

Political change, democracy, and human rights in Guyana

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The annals of Guyana's political history will surely record 1992 as an historic year, for that year was a milestone in the transition from authoritarian politics to democratic politics. Also significant was the emergence from the political wilderness of Cheddie Jagan. Having first entered politics in 1946, Jagan was ousted from power by the British in 1953, and again in 1964, in collusion with the USA, because of his communist orientation. Ironically, though, it was the USA itself that helped to engineer his return to power in 1992. The circumstances that led to the re-emergence of Jagan, and his re-emergence itself, have ushered in a new era in Guyanese politics, one which spotlights the triumphs and pitfalls of democracy and human rights in South America's only English-speaking republic.

Political analysts accept that the status and conduct of both democracy and human rights in various parts of the world are influenced by the nature and operation of the political regime governing a particular society. With this in mind, this article examines the relationship between regime change and democracy and human rights in Guyana. The analysis shows that there has been both change and continuity over the past decade; change in regime and regime politics and policies, and continuity in regime policies that conditioned the environment to pursue democracy. In Guyana, the constitution and the approach of political elites incorporate civil and political rights as well as economic and social ones. However, given the link between the attainment of the latter set of rights and the economic health of society on the one hand, and Guyana's economic doldrums on the other, it is unreasonable to expect any major near-term advancement in economic and social rights.

Democracy and human rights in context

Following Schmitter and Karl, democracy is used here to mean a system of governance where rulers are held accountable for their actions by citizens, acting through competition and cooperation of their elected representatives.¹ This approach goes beyond the formalistic, institutional approach, which defines democracy essentially as electoral democracy.² Elections are central to democracy. But because they are periodic contestations where interest aggregation and representation are centred around individual candidates or political parties, it is

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important to extend the definition of democracy to participation and policy choice on a continual basis and outside parties, through interest groups and other social movements.

Elections constitute a critical legitimising mechanism in democracies. Hence, they are necessary, and they need to be free and fair. But as Larman Wilson noted, 'Too often there is a preoccupation with elections and "procedural democracy", and the assumption that if they are free, that is tantamount to being democratic or having a democracy'.³ It is unrealistic to use elections as the sole measure of democratic strength. Douglas Payne, formerly the top Latin America and Caribbean analyst at Freedom House, is quite right in observing: 'To assume that elections alone are an accurate gauge of the health of democracy is naive at best'.⁴ Thus, for this writer democracy must provide for the exercise of civil and political rights unencumbered by instruments of state coercion, whether with force, such as through military or police agencies, or without force, such as through partisan or corrupted judiciaries. A democratic environment must, therefore, reflect the following: scope for political participation, central to which are free and fair elections; access to decision makers and institutions of government; responsiveness by political rulers; functional courts; and uncensored media.

Human rights thinking in Guyana, as reflected in domestic legal instruments, statements by political leaders, and charters of human rights non-governmental groups, has been influenced by both liberal and communalist thinking.⁵ Moreover, the approach to human rights is an inclusive one, encompassing civil and political rights as well as economic and social rights. As might be expected, over the years since independence in 1966, there have been changes in emphasis among the various categories of rights, reflecting shifts in the focus of the international community, and domestic political and economic struggles. Central to the nature and conduct of these struggles has been the nature and scope of political change.

Political change

One typology of political regimes that explains political change in developing countries like Guyana is that used by Joe Hagan. It describes five kinds of regimes along a spectrum of close cohesion through to high fragmentation: dominance by a single individual; dominance by a single cohesive party with established, autonomous bureaucracies and institutions; dominance by a single party with factional divisions; power sharing by a ruling party with one or more minor parties or groups; and no clear dominant group or a coalition of autonomous groups.⁶ Irrespective of which regime typology is used, though, regime change can be detected by observing the dynamics of the various domestic political arenas, among them the cabinet, the legislature and the political party of the regime leader(s).

Along with his typology of regimes, Hagan developed a typology of regime change. Under his schema, a Type I regime change is limited to the removal or resignation of a top political leader, but one who is not the effective head of state. A Type II change involves a change in the effective head of state, but no

change in the basic political composition of the ruling group. Regime change of the third type involves adjustments in the mix of groups or factions that comprise the ruling coalition, but that do not alter the essential political make-up of the regime. Type IV change is where one political group or set of groups is replaced by another, through routinised, constitutionally sanctioned procedures. The final type of regime change is where the entire ruling group is forced from office by another group through illegal or irregular means, such as a *coup d'état*.⁷

Over the past 12 years Guyana has experienced three sets of regime change. Using the Hagan approach, the death of Forbes Burnham on 6 August 1985 led to a Type II change, involving change of the effective head of state, but no change in the basic composition of the ruling People's National Congress (PNC). Hugh Desmond Hoyte, Burnham's Prime Minister and First Vice President, was identified as successor to Burnham by a joint meeting of the PNC's Central Committee and the Cabinet within two hours of Burnham's death. Hoyte became simultaneously PNC leader and state president, passing over Ptolemy Reid, deputy leader and a former prime minister, as well as Randi Chandisingh, PNC General Secretary. The new regime pledged continuity at the party congress held two weeks after Burnham's death, with Hoyte declaring 'The leadership of the party is pledged to continue his [Burnham's] work'.⁸

With presidential and parliamentary elections constitutionally due within seven months of his accession to the presidency, Hoyte took the opportunity to 'renew' the mandate of the PNC under his stewardship, in elections held on 9 December 1985. Guyana went through the motions of legitimacy without any real correlation between popular choice and political empowerment. As Perry Mars explained, Guyana's post-independence elections have been less about choice or change of government than a kind of national ritual where contending parties dramatise their particular mobilisation strategies. In that context, the ruling party demonstrates its peculiar style of 'never losing', if not necessarily 'winning', popular elections; opposition parties generally experiment with different combination tactics designed to demonstrate their popular appeal based on voter turnout at campaign meetings, rather than at the usually controversial polls. In this situation, 'the campaign is the thing, the elections a predictable anticlimax'.⁹

Under Guyana's electoral system, presidential and parliamentary elections are combined, and the leader of the party with the largest parliamentary representation becomes president, having been earlier designated the presidential candidate and head of the party list of candidates. There are 65 seats in the unicameral legislature, but only 53 are contested directly. This is done using the list system of proportional representation. Each of the 10 Regional Development Councils (RDCs) elects one representative for the Assembly, and the remaining two are identified by the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (NCLDO). Elections for regional representation in the National Assembly and within the RDCs are also held at the same time.¹⁰ The 1985 elections were contested by seven political parties, and according to the Elections Commission, the agency established under the constitution to supervise national and local elections, the PNC won 42 of the 53 directly contested National Assembly seats. The PNC was thus 'returned' to power.¹¹

The circumstances described above would seem ostensibly to constitute continuity rather than change. However, for reasons explained below, those circumstances set the stage for a type of regime change, which, modifying the Hagan typology, could be called Type VI regime change: where the dominant individual ruler alters the composition of the cabinet and key government agencies as part of a political adaptation of his regime. This change is not immediate; it takes place over a period of time. The length of time would vary depending on such factors as the amount of personal authority the ruler possesses, the organisational strength or weakness of his party, the ideological matrix of the party, and local and foreign economic and political pressures. In any case, the change alters the political character of the regime, and in Hoyte's case, its ideological character as well.

