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# DEPENDENCE, CLASS AND RACE IN A COLONIAL FORMATION: AN ANALYSIS OF GUYANA, 1600-1917

# DEPENDENCE, CLASS AND RACE IN A COLONIAL FORMATION: AN ANALYSIS OF GUYANA, 1600-1917

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# INTRODUCTION

There is one obvious sense in which analyses of peripheral social formations should be undertaken: to obtain a better understanding of their dynamics and contradictions within the international division of labour, and to contribute in some way to their structural transformation. This is a theoretical pre-requisite for an adequate analysis of the social formations of peripheral capitalism especially since the capitalist world economy of which these formations are a part is characterised at present by acute class struggles, crises, and contradictions. A problem which one immediately faces when discussing the relations between the imperialist centre and the dominated and dependent periphery is that of perspective, particularly since any attempt to articulate these relations is "already to adopt a position and lay the basis for a theory".[1]

There have been several approaches to the study of the relationship between Guyana and the international capitalist system. While some of these studies are serious attempts to explicate the structural characteristics of Guyana's historical development, others have been inadequate and a few even superfluous.

This study therefore proceeds in terms of the historical materialist approach. That is to say, it attempts to analyse the complex structure of social relations which developed in

Guyana over a specific historical period, 1600-1917, by situating these relations within the context of modes of production and a historically determined social formation. Further, this study attempts to analyse the historical conditions of dependence, class and race within Guyana during this period. That is, the system of social relations in Guyana which has its roots in an overdetermined heritage of colonial conquest, slavery, and indenture, has been conditioned by Guyana's external link to an international capitalist system, the effects of which reproduced a set of class relations and maintained this peripheral formation in a state of dependence.

It is within this social totality, that is, it is within the context of complex social relations engendered by capitalist development at the centre and European expansion and colonialism in general, that we seek to advance the principal thesis that historically, the relations of 'race' which have permeated Guyana's social formation from colonial conquest in the early seventeenth century to the abolition of indenture in 1917, were primarily class relations which were determined by, and have their material basis in the production relations and class conditions of the colonial formation, mediated by a set of political and ideological practices during different phases of this country's development. In short, the system of racial domination and its concomitant characteristics in Guyana must be articulated as a product of a system of social production, i.e., capitalism, extending from Europe during different periods of its development (e.g. mercantilism, com-

petitive capitalism, monopoly capitalism).

Chapter One attempts to define accurately some concepts and terms which will be used throughout this discourse. It deals also on a general level with the question of method. Here I discuss the basic premises of historical materialism arguing that these concepts, though developed to articulate the structure of capitalism, are useful tools to analyse the structures of peripheral social formations.

Chapter Two deals with two theoretical approaches to the study of 'race relations' - cultural pluralism and internal colonialism. I shall argue that the basic theoretical propositions of both approaches are weak and preclude their leading proponents from posing seriously the most pertinent question of class struggle. The reason for this is that cultural pluralism and internal colonialism are predicated upon an epistemology which over-emphasises the superstructural elements of social reality. In an analysis of a concrete social totality these approaches pose the question of 'race' in terms of the emotions, feelings, values, experiences, prejudices, etc., of individual human subjects. Thus, visible social relations become the point of departure to explain historical processes. I shall contend, however, that social relations must be examined structurally and historically by an articulation of a determinate social formation. This enables us to understand the specificity of the social formation, 'the impact of the whole on its parts, and the genesis and laws of development/transformation of the social totality'.[2]

Chapter Three opens with an examination of the international conjuncture within which the slave mode of production was imposed in Guyana subsequent to the dissolution of primitive communal relations. The remainder of the chapter attempts to delineate the structure of the slave mode of production and its combination with the capitalist mode within the developing capitalist world economy.

Chapter Four forms a discussion of the abolition of slavery. It is also concerned with the system of indenture which succeeded slavery. Besides, a number of other topics are discussed concerning the coexistence and identification of modes of production in Guyana under the dominance of the capitalist mode. This necessitates an examination of the role of the state and the relationship of different groups to the means of production during the era of indenture.

Finally the concluding chapter summarizes the major points of the study and draws the threads of the earlier arguments together, then indicates the direction in which useful research should proceed. It is important to point out, however, that this study does not make any pretensions to explain all the concrete processes of Guyana's historical development during this period under consideration. It is only a starting point in this direction which is designed to facilitate further study, therefore, it is hoped that it will be of some value to the subjects I am primarily concerned with - the oppressed masses.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Tom Kemp, Theories of Imperialism, Dobson Books Ltd., London, 1967, p.1.

2. Cf. Henry Veltmeyer, 'Towards An Assessment of The Structuralist Interrogation of Marx: Claude Levi-Strauss and Louis Althusser', Science and Society, Vol. XXXVIII, No.4, Winter, 1974-1975, p.421.

## CHAPTER 1

## A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF 'PERIPHERAL' SOCIAL FORMATIONS

### SOME CONCEPTS OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

> In the present situation, an endeavour that aims to determine the field of validity of the available concepts and to articulate them more rigorously, has become indispensable.
>
> Charles Bettelheim, 1975

The articulation of concepts on a systematic basis is of primary importance for any serious and meaningful discourse on Guyana. This step is necessary not simply because an exposition within a rigorous theoretical system helps us generally to analyse and elucidate concrete social relations, but most importantly it helps us to establish a coherent theoretical and methodological framework within which the status of other concepts and theories themselves could be assessed. In other words, the system of concepts and theories governing a discourse will not only determine the kinds of problems that will be posed with respect to social relations, but it will also establish a theoretical basis for determining the extent to which it is possible to comprehend complex social relations in terms of their configuration, movement, contradictions and change.

This chapter, then, has a fundamental aim. It is concerned primarily with the specification of an adequate conceptual system for the study of social relations within 'peripheral'

social formations generally. This conceptual system requires an articulation of the fundamental tenets of historical materialism. Nicos Poulantzas, for example, in giving an overview of the tenets most germane to this body of thought, i.e. historical materialism, writes:

> . . . historical materialism maintains a general theory defining the concepts which command its whole field of investigation (the concepts of mode of production, of social formation, of real appropriation and property, of combination, ideology, politics, conjuncture and transition). These concepts allow it to define the concept of its object: the concept of history. The object of historical materialism is the study of different structures and practices (the economy, politics, ideology), which are connected and yet distinct, and whose combination constitutes a mode of production and a social formation.[1]

Now, this undertaking in the social sciences will be an abstract and at times a complex one, but it is indispensable for an elaboration of the science of history. It is in recognition of this fundamental principle that Goran Therborn has been influenced into making some pertinent observations. As he attempts to grasp the fundamental principles of historical materialism, he claims that any such perspective has its own theoretical formation since it occurs within a specific social conjuncture and comprises 'part of a situation in the social disciplines that is characterised mainly by crisis, by reappraisals and reorientations, by contradictions and conflicts.'[2] Nonetheless, analyses have to be undertaken so as to obtain a concrete understanding of historical processes, even if these analyses are construed as 'adventurous and hazardous', or as

some theorists may put it, 'impetuous and pretentious'.[3]

It is within this context that we attempt some conceptual clarifications of some basic concepts of historical materialism. But the difficulty which immediately confronts us as we elaborate this conceptual system revolves around two levels of discourse which are basic features of Marx's scientific practice, namely, the abstract and the concrete. This methodological distinction must be emphasised since it is of crucial importance not only for comprehending Marx's scientific method, but also for avoiding conceptual confusion.[4] And it is worth remembering, too, that a failure to grasp this distinction between the abstract and concrete modes of reasoning will inevitably have far-reaching implications. What, then, do we mean by the 'abstract' and the 'concrete' levels of analysis?

As Hindress and Hirst put it,

> The abstract general concepts of Marxist theory - the concepts of the various modes of production and of their conditions of existence, the concept of social formation, and so on - are means for the production of knowledge of concrete social formations and of concrete conjunctures. It is these general concepts that provide the means for the determination and theoretical definition of particular current situations and which determine the criteria of the construction and validation of the concept of particular social formations. The general concept of, say, the capitalist mode of production is not confined in its application to any particular social formation. It is not a description of a particular structure of social relations but a means for the analysis of social relations.
>
> Concrete conditions are not 'given' to theory in order to validate or to refute its general

> concepts. On the contrary, it is the general concepts that make possible the analysis of the concrete.[5]

Marx's approach to these two modes of analysis is explicit, and can be seen from the following passage:

> It seems to be the correct procedure to commence with the real and concrete conditions as they are . . . Yet, on closer consideration, it proves to be wrong . . . The (method which starts from general conceptions and proceeds to concrete ones) is manifestly the scientifically correct method. The concrete is concrete because it is a combination of many objects with different determinations, i.e. a unity of diverse elements. In our thought it therefore appears as a process of synthesis, as a result and not as a starting point . . . (By the scientific method) the abstract definitions lead to the reproduction of the concrete object in the course of reasoning . . . The method of advancing from the abstract to the concrete is but a way of thinking by which the concrete is grasped and is reproduced in our mind as a concrete.[6]

Marx's formulation does not indicate, however, that a scientific discourse could only be established by a series of theoretical abstractions which are devoid of concrete analysis. On the contrary, his methodological position connotes that an analysis of a concrete situation always involves a work of theoretical abstraction.[7] Indeed, what is essential in a scientific discourse and in the production of knowledge, argues Marx, is for us to demonstrate the capacity to think our way back to the concrete through a synthesis of what he calls 'abstract definitions'.[8]

Ben Fine also provides a useful description of this method of analysis and this passage from his Marx's Capital (i.e. Fine's text) testifies to this point:

