

Hindsight and a Truth Commission

by Janet Jagan

Sometimes hindsight seems to provide better answers or decisions than those made at the time a matter arose. This is always a difficult matter to resolve. Was the decision at the time of making, correct, or has knowledge afterwards proved that the decision was wrong?

This came to mind when looking back at all the damage and hurt to the nation which has taken place by the wrong-doings, perversity, violence and sheer unadulterated hate perpetuated through the last eleven years by the People's National Congress.

The question I ask is: Would Guyana have been better off if, instead of being kind and forgiving, the PPP/Civic led by Cheddi Jagan in 1992 had taken a different decision?

It could have gone the way of South Africa with the setting up a truth commission and bringing before the commission all those who had killed, raped, stolen, lied and swindled, taken massive bribes and wrecked the country. The commission would have had the right to cause charges to be laid against those guilty of crimes against the State and who would have to face the courts for their crimes.

Instead, and guided by our late President Cheddi Jagan, forgiveness was the decision, forgiveness in the hopes that those guilty of dastardly crimes would never repeat them and mainly as an effort to heal the nation. I stand by Dr Jagan's hopes of healing and reconciliation as a means of bringing unity to Guyana.

However, when one considers the behaviour of the PNC in all these years, one can only wonder if the forgiveness was merely converted into a feeling that children as well as criminals sometimes get - that it is licence to behave even worse.

That is our experience so far. The lackey media - sections of the print media and TV, have conveniently forgotten everything, even what the PPP/Civic has done to rectify the evils perpetrated by the PNC, and do their damndest to vilify the PPP and provide comfort and solidarity to the wickedness of the PNC.

Is it possible to forget the violence of the 1997 and 2001 post election period, the specifics of violence against a racial group and the projection by Mr Hoyte that he would make it impossible to govern and, as well, the glorification of Mr Hoyte by the media?

Is there anyone in Guyana or the diaspora who can forget the politics of the wave of terrible crimes following the infamous jail break? Find me one person who can say, without tongue in cheek, that the PNC was not responsible for this wave of criminal violence which also had its racial context.

And now, boldly, like the thief, who is being chased by the police, points a finger and says "He's gone that way." The thief becomes the accuser and the lackey press becomes his defender.

In my article last week about the world furor on the issue of weapons of mass destruction being a myth for ill-usage by the US and UK, I mentioned that just as President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair are now accusing faulty information as the reason for going to war in Iraq, it's quite possible that the same will happen and the faulty or false information about phantom gangs in Guyana will turn out the

same. At least the CIA and M15 made reports but in Guyana, no such reports are made, only hearsay and flimsy excuses by criminals and others within and without the PNC that they won't make reports to the police. Only a fool could accept such a stupid excuse, and yet one sees the Stabroek News holding on to its story, telling the public that now there's someone else who knows about the so-called phantom gang but won't go to the police.

Makes you wonder, doesn't it?

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