. His victory was a watershed moment in Brazilian history, marking the first time a working-class leader had been elected to the nation's highest office. Lula's election was a testament to the power of

grassroots organizing and the appeal of socialist ideals to the Brazilian masses.

Lula's campaign in 2002 was notably more moderate than his previous ones. He adopted a more pragmatic approach, signaling that he would respect the country's democratic institutions and maintain economic stability. This shift was strategic, aimed at reassuring the middle class and international investors while still holding true to the PT's core values of social justice and poverty reduction.

The Lula Presidency: Achievements and Challenges

Lula's presidency (2003-2011) is often regarded as a transformative period in Brazilian history. His administration implemented a series of progressive policies that significantly improved the lives of millions of Brazilians. The cornerstone of Lula's social policy was the **Bolsa Família** program, a conditional cash transfer program that provided financial assistance to poor families, on the condition that their children attended school and received vaccinations. **Bolsa Família** became one of the most successful poverty alleviation programs in the world, lifting 11 million families estimated at FORTY million persons out of extreme poverty and reducing inequality.

By the 2006 Presidential elections an estimated seventy percent of those eligible for poverty alleviation were receiving benefits from this initiative. By contrast payments made to Brazilian creditors or the country's relatively costly pension schemes, the "Bolsa Família" cost ONLY 2.5% of the Federal budget. Lula continuously pointed out that "it's cheap and easy to look after the poor".

Lula also prioritized job creation and economic growth. Under his leadership, Brazil experienced a period of sustained economic expansion, driven by a boom in commodity exports and increased domestic consumption. Unemployment fell to historic lows, and millions of Brazilians entered the formal workforce. Lula's government also increased the minimum wage, expanded access to credit, and invested in infrastructure projects that stimulated economic activity across the country. Electricity, previously to millions of households was made available to over TWENTY million families. In addition to his domestic achievements, Lula played a significant role on the international stage. He pursued an independent foreign policy that sought to strengthen ties with other developing countries and reduce Brazil's dependence on the United States and Europe. Lula was a key figure in the formation of BRICS, a coalition of emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and

South Africa) that sought to challenge the dominance of the West in global affairs. Lula's leadership elevated Brazil's status as a global power and gave voice to the concerns of the Global South in international forums. It has been reported that the BRICS were actively considering reforms to the international trading system and currency away from the United States dollar.

Despite these achievements, Lula's presidency was not without its challenges and controversies. His government was plagued by corruption scandals, the most notable being the *Mensalão* scandal, which involved the payment of monthly bribes to members of Congress in exchange for their support. While Lula himself was not directly implicated, the scandal tarnished the PT's image and exposed the difficulties of governing in a deeply corrupt political system.

The Legacy of Lula and the PT

Lula played an impressive and important role in foreign policy, both on the regional level and as part of the global Trade and Environmental negotiations.

Lula left office in 2011 with record-high 80% approval ratings (IBOPE polling). "The Guardian" gave him a more impressive approval rating of 90%, having successfully completed two terms as President.

These impressive numbers were largely due to President Lula's implementation of policies to successfully address the scourge of poverty and hunger.

His successor, Dilma Rousseff, also from the PT, was elected in 2010, continuing the party's hold on the presidency. However, the years following Lula's presidency were marked by growing political and economic instability in Brazil.

Dilma's presidency was marred by a severe economic recession, rising unemployment, and widespread protests against government corruption and austerity measures. The political crisis reached its peak in 2016 when Dilma was impeached by Congress in what many viewed as a politically motivated coup. The impeachment of Dilma and the subsequent political turmoil marked the beginning of a right-wing backlash against the PT and the socialist policies it had championed.

Lula's legacy came under further attack in 2017 when he was convicted of corruption and money laundering in connection with the Operation Car Wash investigation. He was sentenced to prison, a move that many of his supporters saw as part of a broader effort by the conservative establishment to destroy the PT and undo its achievements. Despite his imprisonment, Lula remained a powerful political force in Brazil, and his conviction only served to deepen the polarization in the

country.

Lula's imprisonment and subsequent release in 2019 reignited the debate over his legacy and the future of socialism in Brazil. For many on the left, Lula remains a hero, a symbol of resistance against neoliberalism and the oppressive forces of the status quo. His life and career are a testament to the possibility of building a more just and equitable society, even in the face of immense challenges.

Lula's Return to Politics and the Fight for Socialism

In 2022, Lula made a dramatic return to the political stage, running for president once again. His candidacy was seen as a direct challenge to the far-right government of Jair Bolsonaro, whose presidency was marked by authoritarianism, environmental destruction, and a disregard for the rights of marginalized communities. Lula's return to politics was met with enthusiasm by millions of Brazilians who were disillusioned with Bolsonaro's neoliberal policies and yearning for a return to the social policies that had lifted so many millions of families out of poverty during Lula's presidency.

Lula's 2022 campaign emphasized the need to rebuild Brazil on the principles of social justice, economic equality, and environmental sustainability. He called for the reversal of neoliberal reforms, the strengthening of workers' rights, and a renewed commitment to fighting poverty and inequality.

Lula's vision for Brazil was one where the State plays a central role in the economy, NOT just as a regulator but as an active participant in the creation of jobs, the provision of public service and the protection of the environment. Lula's return to the presidency in 2023 marked a significant moment in the global struggle for socialism. His victory was not just a win for the PT but for the broader movement for social justice in Latin America



and beyond. Lula's government once again placed the needs of the poor and marginalized at the centre of its agenda, prioritizing social investment, environmental protection and international solidarity.

Lula as a symbol of Socialist Hope

Lula's life and career are a powerful reminder to of the enduring relevance of socialist ideals in the 21st century. His rise from poverty to the presidency, his unwavering and tireless advocacy for the working class and his ability to implement policies that have improved the lives of millions are testament to the transformative potential of socialism and resilience, reflecting the broader struggle of the working class against the forces of capitalism and inequality.

Lula's story is not as yet finished. As he continues to lead Brazil through a new era of challenges and opportunities, his legacy as a champion of the working class, of socialism and a fighter for the oppressed will continue to inspire generations to come. In a world increasingly dominated by neoliberalism and corporate power, Lula towers above many as THE beacon of hope for those who believe in the possibility of a world with more just, equitable and democratic societies. His life's work reminds us that the fight for socialism is not just a political project but a moral imperative, rooted in the belief that every living person deserves to live with dignity, where justice is served equally and opportunities to live free from poverty and oppression.



Harry Narine Nawbatt was the Former Executive Director, Social Impact Amelioration Programme (SIMAP), Former Project Manager, Poor Rural Communities Social Services Project (PRCSSP), Former Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Communication & Minister of Housing and Water, Former Ambassador of Guyana to Brazil and High Commissioner of Guyana to Canada.

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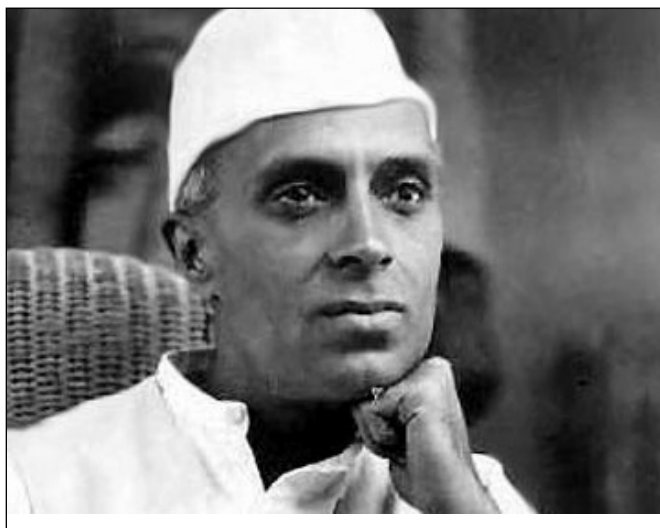
Prime Minister Nehru:

Speech to Bandung Conference Political Committee, 1955

Mr. Chairman, the turn this discussion has taken is a much wider one than that we had already expected. In fact, it has covered the whole major heading. We have just had the advantage of listening to the distinguished leader of the Turkish Delegation who told us what lie, as a responsible leader of the nation must do and must not do. He gave us an able statement of what I might call one side representing the views of one of the major blocs existing at the present time in the world. I have no doubt that an equally able disposition could be made on the part of the other bloc. I belong to neither and I propose to belong to neither whatever happens in the world. If we have to stand alone, we will stand by ourselves, whatever happens (and India has stood alone without any aid against a mighty Empire, the British Empire) and we propose to face all consequences.

We do not agree with the communist teachings, we do not agree with the anti-communist teachings, because they are both based on wrong principles. I never challenged the right of my country to defend itself; it has to. We will defend ourselves with whatever arms and strength we have, and if we have no arms we will defend ourselves without arms. I am dead certain that no country can conquer India. Even the two great power blocs together cannot conquer India; not even the atom or the hydrogen bomb. I know what my people are. But I know also that if we rely on others, whatever great powers they might be if we look to them for sustenance, then we are weak indeed.

My country has made mistakes. Every country makes mistakes. I have no doubt we will make mistakes; we will Stumble and fall and get up. The mistakes of my country and perhaps the mistakes of other countries here do not make a difference; but the mistakes the Great Powers make do make a difference to the world and may well bring about a terrible catastrophe. I speak with the greatest respect of these Great Powers because they are not only great in military might but in development, in culture, in civilization. But I do submit that greatness sometimes brings quite false values, false standards. When they begin to think in terms of military strength - whether it be the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union or the U.S.A. - then they are going away from the right track and the result of that will be that the overwhelming



might of one country will conquer the world. Thus far the world has succeeded in preventing that; I cannot speak for the future. . . .

. . . So far as I am concerned, it does not matter what war takes place; we will not take part in it unless we have to defend ourselves. If I join any of these big groups I lose my identity. . . . If all the world were to be divided up between these two big blocs what would be the result? The inevitable result would be war. Therefore every step that takes place in reducing that area in the world which may be called the unaligned area is a dangerous step and leads to war. It reduces that objective, that balance, that outlook which other countries without military might can perhaps exercise.

Honorable Members laid great stress on moral force. It is with military force that we are dealing now, but I submit that moral force counts and the moral force of Asia and Africa must, in spite of the atomic and hydrogen bombs of Russia, the U.S.A. or another country, count. . . .