The failure of so many of Burnham's prescriptions and initiatives presented Hoyte with strong demands for change. Generally, the demands were for democratisation of the polity, respect for human rights, arrest and reversal of the economic decline, renewal of confidence in the general society, and foreign policy conduct commensurate with the then dramatically changing climate of international politics. Hoyte responded to all these areas, introducing both substantive and symbolic changes. These included privatisation, attraction of foreign investment, rapprochement with the USA, Venezuela, the UK and the International Monetary Fund, electoral reforms, an end to the harassment of the political opposition, and the removal of restrictions on the media. He engaged in challenging, often dangerous, balancing acts in an effort to accommodate domestic and foreign pressures. Essentially, Hoyte engaged in what elsewhere I have called 'the politics of preservative adaptation'.¹²

Among the political reforms undertaken in the quest for preservative adaptation were the abolition of overseas voting, access by opposition parties to state media for campaigning, the sanitising of the tainted voters list, reconstitution of the Elections Commission, tabulation of the vote at the place of voting, and scrutiny of the elections process by foreign observers. Hoyte also reshuffled his cabinet, cut government bureaucracy by reducing the number of ministries from 18 to 11, and clipped the political wings of some politicians who were wedded to Burnham's agenda. In the latter respect, he reduced the authority of Prime Minister Hamilton Green, assigning him specific responsibility for little more than sports, and he removed Randi Chandisingh from his powerful party and government positions. Chandisingh, then General Secretary of the party and a vice president of the government, was given a diplomatic assignment in Moscow.

In addition, Hoyte engineered the resignation and exiling of the powerful Minister of Health, Richard Van-West Charles, a son-in-law of Burnham, who was known in political circles as 'Baby Jesus'. (This, of course, was an indirect and sardonic reference to Burnham; he was God.) Moreover, Hoyte also redefined the relationship between the ruling PNC and the government, abandoning the principle of 'paramouncy of the party'. This was a principle introduced by Burnham in 1973, whereby the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the government and all organisations and institutions in the country were made subordinate to the PNC. Hoyte also reorganised the party structure, ending

TABLE 1
Results of the 1992 Guyana Elections

<i>Presidential candidate</i>	<i>Political party</i>	<i>Ethnic base</i>	<i>Votes won</i>	<i>Percentage of total</i>	<i>Seats awarded</i>
Cheddie Jagan	PPP-Civic	Indian	162 058	53.5	28 + 8 = 36
H Desmond Hoyte	PNC	African	128 286	42.3	23 + 3 = 26
Clive Thomas	WPA	Mixed	6 068	1.7	1 + 1 = 2
Manzoor Nadir	TUF	Mixed	3 183	1.2	1 + 0 = 1
Paul Tenassee	DLM	Indian	1 557	*	0 + 0 = 0
Joseph Bacchus	NDF	African	68	*	0 + 0 = 0
Robert Gangadeen	NRP	Indian	114	*	0 + 0 = 0
Llewelyn John	PDM	African	298	*	0 + 0 = 0
Lindley GeBorde	UGI	Mixed	134	*	0 + 0 = 0
Leslie Ramsammy	URP	Indian	1 343	*	0 + 0 = 0
Winston Payne	UWP	African	77	*	0 + 0 = 0

Notes:

* = Less than one percent

Figures after + in the last column represent allocations based on regional elections

PPP—People's Progressive Party

PNC—People's National Congress

WPA—Working People's Alliance

TUF—The United Force

DLM—Democratic Labour Movement

NDF—National Democratic Front

NRP—National Republican Party

PDM—People's Democratic Movement

UGI—United Guyanese International

URP—United Republican Party

UWP—United Workers' Party

Source: Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, *Observing Guyana's Electoral Process, 1990–1992*, Atlanta, 1993.

government funding of party operations, by abolishing the notorious Ministry of National Mobilization. The party's bureaucracy was also downsized. All these actions not only constituted Type VI regime change, they were also central to the democratisation of society. Ironically, they also set the stage for Hoyte's political demise, and the third regime change in a decade.

The third regime change was a Type IV change. It involved the replacement of Desmond Hoyte and the 'new' PNC by Cheddie Jagan and the Progressive Party People's (PPP)—Civic by constitutionally sanctioned means. Following elections on 5 October 1992, where 11 political parties competed, Jagan was sworn in as president on 9 October 1992. After the 7 December 1992 meeting of the 10 RDCs and the 12 December 1992 meeting of the NCLDO, part of the process of constituting the National Assembly, the parliamentary power distribution was: PPP-Civic 36 seats, the PNC 26 seats, the Working People's Alliance (WPA) two seats, and The United Force (TUF) 1 seat (see Table 1).¹³

The 1992 regime change is significant for several reasons. As the first time in 28 years when both the international community and all political parties in the

country agreed that the elections were free and fair, it is a vital step along the road to democratic reconstruction. Moreover, with these elections Guyana joined the rest of South America in holding internationally accepted elections. In addition, the elections demonstrated the maturity of the Guyanese electorate in eschewing the politics of violence despite efforts in some quarters to promote this. However, they also indicated a continuation of racial politics, since voting occurred mainly along racial lines. As Ralph Premdas pointed out, 'the PPP-Civic victory as well as the PNC support and indeed the entire election was animated by communal sentiments that suffused and shaped voter preference'.¹⁴

The 1992 elections are also testimony to how dogged persistence, perseverance and commitment to ideals can pay off. Cheddie Jagan was finally able to rise from the ashes of the past and secure the position he long sought: political control over Guyana. At his inauguration he remarked:

After I had been declared the winner of the Central Demerara Constituency at the 1947 General Elections, I said 'We, the People, have won!' Fourty-five years later, I can now say once again: 'The People have won.' ... After Guyana gained independence, I wrote in 1966, at the end of my book, *The West on Trial*: 'The struggle will be long and hard, and sacrifices will be many, but time and history are on our side, and win we shall.'¹⁵

Beyond regime change

As noted earlier, elections are key to regime legitimacy in a democracy, but they do not constitute democracy. Hence, in assessing the democracy–human rights nexus in Guyana, we need to go beyond elections and examine participation and policy choice in the context of other institutional and behavioural aspects of civil society. In this respect attention will be paid to constitutional reform, the military, the media and the courts.

A well established principle of democratic governance is that such governance must be carried out under the rule of law. In that respect, the precept and practice of democracy are often judged, and correctly so, against a nation's fundamental law—its constitution. Guyana's constitution pledges 'to respect human dignity and to cherish and uphold the principles of freedom, equality, and democracy and all other fundamental human rights'. It also resolves 'to establish the State on foundations of social and economic justice, and accordingly by popular consensus, after full, free, and open discussion, debate, and participation'. But for most of the years between 1980, when the constitution was adopted, and 1992, when the party that introduced it was vanquished, this pledge was honoured mainly in the breach.