> Marx's methodology can usefully be described as one of abstraction and successive approximation. By 'abstraction' we mean extracting the essentials, not being purely theoretical or divorced from reality. The process of successive approximation does not really mean moving closer to a better 'solution', but the building of explanations of phenomena on the structure of the essentials. If these explanations are impossible in terms of modification or extension of the first stage of abstract analysis, this implies the essential themselves are inadequate and need to be changed.[9]

Two important texts which demonstrate the methodological distinction between the abstract and concrete levels of an exposition are Marx's Capital and Lenin's Development of Capitalism in Russia. Although both texts are works involving theoretical abstraction, the objects of the two texts are different. Whilst Marx's object is the capitalist mode of production in general, which involves an analysis of commodities, use-value, exchange value, the structure of the capitalist labour-process, the process of reproduction, the laws of its development, etc., Lenin's analysis is centered around an investigation of the 'conditions of determinate concrete social formation, and the growth of the capitalist mode of production in Russia produced by the effects of imperialist penetration on several modes of production at a specific time of Russia' development.[10]

Thus, an understanding of the relation between the abstract and concrete levels of analysis is contingent upon theoretical rationalisation 'which operates on information, notions, etc., by means of the most abstract concepts in order

to produce the most concrete concepts leading to the knowledge of the real, concrete, singular objects'.[11]

On the basis of the preceding discussion we can now focus on two basic concepts of historical materialism which are germane to the abstract and concrete levels of analysis and which are basic to any understanding of a concrete conjuncture, namely mode of production and social formation. The concept of mode of production is articulated at a highly general and abstract level while a social formation is a concept at a lower level of abstraction, which articulates the concrete historical conditions within a social conjuncture:

> All scientific systems are based on a system of concepts. The concept of mode of production is the most general and therefore the most abstract concept of social science . . . Its operational power is exceptionally strong. It is related to the concept of social formation, located at a lower level of abstraction and therefore nearer to the immediate concrete reality. The connection between the various levels determining a social formation (economic, political, ideological levels) is specific to each type of formation: it differs in the precapitalist, capitalist and socialist modes of production. The predominance of one level over the others, as distinct from the determination in the last instance, is specific to a mode of production. Social classes are in a similar way defined in relation to a social formation and the relations between them are specific to this formation.[12]

Although the concept of mode of production implies that there is 'no order of historical sequence with respect to the whole period of the history of civilization extending from the first differentiated formation to capitalism',[13] yet it is possible to distinguish several modes of production which have been features of certain stages of historical and social development, e.g., the primitive communist mode of production, slave, feudal,

capitalist and socialist modes of production.

A mode of production is composed of the following invariant elements:

> '(1) The labourer, the 'direct producer', i.e., labour-power.
>
> (2) The means of production, i.e., the object and means of labour.
>
> (3) The non-labourer who appropriates to himself the surplus labour, i.e., the product'.[14]

It should also be understood that in a given mode of production the elements articulated above are combined in a particular form; this combination is an expression of the economic level of a mode of production. Further, it encompasses two sets of relations which can be formulated briefly as the relation of real appropriation (i.e. 'possession'), and the relation of property.[15] With respect to the first set of relations, this refers to the relation of the labourer to the means of production; the second set of relations has to be differentiated from the first primarily because in the productive process, it locates the non-labourer as owner either of the means of production or labour-power or of both, and also of the product.[16] Thus,

> These two relations are distinct, and by means of their combination, they can take different forms. With regard to the relation of property, it should be noted that it belongs strictly to the region of the economic and that it should be clearly distinguished from the juridical forms with which it is invested, i.e. from juridical ownership.[17]

In the German Ideology where Marx and Engels elaborate the

principal propositions of historical materialism the emphasis is placed on production for through the process of production, men are in a position to satisfy their basic needs, an aspect of life which is bound up with the historical process:

> Men must be in a position to live in order to be able to 'make history'. But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself.[18]

In the sphere of production, men are exploiting their environment by applying certain techniques to the productive process. By so doing they are not only transforming their material conditions thereby providing for their basic needs, but they are also transforming and developing themselves through co-operative relations with one another. Productive activity, therefore, is a combination of the natural and social aspects of life.

> In production, men not only act on nature but also on one another. They produce only by co-operating in a certain way and mutually changing their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production, take place.[19]

A second example which demonstrates this double relation of the production process is from the German Ideology:

> The production of life . . . appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relationship. By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions in what manner and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a 'productive force'.[20]

A mode of production comprises a complex combination of the productive forces and the social relations of production. Within a concrete conjuncture, the productive forces constitute the means of production and include the instruments of labour and the men who set the means and objects of labour in motion designed to produce material wealth. The development of a country's productive forces incorporates the existing state of rationality, science, productive technique, machinery, division of labour, etc.; in short, the theoretical and practical knowledge which is essential to a country's development.[21] Because this process has a social significance, the productive process cannot be regarded in a narrow sense as comprising only the technological accomplishments of life. Indeed,

> Whenever we speak of production . . . what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development-production by social individuals . . . Political economy is not technology.[22]

Thus, an important element of the productive forces within a concrete society is labour-power. But the concept of productive forces is part of a double-relation: the other is the concept of relations of production. Both concepts are of paramount importance for comprehending the concept of mode of production, and they both involve social relations. The social relations of production within a country connote:

> . . . the way in which the products of human labour are appropriated, the social conditions under which labour takes place, as well as the principles of distribution, the modes of thought and ideology and so on. Among these relations of production those associated with the ownership of the means of production (i.e. property relations) occupy a crucial place in that they

> determine the forms in which the social surplus product - the surplus over the consumption needs of the producers and the need for replacement of the means of production - is utilised.[23]

There is indeed a great degree of truth in the above explanation that ownership of the means of production is of 'crucial' importance for determining the structure of the relations of production. For example, in certain social formations ownership of the means of production assumes diverse forms and this can be expressed by an examination of the direct producers' objective position within the productive process. If, for instance, a situation exists where the direct producers own the means of production and collectively appropriate the surplus-labour, we have a social formation which is devoid of classes, exploitation and dependence. On the other hand, if ownership of the means of production assumes a private or individual form, the social formation is permeated by class relations of domination, dependence and exploitation. As we mentioned briefly before, we differentiate between economic and juridical forms of ownership. By ownership, then, we mean economic control (the ability to put to productive use). This is not simply an elementary point for it demonstrates two features of a social formation. First, that legal relations are determined in the last instance by economic relations; and second, that there is 'no necessary one to one correspondence' between legal and economic forms of ownership, consequently 'the former cannot be reduced to the latter in any simple mechanistic fashion.'[24]

The productive forces and the social relations of production constitute two aspects of a single reality with the latter either corresponding to the former or in contradiction with them.[25] What I am contending may well be illustrated by looking at a society at a given point where there may be a correspondence between the forces and relations of production. As the society achieves a higher form of development, that is, as it produces and reproduces the material and social conditions of production, a contradiction occurs within the sphere of production between these two structures (the productive forces and the relations of production), and as this contradiction becomes acute because of the non-correspondence between the two structural levels 'a social revolution results, giving rise to a new constellation of the forces and relations of production, to a <u>new mode of production</u>.'[26]

> At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or - <u>this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms</u> - with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution.[27]

To demonstrate this point further we can say that the non-correspondence or antagonism between the productive forces and the relations of production produces a revolutionary rupture inside the social formation. The effect of this rupture not only **determines** the transition from one mode of production to another, but it also results in the transformation of the entire social formation.[28]

There are two points to be made at this stage. First, within a concrete conjuncture the primary contradiction which generates the transition from one mode of production to another is that which develops between the forces and relations of production. Secondly, although the productive forces of a specific society articulate the structural relations between the members of society and nature, there is a fundamental difference when they (productive forces) are examined together with the social relations of production, for this latter concept encapsulates the appropriation and control of the productive forces and social product.[29] This difference is also explicitly formulated by the fact that a mode of production is structured by the dominance of the relations of production.[30]

> The forces of production do not have an independent and faster tempo of development of their own that makes them the spearhead of historical development. On the contrary . . . the rhythm of the forces of production is dependent on the relations of production . . . Contradictions between the forces and the relations of production, their increasing mutual maladjustment, do not emerge because of the more rapid development of the former, but because beyond a certain point the specific development of the productive forces induced by the prevailing relations of production becomes self-destructive.[31]

The most obvious difference between a mode of production and a social formation is that whilst a mode of production is an articulated combination of two structures, that is, the forces and the relations of production, a social formation is a complex structure consisting of two or more modes of production which are combined. Despite this combination, one mode of production is dominant and 'it is this dominant mode of pro-

duction that permeates the entire system and modifies the conditions in which the subordinate modes of production function and develop.'[32]

In every social formation with the exception of a primitive communist one there are certain structural levels (economic, political, legal and ideological) whose modus operandi or conditions of existence are 'secured, modified or transformed as the outcome of specific class struggles conducted under the particular conditions of the economic, political and ideological levels of the social formation. The particular structure of economic, political and ideological conditions in the social formation determines the possible outcomes of the class struggles conducted under such conditions. Such a structure will be called a conjuncture.'[33]

As Marx demonstrates, the effectiveness of each structural level of a social formation hinges on the development of the society as a whole, but what remains clear in his analysis is that in the last instance the economy is determinant:

> In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditons the general process of social, political and intellectual life . . . The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.[34]

It should not be thought that, having distinguished the fundamental structural elements in a social formation, having differentiated the economic structure from the social superstructure, Marx's assumptions of the social totality are vulnerable to the charge of an 'economic determinist' reading. In fact what Marx does argue is that within a social formation the economic structure constitutes the foundation on which the superstructural elements are erected (i.e., politics, law, culture, ideology, religion, etc.), and to which 'correspond definite forms of social consciousness'. What this shows, is that the economic structure is the condition of existence of the superstructure, hence it defines certain limits to what can be erected on it. In other words, his formulation does suggest that within social formations it is possible to identify distinct structural levels - economic, political, legal and ideological.[35] Of course, the degree to which the superstructural elements are able to influence social formations would be dependent on the level of development of the productive forces and the corresponding social relations within these formations.

