

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 'villified' 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

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