

THE THINKER

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CROSS-CULTURISM IN GUYANA

Page 1

GUYANA - CHINA RELATIONS

Pg 12

POLITICS AND TRADE UNIONISM

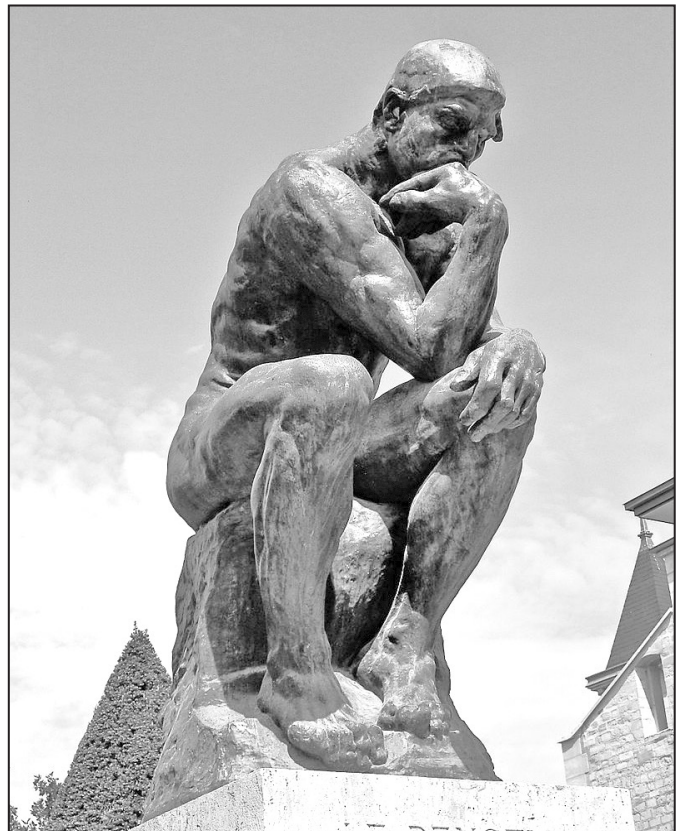
Page 6

75 YEARS OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

Page 22

Table of Contents

Editorial	ii	Book Review: A Revolutionary for Our Time.....	62
Cross-Culturalism in Guyana	1	<i>Hydar Ally</i>	
<i>Al Creighton</i>			
Politics and Trade Unionism in Guyana	6		
<i>Donald Ramotar</i>			
Guyana – China Relations: A Win-Win Situation	12		
<i>H.E. GUO Haiyan</i>			
Renewable Energy and Climate Change	16		
<i>Alexi Ramotar</i>			
75 years of India’s Independence	22		
<i>H.E. K.J. Srinivasa</i>			
Janet Jagan: A Phenomenal Woman	28		
<i>H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali</i>			
The re-emergence of polio, measles and monkeypox. Why are some infectious diseases making a comeback?	32		
<i>Dr. Jacquelyn Jhingree</i>			
October 5: A Defining Moment	38		
<i>Hydar Ally</i>			
The Importance of World Peace	42		
Garlands For Philomena	50		
<i>Clement Rohee</i>			
A Tribute to Philomena.....	52		
<i>Eddie Rodney</i>			
Historical Dates.....	54		
<i>Donald Ramotar</i>			
Gunboat Diplomacy.....	56		
<i>Khame Sharma</i>			



The Thinker (French: Le Penseur) is a bronze sculpture by Auguste Rodin.

EDITORIAL

This edition of the Thinker coincides with several major national and international events. At the local level, it marks the 30th anniversary since the return of democracy to Guyana. The return of democracy was indeed a defining moment and reshaped the social, political and economic landscape of the country in deeply profound ways.

At the international level, this year marked 73 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and 50 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Guyana and China. This year also marked the 75th anniversary of India's independence from Britain and 50 years year since Guyana and India established diplomatic relations. These are indeed historical milestones. Both China and India are today major players on the international stage and have provided significant developmental assistance to Guyana.

October 28th also marked the 102nd birth anniversary of former President Mrs. Janet Jagan and founder member of the People's Progressive Party (PPP).

Several of the articles highlighted the impact and significance of these landmark milestones. In addition, we feature articles on a number of important topics which we feel will be of interest to readers. As customary, we feature an obituary on the late Philomena Sahoye-Shury, an outstanding trade unionist and politician.

In keeping with the objectives of the magazine, we provide readers with varying perspectives on issues of national and global importance including climate change. The 27th Conference of Parties (COP) has again come and gone without any discernible progress in terms of reduction in greenhouse emissions.

The views and opinions expressed by our contributors do not necessarily reflect that of the Editorial Committee. We once again take this opportunity to thank our contributors and our readers and we welcome any suggestions for improvement.

We extend a Merry Christmas and Productive New Year to all our subscribers and readers.

Editorial Committee
June 19, 2022

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Cross-Culturalism in Guyana



One of the more recent controversies circulating in the nation of Guyana is a charge that an apartheid state is emerging in the country. It is reminiscent of a suggestion publicly aired some years ago that the solution to Guyana's political problems was Federalism – the division of the country into two states along ethnic lines. Both of these tend to fuel the racial tensions in the country and offer no solutions. Very interestingly, the false apartheid dilemma is a myth that can be dispelled by a study of myths and cultural traditions in Guyana.

There have been several ground-breaking studies about Caribbean society and culture. These include fundamental definitions of the people and their culture such as the works of pioneering sociologists, anthropologists and cultural specialists like MG Smith, Orlando Patterson, Rex Nettleford and Wilson Harris. Foremost among these are examinations of the plural society, ethnic and cultural pluralism, identity, race, and cultural studies.

Among the most intriguing concepts to have emerged are those of multi-culturalism and cross-culturalism. These may be applied to one of the most urgent problems plaguing Caribbean societies – that of racial conflicts. Both Smith and Nettleford focus Jamaica as a plural society, but the most burning ethnic conflicts exist in the plural societies of Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname. More than Jamaica, more than any other in the West Indies, these are multi-cultural – and therein lies the source of the conflicts.

It was Harris who articulated the difference between multi-culturalism and cross-culturalism. Multi-culturalism exists in those cosmopolitan countries where different ethnicities and cultures share the

same geographical space, but remain divided. Cross-culturalism may be achieved in those same countries when the positive, creative, social, political and cultural strengths arise from ethnic differences. A cross-cultural society is defined by its cultural differences which are seen as the beauty of the country – upon which nationhood is built, where the national identity is drawn from the fact that different races and cultures enrich the image of the country. They co-exist and do not conflict. Interestingly, that is how Harris saw Guyana.

This concept of cross-culturalism has scientific basis. It is based on the understanding of culture as the expression of how a people live – factors that exhibit their world view and beliefs; those things that are at the core of their existence. If we take Guyana as an example; here is a country where multi-culturalism is a source of division, affecting the politics, the economy and the social space. Yet the very source of divisions can be a source of strength if there is a proper understanding of the culture.

At the root of the quarrel between the major racial groups in Guyana is a lack of appreciation of each other's culture. It is neither possible nor desirable to expect an elimination of cultural differences, but it is possible to understand a oneness of mankind, of humanity, and to arrive at the amazing understanding of how close together the different ethnic groups are when we discover the similarities at the core of their cultures. There is compelling evidence in a comparison of some cultural traditions among Indians and blacks in Guyana. At the very core of human society are such factors as a cosmic vision – a world picture – the way the people see and interpret the world they live in, their beliefs,

traditions, the various things they practice and their style of living in order to survive in the environment within which they live. These are factors that account for the emergence of myths, stories and performance traditions. In Guyana, among East Indians and Africans, it is remarkable the way these are also closely related to faith.

Additionally, what has been of interest to theorists such as Smith, Patterson and Nettleford is the factor of socialisation. The history of these racial groups, in particular, the circumstances of their arrival in Caribbean society and their responses to the experience of slavery and indentureship have superimposed other factors that have influenced the traditional cultures of both blacks and Indians. It is revealing to see the similarities among these responses.

are placed and blessings solicited. The procession then returns to the home where a further ritual is carried out by the pandit. This ceremony is accompanied along the road by tassa drumming and by dancing, especially by female members of the family.

According to research carried out among the folk, the bride is important in this ceremony, which is dominated by women. It is a performance tradition in which the tassa drumming and the dancing are prominent. This is a cultural expression in a tradition of chastity. It emphasizes the purity of the bride. The offerings made at the roadside are to the goddess of the earth, and the digging of the ground is the source of the name Dig Dutty. The innocence of the bride is a theme in this ceremony. The dancing especially by older women is known to be charged with sexual symbolism and other



There is a marriage ritual observed by East Indians in Guyana and Trinidad known as Matikoor (it is also spelt matichoor ; there is no standard spelling), variously called Dig Dutty. It is practiced as a part of the Hindu wedding, although some features of it are found among the folk and not among the middle class. The first night, usually a Friday, in the five days of the Hindu wedding tradition is devoted to this ritual, performed separately by the family of the groom and at the home of the bride. To give a very rough description, members of each family gather separately at nightfall and process along the road to a selected place where a ritual is performed next to a trench or canal at the roadside led by a senior female member of the family. It involves digging a hole in the ground in which offerings

things are done as a means of teaching – initiating the bride into married life.

There is striking similarity in a quite different marriage ritual observed by Guyanese of African descent called Kwe Kwe (often spelt “Queh Queh”; there is no standard spelling). It is variously called Kaakalay or Kwe Ke in different parts of Guyana. As a performance tradition the Kwe Kwe is celebrated on the night before a wedding. Just as in the Matikoor, there are two separate ceremonies – one at the home of the bride and another at the home of the groom. It includes a gathering of family and friends who engage in a ritual driven by the singing of songs and dancing in very ritualistic fashion. As the night progresses participants from the Kwe Kwe at the groom’s home will go to join those at the bride’s

home where there are further rituals signifying the unity of two “nations” (families). They make this journey while singing in a procession along the road if proximity allows it.

There is a lead singer, usually a senior female member of the community, known as a Tutor because of her knowledge of the Kwe Kwe tradition and her spiritual role in the ceremony. This parallels the role played by the woman who performs the ritual in the Dig Dutty. But she is also the equivalent of a Pandit in the Indian event, which is a Hindu ritual, while the Kwe Kwe has a spiritual element which links it to its traditional context. The songs and the dancing have a reputation of pronounced sexual reference, which recalls the note of sexuality in dancing in the Matikoor tradition. In similar fashion, one of the functions of the Kwe Kwe is to teach and initiate the bride in preparation for married life, including the assumption of her purity in a tradition of chastity.

This event on the eve of the wedding is only the final expression of a culture in the community in which the Kwe Kwe teaches propriety and discourages errant behaviour, particularly where sexuality is concerned. The standards and the assumptions in the two ethnic traditions are virtually identical. It is an outstanding illustration of what Harris describes as cross-cultural. Two contrasting ethnic traditions belonging to racial groups who co-exist in the same space oppose each other socially and politically because of differences that are, in reality, superficial. These differences have been deepened by the divisive devices of colonial history, both post-emancipation and pre-independence, as well as resulting processes of socialisation. But at the core of these cultures there is a surprising oneness which render the differences cosmetic.

In the analysis that is offered here, we are considering the example of performance traditions. There is no attempt to study religion or anthropology, but merely an elucidation of research conducted into manifestations of culture expressed in performance traditions. Culture is the way people live – their cosmic vision / ethos / beliefs and daily practices. Much of this is expressed through performance traditions, and we do not claim to go any further than what has been found in field research.

Take drumming for example. There is a heritage of African drumming that has survived in the Caribbean – considerably less in Guyana than in other parts of the Caribbean. But it has been found that there is a strong connection between traditional drumming and spiritual belief. One may refer, for example, to the Kumfa (Cumfa) in Guyana, closely compared to the Kumina of Jamaica and the Shango in Trinidad and Tobago. There are still more powerful survivals in Haiti, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. All of these are derived from African religions and are tied to spiritual beliefs.

The drum is a medium in the ceremonial rituals performed by devotees in these traditions. The spirits are important in all of these which practice ancestor worship, and

there are drum rhythms to invoke their presence. There are rhythms which are specific to particular deities, like the Yoruba god Shango, for example, or Ogun. In African Feasts or in the Kumfa these rhythms are played to invite the deities whose presence is required to effect healing, blessing or good luck, or to give thanks for some gift or achievement.

In Guyana there is a hybrid religion known as Kali Mai practiced by East Indians in which drums perform a similar function. Particular drum rhythms are devoted to particular deities, and in each case the rhythm is called a “hand”. The term “hand” is also explained by renowned Indian drummer and drum maker popularly known as Teacher Raghu as an expression used in other types of spiritual drumming in relation to Hinduism. Further to that, the drum finds itself even at the core of Hindu philosophy. There is a drum called the damaru which belongs to Lord Shiva who performs the cosmic dance to keep the balance of the universe. It is a two-headed drum with the shape of two triangles which, when put together form a six-pointed star, representing the symbols for Shiva and Shakti, the male and female creative forces.

Such is the importance of the drum and drum rhythms to human existence in both the contrasting African and



Indian spiritual beliefs. It is amazing the way differences disappear in polarised cultures, supporting the notion of cross-culturalism.

We may also consider the carnivalesque – a basic cultural form in Caribbean traditional performance. It is a shape commonly adopted in both African and Indian theatrical acts. In the contemporary Caribbean the carnivalesque is common to both Blacks and Indians, although the popular notion categorises it as belonging only to the African.

It takes its name from carnival, which is at its heights in the Trinidad Carnival. In this cultural form celebrants create masques, mummeries, costumes, characters and effigies which are paraded in a procession along the streets. It is highly spectacular, exhibiting craft, artistry, colour and theatre driven by music in a long road march. This parade is at the heart of carnival and is also its zenith and culmination. In carnival, there is the combination of history, culture, dramatisation, theatre and social commentary in a spectacular show.

Many African derived forms take the shape of the carnivalesque. Foremost among them is the masquerade with its many manifestations around the Caribbean. These include the Jonkunnu or Maskerade of Jamaica, the Junkanoo of the Bahamas, the Mummies of St Kitts, the Tuk Band and the Land Ship of Barbados, many masquerades related to the Trinidad Carnival, including the devils, and the Maskerade (Masquerade) of Guyana. In all of these masques, costumes, characters are created in street theatre including music and dancing.

Significantly, the same form of street performance is adopted by Indians in celebrating traditions brought over from India during indentureship and developed in the Caribbean. Foremost among them is the Hosay (sometimes called Hosein) in Trinidad, which was known as Tadjia while it survived in Guyana. This is an Islamic performance in commemoration of the Martyrdom of Imam Hassan and Imam Hosein, grandsons of the Holy Prophet Mohamed (OWBP). Muslims recognised them as heirs to the Prophet and leaders of the Muslim World, while another faction led by Yazeid opposed this and the two sides were engaged in a war of succession. The two brothers along with their families, many women and children were betrayed and slaughtered by their opponents in the battle of Karbala. This is commemorated annually in a street procession of large exquisitely crafted effigies, symbols, costumes accompanied by drums and masques.

In close comparison, the grandest and most spectacular exhibition of the carnivalesque among the Hindus is the Diwali Motorcade in Guyana. In celebration of the Festival of Lights, Hindus demonstrate the unequalled craft of picturesque statements in lighting designs. Symbols, images, masques and tableaux are shaped by lights on decorated vehicles accompanied by human models, singing and music. These vehicles process along the road like floats, witnessed by thousands who line the

route. Yet another example is the Ramlila performance that flourishes in Trinidad but is no longer seen in Guyana. This is the longest dramatic play in the world, performed by Hindu villagers in an epic drama lasting some 40 hours over 10 nights. It tells the story of Lord Ram (Rama) and his victory over evil in the person of the demon king Rawan (Ravana). At the end of the play, the performers are known to take to the streets in a joyous dance, processing through the village behind a vehicle carrying the tassa drummers. This dramatises Ram's triumphant return home at the end of his exile and it is also a celebration of his victory over Rawan.

The depth of these comparisons is significant not only because of the similarity in form, but in the way the performances relate to faith. We have seen it with reference to the drumming, and it persists in the forms of street theatre. The tribute to Imam Hosein (On Whom Be Peace) is religious – sacred to Islam; the Diwali motorcade symbolises the Goddess of Light, Lakshmi as well as tributes to Rama, whose conquest of evil is celebrated in the Ramlila. These performance traditions are sacred to the principles of Hinduism just as the African celebrations have spiritual meaning.

The Maskerade and Jonkunnu derive from religious rites in West Africa which were brought to the Caribbean during slavery. In deep comparison to the Indian traditions, the street parade and dancing seen in the



Egungun of the Yoruba and the masquerade of the Ibo (Ijo) in West Africa represent the sacred presence of the gods.

These cross-cultural phenomena continue in secular life. Myth and story-telling are also expressions of belief, of how people see the world. They are therefore central to the culture of both Indians and Blacks in Guyana, and once again, the similarities are revealing. The story-telling traditions of the folk have not survived with any strength, but the little that can be seen remains valuable. The best known around the West Indies in folk tales is the trickster hero Anansi. He is a mythical spider represented in the tales with human characteristics and vices, but with almost magical, superhuman qualities. He is known to call upon his wits, fired by extraordinary brain power, to survive, to escape danger, and to defeat his enemies. He is famed for these victories, bringing down large and powerful foes like the Tiger and even Brother Death, and outwitting kings and fellow animals. But, paradoxically, his human vices include greed, laziness and selfishness, which sometimes cause his downfall.

A far less known character is Balgobin, a folk hero created in the imagination of the East Indian folk. He is a primary school boy from a poor family, with the reputation of being the school dunce. He is famous among teachers and classmates for his lack of scholastic ability. Yet his wit is extraordinary; his age is never stated, but he is wise beyond his years and is able to out-think and outwit all, from classmates to teachers, headmasters and school inspectors.

Balgobin is a satire on the colonial school system. When one interprets the Balgobin tales, the education system fails, and Balgobin is an example of that. Yet, for the Indians, he is a hero and a representative with his superior mental ability in spite of his class reputation. He scores victories against colonialism on behalf of the folk, just as Anansi does. Yet, Balgobin is the product of the Indian consciousness while Anansi is a mythical character from Africa.

Very few indigenous East Indian folk tales seem to have survived. The same is the problem with folk tales among Black Guyanese. However, what is remarkable is the way the tales from both sides have been influenced by the European and the fairy tales in exactly the same fashion. The most remarkable example of a Guyanese Indian folk tale is the story "Sheep Minder" collected in *Enterprise*, East Coast Demerara by Renita Doodnauth Dindyal, a

teacher who researched Oral Literature at the University of Guyana. It was told by villagers and transmitted over many generations. It is a tragic tale of a girl secretly murdered by her brother over a family inheritance, but while she is a village girl and her murder was discovered by a sheep minder at the back of a village, her father is a king. It is the placement of village characters in a fairy tale setting. And would be a European folk tale were it not set in a Guyanese village.

An excellent example of a Guyanese folk tale is the story of "One Kill Polly" told by a villager in Ann's Grove, East Coast, Demerara. This tale, a rare one that survived among Black Guyanese folk is a 'rags to riches' story of a poor boy from a Guyanese village who marries a princess and lives happily ever after. This, too, would be a European fairy tale were it not for its Guyanese setting. It is difficult to find the differences in these two tales except for the cast of East Indian characters in one and the black characters in the other. They both demonstrate the influence of English literature among the folk in British Guiana with identical results when superimposed on the oral literature of the two ethnic groups.

Wilson Harris' *Carnival Trilogy* and his *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill* (based on a cemetery at a place called Sorrow Hill in Bartica, Guyana) as well as in his critical essays, articulates the theory of cross-culturalism. The concept is explored in *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* as well as in *The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination* edited by Andrew Bundy. He argues that the history of mankind is one in which members of the same human race dress themselves in different costumes throughout history and wage war on each other. The various combatants in the wars and acts of genocide through history are really the story of the human race killing itself. The different cultures, races and nationalities who confront each other are the same race in different costumes (cultural identities).

The false notion of apartheid in Guyana falls apart in the face of the reality of Guyana as a cross-cultural state. It is a theatre, as Harris also represents it, in which battles are played out. However, the Black-Indian conflict is fueled by false notions of the divisions between two cultures. Studies of myths, of cultural beliefs and performance traditions establish that the source of conflict does not exist and that at the very core, are different masks worn by the same humanity.



Al Creighton has held various positions at University of Guyana: Director of Confucius Institute; Head of Language and Cultural Studies; Dean, Faculty of Education and Humanities, Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Associate Fellow, University of Warwick, UK; Lecturer, and member of Council, UWI. Awarded Research Fellowships, ACU Fellow at Univ. of Ibadan, Univ. of Warwick; Director, National School of Theatre Arts and Drama; Secretary, Guyana Prize for Literature; Prize Winning Playwright, Poet, Theatre Director; University Captain and winner of Full Colour in track and field athletics and hockey.

Editor's Note:

The following is an address delivered by Former President, Mr. Donald Ramotar, to the 5th Triennial Delegates Conference of the Clerical and Commercial Workers Union (CCWU).

Politics and Trade Unionism in Guyana



Thank you for giving me this opportunity to be the Guest Speaker to your 5th Triennial Delegates' Conference. It is indeed an honor to speak to your delegates and guests since some of the founders and very early members of your Union were members and founders of the political party which I have been a member for my whole adult life, the People's Progressive Party (PPP).

One of the founders of CCWU, H.J.M Hubbard, was also a founder of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) the organization that was the forerunner of the PPP. Comrade Hubbard served as General Secretary of the TUC in the 1940s. He was a member of the Cabinet from 1961 to 1964 in the PPP government and made a sterling contribution in a very difficult period of our history.

The other person was Janet Jagan who was the very first Field Secretary of the CCWU. Mrs. Jagan faced many adversaries throughout her life but her faith in the working class was undiminished. In fact all four of the founders of the Political Affairs Committee were also prominent members of the Trade Union Movement they were Cheddi and Janet Jagan, Ashton Chase and H.J.M Hubbard. Therefore I feel a sense of history being here today as I recognize how history has linked us together.

I, myself, worked closely with two other towering figures of your Union. Gordon Todd and Berchmoore Philadelphia, President and General Secretary of this Union. This was in the late eighties when we were all fighting for the democratization of the TUC which eventually led to the formation of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG). Those

were difficult even dangerous days, but they served to create bonds of friendships in our service to working people.

I, together with Cde. Mithoolall Mangal then assistant General Secretary of the GAWU, went to your union to study how to set up GAWU's credit union in the late 1980s. so its good to be back to renew our long held friendship.

Comrades, you are meeting under the theme "Study the Past, Seize the Present, Shape the Future." It is a very timely slogan which offers us a sound methodology to approach the many challenges that face the working people of our country and the world.

International Situation

Your conference is taking place at a time when the world is undergoing much turbulence and seems more dangerous than any time in our history. Some of these problems are considered global issues. This involves a real danger to the whole of mankind; I am referring to climate change.

Every year the environmental conditions are getting worse. Wild fires are raging in the US western areas. This has become an annual event. Europe too is burning, UK, France, Spain are all experiencing heat waves that are breaking all records. The wild fires have reached as far as Siberia in Russia, an area previously known for its cold weather.

While this is occurring on the one hand, on the other we are witnessing unusually heavy rainfalls that are creating additional misery as it produces landslides and floods. Too many people are losing their lives in these disasters. In Sierra Leone in Africa Land Slides have killed thousands and left many in misery without a shelter over their heads. Natural disasters are becoming more frequent, with greater ferocity. Hurricanes in our region. Let me note here that every year we see these monster storms forming more and more south in the Atlantic. That should be a worry for us in Guyana. Tornadoes etc. have all been doing severe damage in US and Asia.

We now have another category of refugees, the climate change refugees, mainly in the Pacific Islands where people have to abandon their homes due to the rising sea levels.

All of these are taking place because of mankind's over exploitation of nature. Almost a hundred and fifty years ago a working class champion warned what would happen if such exploitation of nature continued. Frederick Engels wrote the following in 1876 when Climate Change as a term did not make its appearance. He said "...the animal merely uses its environment, and brings about changes in it simply by his presence; man by his changes makes it serve his ends, masters it. This is the final, essential distinction between man and other animals, and once again it is labor that brings about this distinction.

"Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. The people, who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivatable land, never dreamed that by removing along with the forests the collecting centers and reservoirs of moisture they were laying the basis for the present forlorn state of those countries. When the Italians of the Alps used up the pine forests on the southern slopes, so carefully cherished on the northern slopes, they had no inkling that by doing so they were cutting at the roots of the dairy industry in their region; they had still less inkling that they were thereby depriving their mountain springs of water for the greater part of the year, and making it possible for them to pour still more furious torrents on the plains during the rainy seasons. Those who spread the potato in Europe were not aware that with these farinaceous tubers they were at the same time spreading scrofula. Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature – but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply

them correctly."

Since then man's understanding of our relations to nature has increased many fold. More than fifty years ago scientists have warned us that the overexploitation of nature was leading the world to catastrophe, even posing a threat to life as we know it on this world.

For instance the big oil companies knew since the early 1970s that fossil fuel was changing the climate and would lead to detrimental environmental changes. At first they hid that information, then they tried to discredit it and finally while they were forced to admit it they subverted any actions to deal with the issue by using their power and influence on the governments in the developed countries. Billions are spent on lobbyists and investing in politicians who support them in their drive to maximize their profits.

This is the nature of the international system that we live under. International capital mostly cares for its immediate profits and pay lip service to environment. I wish to remind you of the fight the tobacco industry had put up to try to prevent any actions due to the exposure of the fact that tobacco was a main cause of lung cancer. Like the oil industry they knew decades before of the great harm to life yet they fought tooth and nail against any regulations of it. This is the nature of the beast that is fighting any measure that appears to affect their bottom line.

Today despite our concrete knowledge, forests continue to be destroyed by the mining, ranching and such other activities. Many of them illegal but driven by greed.

The huge wealth that is being created by these merchants of death is more and more concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. Today we hear about the fact that 0.1% of the richest persons in the world have more wealth than the bottom half of the world's population or some 3.5 billion souls. This is an obscenity of no mean order. We don't hear this from the mainstream media because of the interlocking ownership of these mighty corporations. It is true that many governments that speak about this issue are advocating technical solutions. Yet the reality is that we never had such advanced technologies as we have today but the environment is the worse it has ever been. Those governments hide behind technology because most of them are products of big business and are incapable of confronting it on this life and death issue.

Clearly, my friends, technologies alone are not enough. The main problem lies in the system.

P. J. Dunning, a British Trade Unionist wrote a book in 1860 entitled "Trades' Unions and Strikes: their Philosophy and Intention" he wrote that "...Capital is said to fly turbulence and strife, and to be timid, which is very true; but this is very incompletely stating the question. Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent,

certain will produce eagerness; 50 per cent positive audacity; 100 per cent will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 per cent and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged. If turbulence and strife will bring a profit, it will freely encourage both. Smuggling and the slave trade have amply proved all that is here stated."

This, I believe, captures the nature of Capital better than any that I have seen before.

This explains why wars, conquests and dominations continue to our day despite our knowledge of their environmental and other consequences. Those who control the world's economy are proving incapable of solving the most dangerous problems of our times because their aim continues to be world domination so their corporations can continue to earn colossal profits. They seem oblivious to the sufferings and loss of human lives.

Let's take for instance the war raging in Ukraine. The tragedy of this is that it was totally avoidable. All that was needed was to recognize Russia's valid and legitimate security concerns. But Ukraine is not the only catastrophe in the world. The flood disasters in south Sudan, the war in Tigre, Ethiopia are creating untold miseries for people who have so little.

The Trade Union Movement should join with progressive forces locally, regionally and internationally to demand disarmament and Peace in our world. No one is safe on our planet with such destructive weapons in the hands of unscrupulous people. We need world leaders who are serious about peace and who are ready to take concrete measures for peace. This is the first indispensable step towards solving the Global issues.

Fortunately workers, farmers and ordinary folks are fighting back. Unfortunately much of those fights back are not or are only barely reported by the main stream media. I have not seen much reports of the railway strike in the UK, nor the massive protests of farmers in the Netherlands, nor about the strike by truckers in Canada nor the massive protests by farmers in India, supported by the Trade Unions in India that caused the Indian Government to withdraw a law which they had passed late in the day almost in the dark.

So comrades there is hope when we take justified actions to defend our class interests and the common interests of all the world's oppressed. We can do more if we build stringer solidarity. After all, a victory of workers in any country is our victory as well.

Local Situation

Let me now draw your attention to the many problems that have been and are affecting our movement at home. As you must be aware we have many problems and challenges. Some of these are similar and even connected to the International Trades Union Movement.

The theme that you have chosen for this conference offers you a great approach to discussing these issues and hopefully to assist you to chart a course in confronting them.

One of these is the fall in the membership of the Trade Unions here and abroad. Some of the reasons are common and universal. The fact is that science and technologies are displacing labor at a faster rate than before and the creation of new jobs which economists say will develop with new technologies, are lagging and not catching up in a timely manner.

Some are caused by the fact that many of the new workers do not see themselves as workers.

Many in the tech industry still see themselves as something else. These are highly educated workers but their consciousness lags behind their actual place in the system of production.

Another common problem is the division of the working class and Trades Union movement both at home and abroad.

I hope that you will use your links to the various internationals to propagate and pursue unity of the various centers in the world. You must seek alliances in the region and abroad. It is division that is retarding our struggles.

At home you have greater scope to promote working class unity. In the first place I wish to point out that we have in this country thousands of workers that are unorganized. Those workers are exploited and have hardly any representation. This is an area where the movement as a whole should concentrate on. All our unions should seriously interrogate this matter; seek cooperation and not competition to bring the unorganized into your ranks.

This is imperative since our country is attracting a lot of investments in almost all sectors of our economy. Many that are coming could be hostile to unions. We have to ensure that the workers who they would employ must have the right to join a trade union. The Ministry of Labor must make that clear to all new local and foreign investors. The Trade Union Movement must make this a priority.

