

THE THINKER

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CUBA

A STUDY IN COURAGE
AND RESISTANCE | *By Nadira Narine*

ENGELS | THE OTHER FOUNDER OF MARXISM

BY FORMER PRESIDENT – DONALD RAMOTAR

AT WORK IN HOSPITALS, OR IN GAOL

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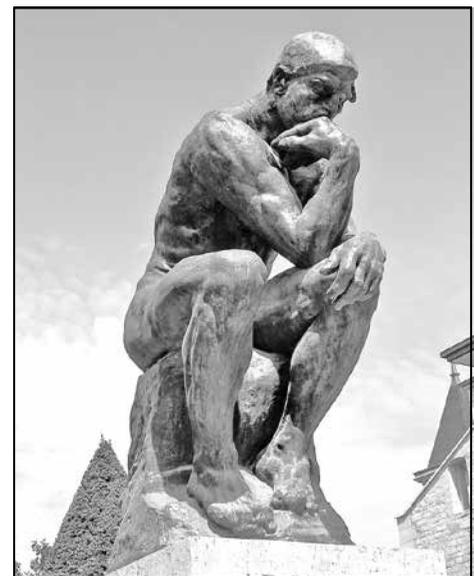
ELECTIONS 2025

HYDAR ALLY



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EDITORIAL

The September 1, elections in Guyana have ushered in very important changes in the body of politics of the country. New forces have arisen on the one hand and on the other some long-held positions, particularly in race relations have been shaken to the very core.

Most important is the landslide victory of the People's Progressive Party/Civic at those elections. The PPP won thirty-six of the sixty-five parliamentary seats that were being contested. Concomitantly, the PPP increased its support in almost every region and in every segment of the population.

For the first time since the 1957 elections, the PPP won most of the votes in Region 4. Moreover, in Region 10, the one-time strong hold of the People's National Congress (PNC) the PPP increased its representation, and the PNC lost its majority to a newcomer to the political scene.

The main tool of the PNC/ APNU, used to be the racial card. This is a historic situation which has its beginning in the 1950s when the Party was split in 1955.

In order to build support for Mr. Burnham and his new Party, the PNC appealed to race and at every election since then, race was the principal mobilising factor and tool resorted to by the PNC.

The September 1, 2025 elections showed that this unpatriotic, divisive and negative instrument is being blunted. Hopefully, the scourge of racism would be completely uprooted from all aspects of our society, within the next five years.

This in many ways was the result of the work of Cheddi Jagan and the PPP from its inception. In the worst period of racial clashes, the PPP held on to the position that unity of all the people was the only way to guarantee our socio-economic progress.

The PPP never made any compromise with the racist. Historically it expelled any member that it caught propagating any form of racism. That was at the heart of the expulsion of Balram Singh Rai in the early 1960s.

At the last elections that line came out victorious.

The second reason for the impressive victory of the PPP was the performance of the government between 2020 and 2025. Coming after the PNC/APNU/AFC tenure in 2015 to 2020, the PPP administration shone brightly.

The economy of the country grew significantly. With the exception of sugar, every other sector of the economy performed magnificently.

The main area was the oil industry. It is well known that the PNC/APNU/AFC regime signed a very bad deal with Exxon Mobil, the US giant multi-national corporation.

Even though the PPP/C administration did not re-negotiate the contract which many had hoped for, it managed the resources very well. It invested in the important areas of infrastructure and the social sectors which benefited all our people.

In the first place, a lot of resources were channelled towards Education and Health. The gains made in those areas have been extremely impressive.

New housing schemes have sprung up catering for various sections of the population. Extension of electricity and water to almost every household were all very impressive.

The PPP/C government tackled the infrastructure with great energy. New highways and Bridges have linked every region in the country. Those projects have given a real boost to the economy. Farms to market roads have contributed to the upsurge in agricultural production.

The PPP/C government removed some two hundred taxes that the previous government had placed on the backs of the population, thus helping to stabilize the cost of living. Taxes on fuel were reduced to allow people to move around easily and freely.

The Opposition Set Backs

As a result of the sterling contributions of the PPP/C, the opposition propaganda lost credibility. The greatest set-back was experienced by the PNC, which saw its supporters leaving en-mass to the PPP and to a new Party WIN that was formed at the last elections.

The racist propaganda, which the PNC specialised in, took a serious and embarrassing beating. The young population sent a strong message to the PNC, which if not heeded could end in greater disaster for and possible total disintegration of the PNC.

The AFC, which was formed for the 2006 elections and had some good results lost all its support and was not able to obtain a single seat in the Parliament. They were rejected because the masses saw them as part of the PNC which did nothing to stop the excesses of the Coalition Government. They were a part of the disastrous regime which provided very little for the masses when they had the chance.

The final nail in that Party's coffin took place when they joined with the PNC to attempt to blatantly and shamelessly rig the 2020 elections, as they successfully did between 1968 and 1992, and many still contend the 2015 elections, with the connivance of GECOM.

The new Party We Invest In Nationhood (WIN) made a good showing. It became the largest party in the opposition, obtaining 16 seats compared to the PNC's 12. That has made them overnight the leading opposition bloc in the National Assembly.

What accounted for this seemingly successful run?

In the first-place disillusionment with the PNC which had lost credibility. They are no longer trusted. That accounted for some of their gains.

Secondly was the open buying of votes. This is a new phenomenon in our politics. The WIN spent billions to bribe some voters. It was done on a mass scale and in many instances openly, for all to see. The leader of that Party is a very rich man and is believed to have made quite a lot of money by all kinds of nefarious activities.

Indeed, he is sanctioned by the United States Treasury for smuggling of gold.

However, the Party is not rooted in the masses, and it is quite possible that it would unravel faster than the AFC.

The PPP/C has a very good opportunity to stay in power for a very long time for it has proven to be the most capable and trusted party in developing the country.

It must, however, stay focused and fight against the anti-social behaviour, including corruption.

Guyana now looks forward continued Peace, Progress and Prosperity.

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THE CLIMATE CROSSROADS

At the end of October 2025, Jamaica was struck by Hurricane Melissa, a Category 5 storm of unprecedented power and devastation. Scientists studying Melissa's origin and trajectory are clear: human-driven climate change made this monster storm far more likely and far more destructive. A rapid attribution analysis by the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London found that a Melissa-type hurricane is now about four times more likely in today's climate compared to a pre-industrial world. Seas along Melissa's path were up to 1.4°C warmer than average, fuelling the storm with stronger winds and more intense rainfall near the storm's centre. The destruction is staggering: Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness estimated economic damages of almost a third of GDP.

The unfortunate reality is that Melissa is not a freak storm. In a warmer world, our Caribbean neighbours will likely face a future of stronger, slower, and wetter hurricanes alongside longer dry spells. While we are lucky that Guyana lies outside the hurricane belt, we are not immune to climate change impacts. Recent research published by the Government in 2024 shows that Guyana's temperatures have risen relative to historical averages. Sea levels are increasing at a rate of 10 mm/year, two to five times faster than

the global average, increasing the vulnerability of our coastal regions. Rainy seasons have become shorter but more intense, causing seasonal flooding, while longer dry seasons heighten drought risk. The outlook is not encouraging; these trends are likely to worsen.

I feel deep sorrow for the people of Jamaica, for every home destroyed, every life disrupted, and every community now facing the daunting task of rebuilding. Globally, events like Melissa should trigger urgency to correct course. Science has warned us, and all countries have repeatedly experienced devastating, sometimes catastrophic, impacts. No country is immune.

These realities have long been recognised. In 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was born at the Rio Earth Summit from a concerted global effort. At the time of writing this article, the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the UNFCCC is ongoing in Belém, Brazil. Expectations heading into the conference were high, as they usually are. Many hope this summit could finally be a turning point, moving from pledges and 'talk' to real implementation on adaptation, loss and damage, and climate finance. Brazil launched several initiatives including FINI ("Fostering Investible National



& Implementation”), designed to turn adaptation plans into bankable projects. Whether such initiatives translate into meaningful action and whether the decisions of COP30's negotiations meet the needs of the world remains to be seen.

Indeed, the outcomes of this ambitious effort remain largely aspirational. Reality tells a different story. We have already passed the opportunity to limit warming to 1.5°C, one of the critical thresholds set just a decade ago in the UNFCCC's Paris Agreement. Global energy demand is rising, and with it, the demand for fossil fuels. South America is the world's new oil and gas frontier with reserves second only to those found in the Middle East. Brazil and Guyana are among the top five drivers of global oil growth outside OPEC.

In this global context, the stakes for Guyana are high. In early November 2025, ExxonMobil announced production of around 900,000 barrels of oil per day in Guyana's Stabroek Block, on track to reach 1.7 million barrels per day by 2030. In vivid contrast, Guyana has long touted itself as a net carbon sink: our forests remove more CO₂ than is emitted by all other sectors combined. Although the sink is slowly shrinking due to rising domestic emissions, we are not likely to lose this status soon because Guyana does not refine or burn the crude we produce. Carbon accounting rules attribute these emissions to the countries where the oil is used.

Even so, the scale of emissions is staggering. Burning just 900,000 barrels of oil per day would release roughly 141,000 Gg of CO₂ in a single year, more than all the carbon absorbed by Guyana's forests in 2022. Our entire national emissions in 2022 were only 10,400 Gg, barely a fraction of the carbon that will be released when the oil we produce this year is burned.

the cumulative annual emissions will be orders of magnitude higher. These emissions add to global warming, making extreme weather events like Hurricane Melissa more likely, accelerating sea level rise, and intensifying floods and droughts worldwide. These impacts will be disproportionately felt by the poor who have lower capacities to adapt and rebuild when devastation strikes.

Climate change is uniquely challenging because greenhouse gas emissions are transboundary. At a global scale, it does not matter where the oil is burned. Addressing it requires action and accountability by all. But should nations bear the burden equally? Should countries like Guyana be denied the opportunity to develop newly found petroleum resources?

At COP30, President Ali challenged calls for new oil and gas producers to slow or halt production. With global oil demand rising, and richer countries continuing to fully develop their petroleum, the argument is clear: why not Guyana? We are on the cusp of a major economic boom thanks to the oil and gas industry. Which country would decline such an opportunity for long-awaited prosperity? On the other hand, without significant mitigation to reduce emissions across the board, climate change impacts will continue and will amplify.

We are at a climate crossroads. One path leads to economic development but almost certain climate catastrophe. The other requires significant sacrifices no country is quite prepared to make. We are on the first path. The question is: how long can we stay here?



By Kandila Ramotar

Editor's Note: The following award winning article is reproduced with the kind permission of the writer Dr. Estherine Adams lecturer. History and Caribbean Studies, University of Guyana

“At Work, in Hospital, or in Gaol”: Women in British Guiana's Jails, 1838–1917



This article argues that labour, particularly female labour, was central to the expansion of colonial Guiana's post-emancipation penal system between 1838 and 1917. It highlights the intersection of coerced labour and colonialism in the post-emancipation period, by centring the lives of incarcerated women to understand the nature of state governance in colonial spaces. It argues the plantocracy leveraged the expansion of prisons not to control crime but to control labour. As the newly constructed prisons filled, colonial and local authorities explained increased incarceration rates as a legitimate response to increased crime, supported by an evangelical rhetoric that promoted incarceration to encourage reform when it was accompanied by religious instruction and education. In practice, authorities used the prison system as a means of labour discipline, labour extraction and as a threat to secure future docility. Female indentured labourers convicted of petty crimes, including breach of contract, were often sentenced to work on plantations; creole women worked on sea defence construction and maintenance. A common refrain in the colony was that free labour could not be obtained. The malleability of prisoners as a labour force was thus attractive to the government, as prisoners could be moved, deployed and disciplined in ways that were not possible for free labour.

Concerned with their profits, planters in nineteenth-century British Guiana¹ often expressed the opinion that their labourers, especially indentured labourers, ought always to be in one of three places: at work on the plantation, ill in the hospital or incarcerated in one of the colony's jails.² Only in the hospital did labourers find some respite; in jail they were often required to perform the same type of labour as on the plantation. Such was the case of Cassilla, an indentured immigrant from India to British Guiana. On 29 October 1856, Cassilla's mother, Bussanta (also an East Indian immigrant), submitted a petition to Governor Philip Wodehouse asking him to release her daughter from the Georgetown jail. Finding her guilty of breaches of the immigration labour law, the magistrate had sentenced her to 12 months' imprisonment at hard labour in the county of Essequibo. Shortly after her sentencing, however, Cassilla had been transported 90 kilometres to Georgetown, where she laboured building and maintaining the colony's seawall defence. Cassilla's mother argued her daughter's relocation was “contrary to the sentence and law” and asked the governor to “direct her to be removed to the jail of the county to which she was sentenced” or “to be bonded to an estate.”³

Just over ten years earlier, another young girl had experienced coerced labour through the prison system. On 9 December 1844, a police magistrate sentenced Frances

Keywords: Female Prison Labour; Indentured Labour; Seawall Construction; Plantation Labour; British Colonialism; British Guiana

.This article is part of my dissertation (University of Mississippi) that explores women in British Guiana's jails in the post-emancipation period. I wish to acknowledge the ESRC-funded project Mental Health, Neurological and Substance Abuse Disorders in Guyana's Jails: 1825 to the Present Day (award no. ES/S000569/1) for affording me the opportunity to refine my work through research and workshops. Also, thanks are due to the Labour History editorial team and the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and valuable suggestions.



Sturgeon, a creole⁴ “orphan about the age of ... ten years old,” to pay a fine of \$20 or face 60 days' imprisonment with hard labour at Georgetown.⁵ In a petition to the governor, her employer and perhaps her relative, Mary Sturgeon, admitted that Frances “got into bad company and stole a small quantity of cigars,” but had since expressed remorse.⁶ As Mary Sturgeon was unable to pay the “hefty” fine, she petitioned the governor to remit Frances' punishment and promised to send her away to the countryside. During the month of her imprisonment, Frances Sturgeon “pulverized earth for use in the gaol” until the keeper attested the veracity of her petitioner's claims and recommended the governor release her in January 1845.⁷

Cassilla's and Frances Sturgeon's cases illustrate the intersection of coerced labour and colonialism: specifically, they demonstrate the interconnections between British Guiana's burgeoning prison system and the life and labour of women. Though limited in number when compared with incarcerated men, women like Cassilla and Frances Sturgeon were fundamental assets in maintaining British Guiana's post-emancipation sugar economy and constructing and fortifying its sea defence. Both the plantocracy and the local colonial administration capitalised on incarcerated people, extracting as much labour and profits from them as possible. With particular focus on women, this article demonstrates the ways in which the post-emancipation penal system maintained the economic viability of the colony through the carceral labour of both former enslaved people and new immigrants.

The article examines the history of incarceration between 1838 and 1917, centring the lives of incarcerated women to understand the nature of state governance in this colonial space. Through an examination of how women's labour was used outside the confines of the prison, it becomes clear that the plantocracy and colonial authorities leveraged the expansion of the prisons not to control crime per se but to control labour. As the prison population expanded, colonial and local authorities explained the increased incarceration rates as a legitimate state response to increased crime. However, archival evidence suggests there was no significant increase in crime after 1838. Rather, increasing prosecutions of petty offences and labour law violations ensured rising prisoner numbers.

Labour was an integral part of the prison system in British Guiana, which required all incarcerated people to take part in some form of punitive or productive labour. Penal labour was not unique to the Guianese context but was part of a wider network of unfree labour systems practiced in Britain and throughout the British empire, notably in the Australian colonies.⁸ In Guiana, it was the malleability of incarcerated people as a coerced workforce that attracted the local plantocracy and administration, as prisoners could be moved, deployed and disciplined in ways that were not possible for free labour.

Most scholarship on this period of British Guiana's history focuses on two major intersecting developments: the abolition of slavery and the ensuing labour scarcity, which triggered the introduction of large-scale immigration schemes. Broader connections between post-emancipation developments and the emerging penal system on the one hand, and the place of non-immigrants or creoles on the other, have been largely overlooked.⁹ The relative paucity of works on the history of prisons is especially striking considering how prisons have long been a representative institution of British imperialism, and a representation of both the successes and excesses of empire. Where this history exists, with few exceptions, it is presented from a male perspective, with the experiences of male prisoners largely accepted as the experience of all

prisoners.¹⁰ Primarily because of their relatively small numbers, the experiences of female prisoners have generally been relegated to the margins. This article advances the growing body of scholarship on immigration in the British Caribbean by connecting British Guiana's expanding prison infrastructure to the increasing demand for unfree labour, notably women's labour. While scholars such as K. O. Laurence, Basdeo Mangru and others have made outstanding contributions to the study of the lives and labour of immigrants, this article presents new possibilities for interpreting systems of labour control after the abolition of slavery, by incorporating the relationship between incarcerated immigrants and creoles into the broader historical dialogue on indentureship in the post-emancipation period.¹¹ While it makes an intervention by suggesting more than a cursory connection between women's labour and the prisons, it also contributes to colonial carceral studies, where the dearth of scholarship on the history of prisons in the Caribbean and Guyana specifically is most heavily felt.

In one of the few historical pieces on prisons in British Guiana, Clare Anderson, et al. (2020) focused on key features of incarceration, such as sentencing, overcrowding, training, and rehabilitation. Tracing these issues back to the British colonial period, the authors suggested systemic deficiencies continued to prevent custodial sentences from meeting their reformatory and redemptive purposes because they were grounded in ongoing coloniality. The article was written through the lens of the male prisoner experience, perhaps understandable given that women comprised a small fraction of those incarcerated. I intend to correct this deficiency by centring the experiences of women, who until the end of the twentieth century often shared the same prison space and labour as men.¹² In recent decades, studies of British colonial carceral systems have evolved significantly but typically focus on the African, Indian, and Australian colonies.¹³ For the Caribbean, the few scholarly productions that exist are country-specific studies of Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad

and Tobago. These have been extraordinarily influential in shaping understandings of the relationship between the social, economic and political forces bolstering the prison system and colonialism. Having approached prisons as a cultural space, David Trotman, Diana Patton and Cecilia Green, for instance, have situated women at the forefront of their work on the history of crime and punishment in the Caribbean in the earlier colonial period.¹⁴ Unlike Patton and Green's work, however, this article approaches incarceration not only as a tool of punishment but as another source of cheap labour for capitalist planters and colonial authorities.

Further, this article builds on the work of scholars such as Talitha LeFlouria and Sarah Haley, whose findings for the southern USA bear similarities to experiences of women in British Guiana.¹⁵ However, unlike the private convict lease system operational in the post-bellum South, the colonial state in Guiana never relinquished its power over punishment, even when incarcerated people were outside its immediate sphere of control. I also examine women's role in the post-emancipation period as "producers and objects of exploitation" for the plantocracy and colonial administration.¹⁶ While a wealth of primary source materials from the official archive underpins this study of British Guiana, low levels of literacy among ordinary workers in the nineteenth-century Caribbean makes it challenging to find their voices in the written record. Nevertheless, "archival fragments" about prisoners like Charlotte Hubbard and Cassilla offer crucial glimpses into lives as lived under colonial power – "lives that were just as important as those more visible and literate people ... who most consistently left an abundance of documentary material."¹⁷ It is the rich material I gleaned from the miscellaneous boxes at the National Archives Guyana, containing, among other documents, numerous petitions for release from custody, that brings women's experiences in the jail into sharp focus.

Post-Emancipation Adjustments and Labour

Emancipation in 1838 ended the planters' access to unpaid labour upon which the agrarian economy had relied. As the colony transitioned from enslavement to wage labour, authorities introduced new laws, which they intended to use to control the freed population.¹⁸ They stipulated that any worker employed for five consecutive days automatically entered a one-year labour contract that they could only terminate with one month's notice. If the worker lived on a plantation, termination also meant cancellation of his/her tenancy and subsequent eviction.¹⁹ However, as Hilary Beckles observes, "the legislation transcended mere labour supply considerations and touched upon issues of public order. If a worker behaved in a manner considered ... insubordinate he could be evicted ... without wage compensation, or imprisonment."²⁰ Such was the case of Delia Saturday: a freed woman who, on her own confession, was convicted on 1 January 1839 for "three days absence from work and indolence and insubordination." She was sentenced to 14 days' hard labour, with confinement, "when not employed, in Her Majesty's gaol."²¹

Freed people circumvented the new colonial policies in two main ways: abandoning the plantation altogether to live in newly formed villages and moving from plantation to plantation in task gangs to avoid restriction to a particular plantation. The planters asserted that freed people's exodus resulted in a chronic shortage of labour. Those who opted to work on the plantation in task gangs collectively bargained for higher wages. When employers could not meet their demands, they resorted to strike action. As Alan Adamson noted, "The ex-slaves were testing what it was to be legally free, and the planter was discovering what it was to deal with wage labour."²² For a brief interval, the colonial balance of power shifted in favour of the freed people, but the new status quo displeased the planters. In their opinion, the colony's economic survival depended on a large controllable labour force reminiscent of slavery. Thus, they looked to immigration to recreate the conditions of continuous, controllable labour. Between 1838 and 1917 the colony imported approximately 350,000 indentured labourers, mainly from South Asia, to

regain control over labour and wage rates.²³ Exerting hegemony over this new labour force, the colonial administration generated stunningly high rates of penal enforcement by using the contract to criminalise worker "unruliness."²⁴

For indentureship to be effective, labour contracts and ordinances governed the system, and the prison became the crucial site for enforcement. Immigrants' violation of contractual obligations, deliberate or otherwise, resulted in fines or imprisonment. Breach of contract was normally considered a civil offence, but when tried under the labour ordinances the immigrant was deliberately criminalised.²⁵ Consequently, large numbers of immigrants, especially East Indians, ended up in the colony's jails annually, as Table 1 demonstrates.

Table 1: British Guiana Prisoner Committals by Nationality for Select (Available) Years, 1889–1918

Nationality	Total Number of Committals					
	1889	1895	1901	1906	1912	1918
British Guiana	1,583	1,765	1,455	1,314	1,156	1,130
India (Calcutta, Madras)	2,024	2,736	2,511	2,842	1,436	472
China	21	18	13	6	2	1
Madeira	15	6	5	5	0	1
Africa	44	25	11	10	2	2
Barbados	392	506	245	88	73	34
Other West Indian Islands	93	146	48	23	31	24
America	27	9	2	12	1	4
Europe	33	44	24	21	17	0
Aboriginal Indians	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dutch Guiana	0	0	0	0	0	2
Venezuela	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	4,232	5,255	4,314	4,321	2,718	1,666

British Guiana Annual Prison Reports, 1889, 1895, 1901, 1906, 1912, 1918, National Archives Guyana

In 1875, Sheriff Brumell, in a report to the colonial office, attributed the upsurge in committals to "an increase in the number of offences against the 'labour laws.'" He identified 2,074 men and 727 women, "chiefly immigrants from India," convicted of such offences in 1874, an increase from 1873 of "1,381 males and 447 females."²⁶ While the prison returns presented a large proportion of prisoners convicted in 1874, he concluded, "they were guilty of offences ... which cannot be classed under the head of crime." Still, he interpreted the results as "unfortunately afford[ing] abundant evidence of a want of industry on the part of the Indian immigrants, and of the low moral and social condition of many among the lower

order of the [creole] people.”²⁷ Where the colonial state considered prisons ideal for “training” formerly enslaved persons for useful citizenship, they also employed them as mechanisms for enforcing labour laws following the introduction of Indian indentured labour. One-fifth to one-third of all indentured workers faced prosecution annually for labour-related crimes and, when creoles are added to this number, it denotes this period as one with the highest rates of female incarceration in colonial and post-independent Guyana, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: British Guiana Prison Committals for Select (Available) Years, 1838–1924

Year	Male	Female	Total
1828	-	-	1,880
1838	1,898	477	2,375
1856	4,014	1,388	5,402
1864	4,298	546	4,844
1874	9,165	2,095	11,260
1880	6,598	1,801	8,399
1884	4,478	976	4,630
1890	3,968	863	4,841
1894	4,639	982	5,621
1900	4,723	841	5,564
1904	4,591	553	5,144
1914	3,849	502	4,351
1917	2,630	367	2,997
1920	3,072	295	3,367
1924	-	-	1,605

British Guiana Blue Books, 1838–1924, National Archives Guyana

Women, Crime, and Incarceration

During slavery, the punishment of crime, apart from capital offences, fell under the legal purview of the slave owners. The state-controlled prisons generally contained free civil offenders, such as debtors, military deserters, and enslaved capital offenders. As emancipation approached, the British government gradually assumed more control over the power of punishment by adjusting the nature and definition of crime adopted from Britain to suit the British Guiana context.²⁸

Because of their inability to use other forms of violence, such as flogging, to control women in the post-emancipation period, colonial authorities channelled their violence using the prison as a mechanism of control to enforce the new labour regime and to discipline the newly freed population.²⁹

Women and men tried for the same criminal offences received different punishments. Once convicted, women were more likely to be incarcerated for petty offences because they could not be flogged and discharged.

