First Lady Janet Jagan made Guyana's history as the first woman to win a seat in municipal elections. At 72, she is the Editor-in-Chief of the weekly Mirror newspaper, in Guyana's electoral history as the first woman ever to be elected in such a poll.

**No longer an American**

It was after this election that she first had her American citizenship revoked. She said that in 1947 the Constituent Assembly let her in and asked if she had voted (she was a candidate). When she said "yes", they told her she had lost her American citizenship—not for being a candidate, but for the act of voting.

Janet said prior to Guyana's independence in 1966, she was again called in by the United States consulate and her citizenship restored. This followed a ruling by the Supreme Court on a case which disallowed the revoking of citizenship because the person voted in elections in another country.

Within weeks however, she again lost the right to be a citizen in the country of her birth, because she had applied for Guyanese citizenship. Given these incidents and the fact that the United States played an integral role in ensuring the removal of her husband's government from power some years later, one wondered if she felt any bitterness towards the United States.

She says: "Not America per se, but I certainly had no good feelings for the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). They came and intervened. They played a dreadful role in this country, and I felt very strongly about what the CIA did. They fomented all of the problems."

She said here was not a wild accusation, as the truth had been revealed over the years on the CIA's role in helping to finance the protrated civil servants' strike which had caused strife in its capital. In 1963, and by this time a mother, Janet won a seat in the National Assembly and became deputy speaker—the first woman to hold that position in Guyana. In that election, two other women were also elected, making it the first time women had been elected in party politics.

Thumbing through a weather-worn booklet of the period, she smiled with delight at the faded picture of the three of them entering Parliament, each dressed in the trendy "shark skin" materials of the period with matching hats, scarfs, purses and shoes.

That election took place against the background of the turbulent Cold war period and the witch hunt in the United States against people who expressed views that could be remotely termed as Communist.

From this period her life became a struggle to defend her beliefs and vision of helping the poorer classes in Guyana.

**Time in prison**

After the PPA's victory that year the constitution was suspended. The party decided on an action of non-cooperation to force the British government's hand. This action led to restrictions being placed on them and later they were both jailed for six months.

Governor-General, as well as a help of somberness to the litera- rature (socialist books).

Relating her experience in prison, Janet said: "I was stuck in a cell. All you had was these folding canvas cot. The only thing that was difficult for me was the mosqui- tos (socialist books).

Relating her experience in prison, Janet said: "I was stuck in a cell. All you had was these folding canvas cot. The only thing that was difficult for me was the mosquitoes, bats, and the type of thing. And the food was very bad of course.

At several stages they tried to make us as well. I didn't want to talk to anyone.

The information of my arrest and trial is the very few we have. It was very quiet because in that period every minute we were busy. It was like a holiday".

During their period of incarceration, the Jagnas resumed their work and won the 1957 and 1961 general elections. They held the reins of government and, Janet, always by his side, rose to minister of health, housing and labour.

Since then the two have kept the PPP's fighting fire burning, fighting the four general elections and the constitutional referendum held. They had consistently assured the government of a full five year term in 1964, and with the end of the Cold War, and international interests in seeing elections were free and fair, they both anticipated victory.

"**Two lovely children**

But what she had most to share with her children, both of whom live in North America. Certainly such a turbulent life would take its toll, and surely she sees and reas, crookoch and that type of. And the food was very bad of course.

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From the Georgetown jail she was sent across the Berbice River to New Amsterdam. There she was allowed to do handiwork: sewing clothes and making the kind of stuff.

She recalled: "We did not dislike prison, in the sense that you had a lot of time to think. It was very quiet because in that period every minute we were busy. It was like a holiday".

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