. . . Many members present here do not obviously accept the communist ideology, while some of them do. For my part I do not. I am a positive person, not an 'anti' person. I want positive good for my country and the world. Therefore, are we, the countries of Asia and Africa, devoid of any positive position except being pro-communist or anti-communist? Has it come to this, that the leaders of thought who have given religions and all kinds of things to the world have to tag on to this kind

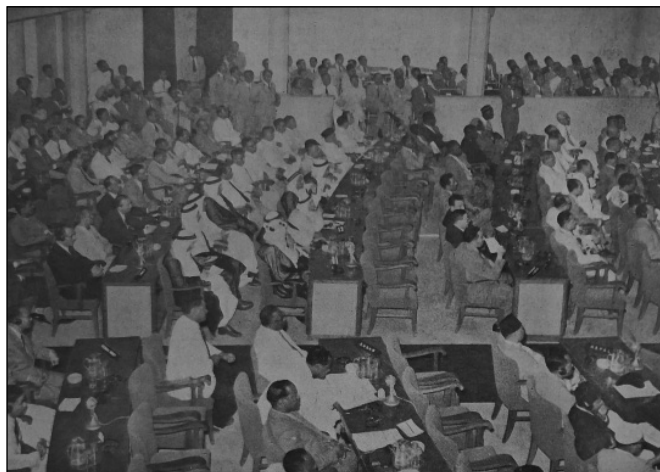
of group or that and be hangers-on of this party or the other carrying out their wishes and occasionally giving an idea? It is most degrading and humiliating to any self-respecting people or nation. It is an intolerable thought to me that the great countries of Asia and Africa should come out of bondage into freedom only to degrade themselves or humiliate themselves in this way. . . .

I submit to you, every pact has brought insecurity and not security to the countries which have entered into them. They have brought the danger of atomic bombs and the rest of it nearer to them than would have been the case otherwise. They have not added to the strength of any country, I submit, which it had singly. It may have produced some idea of security, but it is a false security. It is a bad thing for any country thus to be lulled into security. . . .

...Today in the world, I do submit, not only because of the presence of these two colossuses but also because of the coming of the atomic and hydrogen-bomb age, the whole concept of war, of peace, of politics, has changed. We are thinking and acting in terms of a past age. No matter what generals and soldiers learned in the past, it is useless in this atomic age. They do not understand its implications or its use. As an eminent military critic said: 'The whole conception of War is changed. There is no precedent.' It may be so. Now it does not matter if one country is more powerful than the other in the use of the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb. One is more powerful in its ruin than the other. That is what is meant by saying that the point of saturation has been reached. However powerful one country is, the other is also powerful. To hit the nail on the head, the world suffers; there can be no victory. It may be said perhaps rightly that owing to this very terrible danger, people refrain from going to war. I hope so.. The difficulty is that while Governments want to refrain from war, something suddenly happens and there is war and utter ruin. There is another thing: because of the present position in the world there can be aggression. If there is aggression anywhere in the world, it is bound to result in world war. It does not matter where the aggression is. If one commits the aggression there is world war.

I want the countries here to realise it and not to think in terms of any limitation. Today, a war however limited it may be is bound to lead to a big war. Even if tactical atomic weapons, as they are called, are used, the next step would be the use of the big atomic bomb. You cannot stop these things. In a country's life and death struggle, it is not going to stop short of this. It is not going to decide on our or anybody else's resolutions but it would engage in war, ruin and annihilation of others before it annihilates itself completely. Annihilation will result not only in the countries engaged in war, but

owing to the radioactive waves which go thousands and thousands of miles it will destroy everything. That is the position. It is not an academic position; it is not a position of discussing ideologies; nor is it a position of discussing past history. It is looking at the world as it is today.



Source: Reprinted in G. M. Kahin, The Asian-African Conference (Cornell University Press, 1956), pp. 64-72.

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BOOK REVIEW

Book Review: Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana

The Cheddi Jagan Research Centre (CJRC) is pleased to be associated with this publication 'Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana.' The Centre was established on 22nd March 2000 by Mrs. Jagan to preserve the rich and enduring legacy of her husband and former President Dr. Cheddi Jagan. The Board of the Centre, however took a decision to commission a book on Mrs. Jagan whose contributions to the struggle for a free, independent and just society were of no less significance.

'Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana' stands out as yet another masterpiece in the Caribbean literary landscape. The book is a biographical account of the life, work and struggle of an iconic Guyanese and Caribbean leader whose contributions to the liberation struggle of Guyana have reverberated way beyond the shores of her adopted homeland. Ranked by the TIME Magazine as one of sixteen of the most rebellious women in history, this publication provides readers with a peep into the life and work of a world-renowned leader and revolutionary.

How the author Professor Patricia Mohamed so ably managed to piece together her multi-faceted contributions during the period that spanned her long and illustrious life is extraordinary in its own right. This is all the more commendable given the fact that she was an 'outsider' with only passing familiarity with her life and work. Yet she managed to weave a brilliant literary fabric in a coherent and reader-friendly manner. It must have been a hard, laborious and painstaking enterprise to accommodate the diversity of views and perspectives from a wide range of individuals who knew Mrs. Jagan at fraternal as well as personal levels, and also from those whose opinions and views of Mrs. Jagan may not be as complimentary.

Yet it turned out to be nothing short of a labour of love. It is undoubtedly an absorbing piece of work uniquely complementary to other published works including the celebrated 'West on Trial' written by Dr. Cheddi Jagan and 'My Fight for Guyana's Freedom' by her daughter Nadira Jagan-Brancier. These publications, along with several others, provide readers with a body of knowledge on the life and work of the Jagans not otherwise possible.

This book is in some respects a vindication of the politics of Mrs. Jagan who was unjustly 'vilified' by detractors as a doctrinaire 'communist' whose presumed influence was predominant in the decision-making processes of the PPP. The book brings out her love for the ordinary people and her unyielding commitment to the creation of a just and harmonious society. She, along with her husband, endured a lot including being imprisoned but she bore them all with strides and without malice or ill-will.

This is indeed a major literary work commissioned by the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre on the life and work of former President Mrs. Janet Jagan. We take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt thanks to the author Professor Patricia Mohamed and to the publisher Ian Randle for the printing of the book within the stipulated deadline. We acknowledge with thanks the hard work put in by Nadira-Brancier Jagan in terms of providing valuable factual information and insights which in no small way served to enrich this publication.

This book cannot be considered exhaustive given the multi-faceted and interlocking roles played by Mrs. Jagan as a revolutionary, politician, writer, administrator and freedom fighter. But it does provide readers with some new and fresh background information and perspectives on her rich and eventful life.

We have no doubt that this publication will be of tremendous value to all those who have an interest in the role and contributions made by Mrs. Jagan to the struggle for a free and independent Guyana.

Hydar Ally
Chairman, Cheddi Jagan Research Centre
September 17, 2024

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review: Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana

Ms. Patricia Mohamed, author of "Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana" has done a really commendable job in writing a biography of Janet Jagan, one of Guyana's greatest citizens and undoubtedly a woman way ahead of her times. She was a very complex person, a woman of diverse qualities, yet those of us who have had the pleasure and honour of knowing her, can attest to her often-extreme modesty.

Ms. Mohamed who herself said that her more than five-hundred-page biography of Mrs. Jagan, is not an exhaustive account of her very eventful life, yet she managed to capture a considerable amount of the many attributes of this extra-ordinary woman.

From a very young age J.J, displayed independent and, even in that time rebellious tendencies. She loved sports and was a very strong swimmer. She was adventurous and wanted to explore the unknown. Perhaps that is why she learned to fly planes and did some solo flying. She was never afraid of investigating the unknown.

Her strong character was moulded by her early experience as a Jewish girl growing up in the United States where antisemitism was pretty high. Therefore, she experienced discrimination at an early age. This must have been one of the factors that forged her anti-racist views.

The way those types of discriminations impacted her were totally different from how similar situations impacted most other people who experienced such behaviour. Many people who experienced racial or national discrimination became racists themselves, they became bitter and often led them to act in similar ways to those who had offended them. The racism many experienced transformed them into racist themselves.

That did not happen to J.J, indeed it made her hate all forms of discrimination by race, religion and creed. It fueled her sense of fair play and her deep belief in the equality of all human beings. It helped to make her the champion she became, of the oppressed, the downtrodden and the exploited. Those characteristics were already strong with her even before she got into contact with Marxism, the ideology of the working class.

When she arrived in British Guiana in December of 1943, the social structure of the society was akin to what was happening in Southern African, even if not as acute. At the top of the society were the whites, mainly British, Scottish, etc, below that were the Portuguese, who in Guyana are not always regarded as white, and the Mulatos, a mixture of European and African. At the bottom were the African (Blacks), the Indians, Amerindians and the Douglas (African and Indian Mix race).

The colonialists behaviour and their propaganda had created a mentality in which whites would be regarded as superior to the coloured population. Mrs. Jagan could have easily gravitated to that club and enjoy the privileges of that upper class society. That however, held no attraction to her. Indeed, she immediately rebelled against it.

The very fact that she chose to live and work among the working people was one of the first blows she delivered to the colour structure in the society. This was very pronounced when she along with her husband Dr. Cheddi Jagan, Ashton Chase and Joselyn Hubbard launched their struggle in the political arena. That act was a blow to the racist ideology of the coloured masters.

She was a leader by example, she led from the front. She was in all the marches organised by labour fighting to improve living and working conditions, she was at the front line in all the activities in demanding independence and for the changes that would help the poor immediately.

She worked to organise some of the workers most difficult to bring together, eg, the domestic workers, workers in bakeries and other smaller enterprises, yet she managed to bring them together and led them to improve their circumstances.

She was a pioneer in many things. The first woman to hold public offices among many other posts.

Ms. Mohamed also cast her as a kind of feminist. While it is true that Janet Jagan has probably done the most in getting women to involve themselves in the political and economic life and struggles in Guyana, she was not a feminist as we know feminists today.

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review: Janet Jagan: Freedom Fighter of Guyana

Her main objective was national and social liberation of the working class and farmer. She knew that involving working women in political arena was extremely important in bringing victories to the class as a whole. For that reason, she did a lot in organising them in the party, the PPP and the unions.

She was a very able administrator. Much was said about her role in the PPP as an organiser. However, as the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing in the 1957 to 1961 PPP government, she displayed her talent as manager par excellence. She was a talented administrator. The PPP benefited greatly from that talent of her's.