Between 1837 and 1840, over 90 per cent of women appearing before the courts were convicted of nonviolent crimes, mainly petty thefts.³⁰ Charlotte Herbert, for instance, was convicted on 16 August 1839 for stealing a turkey, although she maintained her innocence. The police magistrate sentenced Herbert to six days at hard labour and a fine of 20 guilders. If she defaulted on payment of the fine, she would be subjected to an additional ten-day imprisonment. Since the magistrate could not have her flogged, he noted, “This is the highest punishment [I] can award for petty larceny to the amount of seventy guilders.”³¹

For the most part, women offenders fell into a limited range of categories: including personal assault and injury offences; “praedial larceny” and other offences against property; various offences against public order and against the Masters' and Servants Acts (including Acts relating to indentured coolies); and offences against Revenue Acts, Highway Acts and Health Acts. Based on Blue Book estimates for 1879, as much as 48.28 per cent of the annual crime of the creole female population involved “disorderly conduct, using abusive language, and so on to assaulting and beating.”³² Most creole women's crimes were related to personal injury and violating public order, but immigrant women's crimes centred on violations of the labour laws, mainly desertion, absences from work, and violation of contract. For instance, the immigration agent general reported 67 women deserted from estates to which they had been indentured in 1885 and 77 in 1886.³³

Men were more likely to be convicted of serious assaults and cases of severe “bodily injury” within the overall category of crimes against the person. They were also more likely to be convicted of crimes against property, more serious malicious injuries to property and breaches of the Masters' and Servants Act. As a separate category of differentiation, “offences against the person” denoted the largest category of crime apart from those associated with contract and labour violations. The Blue Books for the period 1838–1917 show that this category averaged 40.5 per cent convictions per year. Women's involvement in this

property and breaches of the Masters' and Servants Act. As a separate category of differentiation, "offences against the person" denoted the largest category of crime apart from those associated with contract and labour violations. The Blue Books for the period 1838–1917 show that this category averaged 40.5 per cent convictions per year. Women's involvement in this type of crime tended to be less injurious in nature, and fewer women than men appeared before the courts on charges associated with assaults and injury.

Women who committed violent crimes, such as assaults, manslaughter, or murder, met a dismal fate: they were sentenced to death, condemned to a lifetime of confinement, or received lengthy prison terms. However, apart from assaults, cases of women committing violent crimes were infrequent. For instance, only two of the 23 persons convicted for murder in the colony between 1864 to 1868 were women: Molly James, a creole nursemaid, convicted on 11 November 1865, for killing her white employers' child and sentenced to be executed; and Mary Jones, a creole, convicted on 30 November 1865, for drowning her child and committed to penal servitude for life.³⁴ This trend was representative of the period.

Incarcerated Women at Work Outside of British Guiana's Jails and the Price of Labour

As women's prison labour is examined, a better understanding of the interconnections of capitalism, coerced labour and colonialism emerges. In the immediate post-emancipation period, women began moving away from traditional plantation labour and sought alternative "respectable" labour in-keeping with their emerging ideas of femininity.³⁵ But, through the indentured contract and the prison, women were once again relegated to labour in the fields and on public works, as local capitalists attempted to regain control over labourers and maximise their profits.

Labour for incarcerated women in the colony's jails varied. On the one hand, women performed reproductive labour for the prison and the prison officials, religious organisations, and government institutions, such as the hospital and asylum.³⁶ On the other hand, women provided productive labour for public works programmes as well as for plantations in the purlieu of the prison to which they were sentenced. While incarcerated, women could potentially provide free labour for the plantation to which they were indentured.³⁷

Rhetoric emitting from the colonial administration suggests they felt morally justified to exploit the labour of criminals because, they argued, unlike enslaved people, incarcerated people were "agents in their own demise."³⁸ Superintendent T. Sealy of Her Majesty's Penal Settlement (hereafter HMPS) at Mazaruni began his 1875 report with a justification that undertaking labour was intrinsic to the improvement of a prisoner's conduct:

I assiduously endeavoured to raise the standard of industry among the convicts not for the value of its results to the establishment, but in order to teach the prisoners habits of industry and encourage them to exert themselves in good resolutions for future conduct on emerging once more from prison; to this end the prisoners have been employed continually during the year in works for the general improvement.³⁹

Throughout his report, Sealy lauded the "much improved" and "satisfactory" conduct of the prisoners, which he attributed to the labour they performed.⁴⁰ Sealy, thus far, was on par with contemporary rhetoric: many prison reformers believed that hard work, as a form of punishment, was an effective deterrent to criminal offenders and could be an instrument of restoration from offender to law-abider.⁴¹ However, in the concluding paragraphs of his report, Sealy lifts the proverbial curtain, revealing the true nature of prison labour. Regarding the Mazaruni granite mines, he found convict labour to be "materially more elastic" than the supply of free labour for "it can be diminished or increased at a minute's notice, as emergencies arise." He continued, "it would be difficult to find free labourers to perform the work" and emphasised that "the value of convict labour is far underrated."⁴²

Evidently, the prevailing system, which was to make the labour of prisoners as productive as possible, was aptly suited to the needs of a colony where both the cost of free labour and the availability of incarcerated labourers were high. As was common under conditions of slavery – and as Talitha LeFlouria found in the post-bellum convict lease system – gender did not determine labour assignments for incarcerated women.⁴³ It was the needs of planters, public and

private citizens and organisations, and the local administration that influenced the ultimate decision. Planters hired prisoners out of “economic necessity and, when expedient, prescribed labour duties that were often arbitrary and non-gender exclusive.”⁴⁴ Further, the labour system operational in British Guiana's jails was not as delineated as the convict lease system in the American South or in Western Australia. Under those systems, the state, in return for an agreed sum, transferred their responsibility for direct supervision and control of prisoners to private contractors who agreed to house, feed, and clothe them and prevent their escape.⁴⁵ Throughout its history the British government in Guiana refused to relinquish control over the prison apparatus.⁴⁶

Available evidence suggests only prisoners working in agriculture and timber grants were bonded to private employers for extended periods of time, and prison rules always necessitated the presence of prison guards for the duration of the timber grant. Convicts from HMPS who quarried granite worked exclusively under prison supervision, although they spent extended periods away from the settlement.⁴⁷ Prisoners, therefore, were never fully outside the ambit of state control. In whatever form the system manifested itself, the state's responsibility resided in administering punishment for any breach of prison rules.

Prison labour proved most beneficial to the plantocracy, whose members influenced both the expansion and the strategic location of prisons in the post-emancipation period. Prior to emancipation, with jails located on plantations, the authorities had deemed three public prisons sufficient to serve the entire colony. Officials would transport capital offenders over 65 miles to serve their sentences, with little concern for labour loss simply because comparably few enslaved people were incarcerated. However, as labour became an increasingly pressing concern in the post-emancipation period, plantation authorities complained about the time it took moving between the plantation and the prison. By the 1860s, planters continuously petitioned the local legislature for additional prison locations, complaining that, in some areas, “five or six days might be spent in journeying to and from the prison where hard labour

was to be performed so that short sentences of seven days or less were rendered ludicrous [and] an expensive waste of time.”⁴⁸ Thirty years later, during the 1897 budget debate, Mr. Dargan, a local legislator, inquired whether it was true that imprisoned indentured labourers committed under the Immigration Law were made to walk from Skeldon to New Amsterdam, a distance of 77 kilometres, which took two to three days in favourable weather conditions.⁴⁹ The government secretary confirmed that this was the case, but noted the administration made “special provisions” for some categories of prisoners, including an animal-drawn cart to reduce the journey time to one day.⁵⁰

Authorities may also have used carts to move pregnant or breastfeeding women. The presence of babies and small children can be glimpsed in the archival record. The Anglican chaplain, Page Wood, recorded baptising an infant at the Georgetown prison hospital on 30 March 1875,⁵¹ while the inspector of prison report for 1889–1900 noted that “extra diet” was provided to six prisoners and seven children and that “the services of a midwife is available when required.”⁵² Although not explored here, the cases of Rookminia, an 18-year-old immigrant woman with “two little children, one a baby in arms,” and Gertie Penny, provide further insights into the treatment of mothers imprisoned along with their infants.⁵³

Rather than reclassify petty crimes and reduce sentencing, the colonial government responded to planters' complaints by authorising construction of additional prisons to accommodate rising numbers of prisoners. In 1803, the British took over the management of Georgetown prison in Demerara and New Amsterdam prison in Berbice and constructed the Wakenaam Gaol in 1837 in Essequibo. These three locations were considered adequate to serve the colony's 65,556 inhabitants. By 1917 there were 11 permanent prisons, at least two temporary prisons and a convict depot in the colony for a population of 298,188.⁵⁴ Planters influenced the establishment of Capoey Gaol (1838), HMPS (1842), Fellowship Gaol (1868), Mahaica (1868), Suddie (1874), Best Prison (1879), Number 63 Gaol (1888), and Morawhanna (1898).⁵⁵

There was also the Kingston Convict Depot that began

operating circa the 1860s and at least two temporary prisons at Abary and Kaow Island.⁵⁶ Except for HMPS and the Kingston Convict Depot, the other locations accommodated both women and men of all ages, until Fellowship was converted to a women-only prison in 1884.

The strategic location of the new prisons further supports my argument that maximising labour underpinned prison expansion. Interspersed along the sugar belt, most of them were ideally located for immigrants to serve short sentences and for creoles to work on the seawalls. Only HMPS was situated outside the sugar belt, because its purpose differed from that of the others.⁵⁷ As the acting immigration agent general (and planter apologist) who advocated for private prisons noted, “the employer too loses the benefit of the labourer's services for a certain period, and it may happen that this occurs at a time when such services are most required.”⁵⁸

Additionally, prison labour provided revenue for the state while offsetting a significant proportion of the costs of both their own upkeep and prison administration. As a report from the colonial office observed, “It is evident that the form of labour most significant for the interest of those on whom the cost of prison falls is that which produces the largest return for the cost of maintenance.”⁵⁹ This explains the prosheriff of Berbice's September 1857 letter to the governor seeking confirmation to “hire out” the prisoners under his jurisdiction to any “party wishful for them at a given rate per head per day.” Citing the constant requests for prison labour from “so many parties,” he presented his proposal to the Court of Policy for authorisation.⁶⁰ He opined that the scheme “would be the means of raising considerable funds towards their [the prisoners] maintenance and would greatly lessen the cost of the establishment to the colony.”⁶¹ Not surprisingly, he received the Court of Policy's sanction, since it is possible that, as planters, some of the courts' members were included among the applicants.

Blue Book estimates for the period 1870s to the early 1900s also suggest that prisons either broke even or made a profit from inmate labour. In 1874, Sheriff Brumell expressed the opinion that had the prison

maintained proper records of the work prisoners performed while outside the prison, the administration would find that the labour, even at a low estimate, “goes a considerable way toward meeting the annual expenditure of the establishment,” which was \$37,556.76 for the year.⁶² Prison reports in the same year indicate the prisoners' earnings at Mahaica were \$1,052.55, while the expenses of the prison were \$1,036.30. At Fellowship, the earnings were \$1,109.52 and the expenses, \$1,985.68.⁶³ By 1880, the annual operating cost for all prisons was \$77,286, while prison earnings amounted to \$51,732. A decade later, annual prison expenditure and income were almost equal at \$52,962 and \$52,716 respectively, followed by \$6,000 in profit in 1900.⁶⁴ At the end of indentureship in 1917, the institution's annual operating cost was \$49,332, while earnings from prison labour declined significantly to \$27,810. Declining profits continued in the post-indenture era, with expenditures at \$75,270 in 1927 and income at \$57,702.⁶⁵ These figures suggest that British Guiana's prisons were self-sufficient at the core; the colonial coffers contributed minimally to their maintenance. This partly explains the absence of any sustained opposition from colonial and imperial officials over the expansion of the colony's carceral apparatus, the presence of disproportionate numbers of immigrants in these prisons and the disregard for the plight of creole labourers at the seawall.

On plantations, both men and women performed agricultural labour that was similar to that of enslaved people before 1834. Women on the plantation provided primarily field labour for which they received lower wages than men. In the early 1850s, for instance, wages of 30–40 cents per day were average for an able-bodied male, while women and “handicapped” males earned anywhere from one-half to two-thirds of this amount.⁶⁶ In contrast, a free creole labourer, regardless of gender, earned 40 cents per task.⁶⁷ Like men, women spent considerable time at tasks such as holing, planting, tending, reaping, and carting cane from the field to the factory. Those who were skilled at constructing drains could earn better pay by selecting these tasks, while a few women performed domestic duties in plantation houses.⁶⁸ Planters paid the local administration an average of 25

cents for the labour of an incarcerated able-bodied male in 1858.⁶⁹ Not surprisingly, they paid less for women to perform the same labour. They often exploited the law for their benefit, taking workers before the court for any infraction. For instance, in July 1869, J. B. Mayers, manager of Plantation La Grange, brought a complaint against Pultee for absenting herself from work on 29 May “without leave or reasonable cause.” After arriving at work on that day, Pultee left the field for the estate hospital, complaining of a fever. However, when the hospital book was produced, her name did not appear in it as a patient (though the nurse did not deny her statement). Pultee was sentenced to prison but, fortunately for her, the Review Court dismissed the case on the grounds that she had worked five consecutive days and was not required to be at work on the sixth day.⁷⁰

In 1863 Mr. Gray, manager of Plantation Ogle, brought 15 of the 20 cases before Magistrate J. Daly for violations of the indenture law. He accused an indentured woman named Marathie of absence from work for the period 30 December 1862 to 6 January 1863. Marathie had a daughter on Plantation Farm whom she wished to visit. Having received word of her daughter's illness, she applied to the manager for a pass, but he refused to grant her leave because of the high volume of work on the plantation. Under the circumstances, Marathie believed she was at liberty to visit her daughter. The magistrate ruled in the plantation's favour: she should not have left the estate without first obtaining a pass. He sentenced her to pay a fine of \$10, or “go to gaol for thirty days.” Having spent what little money she had on her ill daughter, Marathie went to prison.⁷¹

In 1883, Plantation Ogle again captured the attention of officials as they finally addressed the high incidence of offences of this nature emanating from that plantation. Suspecting a clear case of exploitation, Governor Henry Irving ordered an investigation. The Inspector of Prisons noted: Reports were required in cases where women were convicted of breaches of the labour laws and action was taken against [Ogle] estate where it appeared there was undue pressure. The result has been that the number of women committed for such offences to

31 May this year [1883] is 60 as against 121 during the same period last year. I trust before long it may be found possible altogether to abolish the power of imprisoning women for neglect to perform manual labour.⁷²

Improving agricultural productivity drove increases in labour demands and the subsequent utilisation of prison labour. Prisoners who were incapacitated and could not perform hard labour were sometimes discharged early. In December 1873, for instance, Sheriff Brumell recommended the governor approve the discharge of an immigrant prisoner named Toolacanam, who had been sentenced to one-month hard labour for deserting the plantation but who was “unable to perform hard labour ... because of an ulcer” on their leg.⁷³ The acting immigrant agent general, S. M. Gallagher, presented a similar case to the governor for reprieve, this time involving Iotoah, who was “physically incapable” of performing hard labour.⁷⁴ Although each prison had an infirmary and the surgeon visited the prison weekly, cases beyond their capacity could be sent to the general and district hospitals. If incarceration was primarily about punishment, it is likely the prisoners would have remained in the prison regardless of their medical conditions. However, because illness undermined the prisoner's usefulness as a source of labour, authorities often discharged them. This strongly suggests that incarceration was more about labour extraction than punishment.

Apart from working immigrants on the plantations, the colonial administration used creole prisoners on public works which also benefitted the privately owned plantation sector. In the post-emancipation period, there was an intensified need for the construction and maintenance of public infrastructure to preserve efficient exploitation of agricultural commodities and administrative operations. Thus, on the one hand, officials intended prisons to deter creoles from violating the law but, on the other, they were intended to act as a form of social control by shaping them into an easily controllable labour force. As part of official colonial policy, unfree labour on government public works was a mandated part of incarceration, useful for construction and maintenance of central revenue-generating public

works.⁷⁵ Creole prisoners, often convicted of petty crimes, performed these jobs because their sentences were generally longer than those served by indentured immigrants. For example, Cousilla – an immigrant woman from plantation Belle Vue – was sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment with hard labour for “abuse” of a manager in November 1861.⁷⁶ By contrast, Sarah Robinson – a creole woman found guilty of bigamy in 1868 – was sentenced to six months with hard labour.⁷⁷ Women performed myriad tasks while incarcerated. On average, during the 1870s, female prisoners at Georgetown provided 15,104 days in stone-breaking and washed 54,536 pieces of clothes within the walls of the prison.⁷⁸ However, it was outside these walls that the demand for prison labour was evident, as public officials and private citizens attempted to circumvent high wage rates for free labour.

A letter from John Brumell, sheriff of Demerara, to the government secretary, W. A. G. Young, addressing the breakdown of discipline at the Georgetown prison inadvertently illuminates the issue. Referring to the daily practice of marching the prisoners to their various work locations, Brumell writes, I am afraid that the great demand for regular labour which exists throughout the colony, and the requirements of the Colonial Engineer's department, of the Town Council and of other institutions, render almost unavoidable the employment of the prisoners outside the walls of the gaol, but it is destructive to discipline.⁷⁹

Clearly, unfree labour trumped maintenance of discipline, since prisoners continued to work at various tasks outside the prison walls while incarcerated. For example, in 1876 men and women at Georgetown prison performed 100,520 productive days of labour for the colony. The distribution of combined days spent on various tasks is as follows: to public institutions (“lunatic,” leper and orphan asylums, hospital, etc.) – 9,078; to the town council – 5,986; to the race course – 1,177; to the assembly rooms – 194; to the rifle range – 633; to the prison as mechanics and bakers – 3,007; to the prison in sanitary and other employment – 32,082; and to the sea defence – 48,363 days of labour for the year.⁸⁰ The figures indicate seawall construction absorbed

most of the labour.

Throughout the colony's history, 90 per cent of the population clustered in settlements along the coastland, which is situated below sea level at high tides.⁸¹ The coastland is always under threat from sea-level rise, which could devastate agricultural production and contaminate freshwater supplies used for domestic activities.⁸² No official history of the British Guiana seawall project exists, but anecdotal evidence suggests enslaved people started the seawall construction during the Dutch colonial period and wage labour completed construction in the 1880s.⁸³ However, my research, which is supported by official prison records and other reports for the period, suggests incarcerated men and women built the seawall that protected the coastland. The Dutch had built temporary earthen dykes or dams reinforced with brush wood along the seashore to protect their up-river plantations. But it was under the British that the encroachment of the Atlantic Ocean reached such serious proportions that it necessitated the construction of a more permanent sea defence, in the form of a 450-kilometre granite seawall.⁸⁴ In 1855, the Combined Court voted a sum of \$135,000 to construct sea defence for Georgetown following a period of devastating flooding which “with a violence unknown for nearly fifty years, and in the course of a few hours, swept away nearly the upper part of the embankment, and inundated the military land and the adjoining suburb of Kingston.”⁸⁵ Local newspapers reported that, as water rose over one and a half metres high, the governor abandoned his official residence at Camp House, and plantations along the coast from Plantation Thomaslands to Plantation Ogle were completely inundated.⁸⁶ The efforts to recover from this disaster led to the construction of the first phase of the seawall from Camp Street to Kitty, which was completed in 1882 using prison labour.

Prisoners were employed daily at the seawall under the supervision of the officers of the prison and Public Works Department. Evidence of women labouring in this sector emerges from the daily employment report for 15 September 1862. The report revealed that 21 of the 34 women in custody for the day at Georgetown prison worked at the seawall. The other women made and washed prison clothes, washed “gaol cells,”

attended the nurses at the hospital, were hospitalised or were classified as “invalids,” as Table 3 shows.⁸⁷

Table 3: Daily Report of the Georgetown Prisoners Employment by Location, Monday 15 September 1862

Location	Male	Female
Seawall	4	21
Orphan Asylum	10	-
Police Station	4	-
Parade Ground	14	-
Plantation La Penitence	91	-
Making Prisoners' Clothes	4	2
Washing Prisoners' Clothes	-	2
Washing Cells	4	2
Cleaning Filth	3	-
Cleaning Lamps	1	-
Cooks	4	-
Making Mats	4	-
Breaking Stone	21	-
Leveling under Hospital	12	-
Nurse Attending Hospital	-	1
Total	176	28

Miscellaneous Box no. 4, National Archives Guyana

Further evidence comes from an 1872 colonial civil engineer letter to the governor, asking for an increase of the work gang assigned to him and requesting a “gang of 80 women in addition to the 157 men which were at his disposal yesterday.”⁸⁸ Annual requests for increased prison labour suggest that labour was always inadequate, and it was unlikely free labour was involved in the unskilled construction work.

