

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND POLITICAL CULTURE :

Authoritarian Dynamics In The Making of The New (1980) Guyana Constitution.

by

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INTRODUCTORY

If the political climate of the 1950's reflects a cross-eyed questioning of the future of the inherited British colonial-type of democracy in a near approaching Independent Guyana, that of the early 1980's clearly manifests a tooth-aching concern about the viability of the post-Independence Government whose structures seem to be closer to a socialist democracy in their constitution and ideological conception, but in praxis are essentially authoritarian. The principal proclaimed aim of the eighteen-year old PNC Government is the transformation of Guyanese society, that is, the destruction of the old bourgeois capitalist order and its replacement by new cooperative socialist institutions even though they are more appropriate for a homogeneous rather than a bifurcated society. The reconstruction of the society is to be guided and largely legitimised by a new socialist ideology, and revolutionary authority is to be concentrated in a charismatic leadership whose organisational instrument is the disciplined political party. However, once the leader and party are securely in power, their interests begin to diverge. The leader wishes to maximise his own power and to free himself from the constraints of a particular institution or group. He seeks to reduce the authority of the party and to balance it off against the army, the bureaucracy, the police, the trade unions and other mass-based organisations. As the leader's power becomes more personalistic, there is ever-pressing need for it to find a basis in constitutionalism, if it is not to be seen as naked tyranny.

There is no doubt that the process of nation-building and socialist transition relies heavily on the formulation of a reasonably functional constitution which provides direction for the state, regulates the political institutions, defines the rights, obligations and duties of its citizens and provides the legal framework for socio-economic development. But, because they serve the ruling class, rather than positively limiting them, the norms which the constitution contains, are interpreted from the sole point of the interest of the state as determined by the rulers. The Guyana form of authoritarianism is characterised by strong and relatively autonomous government structures that seek to impose on the society a system of interest representation based on enforced limited pluralism. It tries to eliminate spontaneous interest articulation and establishes a limited number of authoritatively recognised groups that interact with the governmental apparatus in defined and regularised ways. This is qualitatively different from

the experience of many Latin American nations where hardly any serious attempt has been made to institutionalise constitutional democratic forms in the post-Independence era, in so much that the authoritarian regime itself is being transformed into a mobilisational, machine type bureaucratic military process. Thus the New (1980) Guyana Constitution¹ goes as far as incorporating the political participation of a limited number of independent groups and even encourages their emergence, without, however, leaving any doubt that the rulers ultimately define which groups they will allow to exist and under what conditions. In addition, political power is not *defacto* accountable through such groups to the citizens even when it may be quite responsive to them but normally flows through the channels of the ruling political party.

The tendency towards deeper authoritarianism has been fuelled as much by allegedly rigged general elections as by persistent difficulties of political mobilisation and delayed dependent socio-economic development. A popularly-held apology is to resort to a Third World version of the Stalinist notion that development takes place at the price of democracy — that to have a developmental impact necessitates the toleration of a high level of authoritarianism. This view clouds a very significant phenomenon in Guyana's post-Independence political development, namely, the emergence of premature bureaucratisation because of deliberate policies of the ruling elite to control the political behaviour of large sectors of the working-class by making them dependent upon public employment and to live off wages and salaries in the public service. Thus the formal governmental apparatus is pressured to expand faster than economic growth is able to support it. It is this pattern of premature bureaucratisation that fosters consumption patterns, corruption and inadequate production, which since 1976, has squarely placed the agrarian-based Guyana economy in a precarious position. There has been a yearly succession of internal crises which the international linkages with advanced capitalist societies tend to exacerbate by constantly offering Guyanese citizens an alternative political model, subtly encouraging them not to give their full allegiance to the authoritarian regime and to seek a return to the liberal democratic path of political development. While Guyana has managed to introduce socialism into its own domestic system it has failed to escape, at both national and international levels, the heavy dependency upon capitalist market forces for its main products and the leading currencies of exchange remain British pounds and American dollars.