It was under her leadership that health services began reaching every village on the coast and in the furthest parts of the interior. The Georgetown hospital was expanded and became the largest in the Caribbean. Malaria, which was killing many people was eliminated under her watch. A widespread vaccination program began against polio and other diseases.

It was as Minister of Health that she took over the golf course in Georgetown and turned it into our National Park for the people of the city to have somewhere to relax. The golf-course was sent to Lusignan where it still is today. Her achievements in the sphere of labour are stellar. She piloted the bill that made May Day a public holiday – A Workers Holiday. She protected unorganised workers ensuring that they had holidays with pay and other benefits.

In her, trade unions had a real friend. In this period workers gains were substantial, including Workers Compensation Legislation which was one of the landmark legislations in that period.

In Housing, she led the way. The first set of mass house buildings in our country began under her tireless leadership. Many of the houses and housing schemes are still standing as a living monument to her hard work and great achievements.

Ms. Mohamed was able to capture a lot of her personal traits as well. She had a heart of gold. She was generous and selfless in dealing with the underprivileged and her own comrades. She contributed generously to every good cause. Her strength could be seen in how she responded to great problems.

She bore adversity with a great staunchness. This she had to do in the latter part of her days.

When her husband, Cheddi Jagan passed away, it was Janet who consoled the nation and held us all close to her heart. Her poise in public helped to assure a grieving nation that everything would have been alright!

In the aftermath of the 1997 elections when the PNC, unleashed violence and a display of lewdness Mrs. Jagan again faced it head on. No doubt it must have been painful for her, but few ever knew that. Here again her heart led her to make compromises that were beneficial to our society.

It is apposite to recall here that she signed the Herdmanson Accord in which the PPP was deprived of two years of their term of office.

Many of the PPP leaders were not happy with this and expressed their views.

Mrs. Jagan reminded her colleagues that she lived through the 1960s and she saw how destructive the PNC's policy can harm people, not only physically but the hatred that their racism could generate. She said then, I never want to see that happen to Guyana again. That period showed her deep humanity and her love for our country, which she put in front of everything else.

Janet Jagan was loved by the working people of our country, despite what the minority in the opposition tried to do. This was noted in the fact that the votes which the PPP won at the 1957 elections were the highest in the history of the PPP.

That tells the great esteem in which she was and is held in our society.

This book is worth reading and each Guyanese should have a prominent place in their libraries to celebrate one of our greatest heroes, Janet Jagan!

BOOK REVIEW

Cheddi Jagan and the Cold War

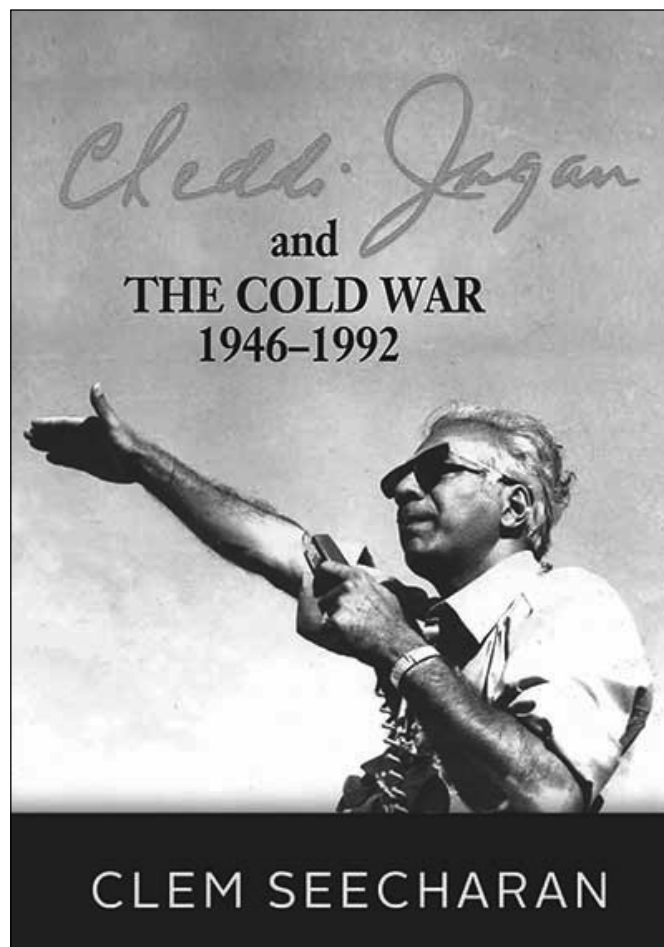
Clem Seecharan's book 'Cheddi Jagan and the Cold War' represented yet another attempt by the writer to project Dr. Jagan as someone who failed to understand the dynamics of power in a United States sphere of influence. As a consequence, as claimed by Seecharan, he was denied the opportunity to take his country to independence status and spent the greater part of his political life in the political wilderness.

This is a recurring point throughout the book which was repeated ad nauseam by the author who seem to have an obsession with Dr. Jagan and his perceived 'communist' orientation. And while it is true that the PPP government lost political office on two occasions, namely in 1953 and 1964 due to the intrigues and machinations of imperial powers, it is unfair and patently wrong to blame Dr. Jagan for the actions of those with bigger imperial interests and who was prepared to sacrifice the good of a nation for a much broader geo-political agenda. The basic premise in the book is flawed. Seecharan took as his point of departure Dr. Jagan's 'repulsion' of what he described as 'bitter sugar' and his Marxist orientation which he felt circumscribed his world view along objective lines. It also interfered in his view with his ability to think rationally and understand 'realpolitik' with specific reference to the role played by bigger players on the international stage especially in the context of the country's location in what is regarded as a US sphere of influence.

Seecharan locates the intellectual origins of Dr. Jagan's 'secular religion' in his Marxist convictions which resulted in him losing power in both the 1957 and 1964 elections. According to him, 'Cheddi had all the trumps in his hand and still lost the game. By his ideological intransigence, he opened the door for Burnham's 'Cooperative Socialist Republic' thereby entrenching electoral rigging, the undermining of liberal democracy, economic stagnation and the flight of the country's best and brightest of all races to the heartlands of capitalism.

The fact is that regardless of the ideological orientation of Dr. Jagan, he was quintessentially a democratic and did not at any time in his political life sought to gain political power other than by democratic means. Whatever fracture in the democratic process took place cannot be attributed to Dr. Jagan and his party, the PPP but to Anglo-American vested interests which facilitated the rise of Burnham's authoritarianism and the consequential economic and social decay of the Guyanese society.

Nor was Dr. Jagan opposed to western liberal values such



as the market-led economic growth and development. At no time, despite his admiration for the Soviet model of economic growth with social justice, did he advocated an economic model of development along the lines of the Soviet Union.

The records will show that Dr. Jagan sought developmental assistance from western countries during the 1957-61 period but to no avail. It was only after such assistance was denied that he was forced into making overtures with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries including Cuba and East Germany.

In some respects the PPP government of the 1957-64 period was left with little option but to turn to the socialist countries for economic assistance and trade. Trade with Cuba was particularly beneficial to rice farmers which benefitted from prices over and above what had obtained on the world market. The same was true of Guyanese on the whole who benefitted from consumer items at affordable prices. Several major projects from socialist countries were aborted after they

failed to get the necessary permission from the then colonial office. Guyana, then British Guiana was still a colony of Britain and it was not at liberty to pursue negotiations on matters relating to foreign investments and international relations.

It speaks to the developmental character of the PPP government that it was able to transform a backward colony in just under a decade to one of the more prosperous in the region. Several initiatives were taken to improve the quality of life of the Guyanese people especially in the fields of education, health, housing and water. Agricultural production increased sharply especially in rice and sugar. The amount of land brought under agricultural cultivation more than doubled.

These are some facts that were deliberately ignored by the writer who seemed obsessed with what he considered to be Dr. Jagan's failure to come to terms with geo-political and geo-strategic realities of the region located in a United States sphere of influence.

The fact is that none of the countries in the hemisphere that pursued a neo-liberal and dependent relationship with the west showed any significant improvement in the working and living conditions of the subject population. This was true of almost all of the dependent colonies in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean. As Dr. Jagan showed in his book *The Caribbean: Whose Backyard?*, the net outflow of money from the developing to the developed world was considerably higher which had left in its wake high levels of poverty, unemployment and a perpetual cycle of underdevelopment.

It is against the above context that Dr. Jagan's 'socialism' has to be situated. It has absolutely nothing to do with the Soviet model of excessive centralism and one party rule. In fact Dr. Jagan has consistently drew reference to a statement attributable to V I Lenin who wrote that 'whosoever sought to build socialism other than through democracy is bound to fail'.

In retrospect, the socialist model in the then USSR failed precisely for that reason. At the economic level, there was excessive centralism which festered a lack of competitiveness, undue bureaucracy and parasitic mismanagement. At the political level, there were no meaningful worker's participation in the management of the affairs of the state and governance was limited to a select few of party functionaries. This 'command style' of governance and management led to mass alienation and the eventual collapse of the soviet system.

The above is highlighted not to cast aspersions on the socialism as a governance system which at the conceptual level is by far superior to capitalism or any other governance system known to man. The fact that socialism collapsed in the then USSR and eastern Europe

is not, as maintained by Dr. Jagan, indicative of the failure of socialism but as a result of the departure from the fundamental principles of socialism which essentially are premised on full democracy and the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

Dr. Jagan's embrace of a socialist vision was based on the high and lofty ideals of a society in which there was an absence of exploitation of man by man and where the material and spiritual needs of the society are fully realized. Capitalism, with its emphasis on profits for the few cannot satisfy the material and spiritual needs of humanity especially under a system of subservience and colonial domination as was the case during the period when Dr. Jagan entered the political stage.

It goes without saying therefore that Dr. Jagan's vision of a future society could not have been influenced by an ethos based on unbridled capitalism. Under colonial rule in Guyana there was hardly any real development. There were high illiteracy rates, abominable housing conditions, poor sanitation, high unemployment rates and limited money circulation especially in rural communities. The living and working conditions of sugar workers who lived in logies in the sugar plantations were no different and probably worse. et Seecharan took offence with Dr. Jagan's strong and militant advocacy for reforms in the sugar belt et Seecharan took offence with Dr. Jagan's strong and militant advocacy for reforms in the sugar belt especially in terms of meaningful representation of workers at the trade union level and enhanced working and living conditions. Instead, he was overly generous to the management of the sugar industry and the 'paternalism' of Bookers especially under the leadership of Sir Jock Cambell. Seecharan was full of praise for Cambell for his 'philanthropy' and cast Dr. Jagan as a 'villian' who was less than appreciative of the sacrifices made by the sugar planters to transform undrained coastal swamps into agricultural areas.

