

Cheddi Jagan – The Developmentalist

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Introduction

Much has been written about Dr. Cheddi Jagan since he began his political career in the mid 1940s. His appearance on the political scene in the then British Guiana disrupted the monotony in the colony and captured the imagination of the Guyanese working people.

This was particularly true since his election to the Legislative Assembly in 1947. His use of that body continues to serve as an example of how even such a place dominated by the colonial officers and the big capitalist elite, could be used in the struggle of the working people.

For the first time in the history of our country the ordinary working people attended the sittings of the legislative committee to hear Dr. Jagan's defence of them and to listen to his assault on the colonial state.

He did not confine himself to the august Chamber of the Assembly, but in his own words, he "took the parliament to the street corners and the street corners to the Parliament..."

He really burst on the international scene in 1953 after the victory of the Party he founded and led, the Peoples Progressive Party, won the elections of April 1953 in a landslide victory obtaining eighteen of the twenty-four seats.

That was the first time that elections were conducted under the system of universal adult suffrage. It was a massive success and a demonstration of how far the PPP succeeded in damaging the colonial mentality that existed.

Unfortunately, that first democratically elected government only lasted for one hundred and thirty-three days. Coming almost like a bolt from the clear blue sky, the British Colonial Office landed troops and removed the PPP from power. The excuse then was that there was a communist plot to take over the country.

It was this event and Dr. Jagan's fight against the invasion of the colony by British troops in which he sought international solidarity that propelled him into the centre stage of international politics. The PPP and Dr. Jagan occupied among the largest portion of the media reports internationally.

So popular he had become that one American journalist, Arthur Sutton, said of him “... (he) is one of the most colourful, controversial, and yet personable politicians in the Western Hemisphere... His stage is limited, but he makes the most of what he has to work with. He is world famous...”

Then he went on to ask, “... who knows the name of Argentina’s Chief Executive or Jamaica’s or for that matter Brazil’s...” People the world over knew Dr. Cheddi Jagan.

By then he was regarded amongst the foremost anti-colonial freedom fighters of the times, 1950s to 1960s.

That reputation, which he earned because of his passionate advocacy for freedom/independence obscured another vital aspect of his life, that of a developmentalist.

Indeed, his anti-colonial struggles for independence was not seen by him as an end in it-self, but a means to an end. He was a very profound thinker and had innovative ideas of development for his country, region and even how all of those fitted into the international environment. All his struggles were conducted to allow him and his comrades to develop Guyana and the Guyanese people.

It is this aspect of his life as a Developmentalist that is being examined today.

Conditions for Development

To appreciate his accomplishments as an administrator in our country it is necessary to have an **understanding** of the environment he was forced to work under and to appreciate the socio-economic conditions of that period, 1957-1964.

In August of 1957, elections were held again in British Guiana. This was after the British felt that Dr. Jagan could have been defeated.

They thought so because they had jailed him and many of his most trusted and capable colleagues. They worked hard and managed to split the party.

They even did a lot of gerrymandering of the electoral boundaries to make it heavily weighted against the PPP. As an example, let me say that they made constituencies where the PPP was strong very large and in the areas where the opposition dominated, they made small.

However, despite all the manipulation and machination of the colonial authorities the PPP secured another very impressive victory. It obtained nine (9) of the fourteen seats.

A reflection of the extent of the manipulation was the fact that the votes that Dr. Jagan got was more than all the votes that the combined opposition obtained.

That election was followed closely throughout the world. It was welcomed by all the anti-colonial fighters in Africa, Asia and by the progressive forces in the Caribbean.

It was welcomed by progressive people in the developed world as well. Le Monde, the French newspaper hailed it as an important victory. It urged the British to change its attitude to Dr. Jagan and to work with him.

British Attitude

The British had other plans. While it congratulated the PPP and announced that it would cooperate with the PPP, it had no intention to do so.