We are now in a position from which we can come to understand that the social formation incorporates not only economic relations, but ideological and, in some instances, political relations. In this totality the economy is determinant.

> It is determinant in the sense that the conditions of existence of the dominant relations of production assign to each of the levels a certain form

> of effectivity and mode of intervention with respect to the other levels. If the dominant relations of production are antagonistic, involving a social division of labour between a class of labourers and a class of non-labourers, then the social formation contains a state and a political level as the necessary space of representation of the antagonistic classes. Otherwise, there is no state and no politics.[36]

At this point of our discourse it is useful to introduce the concept of social classes into our analysis. Although this analysis will be very schematic and terse, its purpose is to show that there is a relationship between social classes and modes of production within determinate social formations, and that it is not possible to articulate rigorously and in a systematic fashion the structure of a social formation without locating the objective positions of different social classes.

Marx's conception of social classes was rooted in the process of production and we can see some evidence of this in his letter to J. Weydemeyer on March 5th, 1852:

> No credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with <u>particular historical phases in the development of production</u> . . .[37]

But it was Lenin who, following Marx and Engels, established the theoretical validity of social classes by giving them a more sophisticated interpretation. Thus he posits that:

> Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated

> in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of s social economy.[38]

There are four distinct but interrelated elements of Lenin's typology which are crucial for articulating the structure of social classes in a concrete conjuncture. Firstly, he insists that under capitalist relations of production there is a class of producers and a class of non-producers. The objective position of each group produces a set of relations so that surplus-value is produced by the class of producers which in turn is appropriated by the class of non-producers. Secondly, Lenin emphasises that the ownership of the means of production is a crucial factor for determining the structure of social classes. In social formations which are characterised by class divisions, some classes own the means of production and are objectively placed in a position to reproduce the material conditions of exploitation of social classes which do not own the means of production. The third element seeks to explicate the separation between the labourer and non-labourer within the structure of production, a phenomenon which is not only manifest in capitalist social formations but also in all antagonistic class formations. The fourth element of any class-divided society focuses on the distribution of the social surplus product. Since one class appropriates the labour of another this class also monopolises the bulk of the surplus

which is produced by the class of labourers.[39] It is important to add, too, that because these antagonistic social relations are fixed juridically, they cannot be transformed structurally without challenging the basic assumptions of the system itself. For the assumptions of the oppressive system guarantee and perpetuate private property relations which the class which is dominant reproduces by its political power and state apparatuses.

These antagonistic class relations are engendered by the fundamental contradiction between labour and capital, between the producer who is exploited and the non-producer who is the exploiter, within the structure of production. Therefore, in instances where individuals interact and are exploited on the basis of this relationship, the fact cannot be obscured that they, as members of social groups, are also agents of social classes or fractions and strata of classes defined by the objective places which they occupy in a historically determined system of social production. Social classes, therefore, cannot be reduced to stratification analysis, a tendency which is dominant in modern social theory. Rather, they must be understood as:

> . . . groupings of social agents, defined principally but not exclusively by their place in the production process, i.e., in the economic sphere. The economic place of the social agents has a principal role in determining social classes. But from that we cannot conclude that this economic place is sufficient to determine social classes. Marxism states that the economic does indeed have the determinant role in a mode of production or a social formation; but the political and ideological (the superstructure) also have a very important role . . . Social classes involve in one and the

> same process both class contradictions and class struggle . . . Social classes coincide with class practices, i.e., their mutual opposition . . . Class determination, while it coincides with the practices (struggle) of classes and includes political and ideological relations, designates certain objective places occupied by the social agents in the social division of labour; places which are independent of the will of these agents. It may thus be said, that a social class is defined by its place in the ensemble of social practices; i.e., by its place in the social division of labour as a whole. This includes political and ideological relations . . . Classes exist only in the class struggle.[40] (Emphasis Added)

Thus, the elements which are essential for understanding the objective positions of diverse groups within a social formation are centered around the labour process. This process, however, does not only involve economic relations, but is compounded by political and ideological relations. It is within this complex totality that we have to integrate essence and appearance to obtain a full understanding of social classes and their reproduction.

There is another phenomenon which has a dialectical relationship to the structure of social classes and their modes of reproduction, namely the state and its apparatuses, whose functions and specificity are determined by the level of development of the productive forces and the social relations of production within concrete social formations. Before delineating at a general level the functions of the state, it is necessary to define the process of reproduction primarily because it is in the study of this process that the possibility exists for the analyses of class relations of exploitation, domination, and dependence.

> Capitalist reproduction, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer.[41]

Now an elementary principle of Marx's science of history is that a social formation must reproduce the conditions of its production whilst it simultaneously produces for itself. In the words of Marx, 'every child knows that a nation which ceased to work . . . for a few weeks, would perish'.[42] Further, in all exploitable modes of production which are characterised by a social division of labour into classes, the mechanisms of reproduction comprise the basis by which the ruling class can exercise its rule and maintain state power. These mechanisms operate in and through the class struggles.[43] Thus, within a social formation, 'the ultimate condition of production is therefore the reproduction of the conditions of production.'[44]

This process of reproduction assumes a 'simple' form i.e. reproducing exactly the previous conditions of production, or it assumes an 'extended' form (i.e. expanding them).[45] But since a mode of production comprises an articulated combination of forces and existing relations of production, the process of reproduction involves reproducing them. Relations of production, however, encapsulate class relations, consequently a social formation in which class disparities are one of the fundamental features of the structure, reproduces not only social classes and their concomitant conditions of existence, but also the

places which these classes occupy.

To be more precise, I agree with Poulantzas that the process of reproduction functions essentially at three levels. At the economic level of a social formation, the material conditions of production and exploitation are reproduced. At the political level, relations of domination and subordination (i.e., political) are reproduced; and lastly, at the ideological level, the conditions for perpetuating the relations of domination and subordination are also reproduced.[46] There remains, however, an interrelationship among these three levels of reproduction in exploitative modes of production. This point has been justifiably argued by Althusser who demonstrates that within a social formation there is a dialectical relationship between the conditions of material production and the ideological forms of domination and exploitation:

> . . . the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e., a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words' . . . All the agents of production, exploitation and repression, not to speak of the 'professionals of ideology' must in one way or another be 'steeped' in this ideology in order to perform their tasks 'conscientiously' - the tasks of the exploited (the proletarians) of the exploiters (the capitalists), of the exploiters' auxiliaries (the managers), or of the high priest of the ruling ideology (its 'functionaries'), etc.[47]

This brings us back to the question of the state and its apparatuses. A fundamental point must be emphasised, however,

particularly since the specificity of the state and its apparatuses within the internal imperialist division of labour can only be determined by an historical examination of the country in question. The point which must be stressed, then, is that the character of the state structure within a concrete conjuncture can only be established by posing the question of the state theoretically, and also by examining the concrete historical conditions of determinate social formations.

Lenin in a very interesting lecture on the state in July 11th, 1919, revealed some of its basic features, arguing that in a social formation it is necessary to have a panoply of devices to cope with situations whenever they arise - the main device being force. On this particular point Lenin argues:

> (The state comprises) a special category of people set apart to rule others and who, for the sake and purpose of rule, systematically and permanently have at their disposal a certain apparatus of coercion, an apparatus of violence . . . (i.e.) armed contingents of troops, prisons and other means of subjugating the will of others by force - all that . . . constitutes the essence of the state . . . The state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for holding in obedience to one class other, subordinated classes.[48]

A passage from Poulantzas is also instructive:

> The task of the state is to maintain the unity and cohesion of a social formation divided into classes, and it focuses and epitomizes the class contradictions of the whole social formation in such a way as to sanction and legitimize the interests of the dominant classes and fractions as against the other classes of the formation, in the context of world class contradictions.[49]

The unity of a social formation is maintained by the state apparatuses, chiefly the Repressive State Apparatus (army, police, prisons, judiciary, civil service, etc.); and the Ideological State Apparatuses: the educational apparatus, the religious apparatus (churches), the **information apparatus** (radio, television, press, etc.), the cultural apparatus (cinema, theatre, publishing), trade union apparatus, etc.[50] These apparatuses and the specific way in which they function in social formations are designed to cohere the social formations, thus contributing to, **perpetuating and sustaining the conditions** for class rule. In other words, the state functions, as a political apparatus of the dominant classes and assumes a domination - regulation character in relation to the social classes that are dominant economically, politically and ideologically, and also in relation to the classes which are dominated in these three spheres. The functions of the state and its apparatuses can, according to Mandel, be summarized by emphasising three cardinal points:

> (1) Provision of those general conditions of production which cannot be assured by the private activities of the members of the dominant class.
> (2) Repression of any threat to the prevailing mode of production from the dominated classes or particular sections of the dominant classes. . .
> (3) Integration of the dominated classes, to ensure that the ruling ideology of society remains that of the ruling class, and that consequently the exploited classes accept their own exploitation without the immediate exercise of repression against them (because they believe it to be inevitable, or the 'lesser evil', or 'superior might', or fail even to perceive it as exploitation)'.[51]

To summarise to this point, what is really significant about the methodological approach which we have employed in this discourse is not the fact that it consists of the articulation of concepts, but more importantly that it shows that the way in which we use concepts will influence our view of the facts of the world. By applying the method of historical materialism to our understanding of social conjunctures, we feel that whatever the controversies surrounding this system of concepts for the study of social reality, it remains most appropriate to articulate the structures of social formations which are characterised by class struggles and class practices. In short, the premises of historical materialism must have priority over all others chiefly because they are more adequate than those categories of alternative conceptual systems which seek to explicate historical processes, contradictions and changes within social formations.