Governor Longden, emphasising the punitive and rehabilitative virtue of labour, argued, “There is no more appropriate work for prisoners than this; once at the seawall they are removed from communication with the town, the work is of a healthy and useful kind and at the same time is hard work.”⁸⁹ The prisoner's view of the labour differed from official rhetoric. While women were familiar with the demands of agricultural labour, the unfamiliar nature of seawall work proved physically demanding for them, as the civil engineer often set a rigorous schedule. Officials considered working at the pug mill and pile-driving to be the heaviest punishment which any prisoner could undergo, and women were sometimes found working at these tasks. The physical toll which seawall labour took on the women was noticeable enough that Bussanta, when she saw her daughter Cassilla “being walked to her daily occupation at the seawall,” was

alarmed at her appearance and petitioned the governor for her release or a reduction of her sentence.⁹⁰

From adverse weather conditions and overwork to constant threats of violence, prisoners continuously complained of the conditions under which they worked at the seawall. In a series of letters to the governor in 1871, prisoners asserted they were made to work continuously until six in the evening, except for one hour “breakfast time.” One petition declared, “Sometimes when we is on a push we don't get even the one Hour Breakfast and yet at eventime when the Masons strike off we still has to work as our usual Hours before we can strike off.” Other prisoners complained that some of them could “scarcely stand” because of extreme hunger.⁹¹

In 1879, Colonel Elliot reported on the abuses of prison labour at public works, particularly at the seawall. In response, the governor ordered the withdrawal of all prisoners working in small gangs at the public institutions, including Government House, and the substitution of free labour. However, because of the added expense, prison gangs providing manual labour at the seawall at Georgetown, Mahaica and Best (where the sea continued to encroach on the land), could not be removed. He noted:

Such works as these, performed by free labour, would be very costly, and I very much doubt whether they would be as substantially and faithfully carried out. I quite admit that in principle, Colonel Elliot takes a convict view as to the employment of prison labour, but practically I do not think we should find it advantageous to substitute paid for prison labour on such heavy work as constructing sea dams.⁹²

This was the crux of the matter: prison was foremost about obtaining the maximum amount of unfree and manual labour, regardless of any responsibility for the wellbeing of the incarcerated. Nevertheless, prison labour did provide a measure of agency for incarcerated people. Prisoners used opportunities to work beyond the prison walls to temporarily escape the drudgeries of prison life. The keeper reported that prisoners naturally preferred outside labour to working on the inside since, on their daily marches to and from their respective places of employment, they

were afforded opportunities of seeing and communicating with their friends and family.⁹³ Working beyond the confines of the prison walls also presented opportunities for escape. For instance, in 1873, 13 prisoners escaped from Mahaica and 16 from Fellowship while carrying out their sentences working in the field at nearby plantations.⁹⁴ Overseers lamented the difficulty of keeping more than two or three persons in sight when “at work in the high canes.” Working outdoors presented an opportune avenue for escapes. Prisoners worked in large gangs, in vast outdoor spaces covered with brushwood. They were insufficiently guarded and guards were remote from assistance. This is illustrated by the 1856 case of Betty Maxwell, who escaped from the jail gang while working at the seawall in February. The submitted report suggests that the police officer assigned to oversee the gang failed to “perform his duty in securing her,” and she took advantage of this to flee.⁹⁵ Her case is revealed in a claim for \$10 reward by P. C. Jones (the officer who recaptured her). The inspector general initially denied the claim on the grounds that he believed “there were no unusual circumstances in this case which call for a special reward.”⁹⁶ In fact, the case had a very “unusual circumstance”: when Betty Maxwell escaped from the seawall, she left her child in jail. There are few other extant details about either mother or child. However, Acting Government Secretary Wolseley appeared astounded when presented with this information: “Imagine I learn that this woman with a living child in jail abandons it there when she effected her escape.”⁹⁷ It is possible that Betty Maxwell's decision to flee was impulsive rather than well thought out and the abandonment of her child was also unintentional. Through their labour, prisoners serving long sentences could earn reduced time and not be completely dependent on the keeper's recommendations for a pardon. To the prisoner, “the marks system,” which awarded credit for work performed and good behaviour, was an important means of benefitting from their labour. Marks automatically accrued and one-third to one-half of a sentence could be deducted. Mary Jones, one of the women mentioned above, benefitted from the marks system. Her original life sentence in 1865 for infanticide

was overturned in 1871 when she received a formal pardon from the governor, partly for her “diligence.”⁹⁸

Conclusion

The development of the prison in British Guiana needs to be understood in terms of a shift from private to public management of labour in the post-emancipation period. The authorities' loss of control over enslaved labour necessitated a new labour force, which immigration alone failed to satisfy. Colonial authorities leveraged the expansion of the colony's prisons not to control crime but to control and discipline labour. As this article has demonstrated, women were critical to this project. Courts convicted women workers for petty crimes and sentenced them to hard labour in agriculture or public works. Such tactics illustrate the intersections of coerced labour, capitalism, and colonialism: the plantocracy benefitted from incarcerated immigrant labour to keep their plantations functional, and the colonial state received remuneration, which offset the costs of maintaining prisoners in jail. Similarly, incarcerated creole women provided considerable labour to construct and maintain the seawall that protected the colony from the devastation of the Atlantic Ocean. The use of incarcerated women's labour outside the walls of the prison to maintain agricultural production and the colony's public works programmes reveals that prisons were not simply sites of punishment but were augmenting an easily exploitable labour force. The use of prisons as a mechanism to enforce the new labour regime wreaked devastation on the lives of thousands of women, like Cassilla, and Francis Sturgeon.



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THE UNPRECEDENTED TRANSFORMATION: GUYANA'S INFRASTRUCTURAL REVOLUTION & THE FRICTION OF RAPID GROWTH

Introduction: The Dawn of a New Developmental Era
For decades, Guyana's developmental story was one of untapped promises. It has been a nation historically rich in resources yet remained underdeveloped. Guyana has been constrained by its colonial era infrastructure, fragile institutions, and geographic isolation. However, this small English-speaking South American nation of a fewer than a million people has found itself at the threshold of an unprecedented economic and infrastructural revolution of historic proportions. This transformation is fueled by the discovery of vast offshore oil reserves since 2015 and the wealth it has generated for the country.

Today, Guyana is channelling its new-found oil wealth into a sweeping and comprehensive multi-billion-

dollar development agenda aimed at modernizing the physical and digital landscape, unlocking vast economic potential, and fundamentally reshaping the lives of its citizens. This is the most ambitious modernization drive in the history of Guyana. This massive investment surge, detailed primarily in successive national budgets since 2020 and strategic blueprints like the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030, is driven by the urgent need to address historic bottlenecks in transportation, energy, agriculture, and communication. The government's agenda is clear, it is using the revenue from the finite resources as a springboard for building a resilient, interconnected, and future ready nation by addressing the elements that have historically hindered social and economic integration.

he urgency is not merely aspirational, it is structural. The scale of this undertaking is necessitated by Guyana's unique geography, a small population concentrated on a narrow, low-lying coastal plain, separated by major rivers, with a vast, resource rich and sparsely populated hinterland. The new infrastructure push seeks to knit these disconnected regions together, enabling trade, improving living standards, and positioning Guyana as a regional hub for transport, energy, agriculture, and digital innovation.

However, with such rapid and high intensity development comes frictions. While the physical signs of progress, such as highways, bridges, housing schemes, power plants, are visible across the landscape, the social and economic frictions are equally tangible. Rising global inflation, capacity constraints, and the persistence of the digital divide, tempers the narrative of wholesale prosperity, it reveals the complex realities beneath the glossy surface of rapid growth. Guyana's journey is therefore, not just one of construction and expansion, but of balance, managing prosperity to ensure it is inclusive, sustainable, and equitable.

The Transport Revolution: Bridging the Divide & Unlocking the Hinterland

The most visible and impactful area of infrastructural development is the transport sector; no other sector captures Guyana's infrastructural rebirth more vividly than transportation. This sector seeks to dismantle geographic barriers and unlock productive lands. The primary focus is on transforming the densely populated coastal corridors and establishing all weather links to the interior and neighbouring countries. What was once symbols of neglect are now at the heart of a national mission to connect people, places, and opportunities.

Coastal Connectivity & Urban Decongestion

The expansion of the road network along the East Bank and East Coast of Demerara represents a critical effort to address the crippling urban traffic congestion. This particular region has long suffered Some of the landmark projects in this region include:





► The Ogle-Eccles, Mandela-Eccles, and Eccles to Great Diamond (Heroes Highway) & further Diamond-Craig – These highways form a triad of multi-lane routes designed to decongest Georgetown and reimagine its urban periphery. These highways provide crucial alternative routes to and from the capital city, easing the daily flow of traffic and drastically reducing commuting times. The impact of these highways, however, extend beyond the subject of mobility, they have spurred the reshaping of settlement patterns, catalysing new housing developments, and decentralising commercial activity away from the crowded core of the capital city.

► The Schoonord to Crane Four-Lane Highway – This project mirrors the East Bank Expansion on the West Bank/ West Coast, further integrating the region and setting the stage for major commercial and residential development outside of Georgetown.

► Railway Embankment Four-Lane Expansion (Sheriff Street-Mahaica) – This is another major project that is set to be completed soon. What was once a trainline has been converted into a two-lane road decades ago. Today, this same road is being expanded and widened to accommodate four lanes starting at Sheriff Street and ending at Mahaica. This road once completed will significantly reduce the traffic congestion on the East Coast corridor due to the growing number of vehicles on the road.

► New Demerara River Bridge (Bharrat Jagdeo Demerara River Bridge) – This high-span, four-lane megastructure that has replaced the antiquated

floating bridge is another major milestone for Guyana. This structure has replaced a bridge that was frequently congested and has now provided a reliable connection between East and West Banks of the Demerara River. It eliminates a decades-long logistical bottleneck that has stifled commerce and daily life between the two regions and even beyond.

International & Hinterland Linkages

The long-term vision involves establishing Guyana as a trade gateway. This requires the penetration of the vast, natural resource rich interior and solidifying international connections. As such one must not only look inward but also outward. In this regard, Guyana has invested in several projects.

► Linden to Lethem Highway Upgrade – This project, including the critical Kurupukari and Puruni bridges is aimed at transforming the dirt trail into an all-weather asphaltic highway. This project represents the opening of a national artery from the coast to the Amazonian hinterland that will increase economic activity. Its completion will establish a permanent and reliable road link between Guyana and Brazil, positioning Guyana as a crucial corridor for northern Brazilian trade. This road upgrade is poised to reduce travel time significantly between Georgetown and Lethem to as little as four hours, a trip that was once twelve hours or more.

Corentyne River Bridge (Guyana-Suriname) – This is a planned joint venture between the Governments of Guyana and Suriname to permanently link the two nations through Moleson Creek, Guyana and South Drain, Suriname. This will forge a vital and permanent link within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). This is expected to unlock enormous potential for cross-border trade, tourism, and regional food security initiatives.

Besides those major projects listed under the transport infrastructural agenda, there are also several other similar projects that will soon commence or have already begun. These include the East Berbice/ Corentyne road rehabilitation project (Palmyra to Moleson Creek), Canal No.1 to Leonora Four-lane highway construction, Soesdyke-Linden Highway Rehabilitation, and the expansion of the

The Energy & ICT Nexus: Fueling a Modern State

Infrastructure is not solely about roads and bridges; it is simply more than just concrete and steel. It is an invisible web of energy and data that powers a modern economy. The foundation of a modern and competitive economy rests on reliable, affordable energy and robust digital connectivity. Recognising this, Guyana's leadership is investing heavily in both energy security and digital transformation.

Energy Security & Cost Reduction

A major historical constraint has been the high cost and unreliability of electricity in Guyana. This has been a long drag on the competitiveness of businesses and household wellbeing. This, however, is being tackled directly by the Gas-to-Energy (GTE) Project.

This is a flagship initiative that is aimed at transforming the country's energy matrix. This initiative involves the construction of a 300 Mega Watt powerplant and pipelines to bring natural gas from offshore fields to the coast. The primary goal of this project is to cut the cost of electricity by 50%. This will not only lower cost of living for households but also stimulate industrial diversification. It will make local manufacturing and Agro-processing viable for the first time in decades and make them regionally competitive. The successful execution of GTE is arguable as critical to long-term economic diversification as the transport projects.

Parallel to the GTE, the LCDS 2030 emphasizes renewable energy expansion through solar farms in regions like Berbice, Essequibo and Linden. These energy diversifications ensure energy security for Guyana's rapid development and ensure Guyana remains consistent with its climate commitment to low-carbon development, financed partly through innovative mechanism such as carbon credit sales to international partners.

Digital Infrastructure & Connectivity

In countries like Guyana where electricity is the lifeblood of modern economies, digital access is its nervous system. Guyana's rapid digital transformation aims to bridge the persistent digital divide where access to affordable, high-speed internet is concentrated on the coast. This has posed a significant constraint on human capital development and

business growth in the hinterland communities.



Through fibre-optic expansion and satellite internet partnerships such as Starlink, the government is extending connectivity to remote Amerindian and hinterland communities. This is not merely about convenience; it is about inclusion. This move is intended to democratize access to education, telehealth, e-commerce, and employment opportunities, bridging the information gap between the coast and communities that once existed beyond the reach of a modern state.

Simultaneously, investments are being made in digitizing government services which is modernizing public administration, reducing bureaucracy, and promoting transparency. This also creates a critical foundation for sustained investor confidence, good governance and supports a better business climate...

. Beyond Concrete: Social Infrastructure & Climate Resilience

Guyana's transformational infrastructural renaissance is not confined to highways and power grids. It extends into the social realm such as housing, health, and water where development touches the daily lives of ordinary citizens.

Housing, Health & Water

Guyana's economic boom has necessitated a massive expansion of social infrastructure to accommodate its growing population and the rising expectations.

Housing: The rapid economic expansion has intensified demand for housing across Guyana. In response to this the government launched an ambitious housing program aimed at delivering 50,000 house lots by 2025. It has been able to surpass this target and has now pledge to deliver another 40,000 houses by 2030. This rapid development of new, serviced housing schemes are strategically located along the new highway corridors. This is more than a real estate initiative, but rather a social contract to expand middle-class opportunities with the aim of reducing urban overcrowding. The government has not only delivered house lots but in many cases delivered houses as well. With varying packages available ranging from Core Homes/low-income house to Young Professional house all across Guyana.

Healthcare: In this sector significant allocations have been made for the modernization of the healthcare system. Between 2020-2025 the government has invested in the construction of and opened six (6) new state- of-the-art regional hospitals in different regions across Guyana. They have also constructed a new Maternal & Paediatric Hospital located at Ogle with another six (6) new regional hospitals being constructed presently. Investments have also been made in telehealth/ telemedicine, training for nurses, midwives, dentist, and other staff critical for the health sector, and in various health care vouchers for persons of different ages. These investments are efforts to move beyond basic care and provide equitable and world class services right here at home, a necessary component of human capital.

Water & Drainage: In a low-lying coastal county like Guyana, water management and drainage are critical infrastructure. There has been major upgrades and

construction of new and existing water treatment plants across the country to ensure there is widespread access to clean, potable water especially in the hinterland communities. Simultaneously, there is extensive work being done on upgrading and constructing volume canals and koker systems to enhance drainage and irrigation, protecting both urban areas and vital agricultural land from climate-induced flooding. The government is also actively considering the possibilities of digging canals in regions 3 and 6 to mirror that of the Hope Canal in region 4.

Climate Resilience

As a small island developing state (SIDS) and vulnerable to rising sea-levels, Guyana has integrated climate resilience into its infrastructural blueprint. From enhanced sea defence reinforcements, slope stabilization techniques, and the adoption of sustainable, climate resilient materials, resilience is no longer an afterthought, it is embedded in every project design. This proactive approach integrates infrastructure development perfectly with the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy, recognising that long-term prosperity is inextricably linked to environmental protection and adaptation.



electricity from the GTE project will revitalize industrial and manufacturing output of this sector.

Social Integration & Quality of Life

Beyond monetary metrics, Guyana's infrastructure drive is directly improving the overall social fabric of the entire nation. With all the major road upgrades and highway construction, travel times between key regions and major economic centres have been cut drastically. This has freed up valuable time for citizens allowing for more quality times for families and enhancing productivity. The removal of tolls from major bridges like the two bridges across the Demerara river and the one across the Berbice river has further contributed to the reduction in cost of living and increase the profitability and competitiveness of businesses across Guyana.

With all the new infrastructure there has been enhanced access to key services. The linking of previously disconnected regions through bridges and all-weather roads ensures that citizens in remoted areas can reliably access emergency medical services, educational institutions, and government services. These projects are forging a deeper sense of national unity, ensuring inclusive growth across the coast and hinterland. The physical infrastructure of Guyana is becoming a metaphorical one. It is not longer connecting just communities, but the aspirations of a people rediscovering their collective potential.

The Friction of Progress: Challenges Amid the Boom

Despite the undeniable progress, the rapid scale and speed of development we currently see in Guyana have created significant friction points. These are being manifested as real, tangible constraints felt acutely by the citizenry. These challenges threaten the very inclusive nature of the prosperity agenda that Guyana is hoping for if they are not strategically addressed.

Inflation & Cost of Living

One of the most immediate and widespread constraint is the accelerating cost of living. The oil windfall and the oil-driven economic boom have resulted in a massive injection of liquidity, driving up demand and prices for goods and services across a multitude of sectors, but particularly those related to the construction boom.

In relation to housing and land costs, real estate prices for both rent and purchases have skyrocketed over the past few years. Affordable housing has now become elusive for many workers in the non-oil sector, including teachers, nurses, and small business owners. Today, a simple one bedroom furnished studio apartment is approximately \$80,000 GYD and upwards per month, a complete house is \$2,000 USD and more per month (many advertised prices are in US Dollars). These prices are often the same as a normal worker salary and even more than that. This rapid cost escalation threatens to price the average Guyanese out of the property market.

On the other hand, the high demand for labour and construction materials, coupled with a booming economy has led to increased prices for basic goods and services. For those workers whose incomes have not kept pace with the oil and construction sectors (majority of the population), their purchasing power has been significantly eroded, leading to increased economic hardships and a widening sense of income inequality. Small business owners outside of the oil and construction sector too are finding their incomes lagging behind. Despite the fact that the non-oil economy is growing rapidly, it is still struggling against the tide of the oil-driven inflation. Added to this, despite the government removed the tolls on all the bridges in Guyana and maintenance of 0% tax on fuel, prices for commodities coming from the various regions still have not been reduced despite an obvious drop in their transportation costs.

Infrastructure Bottlenecks & Institutional Capacity

Amid the construction of new roads and bridges across the country, bottlenecks still persist, in a literal sense. While the new highways offer alternatives routes, traffic congestion remains problematic. The sheer increase in the number of vehicles (a direct result of economic growth) means that congestion, while shifted, remains a major concern. This is the situation particularly in Georgetown and on the feeder roads leading to the new highways.

On the East Coast corridor and along the Rupert Craig Highway for example, there is a daily congestion in the mornings and afternoons due to construction of the new four-lane Railway Embankment road. This is not only caused by skyrocketing of vehicle ownership but

a direct result of limited or poor project management. Guyana's small population and its limited skilled labour pool pose a major constraint, often referred to as absorptive capacity. The shortage of engineers, project managers, and skilled technical officers forces a reliance on foreign expertise, a necessary but limiting compromise for Guyana. This shortage also cause government agencies and contractors to struggle in effectively managing the scale and complexity of many of the major projects, eventually leading to delays, cost overruns, and daily discomfort for citizens.

The Digital & Geographic Divide

Despite the current Government making major strides in digital access across Guyana, there is still some disparity in the availability and affordability of modern services. Even where internet infrastructure is extended, the cost of broadband access remains high for a large segment of the population, particularly in the interior regions. Though there is the partnership with companies like Starlink to provide satellite internet access, the cost factor remains a major concern for residents in the remote communities of the hinterland region. This reinforces the issue of the digital divide and limited access to equal opportunities.

The fact that the coastland is heavily populated, most of the major signs of the economic boom is geographically concentrated around Georgetown and surrounding corridors. The regions outside of this core, do not experience the same level of direct economic stimulation, and productivity. This leads to rising concerns about regional inequality. Bridging this divide remains both a moral and developmental imperative if the national transformation is to be genuinely inclusive.

Conclusion: Sustaining Transformation, Managing Momentum & Ensuring Inclusive Prosperity

Guyana stands at a remarkable crossroad. Its infrastructural transformation is a monumental and necessary undertaking. This revolution is not merely

about building roads and powerplants, it is about reimagining a nation's trajectory. The new mega highways, the high-span river bridges, the transformative Gas-to Energy project, the expansion of digital and social services are all reshaping the country today and are essential in creating a modern, competitive, and unified nation. These projects and the many others not listed are successfully dismantling the historic geographic and economic barriers, acting as a powerful catalyst for employment, investment, and national integration.

However, the journey is one of immense complexity. The speed and scale of the oil-driven wealth, while enabling the projects also demands careful economic management, institutional strengthening, and a deliberate focus on human capital development. The challenge for the government is no longer simply building infrastructure, but in ensuring that the benefits of this oil-fueled boom are broad based. Its greatest tests are containing the inflation and ensuring that the new physical assets are accessible and affordable to all citizens.

Guyana's future hinges on a continued and strategic focus on mitigating these constraints. In doing so it requires not only strengthening of institutional capacity, heavy investment in human capital development as mentioned above but crucially, implementing targeted social policies to shield vulnerable communities.

If Guyana succeeds in navigating this delicate balance, between progress and equity, speed and sustainability, it could emerge not only as a model for resource-rich nations but as a testament of how vision, discipline, and inclusive planning can turn a fleeting oil windfall into a durable foundation for generations to come.

Guyana nevertheless stands on the path of successfully transitioning from an oil-rich nation to a state with resilient infrastructure, a diversified non-oil economy, and most importantly, a foundation of genuine, inclusive prosperity for all its people.



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LOOKING BACK AND AHEAD AT THE FUTURE OF PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL PROPAGANDA IN THE CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICA

Introduction

The 3rd International Conference on Theoretical Publications of Latin American and Caribbean Left-wing Parties and Movements took place at Cuba's Nico Lopez Party University in Havana from October 15 to 17, 2025.

It was attended by hundreds of representatives from dozens of nations, who analysed the current challenges facing progressive and anti-imperialist publications in addressing matters of theory and practice today, in a world where algorithms have changed the international communications landscape continue changing lives like never before.

In a global and regional scenario where Artificial Intelligence (AI) has taken and continues transcending Information Technology (IT) to unknown boundaries, delegates looked back and ahead to determine how to address today's challenge and turn them into opportunities.

Veteran Saint Lucia-based Caribbean journalist Earl Bousquet attended, along with colleagues from across the wider Caribbean and Latin American region.

Bousquet has been a journalist and political activist all his life.

He was General Secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Movement (WRM) from its inception in 1976.

The writer was also among hundreds of Caribbean journalists who attended the XI World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana (July 26 to August 5, 1978).

He was a founding member of the Saint Lucia-Cuba Friendship Association (SLCFA) established in 1978 and President of the Saint Lucia-China Friendship Association (SL-CFA) since its formation in 2003.

Bousquet has collaborated with Cuba's Prensa Latina (PL) news agency since 1978 and with the Venezuela-based Latin American and Caribbean news agency Telesur since its establishment in 2005.

The Saint Lucian and Caribbean journalist has been a long-time contributor to china.com.cn, collaborated with the China Global Television Network (CGTN) and other Chinese news outlets.

He also submits to the recently-established Sun and Silk Communications Agency (SASCA), which specializes on issues relating to China's ties with Latin America and the Caribbean from a regional, continental and global perspective.

SASCA can be viewed at sascaonline.com

Following is an abridged version of Bousquet's submission to the historic Havana conference:

As a veteran Caribbean journalist for the past 49 years, I've very-often wondered how different the world would be today if great leaders and writers like V.I. Lenin, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Dr Cheddi Jagan, Fidel Castro and Maurice Bishop had access to e-mail and instant messaging apps in their time, as we do now.

I've pondered on this thought because of the reach of their messaging, even in the Dark Ages of enlightened communication, when instant mass-messaging came only from the mouth, through hand-held megaphones, or delivered by foot or by hand, on mules and horses, from mountains through plains and valleys, to faraway villages, towns and cities.

In Lenin's time, the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP, through 'Pravda' – before and after his death -- mobilized millions of supporters of their common cause, across Europe, to build a

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) that united scores of East European republics and lasted over-seven decades as a global force for good.

Jamaica and the Caribbean's Marcus Garvey and his United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and African Communities League (ACL) attracted membership of eleven million (11,000,000) people of mainly African descent in the USA, across the Caribbean and Latin America and the world, through his eloquent speeches and the movement's newspaper 'The Negro World'.

Dr Cheddi Jagan of Guyana, as a publicly avowed Marxist Leninist, was leader of the Political Action Committee (PAC) that established the People's Progressive Party (PPP) on January 1, 1950.

Dr Jagan was democratically elected Premier of Guyana in 1953 and the PPP was re-elected several successive times -- until 1964, when the US and the UK governments and intelligence agencies colluded to oust Latin America and the Caribbean's first elected communist head of state.

The PPP and President Cheddi Jagan were only re-elected in 1992, after 28 years of dictatorship and the party is again in office for the current term (2025-2030).

But throughout his life (he died in 1996) and his American wife, fellow communist Janet Jagan, was elected to replace him, serving as President up to 2000 when she resigned from active politics due to old age.

But throughout their lives, Cheddi and Janet Jagan led the political education of Guyanese and Caribbean people through their writings in the PPP's quarterly theoretical organ 'Thunder' and its weekly organ 'Mirror' (which I had the honour of being Editor from 13 to 1999).

Fidel Castro had to use typewriters, aided by torchlights at night, to send messages from hidden places in the battle for Cuba's liberation and he spoke to the press in the Sierra Maestra mountains while the July 26 Movement (M-26) and creatively managed to get its messages across securely to the Cuban masses.

Maurice Bishop served as Prime Minister of Grenada from 1979 to 1983 and the revolution lasted four-and-a-half-years in great thanks to his speeches and determination to ensure the

Grenada Revolution remained on the socialist track.

I served in Grenada during the revolution as well (1980 to 1982), as Assistant Editor of the Free West Indian newspaper, News Editor at Radio Free Grenada (RFG) and collaborated with Television Free Grenada (TFG).

Just Imagine...

President Fidel Castro lived to see and feel the power of computers and the internet and his words and works, old and new, went out to the world before he sorrowfully left Planet Earth.

Bishop and the Grenada revolution died in 1983, just as computers were starting to emerge in the English-speaking Caribbean.

And none of the leaders mentioned above ever got to finger keyboards to transmit messages to the world-at-large.

However, given the successes of all those eloquent communicators in their times, just imagine -- if you can -- what the world might have been today, if they had access to the multiplicity of instant messaging mechanisms at our disposal in Century 21.