I recall that it was not until Cheddi Jagan became President of Guyana that Omai recognized a trade union because the then PPP/Civic Government took an uncompromising position on that issue. We must uphold that tradition. This is one issue you should raise with government. Preventing workers from joining a union is a human rights question and employers must be aware of that!

Unions must seek alliances at home, even merging to increase your strength and we must take the lead in uniting the Trade Unions in the Caribbean.

That is why I am supportive of the GAWU's initiative in seeking alliance with the Oil Field Workers Union of Trinidad and Tobago. Other unions and their umbrella bodies should do the same.



I know that the GAWU came in for some criticism from one of the Private Sector organizations. It was rather ironic. After all many private sector companies are very busy making alliances with the new entrants from abroad. We even have foreign Chambers of Commerce here all working with their local counter parts. Yet objections and opposition are made when workers organizations seek to unite.

The most important and immediate issue is the unity of our trade union movement.

Comrades and friends, speaking frankly, the Private Sector is much more united than labor and they are wielding great influence in our society. They are even called upon to help formulate policies. That is how influential they are because they are better organized.

On the other hand labor has grown weaker. The reasons for this must be sought and dealt with. Merely appealing for unity is not enough we must create the conditions for it to become a reality.

Your theme offers us the way to seek the truth and to chart a course for solutions.

I am happy to be given this opportunity to express some views on this vital matter even though it may be considered controversial by some, I would feel that I have succeeded if it can contribute to discussions in the movement as a whole.

The division of our movement did not take place with the split in the TUC in the 1980s. It has its roots as far back as 1953. Recall that on October 9, 1953 when the Constitution of British Guiana was suspended another suspension took place which is not spoken of these days. That is the disbanding of the British Guiana Trades Union Congress. This militant organization was destroyed because it genuinely defended workers and supported the PPP's drive for independence. The colonial masters wanted a pliant TUC.

The disbanding of the "old" TUC was done to purge it out of the genuine workers leaders of that period.

It was re established in December of that same year but its militant leadership was excluded.

It was re-established by the colonial power to support colonialism to fight against the Independence movement

led by the PPP.

Recall the first act of that new TUC was to send a message to the Secretary of State for the colonies via the Governor congratulating and supporting the suspension of our constitution.

Later on when the Independence Movement was fractured in 1955 the TUC took the side of those forces fighting against freedom, on the side reaction.

During the CIA financed racial riots of the 1962 to 1964 period the TUC was an important instrument that supported and helped in the division of the two major race groups in this country. Of course that was how the working class first got divided in this country.

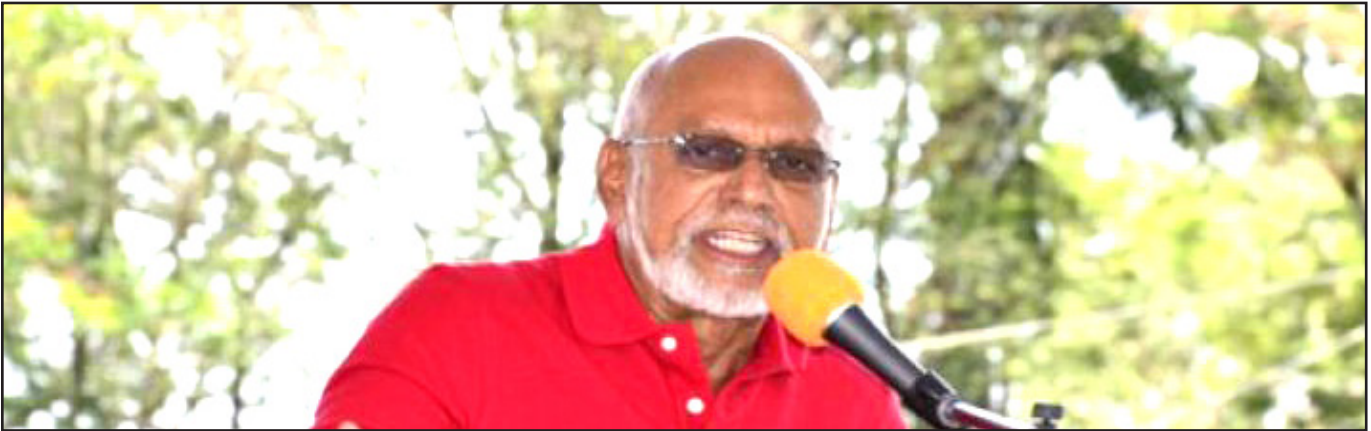
In May of 1963 more than 400 Indian Guianese workers tendered their resignation to the National Union of Public Service Employees (NUPSE) because they complained of harassment and being denied strike relief and of being threatened. During that period Indian workers could not go to the Union offices in Georgetown to collect strike relief for fear of being harassed.

One of the reasons in my mind for the continued division in the movement is the fact that the same structures set up by the British to support colonial exploitation and to fracture the solidarity of the workers of this country remains in place to this day. It is clear in my opinion that the Labor Movement in Guyana is in need of democratization. That is the only way that we can get beyond that period in our history and lay the foundations for a strong labor movement so desperately needed today.

This raises the issue of Politics and the Trade Union Movement. I am not one that would argue that trade unionists and unions should not get involved in politics. I believe that it is futile to make such a call. However what I would like to call your attention to is the nature of politics that you should be engaged in. Your politics as Trade unionists must be on what is good for the working people of this country. Regardless of your political party's preference.

This should be your only guiding principle. You should support every measure that is in the interest of the working class regardless of where it emanates from and vice versa oppose everything that retards their progress. That unfortunately is not the case today. I have seen some persons prominent in the Labor movement often charging the government with practicing racial discrimination. I have no problem with them doing so if it is true. However, they hardly take the time to provide hard facts or any evidence to prove their charges. Those charges have now become more slogans designed to reinforce a mindset that some unscrupulous politicians have succeeded to entrench in the minds of many in the Afro Guyanese community, especially workers.

Charges of racism are used liberally even when the population benefitting is universal. Take for instance the "Because We Care" programme we hear charges of Racial Discrimination.



Even food or snacks are being racially weaponized. Recall the black pudding outburst by one of the prominent commentators in this country whose only purpose in life appears to be to promote disharmony and divisions.

While those slogans may serve some political goals, Trade Unionists must know that all it is doing is keeping the working class divided. This division has affected and is negatively the whole working class movement. Undoubtedly it must affect the Trades Union movement as well.

This is taking place in the face of a very united private sector movement and the advent of powerful transnational foreign companies. Division of the movement in these circumstances is going to lead to further decline and the marginalization of the Labor. We cannot afford this!

It seems to me therefore that Trade Unionists must abandon identity politics, which inevitably leads to divisions and return to class politics which promotes unity of workers and farmers.

Our workers organizations must lead by example and must avoid taking positions that can discredit the organizations.

Many in this movement make charges against government and call for inclusion. Well I support inclusivity. But we should look and see how inclusive we are in this movement.

Let's examine the leadership of our unions and see if it includes all races or enough women and that it has a balance of experience and youth. Such an examination could be revealing.

What we need today are working people who are conscious of their position in society and who would be ready to struggle to advance its own interests as a class. This should be done not only in the economic sphere but also in the political arena. Working people must have a seat at the table and be able to influence government's policies as well.

The politics by trade unionists which appears to be promoting the interests of any political party will inevitably lead to suspicions and push backs. That is glaring in our society because of the identity politics pursued by some in our movement.

I believe to raise the consciousness of the working class calls for a lot of educational work.

We must not allow working people to fall under the ideological influence of the private sector. Therefore the leadership given to the working people must be honest and intelligent.

It means that we must examine where we have made mistakes and correct them. We must teach our own history and the history of the international working class so we can arm ourselves with knowledge to push forward our positions.

I know I'll be swimming against the tide and may very well be called outdated when I raise here the failure of the working people to protect public enterprises. We have remained quiet when other forms of ownership apart from private ownership are criticized.

Our economy is now almost completely in the hands of the private sector. GUYSUCO is about the only state enterprise that still exists. But with the trend and the abysmal management I'm seeing that will not last for much longer.

We have failed in Bauxite and in Sugar. I ask myself why? The only answer I can come up with is that we did not transform relations in the nationalized industries. The managerial class was transformed into a bureaucratic capitalist class and viewed the workers with hostility while the workers saw no difference with in ownership. They were never really involved in managing these enterprises, never involved in any way. That accounted for the failure of state enterprises.

That is really tragic because its failure had negative consequences for all of us.

When sugar and bauxite were under the same ownership it generated unity and solidarity among the workers. In our context that was unity among African and Indian Guyanese. Their failure has led to the loosening of that solidarity. I recall the solidarity of those two groups of workers during epic struggles in the mid 1970s and the 1980s.

While I am aware of many positives of private enterprise I urge you not to see that as the only model for development. I still believe that public and cooperative ownership have just as important a role to play. I point

you to China and Vietnam as evidence of that. We should study their experiences and see what is useful in it for us. We should never allow workers to feel that they are incapable of managing. That is why we should not go with the tide and say that private ownership is the only viable way!

My friends allow me to return once more to the racial problem which has retarded our growth and has affected the workers the most.

I know that many good intentioned persons have been making appeals for unity. Yet we have not solved this problem.

Using your theme again, that is to seek an understanding of our present by studying our past I want to leave you with some of my views on the matter.

I recall in several discussions with Dr. Jagan we were always cautioned not to underestimate nor over exaggerate the problem. This is the approach I have always followed.

I believe that the racial question in Guyana is not as intractable as it seems, I believe we have made progress and we can advance much further. I say so because all those who studied the racial issue throughout the world point to the fact that it is always rooted in economics. It is a situation where one section of the population is exploited so that another set can have a high life. That was the case in Apartheid South Africa and in segregated USA. It is the case in apartheid Israel visa vie the oppressed and super exploited Palestinian people today. In Guyana no such conditions exist. It is true that most of the rich people in our country are Indian Guyanese but that is a handful of persons. The average Indian Guyanese population in general is not better off than their African counter parts. There is no economic underpinning of racism in our society.

Racism was introduced here as a means of defeating the Independence movement during the 1950s. To entrench racism and keep us forever divided our electoral system was changed from First Pass the Post to Proportional Representation. We were the only country/colony where the PR was imposed. Britain and the US which pushed the system on us had rejected it in their own countries. Why have they rejected it? Because they argued that PR leads to weak governments.

In 1962 when Trinidad was going to Independence PR was proposed for their electoral system. It was rejected by the very British and by the PNM. Prime Minister Eric

Williams in his opposition to it said that it would lead to the balkanization of Trinidad and Tobago and the British agreed with him.

It was for that same reason both Dr. Williams and the then Prime Minister of Jamaica Sir Alexander Bustamante were vehemently opposed to PR for BG. So strong was Busta's feeling that he refused to send any observers to the 1964 elections. In passing let me note that this was a very principled position of Sir Alexander for his ideological position and Dr. Jagan's were poles apart.

Moreover, my friends when we look around the world we see that the PR system leads to political instability, weak governments and it perpetuates differences of race, religion etc which often leads to clashes.

This was the case in Italy where we had some 70 governments from 1964 to 2016 compared to 25 in the UK and 24 in Germany. It is happening today in Israel where they are going to the 5th elections in two years. In Israel too it is contributing towards fascist-like attacks on the Palestinian people.

Historians are of the view that the PR system was one of the factors that was responsible for the rise of Hitler to power in the 1930s. I think that that was one of the factors that influenced Germany to move from that system after the war in 1945.

In Guyana too we have seen how racism is being pushed by unscrupulous persons to hold on to some mass support. Those who can click their fingers and get a crowd to create mayhem would not want to voluntarily give up that type of power. That is why it is so emphasized.

That is why I am advocating that we return to the constituency or First Pass the Post System.

The main reasons, I wish to re emphasize, is that it forces political parties to organize on national issues and it deemphasizes race.

The other reason is that the First Pass the Post system promotes strong governments. That is very important and will become even more important in the future as we will be forced to deal with very strong and influential corporations. We must guard our sovereignty and prevent large corporations from being able to buy seats in our legislative arms of Government and create a new type of colonization.

In conclusion, let me thank you for inviting me here. I hope that you will have, and I wish you fruitful deliberations at this year's conference.



Donald Ramotar is the former President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. He also served as General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party. Mr. Ramotar is a graduate from the University of Guyana in the field of Economics. He is an avid writer, and contributes regularly to the Mirror newspaper and other publications.

Editor's Note:

The following is a speech delivered by the Chinese Ambassador to Guyana, Guo Haiyan, at the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Guyana-China Diplomatic Relations.

Guyana – China Relations: A Win-Win Situation



June 27th of this year marks the 50th anniversary of China-Guyana diplomatic relations. On that day, President Xi Jinping and President Ali exchanged letters of congratulations. Before that, China's top legislator, Chairman of NPC Mr. Li Zhanshu held a virtual meeting with Guyana's Speaker Hon. Manzoor Nadir. Mr. Ramotar and Mr. Rohee wrote passionate commemorative articles. With the support of our friends, the Embassy organized Online Cultural Performance, Online Photo Exhibition, Chinese Film Festival, the 50th Anniversary Ceremony and other events. I am very glad and highly appreciate that the Guyanese government, political parties and friends from all walks of life in Guyana attach great importance to China-Guyana relations. Thank you for all your support and contributions.

In my remarks at the 50th Anniversary Ceremony of Diplomatic Relations between China and Guyana, I summarized the major characteristics of China-Guyana relations as three "Mutual".

The first is Mutual Respect and Equality, which is the foundation of China-Guyana mutual trust.

It's an important principle of China's foreign policy that

all countries, big or small, are equal. Guyana is the first country in the English-speaking Caribbean region to establish diplomatic relations with China. China treats Guyana not only on equal footing, but also with utmost sincerity. Political trust between the two sides has been built long before the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972. In 1962, despite the opposition of colonialists, Janet Jagan, then General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party, visited China and was received by Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai. In 1966, when Guyana declared independence, China immediately recognized it and Premier Zhou sent congratulations. In 1971, Guyana voted in favour of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution NO. 2758 restoring the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations. Although the two countries did not have diplomatic relations then, many Guyanese supported the relevant decision, including Mr. Ramotar, who even participated in some demonstrations.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Guyana, despite the different social systems and development models of the two countries, both sides have always maintained respect, mutual trust

and friendly communications. Guyana has firmly adhered to the One-China principle, and China has also firmly supported Guyana in pursuing an independent development path that is in line with its own national conditions. China-Guyana relations have stood the test of time.

Over the years, China and Guyana have maintained close coordination in international and regional affairs, jointly upheld the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order based on international laws, and made contributions to safeguard multilateralism and the overall interests of developing countries. Guyana supported the inclusion of the vision of a community of shared future of mankind into UN Documents. China supported Guyana to play important roles in multilateral organizations such as Non-Aligned Movement, G77 plus China. China supported Guyana to hold international conferences, for example, in 2018, the 17th meeting of CRIC, Conference of Implementation Review Committee of UN Convention to Combat Desertification. Guyana is a founding member of CARICOM and hosts the CARICOM Secretariat. China supports Guyana's efforts in promoting regional integration, especially to play a leading role in climate change and food security.

The second is Mutual benefit and shared development, which is the fundamental goal of China-Guyana cooperation.

China and Guyana are both developing countries and development is our greatest common interest. Bilateral economic and trade cooperation has experienced different stages. In the early years, we were both poor countries. China overcame its own difficulties and provided interest-free loans, grants, donated bicycles, tractors, and helped build brick factory, textile factory for Guyana. That's the way of help between poor friends.

Later on, into the new century, the forms of cooperation are becoming diverse. With non-repayable assistance, China built the Arthur Chung International Conference Center, provided ferries, computers, police supplies, container scanners. A friendship park is going to start buildup this year. With concessional loans, China helped Guyana implement power transmission, airport renovation and expansion, the Demerara East Coast Road Improvement Project, and the National Broadband Network Project.

Meanwhile, the bilateral trade volume bucked the pandemic trend and grew by 123 percent, reaching \$710 million in 2021. It has increased by nearly four folds in the past 10 years. Investment from China is also increasing. Some Chinese companies came as contractors. They participated in infrastructure development and completed the projects with low cost and high quality,

such as the Marriott Hotel, the new Pegasus Hotel, and the Movie Towne. In 2018, the two governments signed a memorandum of understanding on the Belt and Road Initiative, which has injected new impetus into the mutually beneficial cooperation between the two sides. Guyana's economy is taking off, which brings more opportunities to explore more diversified models of cooperation.

The third is Mutual support and understanding, which are the traditions of China-Guyana friendship.

January 12 next year would be the 170th anniversary of the arrival of Chinese in Guyana. The first Chinese indentured laborers arrived in Guyana in as early as the middle of the 19th century. Over the years, the Chinese community has been living in harmony with other ethnic groups and working hard, making contributions to the development of Guyana. Elements of Chinese culture, e.g. Chinese food, lion dance and kite flying, have become integral parts of Guyana's diverse culture, and are natural ties between China and Guyana.

Chinese Medical Teams, Confucius Institute at University of Guyana and Chinese Government Scholarships have become new benchmarks for people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Guyana. In 1993, China sent a medical team to Guyana, which was the first one sent by the Chinese government to Latin America and the Caribbean. Over the past 30 years, 17 consecutive Chinese medical teams have been sent to Guyana. During the last Chinese New Year, the 17th batch of Chinese doctors didn't rest in the holiday but traveled to the rainforest to provide medical care to indigenous people. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Guyana was also the first country in the English-speaking Caribbean to receive vaccines donated by China. Although the quantity was not big, it was delivered when China itself was facing shortages. The Chinese government also donated 16 batches of medical supplies. The donation is a great example of brotherhood between us.

The Confucius Institute at University of Guyana is a window for the Guyanese to further appreciate Chinese culture. Every year, there are new Guyanese students being admitted by Chinese universities. We attach great importance to cooperation in human resources. At the request of Guyana, China has organized training programs in agricultural products processing, sustainable bamboo development, JUNCAO technology, fish cage culture, tourism management, etc. "Development for the people" or People-centered Development is our common value. So, we are making efforts in the same direction.

For the future development of relations between the two countries, I would like to focus on one key word, "opportunity".

There is a Chinese proverb that says, "Opportunity knocks but only once". When discussing development issues, China attaches great importance to opportunities. Some scholars believe that, it is because China missed the opportunities of the first two industrial revolutions, that China declined from a "superpower" in the ancient world to a weak state, suffering from Western countries' aggression and colonization. Later, by seizing the opportunities of the Third Scientific and Technological

and the largest trading nation in goods, China has a huge market of 1.4 billion people and a strong purchasing power of more than 400 million middle-income group. China is opening up to the outside world at a higher level. In November this year, we will hold the Fifth China International Import Expo, to which we have invited Guyana and Jamaica in this region. We are expecting more Made-in-Guyana products sold to China.



Revolution and the accession to WTO, China leaped from poverty and backwardness to become the second largest economy, the largest exporter in the world with the largest foreign exchange reserves. If you seize the opportunity, you will win the strategic initiative and usher in great development. Our Guyanese friends also value development opportunities. The major discovery of oil reserves is a once-in-a-century historic development opportunity for Guyana. It will help achieve economic and social transformation and sustainable development, to realize the vision of "One Guyana".

The development of China and Guyana is highly complementary and offers each other development opportunities. We can achieve development goals through joint efforts.

The economic growth of China is an opportunity. In the first half of this year, the Chinese economy overcame the negative impact of the rebound of the epidemic and achieved growth of 2.5%. The Chinese economy has strong resilience and great potential, and the fundamentals of long-term performance have not changed. We have confidence that the economy will be back to normal soon and achieve reasonable growth rate. As the world's second largest consumer market

China's Belt and Road initiative is another opportunity, which gives priority to policy synergy, facility connectivity, trade facilitation, financial integration and people-to-people contact and is in line with the development needs of all countries.

The Global Development Initiative proposed by China is also an opportunity. Aimed to accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, China will carry out practical cooperation with developing countries in eight areas, including poverty reduction, food security, Covid-19 and vaccines, financing for development, climate change and green development. It is highly attuned to the concerns of Caribbean countries including Guyana. Under this initiative, we have established the China-Caribbean Development Center, and the training course on fish cage culture held in June for Guyana was the first bilateral training program of the Center.

China is willing to work together with Guyana to seize the historical opportunity to strengthen the coordination of development strategies, and to bring the fruits of cooperation to our two peoples.

I am very encouraged to see that a lot of Guyanese friends care about, support and safeguard China-Guyana

relations. At the same time, I feel some people still have doubts and scepticism of China-Guyana cooperation. I'd like to have open and candid exchanges with you on some issues.

The first is about debt. In economics, debt is a neutral concept, and the debt problem is essentially a development problem. Developing countries often face three major bottlenecks: infrastructure, technology and finance. Infrastructure is the precondition for sustainable development and requires a large amount of capital. From the just concluded Forty-Third Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, we can see that Caribbean countries are in urgent need for development finance. The "Financing Gap" is a reality, but the "Debt Trap" is a concept that has been maliciously fabricated to discredit the Belt and Road Initiative.

China has long provided financing support to many other developing countries. First of all, China provided loans at the request of friendly countries according to their own development needs, and never imposed on others. Secondly, the terms of the loans are agreed upon through friendly negotiations. Thirdly, China attaches great importance to the sustainability of the projects and the borrowing countries. No bank is willing to lend to projects of poor quality, because such projects will certainly not recover their loans. Banks of China are no exception. Before providing loans, banks will request loan applicants to provide adequate feasibility studies and ask a third-party to review the studies to ensure the sustainability of the projects. If China creates "debt trap" in developing countries, the first country to jump into it would be China itself.

To date, no single country along the Belt and Road has endorsed the "debt trap" claim. I noticed that in local media there's also reports about Sri Lanka. In fact, many studies have been done and found that so called "debt trap" in Sri Lanka is a false story. When we see the composition of Sri Lanka's debt, it is the commercial creditors of Western countries and multilateral financial institutions that hold the big share. China will continue to work with other countries and agencies to play a positive role in helping Sri Lanka to overcome the current difficulties. In fact, after the outbreak of the pandemic, China has made great efforts in implementing the G20 debt relief initiative.

The second is about diversification of international partners in Guyana. As I said at the 50th Anniversary Ceremony of Diplomatic Relations between China and Guyana, China is happy to see the diversification of Guyana's international partners. From our own experience, during the past 40 years since we implement opening-up policy, we attached great importance to making good use of the capital, technology, equipment and management experience from a number of international partners such as the United States, Japan, Europe and Russia. Therefore, we fully understand that Guyana's development also needs partners from all over the world. It's good for Guyana that all these partners make contributions to Guyana's development with their respective advantages. The key is implementation and action. China-Guyana cooperation is an open cooperation. We are open to trilateral even multilateral cooperation. We believe that Guyana is a hotbed of investment and a place for fair play. We have confidence in Chinese enterprises that operate with integrity and strength, while opposing all smear or discrimination.



Ambassador GUO Haiyan is the Chinese Ambassador to Guyana. She is a career diplomat and University graduate.

Renewable Energy and Climate Change

If you don't think Climate Change is real, or believe that it is real but has nothing to do with human industrialization, you might as well stop reading now. There is a vast amount of evidence, completely incontrovertible, that shows Climate Change is real and that it is modern

calls itself a "Green PR agency" has some of the world's most ultra-green clients; ExxonMobil, Chevron, Saudi Aramco, Shell etc. This firm is in charge of PR for COP 27. Why does the UN even need corporate sponsorship for Climate conferences? This could make excellent material

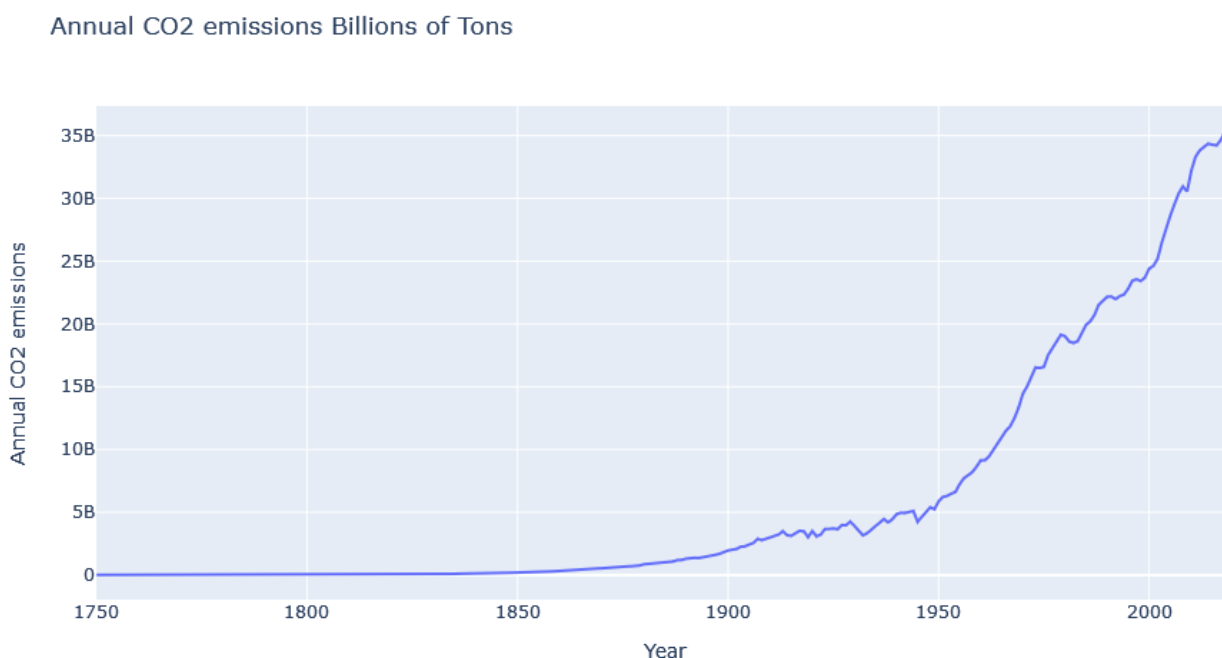


Figure 1: Billions of tons of CO2 around the world from 1750 (Beginning of Industrial Revolution in the US and Europe) to 2020. **Source:** <https://ourworldindata.org/energy/>

human civilization, specifically industrialization that is the main culprit.

The challenge that scientists and some governments have been trying to answer since the World Climate Conference in 1990 is how to reverse or at the very least mitigate human effect on the climate.

The Conference of the Parties part 27 (COP 27) which seeks to tackle these questions has come and gone. What has happened since the COP1 in 1995 to now can best be classified as a farce or at worst a sick joke. It's probably the latter. As evidence we have the world's largest plastic polluter (Coca-Cola) as COP27's largest sponsor. Hill+Knowlton Strategies a leading PR firm that

for a satirical piece of comedy.

As we can see from the chart above the trend has been up and up for CO2 emission. We can also see that since the COP1 in 1995 the rate of change of emissions has been among the highest in the period covered. It is becoming ever more apparent that all these COP conferences have been nothing but a Figure 1: Billions of tons of CO2 around the world from 1750 (Beginning of Industrial Revolution in the US and Europe) to 2020. Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/energy/good> excuse for fun trips by government officials. The COPs have probably had the grand total same effect as hamsters on

a wheel, busy spinning but going nowhere. Those governments, scientists, celebrities and general public who have taken the issue of Climate Change seriously have inundated the public discourse espousing the use “Greener” sources of energy.

Many businesses have latched on to this need by becoming pioneers in “green technology”. But is it possible? Can “green” sources of power generation really solve the needs of our present civilization? Or are we more in need of an actual cultural overhaul? You can be the judge.

Some Modern Human thirst for Energy The modern human need for energy is by far the greatest contributor to the global emissions responsible for climate change. Life as we know it, the very many technologies that we enjoy are solely based on an energy revolution. Without this energy revolution our standard of living would not be much different from that of our ancestors some 300 years ago. If one looks at human standard of living before the industrial revolution we would see that in general it remained mostly unchanged. It is the abundance and exploitation of fossil fuels that have allowed for the invention and mass use of motor vehicles, airplanes, computers, electricity, entertainment, etc. It has literally powered all human scientific endeavour, social development and leisure.

for Climate Change. It has been shown that energy in it’s various uses is responsible for 73% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The emissions from Energy covers electricity, transport, and heating. These include uses such as residential and commercial buildings that are directly used by humans as well as energy required for the manufacturing of all our food stuff, modern appliances, industrial tools etc.

Since the industrial revolution beginning in the late 18th century and accelerated in the 20th century the human thirst for energy can only be described as rapacious. Below we see how that demand for energy has been met.

