

An Inside Look Into Electoral Fraud

by Janet Jagan

An interesting letter appeared in Stabroek News of May 23, 2005 written by Llewellyn John, correcting a S/N report that Mr Corbin, leader of the PNC, was reported to have made. Mr Corbin apparently noted that Mr John had exercised the right to leave the PNC, as Mr Trotman was then in the process of doing. Mr John refuted that remark of Corbin's and wrote: "After the PNC won power in 1968 there were jealous elements in the party that could not stand the acclamation. I received from the masses who knew that I had laboured incessantly in the promotion of such issues as proportional representation, the overseas vote, double citizenship and the ambit of proxy and postal voting.

I was ousted as a result of the machinations of a clique..."

Now, let me say as a prelude to my remarks, and this is common knowledge, that I have been the object all through my political life of constant attacks, vicious slander, unbelievable rumours and gossip, physical abuses including blows, stones and rotten eggs, and so on. To survive throughout the decades, I have mostly forgotten the specifics of these, and like the document I am accused of throwing over my shoulder, these too have gone in the same direction.

However, one or two were more difficult to forget, and my memory is sharply clear on the dreadful verbal abuse and scorn dumped on me at the meeting that was held at the then, Home Affairs Minister Llewellyn John's office sometime before the 1968 elections. General elections were the responsibility, at that time, of the Minister of Home Affairs.

I was appointed to represent the PPP on the Elections Commission in preparation for the 1968 elections. Also on the Commission were Mr Desmond Hoyte for the PNC, I forget the name of the UF representative and the Chairman was Sir Donald Jackson, handpicked for the occasion.

I was the lone objector to all the machinations going on to rig the 1968 elections. I was constantly protesting to the deaf - no one listened to me, but I was exposing all the fraud in its early stages - not that I was so bright - anyone who could see, could see, if they wanted what was going on.

I talked, objected, tried in every way to convince the other three that they were assisting in a terrible wrong. After a while, Sir Donald got fed up listening to me and finally agreed to a proposal I made to discuss the election irregularities (my word) with the Minister of Home Affairs. That is how we visited his office.

That was quite an event! I cannot really describe the harshness and rudeness of the treatment which Minister John heaped on my head - only to say that it was so intense that I carry it in my psyche decades later.

But read his letter more closely - there is no regret in his pride of promoting the overseas vote, proxy and postal voting - all key elements in the electoral fraud that pervaded Guyana through four elections and a referendum. He forgot to mention another of his successes, the padding of the voters' list which also included the disenfranchisement of thousands of potential PPP voters. The PNC were and still remain masters of that technique.

I don't know if it is necessary for me to go into details of the overseas, postal and proxy votes, so well known are these. But a recent formerly secret document released by the USA shows that the PNC received substantial sums of money for the 1968 elections and that US authorities were fully aware that the overseas vote would be used to build up a PNC majority and that the electoral lists would be padded.

I will give you one more experience I had on the Elections Commission. When I examined the overseas list of voters, I was certain as I perused it, that it was filled with false names. I raised the issue over and over at meetings of the Elections Commission, finally irritating Sir Donald so much that he agreed to my proposal that we visit the Registration office on High Street (next to the old railway line) to see some files. The place was apparently taboo - no one except employees were allowed inside, but I was accompanied by Sir Donald, so I was allowed that one time to enter the portals of fraud.

I had the overseas voters' list in my hand and had ticked off a number of names that looked particularly suspicious. I was allowed to give some of these names to a clerk who then, one by one, showed me the registration card for the person. I was allowed to scrutinize each for a very brief period before the card was snatched away. I very quickly wrote down the person's date of birth, place of birth and names of parents. I also noted what was so obvious, the signatures looked phony - most with an obvious slanted way of writing. I was allowed to see about 12 such cards and then hastily hustled out of the highly protected area.

I put my findings together, including the names, addresses, dates and places of birth and names of parents of some 12 overseas voters and asked the Elections Commission to send these to the office of Births and Deaths Registry, requesting birth certificates of those named. Over and over I asked if a reply had been received, and finally, the answer. The Registry was unable to locate any of those so named because I did not provide sufficient information! Not one Commissioner or the Chairman batted an eyelid and the matter was dropped. No one would listen to me. They were all part and parcel of the colossal electoral fraud and should be remembered for what they did or did not do!

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