The bureaucratic-military-personalistic authoritarian solution could not be a permanent response to the present crisis. It could not be because not only the long-established trade unions but also the oligarchic institutions of the establishment have embraced the democratic praxis that politics could not be reduced to administration and policies, and a purely coercive repression is condemned to failure because in all the social classes, including the opportunistic middle class, democratic ideas have gained considerable loyalty. It is here that the making of a new Guyana constitution assumes critical importance, for the basic justification for the "newness" of the constitution is that the formal incorporation of socialist principles effectively facilitates the transition from a pervasive authoritarian to a revitalised democratic way of life. The main purpose of

this article is to explore the relations between the political culture and constitutionalism, which the 1980 Constitution-makers neglected to do, and which provides the key to the problematic of damming the drift towards deeper authoritarianism and political decay.

The political culture, crisply conceptualised as the attitudinal and behavioural matrix within which the political system is located, has been early identified in Bagehot's "English Constitution"² as being concerned with the "dignified" or informal, in comparison with the "efficient" parts of the constitution. It generally reflects and influences the pattern of political beliefs and values and popular orientations towards the institutions and practices of government. In Guyana, the political culture is rooted in the historical experience of Slavery, Indenture and Colonialism with an unbroken continuity of despotic, personalistic and elitist forms of colonial authoritarianism. Both British and Guyanese constitutional lawyers, wedded to the traditional legal-institutional study of politics which often implied that political actors and institutions actually behaved along lines prescribed by constitutional forms, continue to neglect the "dignified" aspects of constitution-making, in spite of the rich and burgeoning literature on political culture, and, consequently, the New (1980) Guyana Constitution suffers from being essentially impressionistic and speculative.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIAN PRAXIS

The curious paradox of constitution-making is that the ruling class which insists on basic changes and seems to show very great confidence in the effectiveness of constitutionalism are often the same ones to honour the new constitution in the breach, claiming in slogan-like fashion that it does not work. From the mid-twentieth century one of the marked contradictions in Guyanese political behaviour is the constitutional appearance of new Bills of Rights and amendments of old ones while in praxis their provisions are generally disregarded or frequently violated. For the essence of constitutionalism is the division of political power by providing a system of restraints upon governmental action. This poses a formidable challenge if the newly-emergent Guyana nation is to function and to grow into a matured democracy; its main task becomes that of finding an answer to what is sometimes regarded pessimistically as the insoluble puzzle of democracy, namely, that a socialist democracy must put a limit on its own powers if Marx's final goal of finding "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all"³ is to be accomplished.

All this is quite easily forgotten in the fetishised victory over British colonial elites by new "revolutionary" power-elites, who tend to believe that when they acquire power they need recognise no limits because power is fundamentally in the hands of the people and the people's representatives are omnipotent. Thus the whole purpose of promoting an extension of democracy and of preventing power from degenerating into a despotism, and more particularly from becoming arbitrary, is subverted by an over-emphasis on the need to regulate the derivative of power. To put the issue another way: does an

emergent nation really need a highly authoritarian form of government which controls the lives of the people in great detail for socio-economic transformation; or would not the prospect be better if in such a nation (which wishes to avoid a massive cost in lives and liberties in revolutionary change) the functions of government are definitely curtailed to ensure that the government is responsible and accountable?

There are other reasons for making a new constitution other than that of the old being simply unworkable; which is difficult to prove. A common assumption behind the maxim "rule of law not rule of men" is that detached value-free judgement will emerge from a detached independently-minded judiciary; that a form of "neo-natural law" is available which comprises an objective code uncontaminated by extraneous coercive forces. Constitutionalism is viewed in the context of an ongoing dialectic between people and power. Power is expressed through government, and popular control of government is expressed through the rule of law. The primary focus is to maintain the independence of the judiciary. But this essential role is being challenged and over-shadowed by a new role which conceptualises constitutions as political manifestoes rather than as restrictive power maps. More and more the device of the written constitution is consciously being used to disguise authoritarian political practice in which the constitution is fully applied and activated for ideologically programmatic purpose and its ontological reality is nothing but the formalisation of the existing location of political power for the exclusive benefit of the power-holders.