Two very striking features can be seen here. The obvious one being the massive increase since the 1950s. Equally obvious is that this demand has been mainly met by fossil fuels; Natural Gas, Coal and Oil. We can also see that while renewables have contributed, their contribution has been dwarfed by that of fossil fuels. What is less obvious but very striking, is that the contribution from renewables is just a little bit more than traditional biomass. If we remove hydro we see that traditional biomass contributes, now and in the past, more than solar, biofuels, wind and other renewables combined. This is a pretty damning observation. It shows that despite all the talk about innovation and technology

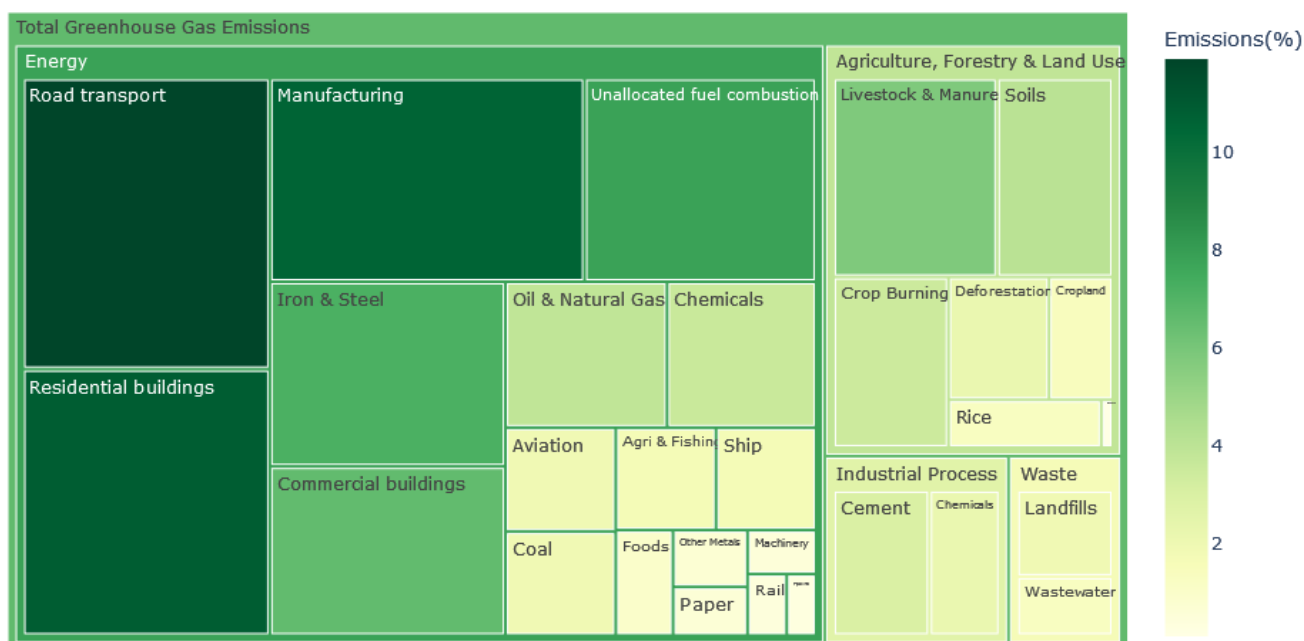


Figure 2: Greenhouse gas emissions by sector. Energy = 73%, Agriculture, Forestry & Land Use = 18.4%, Waste = 3.2%, Direct Industrial Processes = 5.2%. Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

While the massive exploitation of energy has had some obvious benefits it has also been primarily responsible

advances of renewables their contribution wouldn’t even meet the requirements of early industrial period.

We can observe the same thing with nuclear. At the same time hydro just barely surpasses the demands from the 1850s. Without fossil fuels human lifestyle would be nearly unchanged.

We briefly explored what is causing Climate Change but we should also look at the 'who'. Who have been the biggest beneficiaries of the energy revolution and therefore who carry the biggest responsibility for the precarious position in which the planet finds itself?

It is clear that the largest consumers of and also the largest beneficiaries of energy are people in North America, Europe and Australia. This is important as it is one of the major sticking points in climate negotiations. While people in the Asia, South America, Africa feel the brunt of the effects of climate change they are also being asked to make some of the biggest sacrifices while

massive flooding in Asia. If the trends continue, as it most certainly seems to, then Asia will soon also face massive fresh water shortages leading to droughts. There is talk of reparations for the global south. But can these reparations make the rain fall more in drought affected regions? Will reparations raise low-lying regions and protect island nations from shrinking?

Furthermore countries that are demanding reparations should be wary that the main culprits of Climate Change will simply handover an amount and then proceed to continue polluting.

There isn't even agreement on how much is actually owed. The biggest polluters have proposed reparations of \$100B. But this is a woefully small number. The true number is somewhere between \$125Trillion to \$250Trillion. Does anyone see the biggest beneficiaries

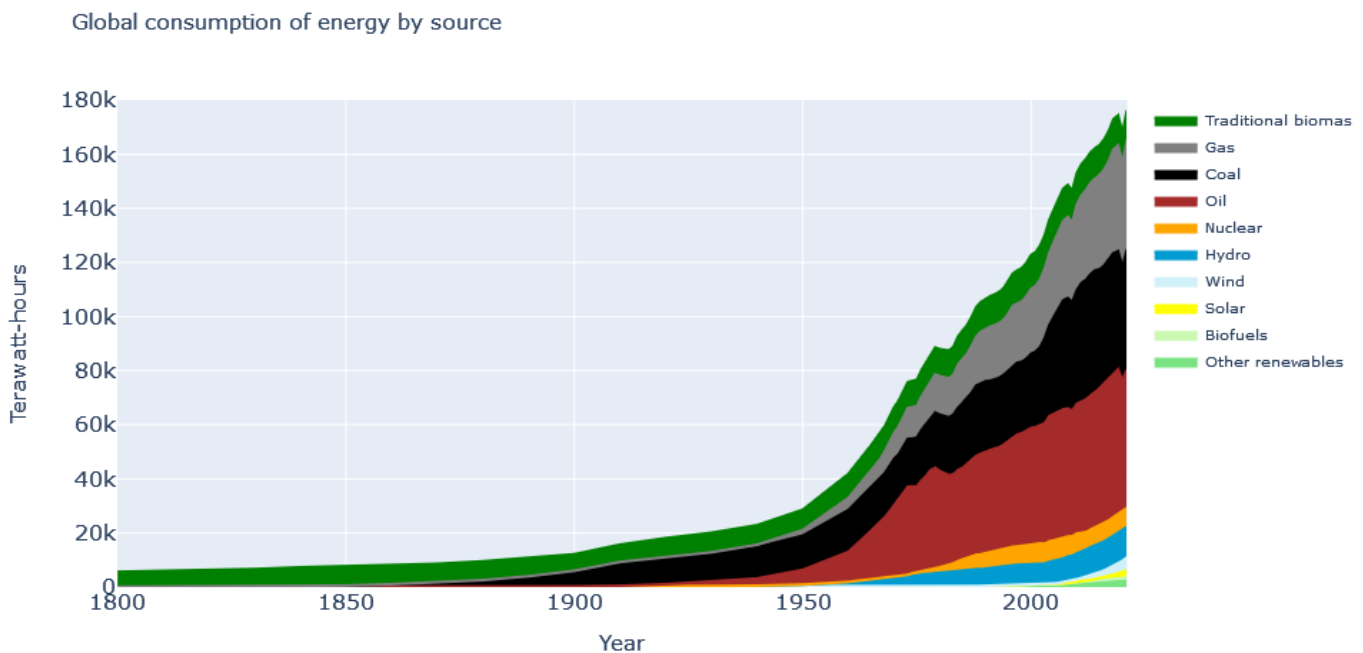


Figure 3: Global consumption of energy broken down by the source that meets the demand.
Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/energy/>

lifestyles in North America and Europe are supposed to be maintained and should even be improved. There is a lot of talk about what is fair and who needs to sacrifice, but the wrong people are being asked to make the sacrifices.

It is becoming apparent that the COPs will not achieve any of the targets set to limit average global temperature increases below 1.5°C. Instead a new target of below 2°C is being set as average global temperatures are expected to be above 2.8°C. Droughts are occurring in Africa while the melting of Himalayan glaciers is causing

of fossil fuel usage hand over \$125T - \$250T in goods, technologies and services? The "social cost of carbon" is \$50-\$100/ton CO₂ (based on the numbers from Joseph Stiglitz, Nicholas Stern et al.). Let us just look at the US, its social carbon cost for 2020 is \$0.25T - \$0.5T. Yet the biggest polluters are haggling the most affected for a payment of \$100B. It's just ridiculous.

The biggest abusers of the climate aren't too inclined to help anyone. What do you think Europe and North America will do as Climate Change fuel resource wars, droughts and famine. Will Europe, and North America

open its doors and let climate refugees in? Based on what we have seen with the rise of right wing political parties, including actual fascists, the democratic process says “no”. Even left wing parties are being affected. The Labour party in the UK is calling for increased deportations and limiting immigration. The vaunted Swedes are turning their collective back on immigration with the former Left-wing government, now in opposition, supporting the new Right-wing government’s harsher immigration policies. In France a parliamentarian of the fascist Rassemblement National, the second largest party in France, told a parliamentarian of Congolese origin to “go back to Africa.” The short answer is “No, these people aren’t inclined to help.”

Will renewable technologies save the day? All the rage of the past few COPs has been around Net-Zero. You will

them, that will capture carbon emitted by everything described in Figure 2. Now look at Figure 3. Do you really think that renewables can replace even a quarter of our current dependence on coal, gas and crude?

If there is a technology or technologies that will allow renewables to replace fossil fuels it has yet to be invented. Carbon capture technology has been touted for decades but are not on the horizon, plus Carbon capture technology sounds more like an oxymoron. It is accepted that no single renewable technology will cause a dent in the fossil fuel usage. But can even a mix of technologies satisfy the needs of an ever increasing human population? Let us ignore the economics of replacing fossil fuel. Let us assume that the governments of the world will devise a new economic system that replaces financial profits with something else. Maybe

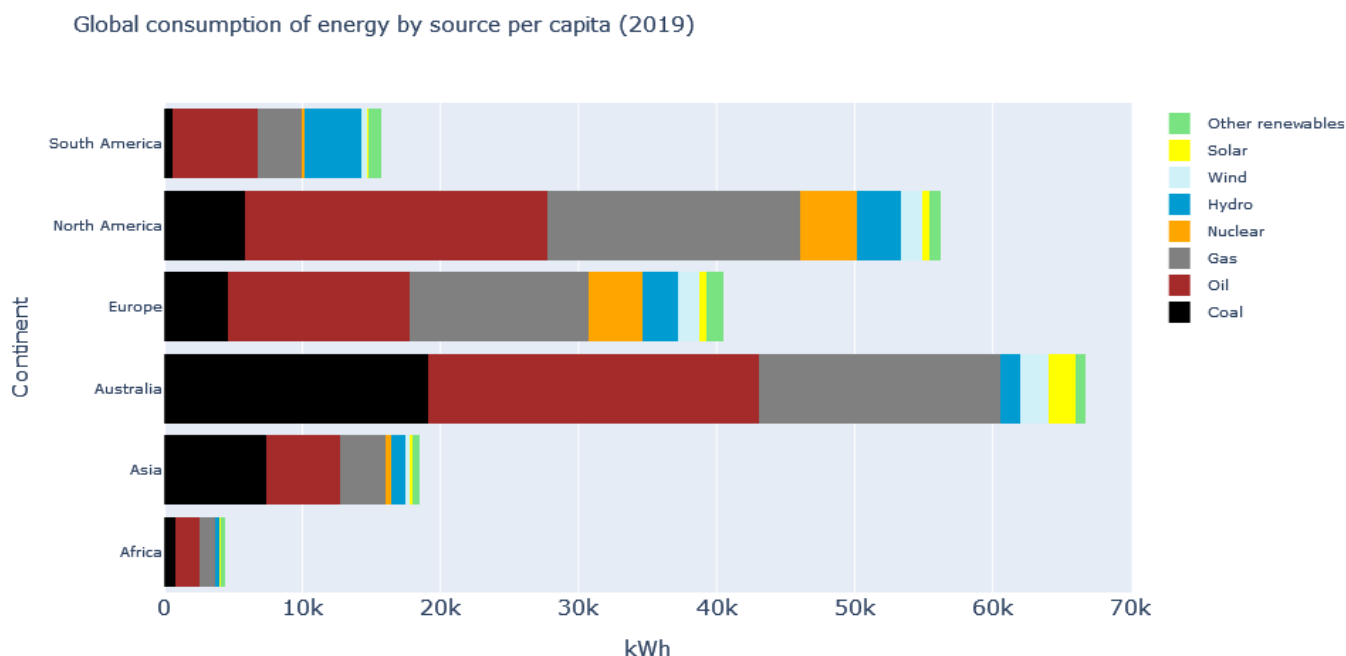


Figure 4: The people of Australia, North America and Europe have been the largest users of energy. Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/energy/>

often find government papers, politicians and even the fossil fuel industry spokespeople talk about Net-Zero. They all set a target of achieving Net-Zero between 2030 to 2050. The earlier date of 2030 is not going to happen. The more pragmatic governments have pushed their deadline even further to 2070 or even further yet. Net-Zero states that an economy will emit no greenhouse gases by some appointed date. This can only be done in one of two ways. We can either severely reduce our use of fossil fuels. Or invent some technology, while ignoring the existence of forests so that we can continue to exploit

profits by how many benefits the environment would gain from whatever activities. Let us just focus on the physical constraints for renewables.

The issue with renewables especially solar, wind and wave is their energy density or lack thereof, their variability, and the expense or inability to store excess energy for future use. Let’s put some perspective on this. If you have 1 gallon of gasoline it can provide 33.7kWh of electricity. To get the same from 1m2 solar panels operating at 100% efficiency at the equator at noon we would require about 1600 such solar panels. The largest

solar farm in the world, Bhadla Solar Park in Rajasthan, India has 10 million installed solar panels.

Additionally the material requirement to build renewables should be taken into account. These material requirements including their mining, manufacturing and production and transportation to installation location cannot be ignored either. In Figure 5. we see that for equally sized power generation facilities solar, wind, geothermal and hydro all have higher material requirements than those from fossil fuels.

Of course these are mitigated over time as the emissions for electricity production is close to 0, ignoring operation and maintenance.

The material requirements are also not the only source of concern for environmentalists. Hydro, wind, solar

Amazon rainforest covers a large area Lula won 4 states while Bolsonaro won 5. It wouldn't be too difficult to see that had there been no pandemic and the subsequently incurred economic woes, Bolsonaro would still be president. That being said Bolsonaro's party gained 66 additional seats in the lower house and 11 in the senate. Lula will have a massive challenge getting much of his environmental policies passed before the next elections and there possible undoing.

In Guyana the shift is quite ironic. Guyana has gone from a policy of championing environmental conservation and mitigating the effects of Climate Change to becoming one of the largest crude oil producers on the planet. None of the major political parties disagree with the change. Their only argument is who would be the best

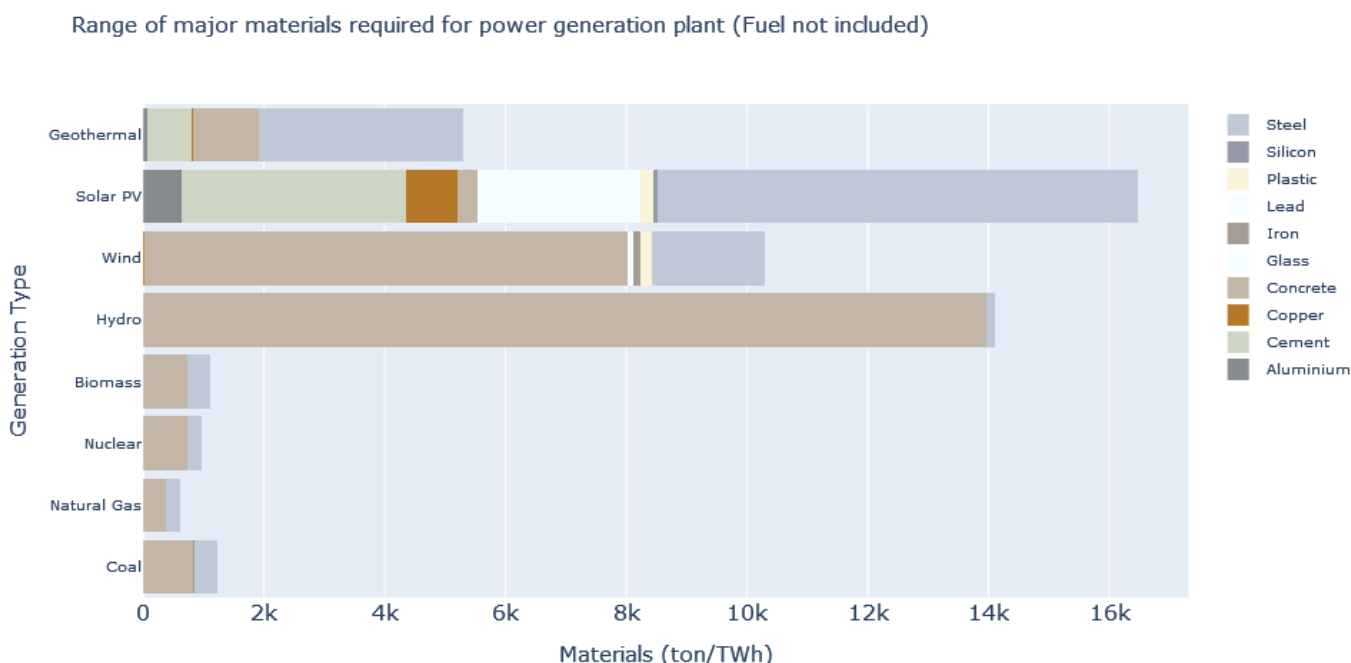


Figure 5: Major materials required for different plant generator types. Fuel is not included. Cannot use this as a correlation with dollar cost of building and operating. Source: US DOE – Quadrennial Technology Review (2015): An Assessment of Energy Technologies and Research Opportunities.

and geothermal require large areas to be cleared and the destruction of fauna and flora. For example the US Federal wildlife investigator visited Ivanpah solar plant in the Mojave desert in 2014 and recorded one bird being burnt and fell every two minutes. The plant also had to “resettle” turtles and other animals from the area.

A Cultural Overhaul is Needed Society needs a massive cultural overhaul. Just as examples look at Brazil, Guyana and the US. In Brazil, Bolsonaro, the climate denying, Amazon clearing, ex-president lost the elections to Lula by just 1.8% of the votes. In Brazilian states where the

steward for this wealth. One will be hard pressed to find anyone who disagrees with them too. It is certain that a majority of Guyanese want that crude to be exploited so that everyone, especially the most vulnerable, can benefit from an improved standard of living.

In the US we see lack of self awareness. A 2021 survey by the University of Yale showed that 72% of Americans believed Climate Change is real. The majority, 57%, also believed that Climate Change is caused by human activity. However, the Bureau of Transportation shows that of the 15M vehicles bought or leased in 2021 78%

are light trucks (SUVs). This was a 5% increase from 2020 while the purchases of passenger car was down by 2.6%. So while Americans believe Climate Change is real its not really something they consider worthy of changing their lifestyle. After all why shouldn't one have the 'freedom' to use a 3000kg piece of machinery to transport an 80kg person a few kilometres. Capitalist efficiency.

So what is the cultural overhaul that is needed? Emmanuel Macron the President of France put it most succinctly, "la fin de l'abondance" (the end of abundance). Many people will scoff at this idea. But one just has to think about it a little. Human population will continue to increase, if we want to keep the status quo then only fossil fuels have the energy density to meet those requirements, really examine Figure 3, and therefore even more will be required.

What should be obvious is that fossil fuels can only be replaced if we find a new source of fuel that is at least as energy dense. Of course scientists are working on this. With regards to electricity there already exists an answer, nuclear fission. However, many people don't like the idea because of the exaggerated effects of the public perception of Chernobyl and Fukushima. The Germans, foolishly, shut down all their nuclear plants after Fukushima. Scientist are also hard at work at harnessing nuclear fusion. Perhaps more brain power and finance should be directed at these efforts. Whatever technology may be developed in the future that can eventually replace fossil fuel we, as a collective need to act now, or we can cross our fingers and hope scientists save the planet. The onus is on political parties to work together. They will need to convince the people that the Climate Crisis is real and the time to act is now. For without political consensus then democracy will simply choose the party that is more appealing and they will turn to blaming the others. Societies throughout the planet, but especially those that have benefited the most from fossil fuels, will have to decouple from fossil fuels. This will inevitably mean getting "poorer", but what is the point of driving your SUV for a road trip if the forest around you is burning.

Conclusion

I will conclude by quoting the words of Colombian President Gustavo Petro at COP27:

The policy to overcome the climate crisis is nothing more than stopping the consumption of oil, gas and coal. The global conferences of governments must put politics in command to generate a global plan to disconnect hydrocarbons immediately.

Decarbonization is a real and profound change in the economic system that dominates.

The mobilization of humanity will correct the course and not the agreement of technocrats influenced by the interests of the coal and oil companies. The market is not the principal mechanism to prevent the climate crisis.



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Editor's Note:

The following is a speech delivered by Dr. K.J. Srinivasa at a symposium at the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre on the occasion of 75 years of India's Independence

75 years of India's Independence

His Excellency Donald Ramotar, Hon'ble Clement Rohee, Ms. Indranie Chandarpal, distinguished invitees, Guyana Peace council members, friends of India, ladies and gentlemen, members of the media, friends all.

Best wishes to all of you and those who love India and democracy from all over the world on the occasion of the Amrit Mahotsav of freedom, the 75th Independence Day.

It is a matter of honor and privilege to be part of this program today to commemorate India's 75 years of independence in Guyana. This marks the day when we had freed ourselves from the shackles of colonial rulers and decided to reshape our destiny. As all of us celebrate the anniversary of that day, we bow to all those men and women who made enormous sacrifices to make it possible for us to live in a free India.

It is a cause of celebration not only for all of us but also for every advocate of democracy around the world. When India won independence, there were many international leaders and experts who were skeptical about the success of democratic form of government in India. They had their reasons to be doubtful. In those days, democracy was limited to economically advanced

nations. India, after so many years of exploitation at the hands of foreign rulers, was marked by poverty and illiteracy. But we Indians proved the skeptics wrong. Democracy not only grew roots in this soil, it was enriched too.

In most other well-established democracies, women had to wage long-drawn struggles to get the right to vote. But India adopted universal adult franchise right since the beginning of the Republic. Thus, the makers of modern India enabled each and every adult citizen to participate in the collective process of nation-building. Thus, India can be credited to have helped the world discover the true potential of democracy.

I believe this was not a coincidence. At the beginning of civilisation, saints and seers of this land had developed a vision of humanity that was defined by equality of all; indeed, oneness of all. The great Freedom Struggle and its leaders like Mahatma Gandhi re-discovered our ancient values for modern times. Then, it is no wonder our democracy has Indian characteristics. Gandhiji advocated decentralisation and power to the people.

For 75 weeks now, the nation has been commemorating these noble ideals that won us freedom. In March 2021,



we began the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' with the re-enactment of the Dandi March. This way, our celebrations began with a tribute to that watershed event which had put our struggle on the world map. This festival is dedicated to the people of India. Based on the success achieved by the people, the resolve to build 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' is also a part of this Mahotsav. Citizens from all age-groups have keenly participated in a series of events held across the country. This grand festival is going ahead with the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan'. The Indian tricolours are fluttering in every nook and corner of the country. Great martyrs would have been thrilled to see the spirit of the Independence Movement coming alive again on such a massive scale.

Our glorious Freedom Struggle was waged bravely across the vast territory of our country. Many great freedom fighters did their duty and passed on the torch of awakening leaving little trace of their heroic deeds. Forgotten for long were many heroes and their struggles, especially among the peasant and tribal populations. The government's decision last year to observe 15th November as 'Janajatiya Gaurav Divas' is welcome because our tribal heroes are not merely local or regional icons but they inspire the entire nation.

For a nation, particularly an ancient one such as India, the passage of 75 years is merely a blink of an eye. But for us as individuals, it is a lifetime. Senior citizens among us have witnessed a dramatic change in their lifetime. They have seen how, after Independence, all the generations have toiled hard; how we met great challenges and how we have taken charge of our destiny. The lessons learnt in the process will prove useful as we move towards the next milestone in the journey of the nation – the Amrit Kaal, the 25 years to the celebration of the centenary of our Independence.

By the year 2047, we will have fully realised the dreams of our freedom fighters. We will have given a concrete shape to the vision of those who, led by Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, drafted the Constitution. We are already on course to build an Atmanirbhar Bharat, an India that would have realised its true potential.

The world has seen a new India rising in recent years, more so after the outbreak of COVID-19. Our response to the pandemic has been appreciated everywhere. We launched the biggest vaccination drive in human history with vaccines manufactured in the country itself. Last month we crossed the 200-crore mark in cumulative vaccine coverage. In combating the pandemic, our achievements have been better than those of many developed countries. For this feat, we are grateful to our scientists, doctors, nurses, paramedics and the staff associated with vaccination.

The pandemic has uprooted lives and also economies in the entire world. When the world has been battling the economic consequences of the great crisis, India got its act together and is now moving forward. India is among the fastest growing major economies in the

world. India's start-up eco-system ranks high in the world. The success of start-ups in our country, especially the growing number of unicorns is a shining example of our industrial progress. The government and policy-makers deserve credit for beating the global trend and helping the economy flourish. During the last few years, unprecedented progress has been made in the development of physical and digital infrastructure. Through the Pradhan Mantri Gati-Shakti Yojana, all the modes of connectivity based on water, land, air etc. are being integrated in the whole country to enable seamless transportation across the country. For the vibrancy of growth visible in our country, credit must also be given to workers and farmers whose hard work has made it possible and entrepreneurs whose business acumen has created wealth. What is all the more heartening is that the growth is becoming more inclusive and regional disparities too are reducing.

But this is only the beginning. A series of economic reforms and policy initiatives have been preparing the ground for a long term. Digital India, for example, is creating the bedrock of a knowledge economy. The 'National Education Policy' is aimed at preparing the future generation for the next stage of industrial revolution while also reconnecting it with our heritage. Economic success is leading to an ease in living too. Economic reforms are rightly accompanied by innovative welfare initiatives. A home of one's own is no longer a dream for the poor, but a reality for more and more people, thanks to the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana'. Similarly, under the 'Jal Jeevan Mission', tap water connection is being provided to every household since the launch of the 'Har Ghar Jal' scheme.

The aim of these and many other similar efforts is to provide basic amenities to all, particularly the poor. The keyword for India today is compassion; for the downtrodden, for the needy and for those on the margins. Some of our national values have been incorporated in our Constitution as the Fundamental Duties of the citizens. I appeal to every citizen to know about their Fundamental Duties and follow them in letter and spirit so that our nation reaches new heights. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav: Marking the 75th year of India's Independence, the Government of India started an initiative, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to celebrate. Ever since India achieved its Independence, the country has been on a spree of doing remarkable things in every field.

Here are some of the most significant milestones that India achieved after the 75 years of Independence:

Green Revolution: The Swaminathan wave

In India, the Green Revolution was spearheaded by MS Swaminathan. It resulted in a great increase in the production of food grains, especially wheat and rice, following the introduction of high-yielding variety seeds around mid-20th century.

The Green Revolution, spreading over the period from 1967-68 to 1977-78, changed India's status from a food-deficient country to one of the world's leading agricultural nations.

White Revolution: Verghese Kurien too had a dream

Verghese Kurien, a social entrepreneur also referred to as the 'Father of the White Revolution' in India, created the greatest self-sustaining business and the largest rural employment sector in the country. Dairy farming now accounts for a third of all rural revenue.

The author of Kurien's memoir, I too had a Dream (2005), explains how farmers were able to transport pasteurised milk from Anand in Gujarat to the Bombay Milk Scheme via railways. To form Anand Milk Producers Union Limited (AMPUL), later known as Amul, Kurien joined forces with Tribhuvandas Patel, founder of the Kaira dairy movement.

Space and Technology: Defying the gravity

In 1969, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) was founded, giving space research a new lease of life. Aryabhata, India's first space satellite, was launched in 1975. In 1986, Rakesh Sharma became the first Indian to go into space, and the Make-in-India initiative produces the best indigenous technology-based launch vehicles today. India sent 10 satellites into orbit with PSLV-C9 in 2008, setting a new world record. As a result of Mangalyaan, India became the first country to reach Mars on our first attempt after successfully launching satellites such as Chandrayaan to the moon.

Fighting the Pandemic: Record 200 crore vaccines in 18 months

India's cumulative Covid-19 vaccination coverage crossed 200 crore, or 2 billion mark, on July 17, 2022 in just 18 months since vaccination began in the country on January 16, 2021.

Booming Startup Ecosystem: Touching the 100 unicorns mark

With Open, a fintech startup that has a valuation of over \$1 billion, India's startup ecosystem has achieved a new milestone of 100 unicorns. Open's entry into the coveted unicorn club comes at a time when Indian startups are booming, with the acceleration in fundraising and capital. India has been declared the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world after the US and China, according to the Economic Survey 2021-2022, released by the Ministry of Finance.

Silver Screen Success: Making a mark at the Oscars

Here are the legends of the Indian film industry who achieved the Oscar awards:

Bhanu Athaiya - Best Costume Design

Satyajit Ray - Honorary Award

Resul Pookutty - Best Sound Mixing

A R Rahman - Best Original Score and Best Original Song

Gulzar- Best Original Song

Indian Railways: On an acceleration mode

Nationalised in 1951, the Indian Railways is today the largest rail network in Asia and the world's second-largest network operated under single management.

State Bank of India: The making of the largest lender

In 1955, the State Bank of India was incorporated. In 1955, the Imperial Bank of India was nationalised, with the Reserve Bank of India taking a 60 percent stake in it, and the name was changed to State Bank of India.

A Nuclear-Armed Nation: Stunning the world with Pokhran-II

Twenty-four years after Pokhran-I, the Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) conducted five further nuclear tests at Pokhran on May 11 and 13, 1998. Chief scientific adviser, DRDO Director, and Deputy Director, Dept. of Atomic Energy (DAE), Dr R Chidambaram, coordinated this test planning with Dr Abdul Kalam, chief scientific advisor, and DRDO director.



Droupadi Murmu: India gets its first tribal president

The 15th President of India will be Droupadi Murmu, who will take oath on July 25, 2022. The joint opposition's nominee for the top constitutional job was Yashwant Sinha. Rairangpur in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha is home to tribal leader Murmu.

There is an old saying that India is a new country but an ancient civilization, and this civilization has seen tremendous changes throughout its history.

From being an education hub of the world in ancient times to becoming the IT hub of the world today, the Indian landscape has come a long way. Taking 15th August 1947 as our frame of reference, we find that there are several fields like Science and Technology, economy, and human development where India has shown remarkable progress. However, some fields like health and education still seem to be taken care of. Let us look at these aspects of Indian development individually.