Two Choices

This conference allows us the opportunity think ahead to what could or would have today, against the background of the propaganda work in their time -- which is precisely what Lenin addressed in his major works 'What is to be Done?' and 'Where to Begin?'

We have two choices today.

First: The advanced communications devices that have taken over our lives (through the robots being driven by humans to drive today's so-called 'Internet of Things') can allow us to take the easy-way-out, by simply asking Chat-GPT for robotic assessments of history and humanity.

Or, secondly: We can put the issues squarely on the table today and try to identify the extent of the problems and challenges we currently face, before arriving at quick or premature conclusions influenced more by online 'likes' and 'shares', than actual assessments of what's really happening on the ground.

Different Environment

Today's global media environment is very-different to what Lenin and Garvey, Jagan, Castro, Bishop

(and their parties and movements) had to contend with -- one in which transnational corporations have compressed their control of international media in ways like never before.

Today, it's easier to measure the effect of messaging, but the yardsticks have changed from certified audiences to inflated 'followers' to attract more 'likes' and 'shares' -- in effect, giving the global internet media barons unlimited access to and control over more information than we used to realise.

We therefore have to revisit how we build our organs and platforms in a very-changed world where political climate change is no less real than in our environment.

The RSDLP Experience

That time came for Lenin and the RSDLP in 1902, when the Russian revolutionaries were faced with the challenge of finding a media mechanism to communicate its messaging and share its experiences across borders.

In Chapter 4 of 'What is to be Done?', Lenin addressed the matter of "The Plan for an All-Russia Political Newspaper."

That was at a time when the RSDLP was a united group of splintered party units across Russia, without a central means of communicating and sharing information across internal and external borders.

Lenin discussed the role of a nationwide newspaper, not only as a collective propagandist but also a collective organizer.

This is what he wrote:

'A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser.

'In this respect, it may be compared to the scaffolding erected round a building under construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour...'

'The scaffolding is not required at all for the dwelling; it is made of cheaper material, is put up only temporarily, and is scrapped for firewood as soon as the shell of the structure is completed.

'As for the building of revolutionary organisations,

experience shows that sometimes they may be built without scaffolding, as the seventies [1870s] showed.

'But at the present time, we cannot even imagine the possibility of erecting the building we require without scaffolding...'

Lenin further explained this notion of a newspaper serving as collective organizer, as scaffolding for building a genuine proletarian revolutionary party. He put it this way:

'The mere function of distributing a newspaper would help to establish actual contacts (if it is a newspaper worthy of the name, i.e., if it is issued regularly, not once a month like a magazine, but at least four times a month).

'At the present time, communication between towns on revolutionary business is an extreme rarity, and, at all events, is the exception rather than the rule.

'If we had a newspaper, however, such communication would become the rule and would secure, not only the distribution of the newspaper, of course, but (what is more important) an exchange of experience, of material, of forces, and of resources.

'Organisational work would immediately acquire much greater scope, and the success of one locality would serve as a standing encouragement to further perfection; it would arouse the desire to utilise the experience gained by comrades working in other parts of the country...'

That was 103 years ago -- 15 years before the triumph of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 that led to the creation of the USSR -- and the rest is world history.

Today, the immediate and always-urgent task of parties of our type (progressive social democratic, anti-imperialist, socialist and communist) all need to revisit the same needs: for party organs and structures that will serve as bases for cementing our contacts with our targeted audiences, within and beyond party ranks.

A Caribbean Perspective

In the English-speaking Caribbean Community (CARICOM) region, for example, Guyana's ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP) has performed a remarkable feat as the only major political party that has kept publishing its theoretical organ

'Thunder' for the past 79 years -- from the inception of the Political Action Committee (PAC) in 1946, which led to the formation of the PPP on January 1, 1950.

His wife, Janet Jagan, was Editor of the 'Thunder' and until her death on March 28, 2009 – and current editor, Hydar Ally, is attending this conference.

Other Caribbean parties of our type have also published weekly organs, like the PPP's 'Mirror', which also continues like ever.

Today's Challenges

In both Russia in 1902 and the Caribbean and Latin America 223 years later in 2025, the theoretical organs and newspapers faced the same problem we do today: the constant challenge to find adequate means to communicate easier and with most certainty across and beyond borders.

Today, we've moved from permanent places to many new spaces, all requiring new types of scaffolding for the various progressive platforms built around original party propaganda and national information outlets.

The new 21st Century scaffolding might very well have to be part of the new structures needed to not only reach-out to selected audiences, but also to navigate the international media traffic in ways that avoid taking too-many shortcuts and selecting too-many inappropriate (one-way) 'super information highways' that cause us to submit to rules that keep us more in dependence, than give us independence.

Where to Begin

The presenters bring to this conference all the thoughts on ways ahead as we discuss what's to be done and where to begin.

For starters, we cannot reverse the progress in Information Technology (IT) and shouldn't try to, but instead seek how best to put these platforms to the best use we can for our respective causes.

But in so doing, we have to be very clear about the road ahead, to ensure we don't throw our proverbial baby out with the bath water.

Saving our publications and giving them longer and everlasting life will require us building the new scaffolding that will shield them from and at the same time nurture them with the new forces at play that we too can play well-enough.

Today (and tomorrow), we therefore have to:

- CONCENTRATE on the nature of the task in each case and as collective forces, to best determine where to go and what to do

- INNOVATE by turning challenges into opportunities, empowering and encouraging younger IT enthusiasts to invent new information mechanisms for better ways and means of communicating directly -- and more safely

- ACTIVATE existing mechanisms for cooperation in joint approaches to the necessary constant reviews to come, of how new changes in IT can help or hinder our messaging; and

- ELEVATE our platforms to work together instead of existing separately while aiming for the same results

Starting Tomorrow Today

In recognition of his recognition of the importance of this ongoing task of changing challenges into opportunities, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), President Miguel Diaz Canel, has assured this conference that this necessary exercise will continue as an annual event.

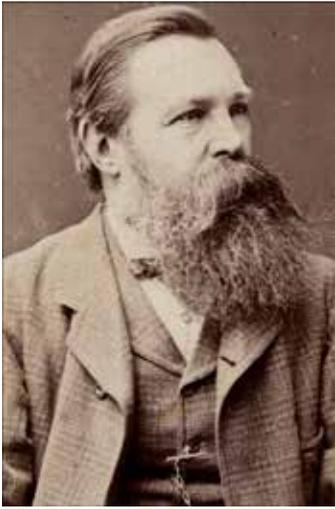
We know we have the global strength to take one step backward, then two steps forward, as we continuously assess and reassess changing times and challenges – and the opportunities they always bring.

We can build and create the alternative platforms we need without daily submitting our very lives to the international foes secretly ploughing our personal information and storing them in 'clouds' that reside in separate earthly imperial information banks.

We cannot (and should not) kill the robots, but we must instead ensure we also build our own -- and feed them with humanoid brainwaves to have the Chat GPT-types 'think' and 'talk' in accordance with our thoughts and perspectives.

Finally, it's also imperative that the conference's organizers do more to ensure greater presence of parties and movements from the Caribbean that also have long histories of similar struggles and challenges, as too-many are simply left out of the loop.

All that said, here's to our better tomorrows -- starting today! (end)



ENGELS: THE OTHER FOUNDER OF MARXISM

This year progressive mankind observed two very important anniversaries of Frederick Engels, the other genius who, along with Karl Marx, founded the theory of the working people, Marxism.

Engels was born on the 28th of November 1820, in Bremen, Germany. He was the eldest of nine children. His father was an industrialist and exposed his son to the business at a very early age. Young Engels left school at a young age and began his working life in his father's business.

It is that experience that exposed him to the conditions of the working class, first in Germany and later in Manchester, England, the very centre of the Capitalist industrialisation process in that period. It is ironic that his father intention when exposing him to the business was for him to be an excellent businessmen, instead he became a champion and teacher of the world's proletariat.

That along with his intellectual curiosity led him towards scientific socialism. Even before he met Marx, he wrote an in-depth analysis of Britain's proletariat titled "The Condition of the Working Class in England." This remains one of the classic works of Marxism.

Engels met Karl Marx in the early 1840s and soon after they became very close friends having discovered how much they were alike in their understanding of the socio-economic conditions that were existing in Europe at the time and how to change them. That was expressed scientifically by Marx in his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, written in 1845, he wrote "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change change it."

Marx and Engels developed contacts with many working-class organisations and were active in their struggles. It was that contact with the "Communist League" that led the league to request of the two thinkers, to write the "Communist Manifesto." That they did in 1848.

This is one of the most brilliant works, both from the point of view of theory and practice. Even today economists, philosophers and sociologist still marvel at the great quality of the work. It has a profound insight into the very nature of capitalism and predicted capitalist globalisation, economic crisis among other features of capitalism. This seminal work was the first programmatic document of the rising communist movement.

Marx and Engels collaborated on many other works, such as the "German Ideology," "The Holy Family" the most well known. However, even in the works that they wrote separately, there was a great deal of consultations and collaboration with each other.

It is apposite to recall that Marx did not live long enough to deal with all the subjects he had set himself to investigate when he started writing Capital. Only Volume one was published while he was alive. Volumes two and three were put together by Engels from the notes that Marx had left. He was the only person who could have done that job. This was due to two main factors, firstly he and Marx's thinking were identical on the most important subjects, therefore he understood Marx's approach completely.

This was particularly true of Volume 3 of Capital since Marx had the basic seeds of what he intended to write

but they were in note only. Engels had to put it into proper form to be published as a book.

The other reason that he alone could have accomplished those tasks was because Marx was notorious for his very bad handwriting. That was made worse by illnesses and exhaustion. Engels was one of the very few who could decipher his drafts.

Despite the Herculean tasks, he and Marx took on and accomplished, Engels wrote other very important works that made a great contribution to the Marxist World Outlook. He delivered in-depth elaboration on subjects that Marx did not have the time to grapple with, some of which Marx read in drafts.

This was particularly true in his writings on natural science, philosophy and on historical subjects. Some of those works arose out of polemics. The most famous of that type of work was "Anti-Duhring."

In that publication he not only destroyed the Pseudo science of Herr-Duhring, but he was able to elaborate on many important theoretical issues, to clear the air on many issues of theory.

Extracted from that work and published after Engels' death was the booklet "Socialism: Utopian & Scientific." Here he dealt with thinkers who were moved by the terrible conditions of the working class and sought to persuade the capitalist class that it should do more to ease the misery of the working people. The main persons who made an impact were Charles Fourier (1772-1837), Robert Owens (1771-1858) and Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825). They were led more by humanism to the conclusion that socialism was a necessity but lacked the scientific foresight to understand that the capitalist nature was to exploit workers. Nor were they able to identify the only social force that was capable of changing the system of exploitation of man by man.

Marx and Engels described them as being Utopian because they knew that it was impossible to persuade the Capitalist by mere moral arguments.

They turned to science to find the force that would put an end to capitalism. They identified the proletariat (working class) as the main force and the leader of all oppressed peoples, in the struggle to end exploitation of the masses. The working class to them was the most revolutionary force because it had no property and was forced to sell its labour power to the capitalists to survive and to provide for their families. Marx and

Engels described them as wage slaves, since the workers had no other options.

Engels also investigated natural science in great detail using the materialist dialectical and historical approach developed by Marx and himself. His seminal work was "Dialectic of Nature." His studies led him to examine nature and made him into one of the earliest Environmentalist.

The depth of his knowledge could be found in his booklet "The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man." Here is a very incisive piece he wrote, which showed his grasp of the subject, "... animal merely uses its environment, and brings about changes in it simply by their presence; man by his changes make it serve his ends, masters it. This is the final, essential distinction between man and other animals, and once again it is labour that brings about this distinction."

He did not just leave it there, but went on to say "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 dreamt that by removing along with the forests the collecting centres 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 conquer 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 other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly.”

What intellectual power to have developed such a profound understanding of the environment in such an early period. Engels wrote this piece one hundred and forty-nine years ago, in 1876. His grasp of the issue still surpasses those of bourgeois intellectual of today. Already he appreciated that capitalism, by its very nature could not solve the problem caused by ecological degradation. He went on to note that “... by long and often cruel experience and by collecting and analysing historical material, we are gradually learning to get a clear view of the indirect, more remote, social effects of our production activity, and so are afforded an opportunity to control and regulate these effects as well.

“This regulation, however, requires something more than mere knowledge. It requires a complete revolution in our hitherto existing mode of production, and simultaneously a revolution in our whole contemporary social order.”

What great scientific foresight that great made had! Marx and Engels can be counted among the earliest environmentalists. Unfortunately, this aspect of Marxism was ignored by Marxist probably until the 1970s when Soviet scientists began pointing to the dangers of unregulated exploitation of nature. Communist parties by not paying attention to that issue allowed a vacuum to be created which was filled by the Green movement, even though Marx and Engels pointed to the dangers very early on.

Today, while we have much more of the subject than existed when Engels wrote that piece, his prediction that Capitalism is incapable of solving the crises is still undisputed. We see that in the drive for profits and to exploit the world resource's imperialist countries continue to plunder and create wars placing the whole world in great danger by creating environmental catastrophes. Today hurricanes, forest fires, floods, landslides, earthquakes are killing thousands of people in various parts of the world. This is undoubtedly caused by over exploitation of nature by ruthless capitalism.

Hope rest with countries like China where the

Communist Party and Government are tackling this issue with greater successes. They are developing new technologies that can minimize environmental degradation. Renewable energies, land restoration, restricting desertification, and ensuring that production is in harmony with nature.

Marx and Engels were more than just powerful intellectuals; they were also activists. As mentioned earlier, they belonged to the League of Communists.

When that organisation was suppressed, they went on to form the First International Working People's Organisation in 1864. By then their works were gaining prominence throughout Europe and indeed the world. The organisation they formed was to advice the working class parties and trade unions and to help them both with theory and practice. Marxism gradually became the most influential revolutionary teaching in their time and has maintained that position to this day. Marxism is more relevant today than when Marx and Engels developed their theories. The need to change capitalist/ imperialist system is becoming more obvious to the masses.

When Karl Marx passed away in 1883, Engels became the main guide to revolutionaries everywhere. One could see from the volume of his correspondences with the emerging political parties of the 1880s and 1890s.

By then the two giant thinkers had succeeded in helping the working class to appreciate its importance and to begin to see it-self as a class for it-self. Over the years the international proletariat made some important strides, even though very unevenly. Engels remained active in the movement and in 1889 founded the Second International which united communist and socialist parties and helped to guide their actions.

The last aspect of Engels life that is very note worthy is his personal character.

Engels was born in a relatively wealthy family as was noted above. He entered business very early in life. However, unlike most persons Engels did not become a rapacious capitalist. Indeed, the opposite occurred. This reflects a high level of decency and the profound humanish of the ideology that guided his every action

very early in life, that ideology which he played a very big part in elaborating is Marxism.

This deep honesty and his strong feeling against oppression was translated into other aspect of his life. His close friendship with Karl Marx is a subject for another article. However, it is apposite to note that Engels stayed in business, even though he did not like it, mainly to support Marx who was writing his most important work, 'Das Kapital.'

Without Engels personal sacrifice, Marx would not have been able to do as much as he did in his service to the working-class.

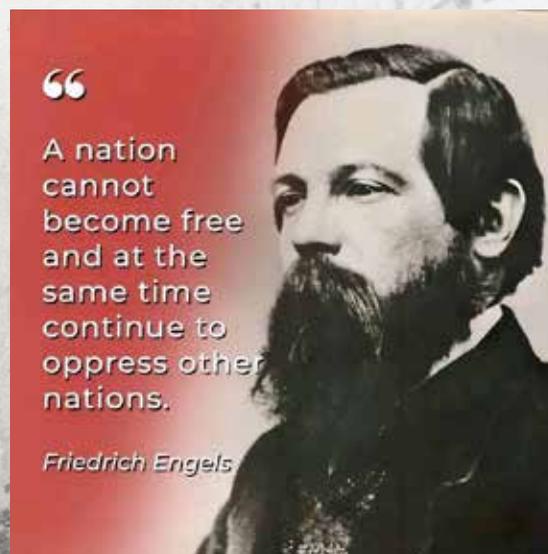
Fredrick Engels was also a very modest man. Even though it is undisputed that he made a herculean contribution to Marxism he never tried to take praise for his works. After Marx died many of his comrades seem to have been speaking much about his works. It appears too that some were even saying he deserved more accolades for the role he played.

Engels put that down before it could spread and become contentions. In a footnote in his work "Ludwig Feuerbach" he dealt with the matter thus, "...Lately,

repeated reference has been made to my share in this theory (Marxism) and so I can hardly avoid saying a few words here to settle this point. I cannot deny that both before and during my forty years collaboration with Marx, I had a certain independent share in laying the foundations of the theory... But the greater part of its leading basic principles ... belong to Marx ... Marx stood higher, saw further and took a wider and quicker view than all the rest of us. Marx was a genius; we others were at best talented..." With that he settled the issue.

This year we remember two very important anniversary of this great man. On November 28 progressive people everywhere will observe the 205th anniversary of his birth. It is also 130 years since he, like Marx earlier went to sleep forever on August 5, 1895, in London.

Working people should know their heroes and place Engels beside Marx as one of the greatest thinkers and revolutionary of all times! Like he said of Marx, so we can say of him, "his name will endure through the ages, and so also will he work!"



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ELECTIONS 2025: AN ANALYSIS

The 2025 General and Regional elections are now over. And even though the ruling PPP/C administration was expected to emerge victorious due in part to the advantage of incumbency, it was the humiliating defeat of the PNC by a relatively new kid on the block that turned out to be the major talking point by Guyanese at home and abroad.

The elections were significant in more than one ways. For the first time the PNC and its allies in the APNU accepted the results of the elections without any hue or cry as in previous elections. One likely explanation was the scale and magnitude of the defeat it suffered at the hands of both the PPP/C and the relatively unknown We Invest in Nationhood (WIN) led by embattled businessman Azrudin Mohamed whose only claim to fame was his access to enormous wealth and a strong social media profile.

The PNC under the leadership of Aubrey Norton who defeated David Granger to assume the highest party position as General Secretary of the PNC wasted no time in demanding, as it were, his pound of flesh. He used his party position to clinch the position of Opposition Leader of the PNC replacing David Granger who had won the 2015 elections in partnership with the Alliance for Change (AFC). The partnership failed in its bid to win the elections of 2020 which resulted in

some amount of tension between the two parties. The rift between the two parties culminated with its failure to agree on a consensus presidential candidate for the 2025 elections. The PNC, as the largest party in the APNU coalition insisted on its leader Aubrey Norton being the presidential candidate. Consequently, the parties decided to go it alone with Norton as the Presidential Candidate for the APNU and Nigel Hughes for the AFC.

With the rupture in the APNU-AFC alliance, the writing was clearly written on the wall. The alliance had barely scraped through a victory albeit under questionable circumstances in the 2015 elections. It was widely believed that the results of the 2015 elections were manipulated by the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) in collaboration with the PNC and certain sections of the business community to deprive the PPP under the leadership of Donald Ramotar from securing a victory at the polls. It is instructive to note that the Donald Ramotar administration was removed from office by way of a no-confidence motion paving the way for fresh elections on May 2015.

It was a forgone conclusion that the APNU could not conceivably win the 2025 elections without the support of the AFC which over the years had seen its support base shrinking at an alarming rate. It had



failed to win a single NDC at the Local Government Elections after deciding to contest on its own. Now with defeat staring it in the face it found itself in a difficult position, literally between a rock and a hard place.

While its political fortunes were clearly on the line, what it did not bargain for was a complete annihilation at the polls, after having failed to garner a single parliamentary seat. It lost to the little known Forward Guyana led by Amazon Desir Walton who only weeks prior to the elections parted ways with the PNC.

All of that pale into insignificance with the emergence of the We Invest in Nationhood (WIN) a mere three months prior to the 2025 General and Regional Elections. The leader of WIN Azruddin Mohamed had multiple charges against him for alleged gold smuggling and tax evasion amounting to billions of dollars. Despite the criminal allegations, he decided to contest the elections both at the national and regional levels.

Many dismissed his candidacy as yet another attempt at ego gratification and wanting to assert himself politically especially in view of impending charges against him. His ability to attract sizeable audiences especially in opposition strongholds did raise some alarm bells.

As it turned out, it was the PNC that became the major political casualty, having been reduced to a mere 12 parliamentary seats from 30 seats it held in the previous Parliament. The WIN party scored an impressive 16 seats and in the process became the main opposition party in parliament.

Political pundits are still trying to analyze the elections results especially given the historic marginalization of the PNC. For the first time in over six decades the PNC failed to garner enough votes to become the main opposition party after alternating between opposition and government benches over the past decades. It has now to play second fiddle to the WIN party which as mentioned earlier was formed a mere three months prior to the September 1, 2025 elections. The

ignominy suffered will long be remembered down the corridors of time. This reality has not been lost to Aubrey Norton who opted not to take up a seat in Parliament for obvious political reasons.

But if there were winners and losers in the opposition camp, there was also a celebratory mood in the PPP/C camp. It had won the main prize under the presidential candidacy of Mohamed Irfaan Ali who was seeking re-election. That was likely his final shot at the presidency as the Guyana Constitution do not allow for re-election beyond a second term. The enactment of presidential term limits came into effect under the presidency of former President Bharrat Jagdeo and despite attempts to have it repealed it was upheld by the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ).

The triumph of the PPP/C at the polls was widely anticipated. The PPP/C had to its credit a solid record of achievements in all facets of national life. This was particularly evident in the delivery of social services such as health, education, housing and water. Wages and salaries also grew in real terms allowing for a bigger basket of goods and service for the average consumer. Old age pensions nearly doubled from the pre-2020 period. Subsidies for water and electricity for the elderly which were lifted by the Granger administration were restored by the PPP/C administration. Cash grants were given to all eligible Guyanese and subsidies to farmers, fisherfolks and other vulnerable groups were given.

Given such an impressive record of achievements by the government, re-election to office was almost a foregone conclusion. Yet there were pockets of discontentment orchestrated by the political opposition. This was particularly evident during the months preceding the elections. The emergence of social media activism added impetus to that climate of engineered dissatisfaction.

Despite the perceived erosion of public trust in the administration to deliver public goods and services by opposition elements, the results of the election debunked any such perception. The view by some that the PPP/C could likely lose its majority in parliament

and forced into a situation of a 'lame duck' administration as happened under the Ramotar presidency proved wrong. Not only did the PPP/C increased its parliamentary majority by an additional three seats, moving from 33 to 36, but it almost swept the polls in terms of control over the Regional Democratic Councils. The PPP won for the first time the plurality in Region Four long considered a stronghold of the PNC. For the first time the PPP/C took the top position of Chair of the Region. At the time of writing this article, the Chair of Region 10, another PNC stronghold remained undetermined, an indication of the changing political dynamics.

One significant development was the apparent convergence of interests between the PPP and the PNC in terms of keeping the emerging WIN from asserting political dominance in regions where it won a plurality of votes such as Regions Ten and Seven, both of which were former PNC strongholds. The WIN, it must be emphasized, has made substantial political gains in PNC strongholds. The extent of the gains came as a shock to the PNC which was hoping that the WIN would have made marginal gains in both PPP and PNC strongholds and by so doing be in a position to hold the balance of power in Parliament. Unlike the PPP which led a robust campaign against the WIN, the PNC went relatively soft on the 'AZMO' effect but as it turned out, to its own detriment. To say that the PNC suffered a devastating loss of support at the polls by WIN would be an understatement. It was the most humiliating defeat suffered by the PNC in its 70 odd years history which must have left founder leader Forbes Burnham turning in his grave.

The PPP by contrast is experiencing its best moments both in terms of popular and electoral support. As the 2025 elections has shown, it managed to win significant crossover votes mainly in PNC strongholds such as Linden and New Amsterdam. This was particularly [evident in the Local Government elections where the PPP/C increased its seats in the Georgetown Municipality from two to seven.](#)

Much of the party's successes is the result of a governance approach with its emphasis on human development especially in areas such as education, health and housing which have seen phenomenol

strides over the past few decades. More recently, the disbursement of cash grants to all eligible Guyanese eighteen years and over and several other interventions such as subsidies to farmers and fisherfolks have positively impacted the livelihoods of these population segments. Added to these are subsidies to vulnerable groups such as pensioners and the less fortunate such as those who are differently abled and single family households.