Indeed, the colonial power decided to turn the PPP's victory into a defeat. They were in a very good position to do great harm to the party.

This time they would not resort to brute force as they did with the suspension of the Constitution in **1953**. On this occasion they decided to use administrative measures to advance their agenda.

Indeed, even though they did a great deal of manipulation to defeat the PPP at the 1957 elections, they put other measures in place just in case their plan did not work.

The main measure that they took was to give British Guiana a new constitution that was far inferior to the 1953 constitution. A vast amount of authority was retained by the Governor.

The PPP'S Position

The PPP was faced with a very difficult situation. It was the last party to announce its participation in the election and the last to submit its list of candidates. This was because the party and Dr. Jagan in particular was working and hoping for a united front against colonialism. It tried with an all-party conference in 1956, when that failed it made public and private overtures to the main group of the opposition. It was only when all of that failed that it submitted its list.

It now had to decide whether it would participate in the government with the British holding and retaining such great powers.

It decided that it had to, for two main reasons. In the first place the enthusiasm of the people shown by the size of its victory (9 of 14 seats). Had it not gone into the government it would have been a great disappointment for the masses. That was a compelling reason for its decision.

The second reason was that if it did not form the government the British would have run the affairs as a dictatorship and the party would have been blamed for that particularly after such a huge mandate.

In going into the government, the party had no illusions. Indeed, Dr. Jagan later described the situation as a 'forced marriage'.

Having a hostile "coalition" partner which had control of the Ministry of Finance, the Attorney General, and the Police was only one of the negative factors.

The other factors were, one the opposition forces were all aligned with the colonialists. Indeed, from the beginning the British saw as one of their goals, the creation of a leader to replace Dr. Jagan by the next time that the elections were held in 1961. They identified Mr. Burnham, a former chairman of the PPP who by his actions, was completely on board with the colonial project.

The second negative was the opposition outside of the Parliamentary parties. Big business which was mainly foreign, white, Portuguese and Mulatto. The old capitalist class saw themselves more as a part of the colonial structure and hated the PPP's working people's orientation.

The other serious opposition came from the British Guiana Trade Union's Congress (BGTUC) which was created after the suspension of the constitution in 1953.

This needs some explanation. After the suspension of the constitution in 1953 the British disbanded the TUC. It recreated it three months later with reactionary, pro-colonial leadership.

Those were the political forces arraigned against the PPP.

The other very important factor that is not often spoken about is the psychological factor.

The public servants in particular, those in the upper echelons, ideologically were much closer to the colonial power than to the new people's government. The vast

majority of those persons saw themselves as British and understood their role as serving the colonial enterprise and not a national government.

The Socio-Economic Situation at the Time

The socio-economic situation that prevailed in 1957 when the party went into office was grim.

Mr. Elsa Hayland, a Home Economist from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (UN, FAO) visited British Guiana in the 1950 and noted that she had rarely seen such terrible signs of malnutrition and was shocked to the bone.

The housing situation was really deplorable. In an article headlined “Eradicate Slums” Dr Jagan quoted from a report of the housing situation in Georgetown in 1950. He noted that “... of the 7994 houses surveyed, 2309 were considered unfit for human habitation, 5303 in need of repair and only 352 were structurally sound. The Town Planning Advisor to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies noted that “... the slum conditions in parts of Georgetown were worse than anywhere in the British Caribbean...” In Albouystown, a working-class area, as many as ten (10) and twelve (12) persons were living in single tenement rooms...”

This was in the city. The conditions on the sugar estates and rural areas were even more dismal. Here is a short quotation from the monthly paper “Thunder” of March 1950, it noted that the Venn Commission in referring to the estates in British Guiana described the situation as “The Black Holes of B.G”. They said that in quite a number of the houses the corrugated iron roofs were leaking and the fabrics of the buildings were in a general state of decay. In numerous instances temporary sheets or awnings had been fixed over the beds to keep off the rains. They had mud floors and **consequently**, with the rain dropping from the roof these were made slippery and dangerous; in many cases we found bags laid over the floor to prevent slipping ... There are few if any proper footpaths and in the rainy weather communication is difficult. The common latrines often built over drainage trenches are frequently in a bad state of repair, with little privacy...”