The Landscape of Science and Technology

When the Britishers left India, they left behind a broken, needy, underdeveloped, and economically unstable country. After independence, India prioritized scientific research in its first five-year plan. It paved the way for prestigious scientific institutes like IITs and IISC. After just three years of independence, the Indian Institute of Technology has established in 1950. These institutions promoted research in India with the aid of foreign institutions. From launching its first satellite Aryabhata in 1975 to being the first country to reach the orbit of Mars, India has taken confident strides in the field of space research technology, thanks to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). We can proudly state that India is standing at par with countries like USA and China, same goes with the field of biotechnology also where India is producing vaccines for the entire world. The success of UPI is also a case study for the world with 9.36 billion transactions worth Rs. 10.2 trillion in Q1 of 2022 only.

Economic Landscape

India faced several issues following its independence, including illiteracy, corruption, poverty, gender discrimination, untouchability, regionalism, and communalism. Numerous issues have acted as major roadblocks to India's economic development. When India declared its independence in 1947, its GDP was mere 2.7 lakh crore accounting for 3% of the world GDP. In 1965, the Green Revolution was started in India by M. S. Swaminathan, the father of the Green Revolution. During the Green Revolution, there was a significant increase in the crop area planted with high-yielding wheat and rice types. From 1978–1979, the Green Revolution led to a record grain output of 131 million tonnes. India was then recognized as one of the top agricultural producers in the world. With the construction of linked facilities like factories and hydroelectric power plants, a large number of jobs for industrial workers were also generated in addition to agricultural workers.

Today India is the 5th largest economy in the world with 147 lakh crore GDP, accounting for 8% of global GDP. In recent years, India has seen a whopping rise of 15,400% in the number of startups, which rose from 471 in 2016 to 72,993 as of June 2022. This phenomenal rise in startups has also produced millions of new jobs in the country.

Infrastructure

The India of today is different from India at the time of freedom. In the 75 years of independence, Indian Infrastructure has improved drastically. The overall length of the Indian road network has grown from 0.399 million km in 1951 to 4.70 million km as of 2015, which makes it the third largest roadway network in the world. Additionally, India's national highway system now spans 1, 37, 625 kilometres in 2021, up from 24,000 km (1947–

1969).

After over 70 years of independence, India has risen to become Asia's third-largest electricity generator. It increased its ability to produce energy from 1,362 MW in 1947 to 3, 95, 600 MW. In India, the total amount of power produced increased from 301 billion units in 1992–1993 to 400990.23 MW in 2022. The Indian government has succeeded in lighting up all 18,452 villages by April 28, 2018, as opposed to just 3061 in 1950, when it comes to rural electrification.

The Landscape of Human Development

In 1947 India had a population of 340 million with a literacy rate of just 12%, today it has a population of nearly 1.4 billion and a literacy rate of 74.04%. The average life expectancy has also risen from 32 years to 70 years in 2022.

The Landscape of Education and Health

In 1947, India had a population of 340 million with a literacy rate of just 12%, today it has a population of nearly 1.4 billion and a literacy rate of 74.04%. The average life expectancy has also risen from 32 years to 70 years in 2022. Though India has shown remarkable progress in terms of literacy rate, the quality of higher education is still a cause of major concern. There is not a single Indian University or Institute in the top 100 QS World University Ranking. With the largest youth population in the world, India can achieve wonders if its youth get equipped with proper skills and education. The health, sector is also worrisome. The doctor-to-patient ratio is merely 0.7 doctors per 1000 people as compared to the WHO average of 2.5 doctors per 1000 people. A recent study shows that 65% of medical expenses in India are paid out of pocket by patients and the reason is that they are left with no alternative but to access private healthcare because of poor facilities in public hospitals.

The Political Landscape

Jawaharlal Nehru was appointed as India's first prime minister in 1947, following the end of British rule. He promoted a socialist-economic system for India, including five-year plans and the nationalization of large sectors of the economy like mining, steel, aviation, and other heavy industries. Village common areas were taken, and a massive public works and industrialization drive led to the building of important dams, roads, irrigation canals, thermal and hydroelectric power plants, and many other things. India's population surpassed 500 million in the early 1970s, but the “Green Revolution” significantly increased agricultural productivity, which helped to end the country's long-standing food problem.

From 1991 to 1996, India's economy grew quickly as a result of the policies implemented by the late Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao and his Finance Minister at the time, Dr Manmohan Singh. Poverty had decreased to about 22%, while unemployment has been continuously

reducing. Growth in the gross domestic product exceeded 7%.

India's first female Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, held office from 1966 until 1977 for three consecutive terms before serving a fourth term (1980–84). India elected Pratibha Patil as its first female president in 2007.

India's economy has expanded significantly in the twenty-first century. Under the Prime ministership of Narendra Modi (BJP), many significant changes have taken place like the scraping of Section 370, strengthening the Defence systems, creating a startup-friendly environment and much more. To expand infrastructure and manufacturing, the Modi administration launched several programs and campaigns, including “Make in India”, “Digital India”, and the “Swachh Bharat project.”

The Legal Landscape

Before independence, the Privy Council was the highest appellate authority in India. This Council was abolished as the first action following independence. The abolition of the Privy Council Jurisdiction Act was passed by the Indian Constituent Assembly in 1949 to eliminate the Privy Council's authority over appeals from India and to make provisions for outstanding appeals. It was B. R. Ambedkar's sharp legal intellect to draft a constitution for the newly sovereign country. In all executive, legislative, and judicial matters in the nation, the Constitution of India serves as the supreme law. The Indian legal system has developed into a key component of the largest democracy in the world and a pivotal front in the fight to protect constitutional rights for all citizens. Since it was first adopted in 1950, the Indian Constitution has had 105 modifications as of October 2021. The Indian Constitution is divided into 22 parts with 395 articles. Later, through various changes, further articles were added and amendments were made. According to the online repository maintained by the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Law and Justice of India as of July 2022, there are around 839 Central laws. The Indian legal system has a promising and forward-thinking future, and in the twenty-first century, young, first-generation lawyers are entering the field after graduating from the best law schools.

The Landscape of the Defence Sector

The Indian military ranked 4 of 142 out of the countries considered for the annual GFP review. From being defeated by the Chinese army in 1962 to becoming one of the largest defence systems in the world, India has surely learnt from its past errors. One of the reasons the Indian defence system has been able to attain its present reputation is the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) which was established in 1958. Since its founding, it has created many significant programs and critical technologies, including missile systems, small and big armaments, artillery systems, electronic warfare (EW) systems, tanks, and armoured

vehicles. India began working on nuclear energy in the late 1950s and had indigenous nuclear power stations by the 1970s. India had also begun developing nuclear weapons and producing fissile material concurrently, which allowed for the purportedly harmless nuclear explosion in Pokhran in 1971. The Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP), under the direction of APJ Abdul Kalam and with the support of the Ordnance Factories, was established in 1983. In 1989, the longer-range Agni was independently designed and tested. Later, India and Russia collaborated to design and produce the Brahmos supersonic cruise missile. India currently leads several other nations in the production of defences. India is one of about a dozen nations that have built and produced their fighter jets, helicopters, submarines, missiles, and aircraft carriers.

Analyzing the different landscapes of India we find that we have come a long way in our journey but still, there is a lot to be done if we want to make India a ‘super power’. A lot will depend on our people's willingness to change, ensuring the equal participation of women in the workforce, including marginalized communities in our economic growth, and last but not least is having a liberal and progressive and unbiased mindset.

As we are celebrating “Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav”, the completion of 75 years of independence can be taken as a new opportunity to build an India of our aspirations and make positive contributions to the changing landscape of India.

At the core of the transformation, we have been witnessing in healthcare, education, economy as well as a number of related areas is the stress on good governance. When work is done with the spirit of 'Nation First', it is bound to reflect in every decision and every sector. This is also reflected in India's standing in the world.

India's new-found confidence stems from the spirit of its youth, its farmers, and above all, its women. Gender inequalities are reducing and women are moving ahead, breaking many glass ceilings. Their increasing participation in social and political processes will prove decisive. At the grassroots level, we have more than 14 lakh elected women representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Our daughters are the biggest hope for the nation. Some of them brought laurels for the country at the recently held Commonwealth Games. Of course, India's sportspersons have been making the country proud by their performance in international competitions. A large number of our winners come from underprivileged segments of society. From becoming fighter pilots to space scientists, our daughters are scaling great heights. In celebrating Independence Day, we are celebrating our 'Bharatiyata'. Our country is full of diversity. But, at the same time, we all have something in common. It is this common thread which binds all of us together and inspires us to walk together with the spirit of Ek Bharat,

Shreshtha Bharat.

India is a very beautiful country, also because of its mountains, rivers, lakes and forests and the animals and birds that live in such landscapes. When the environment is facing new challenges, we must remain determined to preserve all that makes India beautiful. Conserving water, soil and bio-diversity is our duty towards our children. Caring for Mother Nature has been part and parcel of Indian culture. With our traditional life style, we Indians can show the way to the rest of the world. Yoga and Ayurveda are India's invaluable gifts to the world. Their popularity is on the rise all over the globe. Our beloved country has given us everything we have in our life. We should pledge to give everything we can for the sake of safety, security, progress and prosperity of our country. Our existence will become meaningful only in building a glorious India.

Environmental security is getting the same importance in the world as national security. Today India is a vibrant voice of environmental security, whether it is biodiversity or land neutrality, climate change or waste recycling, organic farming or biogas, energy conservation or clean energy transition. India's efforts in environment are giving results today. Increase in forest cover, number of national parks, increase in number of tigers and Asiatic lions are a matter of happiness for the countrymen.

Among all these successes one truth needs to be understood. India is not yet energy independent. India today spends more than 12 lakh crore rupees annually for importing energy. For India's progress and to build a self-reliant India, India's energy independence is the need of the hour! Therefore today, India has to make a resolution to make India energy independent before the completion of 100 years of independence and our roadmap is very clear for the same. It should be a gas based economy. There should be a network of CNG & PNG across the country. There should be a target of 20 percent ethanol blending. India is moving ahead with a set goal. India has also made a move towards Electric Mobility and the work on 100% electrification of Railways is also progressing at a fast pace. Indian Railways has set a target of becoming Net Zero Carbon Emitter by 2030. Besides these efforts, the country is also emphasizing on Mission Circular Economy. Our Vehicle Scrap Policy is a great example of the same. Today, India is the only country in the group of G-20 countries, which is moving fast towards achieving its climate goals.

India has set a target of 450 GW of renewable energy by the end of this decade - 450 GW by 2030. Of this, the target of 100 GW has been achieved by India ahead of schedule. These efforts are also instilling confidence in the world. The formation of the International Solar Alliance on the Global State is a great example of the same.

Of every effort being made by India today, the thing that is going to help India with a quantum leap in terms of climate is the field of Green Hydrogen. To achieve the goal of Green Hydrogen, I am announcing the National Hydrogen Mission today with this tricolour as a witness. We have to make India a Global Hub for Green Hydrogen Production and Export in the 'Amrit Kaal'. This will not only help India to make a new progress in the field of energy self-reliance but will also become a new inspiration for Clean Energy Transition all over the world. New opportunities from Green Growth to Green Job are opening up today for our start-ups & youth.

I am not a fortune teller, I believe in action. I have faith in the youth of my country, I trust the sisters of the country, the daughters of the country, the farmers of the country, and the professionals of the country. This 'CAN DO' generation can achieve every goal imaginable.

I believe that in 2047, on the occasion of celebrating 100 years of independence... whoever will be the Prime Minister... whoever will be the Prime Minister after 25 years from today, when he will be unfurling the flag... I say this with confidence today that he or she shall be chronicling those accomplishments in his speech about which the country has taken a vow today... This is my firm belief of victory.

Today whatever I am speaking of in the form of a resolution, whoever hoists the flag after 25 years, shall be speaking of the same in the form of accomplishments. The country would be singing its glory in the form of these accomplishments. Youth of the country of today, shall also see at that time how the country has achieved this glory.

In the 21st century, no obstacle can stop us from fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of India. Our strength is our vitality, our strength is our solidarity, our vitality is the spirit of nation first - always first. This is the time for shared dreams, this is the time for shared resolve, this is the time for shared efforts... and this is the time to move towards victory.



H.E. K.J. Srinivasa is the High Commissioner of India to Guyana. He has worked in different capacities in the Indian Diplomatic Mission and is also a Medical Doctor by qualification.

Editor's Note:

The following is an address by His Excellency, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, at an event to celebrate the life and work of former President, Mrs. Janet Jagan at the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre on October 20, 2022

Janet Jagan: A Phenomenal Woman



Thank you very much. Comrade Indra and I did see Comrade Donald outside there as the door opened, and in keeping with the very rich tradition of the PPP, we have heard a lot this evening. We have very long speakers and Comrade Indra if you would indulge her she would remind you of the beautiful days when the central committee took three days. So that's part of the culture. Every organization has its own culture.

You know, sitting at this table and reflecting on those around me, including Comrade Nokta, you can see a very distinct attribute of the People's Progressive Party. For example, if Comrade Janet was alive today, you would have had the difference between a sitting president and her age being about 60 years. If you look at the head table here we have Comrade Nokta the difference in the oldest person, the youngest person is quite some years, maybe 35 years but why do I say that?

I say that, to say this: the People's Progressive Party has always been a great incubator of national talent and of young people, and the party that has grown in such a massive way because of the ability of the leadership of the party to incubate young persons in the leadership. And that is why you know, Comrade Gail can speak of generations and the value system and the culture of the party that is passed on from generation to generation.

In this audience too we have persons who have served various presidents of the party. For all the time since 1992 we were in government. We have Ambassador Elizabeth

Harper, who was a former Prime Ministerial candidate for us and still serves. We have Nancy, sitting at the back there but these are all persons who made tremendous contributions to the development or the gains of our party. We have Comrade Nokta in the audience here.

We can't really speak of Comrade Janet without recognizing some of these comrades who worked, and sometimes one of the great dangers in identifying someone of great character like Comrade Janet a common challenge is that we sometimes forget that she operated and believed strongly in a team and was part of an organization, and you can have the greatest leaders but if those leaders are not supported by a team and a group of persons who share the vision and aspirations then you can't really be successful. I think we ought to give all these comrades, Comrade Ralph all the comrades who are here, and who served with her a resounding round of applause because it is their work that really helped to shape the successes that Comrade Janet would have achieved. And not only the leadership, but across the country, in the communities and I would want to speak about that in a few moments.

The month of October is a special month for us in the People's Progressive Party. Important events in our party's history took place during this month. We are here today to recall the life and legacy of one of the party's foundational pillars. Mrs. Janet Jagan whose 102nd birth anniversary we observe today.

Janet Jagan's name is etched in our country's history. Her achievements cannot be erased. She was part of the historic struggle for our Independence. She was in the political vanguard in our country's epic campaign for the restoration of democracy, and later for its consolidation after 1992. The toil of the years on the political frontline deprived us of her wisdom and leadership when she had to resign from the presidency because of ill health.

Comrade Gail spoke a bit about the period and how it contributed to her ill health, but we are comforted that her legacy cannot be erased or diminished, not by the passage of time or by the maliciousness of the detractors. Janet Jagan will remain a timeless figure in our party and country's history.

Janet Jagan was a phenomenal woman. She was a bastion in the fight for the restoration of democracy; a champion of the working class and one of Guyana's foremost advocates for women's rights and freedoms.

Our party and government remain wedded in the ideals of Janet Jagan. We are committed to the same causes and objectives to which she devoted her entire life. We have not deviated from her struggle for equality for women, the end of exploitation, and the improvement of the working class.

Women

Janet Jagan was a constant and consistent agitator for women's rights. One year after arriving in Guyana she took up the challenge in support of women's rights. The Political Affairs Committee (PAC) and the Women's Political and Economic Organization (WPEO) which she founded, lent strident and sustained agitation for universal adult suffrage and for women's rights and empowerment. She linked the struggle for universal adult suffrage to the rights of women since at that time the majority of women were disenfranchised from voting because of property considerations. For Janet, the suffrage was not only about the right to vote but also about empowering women politically.

As I have said before, she helped to pilot and lent her support to legislation which secured betterment for women. During her tenure as a Minister with responsibility for health, labour, and housing, she promulgated legislation which reduced the hours of work for store workers – most of whom were women - and extended protections for domestics. Recognizing the difficulties which women and their families faced as a result of landlordism and poor living conditions, she established housing for working class families.

Janet Jagan expanded our understanding of women's rights. She saw women's rights as going beyond something that is enacted in law and the Constitution.

For her, women's rights were not 'paper rights' but must have social and economic dimensions. Speaking in the country's National Assembly in 1981 – a time of retrenchment, food shortages and declining social services in the country – this is what she said:

Women's rights are about full employment; they are about a decent wage; they are about having proper pre- and postnatal care. Women's rights are about not having two pregnant women in one bed in hospital.... Women's rights mean that women do not have to carry buckets of water; and they must not spend 52 hours queuing up for the most essential things like salt and flour and butter and soap. Women's rights, ... mean that you must give a minimum wage to domestic workers and not talk about maximum hours.

This is what Comrade Janet said in 1981 when women's rights and women empowerment was a taboo issue. The issues she identified then are still most relevant in our societies today. The issues she identified then are fundamental to the development of society and the advancement of women.

This is the philosophy which still guides us, our party and our government. We are committed wholeheartedly to ensuring not just the political rights but social and economic rights of women and to especially ensuring that they receive equal treatment.

When you look at most women right movement today, they focus heavily on equality in the working environment, in wages, in conditions of work but Comrade Janet went many steps further when since in 1981 she spoke about social rights, economic rights, political rights, a the justice system that is fair to women, infrastructure, social infrastructure that understand the specific needs of women in 1981. So she was a woman far ahead. She was far ahead of her time.

Working Class

For Janet Jagan politics was praxis. She was no 'book' politician. She believed and insisted on going out into the communities to meet, listen, learn and organize. This experience allowed her to have a first-hand grasp and understanding of the struggles of ordinary people. When she spoke, whether it was in the legislature or at party meetings, she spoke from experience. She understood the reality on the ground and she identified with the suffering of the working class. Her approach to politics was a practical approach.

She was the unfaltering champion of the working class. While her commitment to the working class may have been influenced by her ideological stance, no one can dispute that first and foremost she was a profound humanitarian. Only a few days ago, Francis who was her

ADC and the ADC of Comrade Cheddi, was telling me that when he was building his home she reached out to him and helped him in the construction of his home, and I know many other persons who benefited that way. She was always willing to help ordinary people and to right whatever wrongs they have suffered. She was a fervent defender of the poor and powerless.

Janet Jagan worked relentlessly to improve their well-being. It was through her exertions that the party was able to build the party's support base at the grassroots. She was one of the ablest party organizers. Her ability to connect with the ordinary citizen endeared the public to her and to the PPP.

How do we sum up her life? In paying tribute to her after her death on 28th March 2009, the National Assembly passed a resolution describing her:

...as a pioneer in politics and the struggle for independence and women's rights, being among one of the first women Members of the Legislature in Guyana, the first female to be made Deputy Speaker in the world in 1953, one of the longest-serving Members of the National Assembly, the first female Minister in Guyana, the first female Prime Minister on 17th March, 1997 and the first female President of Guyana on 19th December, 1997.

Those who now maliciously assert that the party is departing from the ideals of Janet Jagan do not understand the nature of the People's Progressive Party. The party is Janet Jagan's and her husband's enduring legacy to our country and the working class. The PPP is and will always remain the party of these two legends.

We, who stand on the shoulders of the achievements of these iconic leaders, continue to walk in their footsteps. We remain committed to their working-class ideals. When we invest in better education for our children, we are fulfilling the legacy of Janet Jagan. When we improve health care we are imitating her concern for the well-being of the poor. Our massive housing drive draws inspiration from her tremendous efforts in providing a home for working-class families. When we provide support for children, the elderly, and the disabled, we are continuing the mission of serving the most vulnerable. So long as we continue to demonstrate our commitment to respect our women, safeguarding women's equality and to champion the interests of workers, Janet Jagan will be smiling in the Great Beyond to which one day we all have to go.

Before I close I want to say that Comrade Janet's life was around a few thematic areas: social justice, political

justice, economic justice, and global justice. I was fortunate to be in the leadership of the party while she was still alive and I know in all her analysis there is always an intentional approach to contextualize whatever we're going through in Guyana in the global environment, and this is something that most of the leadership of our party in their analysis will do. Because we understand that we do not operate on an island by ourselves, but we are part of a global environment, but in all these aspects is social, political, economic and global justice that she stood for they were based on some foundational pillars, some very important foundational pillars.

The first pillar is people. She believed that people were one: the output, whatever she was doing, must be for the betterment, the output must be the betterment of people, or whatever she was approaching to do the input was people, because he mobilized people to help her to achieve the output. So people was the center of everything she did, and how did she demonstrate this? She understood that times will change, people will change, and there must be a system that records history. Comrade Gail and Comrade Indra spoke about this. The truth is if it was not for Comrade Janet's meticulous notetaking and sense of history and sense of organization, we would not have had some of the historical material that the party is still in possession of. She was a custodian but I'm sure like many of us we don't like a lot of papers stocked up, but she understood the importance of this. More importantly, she understood the importance of breaking down the history of our country into stories for our children and she led a revolution in educating the children. Sometimes we forgot this aspect of our life. So, people, people education, and bringing people along in the struggle was a very important foundational pillar in achieving the different justice system that I spoke of.

Then she believed a lot in systems. She believed in the healthcare system, and the educational system, she believed in strengthening those systems that deliver goods and services to the people. If you look at her work, and you examine some of the things that she did in her life, you will see that there was always a systems approach. It was never a Janet Jagan approach. If you look at the trade union movement, you will see her hands in developing systems.

Then on the institutional side, she believed in strong institutions, the judiciary. Her contributions to the legislature are enormous. Many of the committees that were developed were because of her strong advocacy. So she believed in the strength of institutions. She believed in cultural values. Although she came from a totally different culture, she understood the importance

of the various cultures in Guyana in the political life of the country, and in the social life of the country and she integrated that culture, into the work that she did here. Community and society were other important pillars. In every single community, you go to, you will see or find someone who had a connection or attachment to her. Our old organizers, she reached out to them. She was one of the leaders in the party that would reach out and know those who are in need because she believed in the connection within the society and communities.

One of the important hallmarks of Comrade Janet was her sense of organization, her organizational skills. If you go through the history of the party, you will see her hands in keeping the party together. You will see the work she did in developing organizations. The Mirror that Comrade Ralph spoke about was an enormous entity that most of the leaders passed through that was single-handedly organized and formed and framed and nurtured by her.

The Thunder we heard of, I'm very happy also, the young leaders you're placed on the Thunder board when you sit at this forum, that is why Comrade Indra and Comrade Gail made the point, and Comrade Clement, the sense of history when you understand the history of the Thunder, then you know that you were fortunate enough and you had this humble opportunity to sit on a board of Thunder that has such a rich history. You feel a greater connection with the history of our country.

So today I think the management of Red House and all those who played such a critical role in organizing this event, and not only doing just doing justice to Comrade Janet but they are carrying on her rich legacy of educating people, sharing history, having that sense of history and connecting the present with what we are all evolved from, and we still have in this party, exceptional contributors to national development, many of whom are here today. Comrade Nokta, I don't think there is any person who would have given so much of their life and time to the transformation of the hinterland and riverine communities. Comrade Ralph, Comrade Gail, Comrade Clement, Comrade Indra, Comrade Donald outside, and all the other comrades now in the system.

You see, we must never ever be afraid of transition. We must always prepare ourselves for transition. When you become afraid of transition, then you're separating yourself from organization. It is when we are selfish in our endeavors, we become afraid of transition. When we are pro-organization and understand that we are part of something that is larger than us, the transition becomes a natural course. It becomes a natural force and that is what the PPP has always been about; building up enough, if you want to put it in a military term,

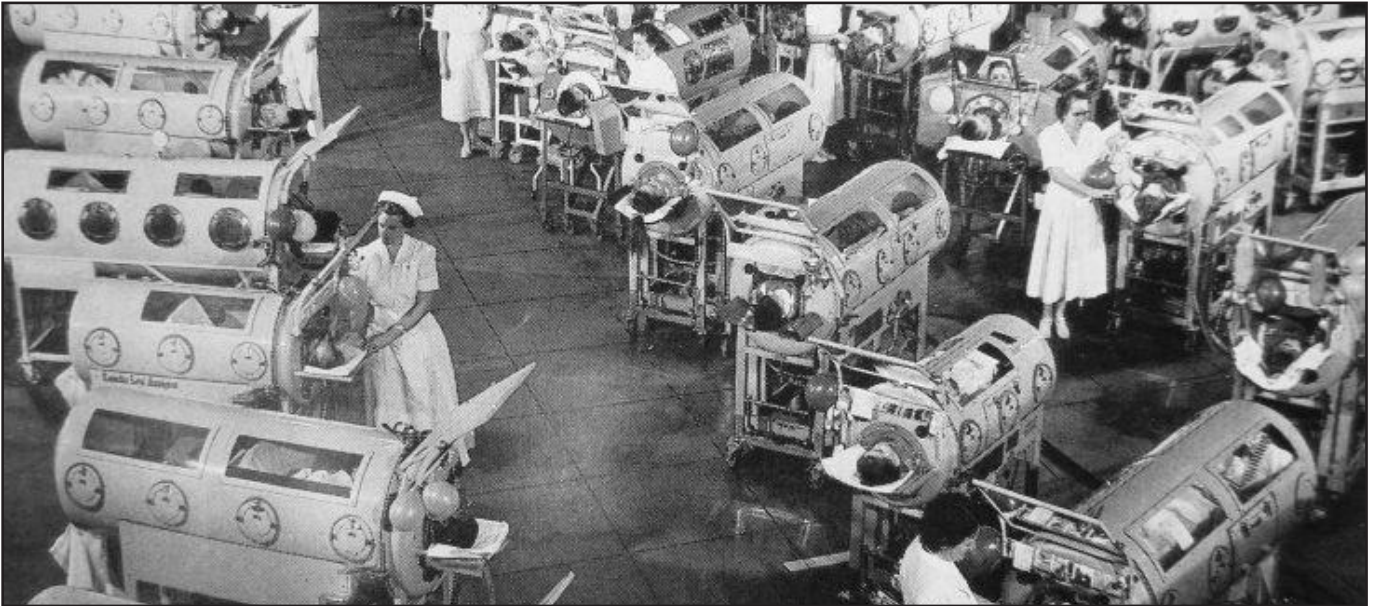
firepower, to make the transition seamless.

Transition does not mean removal of talent. As I just demonstrated earlier, you sit at a central committee with experience differences, not age differences, experience differences of 30 and 35 years, but those are 30 and 35 years that are important for the molding of those who are coming out. So as we continue to build a legacy of Comrade Janet, and this legacy is for all of Guyana and for the party that she built, we have an added responsibility. Every member of the PPP we have an added responsibility to the people of this country. I always say that, because we do not bring the burden of racial division or divisiveness. Fundamentally, every member of the PPP is built in an environment in which we see Guyana belonging to all of us, that is why I can very confidently anywhere I am not part of a system that indoctrinated racism. I am part of a system in the People's Progressive Party that indoctrinated us in national unity. We are from a movement that believes in national unity. We don't have to make a special effort for this. It comes naturally to us. So when we deliver a housing program or health program or education program, it is built on social justice, political justice, and economic justice. It is not guesswork. I said at a forum the other day that when you solve problems too easily, people don't really believe there is a problem, and I said in the last two years, we came into the government in a worst global environment, COVID-19. When we came with the government, we had a COVID building. The hospital did not even have an oxygen tank, not a bed. We came with the worst cost of living crisis, the worst inflation crisis the worst food crisis, the worst logistics and transportation crisis, the worst energy crisis, the worst climate crisis. We face four floods. Movement and energy costs were almost 300% and still, we have positioned Guyana on a growth and development path that is outstanding by every assessment, and that is because of the consistency of our value system, the consistency of our belief system.

The structure of our policy is always oriented around people, even expansion of the private sector. Even the private sector growth and development took place under Comrade Cheddi, then it went into depression in a period of dictatorship, non-existence but even the work to support private sector development is done in a way to bring people along.

So as we celebrate and reflect on the legacy of Comrade Janet, we cannot do so without reflecting on the legacy of our party, and the work of our party in and out of government for the people of this country.

The re-emergence of polio, measles and monkeypox. Why are some infectious diseases making a comeback?



Polio patients in the iron lungs at a US hospital in 1952 (Source: Wikipedia commons; taken by Smith, J. (1991). Patenting the Sun. New York: Anchor/Doubleday)

"On polio, we simply cannot roll the dice. If you or your child are unvaccinated or not up to date with vaccinations, the risk of paralytic disease is real. I urge New Yorkers to not accept any risk at all. Polio immunization is safe and effective – protecting nearly all people against disease who receive the recommended doses. Do not wait to vaccinate. If you are unsure of you or your families' vaccination status, contact a healthcare provider, clinic, or local county health department to make sure you and your loved ones receive all recommended doses." This was a statement from New York's State Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett on Sept. 9th (2022) and was made following the identification of a case of paralytic polio in an unvaccinated person and the detection of the poliovirus in wastewater in New York. Prior to this, on June 22nd (2022), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) declared the detection of polio in London's sewers and advised that it has the potential to spread in areas of patchy vaccine coverage. As such, the UKHSA implemented a supplemental vaccination strategy starting in London.

Rewind three years, in 2019 Bill de Blasio, New York's mayor declared a public health emergency because of a large spike in cases of measles in the city. He said, "we have a very serious situation on our hands, and we must

not allow this dangerous disease to make a comeback in New York City."

Fast forward to 2022 again, cases of monkeypox were reported in countries where the disease is not endemic and later, for the first time, reported concurrently in countries where it is endemic. Endemic means a disease is present at consistent level but restricted to a particular area and therefore rates of spread can be predicted allowing for the disease to be controlled.

