Party Stalwarts

by Hydar Ally

The strength of the PPP always resided in the visionary qualities of its leaders and the commitment and dedication of the rank and file to the ideals of the Party. There are thousands of Party comrades who have dedicated almost their entire lives to the cause of the Party many from the very inception of the Party and even before.

One such comrade is Mrs. Janet Jagan, widow of the late Dr. Cheddi Jagan both of whom have together over a century of service and contribution to the cause of the Guyanese people. And this is no ordinary service but service of an exceptional high level with both having attained the distinction of holding the highest political post of the land-that of Executive President.

As Prime Minister Samuel Hinds indicated during a simple ceremony to mark Mrs. Jagan’s eighty-eight birthday, Mrs. Jagan is more Guyanese than many living today having arrived in this country long before those who unashamedly questioned her right to occupy the Presidency of this country. Imagine the audacity of some opposition elements to question her right to the Presidency during the elections of 1997 when she ran as the Presidential candidate of the PPP! Even may of her detractors, did what any self-respecting person would do. We all know what she did.

The fact is that the history of contemporary Guyana would be incomplete without an acknowledgment of the role played by the Jagans in the creation of a modern Guyanese society and polity. Both Cheddi and Janet Jagan were founding members of the Political Affairs Committee which could be considered as the fore runner of the People’s Progressive Party, a Party which has survived some of the most turbulent political waters only to emerge stronger. It is to the credit of the Jagans that the Party was able to weather the political storms particularly during the early days of the Party’s formation when attempts were made to divide the Party following the suspension of the Constitution in 1953 after the Party won a landslide victory at the polls, winning 18 out of the 24 seats.

Today there are fresh attempts to diminish the role and significance of the Jagans by some so-called ‘academics’ whose objectivity is coloured by their hatred for the Jagan’s and the PPP. One writer and academic, Clem Seecharran, attempted to project Dr. Jagan as someone who sought to exploit ethnic loyalties to foment instability in the country in order to undermine the ‘patrimony’ of Jock Cambell, whom de

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scribed as the ‘Booker Reformer in British Guiana’ during the 1934-1965 period. One hardly associate academic works with the kind of trash being peddled by Clem Seecharran in his book “Sweetering Bitter Sugar: Jock Cambell, the Booker Reformer in British Guiana” Maybe it is not too difficult to understand why that was so, given the fact that research for the publication was financed substantially by Jock Cambell.

I do not propose to go into all the distortions and inaccuracies contained in the publication except to say that the book is on the whole patronizing to the colonial powers especially during the 1934-1966 period when