

# A Second Letter That Was Not Published

Clement James – December 24, 2021

Unpublished Letter In K/N And S/N

Dear Editor,

In my letter published in (KN 13/12/21), I posed a question in respect to a letter written by Baytoram Ramharack in (SN 13/12/21). I asked what class and/or social strata is his target audience in Guyana?

Ramharack's response published in (KN 15/12/21) provided the answer. He admitted he is targeting the younger generation. He claimed that my response to his; '... is a brazen attempt to steal our historical memory, held hostage by the sycophants, determined to leave our younger generation bereft of an opportunity to critically assess the leadership handed down to them from an older generation.'

The chastisements and invective of being a sycophant aside, Ramharack's senseless claim that my response to his was 'to steal his 'historical memory and to leave our younger generation bereft of an opportunity to critically assess the leadership handed down to them from an older generation' was way beyond the pale.

How could Ramharack be so careless not to have noticed that in today's digital world my response to his sanctimonious bleating, be considered an attempt to steal his 'historical memory'?

Independent of my letter, Ramharack and the younger generation, have unhindered access to public records of Guyana's pre and post independence history. All are free to read, critically analyze and offer their views on that chapter of Guyana's history.

It would be wooden-headed to believe that in a world dominated by the WWW, anyone with an investigative predisposition would be unable to 'critically assess' a specific period in Guyana's history as well as Cheddi Jagan's role at a particular juncture of our country's history.

Young people today are not interested in labels nor the ranting and raving by a rabid anti-communist. To them, a decent job, a living wage, and affordable housing are of utmost importance. And the force and orientation of today's younger generation in protest demonstrations, as well as the power of the youth vote in countries around the world are not to be underestimated.

Today's younger generation tend to adopt a more positive and enlightened approach to national and international issues such as free and fair elections, democratic governance and climate change.

Truth be told, the exchange of letters published thus far must have provided readers with a clear distinction between a twisted and biased 'historical memory' of Jagan and a more authentic, superior and objective assessment of the man.

According to Percy Hintzen in his article; 'Cheddi Jagan (1918-97) Charisma and Guyana's Challenge to Western Capitalism;'

'If Jagan was indeed a communist, it was certainly not reflected in the policies and programmes that his party attempted to implement while in office. ...the simple characterization of Jagan as a communist misses the complexity of his political philosophy.( Hintzen 1997:64).

To claim that Jagan was 'followed blindly' without being questioned, is to be uninformed, if not ignorant of the democratic culture promoted by Jagan within the party where freedom of discussion and the right to criticize were encouraged.

Ramharack makes several references to what he holds to be the truth and facts. He closed his letter invoking words

from the Mundaka Upanishad that; 'truth alone conquers, not untruth.'

In contradistinction, I hold the view that 'practice be considered as a criterion of truth'.

Truth, in my view, is but a true reflection of reality in thought, which is ultimately verified in practice. However, truth is constantly evolving becoming more enriched, gaining in scope and exactitude because social practice itself undergoes a process of continuous development. Therein lies the practical manifestation of truth.

Mr Ramharack is free to conjure up his own 'truths' and his own 'facts' but it is improper to try to impose his 'facts' and his 'truths' on those who do not share them.

In the cut and thrust of Ramharack's bleating, one is left to wonder what does he recognize as the mark of truth. Assuming he has none save for the quotation at the end of his letter.

On the question of Marxist/Hegelian dialectics, Ramharack obviously has an unlearned understanding of the historical development of dialectics.

Seeking refuge in a scholastic, unscientific approach to this rather complex phenomenon will be unhelpful to those who chose to follow him.

As far as I am aware, the idealistic dialectics of Hegel was discarded by Marx. He regarded economic reality itself as 'something dialectically mutable in which the conflicting aspects interpenetrate one another'.

Mr. Ramharack went on to assert; 'There are many individuals rooted in Caribbean history who were grounded in Marxist analysis as an epistemological tool .... instead of becoming dogmatically attached to Marxism and Soviet communism. The work and activity of Marxist or anti-colonial and political activists like Claudia Jones, CLR James, George Lamming and our own Walter Rodney comes to mind.'

