

People's Progressive Party
41 Robb Street
Lacytown
Georgetown

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Dr. Vindhya Vasini Persaud
Editor
Horizons

Dear Vindhya

First of all, let me congratulate you on your most excellent publication "Horizons." Only recently I saw a copy and was most impressed. The content, the wide views expressed, the historical worthiness, the layout, pictures, etc. harmonise into an integral whole.

I would like to bring your attention to an historical error in the article "Shaping." It is not stated who wrote it but whosoever is guilty of rewriting history in one line on page 45, last paragraph.

It states: "Beharry's position was later rescinded in 1960 due to his anti-government position on the tax measures concerning the sugar industry." The facts of Beharry's removal as Minister of Natural Resources in the PPP 1957-61 government are as follows. In those days, the budgets were highly secret and only the members of the Executive (Cabinet) who made the decisions knew of the facts until they were made public in the Legislative Council. This was so to prevent any manipulation of goods that would be taxed, to the benefit of the producers.

In this particular case, and I'm not sure it was the 1959 or 1960 budget, Beharry was caught "red handed" as they say, selling tax increase information to Bristol cigarettes, who in turn were able to take advantage of the advance information to profit on the leak. In return, Beharry was given a large franchise for the sale of their cigarettes. This, in fact, appears to be the springboard to his advancing years later, as Guyana's richest man.

Beharry, who before becoming minister, was a relatively small stallholder at Stabroek Market was married and had two sons. Cheddi Jagan, a man of deep humanity and high integrity, was dismayed at what Beharry had done, but did not expose or have him charged because he did not want his family to suffer. He did the same in the case of Finance Minister Asgar Ally who was asked to resign from the 1992 - 1997 PPP government for an act of nepotism.

I cannot remember if Beharry was asked to resign or if he was dismissed, but I suppose the dates and whichever are on record.

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Strange to note, but this is how life is, both ministers, after doing what they did and getting off so easily, turned viciously on Dr. Jagan.

Since Beharry's disgraceful behaviour took place some 50 years ago, it would not be responsible to give publicity to it now, and hurt his family who had nothing to do with his misdemeanors. But it would be far better for historians just to report that he resigned or was asked to resign as Minister.

Yours sincerely

Janet Jagan

Copied to the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre and General Secretary of the PPP,
Donald Ramotar, M.P.

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