Other notable interventions include the salary increases to public servants beyond the rate of inflation resulting in an increase in real wages and a consequential increase in the basket of goods and services for the average worker. Pensions have doubled over the 2020 period.

It is clear that the PPP/C has been using incumbency to its advantage and with a booming economy and an increasing revenue stream from future oil receipts, the prospects of expanding its popular and electoral reach looks good.

What all of this means for the political opposition is at best speculative but if recent voting behavior is anything to go by then the PNC is in bad shape both organizationally and politically. It has lost a significant number of persons at the leadership level. And as mentioned before it suffered its worst electoral defeat since its formation in 1957 and is no longer the main parliamentary opposition after a shameful performance at the 2025 elections. The party can only hope that the performance of the WIN at the elections is a mere 'flash in the pan' and that it would be in a position in future elections to regain lost ground.

The party is on cusp of leading the Guyanese to new and higher levels of prosperity along the line of the One Guyana vision as articulated by President Ali.



hat could very well turn out to be the case with the embattled WIN leader Azruddin Mohamed facing possible extradition to the United States following charges of gold smuggling and wire fraud. It remains to be seen how the political dynamics would play out in the near future but there is much uncertainty about Mohamed's political future in light of the impending allegations of criminal behavior against him.

As for the PPP/C. It is now enjoying its best moments with both President Ali and PPP General Secretary Bharrat Jagdeo on a high note of optimism that the party is on cusp of leading the Guyanese to new and higher levels of prosperity along the line of the One Guyana vision as articulated by President Ali.



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.

**Speech by
Chinese Ambassador
H.E Yang Yang**

at the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre on : Seminar in honour of 80th Anniversary of the Victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the World Anti-Fascist War and the signing of UN Charter delivered on 24th September, 2025



This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War and the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. On September 3, China held a commemorative gathering and a grand military parade at Tian'anmen Square in Beijing. The events were attended by 26 heads of state and government including Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, and heads of international organizations. China held the commemorative events to remember history and honor the fallen heroes, to demonstrate the Chinese people's resolve to firmly uphold world peace.

The World Anti-Fascist War was the largest and most devastating war in human history. It engulfed Asia, Europe, Africa and Oceania, and brought untold sufferings to two billion people, inflicting unprecedented havoc on human civilization. More than 80 countries and regions were drawn into the war, including British Guiana. Some people from British Guiana joined the British troops and fought in the European and Asian theaters. Now, on the Remembrance Day each year, the Guyanese government holds solemn ceremonies at the Cenotaph to lay wreaths to the fallen soldiers. Many Guyanese friends may know about the

atrocities of Nazi Germany in Europe, but are not quite aware of the crimes of Japanese militarism in Asia. In Asia, Japanese militarists carried out frenzied aggression and plundering of neighboring countries. In 1937, the Japanese troops carried out the appalling Nanjing Massacre. They slaughtered the Chinese civilians and soldiers who laid down their arms in Nanjing which was the capital of China. In just six weeks, three hundred thousand lives were massacred. Numerous women were raped and killed. The river ran red with blood. The Japanese aggressors also waged abominable biological and chemical warfare against the Chinese civilians, conducted live human experiments, and committed monstrous crimes.

The Chinese theater was the main battlefield in the East of the World Anti-Fascist War, and the Chinese People's War of Resistance was an integral part of this global struggle. Some Guyanese friends may not know that China's national anthem, March of the Volunteers, was born amid the flames of the war. China's fight began the earliest, lasted the longest, and demanded the greatest sacrifices. Starting from the "September 18th Incident" provoked by the Japanese troops in 1931, the Chinese people fired the first shot in the fight against fascism, long before Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 and the Pearl Harbor incident in 1941. From 1931 to Japan's



unconditional surrender in 1945, the Chinese people's war against Japanese fascists lasted for 14 years. China suffered immense losses, with over 35 million military and civilian casualties and economic damages totaling 500 billion USD. Under the banner of the united front against Japanese aggression initiated and forged by the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people at home and abroad fought in unity and with bloodshed, and completely shattered the Japanese aggressors' plan to "conquer China in three months." They wiped out more than 1.5 million Japanese troops, and played a decisive role in the Allied Forces' victory over the Japanese aggressors.

In that life-and-death battle between justice and evil, between light and darkness, China joined hands with peace-loving people in over 50 countries and formed an extensive international united front against fascism. Foreign friends of different colors and ethnicities came to China to fight for the common just cause of humanity. There are many touching stories. More than 2,000 Soviet pilots took part in the volunteer flight team that aided China's resistance, and over 200 of them sacrificed their lives in China. One of the pilots was Grigori Kulishenko. He once said, "I feel the disaster of the Chinese people like that of my own motherland." In October 1939, on his way back from a raid on a Japanese airport, his plane was intercepted. He was shot and died. The Chinese

people have not forgotten this hero. An ordinary Chinese lady and her son, Ms. Tan Zhonghui and Mr. Wei Yingxiang, have maintained his grave for over half a century. They said, "this foreign hero is far away from his home and has no family here in Chongqing. We must keep him company so he doesn't feel lonely."

In 1941, U.S. General Claire Lee Chennault formed the American Volunteer Group (AVG) to China to take part in China's resistance. The AVG aircraft had a distinctive shark face painted on the front. As local people had never seen a shark before, they thought it looked like a tiger, and started to call the aircraft "flying tigers." The AVG members also liked the name. That was how the name "Flying Tigers" became known to all. The Flying Tigers fought side by side with Chinese soldiers and civilians. After they returned to the United States, what the Flying Tigers members talked about most was not the battles, but the warm friendship with ordinary Chinese people. The American pilots missed the taste of these eggs given by the Chinese people. It may sound like a small thing, but it was a time when having enough food was a luxury for ordinary Chinese people. They saved their eggs for the pilots. As the chairman of the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation Mr. Jeffrey Greene said, it was an incredible generosity, a profound kindness.

China actively coordinated with the Allied Forces in

the European and Pacific theaters, foiled the attempt of Japanese and German fascists to join forces, saved the Soviet Union from fighting on two fronts, delayed Japan's southward advance, and reduced the military pressure on the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries in the Pacific theater. Former U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt once remarked that "China's magnificent defense" was one of the key factors in stopping Hitler's plan of world domination. China also deployed troops abroad to directly support Allied forces. In 1942, the Chinese Expeditionary Force entered Burma, repeatedly defeating Japanese troops and rescuing thousands of encircled British soldiers. In 1944, 24 Chinese naval cadets participated in the Normandy landings, earning commendation from Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Amid the aftermath of the World Anti-Fascist War, the international community reflected deeply and united to establish the United Nations (UN), opening a new chapter of building peace and pursuing development together. The UN-centered international system is an important outcome of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War, and constitutes the cornerstone of the post-war international order. Over the past 80 years, the UN has stood various tests in a changing international situation, ensured an overall peaceful world, underpinned global stability and prosperity, and contributed to notable progress of human civilization. As one of the major victorious countries, China made important contribution to the founding of the UN. At the San Francisco Conference, the Chinese delegation strongly advocated the principle of national self-determination and the spirit of anti-colonialism, and helped include "the equal rights of nations large and small" in the UN Charter. As the anti-fascist ally with the heaviest casualties in WWII and a founding member of the UN that was the first to sign the UN Charter, China has always seen it as a sacred duty to defend the authority of the UN and uphold the post-war international order.

Over the past 80 years, while pursuing its own development, China has supported and practiced multilateralism with concrete actions, and played a constructive role in safeguarding world peace and

development. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence proposed by China have become the basic norms guiding international relations and fundamental principles of international law. China is the largest troop contributor to peacekeeping operations among the five permanent members of the Security Council and the second largest contributor to UN regular budget and peacekeeping assessments. This year marks the 35th anniversary of the participation of the Chinese military in UN peacekeeping operations. Since 1990, China has sent over 50,000 peacekeepers to 25 UN peacekeeping operations in more than 20 countries and regions. In the Caribbean, eight Chinese peacekeepers lost their lives in the Haiti earthquake in 2010. By late 2023, China has sent approximately 30,000 medical personnel to 76 countries and regions over six decades, providing medical services to nearly 300 million patients. For years, China has contributed around 30% of global economic growth and over 70% of global poverty reduction. Since President Xi's proposal of the Belt and Road Initiative more than a decade ago, China has signed cooperation agreements with over 150 countries, with cumulative direct investment in partner nations exceeding \$350 billion, significantly boosting economic development and social stability across the globe.

Today's world faces increasing changes and turbulence, with regional conflicts erupting incessantly. Unilateralism, protectionism, and hegemonism have dealt a heavy blow to the international order. We must learn from history, drawing wisdom and strength from the lessons of World War II and the great victory of the world anti-fascist war, resolutely opposing all forms of hegemonism and power politics to jointly create a brighter future for humanity.

We must uphold a correct view of WWII history. History brooks no distortion and facts tolerate no denial. The history of WWII documents both the crimes of war and the heroic deeds of anti-fascist forces. All peace-loving nations and people need to remain vigilant and firmly oppose any distortion of historical truths or denial of the war's victorious outcomes. Only by correctly understanding history

can we avoid repeating past mistakes, draw valuable lessons, and forge a better future.

We must resolutely safeguard the post-war international order. The conflicts and injustices in today's world do not arise because the purposes and principles of the UN Charter are outdated, but precisely because they have not been fully implemented. The painful lessons of WWII are still fresh in our memory. The world must not return to the law of the jungle where "might is right." The more turbulent the international situation is, the more we need to uphold the authority of the UN. Taiwan's return to China is an integral part of the WWII victory and the post-war international order. The Cairo Declaration, Potsdam Proclamation, and other legally binding documents unequivocally affirm China's sovereignty over Taiwan.

We must build a community with a shared future for mankind. 80 years ago, people across the globe fought courageously and shoulder-to-shoulder to defeat the mighty forces of fascism. Similarly, today's humanity must cooperate to overcome security dilemmas, dialogue to bridge civilizational divides, and unite to confront shared challenges. In the face of a changing era, President Xi put forward the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind. After putting forward the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, President Xi proposed the Global Governance Initiative recently, which emphasizes adherence to sovereign equality, observance of international rule of law, practice of true multilateralism, advocacy of people-centered

approach and focus on taking real actions. The Initiative reflects the common aspiration of the international community. China stands ready to work with Guyana and other countries to safeguard the victory of WWII, practice true multilateralism, and contribute to promoting world peace, development and progress and building a community with a shared future for mankind.



Chinese Ambassador H.E. Yang Yang is the current Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Guyana. She is a diplomat and university graduate.

THE HISTORICAL IMPERATIVE:

SCIENCE SHOULD BE THE ENGINE OF CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT

The global landscape of economic and societal progress has been shaped by a singular, persistent force: the advancement of science. From the agricultural transformations of ancient civilizations to the digital revolutions of the modern era, the trajectory of human development is inextricably linked to our ability to observe, understand, and manipulate the natural world. For the Caribbean, a region grappling with the dual pressures of economic diversification and climate vulnerability, understanding this historical dynamic is not merely an academic exercise, it is a blueprint for a resilient and prosperous future. This article will trace the pivotal moments where science fueled development, and then articulate a clear vision of how the Caribbean can leverage these lessons to build a new foundation of prosperity. Note, any reference to science in this article denotes the natural and life sciences including physics, chemistry and biology.



The Dawn of Modern Development: The Scientific Revolution and the Industrial Age

The first major historical lesson in the science-development nexus in the Western World can be traced back to the Scientific Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries. This period, characterized by a radical shift from philosophical speculation to empirical observation and experimentation, laid the intellectual groundwork for what was to come. Figures like Isaac Newton, Galileo Galilei, René Descartes and Francis Bacon introduced a methodical, rigorous approach to knowledge. While their discoveries did not immediately translate into industrial

applications, they fostered a new mindset—one that sought to understand and systematize the laws of nature for practical benefit.

This intellectual revolution bore its most significant fruit with the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century. James Watt's improvements to the steam engine, a technology rooted in the principles of thermodynamics, did not emerge in a vacuum. They were the culmination of centuries of mechanical and physical inquiries. This invention revolutionized manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture. It enabled the mass production of goods, the rapid movement of people and resources, and fundamentally altered the structure of societies, shifting populations from agrarian rural areas to bustling urban centers.

The wealth generated by these new industries fueled further investment in research, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of innovation and economic growth. The key takeaway for development is clear: the most transformative technologies are often born not from a single moment of genius, but from a long-term societal commitment to foundational scientific principles. The Industrial Revolution was a direct product of the intellectual seeds sown by the Scientific Revolution.

Public Investment and the Rise of the Research University

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the relationship between science and development evolved. It became increasingly clear that sustained scientific progress required institutional support. Nations that recognized this, such as Germany, Russia, the United States (US) and later China, began to systematically invest in public education and research institutions. The creation of land-grant universities in the US, for instance, was a landmark decision that explicitly linked public higher education with practical, agricultural, and mechanical arts. These institutions were tasked not only with teaching but also with conducting research that would directly benefit local economies and populations.

This model proved incredibly successful. American agricultural productivity soared due to university-led research on crop genetics, soil science, and pest control. Similarly, a public-private partnership model emerged, with government funding driving fundamental research and private enterprise translating those discoveries into commercial products. The Manhattan Project and the subsequent post-war investment in defense research gave birth to the internet, GPS technology, nuclear power and countless other innovations that now underpin the global economy. This era demonstrates a critical lesson: government and public institutions have played the most important role in enabling and advancing fundamental research that have tremendous impact on the economy and our lives.

The Green Revolution and Global Health Breakthroughs

Faced with a burgeoning global population and the imminent threat of widespread famine, scientists initiated the Green Revolution (period of dramatic increase in agricultural production during the 1940s-1960s, primarily in developing countries). At its heart was the biological innovation led by figures like Norman Borlaug, who developed new, high-yield varieties (HYVs) of wheat and other staple crops. When these seeds were combined with advancements in irrigation and synthetic

fertilizer use, agricultural output in developing nations across Asia and Latin America surged.

This revolution successfully averted mass starvation, established a crucial foundation of food security, and freed these nations to pursue broader economic development. It was a powerful demonstration that a focused scientific breakthrough, effectively deployed, could have a more profound and immediate impact on human well-being than any single economic policy.

Simultaneously, medical science made monumental strides in conquering infectious diseases. Innovations like the discovery of penicillin and the systematic development of vaccines for diseases such as smallpox and polio were direct results of dedicated research. These public health campaigns not only saved millions of lives but also fundamentally transformed the human capital of nations. The ultimate success of this effort is the eradication of smallpox globally, and the ongoing, intense campaign that has brought polio to the brink of the same achievement. A healthy populace is a prerequisite for economic stability; by removing the burden of preventable disease, these scientific advances unlocked the full potential of societies.



The Digital Age and the Knowledge Economy

The late 20th and early 21st centuries ushered in the digital age, a period where information itself became the most valuable commodity. The microchip, the internet, and the rise of computing power were all built on decades of foundational research in physics and computer science. This technological revolution has not only created new industries but has also democratized access to information and resources. For the first time in history, a startup in a remote corner of the world can access the same knowledge base as a company in Silicon Valley.

This era's lesson is about intellectual infrastructure. Nations that have invested heavily in high-quality education and high-speed internet access are the ones leading the knowledge economy. Their citizens are not just consumers of technology; they are scientific creators, innovators, and entrepreneurs. The most successful modern economies are not built on resource extraction but on the creation and application of knowledge.

The Caribbean's Path Forward: Applying Historical Lessons

For the Caribbean, a region largely defined by its natural beauty and tourism-based economies, the historical narrative of science and development is both a warning and a guide. The region's economic over-reliance on a single sector makes it uniquely vulnerable to global shocks, as demonstrated by the recent pandemic. Furthermore, its geographical location places it on the front line of climate change, with rising sea levels, more frequent hurricanes, and coral reef degradation posing existential threats.

To move beyond this vulnerability and achieve true sustainability, the Caribbean must follow the historical blueprint and make a deliberate, strategic investment in science. This cannot be a marginal effort; it must be a central pillar of national and regional policy.

First, foster a culture of scientific inquiry and research by funding it and building institutions dedicated to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Germany serves as a fantastic model for building highly successful STEM institutes where the state assumed most of the financial burden. Their world-class status in STEM was achieved through a two-pronged approach centered on institutional reform and clear specialization, which

began in the 19th century. The foundational pillar was the Humboldtian university model, pioneered at the University of Berlin in 1810. This model institutionalized the modern research university, merging teaching and research as inseparable functions, and championed academic freedom (*Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*). This created an environment where professors were expected to be world-class scholars, not just instructors, making German universities the destination for scientific training throughout the late 19th century. Crucially, this system led to the establishment of the modern university research laboratory, where foundational sciences like chemistry and physics advanced rapidly, creating the knowledge base for the Second Industrial Revolution

Complementing the pure research focus of the Humboldtian universities, Germany specialized in applying this knowledge to industry. Technical schools were elevated to Technical Universities (*Technische Hochschulen* or THs), gaining the right to award doctoral degrees (*Dr.-Ing.*) around 1900, thereby giving engineering academic parity with traditional disciplines. Later, to support research that was too complex, costly, or long-term for universities, Germany created a unique, dual system of independent research organizations: the Kaiser Wilhelm Society (KWS), later the Max Planck Society (MPG), which focused on fundamental, blue-sky research free from teaching duties; and the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft (FhG), established post-WWII, which focused on applied research and directly served the needs of industry and government. This multilayered structure, spanning basic science, academic training, advanced engineering, and industrial application, ensured a constant flow of discoveries and highly trained professionals, securing Germany's scientific and industrial dominance for decades.

For Guyana and the Caribbean to achieve success in this area it is vital to build institutional capacity and foster collaboration. It means supporting teachers with the resources and training they need and creating hands-on learning environments that spark curiosity. It means funding local universities and research institutions (not any 'institutions' foreign to the Caribbean), providing them with the necessary resources and equipment. It also means fostering collaboration between academia, government, and the private sector, creating a pipeline for scientific discoveries to be translated into commercial products and public policies. It means a massive input of state funding for long term gain in science and technology

and the subsequent economic development that follows as evidence by the historical perspective detailed *a priori*. It is about shifting the cultural narrative to celebrate not just athletes, musicians and lawyers, but also scientists and engineers. In addition, regional cooperation is vital, allowing for shared resources and expertise to tackle challenges that affect all nations in the Caribbean.

Second, **target research to solve regional challenges**. The Caribbean does not need to reinvent the wheel, but it must innovate in areas that are vital to its survival. This includes:

Climate Resilience: Investing in research on climate-resilient crops, coastal engineering to combat rising sea levels, and the development of advanced meteorological and early-warning systems.

Renewable Energy: The region has an abundance of solar, wind, and geothermal resources. Scientific research can help optimize grid infrastructure, improve energy storage solutions, and develop new technologies to harness these resources efficiently, reducing reliance on expensive and polluting fossil fuels that are finite resources.

Marine Biotechnology: The Caribbean Sea is a vast and largely untapped resource. Research can unlock its potential for new pharmaceuticals, sustainable aquaculture, and other valuable bioproducts, creating entirely new, high-value industries.

Finally, **boost the manufacturing capacity of life saving drugs and vaccines** by focusing on regional collaboration to overcome the challenges of small, fragmented markets and limited infrastructure. The core strategy should be to create a unified pharmaceutical ecosystem across CARICOM and other regional bodies, leveraging shared resources, harmonized regulations, and coordinated investment.

Conclusion

The history of development is the history of science. The most prosperous and resilient societies are not those that merely consume knowledge, but those that actively create it and invest in it. For Guyana and the Caribbean, this is a moment of choice. It can continue on a path of vulnerability, or it can seize this historical moment to invest in the single most powerful engine of human progress - science. By making a strategic and unwavering commitment to science, the region can move beyond its traditional economic models and build a future that is not only prosperous but also fundamentally sustainable and secure. The sun will always shine on its shores, but with science as its compass, the Caribbean can chart a course toward a brighter and more resilient tomorrow.



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ANTI-CORRUPTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS EXPO

DECEMBER 9 AND 10, 2023



ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUYANA: PROGRESS, SETBACKS AND RENEWED MOMENTUM (1992–2025)

Over the past three decades, Guyana has experienced significant transformation, including in democratic governance, human development and advancement in the protection and rights of women, children, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups. This article traces significant human rights gains and transformational reforms made during this period while noting the setbacks and threats to democratic rule, indigenous land rights, youth development and other human rights domain during the period of APNU/AFC rule (2015 to 2020).

It is widely acknowledged that the years following the restoration of democracy in 1992 marked a turning point for human rights in Guyana. Several landmark achievements emerged during this period. October 5, 1992 saw the restoration of democratic governance after 28 years of dictatorship, rigged elections, and institutionalized suppression of civil and political rights. It marked an upward turning point in Guyana's history, ushering in a period of free and fair elections, renewed respect for the rule of law, and the rebuilding of institutions and systems, which upholds human rights, transparency, and public accountability. Prior to 1992, human rights abuses went unnoticed and

unpunished due to the suppression of free speech, restrictions on the independent media, intimidation of political opponents, and the absence of functioning democratic institutions capable of holding the state accountable. The lack of judicial independence (e.g. where PNC's flag was hoisted above the Court of Appeal building and other state institutions under the presidency of Forbes Burnham), widespread censorship, and fear of reprisal created an environment where violations of civil, political, and social rights were hardly reported or addressed, leaving citizens powerless and vulnerable.

Post 1992 saw groundbreaking reforms. First and foremost, the 1980 constitution, which was passed based on a rigged 1980 referendum and which entrenched authoritarian powers in the executive, was subjected to an extensive, nationwide inclusive and participatory consultation and reform process. Everybody, including civil society, political parties, trade unions, the private sector, farmers, indigenous communities, youth, women and faith-based bodies all had an opportunity to participate in the constitutional making process. Stemming from this reform process, a number of human rights-based commissions were mandated and established, including the Ethnic Relations Commission,

Women and Gender Equality Commission, Rights of the Child Commission and Indigenous Peoples Commission. Under successive PPP/C Government, Guyana also saw major investments in education, health, water, housing and other basic services, including in rural and Indigenous communities. Poverty levels declined, access to health care improved, and the education system expanded. For example, in 2022, the Human Development Index (HDI) ranking, which considers health, education and income, jumped to high human development for the first time; universal primary education was achieved by 2011 and the country is on track to achieving universal secondary education by 2026. These are all variables that impacts human dignity and strengthen the enabling environment for citizens to participate fully in national development, and access opportunities regardless of geography, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

In terms of reaching those furthest behind and ensuring that no one is left behind, substantial process have been realized. For Guyana's First Peoples, the passage of the first ever Amerindian Act (2006), the expansion of Amerindian land titling programme, formalization of village governance systems, cultural, social and economic/livelihood development of indigenous peoples were all advanced. However, during the period 2015 to 2020, the land titling programme was halted, with the APNU/AFC Government exercising strong resistance to the implementation of already funded projects such as the Norway/Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund US\$13 mln Amerindian Land Titling initiative. Indeed, one Minister of the then Government, Mr. Keith Scott, stood up in the National Assembly and argued that the indigenous peoples of Guyana “manifested an attitude of avarice which should not be condoned”. When called upon to apologize, he refused.

Upon returning to office in August 2020, the land titling programme recommenced, and the Government has pledged to continue this initiative, which guarantees greater human rights protections and more resilient communities for Guyana's First People. In addition, the new PPP/C administration will be continuing its post 2020 transformational development agenda, which includes engagement of 3,000 Amerindian Community Support Officer, provision of GOAL scholarships and the allocation of at least 15 percent of the proceeds of carbon credit sales to support the implementation of Village Sustainability Plans (VSPs). To date over \$14 billion has been transferred to support these VSPs, a funding stream which was non-existent during the 2015 to 2020 APNU/AFC rule.

Other developments include landmark legislation for the protection of Women and Children, including the Sexual

Offences Act, Child Protection Act, and Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. New child protection units, the provision of gender based violence services, and trafficking response teams improved safety and access to justice. New shelters, expanded gender based violence prevention programmes, updated child protection services, and improved anti-trafficking responses have increased access to justice and psychosocial support for vulnerable individuals.

