

Speech of Dr. Cheddi Jagan in National Assembly
on 18 December 1947 to mark 40th Anniversary of his Entry
in Parliament

Permit me to thank you Comrade Speaker, Hon. Prime Minister, comrades Eusi Kwayana and Abraham for marking the 40th Anniversary of my entry in Parliament.

I want also to thank the Guyanese people who reposed confidence in me and in successive elections since 1947 elected me to serve in parliament.

The past four decades can truly be said to have been the best period of my life. It has been both challenging and exhilarating, full of successes and setbacks.

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; fourthly to the American and Russian revolutions, and fifthly 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 is 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 around. Our own heroes and Lenin, Gandhi and King taught me how to change Guyana and inspired me to struggle: Gandhi for independence, King for equality and against racism, Lenin for socialism. And my comrades' steadfastness gave me the strength to continue, especially in times of adversity.

Some other factors which contribute to moulding me include:
1) education in the USA, more democratic and liberal than in the UK where most of my contemporaries were indoctrinated under an

educational system geared for the British ruling class; 2) the impact of Eastern culture (Indian) and ideology (socialist) with the values of West civilisation; 3) a bridging the rural/urban division. Unlike many politicians, I had deep roots in the countryside coupled with a full understanding of urban realities both in Guyana and beyond.

I am glad 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.

I want to assure you that I will continue to work as a Guyanese for working class and racial unity, for national and social liberation, for economic justice and social progress 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 liquidated, the peace movement has grown, disarmament for development is on the current agenda, and democratisation of international political life is gaining momentum.

On this occasion, it is my wish and hope that Guyanese can unite and struggle to put Guyana in the mainstream of world history.