

Speech by Cheddi Jagan at
Freedom House Reception (December 18, 1987)

Permit me to thank you for joining me on this special celebration marking my 40th Anniversary as a parliamentarian.

This aspect of my life was both challenging and exhilarating. During these years, at all times, I never lost sight of the fact that my presence in Parliament was due to the Guyanese people who reposed confidence in me and the Party I head - the People's Progressive Party. In successive elections since 1947, they elected me to serve in Parliament and for this I want to sincerely thank them. In turn, I feel satisfied that at no time did I even contemplate betraying that confidence or do anything contrary to their interests and well-being.

The past four decades can truly be said to have been the best period of my life. It is one filled with significant successes and, of course, not without setbacks. In my opinion, this was a period of trials and upheavals as well as of major changes which had an impact, in one way or another, on our people and country.

In these 40 years, whatever I have achieved can be credited firstly to my parents and my wife; secondly to all those selfless and heroic comrades of my Party who stood and still stand by me; thirdly to our heroes, named and unnamed; and fourthly to the American and Russian revolutions and to those outstanding world figures Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

My parents made the necessary sacrifices for my formal education. My wife insisted that though bread was important, man does not live by bread alone; that life is not just two cars in every garage and 2 chickens in every pot. Karl Marx made me understand what makes the world go round. And our heroes and Lenin, Gandhi and King taught me how to change Guyana and inspired me to struggle. My comrades' steadfastness gave me

the strength to continue, especially in times of adversity.

Other factors: - Country and town; East and West; US education which is more democratic as compared with British. I feel particularly pleased with the knowledge that I have contributed to uniting the working people, winning adult suffrage and independence, eliminating some of the inequalities brought about by divide-and-rule tactics and wiping out some of the vestiges of colonialism. May I also take the opportunity of this occasion to underline the singular importance of the formation of the PPP which is a myriad of positive ways have been playing a major role in our national life. - In government; In opposition.

I want to assure you that I will continue to work as a Guyanese and as a member of the PPP for working class and racial unity, for national and social liberation, for economic justice and social progress and prosperity for our people and country.

In this task I am strengthened by the fact that what I stand for is winning out. During the past forty years socialism has become a world system, the communist and working class and national liberation movements have become a powerful force, colonialism has been virtually obliterated, the peace movement has grown, disarmament for development is on the current agenda, and democratisation of international political life is gaining momentum.

All of these developments serve to strengthen my resolve, raise my hopes and sustain my optimism that successes and final victory in our struggles in Guyana may not be too distant. My confidence is as strong as ever, that our people will unite and will carry out united struggles to put Guyana in the mainstream of world history.

I will continue to make my contributions to such ends and, I believe, if we all act together, we will see that new day dawn, sooner, rather than later.