

# 'He Was Our Teacher, Our Leader & Father Of The Nation'

by President Samuel Hinds

This morning, dear comrades, we another step take, in saying a sad but fond farewell to our President, our Leader, our Teacher, the Father of our Nation.

I can well recall as a country boy 10 years old, when the PPP swept the polls in 1953. Dr. Jagan and the People's Progressive Party lit the flame for independence and nationhood. I did not dream then, nor did I, even seven years ago, ever think of entering the politics of our country. It was the call extended in 1990 by Dr. Jagan and the PPP towards the end of 1990, for civic-minded persons to join with them in the struggle to bring about a change in Guyana, then in the rebuilding of Guyana that brought myself and others into politics. Dr. Jagan was perhaps the common thread amongst the Civic members of the PPP/Civic.

The creation of the PPP/Civic by Dr. Jagan was a political and social innovation, a bold and courageous stretching out of hands across various insecurities perceived by our people, which threaten the keeping of our nation intact. It was an act requiring great self denial and sacrifice by the People's Progressive Party. As we would recall, the campaign period was extended, dragging on for two years — there would have been time and occasion enough if ever that was intended to walk away from any understanding. Our recent history, leading to my being sworn-in as President last Thursday, only a few hours after our President expired, attests to the faithfulness and sincerity of Dr. Jagan and the PPP.

We the members of Dr. Jagan's Cabinet were all new to Government when the PPP/Civic took office in 1992. Our achievements we owe to Dr. Jagan, who brought with him the experiences of two periods of heading a Government when steady growth and development were achieved. We have had, and have benefited from, nearly 4 ½ years of his tutelage and guidance. Were the choice ours, we would gladly have been his students for many more years, but that is not to be.

The greatest tribute we could pay him would be to carry on along the paths he has indicated: seeking growth and development with a human face, growth and development that bring our people together rather than carrying us apart; a lean and clean government; respect for environmental

concerns and our international responsibility. Dr. Jagan's spirit and governance will continue. I and my Cabinet will continue, as President and Government in the service of all our people.

Please allow me on behalf of the Government and people of Guyana to extend thanks to the Government and people of the United States of America, and specifically to the doctors and other medical personnel who provided expert medical care to our President. Such selfless efforts will always be remembered by our people.

Time has borne away our dear comrade and captain, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, a Guyana patriot unto his death; still as enthusiastic, still as full of fervour, still as passionately committed to the Guyanese nation, the Guyanese people, as when he first hoisted the flag for a people's party fifty years ago.

In Dr. Jagan's death, the nation is experiencing great agony -- the disciplined reverent lines of people from all walks of life, all ages and races, paying him their respects, must have been a great consolation and reassurance to his dear wife and family and to us all, that ~~some~~ to the people and nation will not go unrecognized.

Our nation shall go forward in greater unity, stronger in all ways because of the life and death of Dr. Cheddi Jagan. He would want nothing better. It was his life's work to weld us together.

I now invite you to join me in observing one minute's silence to honour the memory of Dr. Cheddi Jagan.

Thank you.

We meet today on one of the saddest days of our nation's history as we pay farewell to Guyana's greatest son, Dr. Cheddi Jagan. Our nation has been plunged into sudden grief, but we are consoled by the tremendous outpouring of sorrow and support from our Caribbean brothers and sisters, and many friendly states. We are strengthened by their messages, and by the distinguished presence of Caribbean world leaders for the funeral of our dear President.

President Cheddi Jagan, for fifty years, strode across the stage of history during the course of which he won numerous victories for the people of our country.

But this legendary figure had also firmly established himself as an internationalist, and many of his ideas for

sustainable development of the Caribbean and the hemisphere are now being loudly applauded by political and economic thinkers in the Region and beyond.

Today our nation mourns the loss of our greatest hero. He has been for me a model of decency, discipline and dedication. Dr. Jagan was the greatest patriot and statesman. He has changed my life, and to his memory I commit myself to work for the continuation of his good work and to fulfil his vision for a greater and prosperous country. What impressed

United States of America for airlifting our beloved President for expert medical treatment at the Walter Reed Army Medical Centre in Washington, DC.

I also want to express our appreciation to the doctors and other medical personnel in the United States' medical evacuation team and those at the Walter Reed Army Medical Centre for the expert care and attention that they provided our President.

Their selfless efforts to restore his health will always



*Mr Sam Hinds being sworn-in as President, just hours after Dr Jagan died.*

me most was Dr. Jagan's boundless love for his people, his total commitment to their welfare, his obsession to bring betterment for all. Dr. Jagan has a life-long bond with the poor and the oppressed.

I have been honoured to be asked by him to serve by his side. And from this rostrum I pledge to keep faith with the confidence which he reposed in me, and to honour my bonds with the PPP.

When Dr. Jagan became ill no one expected the worst would happen. However, every effort was made to bring him back to the road of recovery.

On behalf of the Government and people of Guyana, I express the most sincere thanks to the Government of the

be remembered by our people. Our nation is experiencing great agony. But we shall overcome and go forward in greater unity. We have learnt to share grief; we will know how to build unity. Dr. Jagan would want nothing better. It was his life's work to weld us together. I now invite you to observe one minute's silence to honour the memory of President Cheddi Jagan.

*(Text of Remarks by President Samuel Hinds, at the State Funeral of late President Cheddi Jagan at Parliament Buildings, Georgetown on Monday, March 10, 1997)*