To add to the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic in which we're still living, we are seeing global surges in monkeypox, the re-emergence of polio and, the measles comeback is well known and documented. This article explores how infectious diseases were brought under control with hard fought mass vaccination campaigns and how despite these successes, recently, some diseases appear to be making a comeback. The reasons behind the rise and fall of infectious diseases are often complex and attributed to many factors but a few crucial reasons for these resurgences are also discussed.

Poliomyelitis

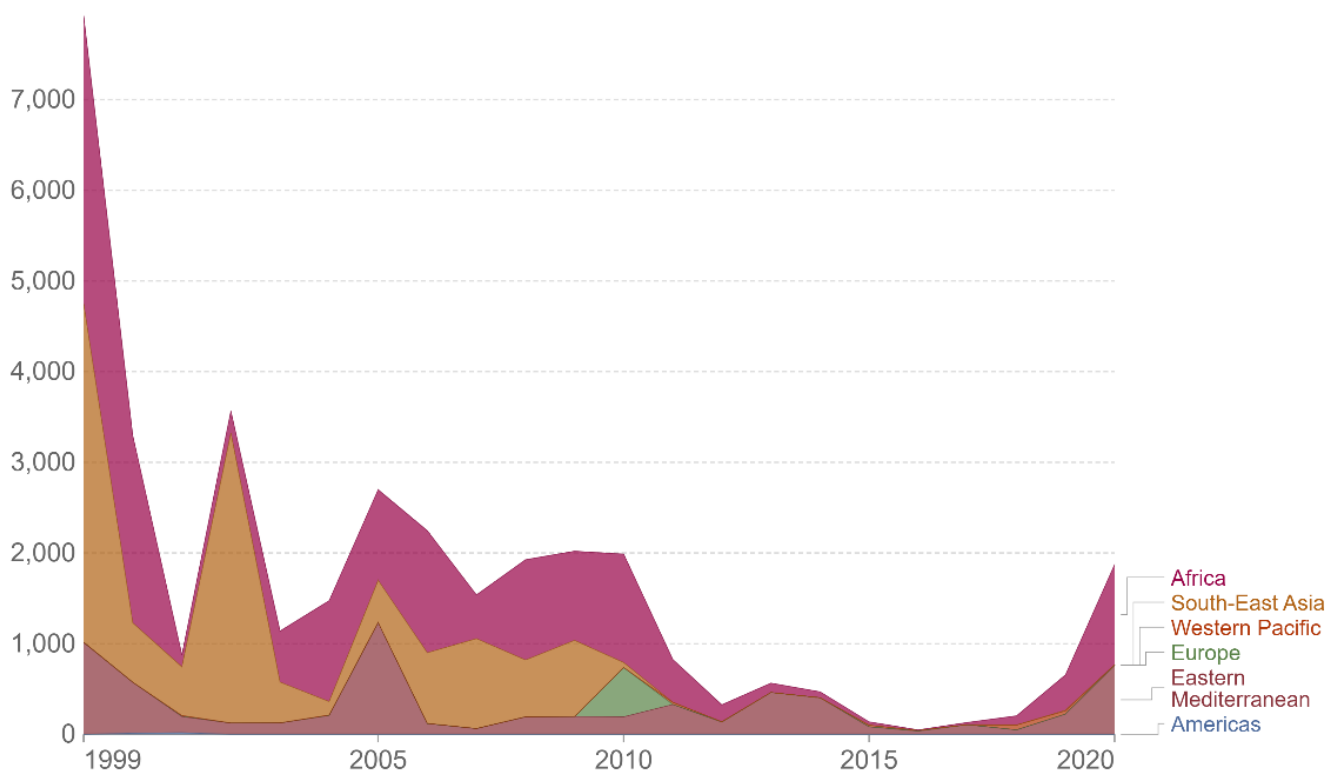
Poliomyelitis shortened to Polio is caused by the poliovirus and is a life-threatening disease since it can infect a person's spinal cord causing paralysis. Polio is thought to date back to ancient times with it being

depicted on Egyptian art but was first identified in 1909 by Karl Landsteiner, an Austrian immunologist. Outbreaks occurred in Europe and the US reaching a pandemic scale in the early 20th century. In the 1950s the highest incidence was in the US with children aged five to nine being at greatest risk of getting the paralytic form of the disease; the mild form produces symptoms like a sore throat and fever. Subsequently two types of vaccines were born out of a strong competition between scientists Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin. The Salk vaccine was the first to be approved. It is an inactivated form of the virus administered via injection; inactivated meaning that it cannot cause the disease. It does not stop viral transmission but protects against developing the disease. The Sabin vaccine came years after in the form of drops that could be squirted into a child's mouth. It is a weakened form of the virus that blocks transmission. It's also cheaper and easier to distribute and so became the main form used for the global eradication of polio campaign. Three doses of the oral version Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) produce protection against the 3 types of

can revert to the virulent form, causing paralytic polio, particularly in under-vaccinated populations (with low population level immunity). In addition, anyone carrying the reverted form of the virus can be a source of infection. As a result of this risk, rich countries abandoned the oral version of the vaccine in order to prevent this vaccine-derived polio. The US switched back to the injectable vaccine in 2000 while the UK did so in 2004. However, it remains in use by the international community who argues that the benefits outweigh the risks given that getting vaccine-derived polio remains quite low (one in a million) particular in places with high vaccination rates. From 1988 to 2015 the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that naturally occurring polio was only spreading in Pakistan and Afghanistan although there were reported outbreaks in other countries however, these remain less than 200 per year (worldwide) with only 6 confirmed cases. It's been 34 years since the eradication initiative began (in 1988) with many claiming near eradication; that is until now where it's re-emerged due to the slowing down of vaccination campaigns for

Estimated cases of paralytic polio by world region, 1999 to 2020

This includes all estimated cases of wild polioviruses and vaccine-derived polioviruses.



Source: Our World in Data based on World Health Organization and adapted from Tebbens et al. (2010)

OurWorldInData.org/polio/ • CC BY

the poliovirus and offer longer lasting immunity than the injectable form Injectable Polio Vaccine (IPV). However, the OPV has one flaw – because it is a weakened form of the virus, one out of every several million doses

a variety of reasons including vaccine inequity between rich and poor countries, vaccine hesitancy, vaccine refusal, war and, religious and political instability bringing vaccine campaigns to a standstill.

The rise and fall of paralytic polio cases

This re-emergence in the developed world (US and UK) is attributed to pockets of vulnerable unvaccinated populations with low immunity to the virus however there is a further complicating factor. Original vaccines targeted the three types/strains of the poliovirus; the vaccines contained the inactivated or weakened form of the virus for all three strains. With vaccination, as more people gained immunity the three strains began to decline but not at the same rate. The first to disappear was type 2 and so vaccines were changed from targeting three strains to the two that remained in circulation since health officials were optimistic that polio is being eradicated. However, not targeting this strain means that if it re-emerged people would not have much protection against it since vaccines weren't targeting it anymore; it is usual for vaccines to be designed to target specific strains in circulation. Now, we have outbreaks with mutated forms of this type 2 strain; the virus recently found in New York and London are mutated type 2 strains.

Measles

Measles is a highly contagious airborne disease caused by the measles virus. The first written account of this disease is credited to Persian doctor Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi in the 9th century. In 1757 Francis Home, a Scottish doctor showed that it was caused by an infection agent in the blood. In 1954 the virus itself was isolated in a 13-year-old boy in the US which allowed for its study and subsequent studies leading to vaccine development. The WHO recommends childhood immunization where global vaccination campaigns have led to its control and even its declared elimination in some places. For example, the US declared it eliminated in 2000. The vaccine is usually given to young children at 12 months as a three-part MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine. Two doses are about 97% effective at preventing measles; one dose is about 93%.

Global measles cases from 1980 to 2021

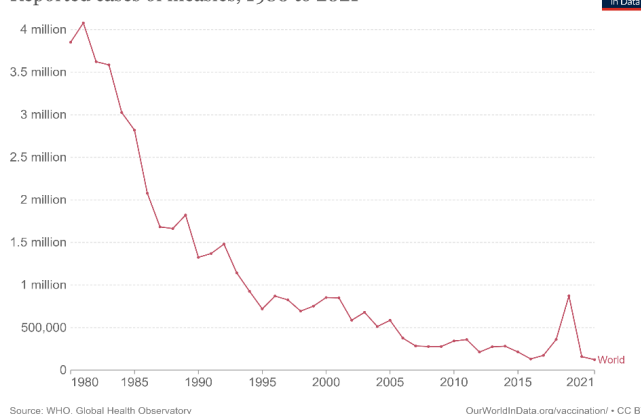
Global vaccination campaigns were successful in combating this disease with a 73% reduction in global deaths between 2000-2018. However, the WHO reports worldwide measles deaths climbed 50% from 2016 to 2019 with over 207 500 deaths in 2019. A report by the WHO and US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the same year showed the highest number of cases reported in 23 years; there was a 556% worldwide increase from 2016 to 2019. The report states that, "the fundamental cause of resurgence was a failure to vaccinate both in recent and past years causing immunity gaps in both younger and some older groups". Data from the US exemplifies this with a rise in cases from 120 to 1274 in 2019 then a drop to date (see figure below). The rise is attributed generally to parents choosing not to have their children vaccinated since many of these cases

were below 19 years old.

In May 2022, the WHO reported a 79% increase in cases in the first two months of 2022 compared to the same time the previous year. They deemed the situation a perfect storm given the challenges of our current times, namely, unequal and inequitable access to vaccines globally, pandemic disruptions with resources re-focused mostly on COVID-19 and children displaced by global conflicts; largest outbreaks being seen in Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Ethiopia. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (the WHO director general) said, "the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted immunization services, health systems have been overwhelmed, and we are now seeing a resurgence of deadly diseases including measles. For many other diseases, the impact of these disruptions to immunization services will be felt for decades to come...now is the moment to get essential immunization back on track and launch catch-up campaigns so that everybody can have access to these life-saving vaccines."

Of course, the pandemic has disrupted mass vaccination

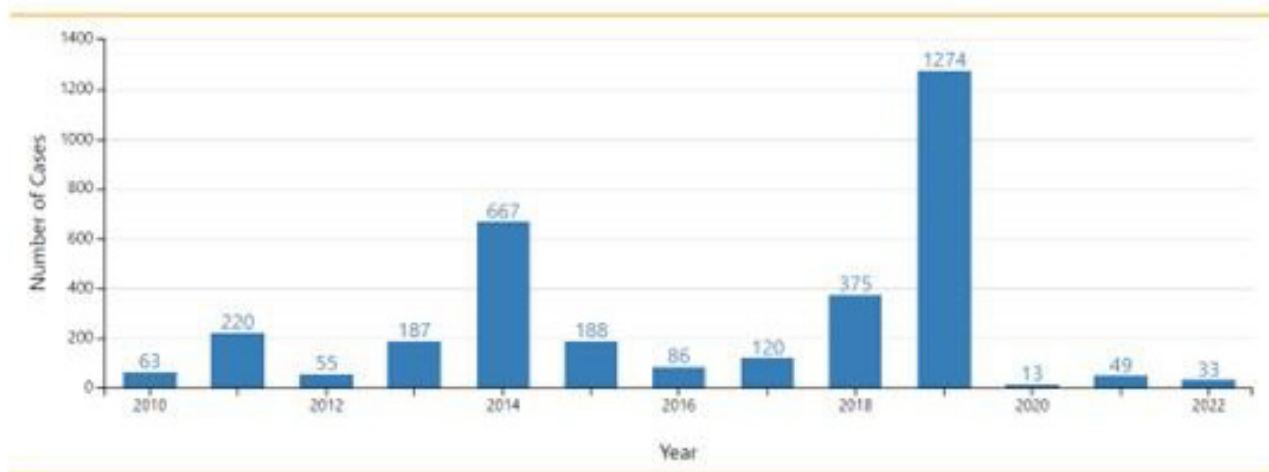
Reported cases of measles, 1980 to 2021



campaigns for measles and other diseases however the measles re-emergence started before the COVID-19 pandemic, and this is attributed to a rise in vaccine refusal and vaccine hesitancy which arisen primarily due to the spread of misinformation and disinformation particularly in the age of social media influence. For example, in 2019 the Philippines reported their deadliest outbreak since they declared measles eliminated. It became so bad that the San Lazaro Hospital set up tents in the parking lot, the courtyards and the landing at the top of stairs outside the pediatric ward for infected patients. The Philippines had 2,400 measles cases in 2017 which rose to over 18,000 in 2018. Vaccination rates had fallen from 88% in 2014 to 55% in 2019. Lotta Sylwander (the UNICEF representative in the Philippines) said, "There has been a notable unwillingness on the part of parents to vaccinate their children on time." At the time 2.5 million children under five were unvaccinated against measles.

Number of measles cases reported by year

2010-2022* (as of October 28, 2022)



Number of measles cases reported by year in the US (Figure source: CDC)

In Texas (US) the number of students with nonmedical exemptions from measles vaccination rose sharply from 10,404 in 2007 to 52,756 in 2017. About 21% of the school districts had measles vaccination rates

below the threshold required to maintain population level immunity to keep the disease from re-emerging. Research shows that unvaccinated people tend to cluster in the same communities, school and organizations

Reported cases of measles, 1974 to 2021

Our World in Data



Source: WHO, Global Health Observatory

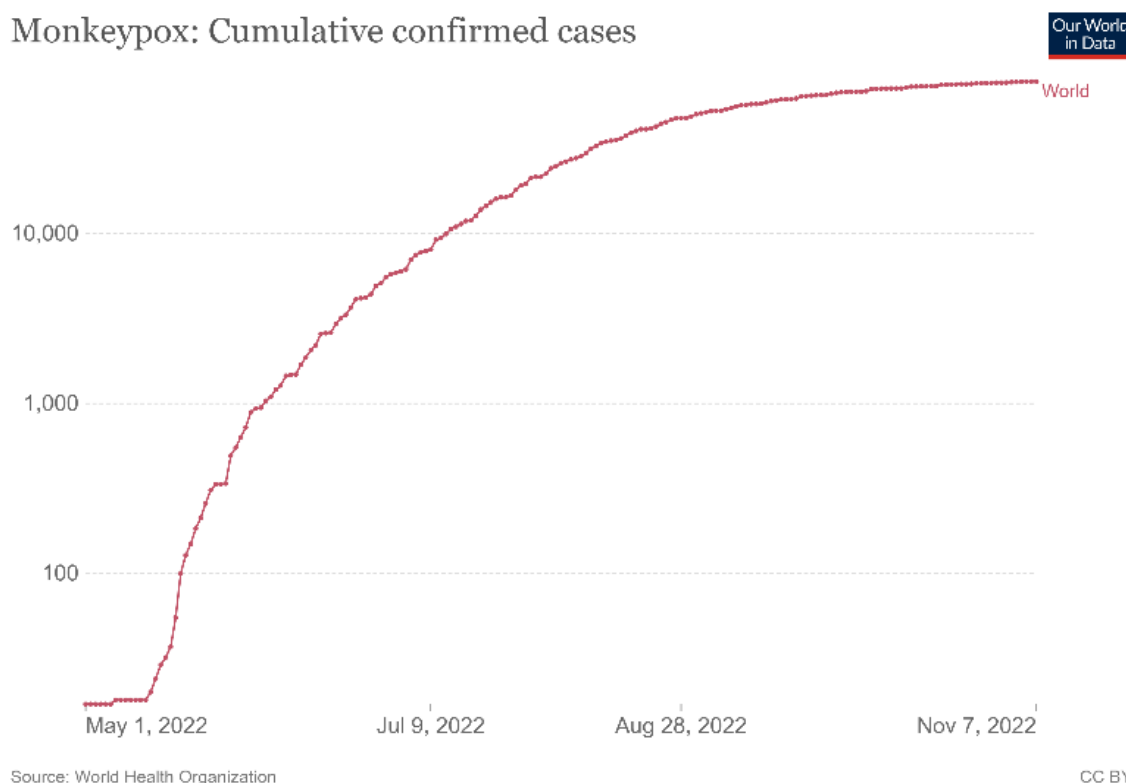
OurWorldInData.org/vaccination/ • CC BY

The rise and fall of measles cases in the Philippines

because of their shared beliefs (whether factual or not) on vaccination. And of course, this leads to whole communities and areas being left vulnerable and at higher risk of outbreaks. A research review article looking at the association between vaccine refusal and vaccine-preventable diseases in the US (Phadke et al., JAMA. 2016;315(11):1149-1158) concluded that, “A substantial proportion of the US measles cases in the era after elimination were intentionally unvaccinated. The phenomenon of vaccine refusal was associated with an increased risk for measles among people who refuse vaccines and among fully vaccinated individuals.”

contact with them. These pets were infected via close contact with imported animals from Ghana, who carried the disease. These were 800 small mammals from six types of rodents including rope squirrels, tree squirrels, African giant pouched rats, brush-tailed porcupines, dormice, and striped mice. A CDC study showed that infection is more likely when touching a sick animal daily, cleaning their cages and bedding, or receiving a bite or scratch in which skin was broken. In this example, there were 47 confirmed cases. This outbreak was contained relatively fast with extensive tracking of the disease, testing and the use of the smallpox vaccine. Smallpox is

Monkeypox: Cumulative confirmed cases



Monkeypox

Monkey is another infectious disease caused by a virus for which there is no cure but whose spread can be controlled with vaccination. It is endemic to West and Central Africa and infections occur with close prolonged contact with an infected person, animal or material contaminated with the virus. In July 2022 the WHO declared a public health emergency due to a monkeypox outbreaks globally in regions of the world where the disease isn't endemic; from May 2022 to date there was an increase to 78474 cases (see figure below).

This rise was an unexpected occurrence and is the largest in areas where the disease isn't endemic. It's not as infectious as COVID-19 or measles and containment can occur relatively fast. This was demonstrated by the outbreak in the US in 2003. In this case pet prairie dogs were infected who in turn infected people in close

the only infectious disease deemed eradicated and this was done with mass vaccination. A study conducted in 1988 (PE Fine et al., Int J Epidemiol, 1988 Sep;17(3):643-50) showed that the smallpox vaccine offers about 85% protection against monkeypox. Monkeypox symptoms resemble that of smallpox but monkeypox is less contagious and illness is generally less severe. However, the West African strain (responsible for the recent outbreak) has a fatality rate of 1-3 %; with the Congo Basin strain being 10% fatal. Therefore, the best way to protect against this disease is vaccination. The smallpox vaccine has been modified to target both smallpox and monkeypox with one approved by health authorities. Currently monkeypox cases have been declining however whether containment has occurred or whether there will be another rise is not yet clear. Preparation is key to prevent another re-emergence and mitigation (of any infectious disease).

Throughout history infectious diseases have had significant impact on societies. As we have seen with the current pandemic, infectious diseases are one of the worlds greatest challenges as they threaten the health of global communities on a massive scale which in turn can be devastating on the socio-economic welfare of nations. Major outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics including the bubonic plague (the black death), influenza and cholera have wiped out entire populations. There was once a widespread belief that infectious diseases were defeated however, we can certainly put that idea to rest with the recent re-emergence of a Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 and, the rise and fall of others including the ones detailed in this article – polio, measles and monkeypox. It's not simple to identify a single cause for the re-emergence of a disease but one key reason is low vaccine coverage in communities and specific areas that contribute to the decline in population level/collective immunity required to keep diseases under control. Vaccination is one of the greatest achievements in disease prevention and control as evidenced by the eradication of smallpox. However, we have seen that diseases that were once under control and thought to be eliminated can re-emerge and so outbreaks need to be thoroughly and systematically investigated to determine and understand why communities, if vaccines are available to them, are not vaccinated. Where low vaccine coverage exists in specific communities, health authorities need to stay constantly informed and assess behavioural and social factors that causes vaccine hesitancy and refusal. Once specifically assessed, targeted strategies for tackling factors leading to low vaccine coverage need to be put into place. It's a continuous process to maintain the trust of parents and communities to ensure that they understand that vaccination is in their children's best interest.

In addition, health authorities must be well prepared to respond to any vaccine-related adverse events in order to obviate any doubts and fears that can erode progress. Another key factor in the emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases is humans' interaction and disruption of wildlife environments, urbanization, deforestation and industrial farming. Most emerging and re-emerging diseases are zoonoses – they originated in an animal and crossed the species barrier to infect humans. The measles virus is closely related to the cattle virus rinderpest and is thought to evolve from an ancestral strain of this virus. It emerged via zoonotic infection in communities where

cattle lived in close proximity to humans. Monkeypox is also zoonotic being first identified in 1958 among lab monkeys in Copenhagen, Denmark. Human cases were later identified and occurred due to contact with infected animals. The monkeypox resurgence discussed a prior began with imported infected animals from Ghana. Another well known example of zoonotic transmission, the probable cause of COVID-19, is a wildlife market in Wuhan, China. These wildlife markets are present in many parts of the world and creates the perfect environments for diseases to thrive. Yet another example, is bush meat hunting which not only causes species extinction but also promotes transmission of previously unknown infectious disease-causing agents. These examples indicate that human intervention and disruption of natural ecosystems will only continue to increase the risk of emerging and re-emerging diseases. In addition, reverse zoonosis is also an occurrence throughout history where humans passed diseases to animals. One big worry with this is that animals can be reservoirs of a disease-causing agent which can change (mutate) and then be re-introduced into humans whereby the re-introduced form could be more harmful/virulent. There are many reports of reverse zoonosis with the SARS-CoV-2 in the current pandemic where the virus has been passed from humans to domestic cats, tigers, dogs, minks and deer. So, destruction of natural habitats, increased agriculture to meet the needs of a growing human population and wildlife trade and hunting will only increase the likelihood of viruses jumping from species to species. Therefore, it's critical to balance our co-existence with the natural world if we're going to prevent or mitigate the emergence or re-emergence of infectious diseases.

On a global scale emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases are closely linked with human activities since we are interdependent. The overall choices we make on a political, socioeconomic, community and personal level will determine the likelihood of the next outbreak, epidemic or pandemic. Choose carefully.



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October 5: A Defining Moment



October 5, 1992 marks thirty years since the restoration of democracy to Guyana after some twenty-eight years of PNC authoritarian rule. It will be recalled that the PNC/UF coalition government came to power in 1964 in what former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson described as a 'fiddled constitutional arrangement' one unprecedented in the history of Commonwealth politics. In this article, I propose to examine the impact of democratic reforms on the economic and social life of the Guyanese people after nearly three decades of PNC dictatorial rule.

Before getting into the discussion proper, it is perhaps necessary to examine the factors that led to the removal of the popular PPP government from government, both in the short-lived 1953 period and again in 1964 when the PPP was removed from power as a result of the intrigues and machinations of western vested interests in collaboration with local reactionary forces.

The history behind the removal of the PPP from power and the installation of the PNC-UF coalition in the 1964 elections is somewhat complicated but it had to do essentially with a plot by western vested interests, in collaboration with local reactionary forces to prevent the PPP administration from taking Guyana into political independence out of a mistaken perception, as documented by the then Presidential Advisor to President Kennedy, Arthur Schlesinger in his book 'A Thousand Days in the White House' 'that an independent Guyana under Forbes Burnham would cause us fewer problems than an independent Guyana under Cheddi

Jagan.'

The stage was then set for the manipulation of the electoral process and a change from the constituency system to one of proportional representation which allowed for contesting parties to combine their votes to form the government should they garner enough votes to gain a majority.

All of that, in the context of our new and evolving political culture, may appear normal since in some ways it could be seen as consistent with the Westminster system of majoritarian rule. But that was far from being the case as the PNC, a mere three years later, unceremoniously kicked out its junior partner from the coalition government and commenced a process of electoral fraud with the aim of institutionalizing PNC minority rule. The PNC managed to perpetuate its life in government for nearly three decades through a combination of force and fraud.

One consequence of that rupture of the democratic fabric of the society was that it set in motion a process of underdevelopment and economic retrogression which culminated in the 'pauperization' of the working people and a disgraceful state of affairs in which Guyana was regarded internationally as a 'pariah' state. Guyana, by the end of the 1980's, was ranked among the poorest country in the western hemisphere.

The restoration of democratic rule in the early 1990's did not come about without a long and protracted struggle led by the PPP and supported by democratic forces both within and outside of Guyana. Elections which were due in 1990 were postponed by two years to

allow for electoral reforms, chief among which was the counting of votes at the place of poll. Desmond Hoyte, then President, fiercely resisted this move describing it as a 'logistical nightmare. It took, as it were, much arm-twisting on the part of President Carter before Hoyte finally but reluctantly agreed to counting the votes at the place of poll, which among other electoral reforms allowed for the holding of the first democratic elections in close to three decades.

To say that the country has made significant strides since the restoration of democracy in 1992 would be an understatement. Guyana is today an important player on the regional and international stage and the Guyana economy is today ranked among the fastest growing in the world thanks to our newly found oil and gas riches. The stigma of Guyana as a pariah state has now gone and we are now firmly on the road to economic prosperity and social progress.

This is not to suggest that our democracy should be taken for granted. In fact our democracy still remains fragile as was manifested in the March 2, 2020 General and Regional Elections when attempts were made by the APNU+AFC coalition in collaboration with rogue elements of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) to subvert the will of the Guyanese electorate.

Our democracy must be consolidated and strengthened. There can be no development and human progress without democracy. Society is diminished by the absence of democracy and democratic institutions and norms. As noted by President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, 'we believe strongly that democratic values are values that should never be sacrificed, are values that are part of human dignity and human rights; and our commitment to Guyana is to ensure that never again should the people of this country have to experience such moments when the democracy of the country was tested. So, I want to say to all of you that be assured that Guyana and this Government's commitment to democracy is unwavering.'

These are indeed profoundly reassuring words by President Ali whose vision of a democratic, prosperous and harmonious society along the lines of his One Guyana vision continue to inspire Guyanese from all walks of life and across the political, religious and ethnic spectrum. Indeed, President Ali and his PPP/C administration must be commended for putting country before party as the search for greater inclusivity and participatory democracy continues.

The restoration of democratic rule on October 5 was a necessary condition for economic and social progress. Indeed, after just over three decades of democratic rule the country's economic profile has changed from that of a Low Income highly indebted country to that of a

Middle-income country and this before the income from our petroleum resources. Guyana is today ranked among the fastest growing economy in the world, something unimaginable a three decades ago when Guyana was in the throes of an economic disaster.

But it was the restoration of hope after nearly three decades of literally being in the political wilderness that could be regarded as the most defining moment of the October 5 'revolution'. It was in a number of important respects, a victory against dictatorial rule and repressive rule. The dark shadows of 'big brother' watching has been removed and freedom of expression became the new norm. The economic and social crisis experienced by the Guyanese people was further compounded by the ban on essential food items which included wheaten flour, peas, cheese and other items. While the Guyanese working class were literally starving to death, Burnham and his blue-eyed boys were living the high life, completely detached from the sufferings of the ordinary people. This observation was made by Fr. Andrew Morrison in his book 'Justice: The Struggle for Democracy in Guyana 1952-1992' when he wrote:

'By far the most extravagant of the President's trips was his five day official visit to Brazil on September 30, 1982. The Boeing 707 was specially decorated for the journey. The President's standard with Caiman and Palm Trees were painted on the fuselage, for which special aviation paint was imported. The interior of the plane was altered and suitably decorated to accommodate 60 passengers. Special glossy menu-cards in white and purple were provided for the four-and-a-half hour flight from Timehri to Campinas in Brazil when the Brazilian host would take over. The menu bore the photographs of the President and Viola Burnham at the front and the Caiman and Palm Tree at the back. Purple was the imperial colour always chosen by the dictator for such journeys.

Snacks and a wide assortment of drinks for that flight included fish fingers, prawns and curry dips and Devil on Horseback served with fruit juices. Two hours and ten minutes later more snacks were served: an assortment of wild meats, Spinach Savoury, Black Pudding, Pork Souse, Garlic Pork and Foo Foo Balls in Pepperpot.

For that short journey, to stimulate the party, the bar was stocked with 4 c/s Johnny Walker Black Label and 2 c/s Red Label Whiskey, 3 c/s Remy Martin VSOP, 1 c/s each of Benedictine, Too Pepe, Cointreau, Pernod, Pina Colada Mix, Bloody Mary Mix, Mouton Cadet White and Red, 9 c/s Coca Cola, 8 c/s Seven-Up, 6 c/s Soda Water and 2 c/s Tonic Water.'

The above was reproduced in full if only to reinforce a fact that most Guyanese were familiar with, namely, that the PNC regime and its cabal of opportunists and sycophants were more concerned with lining their own



pockets and their extravagant and parasitic lifestyles that they could not care less for the well-being of the Guyanese people. Their major preoccupation was to stay in power at any or all costs even if it meant the ruination and collapse of the economy. Maintaining power was all that mattered. There was always going to be enough for the cabal to enjoy the good life and as far as they were concerned the rest of the population could go to hell. The economic and social abuses inflicted by the PNC regime knew no limits. This was facilitated in part by the subservience of both the military, the judiciary and several other institutions including the Labour movement to the PNC. Several leading party activists which included world-renowned academic and revolutionary Walter Rodney were killed in the prime of their political lives. Two PPP supporters were brutally shot and killed for protecting ballot boxes from being hijacked by the military. Many other opposition politicians and activists were harassed and jailed on trumped-up charges. Bribery, corruption, squandermania and nepotism became the order of the day. Even the pro-PNC Civil Service Association (CSA) referring to appointments in the public service had this to say: 'The CSA was most dissatisfied with several recent appointments made by the Public Service Commission. Some of these appointments the CSA considers most objectionable and have seriously disrupted the Association's confidence in the integrity of the PSC.'