Moreover, over the past 5 years, Guyana has launched its largest-ever portfolio of social programmes, including: cash grants for schoolchildren, households, and senior citizens, major housing expansions, new hospitals, health centres, and emergency response facilities, and large-scale infrastructure upgrades in rural and hinterland communities. These measures continue to directly improve living standards and expand economic security.

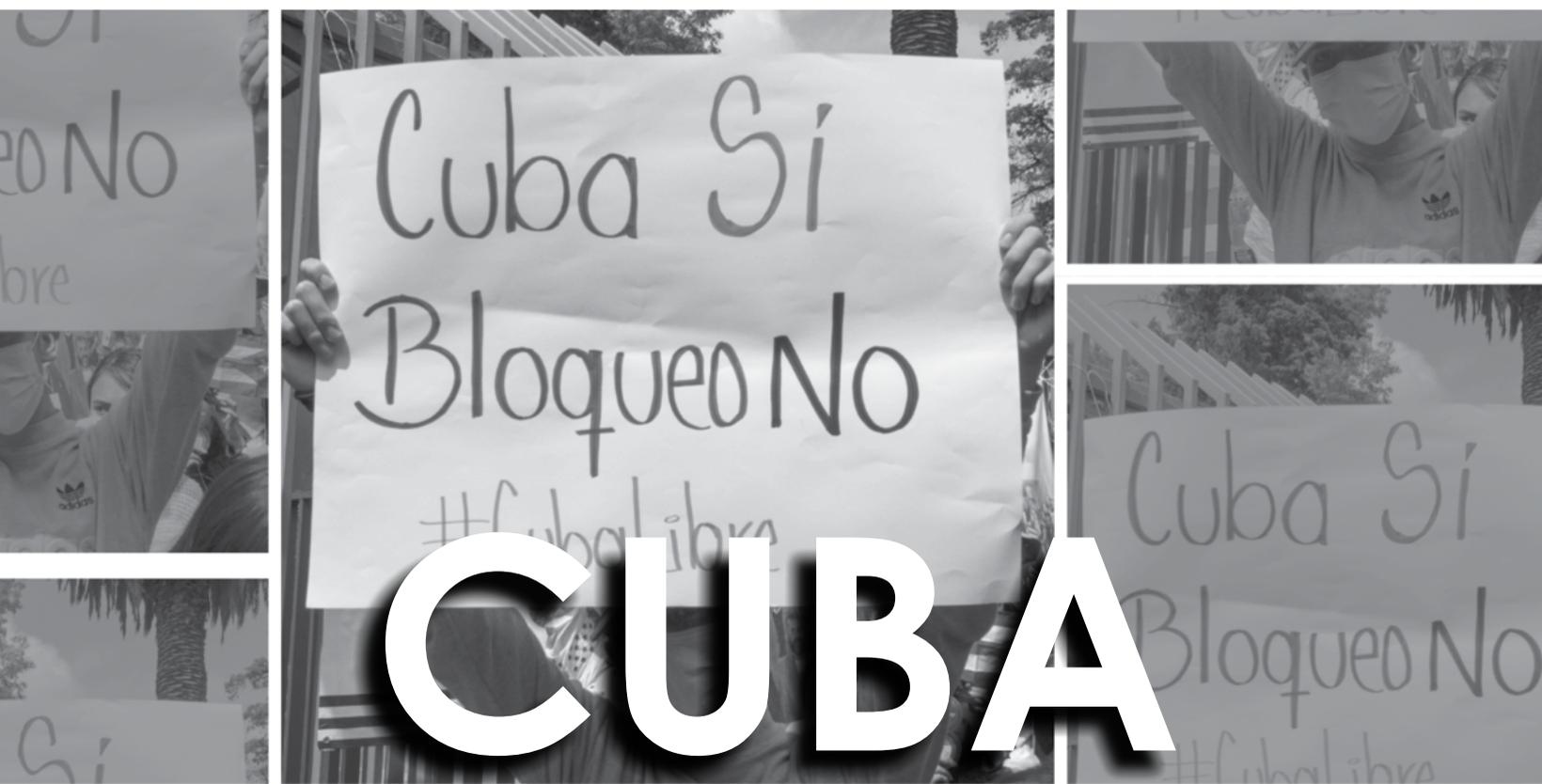
As a testimony to the PPP/C's records and achievements on human rights, during Guyana's 4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva in May 2025, numerous member states of the review panel praised Guyana's efforts. For example, the United Kingdom welcomed “the steps taken by Guyana to improve the legal framework for human rights, including efforts to advance gender equality”.

Guyana supported and accepted more than 70% of the recommendations of the review panel, with the remainder to be addressed through longer-term processes such as constitutional reform.

Those accepted centres around the continued strengthening of democratic institutions and expanding access to justice and legal protections; advancing gender equality, child protection, and the rights of persons with disabilities and rights of Indigenous Peoples; reducing poverty, continuing the expansion of healthcare and education access in all regions, including rural, hinterland and Indigenous communities.

As Guyana continues to grow—economically, socially, and democratically—the country's human rights framework remains central to building a more equitable and resilient future. There is no better steward of this path than the Peoples Progressive Party/Civic Government. Five more years of progress and an exciting future awaits all Guyanese!





CUBA

A STUDY IN COURAGE AND RESISTANCE

FOR SIXTY-FIVE YEARS (THREE GENERATIONS) the heroic Cuban people have been enduring the consequences of economic and other sanctions, heaped upon them by successive governments of the United States of America, effectively aided and abetted by many Western and other complicit and sycophantic regimes.

The U.S embargo on CUBA has its genesis just after the 1959 overthrow of the Fulgencio Batista dictatorial, USA backed and supported regime. During the dictatorship of Batista, CUBA was referred to as the playground of the rich and powerful (especially those of the USA) who frequented the country to indulge in many illegal, nefarious activities including prostitution, trafficking and the sale and use of illegal substances.

What started as severing of Diplomatic and Trade relations, intended to scare the Castro regime into reversing the declared intentions of proceeding on a Socialist path, which favoured the working people of CUBA, soon degenerated into a total embargo of trade with CUBA and thereafter into even harsher and stronger measures with the enactment of Laws such as Helms-Burton Act, in 1969. Actions which began, ostensibly as political revenge and punishment developed into full scale economic policies specifically designed and implemented to reverse the chosen path of CUBA's revolutionary leaders, and punish the CUBAN people for their

overwhelming support of the new regime.

A brief chronology of the events that CUBA has gone through for these agonizing years, should open the eyes, not only of those who have followed and continue to follow and understand the CUBAN peoples' heroic battles against imperialism, but also those who have only heard of CUBA's valiant resistance.

In 1959, Fidel Castro and his band of less than TWENTY-FIVE young, determined revolutionaries succeeded in their heroic bid to overthrow the USA's puppet Fulgencio Batista.

Their victory was achieved after an initial group of around eighty of his comrades, including Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Raul Castro, who had sailed from Mexico, in 1956, in a dilapidated yacht -"GRANMA" were intercepted and defeated, with only twenty-two escaping and fleeing to the mountains of Sierra Maestra.

Fidel himself was captured in the 1956 attempt, charged and conducted his own defense, at the end of which he made his inspiring, resounding, famous speech "HISTORY WOULD ABSOLVE ME", which would be worthy of being in any collection of great defense presentations.

There they re-grouped, added new recruits and after intense fighting (not only against Batista's forces, but



t hunger and diseases, through swamps and over mountains, succeeded in overthrowing the Batista's puppet government.

That change of the status quo, with the nationalization of most of USA owned properties and the enactment of policies to help the working people of CUBA, set into motion, frenzied USA imposed sanctions and policies aimed at bringing the new government to "its knees".

After these initial restrictions for USA corporations and individuals to do business with CUBA, there were many attempts, overtly and covertly to overthrow the Castro government, including assassination attempts against Fidel and his top leadership, the infamous, failed Bay of Pigs invasion in April, 1962 and the missile crisis in October of the same year, when the world stayed on edge at the risk of a nuclear war.

During 1960 the President Eisenhower administration imposed a full blown embargo on the Island, and in 1962 under President Kennedy, these were expanded to be known as the US Trade Embargo on CUBA, and exists up to today. In 1996, the Helms-Burton Act was passed in the USA Congress, which codified and strengthened the then existing embargo to extend beyond the USA. Foreign companies were threatened with legal action and hefty penalties, if they were found to be doing business with those companies nationalized after the 1959 revolution. Under this Act, the US Congress and NOT the President of the United States, was now responsible for lifting, reducing or expanding the embargo.

The embargo, since then has had serious repercussions and severe adverse effects on CUBA's international trade, its foreign investments possibilities and opportunities, which were almost totally restricted to the very few States and Corporations willing and prepared to stand up to the

United States of America. CUBA lost access to its largest historical US market and supplier, which caused it to have to find alternative sources of supplies and markets for its products. Naturally, prices to the consumers were increased astronomically for almost every imported item, including, but not limited to food, fuel, pharmaceutical products, machinery and replacement and maintenance parts, etc.

Shortages led to rationing of essential foods concomitant with increased prices. CUBANS were forced to "tighten their belts", to resort to innovative means to increase local production, adapt new and improved work habits to enhance and improve productivity, while maintaining high standards in their education and health sectors.

As a result of their limited accessibility to foreign markets, the CUBAN economy went into a tail spin, lasting for years, with the effects still being felt and visible to all who are interested or inclined to visit the island. Academics, through various studies have maintained that sanctions and unfair trade practices and lack of access to markets, lead to lowering of a country's GDP growth and foreign investment opportunities, and CUBA remains a prime example of these externally imposed economic measures. For a number of years, the CUBAN people, government and economy have received much support from the Soviet Union, but this solidarity was further and adversely impacted by the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This "breaking up" of the Soviet Union, just as CUBA was "turning the corner" was another severe blow to the CUBAN economy as once again entirely new trading partners had to be found, tough bilateral negotiations undertaken and often harsh conditions agreed upon, just to keep the nation from drowning in a sea of economic and

political sharks.

CUBA was again forced to battle the forces aligned with the USA and most Western nations, intent on strangling a people who choose a path of development different to theirs.

However, the precarious state of the economies and external pressures exerted on those states which were prepared to assist CUBA, unfortunately, did not allow them to create a lasting positive impact on CUBA's economic growth.

In addition, limited trade and other relations with a few bilateral partners, economic reforms and opening up of the informal economy has been a tremendous advantage to CUBA to survive and adapt.

CUBA was again, in order to maintain and improve the living conditions of its people, forced to implement measures such as state rationing, and a dependency on remittances from overseas, mainly North and South American, among other creative innovations.

Countries like Mexico and China provided tremendous assistance through continuing trade and credit, Venezuela provided subsidized oil for extended periods and smaller bilateral arrangements with a few friendly nations, in critical areas, helped to reduce the impacts of the crisis but could not totally offset the damage caused.

Manuel Orozco, a financial and remittances specialist who has been tracking CUBA's financial difficulties for years, is quoted as having said "Sanctions close doors, but they don't close a people's creativity". CUBA is a glowing example of a creative and resilient people.

CUBA found an important niche in opening up its beautiful, scenic country to the tourism sector, earning desperately needed foreign currency. Relatives and friends of CUBANS living overseas, in addition to travelling to CUBA, send remittances "home" which assist in the recipients living conditions, and ultimately, the CUBAN economy.

Estimates of remittances have fluctuated in the lower billions of dollars in both currency and consumer goods, around the beginning of the 2020's.

In the tourism sector, the number of tourists began a slide in the period of COVID (2019 onwards) and is now in the process of a resurgence. However, factors such as frequent power failures, problems with the aged infrastructures and changes in governments in the United States and as a consequence, policy changes restricting

transportation and travel options have added to the reduction of tourists and visitors to CUBA.

In around the 2017/2019 (pre pandemic) period, it was estimated that between four and five million people visited CUBA but declined to just around two and a half million by 2024.

Revenues, understandably fell to just in the vicinity of over a billion dollars by 2024. Also, of great assistance to the Cuban people and its economy was the sharing of their highly skilled personnel in the medical, scientific, cultural and other fields, often referred to as "service exports" where they were in high demands by countries which could not afford to acquire such skills from Western countries. The benefits gained by the receiving countries, were immeasurable in many instances, especially in the training of the receiving countries' personnel. The arrangements also benefitted the Cuban economy in earning much needed foreign currency to fund its social services and maintaining its aged infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the current administration of Donald Trump in the United States, has threatened countries engaging in these activities, to withdraw aid now being given to them. While some countries have responded positively by emphasizing the extent these arrangements have benefitted their citizens, a few are capitulating.

Efforts at "opening up" the economy included the rationing of essential consumer items to ensure that those in need could have access to them, coupled with subsidies to additionally address the scarcities caused by the trade embargoes imposed by the United States of America and facilitated by other compliant western states.

Cuba also slackened controls by gradually allowing the establishment of small private enterprises, such as cafes, taxis and guesthouses, which went a far way in boosting supply and incomes. These establishments have been growing for the benefit of many families. In our own streets in Georgetown, CUBANS and other South American and Caribbean nationals can be seen in busy shopping areas, on a daily basis maneuvering in pedestrian and vehicular traffic, laden with bags of consumer items, which are eventually taken back to their respective countries for sale.

During all of these harsh periods, COVID-19 spreads its tentacles throughout the world, CUBA being no exception. Importantly, however, it has been established that this small nation was more successful in fighting this pandemic



than all the larger, richer economies and contributed its expertise in producing treatments and medications to combat the spread, which it shared with poorer nations which were unable to acquire the more expensive vaccines from the United States and other countries which manufactured them.

Year after year after year, the United National General Assembly has been adopting resolution after resolution to stop the trade and other embargoes against CUBA, but these have so far to gain unanimous acclamation. This year, 2025, ONLY SEVEN of the one hundred and ninety-three countries represented at that world forum voted against the resolution. These included The United States of America and Israel, which was five more than in 2024, as a result of intense lobbying by the United States of America, and severe "arm twisting" and threats. Despite the increase in the negative vote, the stage reached to get this overwhelming majority of the positive vote is a reflection of CUBA's persistent diplomatic presentations and increasing influence and respect on the world stage.

And as if all the difficulties CUBA has experienced for more than SIX DECADES were not enough, and as we say in Guyana, "as if to add insult to injury" almost every hurricane paying unwelcome visits to the region, pummel CUBA with their severity and leave in their wake massive devastation to infrastructure and loss of lives. The most

recent in October, 2025 the hurricane given the name MELISSA created death and destruction in three Caribbean states, Jamaica, Haiti and CUBA.

The courageous, resilient and unbroken Cuban people have survived SIXTY-FIVE years of immoral, unprincipled, undemocratic and repressive treatment by the largest economies in the world, aimed at bringing them to their knees. The CUBAN people, however, have resisted all the cowardly machinations by these unscrupulous nations and have remained standing erect with their heads held high, despite the continuous and consistent assaults against them.

During these long years the courageous Cuban people have extended their hands of friendship to national liberation struggles worldwide, despite their own hardships and sufferings.

SIX decades of embargoes and other sanctions imposed upon CUBA and its people, have failed to break the will and determination of these courageous people. It helps to show that "A PEOPLE UNITED CAN NEVER BE DEFEATED".

It behooves every nation to join in the struggle to end the blockade of CUBA and to alleviate the suffering caused.



By Nadira Narine- Guest Writer



THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE HEALTH SECTOR

Guyana's Health Sector has been experiencing unprecedented and profound transformation. This transformative process is proceeding at a rapid pace. It is leaping into the future, particularly between 2020 and 2025, with major projects focused on infrastructure development, digital advancement and the

modernization of primary health care.

Key initiatives include the construction and renovation of regional hospitals, the establishment of a specialized Maternal and Pediatric Hospital, along with investments in electronic health records and AI assisted diagnostics.



This has been a historic period for the Sector -- not only in the scale, scope, cost and reach of the modernizing projects, but also as a timely and tangible reminder of the underpinning philosophy of the Administration nurturing these projects. President Irfaan Ali eloquently described this inclusive care package succinctly when he said:

"We are not building hospitals alone. We are building systems of care, rooted in dignity, access and equity for every Guyanese."

This giant, costly leap by the Health Sector into modernization and the future, also highlights the stark difference in the priorities of the current Ali-led Administration and the previous Granger-lead APNU/AFC regime. A more recent illustration:

Whereas, from 2015 to 2020 the APNU/AFC Government allocated annually an average of G\$25 Billion to the Health Sector, the current PPPC Administration allocated in 2024 some G\$41.7 Billion for the same Sector

The major changes are happening in both the infrastructural and human resources spheres of operations. The scale and the scope of construction and equipping of modern health facilities are in themselves impressive. The surge in investments in the Sector in the period 2020 to 2025 illustrates the difference in priorities of the past APNU/AFC regime and the current PPPC Administration This is specially visible when compared to the dearth of investment and scant interest and paltry budget dedicated by the APNU/AFC Coalition Government to this vital aspect of national development.

Several important areas of health care services benefited from the remedial interventions and hefty investments of the PPPC administration over the last four plus years.

Twelve new, modern hospitals are to be constructed, equipped and staffed for commissioning by 2028. Several of these have already been commissioned and fully functional, including at Bath, West Berbice and at Diamond, East Bank Demerara. The locations of the twelve new hospitals speak volumes to the philosophical approach of the administration regarding the provision and accessibility of healthcare to all Guyanese, specially the rural, the poor and the vulnerable.

At this pace by 2028 all 12 of the modern hospitals promised by the current administration would have been completed and fully operationalized. This means that the citizens of Regions One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Eight and Nine. would be receiving world-class health services. All of the hospitals will offer 24 hour Emergency Services, modern labs, advanced imaging, and operating theatres and Intensive Care units. A total of six of the twelve hospitals would have been opened by the end of 2025.

The Pediatric and Maternal Hospital will be located at Goedverwagting, on the East Coast of Demarara. It is regarded as the "flagship" project among the 12 new hospitals. This will be a Level Five health facility. It will address, among others, the challenges of women with "difficult" or "complicated" ("high-risk") pregnancies and neonates needing specialist care. It will also manage high risk pregnancies and neonates referred from other healthcare facilities. The Pediatric and Maternity Hospital will have 256 beds.

The provision of modern healthcare services on a sustainable basis requires complex planning, and the availability of adequate numbers of trained staff. To this end the administration has already commenced the construction of two large, modern Nursing Training Schools -- one in New Amsterdam and the other in Suddie. The construction of the budlings to accommodate these new Nursing Schools is well advanced and on schedule. The locations chosen keeps the Government's commitment to "equitable access" on the front burner.

Noteworthy, too, is the fact that these training facilities will be furnished with fully equipped spacious "simulation classrooms", in which students can practice on life-size mannequins and access other learning/teaching aids. This investment in scaled-up nursing training will ensure that

Guyana in a few years would have another 9,000 newly trained Nurses.

The employment of the large number of nurses, the vast majority of whom will be women will present its own peculiar challenges. A significant number of these women will be mothers of or will become mothers of babies and young children. A significant number will also head single-parent families. These motehrs will have to make provision for the care, safety and protection of their young ones while they themselves are at work at the hospitals.

There is an urgent need and demand for a significant number of "day-care" and "night-care" facilities to cater to this demand. The providers of such day care and night care services must poses the requisite knowledge and skills before they can safely be allowed to be in charge of the care, protection and safety of children. The Government will take the steps necessary to address this childcare services gap:

- * incentives will be given to the private providers of day-care and nigh-care childcare services with the aim of allowing the nurses to access these services while working at the hospitals.

- * incentives will be given to certified private providers to train child-care workers based on a curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education (MOE)

- * this curriculum will be developed and introduced into appropriate GOG sponsored vocational training programmes -- such as the Board of Industrial Training (BIT)

- * private citizens will be given incentives to retrofit their homes or other suitable spaces to qualify as certifiable venues for provision of such child-care services

- * owners and operators of such certified venues must also be trained as per the MOE "Child Care Curriculum"

- * the Inspectorate tasked with visiting, reviewing and certifying child-care venues will be strengthened

The quest to provide the very best and the most updated methods and best-practices in providing to all citizens regardless of their location in Guyana has led to the administration, through the Ministry of Health, investing in modern state-of-the-art imaging and communication

technology. this will allow far flung and distant from-each-other health personnel and facilities to communicate with each other in real time. Investments in the Electronic Health Information System will allow some 81 service points in the healthcare network to exchange patient information and records in real time, allowing doctors to consult among themselves in arriving at correct diagnosis and treatment plans for patients in remote areas, and transmitting their findings and advice in real time. For example, a patient in an interior location could benefit from the consultation of a Specialist in the Georgetown Public Hospital or some other Center of Excellence, while not having to spend the time, effort and cost of having to travel from interior location to the Coast. The introduction of this technology will be a boon to both the patients in remote locations and their healthcare providers. This is indeed significant when the challenges presented by the terrain of Guyana's vast interior is considered. Each patient will be given a "unique identifier" which will have to be imputed into the system before access to the information in the electronic health records can be accessed.

The hassle of preparing cumbersome paper referrals will be eliminated. The patient will be spared the bother and

uncertainty of securing and fetching his personal health records when going to a consultation or multiple consultations. This innovation will give new and substantive meaning to the promise of "equity of access to healthcare". Notably, this facility could well be similarly used to link a Guyanese healthcare provider or facility to international centers of healthcare excellence with which the MOH partners.

Importantly, the possible theft and misuse of patients' personal data while it is being used by the Electronic Health Records System is addressed by Act 18 of 2023, under which severe penalties can be meted out.

Mental Health Services provision is another critical aspect of the contribution of the Administration through the activities of the Ministry of Health (MOH). Unfortunately, probably due to the stigma attached to Mental Diseases, the bold efforts and good work of the MOH in this area are under-reported and under-recognized. To address this relative weakness in its work the Ministry strengthened its Mental Health Unit. The number of Psychiatrists and support staff, including nurses with "mental health train" has been increasing.



Dr. Bheri Ramsarran
Former Minister and Current Advisor to the Minister of Health,
Guyana.



FOR PEACE IN EUROPE

19/11/2025

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

The Special Military operation launched by Russia in the Ukraine seem to be coming to an end. Russian forces are making steady progress towards their objectives. That is to liberate the region where the Russian population, has been subjected to continuous national oppression. The other goal was to ensure that Ukraine does not become a member of NATO, the military alliance that has always been hostile to Russia.

At the beginning of the conflict on February 24, 2022, the Western Media worked overtime to portray Russia as an aggressor. They even managed to “sell” the ridiculous story that Russia was unprovoked and all it wanted was to recapture lands it lost after the Soviet Union disintegrated.

The real reason for the tragic event was the security threat which Russia would have faced if NATO was to be on its border.

Over the period it has become clear that NATO countries still harbour hostile intentions towards Russia. Even when they promised the then Soviet President Gorbachev that if he agreed to Germany's re-unification, which took place on October 3, 1990, it would not move NATO one inch east beyond Germany.

Shortly thereafter, the United States began talking about expanding NATO. It appears that it could not resist the temptation to take advantage of a weakened Russia and to initiate action to ensure that Russia would never again be in a position to threaten the NATO alliance. That would have given NATO unimpeded freedom to do as it pleased anywhere in the world.

The plan was to provoke Russia into a war with Ukraine. They had supplied Ukraine with a lot of sophisticated military hardware and had trained its soldiers to NATO standards. By 2022, Ukraine had the largest and most equipped army in Western Europe.

To compliment the military machine it had created in the Ukraine, the US and European NATO members created the most comprehensive socio-economic sanctions against Russia. Then US President Joe Biden boasted that he was going to make the Russian currency, the Ruble, into Rubble.

They immediately seized Russian assets totalling billions of dollars that were deposited in Banks in their respective countries. Russia accused them of blatant banditry. They obviously believed their own propaganda about Russia technological backwardness. They were banning

exports of washing machines to Russia, claiming that Russia was extracting computer chips from those machines for their military.

How ridiculous it sounds today, when Russia has not only outproduced the whole of NATO in the production of military materials but is having technologically more advanced weapons than the NATO countries. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Russian armed forces is probably the number one in the world today.

It is now clear that the NATO alliance strategists totally underestimated Russia both in its economic advances since 1991 and their military capabilities. Sadly, they were fooled by their own propaganda.