In the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, as in the People's Republic of China, politics is in command. A strong government, as strong as could be, is possible under the Westminster-style Independence Constitution, but stronger government may be desired for ideological propaganda, and the ruling political party may quickly see that a new constitution, in which the effective head of government would also be the head of state and would stand apart from the legislature, could serve as a powerful instrument for the projection of the leader's brand of national ideology. While it is fundamental to constitutional democracy that the limits of political power be defined and channelled into authorised procedures, in the New Guyana Constitution the fate of the whole legal order is bound up with the operation of cooperative socialist principles. The power-holders are no longer bound by law, for law has no priority over politics. Instead, the authoritarian dictatorship subordinates the rule of law to the rule of politics, and law becomes effective only within the boundaries marked by political expediency. While constitutional democracy has found by trial and error, certain solutions that guarantee the rule of law and the preservation of individual rights, authoritarian socialism believes it has found the definite organisational form for its socio-economic ideals in the assembly government. Legality is imposed by political factors. The guiding principle is not separation or limitation but unity of power. Furthermore, the desire to inject socialist legal consciousness leads to a psychological dependence of the judges on the party leadership. The judiciary and the administration are pressured by a reinforcement of the political demand for "partyiness" and defend their corporate honour to the detriment of justice.

Individual liberties are restricted and even completely abrogated by state and party if these liberties are considered to be in conflict with socialist premises.

In Guyana, constitutionalism as a movement has been directed against British colonial authoritarianism with its police, its imperialist army and its consequent oppressive restriction upon freedom of self-expression and self-fulfilment. "Freedom" is the doctrinal *avant-garde* against the imposition of a more restrictive 1928 constitution, against the suspension of the comparatively advanced liberal 1953 constitution, for the declaration of the 1965-6 Independence constitution and in July 1978 against its amendments without an overwhelming national consensus. It is a long struggle against dictatorial decision-making which has its roots entrenched in early plantation society. In conceding a President superordinate constitutional authority, the New 1980 Constitution runs the risk of perpetuating in a new guise the old plantation autocracy and justifying it in a semantic fashion by reference to socialist democratic principles. Harold Lutchman, after a detailed analysis of the constitutional powers of the President, reaches the conclusion that :

"In a real sense the Presidential system, as indeed the Constitution of which it is part, is a product of the political crisis now existing in Guyana. As such it is more likely to be an instrument for the exercise of absolute power than one of social cohesion and for solving the many problems facing the nation."⁴

The new constitutional norms, rooted in a preference for a presidential form of government, are substantially based on the same political illusions of the transplanted British parliamentary prototype, although freedom from the imposed British characteristics is ostensibly being advocated as the basis for the change⁵. First, there is the clear uncritical acceptance that the political culture is homogeneous rather than pluralistic. British constitutionalists have from time to time camouflaged the racial antagonisms that repeatedly flared up in the pluralistic society, propagating the popular concept that crown colony government provided for an equitable representation for different groups and the attitude of the Governor and his chief administrative officials was one of impartiality to the various groups.⁶ Second, there is a similar increased concentration of power as in British imperialist rule instead of its radical dispersal to other associations and groups within the nation, hence there is a deepening of authoritarian politics. Third, there is a trend, even more marked than in colonial administration towards the strengthening of bureaucratic elitism instead of a movement towards democratic decentralisation that allows positive decision-making at the basic grass-roots level. Here again, the gap between the power-elite and the majority powerless poor is a continuity of colonial political practice.

In theory the new constitution is an act of the people adopted through a Referendum and thus a manifestation of popular will. In reality it is a document entirely conceived by the P.N.C. party leadership for ideological development as a further phase in socialist transition in Guyana, processed through the government for its blessings and released to the masses for their political propagandisation. A thorough realistic constitutional exercise would have involved the novel search for methods of managing ethnic conflicts through constitutional measures.

the effective socialist transfer of power to the majority poverty class whose historic mission is to carry out the transformation from colonial parasitic capitalism to socialist democracy, the incorporation of measures of progressive extension of democracy to the farms, factories, public corporations, local communities and other basic mass-based associations in order to motivate higher levels of productivity — all these realistic approaches have been completely ignored or submerged under the immediacy of a political socialisation drive for the acquisition of appropriate political attitudes and behaviour in programmed conformity with the ideological dominance of cooperative socialism.

MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A conspicuous neglect is the possibility of applying constitutional measures for the management of ethnic conflicts. The power of the communal factor in politics has been seriously underestimated in the 1960's at the time of Independence by both political scientists and politicians because their optimism that development was an ongoing forward-moving process predisposed them to assume that ethnic loyalty was only a transitional phenomenon, a kind of temporary nuisance that would inexorably disappear as the economic take-off is made. Quite the contrary actually happened. The political economy of scarcity has generated intense conflicts among ethnic groups, who for the most part correctly perceive that they are engaging in a zero-sum game. In the absence of a widespread unifying class consciousness, ethnic groups naturally become the organising structure of competition for political office and patronage. The aftermath of the racial disturbances of 1964 is that loyalty in the plural society has become more communal and less national. Political racism has increased in the post-independence period as the new cultural elites, who replaced the colonial power, began the never-ending dispute about 'who gets what, when and how'. Only gradually did this dimension of political development begin to receive the attention its evident importance merited.⁷

The crucial issue is : What organisational arrangements can best facilitate a transformation of the structural and institutional conditions of pluralism into the social heterogeneity that is the prerequisite for socialist reconstruction without a high degree of coercion. A nationally imposed form of socialism, as practised by the PNC Government has engendered fears of ethnic authoritarianism, dictatorship to subordinate groups, or at best enlightened paternalism by the dominant culture group. The politics of cultural pluralism in many Asian and African states also bear ample testimony that not only have non-democratic regimes failed to be good nation-builders, but they have not even established good records of maintaining inter-communal order and peace.⁸

Yet it is clear that political arrangements must be found which accord to all communal groups a meaningful role in national life, and which are able to keep communal conflict within manageable bounds. For the stability of a culturally plural society is threatened not by communalism per se, but by the failure of national institutions to explicitly recognise and to accommodate existing

communal divisions and interests; and a solution may well mean the difference between racial harmony and civil war. Through careful management of communalism a political system can channel group ethnocentrism into peaceful supportive political competition. By negligence and mismanagement it can be allowed to degenerate into destabilising conflicts and violence.

In instances where conflict and cultural alienation reach a threshold where violent resistance is in prospect and secession is threatened, a large measure of autonomy may be the only way to offer cultural security. So far, there have been lapses between constitutional promise in the Independence Constitution and the reality of political behaviour. Specifically, such Guyanese novelties in Caribbean constitutionalism as the proportional representation system of elections and the institutionalisation of an Ombudsman have notoriously failed to provide an effective check on race discrimination and corrupt administrative practices. Neither has the removal of the limitation on the number of technocrat Ministers in 1973 increased significantly the proportional ethnic representative character of the Cabinet.

How, then, can the developing state coexist with cultural pluralism in a restoration of democracy? Certain policies can immediately be eliminated as undesirable — the application of the principle of cultural self-determination, coerced assimilation, cultural oppression and privileged treatment of a particular ethnic group. Much more feasible is the constitutional institutionalisation of the following mechanisms which would facilitate the direct incorporation of the race groups into the political system: first, the distribution of the political offices and administrative positions to the major ethnic groups approximately proportional to the percentage of the population they constitute; second, the allocation of economic resources in an equitable manner so that each ethnic group gets its fair share; third, the continued search for an electoral system that reduces incentives for communal appeals and increases incentives for cooperation; fourth, the establishment of institutional forums in which representatives of various ethnic groups meet for discussion and bargaining.⁹ Guyanese socialists cannot escape the necessity of giving as much emphasis to depluralisation as they do to egalitarianism, for the Guyanese Marxist revolt is a revolt against the privilege of both race and class.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROMISE AND POLITICAL PRACTICE