The question to be posed at this moment is whether the categories of historical materialism developed in Marx's analysis of capitalism can rigorously analyse social relations within peripheral social formations, especially since the peripheral countries were inserted into an international capitalist system and division of labour. For example, in many peripheral social formations capitalism created a labour market during the colonial period and developed an infra-structure sufficient for its needs, and it also reproduced the conditions for capitalist exploitation and domination.[52]

In order to answer the question it is useful to quote

at length from Marx:

> Bourgeois society is the most advanced and complex historical organisation of production. The categories which express its relations, and an understanding of its structure, therefore, provide an insight into the structure and the relations of production of all formerly existing social formations the ruins and component elements of which were used in the creation of bourgeois society . . . Since bourgeois society is, moreover, only a contradictory form of development, it contains relations of earlier societies often merely in very stunted form or even in the form of travesties, e.g., communal ownership. Thus, although it is true that the categories of bourgeois economy are valid for all other social formations, this has to be taken cum grano salis, for they may contain them in an advanced, stunted, caricatured, etc., form, that is always with substantial differences . . . The point at issue is not the role that various economic relations have played in the succession of various social formations appearing in the course of history . . . but their position within modern bourgeois society.[53]

What this passage suggests is that even the most abstract and general concepts of historical materialism can be applied to historical processes in peripheral social formations but these concepts must be applied scientifically, and must be capable of explaining the important features of these social formations. For instance, they must be able to explain why and under what conditions some relations assume the functions of relations of production within a social conjuncture;[54] and further, how do these social relations remain subordinated to the dominant capitalist relations of production? An analysis which seeks to explicate these relations and their conditions of existence will inevitably have to critically examine not only the external manifestations of capitalist penetration but also the internal ones. As John Taylor quite rightly points out:

> In analysing the contemporary situation in a peripheral social formation, we are confronted with a very complex 'phenomenon'. Not only the economic structure, but also the different elements of the superstructure, (the state, the class structure, the various ideologies, etc.) are the result of a whole series of determinations; they can be determined not only by the effects of imperialist penetration itself, but by the 'survivals' of the effects produced by earlier forms of capitalist penetration (under the dominance of merchant's capital or, later during the period of 'competitive capitalism') and, indeed, by survivals from the social formation that existed prior to capitalist penetration. Analysing this situation, at even the most basic level, then, obviously requires a knowledge of such phenomena as the social formation that pre-existed capitalist penetration, of the effects that the different 'stages' of capitalist penetration had upon this, of the way in which imperialist penetration comes to 'restrict' the reproduction of the dominant mode of production within the penetrated social formation, so as to establish the pre-requisites for capitalist development, and of the manner in which various elements of the superstructures of the social formation survive, as the capitalist mode of production becomes increasingly dominant.[55]

One factor which militates against a simplistic application of the major propositions of historical materialism is centered around the process of capitalist development at the centre which simultaneously generates domination and dependence within the periphery. It should be emphasised that:

> A social formation is dominated and dependent when the articulation of its specific economic, political and ideological structure expresses constitutive and asymmetrical relationships with one or more other social formations which enjoy a position of power over it. The organisation of class relationships and state apparatuses within the dominated and dependent formation reproduces within it the structure of the relation of domination, and thus expresses in a specific manner the forms of domination that characterize

> the class or classes in power in the dominant social formation(s). This domination corresponds to forms of exploitation that are both indirect (because of the place of the dominated formation in the imperialist chain) and direct (through direct investments), in which the popular masses of the dominated formations are exploited by the classes in power in the dominant formations: an exploitation linked to that which they experience from their own ruling classes. Each phase of imperialism is characterised by different forms in which this domination and dependence is realised.[56]

Therefore, this dialectical process involving development, domination and dependence has to be located in a proper context by making a concrete analysis of a concrete situation. The process to which we refer encapsulates a world system of production - relations dominated by the capitalist mode of production, a capitalist world market and division of labour and system of unequal exchange. Because of the nature of this world system and its dynamics, it is impossible to analyse the structure of development and dependence outside of this totality. Furthermore, the capitalist world system combines in an uneven way two qualitatively different social formations - the social formations of central capitalism and the social formations of peripheral capitalism.[57]

> These social formations have different historical origins and different features; in particular the laws of accumulation of capital within each are quite distinct. Social formations are, in turn, 'structured combinations' of various modes of production but within both central and peripheral social formations the capitalist mode of production is the dominant mode of production. While this mode of production has a tendency to dissolve pre-capitalist modes, this tendency becomes manifest only in the social formations of central

> capitalism: in the peripheral social formations where the dominance of the capitalist mode of production is based upon the external market, the tendency to exclusivity remains latent, and pre-capitalist modes . . . are preserved particularly within the agricultural sector. The process of transition is blocked within the peripheral formations with the resultant emergence of the so-called 'structural features' of underdevelopment (sectoral productivity differentials, disarticulation of the economy, economic domination by the centre).[58]

At this point it is necessary to conclude this chapter by stating that the concepts of historical materialism as elaborated above provide a rigorous framework within which we can base an analysis of complex social relations not only in the imperialist centre, but also in the dominated and dependent periphery especially since the latter was inserted into the mechanisms of capitalist reproduction; and also since the production structure of the periphery had to accommodate hypertrophied sectors which were closely linked to overseas markets and strongly penetrated by foreign capital.[59] Nevertheless, the specific manner in which capitalist relations were reproduced and in which the social formations were structured has to be demonstrated.

The analysis of peripheral social formations, then, should focus particularly on the identification of a set of elements which are interrelated, but each of these has its own effectivity. But as Godelier has validly argued, an analysis of a social formation involves a scientific procedure and one which is able to:

> (1) identify the number and character of various modes of production which are found combined in

> a particular way within a specific society and which constitute its economic base at a specific period.
>
> (2) identify the various elements in the social and ideological superstructure whose origin and function correspond to these various modes of production.
>
> (3) define the exact form and content of the articulation and combination of these various modes of production in a hierarchical order insofar as one mode of production dominates the others, and in some way subjects them to the needs and logic of its own mode of functioning and integrates them, more or less, in the mechanism of its own reproduction.
>
> (4) define the distinctive functions of each element of the superstructure and of the ideology which despite the fact that they originated in different modes of production are found combined in a specific way corresponding to the hierarchical ordering of the elements. Whatever their origin these superstructural elements are thus redefined and given a new content.[60]

Finally, this discussion of historical materialism and its concomitant concepts has made no pretensions to be exhaustive since it would be sophistry and naivety to create the impression that all aspects of this method could have been articulated within the theoretical confines of one chapter. Yet this endeavour had a specific purpose; it sought to demonstrate its methodological importance and adequacy, and it was regarded as a pre-condition to a correct analysis of Guyana which will be our focus in subsequent chapters; in a broader sense, it was conceived as indispensable for a concrete understanding of the social formations of peripheral capitalism.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, New Left Books, London, 1973, p.12.

2. G. Therborn, Science, Class and Society, New Left Books, London, 1975, p.9.

3. Ibid.

4. Cf. Charles Bettelheim, The Transition to Socialist Economy, The Harvester Press, Ltd., Sussex, 1975, p.144.

5. Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975, p.4.

6. Karl Marx, quoted by Charles Bettelheim, op. cit., p.144; see also Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970; pp.205-206; Ernest Mandel, Late Capitalism, New Left Books, London, 1975, Ch. 1.

7. Hindess and Hirst, op. cit., p.4.

8. Bettelheim, op. cit., p.144.

9. Ben Fine, Marx's Capital, MacMillan Press Ltd., London, 1975, p.13.

10. Hindess and Hirst, op. cit., p.4; see also John Taylor, 'Neo-Marxism and Underdevelopment - A Sociological Phantasy', Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1974, p.18.

11. Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, op. cit., p.13.

12. Samir Amin, 'Modes of Production and Social Formations', Ufahamu, Vol. IV, no.3, Winter, 1974, p.57; see also Balibar: 'The Concept of the 'mode of production' and the concepts immediately related to it appear as the first abstract concepts (of Marx's 'historical materialism') whose validity is not as such limited to a given period or type of society, but on which, on the contrary, the concrete knowledge of this period and type depends. Hence the importance of defining them at the level of generality that they demand . . . ' (Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, Reading Capital, New Left Books, London, 1975, p.201. Also, 'the core theory of historical materialism consists of two general concepts: mode

of production and social formation. Both are social totalities which can be defined with reference to the articulation of three structures (economic, political, ideological) in a given dominance. A mode of production is a theoretico-abstract concept created by the theory in order to understand the concrete, historical, social formations. Consequently, a social formation presents a higher level of complexity encompassing the articulation of several modes of production in a particular historical conjuncture', J. R. Llobera, 'Some Provisional Theses on the Nature of Anthropology, Critique of Anthropology, No. 1, Spring, 1974, p.22.