Schools were few, overcrowded, understaffed, and mostly dilapidated. Illiteracy was extremely high. Added to this misery was the Church control of schools which resulted in many **strongly** religious Hindus and Muslims families not sending their children to schools.

The conditions in health were also in a similar state of disrepair. Water borne diseases such as gastro were high and killed a lot of children. So too were malaria, typhoid and yellow fever diseases caused by mosquitoes.

PPP In Office

At the time the PPP took office other serious issues affected the economy of the country. The price for sugar and bauxite, two of the three main pillars of the colony's economy suffered steep decline on the international market. This had a negative impact on the unemployment level which was at 18% of the workforce.

The new government had to therefore tackle many important social and economic issues simultaneously.

The PPP ministers picked up from where they left in 1953. They went to the masses, keeping them informed from the very beginning as to the problems which they faced and sought the assistance of the masses of the people in resolving them.

With a serious shortage of funds, the PPP government used organisational methods to deal with the immediate problems of the communities and the individuals.

Communities were encouraged to form 'self-help groups' to build social and physical infrastructure. Several schools and health clinics were built using this method. Over the seven-year period about a thousand schools were built and a similar amount of health clinics using a variety of methods.

The self-help approach was the most popular. This is how it operated. The government provided the materials and the technical oversight of the projects while the community provided the labour. In that way they began to overcome the issue of overcrowding in the schools and medical services were provided in every nook and cranny in the colony. Very many other important infrastructure facilities were built in this way which included wharves in the riverain communities, boats to ferry government workers in health and education, among many others.

At the individual level workers were encouraged to build their homes using similar methods. They banded themselves into cooperatives and were given time off to build their homes. There they helped each other. So effective was this method that it was recorded that the amount of house built in the last half of 1957 were more than all that the colonial authorities were able to build in almost a decade.

Those workers who built their homes outside of the co-ops were also helped by government making it easy for them to purchase house lots by paying down 10%

of the value and the rest over a period of three years. Government also guaranteed loans for them at the banks to build their homes. The amounts being repaid were made deductible for income tax purposes. Government built some houses too and rented to workers at very favourable rentals.

In order to increase the stock of homes government encouraged landlords to build homes and rentals were made non-taxable for those building new structures.

These organisational methods were used throughout it's seven years in office, 1957-1964.

The Economy

The administration recognised that the key to success lay in the economy. The PPP focused heavily on the real economy and identified industry and agriculture as the main vehicles in advancing the fortunes of the colony.

The struggles between the PPP ministries and the colonial administrators began in earnest in 1958.

It was then that the elected members of the executive confronted the administrators as to the Development Plan which was costed at \$91 million. The PPP felt that the plan was too small to deal with the enormous socio-economic situation then in existence.

Moreover, the colonial authorities began to make their intentions pretty clear. Some of the main projects that they were committed to, The East Coast Demerara Road and the Georgetown Public Hospital, before the PPP got into office, they stopped funding.

The squeeze was on.

The PPP ministers were proposing a D-Plan of two hundred million dollars (5-years). This was blocked by the colonial secretary who after being given a presentation told the minister to come back in a year's time. Maximum administrative delays was one of the tools used to frustrate the PPP.

Having been rebuffed by the colonial authorities Dr. Jagan sought funding from other sources. The Swiss Bank in London was prepared to lend the B.G Government eight (8) million dollars. However, it needed a guarantee from the British, which was not granted.

Having seen clearly the intention of the British, Dr. Jagan decided to bring the situation to the attention of the Guianese public as well as to the British. At a press conference he held in London in August of 1958, he outlined the problems in detail and the attitude of the British. In his concluding remarks he said "... After three weeks of discussions the UK has refused our requests. Instead, they reduced the previously agreed limited program for 1959 from GUY \$21.224 million to GUY \$18.2 million, a cut of 20%..."

