

His Good Work Will Live After Him!

By Mel Carpen

THE ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED GUYANESE (New Jersey) in its Press Release, on March 6, 1997, on the passing of Dr. Cheddi Jagan, stated that when the heart of Dr. Jagan stopped beating, he did not die, but achieved immortality. These were very meaningful words because, as we can see from the tremendous outpouring of sympathies and the thousands who turned out at his death, that he was no ordinary man. If one should look closely at his life and work, the fact that he was ordinary becomes very evident.

Dr. Cheddi Jagan was born on March 22, 1918 of humble working class parents in the estate of Port Mourant, Guyana. He received his primary education on the Corentyne and attended secondary school at Queens College, Georgetown, after which he traveled to the USA to study dentistry. In the USA, he worked odd jobs to help finance his education.

During his years in the USA, he was able to see the work and lifestyles of the Americans who had just experienced an economic depression and also was in the middle of the second world war. During his stay in the USA, Cheddi met and married Janet Rosenberg of Chicago. Shortly after their marriage, Dr. and Mrs Jagan moved to Guyana to set up a dental office. Cheddi and Janet, qualified dentist and nurse, could have remained in business and become rich; but they saw the suffering of the people and became involved in the efforts to free them from the bondage of colonialism.

Dr. Jagan was first elected to Parliament as an independent candidate in 1947 and became the LONE voice that challenged the oppressors on behalf of the working people of Guyana.

In 1948, five workers at Enmore were gunned down as they demonstrated for better wages and working conditions. Dr. Jagan knew the workers personally and **he pledged to himself that he would not rest until his people were free from colonial bondage.**

Dr. Jagan and his wife, Janet were on the forefront in the fight for universal adult suffrage and, in 1950 they, along with Ashton Chase and H.J.M. Hubbard, founded the Peoples Progressive Party which became the vanguard of the Guyanese people fight for independence and democracy.

In 1953, the PPP won its first election (18 out of 24 seats) and Dr. Jagan was made Chief Minister in a Government that was removed from office 133 days later on the excuse that the colony had fallen into communist hands. Dr. Jagan, Mrs Jagan and several other leading members of the PPP were jailed by the British.

The PPP also won the next election in 1957 although there was an organized split in the party in 1955. It was triumphant also in 1961 and Dr. Jagan became Premier in a system of Internal Self Rule. In 1964, the PPP was removed from office through a combination of local disturbances and foreign intervention.

During the years 1957 to 1964, Dr. Cheddi Jagan and the PPP government initiated numerous programs to assist the Guyanese people – socially, economically and culturally.

From 1964 to 1992, Dr. Jagan led the Opposition to the PNC government which maintained itself in office through rigged elections and intimidations. During this period, the affairs of Guyana were mis-managed and the physical and social infrastructure were completely destroyed. Thousands of Guyanese, many of the qualified, left for overseas.

On October 5, 1992, election, supervised by a team of international observers, led by former US President, Mr Jimmy Carter, was held, and the PPP, with its Civic alliance, won. Democracy was thus restored and the huge task of re-building Guyana began. Dr. Jagan was the guiding force in this fight for the restoration of Democracy.

Dr. Jagan, in thanking the Guyanese people for their support, stated that all the people had won the election and that his efforts as President would be to serve all the people of Guyana.

He approached the task of re-building Guyana with competence, integrity and sensitivity to the need of all the people of Guyana. He fought against corruption, racism and backwardness. Under his tenure, the foundations to re-build Guyana economically and socially were planned and laid out. He worked hard hours to help his people and traveled overseas on many occasions to lobby for investments and debt write-offs. He also advocated a **new global human order** to fight poverty world wide. He was respected both at home and abroad, and both friends and foes saw him as Guyana's hope to turn things around for the better.

DR. JAGAN'S UNEXPECTED DEATH CAME AT A CRUCIAL TIME IN Guyana's efforts to re-build and to consolidate democracy. As he lay ill in the hospital in Washington, he recognized that he still had a lot of work to do, but he was confident that what he had done so far could be built upon for the betterment of all Guyanese.

He said, "Don't worry, everything will be all right".

Thousands, from all walks of life, came to pay homage upon his death. Thousands attended his cremation. He was no ordinary man – he was the FATHER OF THE NATION.

At this critical time of our Nation's history, Guyanese everywhere must unite and work together to build on the foundation laid by Dr. Jagan. This effort to work together in unity and peace would be the noblest tribute we could ever pay to the life, work and memory of this great and humble man. ■

Newark: THE ASSOCIATION OF CONCERNED GUYANESE (NJ), the support group of the PPP in NJ area received news of the untimely passing of our Party Leader and President of the Republic of Guyana, with deep sadness, concern and grief.

To our Dear First Lady, Janet Jagan, to the family of our departed Comrade, to our party and to the Government and people of Guyana, we send our sincerest condolences at this sad time of our common irreplaceable loss.

We in NJ recognize the fact that when the noble heart of Comrade Cheddi Jagan stopped beating, he did not die but achieved immortality.

Dr. Jagan was a great leader, the best, a beloved comrade and a dear friend. He was the undisputed champion of our peoples' fight to achieve independence and democracy. He was a symbol of inspiration to oppressed people everywhere. He was always a relentless fighter for the rights of the working class. He was the real Father of our Nation.

The ACG (NJ) calls on all Guyanese everywhere to unite and work together to build on the foundation laid by Dr. Jagan during his tenure. This effort to work together in unity and peace would be the noblest tribute we could ever pay to the life, work and memory of our beloved leader, comrade and friend.

Long live the immortal Cheddi Jagan!

Long live the Peoples Progressive Party!

Long live the PPP-Civic Government of Guyana!

Long live the People of Guyana!

Mel Carpen, March 6, 1997.