And in no less incriminating language, the Police Federation in giving evidence before the Collins Commission charged that unless policemen were prepared to bow and scrape and kowtow, they were bypassed. The President of the Federation alleged that favouritism was rampant. He declared: 'The merit

principle is seldom applied. Many men have belittled and degraded themselves in order to find favour with an officer in the hope that they would be recommended for promotion. There have even been cases where men who have been before the court on charges touching on their integrity and honesty have been favoured when neither characteristic could recommend them.

This situation is not peculiar to the those in the public service but among those in the teaching profession as well. It was not unusual for persons to be denied appointment on the grounds of being 'overqualified' for the job. Many with little or no academic qualifications were favoured for employment because of 'party' connections.

What the country went through under the PNC regime was nothing short of authoritarianism at its best. Under the facade of multi-party democracy, the PNC rigged its way to power with impunity moving from a situation of a minority party in the early 1960's with predominant Black support to one in which it managed to garner roughly 80% of the votes through a process of electoral fraud unprecedented in the Anglo-phone Caribbean. Under the doctrine of 'party paramountcy' all the institutions of the state were subverted into a state of forced compliance. Among these were the judiciary and the electoral machinery and more importantly the disciplined forces which were the main instrument used to carry out its dirty political work. A climate of fear pervaded the land. A significant number of Guyanese migrated out of the country to a point where Guyana is now reputed to have the largest per capita diaspora in the world.

All fundamental freedoms were taken away including freedom of the press. The Mirror newspaper was denied newsprint and had to scale down its operations. The same was true of other opposition newspaper including the Catholic Standard and Dayclean.

With the return of democracy on October 5, the country began to breathe the fresh air of democracy. The PPP/C won all elections from 1992 to 2015 when the elections were again subverted by the PNC in collaboration with vested interests. However, the PPP/C was again returned to power in the March 2020 General and Regional elections but not without yet another attempt by the APNU+AFC to rig the elections.

Conclusion

What the post-independence experience has demonstrated is the fact that there is a clear nexus between democracy and development. Guyana is today ranked among the fastest-growing economy in the world and while much of this is the result of our newly-found oil and gas resources, it is by no means the whole

story. The fact is that the past policies by the Granger administration, like that of previous PNC administrations lacked vision and proved hopelessly incapable of governing in the best interest of the Guyanese people. Its closure of a number of grinding sugar estates, removal of subsidies and imposition of Value-Added Tax on a range of basic consumer items and utility services including water and electricity to pensioners are indicative of the class character of the APNU+AFC coalition.

The country is doing well economically but our democracy still remains fragile as the March 2020 General and Regional elections have demonstrated.

More work needed to be done in terms of social cohesion. The 'One Guyana' initiative by President Ali is a step in the right direction but there is work to be done in terms of more inclusive and participatory governance. The re-commencement of the Constitutional Reform Committee is a forward step in terms of accountable and transparent forms of governance.

Guyana has embraced a Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) which could mitigate any risks associated with oil and gas exploitation. This is important as the world is facing an existential threat as a result of global warming.



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Editor's Note:

The following is the political declaration by the World Peace Council at its 22nd Assembly held in Ha Noi, Vietnam. The Guyana Peace Council was represented by Executive Member, Mr. Hydar Ally.

The Importance of World Peace



The 22nd Assembly of the World Peace Council, held in Ha Noi from 22nd to 24th November 2022, hosted by the Viet Nam Peace Committee, in which 108 delegates and guests from 58 organizations from 53 countries participated, concluded with the adoption of the following declaration:

The World Peace Council held with pride its 22nd Assembly in November 2022 in Viet Nam, in a land that is renowned for its heroic people who, for many decades, resisted and successfully defeated the hegemonic, colonial, and imperialist forces that invaded and destroyed their country, killing millions of people. In particular, the Assembly took note of the ongoing consequences of the toxic “Agent Orange” used by the US military in the US war against Viet Nam, with continuing consequences for new generations up until today. The Assembly expressed its wholehearted solidarity with the families of the victims and demanded rightful compensation and relief from the US companies and authorities which bear responsibility.

In a period of deep and ongoing systemic economic, social, and ecological crisis, the world is facing new dangers and threats to peace resulting from increasing imperialist interference and aggression. Humanity is facing the serious danger of a generalized war of

global dimensions. However, this is also a time of new struggles on the part of the peace-loving peoples of the world to counter and stop the pro-war tendencies. We need to recall past lessons from historical struggles and strengthen and unite all peace forces in a strong mobilization against the “enemies of peace”, with the aim of preventing new tragedies from occurring in the future.

The timing of the WPC Assembly was “affected” by the COVID-19 pandemic and could not be held in 2020. More than 4.5 million people on the planet lost their lives and hundreds of millions were infected. The unequal and unjust access to and distribution of the medicine and vaccines necessary to save lives in the different continents, and within each country, underlines once more the mechanisms and tools used in a world dominated by capital and imperialism. At the same time, solidarity actions and efforts undertaken by various countries to combat the effects of the pandemic should be valued, as is the case of Viet Nam and Cuba, among other examples.

The six-year period since the last WPC Assembly in Brazil has been rich with activity and struggle. During the first half of this period, the WPC and its member organizations in the various continents promoted and participated in

street actions and demonstrations, seminars, debates, congresses and regional meetings among many other initiatives. These were intense moments for reflection, sharing opinions and experiences, in all of which we firmly held high the flag of peace and anti-imperialist solidarity. Through penetrating analysis of the main threats to peace, and by proposing clear tactics aimed at the widest possible unity, we helped to strengthen the broad movement for humanity's most noble ideals. In this process, we have strengthened our WPC with new members and friends, as well as our convictions, our hope and our confidence in the peoples' will to move forward and achieve a world in which peace, sovereignty, democracy, and social justice will triumph. During the second part of this period, due to the health pandemic, the WPC and its members were forced to adjust their ways of working to the conditions and many of our activities were held on virtual basis. Nevertheless, the WPC "restarted its engines" in November 2021 and held regional meetings and undertook regular activities up to the 22nd Assembly.

During this period, the WPC reaffirmed its firm commitment to strengthening the international mobilization for peace, as an international organization struggling for peace and against the root causes of imperialist wars, misery, hunger, and exploitation, as well as advocating for a new international order based on peace, equitable and sustainable development, social justice, and solidarity.

After the dissolution of the USSR and the overthrow of socialism in the of Central and Eastern Europe and the fundamental change in the international balance of forces, the world faced a huge setback in which the great democratic and social achievements of the post-war period (including decolonization and national independence; social, economic and cultural development; and the expansion of the international rule of law in areas such as peace and sovereignty and other important principles of international relations established in the UN Charter and international law) were systematically and aggressively weakened from the 1990s. During this period, imperialist forces intensified their drive to impose and maintain their dominant position in the world while fiercely competing for a bigger share of markets and spheres of influence.

The current international situation demonstrates that imperialism pursues and intensifies its policy of threats, blackmail, sanctions, blockades, and aggression, trying to prevent the sovereign development of the peoples, including their right to determine for themselves their own path of development, all matters relating to the sovereign use of national resources and the pursuit of an independent foreign policy.

Since the last WPC Assembly, we have witnessed an increased level of imperialist aggressiveness and heightened arms race, the reinforcement and expansion of NATO and the appearance of new military alliances,

ongoing plans to control the Middle East and its resources; the destruction and partition of Libya by NATO into different protectorates serving the imperialist powers and their regional allies; and the imperialist intervention in Syria, with the aim of overthrowing the legitimate government, which failed, but kept the country under a multi-part occupation — in the Northeast by the US and its allies, in the Northwest by Turkey, and in the Golan Heights by Israel. All the while, the above forces are "recycling" and utilizing fundamentalist armed mercenaries for their plans in Libya, Yemen, and other countries, along with the creation and promotion of the "Islamic State" and others, as assets in the imperialist plan for destabilization and fragmentation of the region. Throughout this time, colonization, ethnic cleansing, and terrorism by the State of Israel against the Palestinian people has continued. With the open support of US and UK imperialism, and the complicity of the EU, new provocations were added: attacks on the Palestinian Gaza Strip; movement of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; the Israeli "National Law," which is further discriminating against non-Jewish citizens in Israel, establishing an "Apartheid-like state;" the expansion of settlements in the Palestinian West Bank; cuts to resources for UNRWA; and the closure of the PLO office in Washington D.C. All the above are continuing under the Biden-administration in the USA.

A very serious situation has developed in and around Ukraine in recent years. After the coup within Ukraine in 2014, which brought successive reactionary governments into power (including Nazi forces), the population of the Eastern provinces of Donbas was for eight years brutally attacked and bombed by the regime in Kiev with the support of the US, UK, EU, and NATO. More than 14,000 people lost their lives by 2022, while a massacre took place on 2nd May 2014 in the Ukrainian city of Odessa, in which anti-government protesters were set on fire and brutally executed in the Trade Union Building of the city — events which the WPC denounced in 2014.

The war in Ukraine did not start on 24th February 2022 when the Russian army started its military action in that country. In previous years, NATO had developed its plans to extend its reach and encircle Russia militarily in a belt from the Arctic and the Baltic Sea to Bulgaria, together with deployment of troops and Missile Defense Shields in Poland and Romania, US withdrawal from major disarmament treaties and the carrying out of military manoeuvres and diversified provocations along the borders of Russia, particularly from 2020. After attacking countries in Europe, Asia and Africa, NATO targeted Russia openly, tried to demonize its leadership, and promoted anti-Russian hysteria and hatred. A long time before the war broke out discussions were already underway about the affiliation of Ukraine to NATO.

The peoples of Russia and Ukraine were living peacefully together in the framework of the USSR, where the fraternal bonds and unifying spirit of the

Soviet Union led its peoples to great social, scientific, and economic achievements. The disintegration of the USSR, despite the referendum of 1991, which was overwhelmingly in favor of maintaining the USSR, led to the restoration of capitalism and acute social problems and setbacks. Control was taken everywhere by the privatized corporations and big monopolies in all sectors and political life. We reject the anti-Soviet and anti-communist political campaigns, particularly the rhetoric about the Bolsheviks and the October Revolution, who allegedly organized a “Red Coup”, the result of which was the creation of Ukraine, clearly showing the nature of the forces that are ruling in the former Soviet Union. From the first moment in 2014 until today, the WPC has not endorsed the war in the Ukraine. We are committed to the just cause of the peoples who must live peacefully together in control of their resources and lives. The WPC Secretariat took a position on 25th February, which we reiterate, by calling for the end of hostilities, the peaceful settlement of differences by dialogue and negotiation, and denouncing NATO’s expansionist strategy. Never before were so many modern and sophisticated weapons delivered to one country than have been given by NATO countries to Ukraine. They are increasingly fuelling the war. The WPC is troubled by the rhetoric pushing for use of nuclear weapons, which would lead to a new World War and the destruction of humanity. The WPC took and continues to take a principled position, based on international law, including for respect of the right of the peoples to sovereignty and independence and for the peaceful solution of international conflicts and for non-interference in the internal affairs of states. The WPC does not accept any unilateral recognition of territories and borders, which thus far has been used, and can be abused in the future, by imperialist powers in other corners of the world.

We express our serious concern about the continuing suffering and loss of innocent lives during the war in Ukraine. In addition to the people of Ukraine and Russia, with thousands of casualties and destruction, the conflict is deepening, with much political manipulation, double standards and a growing “Russo phobia” by the West and NATO that does not cease in its efforts to expand its military and hegemonic domination at European and world level, while the peoples of Europe and the world are at the same time paying a high price for this war. We reject the economic sanctions by the US and EU against Russia, and we denounce vehemently the “games” played to replace Russian Natural Gas by US Natural Liquid Gas (NLG). These are not only fueling the profits of the US, UK, and EU monopolies but also impoverishing masses of people through the soaring prices of electricity and heating and the price-hiking of food. At the same time, we demand the immediate end of the war in Ukraine and call upon the parties to resolve all issues through peaceful negotiation.

The implementation of US military strategy that targets

Asia & Pacific, including China, is reaching new levels. Increased global military spending, which reached more than two trillion USD in 2021, militarization of the planet and space and new developments in nuclear “defense” and weapons technology, which have increased their threat levels, are of great concern. Imperialism has intensified interventions, including coups, to halt and reverse the democratic, sovereign economic and social achievements in many areas of the world. The new reactionary military treaties such as the “Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)” between the USA, India, Japan and Australia and the agreement between the US, UK, and Australia (AUKUS), in addition to the existing US military treaties with Japan and South Korea, are increasing the threats and dangers to peace and security in the region and are clearly aimed at China.

The United States’ doctrine of “full-spectrum dominance” defines its global orientation and combines dismantling sovereign countries in the Middle East, confronting the expansion of the emerging economy of China, and promoting openly full-scale war against Russia, as overtly demonstrated by NATO. This reflects fierce rivalry and NATO’s strategy of creating a comprehensive “wall of containment” against Russia which extends through the Balkans and Eurasia. It is an action led by NATO, the UK, and the EU, which have been expanding their war machine and seeking the incorporation of former USSR republics into NATO.

However, the world situation is characterized not only by threats to peace, but also by the growing movements and struggles for a world of peace and justice. As we have witnessed, peoples’ movements in different parts of the world are playing ever more important roles in the defense of peoples’ rights, their right to self-determination and sovereignty. Recent examples are the huge demonstrations against NATO during its Summit in Madrid (June 2022) in which the WPC participated, the massive protests and actions against the old and new US/NATO military bases, and the demonstrations for peace and against NATO in many countries.

As an organization and movement struggling for a cause that concerns all of humanity, we feel connected to the hardships affecting the majority, the deprived and oppressed peoples all over the world, imposed by an unjust socio-economic system. The current threats of war are directly related to the wide range of multi-dimensional crises affecting the world. The dominant economic system increasingly shows its exploitative and oppressive nature, in the contradictions between those owning capital and those dispossessed. In addition to economic and financial aspects, the systemic crisis also affects energy resources, food, and the environment.

As the exploitation of workers, employees and peoples intensifies, the liquidation of workers’ rights is extended and policies of cutting public spending result in the deterioration of education, health and other public services that are essential for social well-being. The crisis

is deepening social polarization and inequalities in the distribution of wealth and manifests itself as particularly destructive.

The reality before our eyes also shows that imperialism instigates reactionary, obscurantist, anti-democratic, and anti-communist conceptions, and instrumentalizes extreme right-wing, xenophobic, fascist forces to attack freedoms, rights, democracy, and sovereignty.

While the all-around crisis is escalating and the peoples' struggle for their rights, for development and progress, for protection of the environment, an end to poverty and hunger, and a just world, the US-UK-EU, together with their military alliance NATO, continue with their commitment to militarist policies in preparation for war. According to a report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in 2021, 2.2% of the world's GDP was spent in the military sector, indicating a return to the tendency of escalating military expenditure which had previously been briefly interrupted. In other words, in 2021, the world spent US\$ 2,113 trillion in this sector. The US was the single highest spender, with US\$ 801 billion, more than double that of the second highest spender, China, which spent US\$ 293 billion, while NATO countries accounted for over 60% of total global military expenditure. Only a small portion of this global military spending would be enough to eliminate hunger, lack of clean water, and curable diseases from the world.

Despite contradictions, and given the EU and its militarization as the European pillar of NATO or in its complementary to this political-military bloc, the EU launched the «Permanent Structured Cooperation», the «European Defence Fund», the «European Defence Industrial Program» and the «European Interventions Initiative» for developing the weapons industry and funding for battle groups, among other warmongering initiatives. This EU-UK step up in militarization also aims to respond to US demands for a greater European military expenditure within NATO, with European member states spending at least 2% of GDP by 2024.

Europe was one of the regions most affected by the economic and financial crisis during recent years. The European Union, as a political and military structure dominated especially by Germany and France, imposed, together with the governments of the member states, a brutal offensive against social rights and the national sovereignty of its peoples, a process that led to national ruin in many countries. The impoverishment of broad masses, the dismantling of social rights and achievements, and the growing unemployment that have been promoted by EU and national government policies, are accompanied by huge profits for big capital and the monopolies. Efforts for peace are bound together with solidarity with the peoples of Europe in their struggle to build another Europe of peace, cooperation, progress, and social justice, where the peoples will be in control of their wealth and of their fortunes.

For over 48 years, 37% of Cyprus's territory has been

under illegal Turkish occupation in violation of UN resolutions. The WPC reaffirms its solidarity with the Cypriot people in their struggle for a just, viable and sustainable solution for Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Armenians, Maronites and Latins, with the withdrawal of all occupation forces, and all military bases and personnel. The WPC supports the effort for a reunited Cyprus — people, land, and economy — a Cyprus free from custodians and guardians, in a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation with one sovereignty, one citizenship and one international entity, as is provided for in UN resolutions and high-level agreements. At the same time, the WPC rejects and denounces the efforts to affiliate Cyprus to NATO and the use of its ports and facilities by the US and NATO.

The millions of refugees and migrants from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and other African countries are the result of imperialist policies and wars, of which these people are victims. The same forces causing the wars are showing their hypocritical concern about the consequences by applying the Schengen and Dublin agreements. The WPC strongly denounces the EU bilateral agreements with Turkey, Libya and Morocco, and the offensive actions of EU agencies which often prevent by force the movement of people towards Europe. These agreements are in violation of the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees 1951. We defend the right of refugees to go to the destination of their choice. The WPC supports the struggle of Lebanese people for the liberation of their land occupied by Israel and for control of their oil and gas resources in the sea and on land. The WPC expresses its solidarity with the Syrian people in their struggle against all imperialist and terrorist aggression and demands the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Golan Heights.

Israel's aggressive and imperialist policy in Palestine is continuing through multiple actions: the expansion of settlements, the theft of lands, and apartheid-like policies. The WPC reiterates its solidarity with the Palestinian people's heroic struggle against the Israeli occupation and genocidal policy, which subjugates them to a cruel form of colonialism. We defend the Palestinian people's sovereign right to constitute their independent and sovereign state, within the borders prior to 4th June 1967, with its capital in East Jerusalem, and the refugees' right to return to their homeland, in accordance with United Nations' Resolution 194. We demand the dismantling of all Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory and the demolition of the separation wall, as well as the liberation of the 7000 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails — including over 300 children. We call for the recognition of the Palestinian state as a full member of the UN and for the governments of UN member states urgently to recognize the State of Palestine.

After 20 years of occupation of Afghanistan by the US and NATO, and after two trillion USD was spent on

perpetuating its foreign military presence, the US left the country after handing over power to the Taliban, their supposed enemy, who are reinstalling religious fundamentalism and a reactionary and theocratic regime that suppresses secular forces, parties and trade unions, especially victimizing women and children.

We express our solidarity with the people of Iran and their struggle for social, political, and civil rights, and social justice and strongly denounce the recent repressive actions of the security apparatus against women, youth and working people. The WPC supports the right of women in Iran and around the world to make decisions about their own personal and social lives, and matters, including decisions about what they wear. We oppose the use of the above by Western powers to trigger “velvet revolutions” and to their taking advantage of such phenomena for their own agenda. We unequivocally reject any foreign intervention in Iran, including crippling economic and banking sanctions that harm the Iranian people the most. It is only up to the people of Iran, and they alone, to decide on their lives and future. We strongly oppose any interference in the internal affairs of any country of the region, including Iran. All the countries of the region and their peoples can resolve any differences between them through dialogue, diplomacy, and political process, without the intervention of foreign powers.

The WPC calls for making the Middle East a nuclear-weapons-free zone. To this end, it is urgent to abolish the nuclear weapons of Israel, which is the only nuclear state in the region. We strongly denounce US and Western hypocrisy in exerting pressure on Iran while keeping quiet on Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons. The African continent continues to be a target of the big powers and regional players’ neocolonialist and aggressive action, as demonstrated by the destruction of the Libyan state. Besides France’s military presence in about ten countries of the continent (including, but not limited to, participation in UN operations), US troops are also turning Africa into their experimentation lab. The presence of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), the military drills, and the installation of military bases, often in cooperation with the EU and NATO, reveal that the African continent is also a target of various powers and their warmongering policies. Africa was hit by strong economic impacts deriving from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, having little or no access to vaccines from the developed countries. Africa also suffers the impact of terrorism, transnational crime, and armed groups that, despite peace missions in their territory, are ever-increasing phenomena.

The occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco is a flagrant example of injustice, national oppression, and violation of International Law. It is an abhorrent expression of colonialism — Western Sahara is the last colony in mainland Africa — which is contrary to the tendency of the current historical epoch toward

achievement of national emancipation, independence, self-determination, and sovereignty. The WPC supports the right of the Saharawi people to determine their destiny through a free and fair referendum under the auspices of the UN. As opponents of colonialism, we defend the Saharawi people’s right to seek decolonization through the independence of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) — a member of the African union which is already recognized by many countries — as a form of national liberation of the Saharawi people. We demand the release of all Saharawi political prisoners from Morocco’s jails.

We salute the Japanese people, especially the Ryukyu people and the people of Okinawa, in their struggle against US military bases in their country, including Okinawa, and against the government’s plans for Japan’s re-militarization. We reiterate our firm position on the abolition of all nuclear weapons, remembering always the nuclear crime committed by the US in bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki causing a nuclear holocaust.

The intensification of joint military maneuvers by the US and its allies is responsible for the escalation of tensions with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, in and around the Korean peninsula. The continuing US mobilization of its allies to impose sanctions, pressure, and military threats against the DPRK is causing the existing volatile situation to deteriorate further. This should be solved through diplomatic means, through the withdrawal of the 28,000 US troops from Korea, the closure of the Missile Defense Shield (THAAD), and the signing of a genuine Peace Accord in place of the of the 1953 “Armistice Agreement.”

The WPC is concerned about the growing tension and militarisation in the South China Sea, which is a serious threat to peace, stability, freedom, and the safety of navigation and the air space above this region. We object to the use of force to impose or expand unilateral control over these important international waters as well as to military escalation by any party from within or outside the region. The WPC supports peaceful resolution, bilaterally and multilaterally, of all disputes in accordance with international law, particularly the UN Charter and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982).

Although the US aggressive war in Indochina ended nearly five decades ago, its legacy continues to pose serious obstacles and danger to Laos’ national development, especially to agriculture, the livelihood of the people, and the development of infrastructure, as well as to investment programs in the UXO (Unexploded Ordnance) contaminated areas. The clearance of UXO will take a long time and require huge resources. In this regard, the World Peace Council expresses its support for and solidarity with the brave Lao people and demands the appropriate compensation and measures to end this problem by those who have created it.

South Asia has become a major flashpoint in respect of

the relations between India and Pakistan, both nuclear powers, which are deteriorating to a new low. Cross-border terrorism and frequent breaches of the line of control increase the risk of a full armed conflict. The growth of religious fundamentalism and sectarianism further add to this danger. As part of US imperialism's objective to create an Asian version of NATO, India has been co-opted by means of a military and strategic partnership with the US, to share military bases and facilities.

The WPC considers the presence and actions of the 7th US Naval Fleet in the Pacific Ocean along with its hundreds of military bases as a threat to peace and the security of nations and demands their withdrawal and removal.

We express our solidarity with the more than 1.4 million Rohingya refugees who were forced to leave Myanmar for Bangladesh, resulting in an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. We demand that Myanmar and the UN create the conditions for immediate repatriation of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh with full citizen's rights, security, and dignity. We also demand a stop to atrocities committed by the military on minority communities in Myanmar.

The WPC condemns US actions and provocations around Taiwan with the recent high-level visit of the members of the US Congress and efforts to provoke a situation of conflict with the PR China. We reaffirm our principled position of adherence to the "One China Policy" and against foreign interference in the domestic affairs of China. Likewise, we denounce the provocations of imperialists regarding alleged religious or minority issues, which are being used for the purpose of destabilizing the country economically and politically.

US imperialism has always considered Latin America and the Caribbean as its "backyard" and has been acting accordingly by trying to impose or influence political developments in the area in favor of the interests of its multinationals, based on its "Monroe Doctrine." The 4th US fleet and the US military bases in the region are serving this purpose and are used to control markets and plunder the region's raw materials. The construction of a Southern Command military installation in Neuquén (province of Argentina) implies an alarming risk to the peace of the continent. The WPC denounces the US usage of the "war on drugs" pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of the region.

The WPC follows with interest the struggles of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean and supports any progress by popular forces that deepen the social and economic achievements based on solidarity and national sovereignty. This process has provided an effective arena for contributing to peace. We underline the importance of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a 'Zone of Peace' adopted at its CELAC Summit in 2014, in Havana. The World Peace Council expresses its solidarity with the Latin-American

and Caribbean peoples in their struggle for a society with social justice and freedom. It is a struggle in which the peoples and their political and social organizations, and the governments that defend the peoples' interests, face the most powerful forces in the world.

We underline the Cuban Revolution's heroic victory in its battle of more than sixty years' duration facing US imperialism's aggressive and criminal blockade. The WPC supports the Cuban people's struggle for an end to the criminal economic, financial, and commercial blockade and demands that Cuba be removed from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism, as well as the return of the territory illegally occupied by the US naval base in Guantanamo. The people of Cuba and its government have proved in recent years once more the ability and determination as well as moral superiority by their extraordinary achievement in combating the COVID-19 pandemic through the development of several of their own efficient vaccines and the internationalist service and help to dozens of peoples across the world.

The WPC extends its full solidarity to the people of Puerto Rico in their struggle for independence from the US and for self-determination. Likewise, the WPC expresses its solidarity with the people of Argentina in their legitimate right to sovereignty over the Malvinas, Georgia, and South Sandwich Islands, which are under British control. It is necessary to warn that these islands, like other territories, are frequently turned into US-NATO military bases.

In Latin-America, the struggle in defense of Venezuela's Bolivarian process is ever more relevant, in the face of the constant threats of destabilization, sanctions and interferences of local oligarchies in collusion with the US and EU imperialism. We express our solidarity with the Venezuelan anti-imperialist forces and with the Committee of International Solidarity and Struggle for Peace (COSI) and demand the release of all political prisoners of imperialism.

The WPC congratulates the Brazilian people for the victory achieved in October, thanks to the firm and brave mobilization of progressive and democratic forces in Brazil. In this context, the rise of fascism is a reality in many regions of the world and the victory of the Brazilian people gives new impetus to the anti-imperialist struggle in Latin America and other continents.

The WPC supports an end to all forms of foreign military presence through MINUSTAH in Haiti and its replacement by civil, humanitarian support. The Haitian people have been determined in their struggle to overcome the repeated natural and human-made disasters of colonialism that have resulted in the destruction of Haiti's physical and political infrastructure. The WPC restates its support for the struggle of the Haitian people for genuine self-determination and rejects all calls for intervention by force in Haiti which are being championed by the US and its imperialist allies. We also continue our support for the Haitian people's claims for

reparation for the damages of colonialism and slavery at current value.

In the Arctic, the circumpolar countries — including the US, Canada, Russia, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark — are involved in an escalating military build-up, which is contributing to the ratcheting up of global tensions. These developments also threaten the fragile and delicate natural environment of the Arctic, as well as the indigenous communities there. As a result of the melting of the polar ice cap, the scramble to extract resources from the ocean floor and to dominate and control newly accessible shipping routes in pursuit of profit is set to escalate. This will in turn intensify rivalries and the militarization of the Arctic, with devastating consequences for peace and the protection of the global environment. The WPC condemns this drive to exploit and militarize the region and supports the call for a new international treaty on the Arctic, to include strong measures to prevent the wanton exploitation of resources in this sensitive region and to declare the Arctic as a zone of peace.

Throughout the world, colonialist and genocidal practices against indigenous peoples continue. This is deeply bound up with the drive for greater corporate profit, particularly by the resource extraction industries, and the imperialist drive to control ever greater territory. At the same time, an increasing number of struggles around the world for peace, human rights and environmental justice are being initiated and led by indigenous peoples. Inspired by our longstanding commitment to anti-colonial struggle, the World Peace Council expresses its deep solidarity with the struggles of indigenous peoples around the world, for their cultural, national, territorial, political, and economic rights.

Seeking to secure its dominance over the world, the US maintains over 800 military bases and thousands of military sites in more than 100 countries, where it stations 350,000 soldiers equipped with the most sophisticated weaponry, war planes, missiles, and warships. This represents 90% of all foreign military bases in the world and includes US bases throughout every continent and region; the remainder of foreign military bases belong to other powers. The WPC demands the closure of all foreign military bases in the world as a matter of principle.

In addition to maintaining military bases across the world, the US seeks to dominate seas and oceans by deploying its seven powerful naval fleets and controlling outer and cybernetic space through innumerable satellites, spy crafts, radar and surveillance stations and communications networks. The WPC demands an end to such actions and calls for the total demilitarization of space. The renewal and the expansion of the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement between the US and Greece, which turns not only Greece but also the Eastern Mediterranean into a war zone, puts the people in grave danger. We call for the intensification of the peoples'

struggle for disengagement from and dissolution of NATO; for the closure of all the military bases of the US-UK-EU-NATO and we say no to imperialist military missions abroad targeting other people.

NATO's expansion is one of the most pressing issues on our agenda. This powerful military organization constitutes the armed wing of imperialism and includes 30 member states in North America and Europe and maintains diverse partnerships with dozens of countries in all continents. Since 1991, NATO has expanded its numbers and has broadened its framework and area of operations to encompass the world, including the Asia-Pacific region, revealing its fundamental role as imperialism's primary tool for world domination. NATO is the great enemy of peace and of the peoples of the world. From the time of its foundation in 1949 as an offensive military alliance, it has always prepared to intervene. NATO's expansion and provocations are directly responsible for destabilization, tension, violence, and war. The recent affiliation of Finland and Sweden is adding fuel to an already explosive situation.

At its Summit in Madrid in June 2022, NATO officially and publicly declared, with the unanimous agreement of its member states, that it maintains the right to make a nuclear first strike and is ready to do so, announcing that NATO is at war with Russia. We condemn the colonial control maintained of the Malvinas, Georgias, and the South Sandwich Islands, where NATO has military bases. The struggle against NATO is part of the platform upon which the peoples and social and political organizations that advocate for peace, social justice and progress, mobilizing for the disengagement of NATO states from this imperialist war machine and calling for its dissolution worldwide. Achieving this goal is one of the World Peace Council's main priorities.