"The PPP government proposed an additional \$31 million for the expansion of production, drainage and irrigation, land reclamation and land settlement, credit and public works. These were rejected. Even a request of \$2.5 million for expenses in 1959 was rejected."

This was a story that repeated it-self throughout the period 1957-1964. This was how the colonial authority worked to discourage the early attempts at industrialization.

The first project was a factory to make glass from the abundance of high-quality sand in the country. Dr. Jagan managed to get many companies interested in the project, some British, American, and European. Here again the British refused to give funds as loans, or grants and whenever alternatives were found they refused to give guarantees.

The government also sought to build a factory to produce cooking oil from the by-product of rice. In this case a German Company was even willing to build the factory without the British government's guarantee, but it was stopped by the colonials.

A Hydro-Power plant at one of our falls aimed at producing cheap electricity to process our raw materials ran into the same bottle neck. The main purpose of this was to introduce the smelting of bauxite into aluminium. Some progress was made here with the PPP insisting that more value be added to the raw bauxite. They threatened the company ALCAN, to reposes some lands so that the administration would go into production it-self or get other investors involved.

That forced the company to build a plant to produce alumina and they developed a new product (the first in the world) called mullite.

The PPP ministers sought to use the B.G. Legislative Council to put pressure on the colonial authority. It moved a motion seeking the approval of the Legislative

Assembly to approve it going to seek funds from other sources. It was hoping for a unanimous support.

They overestimated the loyalty of the opposition in the country. Even though the motion was passed it did not have unanimous support as was hoped for. The British had the support of the opposition, the People's National Congress (PNC).

A point to be noted here was that all the projects were given approval by top experts in the field.

The one area where the PPP had great support was from the United Nations Decolonization body. This support did not come in the provisions of funds, but in technical assistance.

With the help of the UN many areas for industrialisation were studied carefully.

Dr. Jagan invited private capital in the country and shared the studies with them. He urged them to invest in the projects and offered tax concessions for them to invest. Some local and foreign companies took advantage of this in furniture making and fisheries for example.

He also created a special body, Guyana Industrial Development Corporation to provide technical advice to the private sector. It was headed by a highly qualified and Skilled Guyanese, Mr. Gavin Kennard (CEO). The Chairman of the board was a respected lawyer, a man known for his cool and matured judgment, Mr. Ashton Chase. The other members of the board came from businesspeople, mainly those in manufacturing.

The corporation created a library and circulated to the private sector literature on Business and management. Many lectures were also organised by specialist in various fields, and businesspersons were even sent abroad to learn from other's experiences.

To overcome the starvation by the British, the PPP was forced to introduce some taxation to acquire funds to finance its projects and to run the government in general. However, Dr. Jagan and his comrades were not willing to just tax the poor. They sought to have minimum taxation on goods that working people used. That attitude guided them in taxing even local companies. For instance, lower taxes were applied to locally produced alcohol example rum and beer, as compared on whiskey and other imported liquor, which were highly taxed.

Even though the taxes on locally produced goods were low the one company that produced beer in the colony organised a big campaign against it.

Taxes were put on motor cars, watches, and other type of luxury items.

The government, through the IDC, prepared industrial estates to provide low rental lands to manufacturers.

However, as mentioned above, many of the projects were stifled by the colonial office. These included Hydro- Electric projects, Instant coffee factory; canning factory; glass factory; leather factory, oil brand, etc. were all frustrated.

While a new local capitalist class came into existence and invested in the economy due to the assistance given by the PPP it was not moving as fast as the PPP would have liked. The heavy hand of the British prevented rapid growth.

Despite the tremendous opposition many important gains were made.