13. Amin, Ibid.

14. Nicos Poulantzas, op.cit., p.26; Balibar, op. cit., p.215.

15. Balibar, Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, International Publishers, New York, 1973, p.48.

19. Karl Marx, Wage Labour and Capital, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, p.28.

20. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, op. cit., p.50.

21. Brian Davey, The Economic Development of India, Spokesman Books, London, 1975, p.1; see also Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1)., pp. 174-75. Cf. 'Forces of production' refers to the mode of appropriation of nature, that is, to the labour process in which a determinate raw material is transformed into a determinate product. 'The elementary factors of the labour process are 1, the personal activity of man, i.e., work itself, 2, the subject of that work, and 3, its instruments'', See Hindess and Hirst, op. cit., pp.10-11.

22. Karl Marx, Grundrisse, Penguin Books, London, 1973, pp.85-86.

23. Brian Davey, op. cit., p.1.

24. John Harrison, 'The Political Economy of Housework,' Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists, Winter, 1973, p.36; Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, New Left Books, London, 1975, 'On Social Classes', New Left Review, no. 78, March-April, 1973, pp.27-54.

25. Cf. Emmanuel Terray, Marxism and 'Primitive' Societies, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1972, p.98; G. Therborn, op. cit., p.358.

26. A. V. Balu, 'Marxian Political Economy', Social Scientist, no. 46, May, 1976, p.47.

27. Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, op. cit., p.21.

28. Balibar, op. cit., p.203.

29. Maurice Godelier, 'Dialectical Logic and the Analysis of Structures: A Reply to Lucien Seve', International Journal of Sociology, Vol. 2, 1972-73, pp.247-248.

30. Hindess and Hirst, op. cit., p.9.

31. Therborn, op. cit., p.360; Terray, op. cit., p.104, 'Relations of production play the dominant role in the combination of productive forces and relations of production which forms the economic basis of mode of production: what distinguishes one mode of production from another are its specific relations of production'.

32. Bettelheim, op. cit., p.16.

33. Hindess and Hirst, op. cit., p.15.

34. Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, op. cit., pp.20-21.

35. Hindess and Hirst, op. cit., pp.16-17.

36. Ibid., p.13.

37. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Correspondence, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p.69.

38. V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, p. 231.

39. See G. Carchedi, 'On the Economic Identification of the New Middle Class', Economy and Society, vol. 4, no. 1, February, 1975, pp. 1-86.

40. Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, New Left Books, London, 1975, p.14.

41. Karl Marx, Capital, op. cit., p. 542.

42. Marx to L. Kugelmann, July 11th, 1968, Selected Correspondence, op. cit., p.209.

43. Cf. Goran Therborn, 'What Does the Ruling Class do When

it Rules', Insurgent Sociologist, Vol. VI, No. 3, Spring, 1976.

44. Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1971, p.127.

45. Ibid.

46. See Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, op. cit.; pp.13-35.

47. Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy, op. cit., pp.132-133.

48. V. I. Lenin, 'The State', Selected Works, Vol. 3, op. cit., pp.262-267.

49. Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, op. cit., p.78.

50. Ibid., pp.24-25; See also Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy, op. cit., pp.127-186.

51. Ernest Mandel, Late Capitalism, op. cit., p.475.

52. Cf. George Dupre and Pierre-Philippe Rey, 'Reflections on the Pertinence of a Theory of the History of Exchange', Economy and Society, Vol. 2, No. 2, May, 1973, pp.131-63.

53. Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, op. cit., pp.210-213.

54. Maurice Godelier, 'Modes of Production, Kinship and Demographic Structures', in Maurice Bloch (ed.), Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology, Malaby Press Ltd., London, 1975, p.15.

55. John Taylor, 'Neo-Marxism and Underdevelopment - A Sociological Phantasy', op. cit., p.8.

56. Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, op. cit., pp.43-44.

57. See Richard Leaver, Arena, No. 42, 1976, pp.100-116; Also Samir Amin, Accumulation on a World Scale, Vols. 1 & 2, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1974.

58. Richard Leaver, Ibid., pp. 103-104.

59. Cf. Charles Bettelheim cited in Renate Zahar (translated from the German by Willfried Feuser), Frantz Fanon: Colonialism and Alienation, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1974, p.8.

60. Maurice Godelier, 'On the Definition of a Social Formation', Critique of Anthropology, no. 1, Spring, 1974, pp.63-64.

## CHAPTER 2

## THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF RACE RELATIONS

> The race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics and to think of imperialism in terms of race is disastrous. But to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental.
>
> C. L. R. James

In recent decades several attempts have been made to examine social formations in which the ideology of racism has mediated, and also in which this ideology has had a relationship to the forms of domination which have been reproduced through the state apparatus. These discourses have permeated not only the imperialist centre, but the dominated and dependent periphery; further, they have given rise to various theoretical and methodological problems. For example, there have been debates revolving around the theoretical status and validity of particular conceptual systems to the study of 'race relations' phenomena. In the social sciences there are some theorists who attempt to reduce social relations which are characterised by certain ideological mediations, to 'caste' relations. Others attempt to delineate these social relations by posing them within the framework of cultural and social pluralism, and also internal colonialism.

The disturbing feature with these diverse approaches is not simply that analyses are dominated by an empiricist

point of departure[1], for posing problems at the empirical level and depending on the specific manner in which they are formulated, can constitute a legitimate aspect to the study of complex social relations. It is that these disputes which arise are of crucial ideological importance for the class struggle and the structural transformation of these social formations.

This chapter, then, aims to examine two schools of thought which have attempted to explicate race relations phenomena: that of cultural pluralism and internal colonialism. The object is to demonstrate that both approaches have many theoretical and methodological weaknesses which prevent them from rigorously posing the question of class struggle which pervades the social formations which the proponents of these schools examine.

## 2:1 Cultural Pluralism

We will proceed in this discussion of cultural pluralism along the following lines. First, we will spell out some of its basic theoretical assumptions concentrating on positions of M. G. Smith and Leo Despres, two theorists who have done some work on the Caribbean. Second, we will delineate the intellectual climate within which the theory was established; and third, the theoretical and methodological confines of its cardinal premises will be examined critically.

According to M. G. Smith, it is necessary to distinguish three types of societies, namely, homogeneous, heterogeneous

and plural. The homogeneity is established in societies where there is an absence of cultural divisions and where 'a population shares a single set of institutions'. An example of this kind of society is a preliterate or tribal one, and 'the homogeneity of this unit will be evident in the uniformity of its social structure, ideational systems and action patterns'.[2]

With regard to the second type of societies - the heterogeneous ones - Smith argues that examples of these are modern industrial societies:

> It is obvious that modern societies are culturally heterogeneous in many ways. They contain a wide range of occupational specialities, they exhibit stratification and class differences, they often contain ethnic minorities, and their rural and urban populations have somewhat different ways of life.[3]

But apart from the first two types of societies having their own characteristics, the plural type also has its own. In Smith's typology societies which are characterised by social and cultural pluralism are

> societies possessed of a minimum of common values . . . maintained more by coercion than by consent . . . divided by sharp and persistent cleavages, which threaten their dissolution . . . The terms refer to societies with sharp cleavages between different population groups brought together within the same political unit. The characteristic expressions of pluralism . . . take the form of dissension and of conflict between racial, tribal, religious and regional groups; and the system is maintained by domination, regulation and force.[4]

In societies in which pluralism constitutes the basis of their social organisation and in which divisions are based on racial, ethnic, tribal and regional criteria, there is a

correspondence between the cultural plurality and the social plurality.

> The culturally distinct units of the plural society are its 'cultural sections'. Generally, these cultural sections are highly exclusive in the sense that each displays an area of common life beyond which relationships are specific, segmental, and governed by economic and political structures. The best examples of this type of society are found among the newly emerging nations.[5]

Although racial and ethnic divisions are pervasive elements within plural societies, Smith argues that it is necessary to have a single government with its apparatuses which function to coordinate the activities of the state. For without them it would be impossible to conduct the affairs of the state; and a situation could arise where several societies may attempt to coexist.

> . . . in a plural society, institutional diversity does not include differing systems of government. The reason for this is simple: the continuity of such societies as units is incompatible with an internal diversity of governmental institutions. Given the fundamental differences of belief, value, and organisation that connote pluralism, the monopoly of power by one cultural section is the essential pre-condition for the maintenance of the total society in its current form. In short, the structural position and function of the regulative system differ sharply in plural and other societies . . . The dominant social section of these culturally split societies is simply the section that controls the apparatus of power and force, and this is the basis of the status hierarchies that characterise pluralism. Since the units of this hierarchic arrangement are the cultural sections, ranking applies initially to sections rather than individuals, and within each section it is governed by other status factors.[6]

Smith, however, in attempting to establish pluralism as a general mode of sociological explanation contends that even though pluralism is the theoretical tool which is used to

explain racial and ethnic differentiation within a concrete society, it will be erroneous to 'conceive the conditions and problems of pluralism directly in terms of race relations. To do so is to mistake the social myth for reality, and thus to miss the structure that underlies it and gives it both force and form.'[7]

Another factor which Smith elaborates in his pluralist typology has to do with the relationship between pluralism and stratification analysis. Smith is careful to point out that one should not confuse these two aspects.