Most of the concerns about actual and potential power abuse under the constitution centred around the presidency. Two respected Guyanese scholars expressed a view shared by many people within and outside the country: 'In a real sense the Presidential system, as indeed the Constitution of which it is part, is a product of the political and economic crises [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.'¹⁶ Thus Guyana observers have seen the need for constitutional reform, both to

remove the structural basis for the subversion of democracy and human rights, and to make the constitution more consonant with changing domestic realities, especially in relation to the pursuit of socialism, which failed miserably in Guyana and elsewhere.

Constitutional reform was also on the local political agenda. Both the PNC and the PPP-Civic made it a key aspect of their 1992 electioneering. The PNC manifesto promised that 'one of the first tasks of a Hoyte government would be to review the constitution of our country'. It argued that 'the political and economic policies which have been pursued since 1985 are so diametrically opposed to those which were followed in the past that there is now an obvious need to reconsider and fashion together the kind of constitution that Guyanese need for their further evolution'.¹⁷

For its part the PPP-Civic offered some fairly specific propositions:

The PPP/Civic Government recognizes the urgent need for constitutional reform. We propose that

- (a) the Fundamental Rights Section of our Constitution be preserved and strengthened wherever possible;
- (b) the Directive Principles be reviewed and abandoned where irrelevant, inapplicable, or inappropriate;
- (c) the powers of the Elections Commission be more adequately and unambiguously defined and its composition reviewed.

The PPP-Civic, if elected, will propose that the powers of the President be reduced so that both the President and the Office are more accountable to the people.

In addition to the above, the PPP-Civic Government will invite the views of all political, cultural, social, and other organizations and the community as a whole, to join in a meaningful way in fashioning a Constitution which will serve Guyana.¹⁸

President Jagan sent mixed signals about his commitment to constitutional reform. At one time he declared that nothing was basically wrong with the constitution's provisions relating to the presidency; it was just the manner in which they were used, he said. At another time he announced that a constitutional review commission would be created, even mentioning the name of constitutional scholar Harold Lutchman as a commission nominee.¹⁹ The commission was never appointed. However, a parliamentary resolution was adopted in late 1994 endorsing reform and creating a Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution to pursue it. Curiously, in September 1996 the Committee announced that it did not anticipate presenting a report and a draft revised constitution before May 1997 less than a year before the elections were due, and too late to take effect before the elections.

This foot-dragging on constitutional reform is a great disappointment to people who invested trust and confidence in the new regime, counting on it to create the structural and functional mechanisms for the furtherance of democracy and human rights? And what better place to have begun but with the fundamental law that is both a symbol of democratic ideals and the instrument that guarantees a whole range of human rights? However, it would appear that, after the PPP-Civic had secured power, Jagan was comfortable with the range of powers and immunities attached to the very 'imperial presidency' he had condemned when in opposition, and was reluctant to take concrete measures to

change them. One assessment of his first two years in office concluded: 'If the Guyana society is to move from its present uneasy calm to a cohesive and dynamic entity constitutional change remains the prime item on the agenda and its absence the major failure over the last two years'.²⁰ This is still a credible proposition.

A 1994 controversy that centred around a constitutional guarantee highlights the need to reform the constitution. As mentioned earlier, the approach to human rights in Guyana has been influenced by both liberal and communalist views. Under the present constitution, which was adopted in 1980 when Guyana was flirting with socialism, human rights guarantees extend to civil and political rights as well as social and economic ones. Chapter 2 of the constitution addresses several matters in the latter category, providing for rights to work, medical care, leisure, housing and free education. On the question of education, Article 27 proclaims: 'Every citizen has the right to free education from nursery to university as well as at non-formal places where opportunities are provided for education and training'.

Free education from primary to university level was introduced in 1975. The PNC was thereby able to give expression to its belief about education and its place in society, even before the 1980 constitution was adopted. The government was able to absorb the full cost of education. But that was initially at a time of relative economic buoyancy. As the political and economic crises that later gripped the country worsened, the provision of free education became a huge burden, such that in the latter years of the Hoyte government partial abandonment of this social rights venture was no longer in doubt.

The University of Guyana (UG) finally announced in 1993 that from the 1994–95 academic year there would be 'cost recovery'. Students would be required to pay the Guyana dollar equivalent of between US\$1000 and US\$1500 annually, depending upon their programme of instruction. As might be expected, this announcement was met with condemnation, protests, hunger strikes and litigation by student groups. Students moved to the High Court, which has original jurisdiction on constitutional matters, claiming that the government was violating their constitutional rights under Article 27 of the constitution by having UG, a state institution, charge them for education.²¹ After considerable delay, the court rendered a decision in 1996, rejecting the students' contention.

This outcome notwithstanding, the case calls into question the issue of the meaning and value of rights under the constitution. It is well recognised that, while rights such as those to life, assembly, privacy and property are fundamental and judicially enforceable, the economic and social ones identified in Chapter 2 of the constitution are akin to expressions of societal desire, and their fulfillment is dependent on a society's level of economic development. This matter is a clear demonstration of the incongruity between the existence of social rights in the constitution and the patent inability of the society to fulfil those rights.²² It is a matter that needs attention by way of constitutional review.

Guyana has been one of the few Anglophone Caribbean countries to use the military as an instrument of political rule and an agent for the subversion of human rights. It is therefore important to examine how this institution fits into the contemporary political matrix. It should be remembered that the militaris-

ation which Guyana experienced in the 1970s and the early 1980s did not occur in the sense of Finer's definition of militarisation, as 'the armed forces' substitution of their own policies and or their persons, for those of the recognized civilian authorities'.²³ Rather, the Guyana case was akin to Nordlinger's, where 'civilian governors obtain loyalty and obedience by penetrating the armed forces with political ideas and political personnel'.²⁴ Consequently, the military, used here to refer to the Guyana Defense Force (GDF), the Guyana National Service (GNS), the Guyana People's Militia (GPM) and the Guyana Police Force (GPF), became practically an arm of the ruling PNC, and was compensated with accretions of money, equipment and personnel.²⁵ The ruling party used the military to help subvert elections, harass critics, and often as scab labor when there were politically-motivated industrial disputes. The military pledged loyalty to the PNC and Burnham, not to the constitution or to the state. During the Burnham era there was little if any distinction between the security of the state and the security of the regime, and hence the military was used for both.