Manufacturing of some parts for the Sugar and Bauxite industries were done in British Guiana by both local small-scale producers and a big British Company that was encouraged by the government to go in that direction – Sproston.

That company grew so efficient, and the workers became so skillful that it was able to build huge passenger river steamers to ply two of our large rivers, the Malali – Essequibo River and the Torani – Berbice River.

Some smaller companies did well in the production of paint, nails, wire fencing materials, furniture among other areas.

Focus on Agriculture

Due to the great opposition of the British to halt the industrialization process the PPP government began focusing more on Agriculture. This was of great importance from the employment point of view and from the efforts to industrialise. Focus was on Agro industries. Here too Dr. Jagan had a greater degree of freedom to act.

The first thing that was done was to begin a process of diversification. At that point, the only commercial crops were sugar and rice to a lesser extent. Most farmers were engaged in subsistence farming.

The strategy used to accelerate diversification was to give farmers incentives to go into new crops. Having in its possession studies of the land in the various areas the government offered crop bonuses to encourage farmers to plant other crops. Here

the United Nations helped to provide the skills to do studies on our soil so that farmers were advised on what to plant.

The government began to educate farmers in scientific techniques. It built the Guyana School of Agriculture where it trained persons to provide services and technical advice to farmers.

It trained farmers at the school in more modern and scientific methods in Agriculture. Cooperatives were encouraged. It did this by establishing large farms at the school and used that as a demonstration to farmers as to the advantages of large-scale production. Many short live-in courses were prepared for our farmers.

It established huge agricultural schemes in various parts of the country in land reclamation and Drainage and Irrigation. This opened thousands of acres of new lands to farmers. The government began re-settlement schemes as it encouraged persons to establish homesteads in the newly opened schemes.

As a result, Agri production grew in every area in both plant and livestock production. Farmers were no longer producing in subsistence level but were at a commercial stage. That happened in a relatively short period of time.

To assist the farmers the government established a marketing corporation. Farmers were feeding the nation and many once imported items were replaced by local products, these included honey, carrots, cabbages, peanuts, coffee, milk, meat, fish, poultry products, ect.

The sharp rise in production was a reflection not just of the correctness of the policies of the government but the tremendous enthusiasm of the farmers whose creativity was being unleashed. Some figures will serve to highlight the surge in production that began.

In 1957 the only 700 gallons of milk was purchased by the government's owned Milk Pasteurization Plant. The administration provided **transportation** to farmers from nearby rural areas and in 1958 the amount more than doubled to 1800 gallons. Production kept growing so much so that milk was supplied to our public hospitals, schools, and poor people's homes.

The production rose sharply and government was in the process of buying milk drying facilities to produce Milk Powder.

This posed a new challenge to the administration. Many products were produced in excessive quantities.

As a result, the government had to find markets. One very interesting story was in coffee production.

So much coffee was being produced that the government announced that it would have to ban the importation of instant coffee.

By the way, this was caused by the colonial authorities refusing permission for the government to make a factory producing instant coffee.

The officers from the Multi-National Nestle visited British Guiana and offered the government to buy all its beans. The conditions were that for every pound of coffee beans that they bought the government would allow for the importation of a pound of instant coffee.

The administration made a counter proposal. They proposed that it would not ban instant coffee if Nestle would take our local beans and produce Guyana Instant Coffee to compete on the local market. That was agreed on and that is how 'Guyana Instant Coffee' was born.

Many of the new agro products stimulated the growth of scores of cottage industries. Corn for instance began to grow sharply. In 1958, the country moved from producing at a small scale to commercial levels, producing one million pounds of corn. This allowed us to satisfy the local market and to create value added products, for example corn meal.

Cassava, Coconuts, Cocoa, fruits, and other ground provision began to flourish. In the case of cassava, a factory was built in the city to produce starch, farenen and other by-products.

From coconut, factories were set-up to produce cooking oil, soap, fiber mattresses, etc.