> Within each cultural section of a plural society we may expect to find some differences of stratification or social class. These cultural sections themselves are usually ranked in a hierarchy, but the hierarchic arrangement of these sections differs profoundly in its basis and character from the hierarchic status organisation within each severally. The distribution of status within each cultural section rests on common values and criteria quite specific to that group, and this medley of sectional value systems rules out the value consensus that is prerequisite for any status continuum. Thus the plurality is a discontinuous status order, lacking any foundation in a system of common interests and values, while its component sections are genuine status continua, distinguished by their differing systems of value, action, and social relations.[8]

Now in extending his analysis to incorporate other aspects of social relations in addition to those which are based on racial, ethnic, tribal, religious and regional differences, Smith posits that the denial of legal and political rights to a stratum of the population and the reproduction of the conditions of domination may occur in societies where racial and ethnic differences are non-existent; these factors comprise the essence of structural pluralism.[9]

> . . . neither is differential incorporation confined to multi-ethnic or multiracial aggregates, nor is it always present in them; nor, even where present, is it always prescribed on biological grounds. Even ethnically homogeneous populations constitute plural societies under regimes of pervasive differential incorporation, while ethnically or racially diverse populations may either be unified under structures of uniform incorporation or consociated by incorporation as equal or complementary units. Further, although differential incorporation typically presumes antecedent institutional differences between its collective divisions, it also creates their institutional differentiation within the common public domain; and in consequence of this, even where the differentially incorporated sections initially lacked them, they invariably develop differing institutional practices and organisations in their several collective domains, and in other sectors also. Moreover, since its status and dominion are bound up with the maintenance and scope of this intersectional structure, the dominant section is such that societies normally seek not only to preserve its current control, but to enhance this by promoting further institutional and structural differentiation in other spheres, notably in cult, connubium, economy, education, military organisation, and residential segregation.[10]

Finally, because the government plays a very important role in regulating the social relations of diverse groups in plural societies, social change is usually accompanied by violence precisely because racial and structural divisions are not epiphenomenal aspects of the system, but compose its basis.

> Since the plural society depends for its structural form and continuity on the regulation of intersectional relations by government, changes in the social structure presuppose political changes, and these usually have a violent form. In desperation, the subordinate cultural section may either practice escapist religious rituals or create a charismatic leadership as the organ of sectional solidarity and protest. This sort of leadership develops only where people are desperate in the face of overwhelming odds. We have numerous examples of charismatic leadership in the West Indies.[11]

Leo Despres, in his analysis of the Guyanese concrete conjuncture is also influenced by the pluralist framework such that his point of departure revolves around the racial and cultural elements of the Guyanese situation. Thus he writes:

> East Indian and Africans exist as separate cultural sections in Guyana. Africans, rural and urban, are integrated by structures that are quite different from those that integrate the Indian section. The values that sustain these structures are also different. While both sections are integrated at the societal level by virtue of their involvement in a common economic and political system, it must be kept in mind that this level of integration is one imposed by a cultural minority, the Europeans.[12]

In Cultural Pluralism and National Politics in British Guiana, Despres sets out the fundamental premises of his position along the following lines. Agreeing to a great extent with Smith, he argues that the plural society analysis must consider two related sets of facts: (1) 'the extent to which specified groups are culturally differentiated in terms of specific institutional activities and (2) the level at which institutional activities serve to maintain cultural differentiation as the basis for socio-cultural integration'.[13]

These assumptions further lead Despres to make a conceptual distinction between 'minimal cultural sections' and 'maximum cultural sections'. Much of the argument delineating this distinction, and its significance can be recognised from this statement:

> When institutional activities serve to maintain cultural differentiation between groups primarily at local levels, these groups may be identified as minimal or local cultural sections, for want of a better term. On the other hand, when institutional activities serve to integrate similar cultural groups and differentiate them from other

> cultural groups at the national level, such groups constitute <u>maximal</u> or national cultural sections.[14]

Moreover, this conceptual distinction, argues Despres, can be comprehended if we compared, for example, a society such as the United States on the one hand, and a society such as Nigeria on the other. Thus Despres elaborates:

> The distinction between maximal and minimal cultural sections (and between the plural and heterogeneous society) may be illustrated by comparing, for example, the United States and Nigeria. The United States is a heterogeneous society. It contains within it many cultural groups that are integrated at local levels (e.g. the Irish, the Polish, . . . etc.). We usually think of these as ethnic groups. There are practically no institutional structures (e.g., labour unions, political parties, religious associations, etc.) that serve to integrate each of these groups separately at the national level of socio-cultural integration. In Nigeria, on the other hand, the IBO, the Yoruba, and the Hausa are not only culturally differentiated and locally integrated, but institutional structures exist (e.g. political parties) which serve to maintain their cultural differentiation at the national level. Compared to the United States, Nigeria is a plural society.[15]

Despres leaves no doubt that the pluralist mode of analysis of social relations provides an adequate analytical system for comprehending these relations. Posing problems within the pluralist problematic[16] not only helps one to understand the specific manner in which plural societies are held stable but it helps us to grasp the internal dynamics and movement of these societies themselves.

> The plural model . . . has certain analytical advantages . . . For one thing, it does not require utopian assumptions about the functional integration of institutional systems. Also, it does not reify institutions by redefining them exclusively in cultural terms. Institutions are treated as social structures in terms of which individuals and groups organise activities and

> express cultural values. Another advantage of this particular conceptualisation is that it does not dichotomize the plural society and the unified social system. The plural society is a social system with specified empirical characteristics; as such, it is no less a system than any other type of society. However, as a system, the plural society is not unitary in the sense that all of its component elements are functionally interrelated by virtue of value consensus. The cultural sections of the plural society are subject to a common body politic. They may or may not participate in a common economy.[17]

It is now fairly well established that J. S. Furnival, a representative of the British bourgeoisie in the Far East was the first to conceptualise some social formations as 'plural', that is to say, they were characterised by ethnically and racially distinct groups which result in polarisations between these groups.[18]

In attempting to account for the reality of colonial domination and dependence in Far Eastern countries, Furnival's point of departure as a basis for understanding the specific social relations within these social formations is not the modes of production within these formations, and the socio-historical conditions and contradictions - both within the national and international conjunctures - which give rise to particular modes. Rather, Furnival is more concerned to describe the social relations within these structures by examining how different social groups related to them as a whole. He therefore argues that,

> In Burma, as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples - European, Chinese, Indian and native. It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its ideas and ways. As

> individuals they meet, but only in the market place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately within the same political units. Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labour on racial lines.[19]

It was after World War II, however, that the 'plural society' model was disseminated to 'explain' social relationships within colonial and neo-colonial formations. But during this period also, structural-functionalism as a social theory permeated the imperialist centre and was subsequently extended to the dominated and dependent periphery. These two theories, however, had a relationship for methodologically we can assume that they articulated an ensemble of concepts and notions which could not have really established the specificity of the material processes which they sought to examine. We will briefly reformulate some of the major theoretical tenets of functionalism, and will also point out the manner in which pluralism attempted to establish a framework ostensibly designed to incorporate into its analysis some factors which the functionalist model could not have adequately explained, e.g. conflict. According to the structural-functionalists:

> . . . all social systems are made up of the interaction of individuals. Such interaction is not random, on the contrary, it is highly structured. That structure is produced consensually through the values and norms of the common cultural system, which determine the actions of individuals. The differentiation of individuals into groups, and, most importantly, their allocation to institutionalized roles (including authority of power positions) is carried out in accordance with the common, accepted norms. Because cohesion is produced through voluntary adherence to the rules, conflict is at a minimum; in any event conflict is not systematically generated, it is managed in accordance with the norms and may even function to enhance cohesion.[20]

The relationship between structural-functionalism and social and cultural pluralism was a complex one. Whilst functionalism was articulated as a general sociological orientation to the study of social relations, the exponents of pluralism recognised that structural-functionalism was plagued by a series of contradictions and methodological limitations. Although the theory as a sociological mode of explanation was seen as applicable to the imperialist states which were assumed to be equilibrated, relatively devoid of conflict, and consensual, it possessed many methodological deficiencies when the social relations within these states themselves were rigorously analysed. Functionalism, then, was seemingly meaningful to analyse the social systems which were thought to be integrated around a common value system. Examples of these systems were the advanced capitalist formations of Western Europe and the United States.[21]

> By contrast, the colonial and former colonial societies were seen by (the exponents of pluralism) to be characterised by conflict, cultural heterogeneity and an absence of common values. Not consensus, but domination, is asserted to be the basis of social order and cohesion in such societies. If consent, is the basis of social solidarity in Western societies then clearly a different 'model' had to be devised for societies held together largely by coercion. At this point the 'conflict theorists' enter the stage with various 'theories' of plural society.[22]

Assuming that pluralism is an attempt to present an alternative view of the structure of society to that of functionalism, is it really able to demonstrate by its method that it poses questions within a different problematic, and thus can account for the specific character of colonial and neo-colonial

formations? Secondly, since in all societies both consensus and conflict, and 'plural' groups are common, what criteria are utilised to determine whether a plural conflict model or a consensus model is apposite for explicating social relations in these societies?[23]

In order to answer these two questions, it is necessary to establish the theoretical and methodological weaknesses which are characteristic of pluralism; but before proceeding it is important to emphasise that our object is not to demonstrate all the inadequacies underlying pluralism. This cannot be done within the confines of this chapter. What we seek to determine briefly are its analytical usefulness and methodological importance.

