

## What Ramharack Wrote About Cheddi Jagan Is Unpersuasive And Refutable

By Clement J. Rohee – December 13, 2021

I read with deep interest what I considered to be swift and erudite responses to Ramharack's articles and letters about Cheddi Jagan.

Not being among the 'first respondents' to what Ramharack wrote, I believe that what others wrote contrary to his interpretations, can help any reasonable and unprejudiced person understand the complex nature of Dr. Jagan's thinking and the socio-economic conditions under which he lived and worked.

Just as the Ramharacks of this world will hold steadfast to their jaundiced view about Cheddi Jagan, in the same way, others will hold to their knowledgeable appreciation of, and comradely assessment of Dr. Jagan, his role and place in Guyanese and global politics.

Mr Ramharack seems to believe, that being ideological is repugnant, unless it is of a hew supportive of, or close to his own, apart from his dogmatic approach to religion.

But life does not work the way Ramharack wants it to. What Ramharack holds as true for himself, may not be true for others and what he holds as his beliefs may not necessarily be the beliefs of others.

Ramharack is free to believe in what he writes, and that probably gives him immense satisfaction, but realpolitik in Guyana would show that what he and others of his ilk wrote is unlikely to have any impact on supporters of the PPP, large swathes of the middle class or the business community. Nor are they likely to be supportive of his attempt to push them away from supporting the Party at an election. If Ramharack thinks his view would alienate people from the PPP, he should think again, people tend to close ranks around the legacy of Jagan.

Ramharack's own writings reveal how deeply ideological is his advocacy of ultra-conservative and ethno-centric beliefs.

In the USA, where he is a citizen, Ramharack holds a US passport, a drivers' license, pays taxes and perhaps even vote at elections. He must know that in his country of residence, there is a preponderance of ideological strands and extremities ranging from the ultra-right to the ultra-left. But prolific as he is, he is yet to share with Guyanese any of his pronouncements on the extant ideological expressions, their organizations and representatives in the US so that we can glean, based what he may have written, an appreciation of where he stands politically and ideologically in relation to these matters.

Sitting in the comfy of his home somewhere in the USA and preferring to not pass judgement on any of the left or right wing organizations and their leaders in the USA, Mr. Ramharack chose the safest route; to pontificate, and to a large extent, regurgitate what was written many moons about Cheddi Jagan.

Digging up dirt is one thing, manufacturing, packaging and selling dirt is another.

In that sense, Mr Ramharack's views on Dr. Jagan are redundant, stale and out-of-fashion. There is nothing fresh in Ramharack's writings about Cheddi Jagan. Everything he wrote about Jagan is unpersuasive and refutable. And that is precisely what all those who rose to the occasion did when they effectively debunked his bunkum.

It would not take much perusing of Ramharack's articles and letters, to recognize that he must have been exposed to anti-Jagan views while Jagan was alive and engaged in political activism. Ramharack could have expounded on the 'reimagining' and the 'unmooring' of Jagan at that time, but nay, he chose to do so long after the man had passed away.

Clearly, Ramharack does not endorse Jagan's ideological nor political views but, as demonstrated in his writings, he certainly absorbed the anti-Jagan sentiments prevailing at the time.

In other words, back in the days, it must have been the ideas and values hostile to the PPP that influenced and eventually shaped Ramharack's adult life.

Ramharack is not the first nor will he be the last to expound anti-Jagan views. It has long been recognized that there will always be individuals at home and abroad who hold to biased views for and against what Jagan stood for.

And just as the debate about the efficacy of Marxism has prevailed over decades, in the same way the debate about Cheddi Jagan's role and place in history is likely to continue for years and perhaps decades to come. Those who read the Ramharacks of today and of tomorrow would be able to 'pick sense out of nonsense' as the older folks would say.

In matters treating with great and influential men and women in history, it is human nature to disagree on their role and place in history and to hold strong views one way or another.

This is particularly so in respect to such personages who, from lowly and humble beginnings, emerged as outstanding figures and are etched in their country's history as 'Father of the Nation.' History is replete with many examples.

In considering Ramharack's views, two fundamental questions arise; first, why the sudden extensive coverage of his anti-PPP/anti-Jagan views at this time? And secondly, what class and/or social strata is his target audience in Guyana?

Those of us who reside permanently in Guyana and move around the country would know that the vast majority of Guyanese have absolutely no knowledge of who is Ramharack. Nor would they have any interest in views they consider unhelpful to uplifting their daily lives.

Ramharack's stereotyping of Dr. Jagan apparently, stems from his understanding of who Dr. Jagan associated himself with politically and ideologically. But Ramharack didn't stop there, he went on to stereotype all those who came to the defense of Jagan and what he stood for. Ramharack is free to associate himself with whom he wishes to but not others who hold an

ideological view opposed to his.

As far as Ramharack is concerned, Guyanese of Indian origin are expected to be naturally faithful to either Hinduism or Islam, any departure from this 'natural being' would result in being lost to one's 'cultural moorings' as unscientifically defined by Ramharack. Therefore, in the mind of Ramharack, an unmoored Hindu who gravitates to secular convictions is unworthy and should be rejected.

Based on his ideological posturing Ramharack, seems inclined to be supportive of organizational regimentation, strict adherence to a religious belief of his preference; a 'one size fits all' cultural and religious practices, and values alien to the customs and mores that typify a multicultural society.

This begs the question, how would Ramharack categorize politicians of Indian decent who converted to, Catholicism, Anglicanism, Presbyterianism or Evangelicalism?

A classical example is Dale Bisnauth. Of Indian decent and a former minister of government who, according to Pulandar Kandhai (S/N 12.4.2013) grew up in the village of Better Success ... 'a veritable backwater - in a literal area of darkness' on the Essequibo Coast, shades of the conditions under which Jagan spent his boyhood days.

Bisnauth was, most likely, born into a Hindu family. Later in life, he converted first to Anglicanism then to Presbyterianism later becoming a pastor. While he firmly believed in one of the two 'isms,' but not openly opposed to the suffix in Marxism, he chose to serve in the cabinet of the 'communist ogre' created in the mind of Ramharack

In his life long journey Bisnauth never lost his 'cultural moorings'. In fact, he was so intellectually accomplished that he authored books on Indian immigration, the History of the Presbyterian Church and the History of Religion in the Caribbean.

In deconstructing Ramharack's resort to 'cultural moorings' it is apposite to note that it is not uncommon for a Guyanese born into a Hindu family, to marry into a Muslim or Christian family, convert to one of the dominant religions and, have a wedding or a funeral within one of the three persuasions.

That Jagan was politically 'reckless and inflexible' because of his adherence to Marxism and that he was 'outmaneuvered by Burnham, and further, that he was bound to fail because he did follow in Rodney's footsteps, are all reckless conclusions drawn by Ramharack.

But what is even noteworthy is that the quotes and remarks cherry-picked by Ramharack contra Dr. Jagan are by persons to whom Marxism is anathema as a methodology for scientific investigation into economic, social and political life in society.

Ironically, it is the same Marxism that Ramharack rejects that is being utilized by many outstanding scholars, researchers and fellows at universities and academic institutions in the United States, Europe and in many other countries. Ramharack is obviously not in their league.