Many cottage industries sprung up due to the growth of fruit production, jams, jellies, etc. were put out in large quantities.

This massive increase in production had its own impact on foreign trade. Indeed, very early Dr. Jagan had to fight with the colonial power to diversify trade. He had pointed out that we were forced to buy dear from the UK when the same products were available at much cheaper prices from other countries.

The administration had to find new markets for some of its products, beyond the Caribbean. It began by organising trade delegations to Venezuela and Brazil, our neighbours and began a brisk trade. Rice and paddy were sold in those markets.

The government obtained a very lucrative market for rice and timber products in Cuba, and in the Eastern European countries – the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia.

Meat production (beef) shot up sharply particularly in the South of the country which was isolated from the north by a huge forest. This however, had another positive impact on the **transportation** sector of the economy.

The production was flown directly to markets in the Caribbean and thus began more flights into the interior which became a big industry and very thriving at this time.

The push in the productive sector allowed the government to have a healthy Balanced Budget even in the period 1962 to 1964 when we had serious riots to deal with.

Buy Local

The sharp growth in local products allowed for the changing of our own diet. The government began a campaign in the society urging persons to use more of the local products, many of which were superior to imports and provided at a cheaper price. This was the case with honey, starch, cassava products, coffee among others.

To educate the masses, Exhibitions of locally produced goods became a feature. Many locals expressed surprise at the variety and quality of the products.

In preparation for independence the PPP government had to consider the human capital needed to be prepared for the task of managing an independent country. This task the government took very seriously and took many measures to deal with it which spanned every aspect of life in the country.

Guyanization

Almost as soon as it took office in 1957 it embarked on a program called Guyanization. The role here was to replace retiring colonial officers by Guyanese who were qualified for the posts. This led to many confrontations with the Governor and his team, as was anticipated.

That was not the only source of opposition. Some of it emanated internally from the opposition political parties and sometimes even from the captured Trade Union Congress.

However, this was very successful because many Guyanese began to get very valuable experience in managing government offices and public enterprises.

The administration did not confine that campaign to public offices but insisted that the same policy be followed by foreign businesses operating in the country. This applied to Bookers & Sandbatch Parker in the sugar industry, ALCAN in the Bauxite sector among others. This was really the first-time, qualified Guyanese were given the opportunity to manage in senior positions in the country.

Human Capital

But that was not enough. The country needed more technical skills. This was reflected by the amount of technicians which Dr. Jagan had recruited with the help of the UN Decolonization body.

It was that need that pushed him to establish the University of Guyana. This was a giant step. To accelerate the establishment of that institution the PPP government used the facilities of the biggest secondary school in the city Queen College. It began classes in 1963 after three when the premises were vacant. Dr. Jagan could not wait for the new building to be built. He began immediately.

Apart from training highly skilled people to manage the affairs of an independent Guyana, Cheddi Jagan had another reason. He wanted a new kind of technician, a more patriotic and people's oriented intelligencia. This was one of the very important measures he took in the process of decolonization. He wanted to create "an intellectual nucleus partly as a centre around which some systematic definition for the national purpose can take place and partly as a defence against persistent battering of external colonialist and reactionary ideas against which colonial and backward societies are so helpless..."

In concluding the address at the inauguration of U.G. Cheddi Jagan wrote "...I have stressed the function of the University of Guyana to provide the skills and higher education necessary for the economic development of this country and I have alluded to its role in developing and defining values in our society. But there are two no less important consequences which we hope will flow from the activities of the University. One of these is that every child born in the remotest settlement in the interior, or in the farthest village or sugar estate should have a real opportunity

to reach the highest position in the land. The highest position in our society must no longer be the preserve of the rich and the well-born. By bringing University education within the reach of everyone, **we have laid the foundation for the establishment of democracy in this country. The other result which we hope will flow from the establishment of the University of Guyana is the evolution of a Guyanese consciousness.** With its stress on our own area and our own needs and interests, with its accent on Caribbean and local studies, with the study of our Amerindian languages instead of Greek and of Spanish instead of French, I have no doubt that we shall evolve a national consciousness and a national identity. We regard this as of a supreme importance, for only with the development of this national consciousness will Guyana become the great nation we would all like it to be..."