The World Peace Council concludes its 22nd Assembly in Ha Noi confident in its growing strength as an anti-imperialist organization that is capable of uniting broad forces in the struggle for peace and in solidarity with the peoples. This conviction is based on the rich record of activities that the WPC has undertaken and achieved. Since the 2016 Assembly in Brazil, the WPC has promoted and developed campaigns and global actions in all regions of the world. It has mobilized social forces and movements against military interventions in sovereign countries, Coups d' État, conventional and non-conventional wars, militarism, and nuclear weapons. Building on these activities constitutes the basis for further strengthening the WPC.

Today, given existing weaponry, a new war of unprecedented proportions, more destructive than the two world wars of the 20th century, can only have one outcome - the destruction of humanity as we know it. It is therefore more urgent than ever before to defend such principles as the peoples' right to self-determination, national sovereignty, and independence; non-interference in the domestic affairs of states;

peaceful resolution of international conflicts; an end to all forms of national oppression; disarmament; the dissolution of political-military blocs, and cooperation among the peoples and countries for a world of peace and emancipation and for humanity's progress.

Global capitalism's relentless drive for profit results in devastation of the natural environment through depletion of resources, pollution of the land and water, and global climate change. This indiscriminate destruction ruins the lives of billions of people, displaces millions around the world, and threatens the survival of the entire human race. The bulk of the environmental crisis has been caused by the economic activities of the richest countries, which refuse to bear their full share of responsibility.

The WPC, in accordance with its character, does not support wars for forced redistribution of natural resources, markets and spheres of influence amongst big capitalist powers for their geopolitical interests, attempting to change borders and impose their rule over the peoples, including by means of violent regime change, through controlling the corporate media and manipulation of peoples' ability to access information and analysis. We denounce the foreign debt and the conditions that are imposed on the people as a great obstacle to peace and to facing up to climate change, as well as preventing the exercise of sovereign policies for the well-being of the people.

The peoples of the world have mobilized in defense of their rights and sovereignty. The WPC condemns institutional violence and criminalization against those who exercise their right to protect their rights. We also demand the freedom of all political prisoners. We will not be bound by the imposition of any imperialist agenda of national oppression or exploitation and will continue to resist and reject its instruments of war and domination, such as NATO, nuclear weapons and military bases, fleets and exercises the world over.

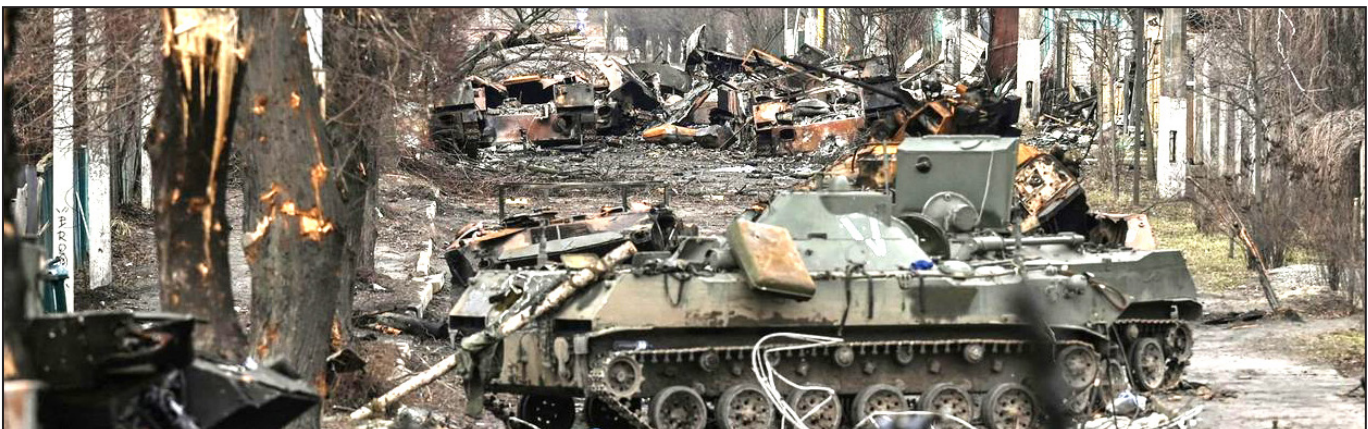
Strengthening the WPC is a key to the strengthening of solidarity between the peoples. The alliance between our members and our coming together with movements and friendly organizations are essential for promoting our united struggle for peace, justice, popular and

national sovereignty, common progress, and a world free of occupation, oppression, colonialism, exploitation, imperialism, and war. This is what we stand for and will continue to work for.

The spirit of our era is the affirmation of the peoples' will to take their destinies into their own hands. Developing the struggle for peace, democracy and justice is an inevitable tendency. Anything that contradicts this tendency is the manifestation of intolerance and oppression, the imposition of force against rights by the imperialist and military powers, and interventionism and war over the peoples' sovereign will, all of which deserves condemnation by all who stand for peace.

The World Peace Council is called upon to play an important role in this struggle and in strengthening this drive for progress. Since the time of its foundation, the WPC has been an international organization that embraces the broad convergence of all movements that are struggling against war, nuclear weapons, militarism, and imperialism in general, and violation of the rights of peoples and nations. We are happy to announce that the deliberations and decisions of the 22nd Assembly in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, have provided us with more determination and impetus in our efforts towards further strengthening the WPC and the entire peace movement.

The World Peace Council expresses its deep gratitude to the Party, the Government and People of Viet Nam, particularly to the Viet Nam Peace Committee and the Viet Nam Union of Friendship Organizations for their generous support and hospitality in hosting the XXII WPC Assembly. We congratulate the Vietnamese people for their great successes in building socialism in their country. The WPC reiterates its unwavering solidarity with and firm support for the course of national independence and socialism of the Vietnamese people. It is with these convictions that the delegates to the XXII WPC Assembly in Ha Noi, national member organizations of the WPC and our friends, have adopted resolutions and motions that push forward broad unity of action for peace, democracy, social justice, and anti-imperialist solidarity among the peoples, for a world of Peace and Social Justice!



Garlands For Philomena

If there is a Guyanese woman who dedicated her life to the struggle to uplift the living and working conditions of sugar workers in particular and workers in general in Guyana, that woman is Philomena Sahoye-Shury.

Growing up in the Progressive Youth Organization (PYO) youth arm of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), I saw Comrade Philomena at work in the field and at meetings with her trade union colleagues including Ram Karran, Harry Lall, Maccie Hamid, Albert Bodhoo, Ramprashad, Guy Fedricks, Komal Chand, James Dastigir and other outstanding trade unionists associated with the Guyana Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU, later named, the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union.

It was from her feisty political activism as a leading member of the PPP and her fiery speeches at public meetings at sugar estates with the workers as a trade unionist that Philomena was popularly branded 'The Fireball'.

Philomena had a distinct and unique voice that she could express with a certain pitch or highness. She spoke in a way her audience could understand the ideas and messages she sought to convey. Philomena was neither a dull nor monotonous speaker, she was a natural speaker, never artificial nor disingenuous. She had her own distinct style never speaking as if at a funeral dirge. I have had the privilege of listening to Philomena and sometimes joining with her at GAWU-sponsored May Day rallies in the countryside, on numerous and memorable election campaigns,, at bottom house meetings to fight off attacks by politically sponsored poachers who sought to undermine GAWU's vanguard role in the sugar industry, and who attacked the union because of its affiliation to the PPP.

The thin line that demarcates fear from respect was the way she was viewed by the labour aristocracy and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie who controlled the sugar industry before and after nationalization.

Philomena loved going on House-to House campaigns. She would 'load' a group of young boys and girls into an open-back vehicle and take them along with her on such campaigns encouraging those we visited to join the



PPP, to buy the Mirror newspaper or Thunder, the official organ of the PPP or simply to distribute handbills about a topical political or economic issue in Guyana.

Philomena was a powerful speaker, she had a knack for communicating or just rapping with sugar workers, she was well versed in their lingo and knew the vagaries of the industry 'like the back of her hand.'

'Philo' as we called her, knew quite well the woes and distresses of the workers at every sugar estate. She knew how to 'fire them up' to encouraging them to continue and never give up their struggle for better wages and working conditions; to be confident with the demand for recognition of their Union and to imbue in them, hope and inspire them with optimism in the future.

It was with a sense of great anticipation that whenever she rose to speak as a member of the National Assembly, the entire House would be silent knowing they would be treated with real life experiences conveyed with energy and aliveness that compelled members on both sides of the House to listen and learn about the Guyanese people's struggle for independence, social justice and why economic development must be for the benefit of the working people.

What many people do not know is that Philomena understood well the importance of popular or grassroots culture as a means of communication and what it meant for families of sugar workers who hungered for progressive and healthy entertainment.

In the absence in those days of television and social media when cinema-going was the only entertainment outlet available to the few at the estates who could afford to take the entire family to the cinema, grassroots cultural entertainment was greatly appreciated by people at the sugar estates.

It was under those conditions and in the face of that reality, Philomena organized groups of young girls and boys who would perform skits and recite poems reflecting life on sugar estates. Philomena and her close Comrade and friend, Shirley Edwards helped form choirs of five or six of 'old and young YO's' who would be taught to sing revolutionary, patriotic or individually composed folk songs at 'Penny Concerts' held either at community centers or school halls in the villages and

wider communities in the rural areas.

Talk about defending women's rights? Philomena must be placed in the pantheon of outstanding Guyanese women who, from time she entered politics and trade unionism, weathered the storm in defense of the rights of women in general but of women sugar workers in particular. Whatever the level or forum, Philomena was there speaking out in her unique fireball style, championing the rights of working women of Guyana and the world at large.

Learning of her passing, her comrades and friends would know that her energetic voice and passionate speeches will no longer be heard. It is that characteristic feature of our 'Fireball' we will miss most of all.

And while we bestow garlands upon her, we recall Richard Strauss' words; "The human voice is the most beautiful instrument of all, but it is the most difficult to play"



Clement J. Rohee was the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Foreign Trade and then Minister of Home Affairs. Mr. Rohee is an Executive and Central Committee Member of the People's Progressive and was a former General Secretary. He is the President of the Guyana Peace Council.

A Tribute to Philomena Sahoye/Shury

"I rememba wen wi used to sit inna govament yard inna trenchtown obi observin hypocrites mingl-in wid di good people we meet 2 years yes....good frens we have ooh... good frens wi have loss along di way yeah.....inna dis great future you kant forget your past...so dri your tears Issay yeah...no woman no cri....no woman no cri..."

Bob Marley, Island Records, Kingston Jamaica, 1974

Philomena Sahoye/Shury who passed away on October 2nd 2022 could be epitomised, eulogised as a gifted feminist.

A former member of the National Assembly (parliamentarian) Shury, aged 91, was a member of the People's Progressive Party for the longest while since the mid 1950s, serving as a rank-and-file activist and regional as well as central committee member of the PPP.

Her early formative years would have contributed (based on her own recollection) to her evolution as <a messianic> supporter of the Jagans, Janet and Cheddi (JJ and CJ) as she would make references from time to time.

On occasions gracing public platforms in political campaign mode, Comrade Philo often drew attention to the mixed ethnicity factor that comprised her parentage and family connecting to the Vieira's lineage and plantation proprietors of the Houston/Rome estate; a stone's pelt from the Demerara River.

Born during 1931, she spent part of her early years in Agricola village before moving to other parts of the country, then British Guiana.

To what extent her upbringing and education influenced her value systems is not known. Shury was, if anything, a very private woman. However, the decade of the 1930s, the extensivity of industrial activities of working people as well as the impact of the crisis-fraught war years of shortages coupled with Colonial oppression, would have been significant in the formation of her own social resume as she eventually chose to become a trained nurse.

But it was Janet Jagan she claimed oftentimes, who influenced her as a role model.

"I told my mother after listening to Janet speak that I want to be like her..."

Marginalisation and the struggle for Working Class Rights
The intergeneration of immediate post WWII, the national liberation or independence programme of the PPP as well as the Anglo United States conspiracy to displace PPP leadership cadres commencing from the late 1950s into the 1960s, had a profound impact upon the progressives throughout B. G; and it this experience that shaped and

determined Sahoye as a leader, a feminist as well as a politician.

Future historians may well endorse the notion that with the exception of Janet Jagan, Jane Phillips-Gay, Jessica Huntley, Jesse Burnham and Mses. Frances van Stafford, it was the militancy and thoroughbred temperament of Fireball Philomena that created lacerations on the façade and arrogance of the reactionary bloc of Creole and upper-class elites as a social agglomeration (or mix of class identities in society).

Philomena Shury dispelled the notion of women's inferiority and invisibility by achieving a presence within the Marxism-Leninism of the PPP based upon her connectivity with critical segments of the organised workers movement.

Unable and constrained towards claims of being representative of either of the two major racial groupings in Guyana, Shury focused on the 'small man', the people who were somehow considered as mired in communalism and impoverishment.

A statement issued by the Guyana Agricultural & General Workers Union (GAWU) stated:

"GAWU is saddened by her passing...a long-standing ally of the Guyanese Working Class, a dedicated comrade of GAWU, and a voice of working people...Cde Philomena, who earned the nickname of <Fireball> when she served as General Secretary (of GAWU) played an instrumental role in the consolidation and success of the GAWU.

During her time in GAWU, the union was engaged in the nearly 30-year struggle for recognition of field and factory workers in the sugar industry. It was a period when no attempt was spared to extinguish the militancy of the workers and GAWU. Despite the great challenges the 'Fireball' was not daunted. Her commitment was unyielding as she and other leaders of GAWU, demonstrated tremendous grit and determination that eventually saw GAWU gaining recognition in the sugar industry..."

Operating in a social cultural and political environment where no such proposition of a Gender Commission existed, Shury quite regularly made contributions to negotiations and decision formulation on par with her male counterparts in both the trade union and political party areas of activities.

Vice President, Dr Jagdeo, as PPP General Secretary, President Irfaan Ali as Head of State as well as the Women's Progressive Party (WPO) and GAWU have lauded and paid due respect to Comrade Philomena, who even in her years of an octogenarian remain a victim of criminals and racists

who would have the temerity to toss channa bombs and other intimidatory missiles upon her Sheriff Street Bel Air Georgetown residence.

But she remained a social revolutionary serving the People until the end.

"...Said I rememba wen wi used to sit inna di govament yard inna trenchtown...yeah an georgie would lite a logwood burning thru di nite...we would make oat meal porridge of which I'll share with you...yeah

So little darlin dri your tears shed no tears yeah...no woman no cri

No woman, no woman...no woman

No woman no cri one more time gotta say little little darlin please doan shed no tears no woman no cri

Evri ting goin to bi alrite

Evri ting goin to bi alrite

Evri ting goin to bi alrite

Evri ting goin to bi alrite..."

Bob Marley, Island Records, Kingston, Jamaica, 1974.

Shury's matrix, or otherwise expressed cross cutting activities, could only have evolved and rendered resilient by the socialisation that emerged as a consequence of WWII.

As former Guyana president Donald Ramotar has noted in comments, "she was fifteen years when Cheddi and Janet Jagan, Ashton Chase and Jocelyn Hubbard began the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) and took the first steps in the fight for freedom."

Her early association with the first mass progressive political party is therefore unique, given the pronounced patriarchal influence that was an impact on whatever political reforms the plantocracy was prepared to authorise.

Women's resistance to social oppression in fact did not begin with the intelligence and sagacity of Janet Jagan as historian Nigel Westmaas has revealed in descriptions of the urban pushback against the colonial elites during the 1920s and 1930s.

However, these were rare and brief and lacked the internal cohesion that characterised the initial 'pressure group' interventions of the PAC.

It can be assumed that for the majority of disenfranchised Guyanese the PPP brought something NEW to the concept

of self-rule and people's sovereignty.

According to a women's studies professor, A Lynnee Boyles, women workers cadre leaders in the Commonwealth Caribbean historically experienced relatively low inclusivity.

This situation resulted from a mix of factors; both within the productive process (job skillsets and roles) as well as coexisting with the work factory/mill (as defined by Michael Manley's Voice at the Workplace), particularly during the crisis decades of high unemployment, industrial crises coupled with the subordinate role of women in many instances, specific to women single parents.

Shury was fortunate in terms of her relatively again, insider knowledge of sugar estate field factory norms where for example, a cane harvester with years of service at one estate, having opted to seek employment at another plantation supposedly with improved conditions, would come to the union convenors with a grievance: "management ah still gi abie boy pay till abie wuk probation...". And this conflict was by no means circumscribed by age, as the workers affected would be usually in their late 20s and mid 30s as well as having spouses and offspring.

Another significant factor that weighed positively in terms of organising and being directly involved in decision making was that her organising skills were varied, serving to enhance her capacity as a multitask politician of the working people.

Useful for those radical Guyanese would be Shury's public debates during the mid 1990s. In these discourses there is an indelible indication that Shury, similar to the late Jan Carew and likewise late Rocky Mann, as well as the legendary Billy Strachan, identified with the ideological guidelines laid out by the scientific socialism of the Jagan-led PPP despite the so-called Ethnic Security Factor (ESF) postulated by the non-Marxists.



Eddie Rodney is a Senior Journalist for the Weekend Mirror newspaper. He was a former Member of Parliament.

Historical Dates



In 2022, we celebrated many significant events in history, both nationally and internationally.

On the national situation this year marked seventy five years since the election of Dr. Cheddi Jagan to the Parliament of Guyana in April 1947. It was then called the Legislative Assembly and the country was then a colony, British Guiana.

This was significant since Dr. Jagan was the first real representative of the oppressed masses, mainly the working people in that body. That was the beginning of Guyana's fight for freedom.

This year also marked sixty five (65) years since the second victory of the PPP at General Elections. The importance of this is that it was the first election held after the suspension of the Constitution in 1953.

At those polls the PPP fought against great odds. The Constituency boundaries were so manipulated by the British that the votes that Dr. Jagan got in his constituency was greater than all the opposition combined.

This was the first effort by the British to manipulate elections in this country.

At that time the British had managed to split the PPP using Mr. Forbes Burnham as the instrument of that split. The manipulation was done to assist the new British ally Forbes Burnham and his group.

It was in that same year that the Burnham faction of the PPP was renamed the People's National Congress (PNC). It was a creation of the British to fight against Independence of the then British Guiana.

Another significant anniversary is in riots of February 1962. That was sixty years ago.

The riots were instigated by the American CIA with the

main purpose of trying to dislodge the PPP from office. It financed the PNC and using the British control of the state practically guaranteed them immunity from arrests. The excuse used was that the 1962 Budget which was drafted by a well known economist Mr. Nicolas Kaldor, sent by the United Nations.

It was a budget that was designed to prepare the country for Independence. It got many great reviews from independent commentators.

However, it was used to create racial riots in which Indian Guyanese were attacked on the streets of Georgetown and Indian-owned businesses were destroyed by a roving mob of PNC supporters using molotov cocktail and dynamite.

It became notorious as the first racial riot in Guyana.

On October 5, 1992, thirty years ago, the first free and fair elections since independence was held in Guyana. The PPP won. Dr. Jagan was sworn in as the first freely elected President. Coincidentally he was sworn in on the 9th of October, 1992 exactly 39 years to the date that the constitution was suspended.

This is regarded as the return of democracy in Guyana.

It is also regarded as the date when the country's socio-economic life began its recovery from almost three decades of undemocratic rule and economic regression.

On March 6, 1997, twenty-five years ago, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, the man who led the fight for Independence from 1946 to 1997 and who also stood solid against PNC dictatorship from 1964 to 1992 went to sleep forever.

This man was also responsible for putting our country on the road to peace and development.

On that date the nation mourned for that great soul.



Significant International Dates

On October 25, 1917, old Calendar and November 7, 1917 new calendar, there occurred one of the most important events in the world, that was the victory of the working people's revolution in Russia. It became known as the Great October Socialist Revolution.

This revolution was led by one of the greatest thinkers and revolutionary of all times, Vladimir Ilich Lenin.

On December 1922, one hundred years ago under Lenin's leadership the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed. It grew to become the second largest economy in the world. Its progress was very rapid up until the mid 1970's when grave mistakes were made. It collapsed in 1991.

However, many of its accomplishments and contribution to mankind stands out as a monument of its achievements. This new workers state saved the world from Hitlerite fascism in the 1940s. The sacrifices and heroism is still spoken about today. In that fight the Soviet Union mainly the Russian people lost some twenty seven million people.

The Soviet Union played an important part in helping many other states to prosperity and freedom. It was one

of the first major assault on modern day colonialism. It introduced the principle of the "Right of Nations to Self-Determination".

It was the unselfish support of the USSR that was most responsible for the victory of Vietnamese people. The Cuban Revolution too would not have survived had it not been for the all round support of the Soviet Union.

The other significant anniversary is the seventy fifth (75th) anniversary of India's Independence.

In the modern era India was the first country to win its freedom from colonial domination.

In the fight for freedom thousands of Indian patriots lost their lives. It was a long and difficult road to freedom.

Many of the colonial masters, in their racism were predicting that India would fail.

However India produced some great leaders whose impact went world wide. The two most prominent were Mahatma Ghandi, whose non-violence and civil resistance movement broke the mighty British armaments.

His example and method of struggle influenced generations and contributed to the struggles of African-Americans led by the great Martin Luther King.

India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, became one of the greatest and most enlightened Stateman of all times!

It was under his leadership that India created formidable institutions to protect its people and to institutionalize democracy in that multi-cultural country.

Nehru visionary projects in Education and Health has created the conditions which has made India a power in science and technology. It has sent probes into space among other significant progress made.

Moreover the education which they received due to Nehru's enlightened policies has contributed to economic development throughout the world. Many huge corporation are managed by graduates of India's educational institutions.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a founder and leader of the Non-Aligned Movement which played a great role in defending the newly freed colonies from imperialist domination. He along with Kwame Nkruma, Broz Tito and Sukarno, guided the movement to defend the independence and to fight against militarism.

It is the work that he started which allowed India, seventy five years after freedom, to overtake the United Kingdom economically and now the fifth largest economy in the world.



Donald Ramotar is the former President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. He also served as General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party. Mr. Ramotar is a graduate from the University of Guyana in the field of Economics. He is an avid writer, and contributes regularly to the Mirror newspaper and other publications.

Gunboat Diplomacy

As British Naval and military forces headed towards British Guiana, a popular Cricket tune captured the attention of cricket fans across the land. The country was relatively peaceful at the time, as the people went about their business as usual.

The little children were playing games in the street singing such popular children tunes, while some were acting them out as well. Tunes like 'London Bridge is falling down, falling down; then they would fall to the ground. Another popular tune at the time was Humpty Dumpy sat on a great big wall, Humpty Dumpy had a great big fall, all the King's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpy together again. It was fun that no one knew why, until it was revealed Humpty Dumpy represented an egg. Have you ever tried putting a cracked egg together again?

But this was the sign of the times? The mighty British Empire was cracking up and nothing could put it back again. World War 11 had ended. The year was 1945. Britain was devastated by the constant bombing by the Germans during the War.

The 'Red Army' had sacrificed over 20 million lives in the war to defeat fascism. Hitler surrendered and the historic photo of the Soviet flag being hoisted on the Reichstag is an unforgettable historic event.

The US had acquired a secret weapon created by those scientists who fled Hitler's Germany. The US which at first did not enter the war reacted to the Japanese provocative bombing of 'Pearl Harbor' reportedly sinking a number of US battle ships. Humiliated the US retaliated by using the atomic bomb to destroy two Japanese cities.

Times were changing fast and the British Empire was no longer able to sustain itself. A new Empire was on the rise but not many knew it at the time. After the bombing of the two Japanese cities, in what may seem the use of excessive force on innocent people the US emerged as the new 'Superpower', militarily, financially and economically superior to every other country at the time.

After the war it was not always hostility between the big three leaders, Franklin D. Roosevelt of the US, Premier Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met in Crimea near Yalta to discuss how the post-WW11 should be organized. Germany was divided into two parts, West Germany

under Western Control and influence and socialist East Germany which became known as the German Democratic Republic. Is the present conflict between the Russian Federation and NATO another European Civil War which could escalate into a nuclear catastrophe should the NATO continue the dangerous path of expansion on the Russian border? Déjà vu.

After the end of the war in 1945 with US Imperialism on the rise a second phase of the 'Red Scare' had begun. The first phase begun in 1919, two years following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 led by Vladimir Lenin. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 ushered in a new era in international relations.

The first workers' state in history was born. Several of the Eastern States formed an alliance with the Soviet Union. This alliance had economic, financial and military ties with the young Soviet State. This military alliance was the WARSAW PACT.

There were now two Super Powers, the USA and the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). Ronald Reagan, President of the USA referred to the USSR as the 'evil empire' A new war had begun. It was called the 'cold war'. Sir Winston Churchill who was regarded as the British war hero even coined the term 'iron curtain', a virtual curtain to isolate the young Soviet State which was making remarkable progress from a poor, peasant state before the Revolution led by the Bolsheviks.

The US began to see 'red' everywhere especially as 'Red China' led by Chairman Mao united China in the Communist Revolution of 1949, two years after Britain had lost its 'cash cow'. The slave trade had ended and slavery and indenture slavery were coming to an end.

In the colony of British Guiana, the National Party of the People formed on January 1 1950 contested the first National Elections in 1953 sweeping the polls winning 18 out of 24 seats in the Peoples Assembly. This was unprecedented and a blow to an Empire once regarded as the largest empire in the world where it is said the 'sun never sets'.

Thirteen years after the PPP was formed Britain invaded its own colony several thousands of miles away. Many were wondering why?

News Flash...1953

The BBC leaked the news. British Gunboats heading towards British Guiana. Their mission: to put down an

impending communist insurgency led by the PPP. Fast forward: Remember the lie that Iraq had 'weapons of mass destruction' was used as the excuse to remove overthrow the President. The WMD's were never found or the lie retracted.

The peace was suddenly shattered with the news from the BBC, gunboats were heading towards the colony of British Guiana. Many were surprised. How could this be? In a country with no standing army, only a 'volunteer force' and a population of less than a million people, many kept wondering where is the war? The truth is, there was no war. So then why spend millions of pounds to carry out military maneuvers to invade another country? This is about what we are about to find out.

It was some seventy years ago when the Queen signed the order. A British cruiser; two frigates and 700 troops were immediately dispatched to the colony several thousands of miles away across the Atlantic.

Their mission: to overthrow the democratically elected Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) Government. The year was 1953. Guyana, a free country with limited self-governance was no longer free.

After only 133 days in Office the PPP Administration had no idea, a coup was in the making. Using the pretext of a 'communist plot' to undermine democracy in the colony the invading force sought to justify their actions. The mainstream print media, 'Argosy' and 'Graphic' had a heyday spreading disinformation of an impending communist takeover by the PPP.

The 'Red Scare' was everywhere. In the print and electronic media, the movies shown on the big screen, and radio waves since there were no cell phones or Televisions at the time.

The landing of battle-ready troops, disembarking at Port Georgetown caught many by surprise.

The National Party led by Dr. Jagan and other progressive leaders having contested its first National Election in 1953 surprised itself by winning 18 out of the 24 seats under Universal Adult Suffrage where property ownership or the inability to read and write English were no longer required to be qualified to cast the ballot. The voting age was 21 years like in England. Dr. Jagan had argued for Universal Adult Suffrage since 1948 when he had won a seat in the People's Assembly. Later voting age was even reduced to 18 by the PPP. This victory at the polls by the PPP proved to be a humiliating defeat especially for the British hierarchy.

But it must have been a curious sight, for the unusually small crowds who were brave enough to gather around to witness such a unique historic event. Some of the angry protesters shouted, 'go home limey', as a means of hurling insults to what they perceived to be the invading

force. Others just looked on amazed this display of this abuse of power and force.

Some of the soldiers suffered from a skin disease known as scurvy, which is cured by citrus limes rich in Vitamin C.



Photo shows British soldiers buying limes at one of the city markets.

British Guiana just about the size of England but with less than a million people made the BBC headline news at the time. It even made the top item on the Agenda of the Privy Council of Great Britain, its highest judicial body.

According to a Statement issued by the Colonial Office, the invasion was in response to developments that made it necessary to send forces with the "utmost dispatch" to preserve the peace in the colony. This illustrates the power of the propaganda of the ruling elite. While the situation was tense there is nothing to indicate the country was at war with itself.

The mighty British Empire where it was once said, 'the sun never sets' was now in decline. The Privy Council had met in emergency session. The decision 'dispatch troops with great urgency was clearly under the pretext not to put down a 'communist insurgency' in the colony. The troops anticipated hostility. The soldiers triggered by 'Cold War' fears and sentiments made the situation even more amusing as some children mimicking the troops marching through the peaceful streets of the capital city of Georgetown was a sight many could not forget.

Many stayed indoors as emergency rule was declared and to escape the wrath of those in command. Restrictions imposed on the movement of the leaders of the national movement resulted in Dr. Jagan who in the Gandhian spirit of non-cooperation and civil resistance deliberately broke the restrictions. Dr. Jagan was sentenced to be jailed for six months for breaking the restrictions on his movement. Other restrictive measures included, suspension of the Waddington Constitution of 1953. This can be considered Guyana's first Constitutional Crisis. The legally elected legislators were fired and the

British Governor, Sir Alfred Savage, re-installed to carry on until fresh elections is expected to be held four years hence. But many wondered why this show of force? The situation at the time could only be described as tense. Since the colony possessed no army, no police force of its own and never threatened anyone, there was no justification for a coup d'état.