At the political level, he was heavy on criticism of Dr. Jagan's failure to, as were, dance to the white man's tune. What he failed to recognize was the fact that Dr. Jagan was never interested in power for the sake of power. For Dr. Jagan, political power for it to be meaningful must be an instrument to change society and transform the lives of people. Under a system of dependent capitalism it was not possible to effect meaningful changes. Hence his strong advocacy for independence and self-determination.

It does not follow from the above that Dr. Jagan was not cognizant of the importance of political power which he saw as the highest form of struggle. That was precisely why he co-founded the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) in 1947 and the PPP in 1950 which convincingly won the 1953 elections, the first under universal adult suffrage.

And even though that victory was short-lived, it shook the foundations of colonial rule and led eventually to limited self-rule and independence status. Dr. Jagan had the honour of becoming the first elected Chief Minister and Premier of British Guiana and to crown it all, the first democratically elected Executive President of Guyana, following his victory in the historic October 5, 1992 elections.

These are no mean achievements and certainly does not speak of someone who was not interested in political power as Seecharan seems to imply. The fact that he was denied political power in the 1953 and 1964 elections by the British Government and then by the PNC dictatorial regime cannot be blamed on Dr. Jagan. Yet Seecharan seem to project Dr. Jagan not as the victim but as the villain. Dr. Jagan, he argued, should have been more accommodating to the machinations of the western powers and by so doing prevented the rise of PNC authoritarian rule.

In other words, Dr. Jagan should have abandoned his principles and working class instincts to obtain political power. He should have been a conformist and abandoned his radicalism. Had he done so, he would have fallen in line with other Caribbean leaders who seemed comfortable with the colonial dispensation.

Had he done so, his image as a fighter and his political persona would have been sacrificed on the altar of political expediency. Guyana would hardly been recognized beyond the shores of the region. And the colony, which gained centre stage would have remained in the political backwaters.

Dr. Jagan was different from other Caribbean leaders. He was a 'rebel' but with a cause. One possible explanation was his early exposure to plantation life where he saw first-hand the high degree of deprivation and indignity to which workers were subjected. Another possible explanation was that he spent much of his formative years in the United States as a student. Many of the Caribbean leaders of his time studied in the United Kingdom and was influenced by an ethos of conservative values as opposed to the more radical politics of the United States.

Whatever the explanation, Dr. Jagan was different. He saw his political role as a change agent and immediately

on his return from the United States, along with his wife and other like-minded individuals began a process of institution building to challenge the status quo. That found expression in the founding of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) in 1946 and the PPP in 1950.

Like all mortals, Dr. Jagan was not infallible and some mistakes were made. He himself admitted to some degree of youthful exuberance and felt that some things could have been handled in a different way. His biggest 'weakness' was his trust in people to do the right things. Hence his decision to accommodate Forbes Burnham to the Party leadership only to be betrayed later and his decision to allow the British Government to come up with a solution on the electoral system for the 1964 elections. In a clear departure from the electoral system practiced in Britain and other Commonwealth countries, the British Government imposed a system of Proportional Representation carefully designed to engineer the PPP out of power.

The book is replete with all manner of anecdotal stories some of which are not worthy of mention. There are references of the undue and controlling influence of Mrs. Jagan and the PPP and her strong communist predispositions. Others include Dr. Jagan's 'atheism' which blinded him from seeing beyond a certain framework. Hence, in Seecharan's view, his 'blind' embrace of the communist creed came with a high price. Perhaps the greatest tribute paid to Dr. Jagan was from Arthur Schlesinger, who in his capacity as advisor to President Kennedy recommended that Forbes Burnham would pose fewer problems to the United States than Dr. Jagan in an independent Guyana. Time and history have proven him wrong. In fact this admission was made by Schlesinger himself when in a meeting with Dr. Jagan several decades later he apologized and openly admitted that an injustice was done to him.

The Cold War may have ended but that mentality still pervade in the minds of several intellectuals such as Seecharan who still continue to peddle a narrative of a leader whose vision has failed a nation. Thankfully, Dr. Jagan has been completely vindicated by history and time and ranks among the great statesmen of history along the lines of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Dr. Martin Luther King.



Hydar Ally is the holder of a Master's Degree in Political Science from the University of Guyana. He is the Author of two Publications, "Insightful Views on Guyana" and "Pragmatism or Opportunism: Guyana's Foreign Policy Behaviour". He is also Chairman of the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre.

Ameena Gafoor and the Ameena Gafoor Institute for the Study of Indentureship and its Legacies



Many years ago I asked Ameena Gafoor to send me a note on her life, since I was recommending her for an award in Britain. It was a lengthy note which, in 2021 she converted into a Memoir, *A Lantern in the Wind*. She told me she was born on the 16th June 1941 at the height of the Second World War in a little village called Triumph just 9 miles from Georgetown, 'the colony's (then) picturesque capital of British Guiana.'

Her paternal grandparents were indentured immigrants (married when they were recruited), who came from Basti in the UP state of India in 1898.

After a five-year indentureship at the Success Plantation in Demerara they began farming at the backlands at Triumph. Ameena wrote that each morning they went to their farm in a narrow bateau and each evening they returned with the bateau loaded with produce, 'my grandfather sitting in the stern like a Raja while my grandmother fixed the fat rope attached to the bow across her ride shoulder and walked barefooted and the grassy left bank on the middle of canal, pulling the boat produce and grandfather with her.' They each lived well past 80 years.

Her maternal grandmother was born in 1889 and was raised in Mon Repos Estate, a community east of Triumph Village. Her parents had come from UP state and were indentured to LBI.

Ameena wrote that her grandmother was one of the very few East Indian girl children who possessed primary education at the time, as her grandmother 'formed

friendship with the creole children and tagged along with them to school, eventually taking her two young sisters and a brother with her.

Her grandmother was married 'by the age of 13' to an immigrant tailor and lived on the Corentyne coast, but the relationship failed due to his excessive rum drinking habits. Her grandmother escaped with three young children (of whom Ameena's mother was only one year old at a time) back to Mon Repos and started selling washing soap, matches, tomato paste in tiny tins, little squares of Ricketts blue and other such small items.

At the age of 18 Ameena's mother married the son of the local Imam and she learned Arabic after school at the mosque. Ameena's father abandoned their four children (aged seven, five, three and 9 months and her mother expecting another baby) and joined the RAF in 1944. Her mother had to take care of the children with a meagre allowance from the Home Office. 'She was a seamstress and produced wedding dresses with the most exquisite embroidery worked by the light of a lantern.'

Her grandmother's business grew, making enough money to feed and clothe and keep them in school including primary and secondary. Both Ameena and her brother helped in the shop, pasting brown paper cut to different sizes with glamma cherry paste to form bags to package flour, sugar, salt, split peas, channa and peanuts. They attended to customers, collecting cash and making change.

They had graduated to weighing off the items and then to keeping the accounts of those who took rations and credit. 'The accounts consisted of long strips of paper with the customer's name and the date and a long column of numbers with a total of the bottom skewered through with a wire stake.' Ameena spent nights sleeping with her grandmother who, by the light of a small speakeasy lamp, would recite from the Taleem Islam, about the Hijra and the Battle of Kerbala. Her grandmother recounted to her the lives of the Prophets and many tales from the Arabian oral tradition 'What I did not know then was that she had infused in me a thirst for a books, for knowledge, with a curiosity and an appreciation for storytelling so that in decade to come I was drawn to the literary arts.' Ameena's mother also had a mysterious well of literary knowledge.

'My mother also used to spew out quotations from Confucius, Shakespeare and other poets to keep us

children in the line of moral rectitude, lines that are indelibly engraved on our minds ; to this day I have no idea where she learnt them.'

In addition her mother had 'the most melodic voice' and she constantly sang and hummed such classics as Drink to me only with thine eyes ; By yon bonnie banks and by yon bonnie bays ; The Lonely Ashgrove, as well as Surahs from the Quran, Moonajaats and Quaseedas. ' These sounds seem to lift our spirits above our poverty and when people refer to us as "poor" we were puzzled as we lived a rich cultural life I did not think about ourselves as poor even though we had not a second pair of shoes.' Her mother was a far- seeing woman and insisted they all went to high school. She would calculate the monthly contract money for the train and put that aside before anything else. ' All we were certain of is that we were going to school.' The nine miles on the Bermuda locomotive to Georgetown was an easy journey for them since they had spare money lunch money in their pockets for tennis rolls and a bottle of chocolate milk each. ' Growing up for me was very basic: no electricity, drawing water from a well pipe a short distance away from our house, cooking on a fireside with wood for fuel that produced lots of smoke to burn your eyes from early morning.' When the village wrote flooded, as it often did, they had to wade through the water holding their school uniforms above their knees and balancing books, shoes and socks. ' When we reached the public road we would hastily pull on our socks and shoes and hurry for the train as it sounded its arrival in the distance.' They did homework and studied later night by the light of a candle as their mother took the only lantern to complete her urgent sewing jobs. As Ameena put it memorably, ' everything was always time bound.'

Central High School and headmaster J.C Luck gave Ameena a partial scholarship, which greatly relieved her mother having to struggle more to earn school fees. It was a time of political unrest. The slaughter of East Indian sugar workers at Enmore in 1948 brought the Jagans into the lives of rural Indians. Between 1948 and 1953 Ameena's uncle would take her and her two brothers in his Opal motor car to the neighboring villages to distribute Cheddi Jagan's so- called " communist" pamphlets. The PPP meetings were held at her grandmother's shop corner. Her brothers would become members of the youth arm of the Party.

