

# The Jagan Legacy

by Hydar Ally

The People's Progressive Party (PPP) convened a symposium on the New Global Human Order (NGHO) on Wednesday last at the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre. Panelists at the symposium were Mr. Ralph Ramkarran, Speaker of the National Assembly; Dr. Prem Misir, Pro-Chancellor of the University of Guyana; and Professor James Rose, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Guyana. Chairman of the Symposium was Mr. Clement Rohee, Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation.

The symposium was held to mark the 10th anniversary of the launch of the New Global Human Order (NGHO), brainchild of the late Dr. Cheddi Jagan. It would be recalled that in August 1996, an international conference was held at the Sophia Convention Centre

dedicated specifically to brainstorm the ideas contained in the New Global Human Order (NGHO). Prior to that Conference, Dr. Jagan's thoughts on the subject were published in pamphlet form and sent to every head of state and government the world over. Some months later, Dr. Jagan published his work in a booklet entitled "Pushing for a New Global Human Order" which was distributed at the first Summit of the Americas held in Miami, United States of America.

The main thesis of Dr. Jagan's New Global Human Order (NGHO) is that the current world order is dysfunctional to the needs of humanity and should be replaced by a New Global Human Order (NGHO). Since then, the concept has been widely embraced by people all over the world, including the developed world.

It is amazing how much could be done by a single in-

dividual during the course of his or her lifetime to influence and shape opinion both nationally and internationally. Names such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and Cheddi Jagan come readily to mind. These men, armed with a vision of a future society and a passion to make things happen, have left an enduring legacy that would forever be etched in the memories of peoples throughout the world.

It was Dr. Jagan who first put the colony of British Guiana on the international stage when almost single-handedly he launched an assault against the colonial masters on behalf of the working people and subsequently for universal adult suffrage, internal self-government, independence for the colony and during the PNC authoritarian years, for free and fair elections. The British government suspended the Guiana constitu-

tion following his victory at the polls in 1953, the first to be held under Universal Adult Suffrage, jailed him for six months, had his government engineered out of office in 1964 until democracy was finally restored to the country in October, 1992.

Dr. Jagan's visionary attributes found manifestation in his strong advocacy for debt relief which he felt was a drag on the economy and prevented the improvement of the quality of life of the Guyanese people, by diverting resources from development to that of debt repayments. He waged a relentless struggle to end this exploitative arrangement and likened it to a patient who receives one pint of blood from a benefactor, but who is forced to give back two pints in return by way of compensation. This inevitably would result in a worsening of the condition of the patient, eventually leading to



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death.

It is to the credit of Dr. Jagan that Guyana is now a major beneficiary of debt relief under the Enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (E-HIPC), which has allowed for more resources being freed up for developmental purposes, which otherwise would have been eaten up in debt repayments. Many scoffed at the idea advanced by Dr. Jagan during the initial stages of his appeal, but Dr. Jagan never gave up.

Even prior to his call for

a New Global Human Order (NGHO) Dr. Jagan was openly critical of developmental models based on market reforms and the unfettered flow of foreign capital and investment. He was for example critical of the Puerto Rican model of development which essentially had as its centre-piece "industrialization by invitation" and the implications of such investments for the rape of our natural resources and capital flight.

Since the death of Dr. Jagan in 1997, all successive presidents have carried out the Jagan legacy which is based on people-centred development and creating a just and prosperous society. As the Party inches towards another general election with President Bharrat Jagdeo as presidential candidate, all the signs are there that the PPP/C would once again emerge victorious, thereby keeping the legacy of Dr. Jagan alive.