

## Some Observations on The Occasion of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Year Since the Birth of Janet Jagan by Eddie Rodney

Beyond the relatively well published narratives of Janet Jagan's political life and persona, it is necessary to upgrade and to revise the Marxist-Leninist perspective of this truly remarkable historical figure.

It is always an honour to have the invite to participate in any event focusing on such a highly and also globally recognised political leader.

The first point one could make is that Janet Jagan in reality was a professional who was trained to become a medical, or if we like, healthcare provider. Obviously, her nursing education sessions would have enabled her understanding of the anatomy and structure of the human body and its functions.

Naturally therefore, her lifelong union with Cheddi Jagan could be considered as a process devoted to restore, to repair and rehabilitate.

The Cheddi Jagan Research Centre (Red House<sup>1</sup>) not only served as the official residence of the Jagans whilst Dr. Jagan was Prime Minister subsequent to the 1961 general elections, but was transformed after Dr. Jagan's death in 1997; into a centre whose primary purpose was to store and enable research into the Cheddi Jagan history with all its cultural and socio-political ramifications.

Janet Jagan developed a keen historical insight into the Guyanese identity. Whilst it is true she never lost her Americanised accent, whatever rhetoric she engaged in or with, clearly reflected her complete immersion into the sociology and political culture of Guiana/Guyana.

The second pole of reference we could discuss is the fact she was understandably protectionist in praxis of the People's Progressive Party" I recall on one occasion after the end of a PR sub-committee meeting held at Freedom House, where as those in attendance including Cde. Hydar (Ally), were about to depart, she inquired of myself "where are you going Cde Rodney" (in fact she always called me Cde Eddi or just plain Rodney). I responded that I intended to proceed to Mirror's Industrial Site location. She said to me "no comrade, I want to have a word with you". She then indicated there had been (what most likely was an Execo decision which would have been subsequently an agenda item of the Central Committee), to the effect that commencing from early 2000 there would be the launching of the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre (CJRC).

Not being a CC member at that time, she ensured that I was consulted and aware of such a critical political decision.

One always had the impression that she performed a kind of **matriarch** role; tracking and monitoring every detail of party life, and that in itself demonstrated her qualities as an administrator who not only worked for election gains and successes but had a vision of protectionism – at least as far as Freedom House supervision and controls were material issue.

To further illustrate this aspect, one that has been alluded to by Cde. Nokta when he made binary "the mother and the baby..."

Some years ago, whilst in London I witnessed an Asian young woman with her infant strapped to her back as she boarded a London Transport Red bus. I cannot recall precisely what the conductor told her, but before she could take her seat, she unwrapped the cotton material item and placed her young child

which was still asleep to the front of her body and secured the wrap around her neck. Only then did the conductor ring the bell that signalled the onward journey of the vehicle.

This recollection though somewhat hazy has come to mind as I have listened to the previous contributors, especially Indra Chandarpal and Clement Rohee, who interestingly has remarked that one should opt to say something about Janet Jagan that has not been said before.

If another comparison that is relevant to the international impact of Janet Jagan's contribution could be drawn, then we could cite the historical missionary activities of Mother Theresa who devoted years of her life to alleviating the suffering and desolation of poor people in Kolkata, India.

Now Mother Theresa was not a politician but she originated from the Eurozone of East Central Balkans (Albania) not very different to the territory of Romania (capital Bucharest). Romania according to the official version was the country where Janet Jagan's parents hailed from.

The impact of Janet Jagan in Guyana included an early 1950s sojourn to this part of east/central Europe when she represented Guyana at a Youth International Festival.

To conclude: Cheddi Jagan and Janet Jagan were inseparable.

There was Cheddi Jagan the Scientific Socialist and there was Janet Jagan the Revolutionary Socialist.

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**End note**

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<sup>1</sup> See Issue, Vol 1 Nos 1-4, The Thinker, Editorials and Statements