Between Senior Cambridge and Higher Senior Cambridge Certificates, Ameena taught at Central High School for one year (French and English literature in the first and second forms), After gaining her Higher Senior she taught at Tutorial High School for three years (Latin and French) before leaving for England in 1962 to study Law. She had done half the Law course in British Guiana

privately, in the evenings, under the tutelage of the renowned Fred Wills. Disturbances erupted in British Guiana (Black Friday etc.), fires raging, looting and racial conflicts becoming ugly. 'My mother who could struggle no more collapsed and died from a heart attack one year after I left British Guyana.' Ameena, deeply affected by her beloved mother's sudden death, returned home with the aim of taking her three young siblings to England. British immigration thwarted her efforts. She had to abandon Law studies as there was no Law school in British Guiana at the time. . ' At 21 I got married into a family who believed that a woman's place was in the kitchen and that no wife should be more educated than her husband.' Nonetheless she entered the University of Guyana when it first opened but by then she had three young children. ' It was a great struggle to feed and bathe them when I came from classes late at night. As Burnham's dictatorship hardened and he tightened the screws we flipped to Barbados without even a teaspoon to start life again from scratch.' Walter Rodney was killed in an explosion in June 1980, one block from their home; Father Darke was killed by PNC thugs in the streets in July, again close to their home. ' We left our homeland on 1st September 1980. In spite of condition of exile and feeling of alienation and un- belonging, the children received a good secondary education upon which they developed themselves creditably and I was able to continue university studies.' It was this dedication to education, and then to the literary and visual arts, that led to the creation of the Ameena Gafoor Institute, which was launched in the UK at the House of Lords in 2021 (an appropriate venue, given that the House of Lords was engaged, over centuries, in debates about Slavery and Indentureship).

Ameena, being always humble and self-effacing, didn't want the Institute to be named after her, but I insisted, since she was a rare Guyanese person, , an iconic Guyanese woman. As the University of Guyana announced when Ameena died, on August 26th, ' she was a feminist critic and a Muslim woman who wrote in the context of Islamic womanhood in Guyana which is rare and can only otherwise be found in the work of a handful of other Guyanese women.' And, as President Ali declared : ' Ameena will be remembered not only for her profound influence in the literary world but also for her humility and warm-spiritedness.

Her gracious nature and compassionate heart made her a beloved figure to all who knew her. In her passing, Guyana has lost a true literary luminary and one of its kindest souls.'

The Ameena Gafoor Institute's Honorary Patrons include Lord Bhikhu Parekh, Dr Patricia Rodney, Professor David Olusoga and Dr Khal Torabully. It has some 35 scholars

and artists worldwide on its Academic Advisory Board.. The Institute has an extensive website, containing the most comprehensive bibliography on Indentureship anywhere in the world (put together and updated regularly by Dr Lynne Macedo). It now collaborates with the University of Cambridge in setting up Visiting Fellowships in Indentureship Studies, thus bringing the subject from the margin to the centre of scholarly pursuits. Among its external partners are the prestigious German University of Bonn.

Its flagship project is the Journal of Indentureship and its Legacies. On 8th September, a long- planned webinar on the Life and Work of Ameena was organised by the Institute in collaboration with Trinidad’s IndoCaribbean Cultural Centre.

Her death gave added sadness and poignancy to the proceedings. I asked the editors of the Journal of Indentureship, Professor Amar Wahab and Dr Maria Kaladeen to make brief presentations, and Dr Mark Tumbridge to compose a bibliography of Ameena’s writings.

The webinar can be viewed on Youtube, and their contributions are now available for perusal, as follows.

Professor Amar Wahab (University of York, Canada)

Unsilencing the Past: The Journal of Indentureship and its Legacies

When we make a contribution in this world, sometimes we don't know how impactful and powerful that contribution can be and the kinds of doors that it opens, the worlds that can begin to happen.

The Journal of Indentureship and its Legacies - one of the projects of the Ameena Gafoor Institute, in partnership with Pluto Educational Trust – is one of those worlds and one of those doors that have opened within the last five years. The journal was developed to create a unique and unprecedented space for the study of indentureship in the Caribbean and the wider global contexts. Part of the reason why this journal emerged or even became an idea is that the field of indentureship studies, which remains unrecognized as a field in many spaces on the globe, has been relegated to the historical margins and there have not been many venues for publishing work on studies of indentureship.

In fact, the journal’s website states that there is no other journal like this in the world, which centers its focus on indentureship, and it is because of this history of academic and intellectual marginalization, that the journal was envisioned , supported and facilitated by the Ameena Gafoor Institute and Pluto Educational Trust.



Our editorial board consists of the primary editor, Professor David Dabydeen, co-editor, Dr. Maria del Pilar Kaladeen and me (Dr. Tao Leigh Goffe was also a co-editor in the first year of the journal). We are supported by a global and diasporic academic Advisory Board of 35 Scholars (we started off with 35 but sadly some of these very important folks have left us). We are also grateful for the work and support of our supporting coordinator, Eve Kanam at Pluto.

The journal is a peer-reviewed academic journal and is published twice a year (June and December). The issues contain academic essays, creative and life writing, and interviews with scholars and artists (in the most recent issue we interviewed a world-renowned cricketer).

We also publish photo essays, book reviews, and poems. Since the first issue in 2021, we’ve published 71 items (i.e., articles, reviews, etc.). The journal is an online, open-access journal, available via the Ameena Gafoor Institute **website: <https://ameenagafoorinstitute.org/journals>** To date, we've had a really encouraging record of usage: 28,000 item views and about 29,000 downloads!

This is quite telling! We've basically moved from a situation of poor visibility (of the field of indentureship studies) to one where – through the work of the journal - we've managed to create a more visible home and space for the field. And we are witnessing the increasing traction of the journal, in terms of getting people to submit their articles and seeing how folks are actually yearning and hungering for scholarship in this field. Just to give you an overview of the issues: our first issue was a general issue, which featured an excerpt from Dr. Gafoor’s *A Lantern in the Wind: A Fictional Memoir* (2021, Hansib Publications) prior to its publication.

This issue also featured article contributions by late Professors Brinsley Samaroo and Brij Lal. So, this is an issue that actually started with seminal scholars and

founding figures in the field, but we also managed to attract emerging scholars.

This is one of the things that we really wanted to do i.e., to bring established and emerging scholars into conversation about indentureship studies as a field worth pursuing. I should mention that the artwork on each issue cover (and at times, within journal articles) features the work of creative workers and artists who are dealing with the topic of indenture across the global diaspora (and whose work is marginalized and not even featured in museums and popular online art platforms). We want the journal to provide space for their creative voices.

The second volume (two issues) in 2022 focused on the topic of 'gender, sexuality and indentureship'. This was an interesting moment for us (the editorial team). We put out a call asking for papers on this topic precisely because we wanted to open up very concentrated spaces of exploration and thinking in areas that were not so well-researched within indentureship studies.

We received so many abstracts that we ended up having to do two issues on gender and sexuality. The covers of both issues featured the works of Indo-Caribbean and diasporic artists, Renluka Maharaj and Shalini Seereeram - both quite well-known artists but who deserve more recognition in the wider art world, specifically because of the focus of their work.

So, this issue was quite groundbreaking, especially since no other journal (and no book) has focused on this specific topic in relation to indentureship. It has opened up a space of conversation in a context in which there is no sustained and concentrated focus on the topic.

In 2023 we also published two issues. One was a special topic focus on the term 'coolitude' (a term coined by Khal Torabully that focuses - mainly through art and literature - on the struggles of indentured labourers as well as the ways in which they survived the brutalities of the system and managed the tensions between exploitation and survival), which was guest-edited by Crispin Bates, Marina Carter and Khal Torabully.

The second issue was a general issue, to feature work by scholars whose work does not necessarily coincide with our special topic areas. So, there is always discussion by the editorial team about our planning of both special topics and general issues.

This year (2024), the first published issue is a special tribute to late Professors Brinsley Samaroo and Brij Lal. The second issue (planned for November 2024) will focus on the topic of 'indentured bodies/embodiments of indenture' and is guest-edited by Drs. Jennifer Leetsch and Sinah Kloß, University of Bonn.

Our plan for next year (2025) - which we've already started planning - is that both issues will focus on the

topic of 'art and indentureship'. So, at time we are focusing on more standard studies of indentureship, but we are also trying to diverge from that path, to rethink the field by broadening the focus on topics that have historically remained marginal.

It is important to recognize the impacts of the journal in terms of what it makes possible (as well as its limitations). The journal has increased the visibility of indentureship studies as a field in itself.

Many academies across the globe (which have departments of History, Ethnic Studies, etc.) do not have departments or programs in indentureship studies. Why? Visibility is not just about inclusion, although it is very important. We need to ask more questions about why the histories and legacies of indentureship continue to be silenced, even in the contemporary moment - not just in academic and intellectual conversations, but for school kids to know that indentureship is a legitimate field of studies that they can choose and pursue.

It is currently not an option. So, the journal is playing a part in enhancing the visibility and legitimacy of the field (and you will see on the Ameena Gafoor Institute that there is also an oral history project, created by Arlen Harris, and conferences, etc. that also facilitates visibility and voice).

Secondly, we would like to think that what we've been doing with the journal is helping to facilitate a broadening of our scholarly community and network, through which we are interacting and connecting with folks who are doing work on indentureship across the globe.

When we receive an article for consideration and we send it out for anonymous peer review, we sometimes have to approach up to ten potential reviewers before one reviewer commits.

This is one small example of how the journal develops its networks and brings scholars together as a way of making community possible. So, the journal brings these scholars into the radius of the field, making space for invested collective research dissemination.

Finally, since much of the early work (i.e. scholarship and publications) on indentureship came out of the academic discipline of History (this is part of the genealogy and legacy of the field), what we'd like to do is to broaden the field (beyond disciplinary History) to think about the potential contributions of other disciplines and perspectives on studies of indentureship and explore new methodologies that might prompt us to ask new questions about the field. We often assume that we all understand and agree on the main questions that structure the field, but the future work of the journal hopes to ask new questions about who and what topics might be included in a broader understanding of the field. It's about opening up some breathing space, so

that the sense of curiosity that Dr. Gafoor was known for, continues to live through the journal by allowing space for new questions, different perspectives and different modes of intellectual production.

I would like to thank Dr. Gafoor and her family for her initiative and support, which has broadened the possibilities for building the field of indentureship studies and unsilencing the past – a powerful legacy that will no doubt change the worlds to come.

Dr. Maria Kaladeen
(Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London University)

I want to begin by acknowledging the considerable impact that Ameena Gafoor had on my own professional life. I had the opportunity to meet Ameena at the 2017 conference held at Senate House in London to mark one hundred years since the abolition of indentured labour in the British Empire. The memory of meeting her has stayed with me because of her humility, openness and for the rapt attention she gave each speaker during the conference. What was abundantly clear is that she was absolutely invested in the work that we were all doing and for me, as a relatively new researcher, her financial commitment to the creation of a space where scholars of indenture could come together and share their work, was inspiring.

