

# Remembering The Past & Living The Present

by Janet Jagan

In 1973, after the general elections which were massively rigged with the army used to commandeer ballot boxes, I found myself again at the **Mirror** working as editor. This happened arising out of the following events. The Party had sent me to the **Mirror** to work as editor sometime in the early 70s. I had previously, in the 50s, worked as editor of the Party's official organ, **Thunder**.

During this period of working at the **Mirror**, I had to go abroad and Vincent Teekah was asked to work in my place. He apparently liked the job and found that he wanted to be the permanent editor. Teekah then resorted to methods I had hitherto not been aware of, but which I learnt about later. When he was younger, he hungered for the position as head of the Progressive Youth Organisation (PYO) and used a number of maneuvers to oust the Chairman. He succeeded. Later, he used the same technique to move further up - he was a very ambitious person - and became principal of Accabre School of Political Science.

Next he apparently had his eye on what he must have considered the prestigious post of Editor of **Mirror** and while I was away, laid the foundations to achieve this. Not being

an ambitious person, when I returned and became aware of his various maneuvers to become Editor, I moved off and left him with the position.

Then came the 1973 elections which we all knew were rigged, but the Party decided to contest in order to expose the methods of fraud. Vincent Teekah was of a different view and felt the Party would really win. He was a very ambitious person and according to those he confided in at the time, he had his heart and his eye on becoming Minister of Education. When the events and results of the horrific 1973 elections came to pass (the army took over the ballot boxes which were held in Camp Ayanganna for lengthy periods and two PPP youths were killed) Teekah could not face the reality. He walked off from the **Mirror** and never came back. I had to take over suddenly and keep the paper in production, so necessary at a time when so many truths had to be told. That was the time when Rickey Singh, Ric Mentus and Father Wong were sacked from **Guyana Graphic** and the **Catholic Standard** for telling the truth. Father Wong as **Catholic Standard** Editor ran the headline "Fairy Tale Election," and for this, he was removed as Editor.

So that is how I became the editor of **Mirror** from 1973 until I became Prime Minister in 1997.

An aside - Teekah later defected to the PNC and rose to

the top - becoming a close friend and advisor to Forbes Burnham. The story goes, and I have no reason to doubt it, that PNC members became jealous of Teekah, that he was replacing old PNC stalwarts, and so we know what happened.

Maybe, if he had not been so ambitious, he would be alive today!

As for the present, looking at my diary, I see that I have been busy meeting people with problems who come to my desk at Freedom House; attending a funeral service for the Presidential Guard who lost his life as he traveled to Rupununi; attending a WPO reception to honour Minister Indra Chandarpal who was elected to the prestigious post of Chairman of the Women's Division of the Organisation of American States (OAS); attending a poetry reading by judges of the Guyana Prize Literature; meeting the Tiger Bay Committee to find housing for the residents; attending several meetings of the PPP for consultations and regular meetings of the Executive Committee; escorting an American professor to the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre at Red House in Georgetown; attending an art exhibition at Castellani House; addressing Party Organisers who have periodic conferences and having a first hand look at the government housing scheme at Diamond/Grove, East Bank, Demerara. These and many more, keep me busy in my retirement.