Another trouble-area centres on the orthodox gap between constitutional fiction and political fact, and what guarantees and provisions exist for turning constitutional promises into actuality particularly when constitutions are extolled as charters of rights and liberties. It is sometimes difficult for constitution-making to escape being conditioned by temporary needs, resentments and illusions. A constitution is more likely to survive if it can avoid this, if it is not merely a work of casual circumstance but deals with the long-term hopes, fears and possibilities of the nation. When a young nation undertakes the difficult task of giving itself a new form of government, it is not necessarily harmful to set out

the moral and political biases which these institutions are supposed to embody. However, many things get lost or are in the danger of being lost in the big house-cleaning. What is termed "the principles of liberty" are among the things that may be lost in a sudden decision to scrap the old and start over again with brand-new constitutional furniture. In a situation in which there is far more agreement on what should be the spirit of the laws than on the mechanics of political arrangement, a governmental party that proclaims the principles behind the laws may win for the new arrangements some of the emotional support or even mere cessation of hostility which the new constitution will need for its successful operation. In this respect, not only the theoretical inadequacy of the PNC model of cooperative socialism¹⁰ but also its clearly marked anti-democratic practices such as the paramountcy of the party, militarisation of politics, the manipulation of the poor by party-machine bosses, occupational discrimination based on party membership and loyalty, raise serious doubts about the protection and implementation of its greatly enlarged charter of individual, social and economic rights.

The addition in the New 1980 Constitution of social and economic rights, laudable as a major constitutional development, and the elaboration of the liberal-democratic rights adopted from the Independence Constitution should not lead to the conclusion that these rights of citizens and their participation in government have become more secure and more extensive than they were before. The socio-economic rights are definitely limited by the economic resources that the government can mobilise to free the poor from misery, sickness and inadequate education. Moreover, there is an inter-dependence of rights and freedom. Freedom of speech without economic justice may be freedom to die from hunger. Material satisfaction without freedom of expression and creative innovation may result in a paralysis of spirit. The right to work presupposes efficient national planning just as the right to education presupposes schools and teachers. The right to health means little if hospitals, drugs and doctors are not available. Sufficient funds must precede the enjoyment of the right to social security, rest and leisure, and unlike political rights, these socio-economic rights are not enforceable in a court of law. They are only desirable goals and often mean nothing more than the right to invoke the constitution and so strengthen and legitimize an argument for or against a welfare proposal. The current economic crisis pinpoints the illusory character of these socio-economic rights. The noted Guyanese economist, Clive Thomas, in a contemporary analysis of the performance of the economy, asserts:

"For a record of six continuous years, there has been declining real output and income per head, increasing unemployment, unchecked inflation of prices, decreasing productivity, a deterioration of the country's productive assets, a worsening balance of payment, and a decline in the levels of international reserves."¹¹ (Thomas, Jan. 1982).

He further points out that in the three main sectors of the economy — rice, bauxite and sugar — the PNC Government has been unable to achieve output levels attained a decade ago.¹²

There is another dilemma. The political rights are intended to protect the individual against the state; yet, whilst seeking this independence, the individual demands in pursuit of social and economic rights that the state take action and so in effect endangers his own independence. Thus the socio-economic rights may well entail the abridgement of some of the political rights. In other words, the freedom from want, ill-health, illiteracy and exploitation is based on the expectation that the Government will act as social worker, economic planner, mobiliser of national resources, investor and educator. This clearly implies more government in contrast to freedoms of speech, of assembly and of expression, which imply a desire for less government or for the restraint of governmental action in those areas of social life. The necessity for a series of "crises controls" may mean frequent violations of participatory and individual rights and the non-implementation of socio-economic rights.

A further reflection will serve to reinforce the insight into the hollowness of elaborate Bills of Rights which remain largely paper declarations. For poor people what appears at first sight to be a right apart from the political order may turn out to be a right depending upon the political order. The inherent right to an education is for a wealthy person a right apart from the political order, whereas for the poor person it is a right that is dependent upon the political order. Furthermore the failure of the poor to appreciate the rights that they possess or indeed to know about them or to realise what means are available for vindicating them, creates great obstacles to their enforcement; for, unless complaint is made and insisted upon, law enforcement authorities often cannot act. Serious injustice continues to prevail because of the indifference and apathy of the underprivileged as against those who hold positions of power.