The poster for the conference, which features three young academics, all descendants of indentured labourers, is indicative of the spirit with which Ameena gave her patronship to this project. Instead of the keynote going to senior established scholars, who arguably didn't need the career boost, three new researchers presented their work in a joint keynote : the academic Dr Reshaad Durgahee, who presented his work on what he refers to as The Indentured Archipelago, making reference to labourers who were able to use the system to re-indenture to different parts of the Empire; Dr Kavyta Raghunandan who spoke about her sociological study on colourism in Trinidad and Dr Gitanjali Pyndiah who presented on violence against women in colonial Mauritius.

Ameena Gafoor's funding of this conference (alongside monetary contributions by the University of Warwick and the University of London) meant that we were able to offer financial support, in the form of travel and accommodation costs, to several early-career researchers, who at crucial junctures in their study were able to make use of the conference not only as a forum to share their work, but also as a place to connect with more senior scholars working in their field. The conference wasn't just about academic research

however, in an evening event that we organised with the Commonwealth Writers, Guyana-born writer Gaiutra Bahadur, Mauritian writer Ananda Devi and the Trinidadian novelist Lakshmi Persaud all read from their work. My British Mauritian colleague, the academic and writer Gitanjali Pyndiah, also chaired an event where she interviewed Ananda Devi about the process of translating the novel , The Counting House into French. I speak about Ameena's co-funding of this conference as so crucial to me because as one of the conveners, I have seen over the last seven years, many friendships and professional collaborations blossom as a result of the meeting that took place over those two days. Indeed, one of the first pieces that we published in the Journal for the Study of Indentureship and its Legacies was the work of two young researchers who attended the event – Priya Swamy and Sarojini Lewis. Priya presented, for me, one of the most memorable talks of that event where she spoke about the statue of Janey Tetary of Suriname and the campaign for its placement, as evidence against unhelpful stereotypes of Indian-Caribbean people in Europe as politically inactive.

In the Oscar nominated film My Beautiful Launderette, the food writer and presenter Jonathan Phang and the journalist Charlotte Helen Bailey. Each of these writers contributed valuable pieces to The Other Windrush that for me summed up the diversity of our experiences as children of this migration, who I have referred to as the 'invisible passengers' of the Windrush migration.

If I am asked to talk about why the study of the system of indenture is so important I come back to how many books like The Other Windrush currently lay unwritten

As important as this book was for people of Indian-Caribbean heritage in the UK, we must also be mindful of the fact that we are part of an indentured labour diaspora, and no such anthology currently exists that recounts the lives of the UK's Indian-Mauritian community, a large number of whom are doctors, nurses and care workers, who have dedicated their professional lives to the British National Health Service. Or the Indian-Fijian community who like Indian-Guyanese, are all too familiar with the process of giving geography lessons to the millions of people across the UK who neither have an idea what the system of indenture was or where its workers ended up. Moving beyond the UK, one is mindful of the fact that diasporic communities of indenture exist in the Netherlands and France also.

There is no doubt in my mind that there has been a total failure in the UK to acknowledge responsibility for the creation and implementation of the system of Indian indenture in any significant way. To compound this erasure, there has been no attempt to acknowledge, within the teaching of the history of the British Empire

in schools, the fact that such a system existed or that it followed almost directly on the heels of the abolition of enslavement. That this forgetting is deliberate, I have repeatedly argued, is certain.

For there is nothing more uncomfortable for a community who have wished to portray the abolition of enslavement as a moment in which the Empire came to its senses, than the almost immediate implementation of a system of unfree labour which was at its worst unjust, brutal and carceral. If one is to take as an example of a place where the system of indenture should feature as a permanent exhibition – the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich for example – there is currently no mention of the system anywhere on the site and the section on the Windrush makes no acknowledgment of descendants of indenture as part of the migration.

Recently, David Dabydeen, the filmmaker Arlen Harris and I travelled to York with Professor Diamond Ashiagbor from the University of Kent. The four of us had been invited to the York Festival of Ideas on behalf of the Rowntree Society, who have been exploring their own role in colonialism through plantation ownership in the Caribbean in the 19th century. To me what was most fascinating about this event was the contribution by Prof Ashiagbor, who spoke about her research as a legal scholar looking at the ways in which 'legal forms governing slavery and indenture have continuities in 'free' modern waged work. Using examples from jobs such as fast-food delivery drivers to seasonal factory workers, Diamond skilfully showed us that we live with the legacies of the indenture system in ways that even we, the descendants of indenture may not realise or fully acknowledge.

One of the privileges of working as an editor on the *Journal for the Study of Indentureship* is that I have the opportunity to meet and work with scholars across disciplines who are currently researching in this field. Whether their work relates to the study of literature by one of a number of talented poets and novelists from the indentured labour diaspora or to a sociological aspect of the system it is a privilege to see the work of people we've lost recently, like Prof. Brij Lal, Brinsley Samaroo and the writer Lakshmi Persaud taken up by a new generation of scholars who are committed to this field of study. In being the force that empowered so many young scholars to present and promote their work in 2017, in being the force that provided vital funding for the *Journal for Indentureship Studies*, Ameena Gafoor has to my mind secured the study of indentureship for another generation. As a descendant of indentured labourers and as an academic working in the field, I am indebted to Ameena and to her family for their generosity and support.

Dr Mark Tumbridge (University of Guyana)

Ameena Gafoor – A Life in Words

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David Dabydeen (born 9 December 1955) is a Guyanese-born broadcaster, novelist, poet and academic. He was formerly Guyana's Ambassador to UNESCO (United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation)[1] from 1997 to 2010, and was the youngest Member of the UNESCO Executive Board (1993–1997), elected by the General Council of all Member States of UNESCO.

Dave Martins – A Cultural Titan



The news on the morning of August 19, 2024, announced the passing of Dave Martins, the leader of the famous musical band, “The Trade Winds.” That announcement cast a sombre feeling in the whole country and throughout the Caribbean and the diaspora.

During his lifetime Dave was able to touch almost all of our lives through his songs and the music of his band. What made Dave the phenomenon that he became? To identify this, it is necessary to go back to his early childhood days in Guyana and the region.

Dave Martins was born in 1934 on the West Demerara. His parents were descendants of Portuguese indentured labourers. His father was a farmer and had his cultivation in the Pomeroon river, some distance away from his home. Growing up on the West Demerara, Hague and Vreed-en-Hoop allowed him to engage with a lot of working-class youth in the area. His early association with children of sugar workers must have allowed him to develop a deeper understanding of the life and struggles of workers. His regular visits to the Pomeroon exposed him to a different way of life than the one he knew on the coast and Georgetown (where he went to school). He got acquainted with the life of people in the riverain areas. This must have had a big impact on the young Dave since riverain people are really the greatest of story tellers. Some of this is also caught in his songs. “... the labba that run from Gouvia gun is we own...” He must

have heard that story in the Pomeroon. exposed him to a different way of life than the one he knew on the coast and Georgetown (where he went to school). He got acquainted with the life of people in the riverain areas. This must have had a big impact on the young Dave since riverain people are really the greatest of story tellers. Some of this is also caught in his songs. “... the labba that run from Gouvia gun is we own...” He must have heard that story in the Pomeroon. He grew up at an important period in our country’s and region’s life. His early childhood coincided with the revolutionary awakening of workers in our region. It was the beginning of the awakening of the political awareness in the Caribbean. The struggles of the working-class exploded in the West Indies and in British Guiana, huge demonstrations of workers hit the streets and the plantations. Working people were beginning to organise themselves, this gave rise to the Trade Union Movement in the West Indies. The West Demerara where Dave dwelled was a hot bed of resistance and rebellion. By 1939, the struggles of the workers led to the formation of many Trade Unions. Recall it was the strike at Lenora which eventually forced the sugar gods to accept the unionization of the sugar workers, indeed many workers were shot and killed for this gain. The 1940s, which we can consider as the formative year of Dave Martins, was also extremely eventful.

It was the time of the Second World War, and many Caribbean people were recruited to fight for Britain. Many came back with a different outlook and began to question their working and living circumstances.

In the "West On Trial," Cheddi Jagan described the atmosphere in the following way, "... Since the closing years of the war, British Guiana was a ferment of ideas. The interruption of shipping from time to time and the consequent food shortages had thrown the territory back on its own resources and had produced for the first time a national consciousness ..."

Dave was quite a young man (19 years) when in 1953 the first democratically elected government came into existence in April and was removed in October of the same year. The unity which the PPP forged in that period had a profound effect on the country. No doubt Martins was among those who caught the vision of Cheddi Jagan and the People's Progressive Party, and it really never left him.

That was reflected in his songs "Hooper and Chandarpal," "Is we own," "Not a Blade of Grass" and many of the songs he sung about West Indian cricket.

He left Guyana just about the time of Independence to seek a better life, as so many did in that period. However, Guyana and the region never left him.

It was in Canada that he honed his creative skills. His songs were a unique blend of Country and Western and Caribbean music, particularly calypso. Those art forms are distinctive but have a common feature, they tell stories of life.

He was obviously a very gifted song writer and an outstanding vocalist and musician. Those who had the good fortune of watching him perform will never be able to forget those experiences. One can say he really gave it all.

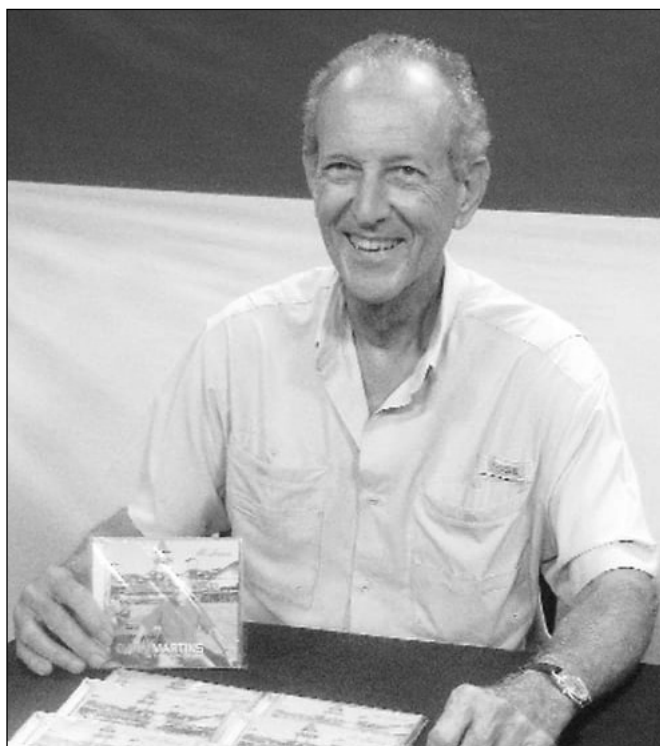
He was versatile. Some of his songs were purely for entertainment, like "Better Get on Top." Some others were very entertaining but with some serious messages, a good example is "Copy Cats." In this song he made us laugh at ourselves but at the same time it was telling us to be ourselves, to be authentic. He was the best example of this, recall the concluding line in "Copy Cats" which goes like this, "...even when the maker calls ah gon walk into heaven put down me roti and seh wah happening

deh..." Others like "Civilization" had messages of the importance of morality in life and not for us to be too pompous about our achievements. We can learn from the life of animals and try to be in concert with nature.