British Guiana had no standing army of its own. Only a Volunteer Force at the only American Airbase, known as the Atkinson Airport. With a population of just under a million people, Guyana, a peaceful friendly, nation located on the shoulder of South America with close historical and cultural ties with the rest of the Caribbean is strategically located next to a major waterway. The Atlantic Ocean to the North constitutes a major trading route. This gives it a strategic advantage over its neighbors, particularly Venezuela, a major oil giant of South America.



Because the people of Guyana spoke English and because of its geo-strategic location on the shoulder of South America next to the Atlantic it is considered a prized possession by any country seeking military power and control of the Region. Its common borders with Venezuela, Brazil to the West and Suriname to the East offer unlimited possibilities for trade and Commerce with easy access to the waterways.

Was the 'Red Scare' an attempt to intimidate a small nation state whose plans, programs and policies of a Peoples Government offended the status quo in England and the local elites.

This was repeated in the case of the invasion of Grenada when the US 82nd Airborne division swooped down on the spice isle on the 25 October 1983 the pretext of saving 14 US lives.

The 'New Jewel Movement' Bishop's Party was smashed, its leaders killed or imprisoned. Again, using the 'red scare' as a pretext. This time Cuba is accused of

constructing a military base on the island. This the US claimed can pose a possible threat to US security. Again, the red scare became the pretext for overthrowing the progressive Maurice Bishop Government of Grenada. This is another tragic moment in Caribbean history that never should have happened. Today the Grenadian people are proud of their modern airport named after its hero Maurice Bishop.

Guyana remains poor and underdeveloped by years of colonial rule. Guyana rich in natural resources, particularly gold and other minerals continued to be perpetually poor as a result of colonial, neo-colonial misrule even though its rich biodiversity, warm climate and hospitable people made it a virtual paradise in Latin America and the Caribbean.

But it was Guyana's bauxite refined in the United States used in the manufacture of the airplanes to fight the Germans in World War 11 that would attract much attention. Also, earlier seismological studies by Russian geologists would have indicated the possible presence of oil and gas that made it a veritable prized possession in the international arena. Seventy years later this proved to be true with the discovery and production of huge deposits of high-grade oil and gas just offshore of Guyana's coastline. How ironical that the first contract to explore for oil was signed by Janet Jagan OE known as 'Thunder in Guyana', as President in 1997.

While the British sent troops to British Guiana on October 6, 1953 is still considered a mystery for some, for many others, it was an invasion the natives and the world would have witnessed for themselves firsthand.

A mighty Empire had eventually lost its way, like those before it. What was significant was Britain had lost its 'cash cow' in 1947 after India finally won its Independence from Britain after 200 years of the 'British Raj'. Whatever it was, it soon became clear the colony of British Guiana was under siege in '53, as the rest of the world looked on silently and did absolutely nothing. Not long after World War 11 ended, the US bombed two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki in what it is said to be retaliation for Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor resulting in the sinking of US battleships. The use of atomic bombs on innocent men, women and children was unprecedented and cannot be justified. The use of Atomic Weapons of mass destruction is a deliberate attempt to portray to the world the new emerging US Empire now possessed great power of control over others. This gave rise to US hegemony over the rest of the world.

A new insidious Empire was in the making, one not easy to recognize, one that thrived on the fear of communism and the 'red scare'.

The deception worked admirably for a number of years until the bubble bursts with the rise of 'Red China' as the fastest growing economy under the rule of the Communist Party of China. China has made remarkable progress in eradicating poverty, as well as, highlighting the achievements of socialism in a relatively short space of time constructing socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The decline of the British Empire and the rise of the American Empire brought a new era of wars and conflicts into being. America became the only superpower in a Unipolar world. With China emerging soon as the leading economy of the world surpassing that of the US the prospect of a multipolar world based on multilateralism is fast becoming the new reality.

Attempts at 'Regime change' under the pretext of containment of communism which first began in 1919 two years after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 led by Vladimir Lenin is now exposed. It was in 1919 that a new war had begun with disastrous consequences. It was called the 'cold war' led by the US. Was Guyana a victim of this war? This seems to be the only logical conclusion. The year 1953 was the time of the second 'Red Scare'. The birth of the first worker's state in Russia, chronicled by the American journalist as 'Ten Days That Shook the World', literally sent shock waves throughout Europe and North America. A poor peasant state after the socialist revolution of 1917 had become the showcase of socialist achievements. The USSR became the new rising superpower. The world was quickly transformed into a 'bipolar' world.

This had led to an unprecedented 'arms race' with serious consequences. While the so-called free West proclaimed the threat of communism, the question we need to ask ourselves is, without the solidarity and training provided by the socialist countries we would still be the colonies of the predatory West.

The British war hero and arch anticommunist, Sir Winston Churchill issued a chilling warning calling for the 'Bolshevik baby to be strangled in its cradle'. This is the direct reference to the October 1917 revolution led by Vladimir Lenin. This never happened as the Soviet Union became a formidable force for peace and progress.

Many national liberation fighters turned to the young Soviet State for training, moral support and solidarity in their struggle to be free and Independent. The big question remains unanswered; without the Soviet Union where would we have been in our own national liberation struggle led by the PPP? Some even argue, without the PPP where would we be?

Fomented violence, strikes, arson and rapes were instigated to destabilize progressive governments

throughout Latin America and the rest of the world. Again, in the 1961- to 1964 the declassified documents of the CIA and MI-5 described how it overthrew the legally elected PPP Government as the British maneuvered with electoral gerrymandering, Machiavellian style, to remove the PPP.

But Guyana was not alone. It was 1953 that the democratically elected Government of Dr. Mohamed Mossadegh was overthrown after the CIA fomented strikes and riots in the streets of Tehran. The Government had nationalized Iranian oil.

The following year 1954 the Jacobo Arbenz Government was overthrown with the help of the CIA. The crime, this time around was the nationalization of the United Fruit Company, the major exporter of fruit in Guatemala. Today many years later Guatemala still remains one of the poorest nations in Central America.

What all these countries had in common was the desire to own and control their natural resources in the interest of their people. Several years later, these countries have remained poor and underdeveloped. Why many are asking?

After World War II a new Empire was on the rise- the United States of America. A new era was beginning. It was now a unipolar world with the US hegemony felt all over the globe. New military alliances were forged, the Warsaw Pact, the military Alliance of the Socialist States and NATO of the Imperialist countries.

The Monroe Doctrine was adopted by the US to remind Europe to keep their hands off the territories in the Western hemisphere.

So, why did the British send troops to British Guiana October 6, 1953 still remains a mystery to many now seem to acquire some clarity? Was it a show of naked force aimed at driving fear in the minds of the people or was it aimed to stop support for Dr. Jagan and the PPP? After all the Peoples Progressive Party led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan had won the first national elections convincingly with 18 out of 24 seats in the House of Assembly. How could this be tolerated by the mighty British Empire? The Empire was angry. The Empire was humiliated and ready to strike back. The Empire did what most Empires do, striking a defining blow on its own colony. Was this meant to teach the unruly natives a lesson or was it designed to achieve regime change after standing still for the next four years?

The British did not seem to care, only to get regime change so their puppet can rule after they would have left. It should be noted Forbes Burnham a high-ranking leader of the Party was not jailed.

The invasion of the Malvinas islands in 1982 claimed by Argentina thousands of miles away led to its invasion

by Britain resulting in a war that should never have happened. Thousands died with untold destruction of property. Attempts to remove the legally elected Government of Venezuela on the border with Guyana recently failed. The Venezuela army is strong and solidarity with the socialist countries strong.

The United Kingdom Government based its actions on what it claims to be a threat to the administration of the British colony. The British Officials blamed “communists and their associates” for the show of force and invasion in 1953.

As would be expected the colonial version would be different from those who refused to endure the pains, subjugation and humiliation of colonial domination and rule. While there were those who were willing to cooperate with the British there were others who refused to be subdued and subjugated or even shackled again like the slaves who fought bravely for their freedom.

A National Movement had come into being led by a Party of the People (PPP) for the first time. Armed with a people-centered program for change, democracy and development created fear and apprehension in conservative Britain.

After three and a half months the achievements in the field of health, education and social services in such a short period of time was too much for the British Lords and Barons to bear. The British preferred their puppets to the choice of the people based on democratic elections. How could this happen became the hue and cry among the ruling circles, here and abroad, especially since the Administration were made up of progressives guided by working class values and principles. This proved unacceptable to the colonial masters. Such precedents can prove dangerous. Since the leaders of this Party were dedicated and committed revolutionaries that would not be easily bought. The British then proceeded to do what they know best, institute a policy of ‘divide and rule’ or as others put it, ‘divide and conquer’.

About the size of England with 90% of its rainforest intact. Rich in natural resources and biodiversity Guyana remained poor and undeveloped as a colony. This was the stark reality. At one time in the 80’s Guyana was even competing for the status with Haiti for being the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Apart from the Europeans who colonized these lands in the 17th century, the slaves were the first to be bought and brought to work on the sugar plantations. It was not until slavery was finally abolished in 1838 that Indian indentured ‘slaves’ were brought to replace the freed slave labor. The only indigenous people occupying the land are the Amerindians who would have come thousands of years ago.

Britain desperately needed an excuse for removing the

PPP which won 18 out of the 24 seats in the ‘House of Assembly’. Dr. Jagan and the PPP were far too popular to simply wish away. So, the British feverishly began to hatch a plan to remove the PPP using two options available to them. The first was to split the PPP leadership so as to weaken the Party and if this fails then they would resort to a period of ‘marking-time’ hoping the people would move away from Dr. Jagan and the PPP.

But as the leader Dr. Jagan predicted this turned out to be wishful thinking. Dr. Jagan was not only a charismatic leader of the national movement but also had in the 133 days ‘towards freedom’ demonstrated how the people once motivated can achieve great heights in solving social issues affecting their lives and livelihood.

The ‘cold war’ had begun in 1949 four years after the end of World War II resulted in an invisible ‘iron curtain’ around the Soviet Union and the other Socialist States. The term ‘iron curtain’ first coined by the arch anti-communist Sir Winston Churchill who was Prime Minister of Britain at the time in a speech made in the US. This can be considered the first set of sanctions against the young socialist state by trying to isolate it from the rest of the world. Today, several years later Russia remains the key player in global politics with China to soon overtake in the coming decade the US as the number one economy of the world.

The ‘red scare’ first began in 1919 two years after the Great October Socialist Revolution led by Vladimir Lenin. John Reed, the American journalist who witnessed firsthand this event described it as ‘Ten Days that Shook the World’. It was a truly earth-shaking event.

‘Resurrected in the late 40’s and early 50’s, Communism is referred to as the ‘Red Scare’ was blamed for all of America’s ills. Fear of spies, threats of a communist takeover and paranoia about nuclear war appeared everywhere’. In British Guiana news spread among the Amerindians living in the forests that communists are people who eat people among other fears. Many who are vulnerable believe these lies.

In his book, 133 days towards freedom, veteran trade unionist Comrade Ashton Chase, one of the four founders of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) the fore-runner of the Peoples Progressive Party led by Cheddi Jagan exploded the myth of a communist plot in Guyana. Later exposures from the declassified CIA and MI-5 secret documents confirmed Dr. Jagan’s conclusion in his book, ‘The West on Trial’. In the epilogue Dr. Jagan concluded the West is guilty.

History moves only in a forward direction in spite of the twist and turns along the way and frequent set-backs that occur from time to time. It was 1953 when the PPP swept the polls winning 18 out of 24 seats in the People’s Assembly in the first National Elections under Universal

Adult Suffrage that the British found the results shocking and totally unacceptable by British standards or for that matter, any standard.

The second 'Red Scare' occurred after World War II in 1949. Known as 'McCarthyism' after Senator Joseph McCarthy of the United States. This is one of the most vicious periods in US history. Many innocent persons were persecuted on the spurious ground of being Russian spies. Among these were the world-famous comedian and actor Charlie Chaplin. Paul Robeson, the famous American black performer and a close friend of Dr. Jagan, during his student days in the US. He was mocked and ridiculed for visiting the Soviet Union.

Was Guyana a victim of the 'cold war'? US Senator McCarthy saw red everywhere, destroying the careers and lives of many by labelling them communists. Dr. Jagan was constantly persecuted labelling him and several others communists. This anti-communist hysteria was used to camouflage and justify the exploitative actions of the Imperialists.

But we no longer live in a Uni-polar world where the US acts as the chief hegemon dictating its values and principles to others. We are now living in a rapidly changing world where the shifting balance of forces is more in favor of peace, true democracy and social progress. The new global democratic order will create a new global climate based on a multipolar world with multilateral policies that are mutually beneficial. The alternative is Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD).

According to former US diplomat, Henry Kissinger we are now living in a new era. Any attempt to institute a new 'Cold War' must be resisted at all cost. Map showing Guyana's geo-strategic location next to the major Atlantic waterway: Did the imperial British hope to achieve regime change by keeping the PPP led by Cheddi, Janet, as well as, other progressive leaders from winning the elections and subsequently out of power for a long, long time. It was not until the return of democracy in 1992 after former US President Jimmy Carter intervened was free and fair elections, free from fear returned to this troubled land.

Without the British invasion in 1953, CIA and M-I 5

subversive activities as well as, the action of the local reactionaries including the mainstream and yellow press wouldn't we have been far better off?



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Book Review:

A Revolutionary for Our Time

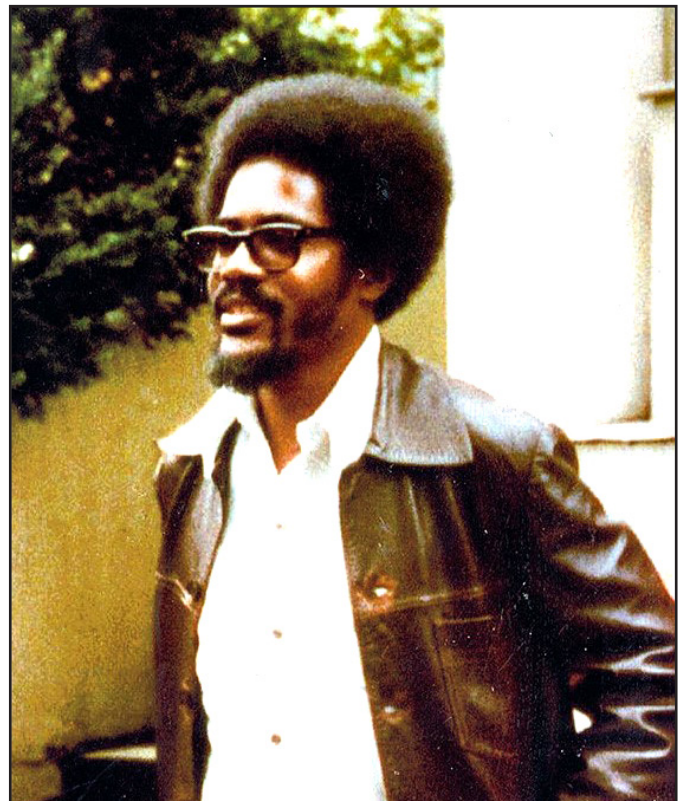
It is said that the worth of an individual is judged, not by the number of years lived, but by the life in those years. This is exactly what Leo Zeilig attempted, rather successfully, to highlight in his book 'The Walter Rodney Story: A Revolutionary for Our Time.'

Walter Rodney died at the relatively young age of thirty-four, but as pointed out by the author, Walter Rodney's unparalleled analysis of slavery, colonialism, and racism helped ignite revolts across the Pan-African world in the 1960's and the 1970's. This vivid account of his life and work traces the roots of Rodney's brilliant synthesis of Marxism and Black Power within the living struggles and demonstrates his unique relevance to radical internationalist solidarity today. As mentioned earlier, life cannot be measured by the number of years we live and Rodney's contribution to the revolutionary struggles of his time do amount to several lifetimes.

In a number of fundamental ways, Rodney's life and work emphasized the evils of capitalism and the impact it is having not only in the underdevelopment of countries in the so-called Third World but on humanity as a whole and the existential threat posed to the human race. A world system that generates deadly viruses as a result of climate emergency has not escaped the penetrating mind of Rodney, one as observed by Canadian writer and activist Naomi Klein, the economic system of 'limitless consumption and ecological depletion' is at the heart of the climate crisis.

A free world cannot be built until and unless the cycle of destruction generated by the capitalist mode of production and distribution comes to an end. History was a tool used by Rodney 'to highlight the repetitive and ruinous pattern of global capitalism: the millions of lives it had destroyed and the devastation it had wrought upon the earth in its brief five centuries of existence.'

As noted by the writer, Rodney was a Marxist for our time; a man who spent his life on political education, aware that it was only through careful and painstaking study that capitalism could be known and ultimately overthrown. Armed with this knowledge and conviction, Rodney set about not only to interpret the world around him, but to change it in a radical and fundamental way. Rodney was the main architect in the formation of the



Working People's Alliance (WPA). As Zeilig pointed out, Rodney on his return from abroad fully immersed himself in full-time political activism which in some respects was 'the practical consummation of everything he had been working toward in his adult life. He became passionately involved in the struggle against the undemocratic and dictatorial Burnham regime which, even though ostensibly Black, did very little if anything to enhance the working and living conditions of the working class of which Afro-Guyanese was a major ethnic group.

The influence of Dr. Jagan and the PPP on the shaping of Rodney's political and revolutionary outlook was significant, a fact which many in the WPA leadership appeared not to give due prominence to. This fact was however acknowledged by the author when he wrote:

'Walter had already left for his studies in Kingston when the People's Progressive Party (PPP) for whom he had campaigned as a boy won the election..... Despite the

fact that the Party had gained almost double the number of seats of the People's National Congress, the aftermath of the elections had seen terrible racial violence with mass demonstrations headed by the PNC and a general strike. The strike was encouraged and supported by the CIA...

Regrettably, what was essentially a class struggle turned out to be an ethnic confrontation and the WPA saw itself as a kind of balancing force to blunt the ethnic cleavage which was gaining ground in the country's political landscape.

The formation of the WPA did in some ways contribute to the forging of a national response to PNC authoritarian and dictatorial rule. The WPA under the then dynamic leadership of Walter Rodney managed to, as it were, blunt the ethnic factor which had bedevilled the democratic and working class struggle ever since the split of the PPP in 1955. This was manifested in the solidarity actions of workers in the sugar and bauxite industries dominated by Indians and Blacks respectively. Rodney played a key role in that regard. After his return from overseas in 1974, he was instrumental in the formation of a broad-based Arnold Rampersaud Defence Committee. Rampersaud, a taxi driver and PPP activist, was accused of murdering a Black police officer and was remanded to prison in Georgetown on trumped-up charges. Together with the PPP and other overseas lawyers which included Maurice Bishop in December 1977, after four years in prison and three trials, Rampersaud received a verdict of not guilty.

By the mid-1970's the working class struggle was picking up momentum. Bauxite workers with known loyalties

to the PNC began to take industrial action. This was a significant development which demonstrated that the PNC was losing its political grip on the predominantly Black mining town of Linden. Several trade unions which were sympathetic to the PNC began to take industrial action including the CCWU and the Guyana Labour Union. It was during that period that the Organization of Working People (OWP) was formed which saw itself as a voice of workers in the mining sector.

Rodney's radicalism, though hailed by many of his supporters as revolutionary, was seen by some of his peers as risky and something of a misadventure especially against Burnham's 'my steel is stronger' threats against militants in general and Rodney in particular. Burnham's call for the militants 'to prepare their wills' proved to be much more than political rhetoric. As it turned out several opposition activists, including Rodney was murdered by the Burnham regime, including two supporters of the PPP who were shot to death by the military after they sought to prevent ballot boxes from being hijacked in the 1973 massively-rigged elections. One of Rodney's mentors, CRL James felt that Rodney took too many risks and for 'not realizing the extent of the regime's murderous intent'.

One shortcoming of the book is that it did not give due credit to the PPP and Dr. Jagan in particular in terms of advancing the class struggle and raising the revolutionary consciousness of the Guyanese people both during the pre-independence period and also during the days of PNC dictatorial rule. His reference to Dr. Jagan and the PPP as a 'disappointment' was somewhat of a disservice. Nor was enough credit given to the PPP/C administration



and former President Donald Ramotar for setting up a Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the circumstances that led to the untimely demise of Dr. Rodney. Indeed, it was under the PPP/C administration that Rodney was rehabilitated and the official cause of his death changed from 'misadventure' to 'assassination'. His occupation which was listed as 'unemployed' was corrected to read Professor', is a fitting tribute to a true son of the soil. Moreover, several other national institutions were named after him including the Walter Rodney National Archives and the establishment of a Walter Rodney Chair at the University of Guyana.

The changing dynamics of the post-Rodney politics which saw the leadership of the WPA joining in a partnership within a broader APNU coalition which included the PNC was glossed over by the author, no doubt out of respect for the memory of Rodney whose life was snuffed out by the Burnham regime in the prime of his political and academic life.

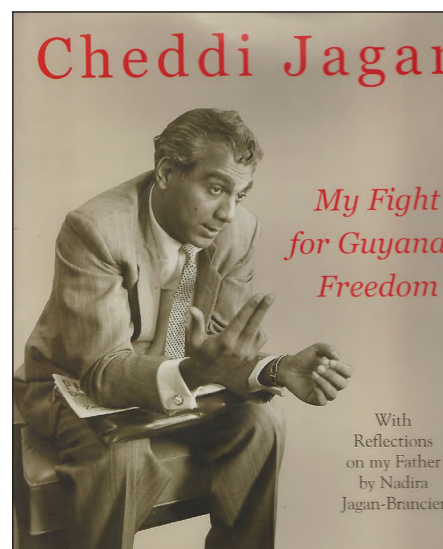
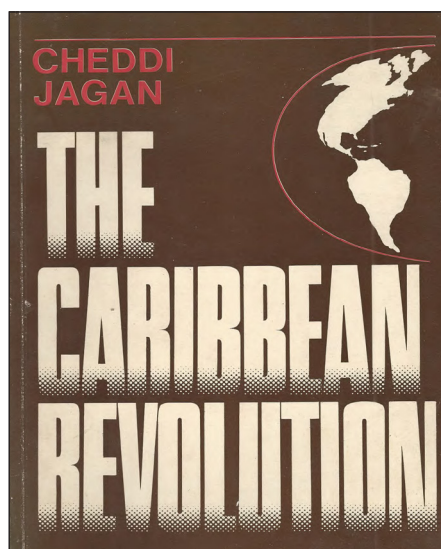
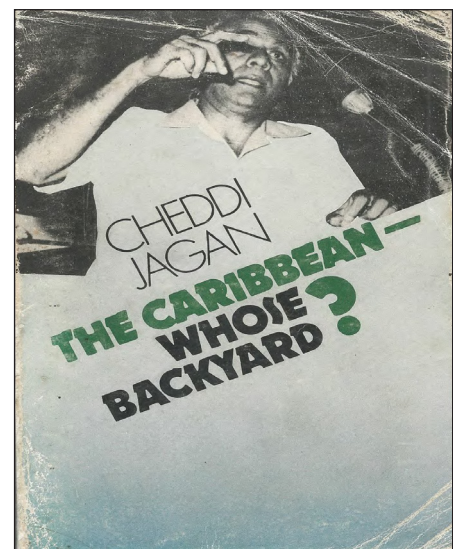
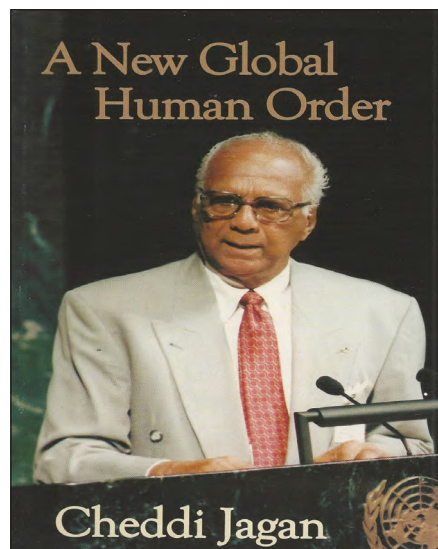
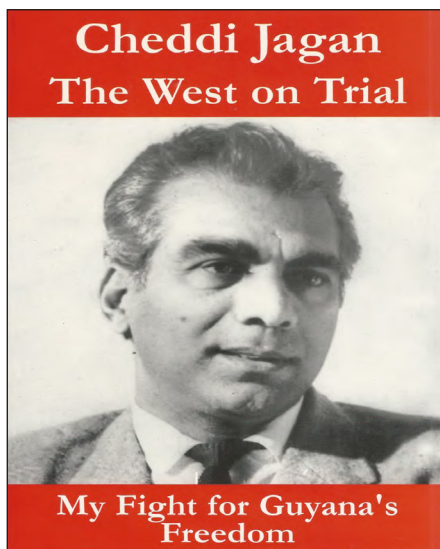
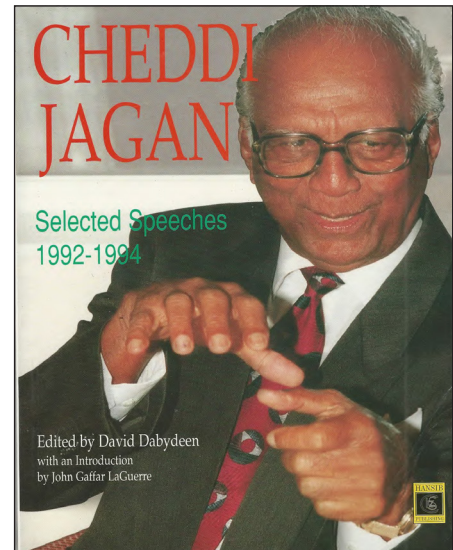
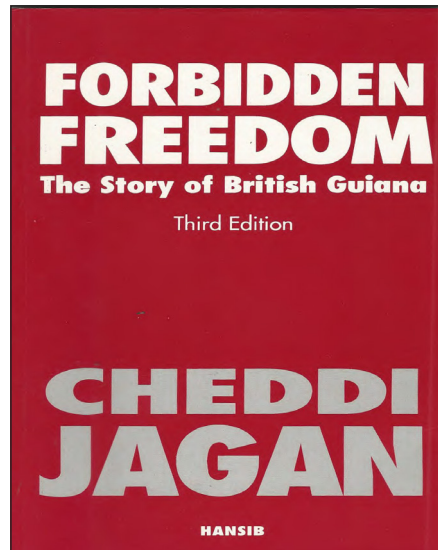
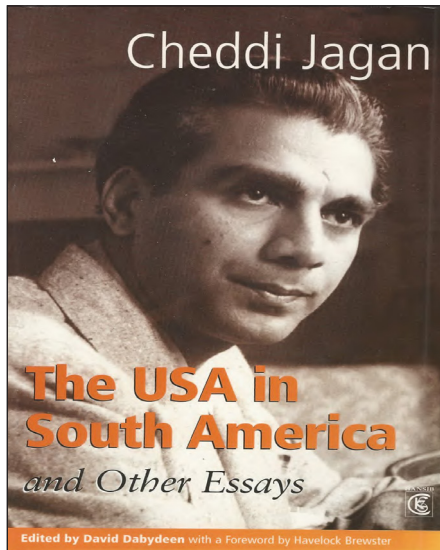
The 'shortcomings' notwithstanding, the book is a good contribution to the literature on progressive thinking in Guyana and the wider international community especially as it relates to the life and work of Dr. Rodney. In paying tribute to Dr. Rodney and his legacy, the author

could not have put it more succinctly when he wrote: 'Rodney's writings as I hope this book has shown-remain vital to understanding our world, and the pressing need to revolutionise it. If Rodney had lived, he would not have been surprised by the unending destructive capacity of global capitalism and its ability...to destroy the very source of human life, earth itself. Rodney understood that the capricious, insatiable hunger for profits in capitalism generates the devastation we see today, and that the economic system cannot be reformed.' The book is certainly worth reading and the author must be commended for the informative and well-researched publication.



Hydar Ally is the holder of a Master's Degree in Political Science from the University of Guyana. He is the Author of two Publications, "Insightful Views on Guyana" and "Pragmatism or Opportunism: Guyana's Foreign Policy Behaviour". He is also Chairman of the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre and a Central Committee member of the PPP.

Publications by Dr. Cheddi Jagan



Cheddi Jagan Research Centre

The Cheddi Jagan Research Centre (CJRC) was officially opened on March 22, 2000 which was the 82nd birthday anniversary of Dr. Cheddi Jagan. The CJRC is dedicated to making available to Guyana and the world, the very rich collection of materials which captures the visionary thoughts and revolutionary ideas of the late President of Guyana, Dr. Cheddi Jagan (1918-1997)

The centre houses a large archival collection of papers, documents, photographs, audio and DVDs related to Dr. Jagan's long and enduring involvement in leading the political struggle in Guyana and at the global level. Dr. Cheddi Jagan is the Father of the Guyanese nation and a renowned and respected statesman. His immense stature in Guyana the Caribbean and the world at large stems from his ground-breaking contributions in numerous stages of the struggle for a better life for the people of Guyana and the world at large.

These include:

1. The struggle against the British to end colonial rule through political independence.
2. Governing for the benefit of the Guyanese people in the colonial period in 1953 and 1957 to 1964 and as the first democratically elected President of independent Guyana from 1992-1997.
3. The international struggle for an end to poverty and inequality through a New Global Human Order.

The CJRC's aims and objectives are to publish material and promote research on the life, work and ideas of Dr. Jagan which is intertwined with the history of Guyana as a whole from the early 1940's to the late 1990's.

Moreover, the collection is indispensable to any analysis of Guyana's post-war social, economic and political development, since Dr. Jagan's work and thoughts have had such a powerful resonance with his country and beyond.

Conference Room Rental

The Conference room is available for rental to host meetings, seminars and workshops

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Website: <http://jagan.org>

Opening hours: Monday – Friday (9:00 am – 4:00pm)

Admission – FREE!

The Cheddi Jagan Research Centre is dedicated to making available to the Guyanese and international communities the Legacy and Work of the Late President of Guyana, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, through research and education.

The Centre is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation located at the Red House.

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