If the charter of rights and freedoms is not to provide a mere smoke-screen behind which an authoritarian dictatorship could try to hide, effective enforcement provisions should have been made in the New Constitution. In the last resort the full implementation of recognised rights depends upon the power individuals can marshal through organisation whether for the display of coercive power as in strikes or for securing remedial action in the administrative field. Hence any political authority that prevents individuals from organising themselves for the defence of their rights as they see them is unlikely to provide adequate scope for the maintenance of such rights. That is why socialists insist that "democracy is not a matter of merely allowing individuals to vote while organisations of the exploiting class take control of the executive organs of power, but of the continuous activity of popular democratic organisations and the controls of power through them alone."¹³

FURTHER SHIFTS TO BUREAUCRATIC ELITISM

Yet another disturbing aspect of the New Guyana Constitution is the opportune strengthening of bureaucratic elitism through the incorporation of a reformed system of regionalism which increases the scale of organisation making the regional authorities far too remote, far too inaccessible to the average citizen, to appear to him as close and benevolent; rather it appears as a distant and

despotic power. The sense of community — of sharing in common purposes, activities and values, the very lifeblood of democratic socialism — has been poisoned by an overemphasis on administrative efficiency and economies of scale. Under Crown Colony Government there was imported from British West Africa a form of administrative regionalism which divided Guyana into nine administrative districts, three in the Interior and six on the Coastlands. Each region was in the charge of a District Commissioner whose duties were to represent the needs of the people to the central government, to interpret the policies of the national government to the people, to coordinate the activities of the various government departments in his district and to provide advice to the village communities in the management of village affairs. The District Commissioner was portrayed as the eyes and ears of the national government in so much that he was spoken of as being the governor-on-the-spot. In 1973 the PNC "modernised" this concept by reducing the geographical division to six, each with a Minister of State as political head, with a bureaucratic gradation from a Ministry responsible for Economic Development Cooperatives and Regional Affairs, through a Regional Administrative Council, a Regional Development Council, sub-regional Council, down to a Community Development Council, each with its overweighted officialdom. Having tested the efficiency of regionalism as an instrument of political control, its further development as expressed in the New Constitution mars the possibility of inculcating a realistic plan to give local democracy the long-desired reinvigoration and renewed vitality it needs for effective functioning.

Instead of democratic decentralisation there is merely an additional mechanism of political deconcentration of activities, with the regional council as much remote from the intimate life of the basic local community, namely the village or estate or Amerindian tribal settlement, as a member of parliament is from the life of a Macusi canoe-builder. According to Ken Dadds and Lear Matthews "the extension of the state is accompanied by the extension of the PNC party official . . . Local government control is thus PNC party control . . . The six-tiered concentric model of local government is not even understandable to the functionaries who are expected to operate it, and if the officials involved are as yet befuddled by this concentric confusion it is difficult to imagine when and how community involvement can be brought about . . . The new regional system gives the appearance of the devolving of authority to communities and the encouragement of self-reliance aimed at promoting development. The fact is, that the system extends the very control it is seeking to avert and stifles the local initiative and involvement it is seeking to foster."¹⁴ What is required is a form of democratic regionalism that can give the people their own socialism, not state socialism, which is the monopoly of a minority group of party activists and functionaries.

The concentration of power at the top means that there is a built-in interest in maintaining downward movements to promote the goals of cooperative socialism whereas community socialism entails its reversal, that grass-roots initiatives, local sentiments bottom-house decision-making must flow upwards to bombard the entrenched citadels of inequality, wealth and dictatorship.

When socialist transition is geared to new forms of social consciousness and social responsibility and mass action are rooted in the small-scale community socialist humanism comes closer to be concretised and the sense of belonging becomes mobilised to give poor people some measure of control over their own destiny and some ability to influence the decisions that affect their future. Paradoxically, authority today seems even more immune to influence than power exercised by colonial authoritarian rulers. The Governor or his District Commissioner might personally listen to the individual petitioner and redress his grievances instantaneously. Today, the citizen has difficulty in finding the responsible authority, let alone in making himself heard, and is being increasingly conditioned to accepting what they, "the big ones," chose to decide for him.