The message underlying many of his songs is the need for unity in our country and region. One could see his longing to see the unity of the Guyanese people that he experienced in the 1940s and 1950s. Mention was already made of "Hooper and Chandarpal" where he was telling us that working together will bring successes and being together is the best way of overcoming adversaries. Here he was showing us the great possibilities that our multi-culturalism can bring if only we recognise it.

Dave Martins was rooted in our history and our culture. He was a philosopher of sorts. He managed to capture the individual streams of our people's culture and wove them into a colourful fabric which reflects a unique Guyanese and Caribbean way of life.

Guyana has produced many talented artists, too many to list in this short article. Among them standing in the front rank was the genius, Dave Martins, a true son of the soil, a real Caribbean Hero!



Donald Ramotar is the former President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. He also served as General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party. Mr. Ramotar is a graduate from the University of Guyana in the field of Economics. He is an avid writer, and contributes regularly to the Mirror newspaper and other publications.

Parbu Dial Sattan:

Militant, Rebel, Foot-Soldier and Grass Roots PPP Activist

Certainly, within the extended Georgetown, particularly Kitty North Central and Southern sections, it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to flag a more <partinost> and stalwart of the People's Progressive party than Parbu Dial Sattan.

His affiliation with the political process would have been determined by the socio-political realities of the early 1960s; a period dubbed as the "Troubles" by some and Guyana's "Civil War" by others.

It may also be correct to situate his association with the Guaina Hindu Sanatan Dharma organisation that was founded by the late Reepu Daman Persaud.

However, the spiritual and Hindu identities were sustained internal to a historical environment specific to Kitty as an extension of Georgetown, that retained elements of national cohesion forged by the 1950s PPP, and demonstrated by the supra-majority election victory of 1953.

It is also possible that Parbu's seniors including his paternal head of family, always believed that the Burnham PNC would have to accept the reality of the People's franchise.

And difficult as that process was to become, somehow there was a realization that Dr. Jagan's sincerity, his belief in the unity of the working class, and ultimately, his dedication to the oppressed class would provide an alternative to ethnic as well as class polarisation as these trends impacted upon the lives of ordinary folks.

Another factor that could be examined is that of Gandhian peaceful political campaigns as this formulation would be applicable to then colonial British Guiana. Subjectively at least, Gandhi's ideas had a generational influence throughout the former English colonial territories, especially during the immediate post WWII years leading to India's independence.

These are important strands that must be recognised, when extracting a balanced perspective relative to an activist such as Parbu, the 'Thomas Street comrade'.

At another yet significant level would be the <communal> type environment of Kitty bound to the west by Vlissengen Road, Barr Street, and the Barr Street access to the Lamaha artery.

Kitty Market/Alexander Street PPP Rallies as Socialisation

Local historians Rose and Moore have alluded and specified the critical role of the 'Fear' factor in the period



characterised by the CIA (through their Local agents) campaign to overthrow and displace the Jagan PPP commencing from the 80-days Strike, and anti-Kaldor budget demonstrations.

As in West on Trial, Jagan C.J., Justice: The Struggle for Democracy in Guyana, 1952-1992, Fr. Andrew Morrison SJ, Part 1, cf on Premier Dr. Jagan's 1962 New Year's Message. Also, section D, 'Big Brother Against Professionals', and 'Policeman Under Manners'; pp. 63/4). Interestingly Jessie Burnham's letter "Beware of My Brother Forbes", highlighted and forewarned about Burnham's racist ideas.

Communal Kitty served as an important hub in the political sense of transcending the fear (as discussed above), sourced from political and racial discrimination as well as state sponsored coercion as evident in rigged PNC elections.

PPP Kitty market square rallies were sponsored during the pre-election (or E-Day) itself.

Parasatan's pharmacy as well as the location immediately north of the old Hollywood Cinema – along Alexander Street - were venues for PPP solidarity events. Perhaps only Bourda Green and Lousia Row would have shared as foreraters for socialization amongst the working people of Georgetown.

The role that Parbu Sattan would have played in this process, that of a committee group member tasked with local organization - mounting of platforms, streaming of flags and banners, as well as some level of security -, would be complex to unravel without a collective input of others who collaborated with party mobilisation over the decades.

Nevertheless, one thing is certain. Comrade Parbu's intimate familiarity with the problems confronted by grassroots, his perception of diversity as manifest in location (i.e., street corners), as well as scheduling of meetings in terms of political events not "clashing" with

public holidays; or any other major cultural or sports activity within given boundaries or constituencies, was a real time value.

It was in this area of grassroots experiences that Parbu Sattan was proficient.

Additionally, it must be recalled that the Kitty ward (at that time) or later comprised of a neighbourhood viewed as a virtual 'heirloom' for LFS Burnham. Burnham grew up in the northern-most sector termed Subryanville/Kitty, and this contiguity impacted across ethnicities. Similar perhaps to the Charlestown ward and the municipal support for Janet Jagan in the 1950s.

<To win back electoral support in Kitty therefore, especially in the environment of paramountcy, police as well as other non-state harassment was no easy task.

Multi-Class Democracy and Militancy

In the post WWII decades, up until the late 1960s (and even somewhat more), Kitty and Bel Air were considered at best semi-rural in terms of social amenities linked directly and otherwise to the East Coast railway. Kitty being the first station/stop out of Georgetown.

Coupled to the open municipal market were micro-grocery outlets as well as bovine and ruminants rearing. Parbu himself could often be seen, during the 1970s, herding three or more heifers along the road after these had been taken to graze.

So it would seem that similarly to the family unit of Komal Chand (West Bank Demerara) and to a lesser extent the late Boysie Ramkarran, the rearing of cattle was one source of earnings.

During the mid-1970s for instance, it was not unusual to see Parbu riding one of the horses stabled in Thomas Street along Alexander Street.

This combination of small business people, cattle rearing and casual labour represented to a substantial degree the Kitty constituency.

At the said time there were the Ramkarrans (Bel Air), the subgroup of PPP frontline leaders such as Narbada Persaud, Ramroop aka "Shogat", Maccie Hamid and Yacoob Ally, all of whom with the exception of "Shogat" were residential in the location bounded by Sandy Babb, Stanley Place, Vlissengen and Kitty Public Road

as converted to link with the East Coast Highway - Burnham's alternative to the closure of the East Coast railway.

As he matured Parbu practically became a spokesperson for almost the entire North Kitty/Subryanville/Prashad Nagar and Lama Avenue location as well as Section "K" and Campbellville.

Essentially, this would have been derivative from his other engagements discussed above. However, he became a PPP Councillor serving on the Georgetown City Council for a number of years – a reflection of the high level of local knowledge he had accumulated for a considerable period of time.

As was confirmed at the Freedom House tribute recently, Parbu not only was a close collaborator with PPP elections committee chairperson Gail Teixeira, but also with other stalwarts. These would include Kemraj Raj and Ronald "Ronnie" Nawbatt, both managers of the Basic Needs/SIMAP during the 1990s, as well as with the 'agency' tasked with supporting farmers under the authority of then Minister Housing and Water, Irfaan Ali. Last week, travelling through the Kitty community – Alexander to Pike and David Streets – where a more variegated cluster of small business have evolved, one was struck by the feedback from ordinary folk. And why? The sense of loss, alienation even from the essentialism of human mortality was very evident.

Unlike Burnham who claimed that "another rasta" would replace him, the same cannot be said of Parbu Sattan the militant and at occasions controversial PPP Man with an attitude.