After Desmond Hoyte took power in 1985 he adopted a different approach to the role of the military in society. The military continued to have political, military and economic security mandates, but there were appreciable policy and operational differences in these areas, in addition to the assignment of a new role: that of diplomatic security.²⁶ Trends were such that the following view was expressed: 'Guyana's new direction offers hope that it will merely be a matter of time before those interested in full depoliticization of the military and the democratization of society win over those dedicated to Burnham's agenda and initiatives'.²⁷

That time has come. There is no possibility of a return to the Burnham approach. Although Hoyte had adopted a different approach to the military, and despite pronouncements from the military high-command that the army would not meddle or be co-opted in politics, there was still concern in some quarters locally and abroad that the military had not been fully depoliticised; that they would display praetorian tendencies and perhaps declare martial law during the 1992 elections, in order to guarantee a PNC victory. That fear did not materialise. Moreover, since the elections the army has reached out to the government, promising to honour their pre-election pledge to abide by the popular choice, act according to their constitutional mandate and be a professional, apolitical force.²⁸ Neither the army nor the police has qualms about working with a government formed by a party that once hurled scurrilous and vitriolic remarks at them. The heads of the military and paramilitary agencies are fully conscious of the dramatic changes domestically and internationally and of the implications for their institutions and the nation of working outside the popular and constitutional frameworks. Hence the pledge to uphold democracy and human rights in the country.²⁹

The right to free speech is so central to the preservation of democracy and the exercise of human rights that scholars often invoke Voltaire's famous assertion: 'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it'. The MacBride Commission on the Study of Communication Problems called the freedom of expression 'one of democracy's most precious acquisitions',

noting that, 'The presence or absence of freedom of expression is one of the most reliable indications of freedom in all its aspects in any nation'.³⁰ In the Guyanese context, as elsewhere, it was accepted that this freedom extended to freedom of the press and freedom of citizens to criticise their government. The precept also included the right to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas.

However, the reality in Guyana during most of the early post-independence years was one where government dominance of the media, currency controls, restriction on press imports and judicial decisions combined to create an environment where these freedoms were curtailed rather than permitted or encouraged. Not only did this suppress political debate, it also affected several contingent freedoms—association, assembly, and the right to demonstrate for redress of grievance, among other things. Moreover, it contributed to the development within society of what one observer called 'a sort of intellectual paralysis'.³¹

As mentioned earlier, expression, speech and the media benefited from the substantive and symbolic changes introduced after 1985 as Desmond Hoyte pursued his politics of preservative adaptation. Not only was one businessman emboldened to establish an independent and critical newspaper, *Stabroek News*, in November 1986, but he was able to say afterwards: 'The atmosphere of repression lightened perceptibly and the style and language of politics were noticeably more responsive and less threatening...An independent newspaper was allowed to open and there has been no interference with it.'³² In its report to the US Congress in 1991, the State Department reported: 'In past years the Government...maintained varying degrees of control over the media. This control, however, has been easing since 1987.'³³

The changed political climate that began under Hoyte continued under Jagan, being generally conducive to the exercise of rights related to expression and free press. For example, during 1993 Guyana Publications Limited, publishers of *Stabroek News*, extended publication of the newspaper from twice weekly to seven days a week, having gone earlier from a Sunday edition only. Later that year they started publishing *Stabroek Review*, a weekly. Also in 1993 Desmond Hoyte's former National Security Adviser, David Granger, teamed up with an attorney to launch a monthly public affairs magazine, *Guyana Review*, which has since become a highly respected source of balanced news and analysis.

That year also witnessed the launching of *Caribbean-Indian American News*, *Business Monthly*, *Guyana Guardian*, *Guyana Times*, and *Insight*. However, the last three newspapers mentioned ceased publication within a year. In 1994 the major initiative in this area was the establishment of two book publishing houses: Hughes and Thorne Limited, and Roraima Publishing Company, the latter established by the owners of the failed *Times*. The year 1996 saw the birth of three newspapers: *The Vision*, organ of a party called For a Good and Green Guyana (GGG) formed by former Prime Minister, Hamilton Green, who was expelled from the PNC shortly after the 1992 elections; *The Sun*, revived organ of TUF; and *The Taj Mahal Times*. There also was a development of signal importance in 1996: on 6 November *Stabroek News* went on-line with a web site maintained through the *Trinidad Express*. With this, the media in Guyana finally entered the age of electronic publishing.

For all this, the PPP-Civic, which had proclaimed in its election manifesto that, 'In the process of reconstruction and the development of a pluralist democracy, free media will facilitate wide and open debate on the choice of path for recovery' and promised an 'opening [of] the media to different shades of opinion'³⁴ under its rule, now seems indisposed to close scrutiny and strident criticism by the press. The same *Stabroek News* which Jagan had once hailed as a champion in the search for truth and a bulwark in the pursuit of democracy and the protection of human rights in the country is now ridiculed as subversive.

Jagan's most scathing remarks followed the newspaper's report on the PPP congress where he had affirmed his commitment to Marxism/Leninism. Later, the paper also carried an editorial on the subject. Jagan excoriated *Stabroek News*, calling it 'unpatriotic and anti-national', and bent on 'witch-hunting' his government. He expressed a totally befuddling view: 'Despite all its disclaimers, *Stabroek News* is trying to destabilize this government. They probably didn't want this party to be elected to the government in the first place.'³⁵ More than this, though, in a move aimed ostensibly at cost-cutting, in December 1994 Minister of Finance Asgar Ally (who resigned in May 1995 over political and policy differences with President Jagan and in July 1996 announced his presidential candidacy for the 1997 elections) ordered Bank of Guyana officials to cease advertising in *Stabroek News*. Bank of Guyana advertising is not only significant in volume but also lucrative for the print and electronic media.³⁶ Coming on the heels of the paper's battle with the government, this move smacks of discrimination against *Stabroek News*, since the new directive, which was not rescinded after Ally's departure, does not affect the government-owned *Guyana Chronicle*, or the *Mirror*, which is owned by the PPP, President Jagan's party.

One of the criticisms made of the Jagan government, by both the press and political analysts, was over its abandonment of the pledge to consolidate democracy and racial harmony by establishing a government of national unity. The PPP-Civic had made a bold and laudable offer in its election manifesto:

The PPP/CIVIC is convinced that the true interests of all Guyanese lie in working towards national unity and the eventual elimination of ethnic insecurity. The proposal for a multi-ethnic, multi-class, broad-based national PPP/CIVIC list to contest these elections reflects the PPP's unending search of [sic] and means to promote national unity. The commitment of the PPP/CIVIC to winner-does-not-take-all politics and to the formation of a government of national unity after winning the elections, attests to our belief that national unity and ethnic security form the cornerstone on which a truly democratic system will be built in Guyana.³⁷

Apart from the search for political renewal that existed within society at the time of the elections, it was this pledge that made the PPP-Civic an attractive prospect to many sections of the electorate. However, as is often true with parties seeking power, the pledge, once made, becomes subject to subtle amendment or plain abandonment. In this case it was the latter. Having won 53.5% of the votes and 36 of the seats in the National Assembly—28 in the national contest and the other eight through regional mechanisms—the PPP-Civic decided to exercise power exclusively. True, after some delay and some political histrionics, it

offered the WPA one cabinet position—the Ministry of Planning and Production.³⁸ But, given the authority constraints expected to accompany the person holding this position, that move seemed part of a PPP-Civic tactic to make an offer they knew the WPA could only refuse.