He really put a very high premium on education! As mentioned above he created the Guyana School of Agriculture and expanded the technical institutes.

He also had organized a system of Adult Education. Here he used many schools after hours to prepare some adults for secondary education and for others to teach them to read and write.

In the seven years he was in office he almost eradicated illiteracy in the country and was the only colony that had established its own university.

To feed the university Dr. Jagan had to revolutionize education. We spoke about the hundreds of new schools he built and developed new ways of increasing the quantity of qualified teachers. In the task Dr. Jagan, began to organize training in several centers throughout the country for teachers, while building a new and larger institution dedicated to train teachers.

In 1957, only 30 teachers were being trained per year. In 1958, that grew to 150 and it kept on growing throughout that period.

The government began to aim in that early period to move towards universal secondary education. To achieve this goal, they created all age schools. Those were schools where students moved automatically from primary to secondary education.

Culture

Dr. Jagan was very aware of the need to free the minds of the people from centuries of colonial domination. In this drive he placed a great emphasis on History and Culture.

Immediately on taking office in 1957, a History and Cultural Committee was formed. This body was to organize events to promote our history and create the conditions for the evolution of a Guyanese Culture.

It was the PPP government that first began to teach Guyanese History in our schools, beginning from primary schools.

Public lectures were organized to **commemorate** important dates in our history such as the 1763 Slave Uprising in Berbice.

Music and the performing arts were encouraged. Local poets and singers were heavily promoted. The radio was used extensively to promote local culture and even festivals were organized in which local music, dances and songs took center stage.

The administration was in the process of building a National Philomonic Orchestra when it was cruelly removed from office in 1964. Classical music and the teaching of artists to play the violin and other classical music instruments.

In order to encourage and promote Guyanese literature it started a Guyana Prize for Literature.

Local dances were promoted and emphasis was also placed on the teaching of ballet, Latin, Indian and African dances.

He had to build both physical and social **infrastructure**, some of which I touched on.

Infrastructure

As mentioned above hundreds of schools, hospitals and clinics were built all intended to raise the quality of the human capital for the building of a new society.

However, you would realize that the physical infrastructure was in a very poor state and extremely limited. To develop the country and open access to the lands and resources the country needed roads. The government began to undertake such projects. Two roads started from the coast with the plan to push them annually until it got to the south of Guyana. This was because it was being done with our own resources.

Natural Resources

Dr. Jagan appears to have had a preference for the development of manufacturing and seem to have a position that we should leave our mineral resources in the ground until the state was in a stronger position to get better deals for the people of the country. For him those assets were not renewable and therefore to get the maximum the state had to be in a stronger position to exploit them alone or to get more favorable deals with foreign companies.

That attitude most likely reflected what he thought the country was receiving from its Bauxite.

His attitude changed or was forced to change because of the non-cooperation which he had experienced from the British. He became anxious to get an understanding as to our mineral resources. To find out he turned to the United Nations once again.

With their technical assistance he organized an aerial reconnaissance of the country to map the mineral deposits. This was used to minimize the risk that investors would have to take and minimize the damage to the environment.

One area he was eager to get into was the exploration for oil.

The Story of Oil: The first attempt to search for oil began in July 1958. The PPP Government gave prospecting license to the "California Exploration Company" to search for oil in 16,000 square miles in British Guiana.

Under the terms of agreement British Guiana was expected to get 54% of net profit if oil was found. A certain (undetermined) amount of oil would have to be processed in the country.

Nothing came of those exploration. However, it is clear that Dr. Jagan did not believe that oil was not there. In 1964 he had the help of the UN to send geologists to look again for oil. The UN sent four geologists from USSR and their report was that there was a high confidence that oil was present in commercial quantity in the deep-water area. They were so confident that oil was there that they were prepared to invest in a refinery.