Eddie Rodney
24 June 2024

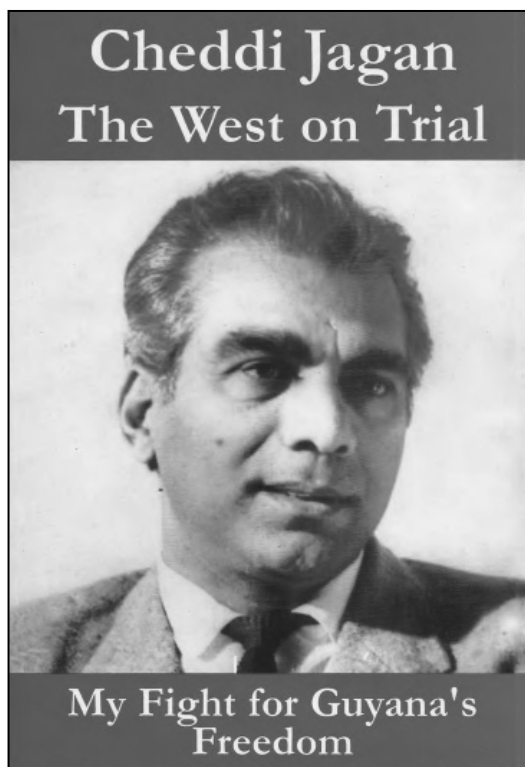
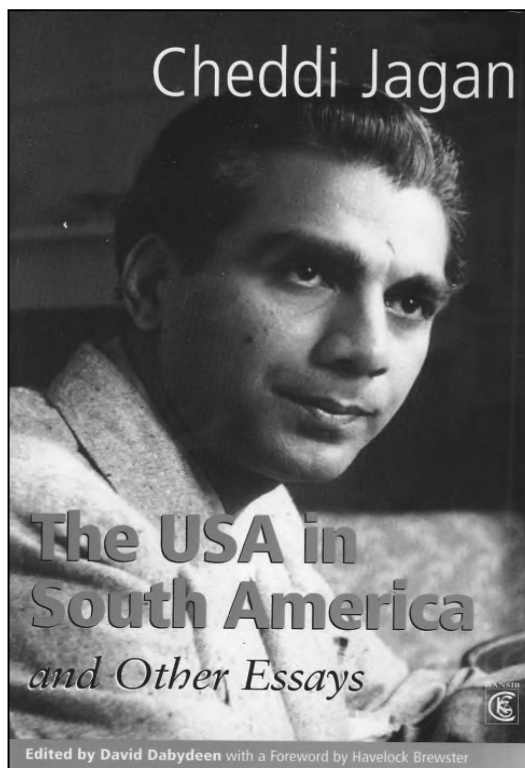
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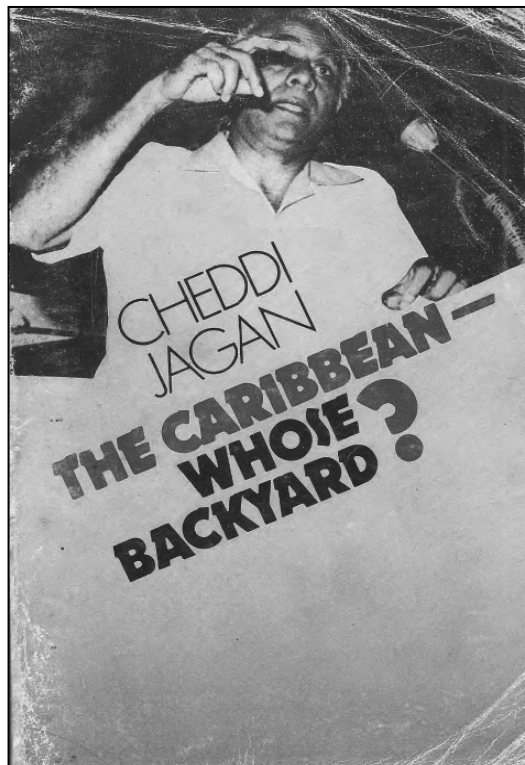
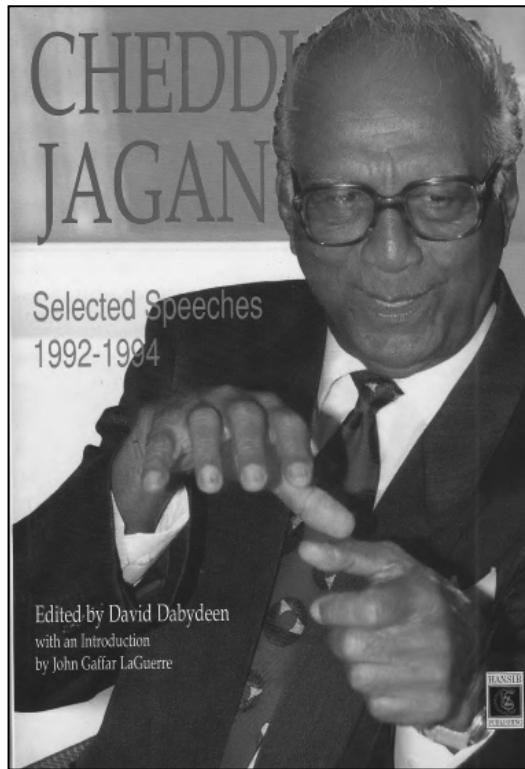


Eddie Rodney is a Senior Journalist for the Weekend Mirror newspaper. He was a former Member of Parliament.

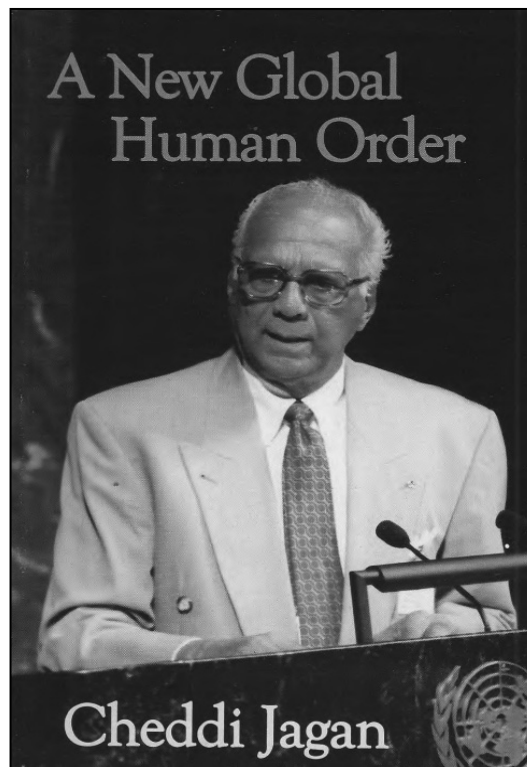
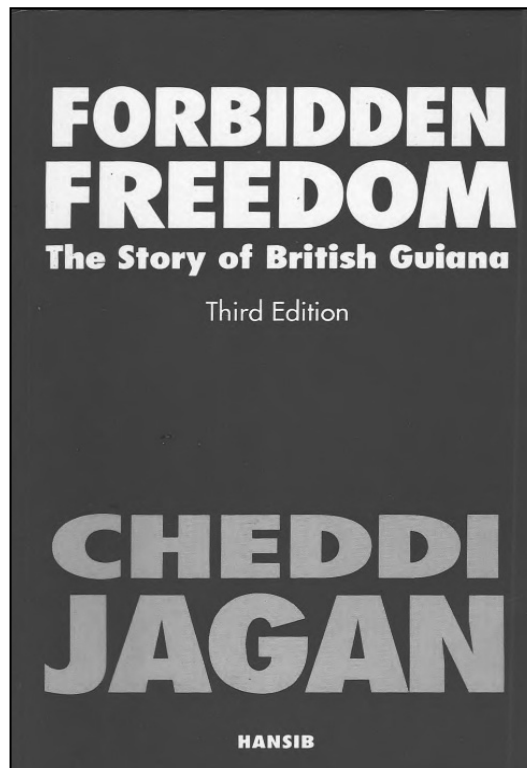
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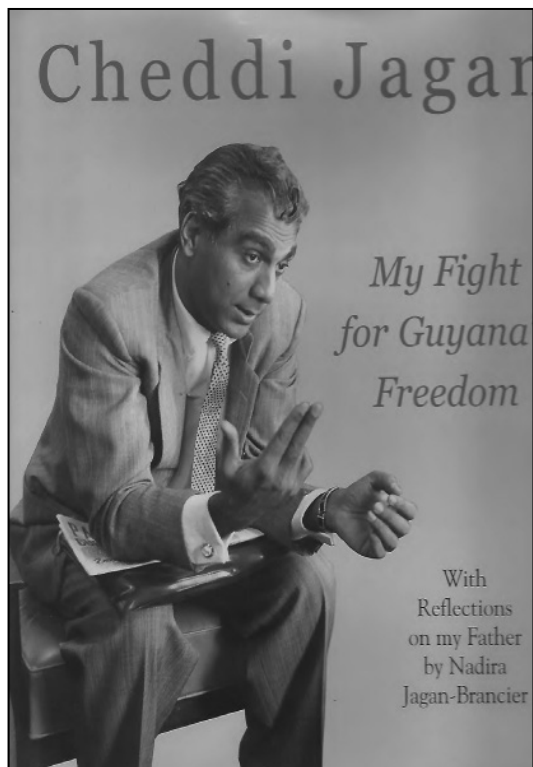
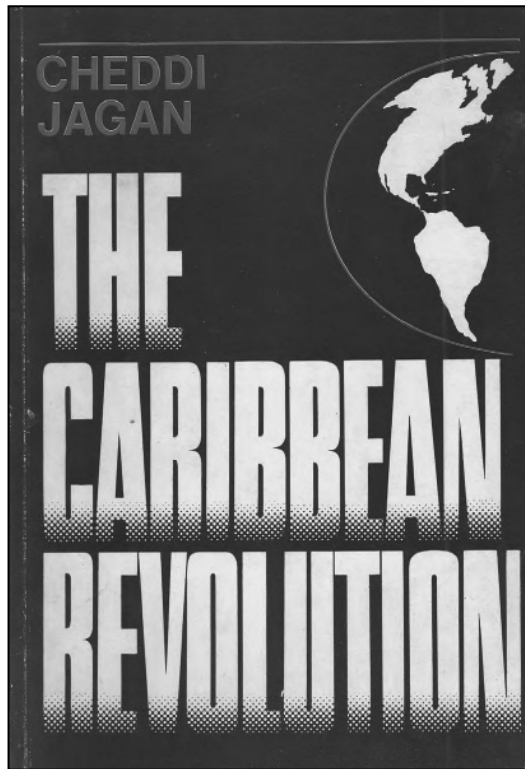
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Publications by Dr. Cheddi Jagan



Publications by Dr. Cheddi Jagan



Cheddi Jagan Research Centre

The Cheddi Jagan Research Centre (CJRC) was officially opened on March 22, 2000 which was the 82nd birthday anniversary of Dr. Cheddi Jagan. The CJRC is dedicated to making available to Guyana and the world, the very rich collection of materials which captures the visionary thoughts and revolutionary ideas of the late President of Guyana, Dr. Cheddi Jagan (1918-1997)

The centre houses a large archival collection of papers, documents, photographs, audio and DVDs related to Dr. Jagan's long and enduring involvement in leading the political struggle in Guyana and at the global level. Dr. Cheddi Jagan is the Father of the Guyanese nation and a renowned and respected statesman. His immense stature in Guyana the Caribbean and the world at large stems from his ground-breaking contributions in numerous stages of the struggle for a better life for the people of Guyana and the world at large.

These include:

1. The struggle against the British to end colonial rule through political independence.
2. Governing for the benefit of the Guyanese people in the colonial period in 1953 and 1957 to 1964 and as the first democratically elected President of independent Guyana from 1992-1997.
3. The international struggle for an end to poverty and inequality through a New Global Human Order.

The CJRC's aims and objectives are to publish material and promote research on the life, work and ideas of Dr. Jagan which is intertwined with the history of Guyana as a whole from the early 1940's to the late 1990's.

Moreover, the collection is indispensable to any analysis of Guyana's post-war social, economic and political development, since Dr. Jagan's work and thoughts have had such a powerful resonance with his country and beyond.

Conference Room Rental

The Conference room is available for rental to host meetings, seminars and workshops

CONTACT US

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Opening hours: Monday – Friday (9:00 am – 4:00pm)

Admission – FREE!

The Cheddi Jagan Research Centre is dedicated to making available to the Guyanese and international communities the Legacy and Work of the Late President of Guyana, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, through research and education.

The Centre is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation located at the Red House.

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