In the first instance, pluralism is characterised by conceptual confusion. Since the system of concepts which governs a discourse will determine the types of questions to be posed and the answers to be obtained, it becomes very difficult, given Zubaida's observations below, to establish its theoretical adequacy:

> Consider, for instance, the great structural differences between the following relationships: military slaves of diverse origins in Islamic empires to their masters and to the subject populations; 'barbaric' conquerors to the settled 'civilized' populations; master-slave relations in slave plantations; 'immigrant-host' relations in contemporary Britain. All these can be classified as 'pluralist' situations and yet there is no theory of plural societies that explains variations within the category. 'Plural society' is a very general descriptive term. On the other hand, these variations <u>can</u> be explained in terms of general sociological theories of power structures, economic structures, and patterns of stratification associated with them. For plural societies do clearly constitute systems of production and domination to

> which the groups are differentially related. The groups that migrate into a particular society soon become integrated into the indigenous systems of production and domination: conquerors proceed to dominate and exploit, slaves are only transported for their labour power, migrant workers are assigned to particular kinds of work which native workers would not do, and so on.[24]

Apart from the conceptual weakness of pluralism which prevents it from delineating social relations beyond their surface manifestations, the theorists who operate with this mode of explanation as a guiding principle, present their arguments from an inadequate epistemological and methodological orientation, as do the proponents of structural functionalism whose theoretical reasoning they do not fully accept. In seeking an alternative form of explanation, what the theorists of pluralism do is to devise an empiricist body of premises concerning the nature of social reality. That is to say, pluralists incorporate into their framework some vague and imprecise notions of conflict, instead of consensus defined in cultural terms. Besides, social and cultural pluralism takes the social formation as it appears, consequently social reality is visible and directly observable. The conflicts which occur between different social groups are explicated in terms of different value systems and cultural identifications:

> This distinctive theoretical feature of the concept of social and cultural pluralism is not its preoccupation with social heterogeneity and conflict (despite the stress which is laid on this, to differentiate it from functionalist sociology). For in the general spectrum of social theory, such a preoccupation is in itself, of course, no inno-

> vation at all. It is this preoccupation with 'racial, tribal, religious and regional groups' which is notable, and it is this insistent implication that there is some kind of necessary causal connection between the characteristics described as typical of the plural society and 'racial, tribal, religious and regional groups' which constitutes the theoretical specificity of the concept of social and cultural pluralism. And when we examine the nature of pluralist explanation, we may observe that it is characterised by a kind of ethnological determinism, and is of tautological nature.[25]

In colonial and neo-colonial formations the conflicts between social groups cannot be explained appropriately by constructing analyses which attribute chief importance to the racial and ethnic divisions within these formations. In order to get to the essence of these conflicts, it is necessary to focus on the factors which constitute the underlying elements of these conflicts. We need to know how and why these formations have assumed colonial or neo-colonial status, and the specific manner in which the histories of these formations have been integrated into the history of bourgeois society. Moreover, we have to understand how and the forms in which capitalism and imperialism have reproduced themselves in these formations. Furthermore, it is of crucial importance to establish the extent to which the reproduction of imperialist relations and practices has engendered and perpetuated social conflicts. These considerations involve posing questions relating to social conflicts <u>historically and dialectically</u>; that is, in relation to the developments and contradictions within the national and international conjunctures.

When the dialectical method is applied to the study

> of . . . problems (of a social formation) . . . phenomena are not viewed separately from each other, by bits and pieces, but in their inner connection as an integrated totality . . . This totality is analysed in all its aspects and manifestations, as determined by certain given laws of motion, which relate also to its origins and its inevitable disappearance . . . These laws of motion . . . are discovered to be nothing but the unfolding of the inner contradictions of (the) structure, which define its very nature. (A social) structure is seen to be characterised at one and the same time by the unity of these contradictions and by their struggle, both of which determine the constant changes which it undergoes.[26]

Pluralism, however, because it poses problems within the existing parameters of bourgeois thought, lacks a conceptual arsenal that would enable it to locate structural contradictions, hence it is forced to account for events in an ahistorical and empiricist manner. By making 'ethnic' and 'racial' groups the analytical forms of group differentiation in the societies regarded as 'plural', the concept of social class defined in relationship to the means of production is reduced to a secondary position. But this articulation of social relations in ethnic, racial or, cultural terms does not

> . . . really take us very far. When considered critically, this pluralist type of explanation may be said to amount not to an explanation at all but merely to a tautological redescription of the phenomenon to be explained, which treats as given and as an explanation precisely what needs to be explained - the specific form and system of 'social and cultural pluralism' . . . Characterising a social system as a 'plural' society . . . does not explain anything. It is merely an extended description of what needs to be explained . . . This is the problem which runs right through the 'analytical framework' of pluralism. Conditions are extensively defined and described but not explained. A complex descriptive model is developed which has little if any explanatory value.[27]

To return to the two fundamental questions posed earlier with respect to the relationship between pluralism and functionalism, there are two essential and interrelated points which must be made. First, although pluralism attempts to raise questions of conflict in the societies which form the basis for their enquiry, like functionalism, it takes the social system as given, sees property relations of capitalism as universal and desirable, and assumes axiomatically that all social relations are exactly as they appear. Second, the evidence suggests that the conceptual distinction is made regarding the 'plural' conflict model as opposed to the structural-functionalist model solely on the basis of the value preference of the authors of the pluralist school and on ad hoc empiricist judgements.[28] Thus, it is not surprising that in many instances, the pluralists' interpretations of events and of social reality often contradict that which occurs in practice.

To attempt to explain the conditions for the reproduction of the conditions of domination and subordination would require a far more rigorous analysis which is able to explain the complex social relations in societies characterised by socio-economic contradictions. It is reasonable to postulate, then, that

> . . . the important issue is not the observation of 'domination by an institutionally distinct group' but the explanation of this condition: why has a specific institutionally distinct group become dominant in a specific situation at a specific time? And the important issue is not the observation of coercive racial and ethnic group differentiation, but the explanation of such differentiation:

> why have such forms of groups differentiation become 'meaningful social realities' in specific situations at specific times?[29]

These complex questions can only be posed and answered within a determinate problematic, one which is different from that of pluralism, and which is able to analyse concrete relations theoretically. Concrete analysis cannot be reduced to descriptions of 'sharp cleavages between different population groups'. The basis of these cleavages has to be correctly located but with different theoretical tools which are not influenced by an idealist problematic; i.e. that which overemphasises the subject. However, with regard to the questions raised in the previous reference, the 'analytical framework' of pluralism cannot answer them in any meaningful way, precisely because the pluralist conceptual model lacks any explanatory power. Instead, we are given a package of extensive definition, classification and description.[30] Consequently,

> This framework is unable, however, specifically to explain the coercive and non-consensual system of group differentiation constituted by the system of racial domination; but what it does do is to locate the explanation somewhere outside of this economic system. At this point, recourse is made to a plural type of explanation, which provides an 'explanation' which does recognise the coercive nature of the system of group differentiation and which does locate the explanation outside of the economic system . . .[31]

The pluralist school seems to have developed not only as a variant of structural-functionalism but as a response to Marxism. Because of this, it cannot pose the most pertinent question of class struggle in any real sense, for to do so would require an analysis not only of the economic and political in-

stances within countries but also the social mediations, e.g., ideology, the state, etc. The theorists of pluralism are unable to move in this direction since to do so would result in the inherent contradictions within the theory itself being revealed.

This is not to deny that there is some concern with the the conflicts which are reproduced in colonial and neo-colonial structures, but to assert that structural relations can at best be understood, analysed, and concretised by explicit references to the ideological practices of different social groups, is tantamount to obfuscating and concealing the material basis of these conflicts. Indeed, the subjects of ideology are members of classes and fractions of classes, which include pluralist theorists themselves. These classes are in dialectical opposition to each other. Further, since the divisions in these societies have a relationship to social classes within a system of social relations, a correct analysis will have to be articulated in terms of classes, fractions of classes, alliances between classes, primary and secondary contradictions, tendencies, etc.[32]

Indeed, the failure to pose rigorously the question of class struggle prevents social and cultural pluralism from making an intensive study of <u>all</u> social phenomena, hence being unable to make clear generalisations about them. Also, the theory is unable to bring out new developments and trends, processes, contradictions and conflicts produced by them.

Kuper, however, feels that the Marxist problematic of class struggle and social classes defined in relationship to the

means of production is most untenable for understanding societies regarded as 'plural'. As we will presently see there are serious theoretical difficulties with this position.

**For Kuper,**

> . . . the racial (or ethnic) structure itself, in-including the mode of differential political incorporation, is the crucial variable in the analysis of revolutionary change in these societies, and that it is a source of great confusion to interpret the political conflict between the racial or ethnic sections, in terms of class struggle and the relationship to the means of production.[33]

Kuper seems to adhere to a methodological principle which indicates that 'racial' and 'ethnic' relations in 'plural' societies are determinate features in these social formations. This sociological perspective masks the nature of the real relationships and the reasons for racial divisions, thereby making them appear fundamental, as if they 'transcended class divisions'. But this perspective also distorts and misrepresents these social relations. Moreover,

> In pluralism theory, . . . not only are racial groups conceived of as the only salient or 'meaningful' groups in society but, by excluding the non-ideological structures and processes from the analysis, the racial basis of group definition is treated as unproblematical . . . Now, the problem to be determined is how group definitions arise; it makes no sense to attempt to do this in terms of relationships between groups which are themselves constituted by the very definitions which are the subject of the investigation. It is necessary to go 'outside' of these groups and definitions, and this immediately involves an analysis of the systemic processes which generate social, political and economic power and their relationship to the operative definitions.[34]

In order to be able to go 'outside' in the specific manner in which Wolpe asserts, it is necessary to question the

methodological and epistemological assumptions of the entire theory of pluralism. Further, to be able to explain complex social relations in their totality,

> . . . it is necessary to integrate 'essence' and 'appearance' through all their intermediate mediating links, to explain how and why a given 'essence' appears in given concrete forms and not in others. For these 'appearances' themselves are neither accidental nor self-evident. They pose problems, they have to be explained in their turn, and this very explanation helps to pierce through new layers of mystery and brings us again nearer to a full understanding of the specific form of (social) organisation which we want to understand. To deny this need to reintegrate 'essence' and 'appearance' is as undialectical and as mystifying as to accept 'appearances' as they are, without looking for the basic forces and contradictions which they tend to hide from the superficial and empiricist observer.[35]

In many social formations which theorists of social and cultural pluralism attempt to analyse, capitalist relations are reproduced within them, whether in Guyana, other countries in the Caribbean, or South Africa. In other words, there are workers who are separated from their means of production and who sell their labour-power on the market for wages. In addition, the ideology of racism mediates within some of these social formations and helps to reproduce and sustain relations of exploitation and dependence.