The Ministry of Planning and Production was never created. Hence the PPP-Civic were able to retain full and absolute control, a total about-face from the election commitment. Even one scholar who is usually sympathetic towards the PPP observed: ‘Its protestations notwithstanding, the stark elementary fact remained that the new Jagan-led government was essentially an Indian-backed regime and that power was not shared but monopolized by one partisan group alone’.³⁹

Allied to this is what one newspaper editorial called the ‘far more worrying tendency which seems to be clearly establishing itself to remove good Guyanese professionals who served in public positions before this new Government came to power. This line seems to be not very subtly changing from “winner will not take all” to “winner is perfectly entitled to take all”’.⁴⁰ It is true that any new government, especially one formed by a party in opposition for 28 years, will harbour a certain distrust for the bureaucrats in the government once run by its political nemesis. It will therefore want to bring its own trusted cadre into the executive and judicial branches. It is also true that in the context of patronage politics, which is accepted in Guyana and the Caribbean as a whole, this is expected. But there has been a certain callousness by the new government in dealing with some of the professionals of the former administration, often reflected in short termination notices, reassignment to positions of lesser responsibility, and suspension from duty, in many cases violating their administrative and constitutional rights. Some have sued and won, including Dr Cedric Grant, former Ambassador to Washington and later Foreign Affairs Advisor to Desmond Hoyte, and James Matheson, former Ambassador to Brussels.

In most cases the competence of these officials was not questioned; their political loyalty was suspect. Worse than the administrative and management implications of this action, given the dearth of managerial skill in the country, are the racial ones, since the action is pregnant with racial overtones, giving rise to charges of ‘ethnic cleansing’ by the opposition PNC. While those charges exaggerated the reality, in most cases the people removed were Afro-Guyanese and their replacements were Indo-Guyanese. Although some top non-black functionaries in the former government were also removed, here again, there replacements were almost all people of Indian descent.⁴¹

This is not to say that some of the replacements were not necessary, given the corruption and mismanagement that had existed in some quarters. However, indelicate management in this area could be dangerous, given the country’s history of ethnic conflict. I agree completely with anthropologist Raymond Smith, that ‘Whatever racial antipathies exist in Guyana today are not the same as those of the 1960s’.⁴² However, there is justifiable reason for concern, for as Smith himself has correctly observed, ‘If the causes of the violence of 1962, 1963, and 1964 was an upsurge of racial antipathy rooted in primordial identities and expressing itself in the struggle over political power, then it is logical to assume that the very same racism will assert itself once again’.⁴³ It is clear to

this writer that the combined effects of two factors will serve as the basis for political discontent and racial animosity: one, the fact that Indo-Guyanese now control the authoritative allocation of political resources and, because of the country's demographics, are likely to do so for some time in the future; two, the fact that Indo-Guyanese continue to own significantly greater economic resources than Afro-Guyanese, a situation not likely to change in the foreseeable future.

In recognition of the critical role of the judiciary in democratic governance and the exercise of human rights, a former Ombudsman of Jamaica once asserted: 'The rule of law is the fulcrum around which justice revolves; the catalyst from which emerges true protection and promotion of human rights'.⁴⁴ This statement is as relevant to Guyana as it is to Jamaica. In Guyana's case, unlike some years ago when the independence of the judiciary was compromised by the precept and practice of party paramountcy, the judiciary now exercises greater independence. It must be remembered, though, that the practice of the rule of law involves much more than an independent judiciary, and in this respect Guyana does not fare well.

The dispensation of justice in Guyana is now affected by a shortage of criminal justice personnel, including magistrates and court officers, low salaries, inadequate training, poor facilities, and to crown it all, inefficiency in many quarters. Indeed, it has been reported that, 'The inefficiency of the judicial system is so great as to undermine due process'.⁴⁵ It is common to have people detained for three and four years awaiting trial. And as outrageous as it may appear, there are people with murder indictments who have been awaiting trial for eight and 10 years. This problem was brought into the public spotlight during 1993, when several prisoners held public protests on the roof of the country's main prison in Georgetown over their prolonged remand for trial.⁴⁶

One complicating factor is severe prison overcrowding, as the former Ombudsman, Justice Clifford Baburam, noted in his 1992 report to the National Assembly. The Director of Prisons himself has indicated that, for example, the Georgetown Prison, which had been built to house 350 prisoners, was forced to hold over 800 in 1994, and had accommodated as many as 1000 during early 1992.⁴⁷ Moreover, the Guyana Human Rights Association has cited inadequate medical services and sanitary facilities, food shortages and poorly paid and trained staff as additional factors.⁴⁸

The protection of all human rights in any society involves the possession and use of some set of economic assets by government, even if only to run decent police forces and courts to protect civil and political freedoms, and to hold elections. But the fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights is dependent on economic factors in ways that maintenance of civil and political ones are not. There is variation in both the nature of the economic linkage and the degree of dependency on economic factors.

As noted earlier, human rights concerns in Guyana extend to civil and political rights as well as social and economic ones. In referring to the issue, President Jagan once observed: 'Some states emphasize civil and political but fail to note the centrality of economic, social, and cultural rights. Both sets of rights are essential.'⁴⁹ However, despite the economic growth average of 7% over the years

1992–96 and a wealth of natural resources, Guyana's poor socioeconomic condition will make attainment of economic, social and cultural rights a Herculean task.

One gets a sense of the magnitude of the task of pursuing such rights when it is recognised that, according to Finance Minister Asgar Ally, 'Recent studies have estimated that approximately 70 percent of the population is now living below the poverty line'.⁵⁰ In explaining the country's socioeconomic dilemma to members of the Caribbean Group for Cooperation and Economic Development in January 1994, President Jagan indicated: 'Every man, woman, and child in this country is indebted to the tune of \$US2600—this in a country where more than half of the population lives below the poverty line and per capita GDP hovers around \$US430'.⁵¹ Moreover, the country's roads, schools, power supply, sewerage system, health services and other social infrastructure are in virtual collapse, partly the result of neglect, mismanagement and the economic crisis that the country experienced under the PNC watch. Guyana now has the dubious distinction of being the second poorest country in the Caribbean, after Haiti.

The PPP-Civic government has some bold plans to promote economic democracy and fulfil some of the economic, social and cultural rights specified under Chapter 2 of the Constitution. These include promoting private sector development and public sector reform, rehabilitating the social and economic infrastructure, searching for maximum debt relief, and offering incentives for investment and production. But, as might be expected, these plans will take massive financial injections and time. Meanwhile, to use a Guyanese adage, 'While the grass is growing, the horse will be starving'. And given the country's demographics, where some 40% of the population is 15 years and under, children and women will continue to feel the greatest impact of the crisis. One source has even indicated that 'the severe deterioration of the public education and health care system has stunted children's futures and often cut short their lives'.⁵²

Conclusion

The above discussion suggests that there has been both change and continuity regarding regime and democracy and human rights in Guyana over the last decade. Change has occurred not only in terms of regime, but also in terms of regime politics and policies. Curiously though, there has been some continuity in relation to regime policies despite regime change, for President Jagan had continued some of his predecessor's economic reforms, and built on the democratic environment that Hoyte had begun to create, under domestic and foreign pressure, as he pursued his politics of preservative adaptation. Hoyte deserves recognition for his stage-setting role in the political and economic reconstruction of Guyana; for being the Mikhail Gorbachev of Guyana.