Nothing came of this because the government changed and the new regime did not show much interest in this after.

It was not until 2015 that oil was finally found in high quality and in large volumes.

Innovation in Finance

One of the major challenges that plagued the government throughout the seven years was the availability of cash. As was mentioned earlier the British deliberately set out to frustrate the government with the hope of making it unpopular.

To circumvent this Dr. Jagan had to take many measures. As seen above, organizational methods such as co-ops, self-help, etc. played a big role in overcoming those challenges.

They were not enough. Dr. Jagan's government was the only **administration** in the English-speaking Caribbean that was faced with this massive financial squeeze. To overcome these, he floated a Bond to mobilize funds internally. He even attempted a compulsory saving. **Unfortunately**, due to organized opposition he could not proceed with that.

Another unorthodox measure he used to obtain loans from abroad was to establish a local private company called Guyana Import & Export Co. This company got a loan from Cuba and that company lent money to the government.

This company was also used to trade with some socialist countries because the British had banned the government from having such relations. It was through that body that rice and timber products were sold to Eastern Europe and China.

The Jagan Government was moving to establish the Bank of Guyana. That bank was envisaged to be more than just a Central Bank. It was envisaged that it would serve to provide banking services to the people, particularly in the areas outside of Georgetown. (Banks only existed in Georgetown and they were 100% foreign owned).

It was another means intended to mobilize funds for developing industries and agriculture.

Conclusion

The seven years that the PPP was in office were marked by profound challenges by the combined reactionary forces locally and internationally on the one hand. On the other it was characterized by heroic resistance and great enthusiasm of the broad masses.

In addition, it brought out the creativity of Dr. Cheddi Jagan and his team in the government and the People's Progressive Party. They had to find solutions in really difficult times.

Even though all their plans could not have been realized the achievements were really impressive.

Many industries flourished and **unemployment** was one of the lowest in the Caribbean.

With Industry and Agriculture, scores of new Agri and industrial products came into the market. It was in this period that Guyana got the reputation as being "the breadbasket of the Caribbean".

The country's economy became much healthier using both imports substitution, mainly in food production and export promotion as our goods began to be exported to many other parts of the world.

The government was able to have a balanced budget in most of the years it was in office.

At the social level we were able to achieve an almost 100% literacy rate and our students began topping the Caribbean in GCE 'O' and 'A' levels.

The **administration** put a very high premium on Education and really, we had a revolution. The University of Guyana remains the only university established by a colonial people.

It ended overcrowding in schools and really created very favorable conditions for learning.

The same could be repeated in relation to health. The PPP government was able to rid the country from Malaria, Typhoid, and other diseases. The progress made in this sector could be seen in the improvement in life expectancy and in infant and maternal mortality.

In every sector great improvements were made, in housing for instance, the government was able to get rid of the houses slaves and indentured laborers live in by opening up schemes for poor people to own their own houses.

At the beginning of this talk we saw the impression of Elsa Hayland of UN, FAO as to the overbearing poverty. We also saw the remarks by the British controller for

development... that the slum conditions in Georgetown were the worse in the region.

In 1963, Pro. Peter Newman wrote "... B.G per capita income (\$350) is higher than that of many Latin American countries, and very much higher than that of most countries of Africa and Asia..."

He went on to say "... No shanty towns exist, on the scale of West Kingston in Jamaica or of the swamps of Port of Spain in Trinidad..."

That reflected the great strides made in a short but troubled seven years in office of the PPP, with very limited power.

The years which Imperialism kept Dr. Jagan out of power, robbed Guyana of his genius and as a foremost developmentalist of his time.

As a testimony of his immense work during the 28th years he was continually rigged out of government, he steered the country, when re-elected in free and fair elections in 1992, along the path of a sustainable development trajectory.