The fulfilment of regionalism in a constitutional democracy requires a balance of two primary values, those of access and of service. By access is meant the most widespread participation possible of citizens in terms of capacity to influence public policy decisions and to enforce responsive and responsible administration. By service is meant the economical discharge of public functions as well as the achievement of technical adequacy in due conformity with public needs and desires. The difficulty with which the constitutionalist has to grapple is that while these two values are complementary and desirable, each can potentially come into conflict with the other. Neither access nor service can be pursued in isolation, if the over-all goal is a healthy democratic society. The pursuit of service in isolation from access consolidates the authoritarian society without enhancing the serviceability of government in producing results more in keeping with public needs and expressed wishes. Petty bureaucrats and loud-mouthed activists flourish at the peril of apathy and alienation of the majority poor. It is the politics of bilateral frustration at the regional and local community levels, which has crystallised within a year of the operation of the New Constitution. The constitutionalists misconceived the "esprit de corps" of Marxism; for Marx's ideal of the socialisation of human freedom and true individuality finds its most fertile soil in the self-governing community where a synthesis between the personality's freedom and its solidarity with others materialises. The dominant tendency in the third world of revolution from above must be replaced by revolution from below.

CONCLUSIONS

The Guyanese constitution-maker is faced with two broad structure-transcending systems of ideas: first, those which are adaptive in such a way that repressive tendencies in the structures are developed; and, second, those which enter the old material structures in such a way that repressive tendencies in the old structures are abolished. The choice between repression-developing and repression-abolishing would have been obvious had it not been for the repression-developing system to contain a strongly convincing potential to mask or veil itself with phrases of abolition. The authoritarian dynamics remain masked unless constitutionalism is analysed in relation to the praximal political culture which telescopes the pattern of continuity with the authoritarian values of the plantation society.

The New Guyana Constitution has moved in the direction of structural compulsion and away from visible physical compulsion, thereby tending to make physical compulsion hidden or concealed. In the new conjuncture, in other words, the compulsion is not seen, and material distress is felt without being able to point to it, for the fate of all groups within the society becomes inseparably bound up with the fate of the ruling class, and the responsibility for a failure of developmental impact is pulverised. This is in contrast to conditions under colonial capitalism when compulsion was largely physical, so that it could have been seen, and psychologically unendurable distress could have been pointed to, therefore repression could have been clarified rather than concealed, and responsibility could have been found concentrated at the level of the colonial elite leading to an effective demand for their removal from power.

The post-colonial experiment with cooperative socialism internally remains engaged in the external market forces of world capitalism while the preoccupation with "revolutionism" has produced constitutional norms that nourish the type of bureaucratic elitism manifested in state socialism, which has come under severe strictures from the Yugoslav and East European Marxists for its bureaucratic excesses and cults of the personality. These critics have shown how state socialism has, to a substantial degree, been imposed on the working class as a model of revolutionary socialism, and the working masses remain as nothing but masses because the agent of historical transition and of socialist development has been someone else, namely, the bureaucratic elites who ruled in their name. The bureaucrats and their party bosses dispose of the entire surplus labour of the masses, determine the norms of their conduct, their freedom of mobility and even their assignment to jobs; and limit the right of protest, proclaiming every protest as anti-socialist and anti-nationalist without rendering account to anyone.¹⁵

At a time when there are ever more frequent outbreaks of the citizens' exasperation with stultifying impersonal bureaucracies, it would be going against the tide of democratic leftist thought to revert to reliance on just such unresponsive structures which are associated with the presidential form of constitutionalism in a mini-state in the significant task of transformation and development. There is an in-built dynamic for authoritarianism to couple the accompanying regimentation in the system to full dictatorial power and ever-growing reliance on coercion, fear and terror with ever diminishing returns in societal transition. What makes the difference is democratic leadership and mass organisation, not the presence of authoritarianism, for the ability of a government to get economic sacrifices depends upon the confidence the majority poor have in the rulers rather than on legally structured compulsion. One is forcibly reminded of the worldly wisdom of the British radical philosopher, John Stuart Mill, who wrote nearly a century ago :

"A State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes — will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished; and that the perfection of machinery to which it has sacrificed everything will

in the end avail it nothing, for want of the vital power, which, in order that the machine might work more smoothly, it has preferred to banish."¹⁶

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