But there is a bigger, rather than the narrow picture that comes to mind which Ramharack conveniently dodged in his attempt to frame Jagan's ideological advocacy

Assessing Jagan in his article Hintzen wrote;

'Like his West Indian nationalist counterparts he was not hostile to America or American investments. He firmly believed that the nationalist goal of economic determination would have been considerably enhanced if the colony were weaned away from dependence upon the sterling block (Fraser 1994:127). This was precisely the thinking behind the anti-communist policies advocated by other West Indian nationalists from the 1950s through the post-independence era (Hintzen 1997:64) But once his socialism became cast in Cold War terms, this fundamental similarity was over looked.'

Ramharack displayed once again his preference to draw from the revelations of Kwayana's conversations with Naipaul to categorize Bisnauth. He failed to grasp and chose to ignore, unwisely so, the many natural traits of Jagan including his humanism, honesty and ability to engage and bring on board engage persons who did not share his ideology as witnessed in the many civic members of his cabinet.

Instead Ramharack opted to slavishly fall back on the old, hackneyed arguments about 'doctrinaire Soviet Marxism' while labeling those who stand opposed to his religiously birthed ideology as 'sycophants.

Ramharack is so blinded by his deep hatred for Jagan that he completely ignored his speeches and writings which threw fresh light on the historical development of society and particularly that of colonialism. In contrast he continues to stir the cracked pot about 'Cheddi's dogmatic and inflexible Marxist ideology and his persistent loyalty to the Soviet Empire'.

Had Ramharack read widely, he would have taken note of the fact that Jagan was not alone ideologically. Jawaharal Nehru's observations in his book 'The Discovery of India' wrote; 'A study of Marx and Lenin produced a powerful effect on my mind and helped me to see history and current affairs in a new light. The long chain of history

and of social development appeared to have some meaning, some sequence, and the future lost some of its obscurity.'

And about the so-called 'Soviet Empire', this is what Nehru had to say; 'The Soviet revolution has advanced human society by a great leap and had lit a bright flame which could not be smothered, and that it had laid the foundations for that new civilization towards which the world could advance'. (ibid p 29).

Ramharack makes the astounding claim that it was Janet Jagan who, in the 1940's, 'steered Dr.Jagan to accept lock, stock and barrel a dogmatic and inflexible Marxist ideology and his persistent loyalty to the Soviet Empire.' This is old hat. We have heard the tale repeated many times over by the Ramharacks of this world

To the unbiased mind, contrary to Ramharack's jaundiced view, it is was progressive American historians, academics, authors and journalists including, Charles Beard, Mathew Josephson, George Seldes, the Indian Professor Sinha and Marx's Capital that 'steered' Jagan ideologically and in his own words; 'opened up whole new visions.'

Ramharack is obviously unaware of the internal dynamics of the PPP at the time of Cheddi Jagan, thus he ends up confused as ever over what appears in THUNDER, and what emanates from a CENTRAL COMMITTEE REPORT to a party congress. In the same way he confuses THUNDER with the CONSTITUTION of the party

THUNDER is the official organ of the PPP with an editorial Board. The Editorial Board is free to accept or reject any article submitted for consideration.

A Central Committee Report, is precisely what it says it is. The document is discussed and approved by the 35 members of the party's central committee. It is not a document personal to any individual member or party leader.

The report is usually read at a party congress by the General Secretary of the Party on behalf of the central committee.

The CONSTITUTION of the party sets out the purposes for which the party was constituted and establishes the basic rules of the organization.

Setting out to manufacture contradictions between an article in THUNDER, and a CENTRAL COMMITTEE REPORT while ignoring the basic tenets, guiding and foundation principles enshrined in the party's CONSTITUTION is not surprising as Ramharack set out to do as if in search for a needle in a haystack.

I close with the following proverb; 'He who pays the piper calls the tune'

Yours faithfully,  
Clement J. Rohee