The importance of economic and social rights is not to be gainsaid. But their status as fundamental rights is both debatable and subject to economic vicissitudes in ways that civil and political rights are not, since their fulfillment is intimately bound up with the economic capability of a society. Consequently, it is easier to give tangible meaning and institutional expression to civil and political rights in Guyana than to do so for economic, social and cultural ones.

Indeed, we saw the country's dilemma in relation to the constitutional provision for free education. While political elites and interest groups in Guyana will surely continue to do what is 'politically correct' and pay homage to the importance of economic, social and cultural rights, and to their symbiotic relationship with civil and political ones, it is unrealistic to expect any major near-term advances in the former area.

Guyana is now in the political campaign season, as the next presidential and parliamentary elections are due constitutionally by March 1998. The triumphs and pitfalls of democracy and human rights there will, therefore, command the attention of concerned publics both within and outside the country. These publics will seek to ensure the transparency of the elections in particular and the wholesomeness of political democracy and civil and political rights in general. Yet it must be emphasised that political democracy and civil and political rights are necessary, but not sufficient. There are other parts of the democracy and human rights equations—economic democracy and economic and social rights. Difficult though these are, they should also command the attention of publics near and far that are concerned with political change, democracy and human rights in Guyana.

Postscript

March 1997 witnessed a fourth regime change in Guyana. It was a Type II change—where the head of state is changed but the basic composition of the ruling group is otherwise the same. That change was precipitated by the death of President Cheddie Jagan.

President Jagan suffered a heart attack on 14 February, four hours after presiding over a session of the National Defense Board. Given the severity of the heart attack and the limited medical facilities at the state-owned Georgetown Hospital where he was taken, foreign medical attention became necessary. He was taken to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, spending a night on the way at the Gorgas Army Community Hospital in Panama to reduce the stress of a direct flight from Georgetown to Washington. For a short while in Washington President Jagan's medical condition seemed hopeful, but the situation soon deteriorated with the collapse of his lungs. He died early in the morning of 6 March. A state funeral was held on 10 March and his remains were cremated on 12 March.

The regime change was consummated on 6 March, within six hours of Jagan's death. Following a 5:00 am special meeting of the Cabinet, at 6:00 am Prime Minister Samuel A Hinds, a Canadian-trained chemical engineer, was sworn in as President by the Chancellor of the Judiciary, Justice Cecil Kennard, in the presence of the Speaker of the National Assembly, ministers of the government, and the heads of the army and the police force. The ease of the succession itself is a tribute to several things: the maturity of the political opposition in not exploiting the medical crisis for partisan political gain; the acceptance by political actors in the country—both within and outside the ruling group—of the need to honour the spirit and the letter of the constitution in relation to political succession; and the relative democratic maturity of the polity overall.

The death of President Jagan, of course, raises several issues. And although this postscript is not the place to examine them fully, some of them must at least be mentioned. One is the matter of party leadership succession—within the PPP and within the PPP-Civic coalition. A second pertains to possible realignments among political parties, especially since the nation is now in a political season. Indeed, up to mid-March 1997, 21 political parties had announced their entry into the electoral fray. A third matter, and one directly related to the two previous items, relates to what Dr Jagan's death portends for politics overall in Guyana. The poignancy of a remark by WPA co-leader, Dr Rupert Roopnarine, is not lost on any close observer of the Guyana scene: 'His not being here really does open an entirely new situation. I mean we are literally at the end of an era with the passing of Dr Jagan'.

Cheddie Jagan was born on 22 March 1918 in Port Mourant in eastern Guyana of parents who had migrated from Uttar Pradesh, India in 1901 to become sugar plantation indentured workers. He lived a full life. It was also a controversial life at times, one that tested his endurance for struggle, his ideological commitment, and his skills as diplomat and politician. The circumstances of his birth, the possession and use of power that he beheld, the age in which he lived, his knowledge of history, and much else all propelled him into becoming not just a complainer, but a tireless, charismatic champion of the cause of the underdog, and an activist for change.

Jagan played many roles during his nearly 79 years on life's stage. Professionally, he was a dentist, his doctorate in dental surgery having been obtained in 1942 at Northwestern University in Illinois in the American mid-west. He was also a husband for close to 54 years—and to the same spouse—having married Janet Rosenberg in August 1943 in Chicago, IL. She was not only his life-long marital partner, but also his companion in struggle. Cheddie and Janet had two children and five grandchildren. But for Cheddie Jagan, while profession and family were necessary, they were not sufficient. For he saw how history, the nature and use of power, and politics at home and abroad had served to visit injustice on the poor and the dispossessed in Guyana, and he vowed to secure justice, both political and economic. Hence there were additional roles: labour leader, teacher, revolutionary, reformer, scholar and statesman, all towards pursuing a politics of change. As he remarked in *The West on Trial*, one of the four books he wrote, 'Mine was the role of "politics of protest" within the weapons of exposure and struggle. If the legislature was my forum, the waterfront, the factories, plantations, mines, and quarries were my battle ground.'

Understandably, there was naivete and idealism along the way. He recounted, also in *The West on Trial*, that 'At first I was rather naive as a parliamentarian and a debater. I spoke with tremendous enthusiasm and force, thinking that the logic of my arguments would convince my colleagues... But I soon learnt.' Some of Jagan's idealism—and, indeed, his principled stands—brought him into conflict with political forces in Guyana and elsewhere against which he could never prevail. Jagan was, however, also a pragmatist. And this pragmatist itself helped to reveal some of the ironies of his life of struggle and change. For instance, he was ousted from power twice as Premier of his nation, once in 1953

by the UK and then in 1964 by the UK in collusion with the USA, all because he was at the extreme left of the ideological spectrum. That was during the Cold War. Yet it was the USA that was instrumental in his return to power in 1992, this time as President of Guyana. That was after the Cold War. And it was the USA—not Cuba, his erstwhile ideological and political ally—that played the critical role in attempting to save his life. Indeed, he died in the USA.

Jagan's entire political career, which began in 1946 with the formation of the Political Affairs Committee in Guyana, testified to the fact that for him gaining political power was not an end in itself, but an opportunity to right wrongs, to secure justice. And although Guyana was the main arena for his politics of protest, he was both a regionalist and an internationalist, for he correctly understood the indivisibility of the struggle for justice. His death, then, is a loss not only to those engaged in the pursuit of political and economic justice in Guyana, but also in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

Shakespeare once wrote: 'All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts...' Of course, all men and women are not equal players on the world's stage; some play more, and more significant, parts than others. The great players have every reason to have their exists noted and a record made for posterity of the roles they played, especially when those roles sought and secured justice for a segment of mankind. Undoubtedly, Cheddi B Jagan was one such great player—a man with a mission, not merely to complain about the age in which he lived, but to strive to improve it.