The sanctions have forced the Russian government to tap into the tremendous human capital that it has, a very highly skilled and educated people in every field. Technologically it was forced to become more self-reliant. In dealing with sanctions the Russian government has managed to successfully diversify its trade with the global south and in the east.

It has not only largely neutralised the economic sanctions but has managed to turn the table on the NATO states. By promoting the use of domestic currencies in international trade and by working to establish a new currency and alternative banking relations many NATO states are experiencing serious economic problems.

This is more seen in Europe. The economy of the EU is in very serious trouble, almost at a recessionary stage. Germany which was the main driver of the EU economy is going through severe economic and financial difficulties. It is being deindustrialized as large companies migrate to the US due to high energy cost in Europe. It is inexplicable that the German government had allowed this to happen to its own country because of the demand of the Biden administration.

The Germans are now realising that their economic successes in the pre-Ukraine conflict, was closely tied to the cheap energy it obtained from Russia. By breaking off economic ties with Russia it has seriously hurt itself. The same could be said for France and the United Kingdom. All those countries are experiencing difficulties that are threatening their stability. Added to this is the fact that those governments have become very unpopular and facing defeat at elections.

The Trump administration which inherited the situation from Biden is vacillating quite a lot on the conflict. The

President of the US seems to be under a lot of pressure from the old Russian haters in his administration. Left by himself he seems to be adopting a common sense attitude to the situation. He had made several statements expressing an understanding of the conflict and had proposed positive measures to stop the conflict. However, shortly after he changes his position and seem to be making concessions to his most anti-Russian elements in Europe and in his administration. This was manifested time and again, most recently at the Alaska summit and after. He once more added sanctions on Russia and selling military equipment to Europe for the Ukraine. This is only prolonging the sufferings of the people.

The Russia/ Ukraine turmoil is also becoming an important juncture in international relations. It is becoming the marker that announces the end of a unipolar world and the beginning of a multi-polar international scenario.

This is something that the old colonial and imperialist states find psychologically difficult to come to terms with and explains their continued aggressiveness in the face of a complete failure with their Ukraine project. Their behaviour reflects a deep frustration which stems from failures.

It is hoped that reality would hit them sooner rather than later and allow them to accept the new multi-polar world which can be beneficial to all.

In the meantime, the Ukraine armed forces are being crushed. Russian forces are advancing and liberating the territories in which the people voted first to recede from Ukraine and secondly to become, once more, a part of the Russian Federation.

The conclusion of the Special Military Operations could bring into being a lasting peace in Europe and the whole world.



GAZA

DESTRUCTION AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT



At the time of writing a “ceasefire” proposal made by the United States, is in effect. This is despite the fact that Israel has been violating almost every aspect of the agreement. Almost every day since the October 10, ceasefire came into effect, Palestinians are being killed by bombs and bullets unleashed by the Israeli army.

By November 19, some two hundred and eighty Palestinian civilians have been cut down. In this “cease fire” period six hundred and fifty have been injured in more than four hundred (400) Israeli violations.

These figures are in addition to the almost seventy thousand known Palestinians who have been killed between October 7, 2023, and October 10, 2025. In this period more than one hundred and fifty thousand have been injured. Among these, in excess of four thousand children have lost one or more of their limbs.

These figures do not tell the whole sordid story. Many respected experts believe that the real death toll is above half a million people killed by Israel. Those are missing persons believe to be buried under the mountains of rubble and destruction that is today's Gaza.

The Israeli regime also targeted specific sections of the Palestinian population during this genocide. As of the end of October 2025, more than one thousand seven hundred and twenty-two health and aid workers were killed in the Strip, and one hundred and twenty-five hospitals and clinics were destroyed or seriously damaged.

A specially targeted group of the population are journalists. More than two hundred and fifty have been deliberately targeted and killed. Overwhelmingly they were from Al Jazeera, the station that has heroically and honestly brought the inhumane behaviour to the attention of the world. There is no length that the murderous regime in West Jerusalem would go to cover their barbaric actions.

The “cease fire” proposal, as was mentioned above has not stopped the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. They are being killed while moving to points designated by the

United States and Israel to collect food. At least two thousand and six hundred died while in the process of receiving some basic food items and in excess of nineteen thousand were injured in the same process.

Israel has ignored the agreement that has to do with the supply of necessary food in the area. Israel is continuously sabotaging this process. Which has resulted in prolonging the famine in Gaza. It is estimated that four hundred and fifty-nine persons have died due to starvation, among these are one hundred and fifty-four children.

The murder of the Palestinians in many instances is as a result of the targeted destruction of essential services and facilities, with all electricity generation and water supply infrastructure destroyed, and more than ninety percent (90%) of their homes obliterated from the face of the earth. This is naked Fascism in the 21st century.

Russia and China Voting at UNSC

Now that the 20 points “Peace Proposal” initiated by US President Trump, has been passed by the UN, a lot of examination is being made of the proposal.

At the voting on the US proposal on November 18, 2025, Russia and China abstained. It is clear that those two countries do not believe that the proposals will result in a lasting peace. Their abstentions has to do more with saving lives in Palestine and easing the tremendous sufferings.

It appears that they do not want their vote to become the pretext for Israel, in alliance with the US, to restart the wholesale slaughter of the poor Palestinian civilians. Maybe they were influenced by the fact that the Arab and Muslim countries on the Security Council voted for the humiliating agreement.

Some Initial Comments on the Peace Plan

The “Peace Plan” will not bring a lasting solution to the situation in the Israel/ Palestine problem. What it will do is postpone the time for another outburst.

The main weakness of the “plan” is that it lacks any input by the Palestinians. They have not been consulted nor are their interests being taken into consideration. The proposals are undemocratic and is therefore bound to fail. The idea of establishing an international body to govern

Gaza is formalising the colonial status of the Palestinian people. History has shown that is a status that the Palestinians would never agree to.

This is the handy work of the US government. They have once more shown themselves as being ready to go to great lengths to satisfy their Israeli partner. The main focus for them is how much money they will make on the Gaza real estate. The US has time and time again shown that it is not an unbiased arbitrator. It is a full partner in the crimes that are being committed in GAZA.

That is why Israel continues those activities even after signing a cease fire agreement. It is no secret that it was US weapons, tanks, planes, bombs, guns, and bullets that were used to commit the genocide. They not only supplied but re-supplied the murderous troops when they ran low on arms and ammunition. Clearly the US is encouraged the violation by Israel.

The United States even used its position to hamstring the United Nations from taking actions to stop the massacre during the two years of Israeli offensive. That country even went so far as to join in the defence of Israel in the case brought by South Africa to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

In fact, the US has behaved as if it is a captured state. It continuously carries out the will of the Apartheid Israeli regime.

The Way To Lasting Peace

If peace is to be sustained and lasting in that troubled area, then the root causes of the problem have to be tackled. That is the status of the people of Palestine.

The people want their own homeland. It is clear that they would not be able to get the whole of historic Palestine

because another state, Israel occupies a large part of it. However, they want to have that portion which was voted on at the United Nations in 1948. This means going back to the recognised borders of 1967.

The second issue has to do with the governance of Gaza. The plan is to impose a form of governance which has no input by the people nor does it have any Palestinians. If the people are not allowed to choose their own leaders to govern them then no peace would be viable.

The Way Forward

As mentioned above, we believe that lasting peace has to be rooted in democracy. It is wishful thinking to believe that outside forces, even if it is the United States of America can dictate who should and/or should not be in a government. This can only be finally decided by the Palestinians themselves.

It is not surprising therefore, that Hamas has rejected the plan.

The plan appears to be an attempt by the US and Israel to achieve ethnic cleansing by another means having failed to eliminate the Palestinians by war. It would be asking the people of Palestine to accept the status of second-class citizens in their own land.

The democratic and peace loving people the world over should demand that the United Nations take the lead to, firstly stabilize the situation and after that is achieved, hold free and fair elections in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem to allow the people to choose their own government.

There is no short cut, it is the most viable way towards a lasting peace!

THE ATTACK ON VENEZUELA THREATENS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF OUR REGION

International Correspondent

On November 23, the Reuters News Agency had an Exclusive saying that the US is poised to launch a new phase of operation in the coming days against Venezuela. The excuse is that Venezuela's criminals are transporting drugs to the US.

On that flimsy premise the US military moved into the South Atlantic with a huge force. They have targeted several boats and blew them up. So far, they have killed more than eighty persons in this illegal operation.

The US claimed they were criminals but has provided no evidence. Even though the US has the capacity to stop and search the boats, it has not taken that option. Instead their air force just blasted the boats. Shoot first and destroy any evidence that can prove innocence seems to be the new rule established by the United States.

The whole region is tense as people are awaiting the attack which almost seem inevitable.

It has become clear that the real reason for this unprovoked aggression has nothing to do with drugs. It is clearly a regime change operation. The United States is determined to overthrow the Maduro regime in Venezuela.

The United States adopted a hostile position to Venezuela since Hugo Chavez was elected President in 1998. They even attempted a coup which almost succeeded on April 11, 2002. In fact, Chavez was out of power for two days and was reinstated because of mass demonstrations and the loyalty of the army.

Since then, the United States have intensified their attacks on all fronts. They have imposed a comprehensive sanction against Venezuela. Those measures have seriously damaged Venezuela's economy and has led to massive shortages of essential items.

Those measures while inflicting great pains to the people and has created a massive outflow of persons from the country, have failed to dislodge the government.

The present US government has now dropped all pretences and is openly saying that it intends to overthrow the government. No less a person than the President of the United States has announced that he had authorised the CIA to act in Venezuela. Only recently on the 19th of November 2025, an explosion occurred at one of Venezuela's oil plants. Was it sabotage? Was it a CIA operation?

Caribbean governments, with very few exceptive, have been very quiet. They seem afraid to even condemn the illegal

killings in the region.

Some believe that that fear is rooted in the knowledge of the harm that the US can do to their countries. They have seen the hardships that the economic sanctions have had on Cuba and Venezuela. They are aware that the PPP government was harassed out of government in 1953 and 1964. They know of what happened in Chile on September 11, 1973 (the first 9/11). They are aware of what happened in Grenada in 1983.

Fear is now a tool in the hands of the powerful against the smaller and weaker states. This fear is threatening the independence of our region.

We have to breakout of this mentality. Our Caribbean region must know that if the US attacks Venezuela it can have tremendous consequences for the whole region. It can drag us into conflicts. Already the US has dragged at least two armies of the region into having joint exercise with them.

The consequences of such an invasion are much too serious for this matter to remain at the level of foreign ministries. Our people should insert themselves into this situation. We should seek the solidarity of peace loving and democratic forces everywhere to say to the United S

tates, Stop Your Regime Changing Campaign.

We are too civilised to continue resorting to arms to settle differences. Let us sit down and talk like reasonable people. This would bring in better results and can save untold number of lives.



Editor's Note:

As an added feature the Thinker would be introducing Cheddi Jagan's Fight for Guyana's Freedom as documented in the West on Trial, chapter by chapter, in future issues.

CHAPTER III SEVEN YEARS IN THE U.S.A.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

— The United States Declaration of Independence

The idea of going to study in the United States of America did not come about as the fulfilment of any plan or ambition. It is true that as a boy I had thought I would have liked to be a doctor, influenced as I had been by the district government Medical Officer, Dr. Kennard, an Englishman whom I had greatly admired and respected. But that was just wishful thinking. As it turned out, going abroad to study dentistry was purely accidental.

The fact was I could not find work. Armed with an Oxford and Cambridge School Certificate at the end of the school year in 1935, I tried to get a job. But trying became hunting. My father and I knocked at many doors. The civil service was closed. A teaching job was proposed, but the salary offered was only \$20 a month. Besides, there were suggestions that if I wanted to become a teacher, I would have to become a Christian, and my parents would have none of this. The idea of my working at the sugar estate at Port Mourant was also abhorrent to my father.

Finally, my father tried pulling strings to find a civil service job for me. He and I went to see the legislator, the late I. J. B. Singh. The good doctor kept us waiting for a while, and finally emerged from his surgery with a very charming smile; like a good diplomat he immediately went on the offensive. "Jagan," he said, "why waste the boy's time? Don't worry with the civil service; send the boy to study." My father went away with his wish unfulfilled. But he had been given a new idea on which to ponder.

Finally, two of my Queen's College friends, the sons of two dentists, Doctors Cameron and Dummett, settled the matter. They were going to Howard University in the U.S.A. to study dentistry. They aroused my curiosity. But for my father, curiosity was not enough; he was anxious to know how much it would cost and how many years it would take to complete the course. Six years, he thought, was too long. He suggested a law course which would take

only three years. But I associated law with excellent public speaking and oratory, and at that time I had not yet been initiated into this art. Besides, one could not both work and study in England where I would have had to go to study law. At least that is how I understood it.

Howard University, on the other hand, had relatively low tuition fees. My father was persuaded that the United States of America presented many opportunities, and that I would be able to work my way through school. And so in September 1936 at the age of eighteen, I sailed for Boston on one of the famous Canadian liners, the Lady Hawkins, with my classmate and friend, Orrin Dummett. My father gave me all the money he could muster at the time — \$500 (about £104) of which \$90 (about £19) was paid for a second-class passage and the rest was to last for my two years at Howard. For me, the U.S.A. was a strange new world, where seven of my formative years, from September 1936 to October 1943, were spent — two years in Washington, D.C., two summers in New York City, and the last five years in Chicago, Illinois.

In Washington I attended Howard University, taking a two-year pre-dental course. Rated as one of the best Black Universities, it attracted Blacks from all over the country. In a way, it was a showpiece with a beautiful campus on a low hill, magnificent buildings and some of the finest professors.

At Howard I fitted in quickly. I only felt homesick at Christmas when most of the students were going home. Winter did not particularly bother me; indeed, I always looked forward to it. Like most Guyanese students who have studied abroad, I will never forget the thrill of my first experience of snow.

I was a serious student. I wanted not only to keep my pledge to my parents but also to win a free tuition scholarship and to enter Northwestern University Dental School where, I was told, only the best students secured entry. Eventually, hard work earned me a free tuition scholarship for my second year at Howard, and in 1938 entry into Northwestern University.

There I enrolled for a three-year dental course. The normal course leading to a degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.) is a four-year one, but with attendance at

three consecutive summer terms, it was possible to complete the course within three calendar years.

I soon found, however, that Northwestern was a different proposition from Howard. At Howard, fees were only \$175 (U.S.) a year; at Northwestern, \$300, and required textbooks were more numerous and more expensive. There was also an expensive set of instruments to be bought. Realizing that these expenses would have been quite a severe strain on my parents, I soon began to work and switched my three-year course to the regular four-year one.

Money was not the main reason for the change. Contact with people, mostly students, at Brent House and International House, situated on the South Side and closely associated with the University of Chicago, demonstrated to me that my education was not so liberal, that it was lacking in many important respects. I became conscious that I was being trained to become nothing but a glorified technician and craftsman, and while I liked what I was being trained for, I did not know enough of what was happening around me and in the world outside. At Howard, my studies had continued in much the same way as they had at Queen's College, where there had been then no civics, economics, political science, philosophy and sociology. Because I had a good memory and wanted good grades, I had specialized in the exact natural sciences. Outside these subjects, all that interested me were the writings of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian question; at that time, India was in the forefront of the struggle for independence.

To learn more about the world, I enrolled at the Y.M.C.A. College in the Loop, the business centre of Chicago. There I attended classes in social sciences during the summer and evening courses during my last two years in dental school. And so, in 1942, when I secured my degree in Dental Surgery (D.D.S.) from Northwestern University, I also received a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree.

But formal instruction was only part of my education. Perhaps more important was just living and working in the United States. The first thing I became very conscious of was the question of colour. Somehow, in the US., a non-white, is always reminded of the colour of his skin. For me, this was an entirely new experience.

In colour-conscious U.S.A., I soon learnt the position of the various ethnic groups on the social ladder. Blacks, called at that time Negroes or Coloured, occupied the lowest rung. Above them were the whites.

The white hierarchy was itself stratified in different layers. On the top were the so-called Nordic, Anglo-Saxon New Englanders, while at the bottom came the Southeast Europeans and the Latin Americans.

The term Coloured had a different connotation from the one it had at home. In British Guiana, Coloured meant a mixture of African and white and was distinct in meaning and social status from African or Black. In the United States, on the other hand, Coloured meant Black, and everyone with the slightest trace of "Black blood" was called Negro or, synonymously, Coloured.

This distinction led to the formation in a social sense of a ghetto within the Black ghetto of Washington. West Indians and Guyanese, coming from such different places in the Caribbean as Puerto Rico, the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, the Virgin Islands, Barbados and British Guiana, tended to cling together, and to look upon themselves as superior to American Blacks. They did better at school and won most of the scholarships. This was undoubtedly due to the better opportunities the West Indians had at home in primary and high school education. They did not suffer to the same degree from discrimination and segregation as their counterparts in the U.S.A.

For even as late as 1964, about 99 per cent of the nearly three million Black students in the eleven Southern States were still in segregated all-Black schools, where standards were minimal and often shocking.

The superior attitude of the West Indians was also probably due to the fact that they wished if possible to avoid the many social pressures on American Blacks. Many of them must have felt a psychological compulsion to be different, for the majority had come from families of high social position and had never experienced the openly racial "Jim Crow" discrimination of the United States. Needless to say, whatever its origin, this attitude of many West Indians was resented by American Blacks.

It must not be thought from what I have said that there was no discrimination in the Caribbean. There definitely was. In British Guiana, for example, the Georgetown Club and the Georgetown Golf Club were almost exclusively white. Banks and insurance companies discriminated against people of dark colour. For several years, the bauxite interests ran a segregated river boat and maintained segregated housing settlements in Mackenzie. Of this I have a vivid recollection. In 1946, I had

been asked by the officials of the Demerara Bauxite Company to advise on the establishment of a dental section in their hospital at Mackenzie. Overnight accommodation for my wife and myself had posed a problem; the officials could put us neither in the workers' compound nor in the white compound at Watooka. They eventually extricated themselves from their predicament by putting us in a special room at the hospital!

It would seem that on the question of colour, the British are more subtle than the Americans. As someone put it to me: if the British do not want you to live in a certain house, they will raise the rent so that you are forced to move out. Or as the British landlady, in answer to a telephone inquiry, will say: "Yes, I have a vacant room," only to change to "Sorry, the room is already taken," on the personal appearance of the Coloured student. With the Americans, it is different. They are blunt about colour; they draw the line and say plainly, "You can't come here" Where did I fit in these two worlds? Because I was different, there was a certain amount of curiosity about me. With the expression of a single professor who taught religion and Indian philosophy on the Howard campus. Rahjah, the students nicknamed me, for to many Americans, East Indians were associated with maharajahs or princes.

On the question of racial stratification, I also had a rich experience. As an East Indian, I was told by my friends that I could go to cinemas and theatres in the white section of the city. But I never did; I usually attended the "Jim Crow" cinemas. Occasionally, for financial reasons, I went to the cheap cinemas. Occasionally, for financial reasons, I went to the cheap cinemas on the borderline between the Black and white belts. In these, I was to witness quite a spectacle: a physical partition the middle, a wall between Black and white. I sat in the Black section mainly because I, too, had imbibed the psychology of fear, which had gripped black U.S.A.

Then there was the incident, which arose out of a trip I made by streetcar with one of my Howard classmates to his home in Eastern Virginia. Everything was all right in Washington; one could sit anywhere one liked. But at the border between the District of Columbia and Virginia, my light-skinned Coloured friend was ordered to the rear by the streetcar conductor. I was not told to do so, but I joined my friend in the rear.

My second experience was in Miami, where I had stayed

overnight prior to my departure from the United States. One of the passengers on the long, uncomfortable bus trip I made from Chicago to Miami was a Black girl. She had a reservation for one of the Miami hotels. But when she presented herself at the hotel desk, the clerk took one look at her and said: "Sorry, there is some mistake." He was not prepared to honour the reservation made by a travel agency in Detroit from where she had come. Apparently the agency had made the booking without realizing she was Black. She was directed to a hotel in the "Jim Crow" section of Miami. I, on the other hand, with no reservation, was offered a room after she had been refused one. I refused to take it.

Many East Indians, however, because of their darker colour, were not treated as I was. In the "South" of segregated cinemas, theatres and schools, they had no choice but to travel in the rear of streetcars and buses or in special railway carriages.

One often hears that the evils of Jim Crow pertain only to the South, that Blacks are free in the North to go to any hotel, eat in any restaurant, and so on. This was not my experience. I found that Blacks may be permitted to do certain things, but in fact they did not; they avoided unpleasantness. They knew that they would be made uncomfortable in the "best" hotels and restaurants and preferred not to be subjected to this, especially when they were seeking amusement or relaxation.

Here my experience is revealing. In Washington, D.C., my friend Orrin Dummett and I had no difficulty finding a room, which we shared for two years. This was because Howard University formed part of the Black ghetto.

In Chicago, the position was different. Northwestern University Dental School was situated in the North Side, a white area. I was fortunate in securing a room in a building not too far from the school at 19 West Chestnut Street, which was in the transition zone bordering the slums. The rent was fairly low; my room cost me \$12.00 a week. My landlord was a hardworking, poor American of Scandinavian origin. But even his family reflected the deep-seated prejudices of white America. They allowed me to have a room and later took in some of my Hawaiian-Japanese fellow students. But this was as far as they were prepared to go; they drew the line when it came to Blacks, who were treated as beyond the pale, as outcasts.

Orrin could not get a room in this building, nor could he

rent a room anywhere else in the area. For a while he had to live in the Black ghetto on the South Side. Not long afterwards, however, he secured a room in a church, but the room was tied to a job. He did not need to work; his parents could afford his education abroad. But in order to have a convenient room he had to look after the heating system of a church and presbytery!

Incidentally, I found that even though Northwestern University was heavily endowed by a religious Organization, it had its own religious and colour bar. The Dental School, I learnt, could not enroll more than one Black a year and no more than a few Jews

If simply living in America taught me much about life, working there enriched my experience. At work, I really learnt the "guts" of American life.

Not long after arriving in Washington, I secured a job in a hock shop. This was a combination pawnbrokery-retail store on the borderline of the Black belt. Its owner was white but its customers mainly Black. It attracted a regular flow of dresses, suits and coats. They were either sold or pawned by poor and hard-pressed Blacks. Most of the pawned articles were never redeemed, for these were the late years of the depression.

My other job was that of a tailor which I had "picked up" from one of my best friends at home in Port Mourant. I had not only to alter and fit new suits for customers but also to repair and patch ripped linings, cuffs, etc. of the old, purchased and unredeemed suits. After this repair process, the suits were sent to the cleaners. It was astonishing to see how different they looked when they were returned. Then they were sold for two or three times the amount originally paid.

This phase of the operation particularly angered me. It was real robbery. And besides, at a rate of pay of 25 cents an hour, I felt that I too was being robbed. However, I stayed on; I needed the money and other jobs were difficult to get. Mine was a little better than washing dishes, which some of my colleagues were doing. It was also convenient, for at any time during the day when I had free time between classes I could put in a few hours of work.

Apart from being a tailor, I was soon to become an expert salesman. During the Christmas and Easter holidays in Washington, I peddled such things as playing cards,

Christmas and other greeting cards. In Harlem, New York, where I spent my 1937 and 1938 summer vacations, I did all kinds of odd jobs. At one stage, I managed to hold three jobs simultaneously: a salesman for bar and restaurant supplies; delivering evening newspapers for an hour every afternoon; and a part-time job in a small ice-cream shop. I took on this last job because I found that running around Harlem was tiring — American summers can be very oppressive.

What brought me the greatest remuneration was the selling of a patent medicine. The commission offered was high; a bottle of medicine to be retailed for \$1.50 earned the salesman 75 cents; no doubt, it also brought the compounders of this quack remedy an enormous profit. The cost of each bottle could not have been more than 10 cents. The content was a bright red liquid made up, as far as I could tell, mostly of Epsom salts disguised with a pleasant-tasting flavour and eye-catching colouring matter.