Notes

- ¹ See P C Schmitter and T L Karl, 'What democracy is and is not', in Larry Diamond & Marc F Plattner (eds), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p 40.
- ² See, for example, E Huber, 'The future of democracy in the Caribbean', in Jorge I Dominguez *et al.* (eds), *Democracy in the Caribbean*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, pp 74–75.
- ³ L Wilson, 'The OAS and the transition to democracy in Haiti: the effort to restore President Aristide', paper delivered at the 18th Annual Conference of the Caribbean Studies Association, Jamaica, May 1993, p 11.
- ⁴ D W Payne, 'Ballots, neo-strongmen, narcos, and impunity', *Freedom Review*, Vol 26, No , 1995, p 27.
- ⁵ Liberalism and communalism, along with conservatism, are considered the three basic philosophical schools of human rights analysis. For a full discussion of them, see D P Forsythe, *Human Rights and World Politics*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983, pp 158–175.
- ⁶ J Hagan, 'Regimes, political opposition, and the comparative analysis of foreign policy', in Charles Hermann *et al.* (eds), *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987, pp 345–346.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 347–348.
- ⁸ H D Hoyte, Address to the Sixth Biennial Congress of the People's National Congress, Sophia, Georgetown, 19 August 1985, p 7.
- ⁹ P Mars, 'The 1985 Guyana elections in retrospect', *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, Vol 13, No 4, 1987, p 29.
- ¹⁰ For a discussion of proportional representation systems, see D Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967; and E Lakeman, *How Democracies Vote*, London: Faber, 1970. For more on the electoral system of Guyana, see *Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana* (1980) hereafter *Guyana Constitution*, Articles 60–80, 160–162, and 177; and R James & H Lutchman, *Law and the Political Environment in Guyana*, Turkeyen: University of Guyana, 1984, pp 75–87.
- ¹¹ For assessments of the 1985 elections, see Mars, 'The 1985 Guyana elections in Retrospect'; British Parliamentary Human Rights Group and Americas Watch, *Interim Report on the Joint Mission to Investigate*

- Political Freedom in Guyana*, New York: Americas Watch, 1985; and Americas Watch, *Electoral Conditions in Guyana*, New York: Americas Watch, 1990.
- ¹² See I L Griffith, 'The military and the politics of change in Guyana', *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol 33, No 2, 1991, pp 141–173. For other assessments of the Hoyte regime's adaptation, see D de Caires, 'Guyana after Burnham: a new era or is President Hoyte trapped in the skin of the old PNC?', *Caribbean Affairs*, Vol 1, No 1, 1988, pp 183–198; F Long, 'The new international political economy of Guyana', *The Round Table*, No 317, 1991, pp 73–80; US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Transition to Democracy in the Caribbean: Haiti, Guyana, and Suriname*, Hearing, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, 102nd Congress, 1st Session, 26 June 1991; and D Watson & C Craig (eds), *Guyana at the Crossroads*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992.
- ¹³ For reports on the elections, see 'PPP-Civic enters house with 3-seat majority', *Guyana Chronicle*, 10 October 1992, pp 1, 6; G Brana-Shute, 'Guyana 1992: it's about time', *Hemisphere*, Vol 5, 1993, pp 40–44; R Premdas, 'Guyana: the critical elections of 1992 and a regime change', *Caribbean Affairs*, Vol 6, 1993, pp 111–140; and Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government, *Observing Guyana's Electoral Process, 1990–1992*, Atlanta: Carter Center, 1993.
- ¹⁴ R Premdas, 'Guyana one year after the PNC', *Caribbean Affairs*, Vol 7, No 3, 1994, p 157.
- ¹⁵ Text of the Statement made by Dr Cheddie B Jagan, President of Guyana, at his Swearing in Ceremony at State House on Friday, 9 October 1992, p 1.
- ¹⁶ James & Lutchman, *Law and the Political Environment in Guyana*, p 117.
- ¹⁷ *Development, Social Harmony, and Prosperity with Hugh Desmond Hoyte: The Manifesto of the People's National Congress*, 1992, p 3.
- ¹⁸ PPP-Civic, *Time for Change, Time to Rebuild: Manifesto—Elections 1992*, 1992, p 4.
- ¹⁹ Lutchman is a lawyer and a political scientist who once served as Head of the Department of Political Science and Law at the University of Guyana, and as a Dean at the same institution. At the time he was mentioned by President Jagan he was Professor of Public Administration and Director of the Graduate Program in Public Administration at the University of the Virgin Islands, where he had been since 1986. Lutchman returned to Guyana in August 1996 to become Vice Chancellor of the University of Guyana.
- ²⁰ 'Constitutional reform still a priority; faster economic progress essential', *Stabroek News* (Guyana), 10 October 1994, p 13. See also Harold Lutchman's thinking on the constitutional reform issue, in 'A contribution to public education on constitutional reform', *Stabroek News*, 21 June 1994, p 8; 'Substantive changes: the presidency', *Stabroek News*, 22 June 1994, p 8; and 'Removal for violation and misconduct', *Stabroek News*, 23 June 1994, p 15.
- ²¹ See G Cave, 'University fees', *Guyana Review*, No 18, 1994, pp 28–29; and A Hassim, 'No breach of natural justice law by introduction of fees at UG—[Keith] Massiah contends', *Stabroek News*, 22 September 1994, pp 4, 12; and A Hassim, 'Massiah argues that "natural justice" was served', *Stabroek News*, 29 September 1994. Massiah, an Attorney General under the Hoyte Administration, was University of Guyana Counsel in the case. For a brief examination of the constitutionality of the right to education, see J Branche, 'Tertiary education: free for all?', *Guyana Review*, No 15, 1994, pp 26–27.
- ²² If Minister of Health Gail Texeira has her way, what little is left of free medical attention will also be abandoned. See G Persaud, 'Cost recovery to be carefully scrutinized in health sector', *Stabroek News*, 30 September 1994, p 4.
- ²³ See S F Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1988, p 20.
- ²⁴ E Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977, p 15.
- ²⁵ For a discussion of militarisation in Guyana, see G Dams, 'Militarization and development: an experiment in nation-building', *Transition*, Vol 1, No 1, 1978, pp 23–41; Dams, *Domination and Power in Guyana*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1982; I L Griffith, 'Guyana: the military and the politics of change', in Griffith (ed), *Strategy and Security in the Caribbean*, New York: Praeger, 1991; and J E Greene, 'Cooperativism, militarism, party politics, and democracy in Guyana', in Paget Henry & Carl Stone (eds), *The Newer Caribbean*, Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Studies, 1983.
- ²⁶ See Griffith, 'The military and the politics of change in Guyana'.
- ²⁷ *Ibid*, p 167.
- ²⁸ See 'Army aims at feeding itself', *Stabroek News*, 16 February 1993, p 10; 'GDF to be service oriented—[Chief of Staff] Singh', *Stabroek News*, 29 October 1993, p 4; L Harvey, 'Marking time on defense policy', *Guyana Review*, Nos 10 & 11, 1993, p 7; and '[Commissioner of Police] Lewis urges more pay for police', *Stabroek News*, 21 December 1993, p 1.
- ²⁹ This was quite clear from my interview with Brigadier Joseph Singh, Chief of Staff of the GDF, at Army Headquarters, Camp Ayanganna, Georgetown, Guyana, 30 June 1994; and with Commissioner of Police Laurie Lewis at Police Headquarters, Eve Leary, Georgetown, Guyana, on 1 July 1994.
- ³⁰ UNESCO, *Many Voices, One World*, London: Kogan Page, 1980, p 19.
- ³¹ A Chase, 'Freedom of expression', *Guyana Review*, No 2, 1993, p 13.
- ³² de Caires, 'Guyana after Burnham', pp 194, 195. For a short, but useful commentary on the travails of *Stabroek News* in the context of press freedom in Guyana, see A Graham-Yooll, 'Guyana: the newspaper *Stabroek News*', *The Round Table*, No 332, 1994, pp 447–454.