It was this selling job that started my adventure into the depths of Harlem. Up and down I walked the long flights of steps in one terrible slum dwelling after another. I saw how "Black U.S.A." was forced to live. Most Harlemites were overcrowded in miserable living quarters. This overcrowding was dramatically highlighted later in a report of the Civil Rights Commission: "If the population density of Harlem's worst blocks obtained in the rest of New York City, the entire population of the United States could fit into three of New York's boroughs." They also lived in extreme poverty. Most of my customers did not have the money to pay me the \$1.50 at once, so they paid in installments. Many never paid in full, a reflection of their condition.

My patent-medicine selling in Harlem was an experience, which I have looked back upon with some regret. For although it enriched my knowledge of life in the United States, it troubled my conscience. It was only later in Chicago, when my social consciousness really developed, when I read *Skin Deep* and other such books in an "Economics for Consumers" course that I realized how I had helped in the exploitation of poor people by purveying junk for a cure-all.

In Chicago, I could have taken an easy road. I knew Indians who donned turbans and fancy costumes and made easy money telling fortunes, reading palms and tea-leaves. There were many tales of gullible Americans buying fancy

bottles with water from Lake Michigan as sacred Ganges water. But since I did not wish for a repetition of an uneasy conscience, I resisted this temptation.

So I sought other work! At one stage I thought of becoming a laundry sub-agent, of pooling students' laundry and making a deal with one of the city laundries, but this proved impractical.

The only other openings were in restaurants. For a while I washed dishes in one restaurant during the midday lunch hour, and in the early evening after school I put in two hours a day for an evening meal, as well as a "small piece" in another restaurant which was in a residential apartment-type hotel about three blocks north of my school. The proprietor of the latter was Jewish-American, very sympathetic and kind. On one occasion his kindness was strained to the hilt when I dropped a tray of dinner for five in one of the apartments.

During my first summer in Chicago I secured a job as a presser. However, operating a steam presser in stifling summer heat was a hideous experience and I soon gave this up.

Finally, when my financial problems were becoming very embarrassing, I started my two-year career as an elevator operator in a hotel, a job I was most fortunate to get. The manager, whom I had served in Steiner's food shop, sympathized with my plight. But again the colour problem reared its head; only whites were employed as elevator operators and bellboys. But finally the manager was able to effect a compromise; he put me on the "graveyard shift" from midnight to 8 a.m., an unpopular shift and a time when few people would have come in contact with me since most would have gone to bed. This compromise was the best arrangement for me, too, for it gave me time and quiet conditions for study during those long night hours.

If living and working in Washington and New York gave me an opportunity to see the life of Black America, it was Chicago that allowed me to know about part of white America.

In Chicago, I lived on the border of the slums, but I worked on the fringe of the Gold Coast at 211 East Delaware Street. Here, middle-class white Americans lived: small businessmen, shop girls and others. I often ate meals in the Clark Street slum area. There I came into close physical contact with urban, poor, white Americans. And in "Bughouse" Square nearby, I listened to speeches reflecting their miseries and sufferings.

These experiences enriched my understanding of North American life. Rarely do Guyanese visiting the United States of America as tourists or as more sheltered students have such an opportunity. I was able to observe that life for most Americans was not all "two chickens in every pot and two cars in every garage."

Work and study left me very little time for play. The only occasions when I found time for real leisure were my first three summers abroad. In New York in 1937 and 1938, cricket was the main pastime, under the benign patronage of the friend and counsellor of West Indian students, H. C. Cameron of 133rd Street. With his help we organized the best cricket team in New York. The Royal Exiles became a team to be feared; Claude Denbow with his slow leg spinners was the bane of batsmen, while I, as opening batsman, helped to chalk up our score.

In the summer of 1939, four fellow Japanese-Hawaiian American students and I hired a car and visited the World's Fair in New York. Our tour took us to Philadelphia, Cleveland, Buffalo, Washington, D.C., Niagara, and Detroit. We were able to combine pleasure — the World's Fair and Niagara Falls — with gaining some knowledge of United States business organization and history. In Philadelphia, we visited the home of Betsy Ross and national monuments associated with the American War of Independence and with the U.S. Constitution. I re-discovered Washington, D.C.: the White House, the Capitol, and the Lincoln Memorial. Particularly moving, with a new meaning for me, was Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address.

In New York, a boat trip took us to the Statue of Liberty, which acquired a new meaning for me also. This too expressed the ideals of liberty and democracy, and yet too much of the reality I had seen was in shameful contrast!

In Chicago, I played cricket occasionally with some Scottish-Americans but their main qualification was enthusiasm rather than skill, and in my third summer there was horse-racing, which became an addiction. Like my father, I thought I could make a small fortune betting. After losing, however, I decided to do some research in order to find a "system." But books such as *How to Win the Races* demonstrated that it was impossible to win and exposed all the elementary mistakes I had made. That experience taught me a lesson on the value of research! Hard work and almost no play eventually caught up with me. Even though at times I had felt very tired, I had tremendous vitality and so did not worry. Only later did I realize that I was actually burning myself out.

A routine X-ray examination at Northwestern produced a film slightly different from the one taken at entry in 1938. The radiogram showed a small speck on my left lung. Since I had no symptoms and was not feeling ill, there was some doubt as to whether it was tuberculosis or lung cancer or anything at all. A stomach-wash eventually resolved this; it was diagnosed as tuberculosis.

This was an intense shock. I felt lonely and desolate. I was advised to go to a sanatorium in Naperville, about 30 miles from Chicago, but the problem was how to find the money for my upkeep there. Fortunately, the kind lady who headed the institution allowed me special rates.

Mine was the so-called "rest-cure". At that time there was little treatment and no effective antidote for this killer-disease. All one could do was to rest. I was put in a small cottage with three others: a cottage with walls half of mesh, which during the winter time was as cold inside as out. Two of the others with me were advanced cases, one of whom had had a lung removed. I was resting for recovery while the others were cheerfully passing away their numbered days.

In the sanatorium I began to learn a new discipline. My normal speed of activity had to be cut down drastically. Like most big-city Americans, I began rushing, even at mealtimes.

Apart from occupational therapy such as mat-making, there was little to do there. Many could not stand the cold and the routine, but for me it was a golden opportunity to further my reading in the social sciences. At the Y.M.C.A. College under the influence and guidance of Professor Sinha, an Indian exile, I had become more and more interested in politics. From texts by the historian Charles Beard I had learnt about the American War of Independence and the American Constitution. In my "Economics for Consumers" course, I had learnt to realize the powerful role played by advertising. Nehru's autobiography, *Towards Freedom*, inspired and fired me; Matthew Josephson's *Robber Barons* explained how the powerful in America had made their fortunes; George Seldes's weekly, *In Fact*, had given me a new perspective of America and of the world, and a peep into socialism. Karl Marx's *Capital* was later to open up whole new horizons.

By the spring of 1943, I was out of the sanatorium with instructions that I should "take it easy". But after about a month of doing nothing, I was again looking for work. I could not work as a dentist, although I had qualified the

year before, for to practice as a dentist required not only a D.D.S. degree but also a State Board examination certificate. I could not take the examination because I was not a citizen. And I could not become a citizen because, although I was not from India, I had been put into the category of Orientals and so came within the Oriental Exclusion Act of the late 1920s! The field of dentistry being closed to me, I had to work as a dental technician for about six months.

It was during this time that I met my wife, then Janet Rosenberg. We met at a party given for a mutual friend who was joining the W.A.C.S. It was love at first sight: she was exceedingly beautiful. Anxious to serve in the war, she had curtailed her University studies and was taking a nursing course at Cook County General Hospital.

During the summer of 1943, I received my draft card. After a physical examination had indicated that I was fit, the United States authorities, unwilling to let me become a citizen, were quite ready to draft me as a private!

I had mixed feelings about the war, torn between President Roosevelt's internationalism on the one hand and pre-war American isolationism plus the attitude of the Indian National Congress leaders on the other. Roosevelt was to me a fighter for the underdog. I sided with him as I always had whenever there was a confrontation between those in power and the suppressed and oppressed. This personal tradition had been built up at home. At Port Maurant, I always sided with my father against the planters; in a family dispute, with my mother against my father. Roosevelt's fight against big business in the United States and his New Deal programme in Puerto Rico had greatly impressed me. But I was equally influenced by the stand taken by the Indian National Congress leaders, who while not taking any positive steps to obstruct the war effort, did not actively participate.

At that time, my perspective was limited. I saw Hitler and fascism through the eyes of the Indian National Congress and I identified the struggle for freedom in India as part and parcel of the struggle for freedom at home. I did not then clearly understand that freedom was indivisible, that it was necessary to oppose fascism anywhere and everywhere in the world.

Faced with this dilemma, torn between isolationism and internationalism, I sought a way out in a protest to the Draft Board authorities. If they were not going to

commission me a lieutenant on the basis of my D.D.S. degree, I was determined, I told them, not to join the army as a private, even if it meant going to prison. Eventually they gave me six months to get my State Board examination certificate; how they expected me to do this did not concern them.

On August 5, 1943, Janet Rosenberg and I were married at a simple ceremony at Chicago City Hall. We did not have the consent of parents on either side. Janet's father had threatened to shoot me, but was nowhere near to give us either bullets or blessings. My parents, too, were unhappy. Since I had long been absent from home, my marriage aggravated their unhappiness; they were anxious for me to return and now they wondered if I would. And so in October 1943, before the moment of decision as to whether or not I should go into the U.S. army, I decided to return home.

Returning home meant preparation for setting up a dental practice, and acquiring equipment and supplies to furnish a surgery. Equipment in those days was in short supply and prices were very high. The usual problem faced me: where was I to find the money? The question was finally settled when I answered an ad in one of the Dental Journals. A dentist had died and his equipment and supplies were being offered for sale.

The small town to which I traveled was about 200 miles away from Chicago. Most of the equipment was ancient; the dentist apparently had been in practice for many years. His wife was anxious to dispose of the equipment at a reasonable price, but she wanted to sell it all complete. I did not like many of the things I saw, especially as I had been filled with the desire for the latest and most modern dental equipment and office. Mine was therefore "Hobson's choice". I had to purchase everything — new and not-so-new, usable and unusable — all of which was packed into nine crates and sent off for shipment home.

I was now ready for homecoming. In October 1943, I kissed my wife goodbye and joined a Greyhound bus for Miami. Janet was to remain for a few months in Chicago with our friends, Nell and Sim Venus, with whom I had been staying for about a year. For the time being Janet was to continue her job as proofreader at the American Medical Association, while I was to woo my parents into accepting her and finding the money to pay for her passage. She arrived a few months later, just before Christmas.

I had mixed feelings about returning home. I left the U.S.A. with feelings of sadness compounded with suspense. Since most of my formative years, from 18 to 25, had been spent there, I had become completely adjusted. I grew to like the people with whom I came in contact, so generous and warm-hearted, and I was greatly impressed by their traditional values, their efficiency, and their material achievements. And I, too, in spite of difficult experiences and shocking observations, had imbibed the propaganda that the United States of America was a land of unlimited opportunity, that with hard work success was always assured. After all, mine was also a Horatio Alger success story, from rags to potential riches!

Disillusionment was to come later when I read more widely and pored over statistics, facts, interpretations, and analyses. I saw then how superficial my observations and conclusions had been, how I had conformed like so many millions of Americans to automatically accepted ideas. It was then that I began to think again about all that I had seen and to question seriously whether the United States was really the "land of the free."

After a most uncomfortable ride from Chicago to Miami, the next day I boarded a Pan American Flying Clipper for home. The flight on the amphibian plane was uneventful but was quite a new experience for me. After overnighing in Puerto Rico, the aircraft landed on the Demerara River and I immediately ran into difficulties with the police. I had brought a letter from my friend Dr. Orrin Dummett to his father and had failed to declare it. In those wartime days there were strict censorship and security measures. I was charged and brought before Magistrate A.V. Crane who was a friend of the Dummett family. I was severely reprimanded. He thundered: "Ignorance of the law is no excuse" and fined me ten dollars. This was my first brush with authority.



In Memory of Shirley Edward

Beneath the warm, unyielding skies,
In Guyana's heart, where the river lies,
There walked a soul, both bold and kind,
With wisdom carved and peace of mind.
Her name was Shirley, a beacon bright,
Guiding hearts through day and night,
Her laughter soft, her spirit strong,
A melody in life's sweet song.

In Georgetown's streets, where palm trees sway,
She'd greet the dawn and greet the day,
A mother, sister, friend, and guide,
With open arms, she'd stand beside.
Her soul, a tapestry of grace,
A calmness in this restless place,
She nurtured all with tender care,
A love that none could quite compare.

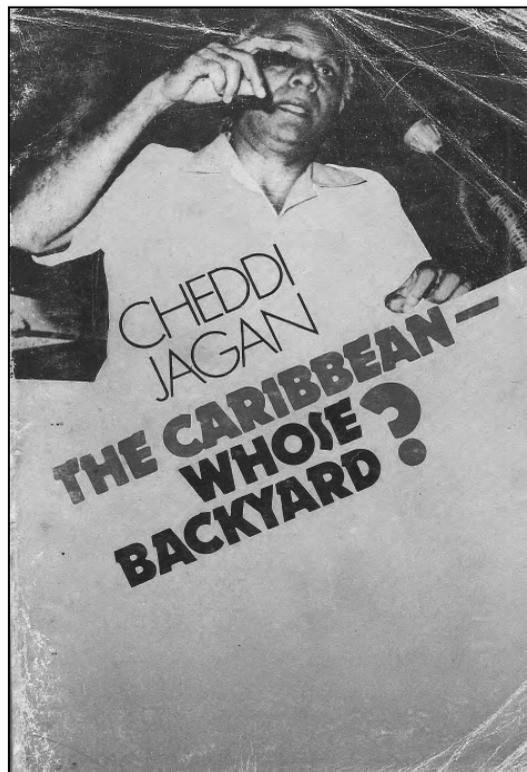
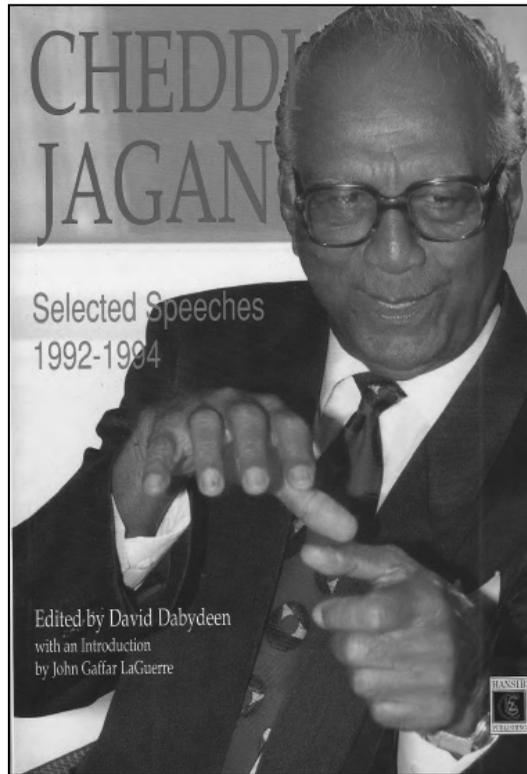
She lived her life with gentle hands,
Touching the hearts of many lands,
Her legacy was one of peace,
A call for justice, sweet release.
In every corner of her town,
Her name was whispered, never down,
For in her eyes, a light did gleam,
A vision of a better dream.

Shirley Edward, bold and true,
In every field, her work she knew,
From classrooms where the young would grow,
To village paths where workers go,
Her wisdom shaped the lives of all,
From those who rise to those who fall.
She gave with love, she gave with care,
And in her absence, none compare.

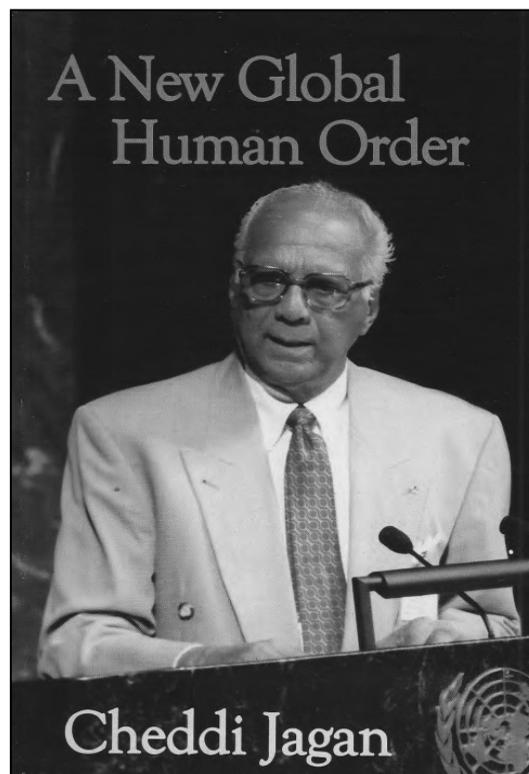
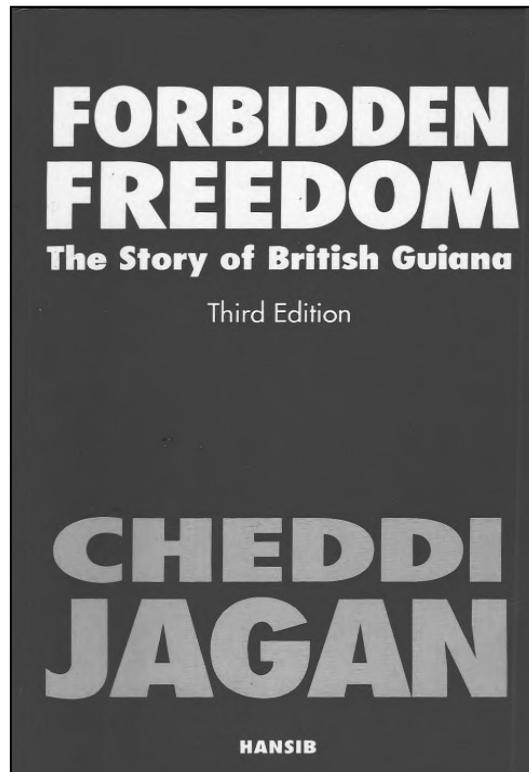
The years passed swiftly, as they do,
But Shirley's light forever grew,
A beacon in the hearts of those,
Who saw her strength, who felt her glow.
And when her time on earth was through,
When heaven called, as heavens do,
The stars wept softly in the night,
For one so pure, so full of light.

Yet in the soil of Guyana's land,
Her memory forever stands.
The rain that falls, the sun that shines,
All carry whispers, sweet designs,
Of Shirley's love, her gentle soul,
A life that made the broken whole.
And in the winds, a soft refrain,
Her name lives on, like gentle rain.

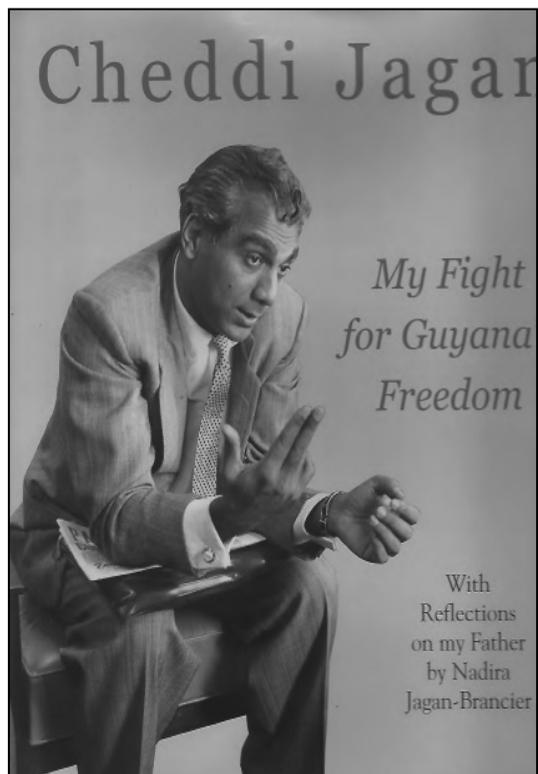
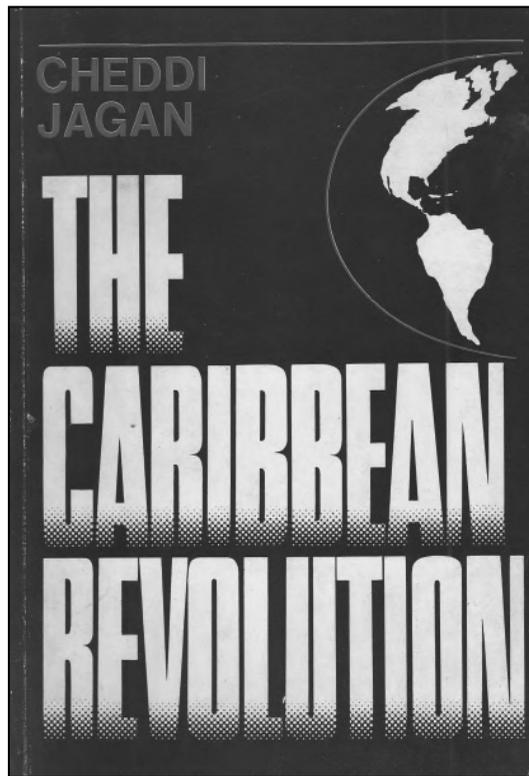
Publications by Dr. Cheddi Jagan



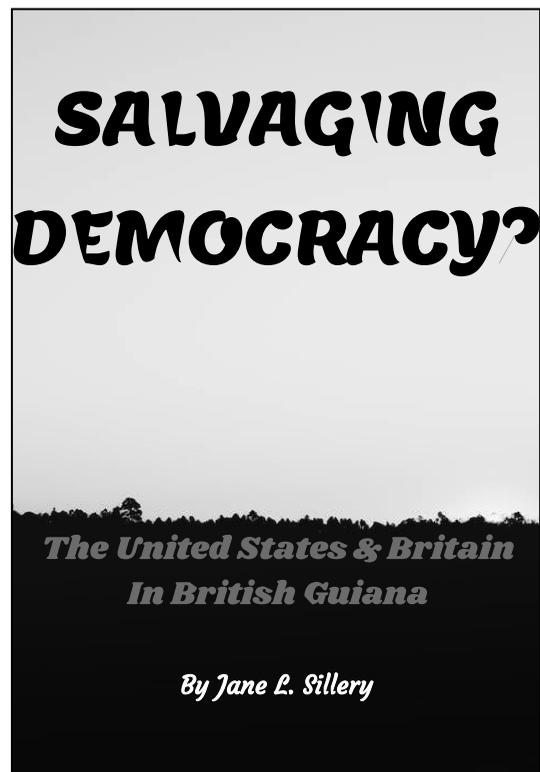
Publications by Dr. Cheddi Jagan



Publications by Dr. Cheddi Jagan



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

CONTACT US

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Tel: (592) 223-7523/4

Email: cjresearchcentre@gmail.com

Website: <http://jagan.org>

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

Admission – FREE!

GAZA STRIPPED

THE COLONIAL ISOLATION OF GAZA

- GAZA CITY
- BLOCKADE

HISTORIC GAZA

For thousands of years, Gaza's location on land and sea trade routes shaped it into a prosperous and cosmopolitan urban center. By the early 20th century, Gaza was part of the Ottoman district of Jerusalem, **connected by rail to cities across the Eastern Mediterranean and a major exporter of grain to Europe**

SOURCES bit.ly/vp-gaza-stripped

VISUALIZING PALESTINE

1920-1947

BRITISH MANDATE PALESTINE

After WWI, Britain created the Gaza District, which extended south to Bir Saba' and eventually included **more than half of historic Palestine**. Family and economic relations between Palestinians in this area remained close



مركز الدراسات الفلسطينية

MAY 2025



1948-2023

NAKBA & OCCUPATION

When Zionist militias ethnically cleansed Palestine in 1948, more than 200,000 Palestinian refugees from areas around Gaza were corralled into the newly invented "Gaza Strip," comprising **1% of historic Palestine**. Israel occupied this land in 1967 and later imposed a suffocating blockade

2023-ONGOING

GENOCIDE

Israel ordered Palestinians **out of 70% of the "Gaza Strip,"** as of May, 2025, vowing to take over all of Gaza after more than 18 months of genocide. 1.9M Palestinians were displaced, many of them concentrated in tiny camps on the coast

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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