- ³³ US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1990*, Washington, DC, 1991, p 649.
- ³⁴ See PPP-Civic, *Time for Change*, p 6.
- ³⁵ Jagan repeats destabilization charges against Stabroek News', *Stabroek News*, 22 August 1993, p 24; and 'PPP is Marxist, not Government—Jagan', *Stabroek News*, 26, 1993, p 1. The Guyana Press Association called President Jagan's remarks 'inappropriate and intemperate in the prevailing circumstances of the government's stated commitment to press freedom.' Interestingly, in the section of the PPP-Civic manifesto that deals with democracy the promise is made that: 'The PPP/CIVIC will encourage constructive political debate, education, and activity, instead of abuse and denigration of political opponents'.
- ³⁶ Government discriminating against Stabroek News—deCaires', *Stabroek News*, 7 December 1994, pp 1, 3; and 'Ally incommunicado over Bank of Guyana ads', *Stabroek News*, 9 December 1994, p 1.
- ³⁷ PPP-Civic, *Time for Change, Time to Rebuild*, p 7. See also A Persaud and R Naraine, 'Democracy will be participatory', *Stabroek News*, 18 December 1992, pp 1, 2. Participatory democracy was the theme of Jagan's speech at the inaugural session of the post-elections National Assembly.
- ³⁸ See 'WPA to discuss participation in government', *Stabroek News*, 28 October 1992, p 1; and L Harvey, 'Civic pride: cabinet making in 1992', *Guyana Review*, No 1, 1993, pp 10–11. The United Force party was also supposed to be offered a cabinet position. That deal fell through largely because TUF wanted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in return for its support in the National Assembly, something to which the ruling party obviously could not agree, especially since TUF has only one seat in the National Assembly.
- ³⁹ Premdas, 'Guyana one year after the PNC', p 169.
- ⁴⁰ 'Winner Takes All?', *Stabroek News*, 26 June 1993, p 6.
- ⁴¹ One Caribbean ambassador based in Washington made the observation to me in March 1994 that while Hoyte was President one saw a considerable number of Indo-Guyanese in the Guyana diplomatic corps, which was predominantly Afro-Guyanese. However, since Jagan's entry into power, the latter are conspicuous by their absence. Up to autumn 1996, except for the High Commissioner in Canada, the Ambassador in Brazil and the Ambassador in Belgium, the heads of all Guyana's 10 foreign missions were of Indian descent.
- ⁴² R T Smith '“Living in the Gun Mouth”: race, class and political violence in Guyana', *New West Indian Guide*, Vol 69, Nos 3 & 4, 1995, p 225.
- ⁴³ *Ibid*, pp 224–245. For more on ethnic conflict in Guyana, see P Newman, *British Guiana: Problems of Cohesion in an Immigrant Society*, London: Oxford University Press, 1964; L A Despres, *Cultural Pluralism and Nationalist Politics in Guyana*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967; J E Greene, *Race vs Politics in Guyana*, Kingston: Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1974; and P Mars, 'State intervention and ethnic conflict resolution: Guyana and the Caribbean experience', *Comparative Politics*, Vol 27, No 2, 1995, pp 167–186.
- ⁴⁴ E George Green, 'The role of governments in strengthening human rights machinery', in Angela D Byre & Beverly Y Byfield (eds), *International Human Rights Law in the Commonwealth Caribbean*, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1991, pp 309–310.
- ⁴⁵ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1993*, p 462.
- ⁴⁶ See 'Prisoner caused his own dilemma', *Stabroek News*, 6 May 1993, p 1; and B Henry, 'Prisoner on the Roof', *Guyana Review*, No 5, 1993, pp 14–15.
- ⁴⁷ 'Prison problems', *Guyana Review*, No 10, 1994, p 16.
- ⁴⁸ On the Ombudsman report, see 'Ombudsman complains', *Guyana Review*, No 8, 1993, p 4. The government official responsible for the police and the prisons, Home Affairs Minister Feroze Mohamed, acknowledged the existence of serious overcrowding and the other problems in an interview with this author at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Georgetown, on 1 July 1994. See also, B Henry, 'Why problems persist in our prisons', *Guyana Review*, No 8, September 1993, pp 19–20.
- ⁴⁹ C Jagan, 'The Caribbean community: crossroads to the future', *Caribbean Affairs*, Vol 7, 1994, p 31.
- ⁵⁰ Government of Guyana, Parliament, *Budget Speech by the Honorable Asgar Ally, Senior Minister of Finance*, Sessional Paper No 1 of 1994, Sixth Parliament, 1st Session, 7 March 1994, p 27. Three different poverty-line figures exist. The government uses G\$6080 per month; the *Catholic Standard*, a sympathetic independent weekly, uses G\$15 000 per month, and C Y Thomas, a respected economist, who was also the WPA presidential candidate and later parliamentarian from October 1992 to March 1995, cites G\$10 644 per month. During 1996 the US–Guyana currency exchange rate fluctuated between G\$138 to US\$1 and G\$146 to US\$1. For a good analysis of poverty in contemporary Guyana, see C Y Thomas, 'Lessons from experience: structural adjustment and poverty in Guyana', *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol 42, 1993, pp 133–184.
- ⁵¹ C Jagan, 'Guyana is a free country where democracy prevails and the economy is open', *Thunder* (Guyana), Vol 26, No 1, 1994, p 11. In his 1996 budget speech the Finance Minister told the National Assembly that, 'At the end of 1995, Guyana's external debt stock amounted to US\$2.06 billion, or a 3 percent rise over the previous year'. See Government of Guyana, Parliament, *Budget Speech by the Honorable Bharat Jagdeo, Senior Minister of Finance*, Sessional Paper No 1 of 1996, Sixth Parliament, 1st Session, 19 January 1996, p 25.
- ⁵² US Department of State, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1993*, Washington DC, p 464.