Therefore, any concrete analysis of the social conjuncture in which the concept of 'race' comprises a crucial element, cannot begin from the political and ideological levels, but must begin from an identification of various modes of production under the dominance of the capitalist mode. Of course, the political and ideological levels are very important since a mode of production is composed of a complex unity of determinations arising

out of both base and superstructure'.[36] But these superstructural forms can only be comprehended within the context of class relations and class struggles. Thus, the methodological failure and theoretical inadequacy of pluralism to assume a materialist perspective to articulate the specificity of social relations, prevent it from differentiating the method of investigation from the method of exposition. In the case of the former empirical data have to be obtained first in order to grasp the existing state of knowledge. In the case of the latter, i.e., method of exposition, the data having been obtained, it is essential to restructure dialectically the material so as to be able to understand the given totality. The success of this approach is ascertained when the material totality is 'reproduced' in one's thought, that is, a specific mode of production becomes one's object of study.[37]

Finally, the general theoretical weakness of social and cultural pluralism reveals the following interrelated consequences:

> Firstly, since the ideologies of specific groups are not related to their position in the social structure, except in so far as the social structure is defined in terms of racial values, ideologies become treated as detached, autonomous determinants of action. Secondly, the failure to examine the changing non-ideological conditions in which specific groups apply, and therefore interpret and therefore modify their ideologies, results in the treatment of the latter as unchanging entities. By simply ascribing all action to generalised racial beliefs, prejudices or ideologies, the specific content of changing social relations and the conditions of change become excluded from the analysis.[38]

## 2:2 Internal Colonialism

We have demonstrated in the preceding discussion that the plural society analysis is characterised by serious theoretical and methodological limitations, resulting from the manner in which problems of social relations are posed, and also from the utilisation of an inadequate system of concepts to analyse these problems. These limitations culminate in restricted efforts to articulate the specificity of exploitative social relations which occur within historically determined social formations.

We intend in this section to extend this conspectus to the theory of internal colonialism, to show that it suffers from the same methodological failures and contradictions of pluralist formulations - namely, it analyses problems from a subjectivist standpoint, and it lacks an adequate system of concepts to rigorously pose the question of the class struggle. It is unable, by its methodological confines, to establish precisely the relationship between class practices and racial and ethnic practices. Finally, any serious examination of the tasks which the theory undertakes would reveal that it argues, in the final analysis, that relations of conflict, domination, and exploitation which occur between 'racial' and 'ethnic' groups within certain societies, are the result of significant forms of group differentiation. Starting from these preliminary remarks, we will explicate the essential dimensions of internal colonialism.

If we were to take a cursory glance at the literature on 'race relations', we would undoubtedly find that numerous references are made to the concept of internal colonialism[39] as a mode of explanation of certain aspects of social relations. More precisely, the internal colonialism thesis is applied to the study of 'race relations' both in the capitalist centre and the dependent periphery in order to delineate the structural contradictions, relations of oppression, exploitation, and dependence which permeate these states. Some of the social formations which are generally associated with this kind of analysis are Mexico, the United States, and South Africa. But the general thrust of the 'internal colonialism' thesis is to show that there are close parallels between the external relationships established by colonial powers over colonised peoples and the relationship of ethnic, cultural, national, or racial groups within these formations.[40] Let us therefore look more closely at some salient features of internal colonialism, so that we can point out the conceptual difficulties and limitations which arise in its articulation.

Although the basic theoretical propositions of internal colonialism may be well known, it is a necessary preliminary for us to recapitulate its primary distinguishing features so as to establish the context within which we will develop our critique. We will proceed along these lines. First, we will show how the complex problem of 'race relations' and exploitation are posed by the advocates of internal colonialism. Secondly, we will articulate the limitations and analytical difficul-

ties which are manifest when the theory of internal colonialism itself is subjected to our critique and mode of proof, not being oblivious to its useful contribution to knowledge.

In the first instance, internal colonialism is predicated on a Weltanschauung which states that

> . . . the 'underdeveloped' (and 'underdeveloping') condition, of subordinate ethnic and racial groups and the geographical areas they occupy within the boundaries of the state, is produced and maintained by the same mechanisms of cultural domination, political oppression and economic exploitation which, at the international level, produce the development of the advanced capitalist states through the imperialist underdevelopment of the colonial satellites.[41]

It seems from the above formulation that internal colonialism seeks to develop the thesis that there are some basic similarities in the forms of exploitation and oppression between countries which have experienced 'normal' colonial forms of exploitation and within those which were instrumental in carrying out imperialist practices. Flores, in attempting to describe the relations of exploitation and oppression which are experienced by certain social groups in the United States, contends:

> . . . it is our belief that Native-Americans, Chicanos, Afro-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Philippinos, and Asian-Americans, constitute domestic colonies of white U.S. society. In more than a metaphoric sense, these groups are nations within a nation, fragmented from their native lands by experimental, temporal, and spatial barriers and from themselves as populations dispersed throughout the urban and rural centers of this country . . . racial minorities have been the object of racial discrimination and economic exploitation.[42]

Secondly, R. Blauner, writing also about internal colonialism and its applicability to the United States,

emphasises the important features of colonial relations thus:

> Colonialism traditionally refers to the establishment of domination over a geographically external political unit, most often inhabited by people of a different race and culture, where this domination is political and economic, and the colony exists subordinated to and dependent upon the mother country. Typically, the colonisers exploit the land, the raw materials, the labour, and other resources of the colonised nation; in addition, formal recognition is given to the differences in power, autonomy and political status, and various agencies are set up to maintain this subordination.[43]

When Flores and Blauner address themselves specifically to capitalist social formations and the forms of colonial relationships which are reproduced within these formations, similarities between their positions and those of other Latin American theorists are not difficult to recognise. This becomes obvious from Casanova who, writing about the colonial situation in Latin America, adds:

> Internal colonialism corresponds to a structure of social relations based on domination and exploitation among culturally heterogeneous, distinct groups. If it has a specific difference with respect to other relations based on super-ordination, it inheres in the cultural heterogeneity which the conquest of some peoples by others historically produces . . . The colonial structure resembles relations of domination and exploitation typical of the rural-urban structure of traditional society and of underdeveloped countries, insofar as a population integrated by several social classes (urban or colonial) dominates and exploits a population integrated by different classes (rural or colonised). This process resembles foreign colonialism because cultural differences between the city and country are acute. However, internal colonialism stands apart because cultural heterogeneity is historically different. It is the result of an encounter between two races, cultures or civilizations, whose genesis and evolution occurred without any mutual contact up to one specific

> moment. The conquest or the concession is a fact which makes possible intensive racial and cultural discriminations, thus accentuating the ascriptive character of colonial society.[44]

The conceptual distinctions which Casanova makes are interesting. Whereas the process of normal colonialism involves conflicts between two races, cultures and forms of social organisation, the process of internal colonialism refers to the modes of exploitation among culturally heterogeneous, distinct groups. He explains further that under normal colonialism, the dominant metropolitan country (with its distinct classes, proprietors and workers) subjects the whole population of the colonised country to its interests and mode of operation. On the other hand, internal colonialism has many differences with the structure of classes, but according to Casanova, the concept is adequate to articulate the rural-urban disparities within some peripheral formations.[45]

Michael Hechter, utilising the distinction between 'core'and 'periphery' as a mode of explanation of exploitative relations observes that,

> Internal colonialism . . . has emerged from the consideration of the situation of Amerindian regions in several Latin American societies. This concept focuses on political conflict between core and peripheral groups as mediated by the central government. From this perspective the 'backwardness' of peripheral groups can only be aggravated by a systematic increase in transactions with the core. The periphery collectively is seen to be already suffused with exploitative connections to the core, such that it can be deemed to be an internal colony. The core collectively practices discrimination against the culturally distinct peoples who have been forced on to less accessible inferior lands.

> Some aspects of internal colonialism . . . bear many similarities to descriptions of overseas colonial situations: commerce and trade among members of the periphery tend to be monopolised by members of the core . . . When commercial prospects emerge bankers, managers, and entrepreneurs tend to be recruited from the core. The peripheral economy is forced into complementary development to the core and thus becomes dependent on external markets . . . The movement of peripheral labour is determined largely by forces exogenous to the periphery . . . Economic dependence is reinforced through juridical, political and military measures.[46]

Although many of the uneven processes of development in a dominated social formation have been described by Hechter, his position cannot be taken to represent accurately the real state of affairs. By examining relations in the 'core' and 'periphery' as though these were homogeneous entities his analysis presents some difficulties. Hechter assumes that the oppression of peripheral regions by the core is the fundamental form of oppression and exploitation, but by reasoning in this way, he fails to comprehend the reality of uneven development as a function of complex class relations on which social formations in Latin America are based.

The element which preserves the distinctions between regions - namely the core and periphery - is not to be described on the basis of a collection of groups in the core exploiting the periphery as a whole. Further, it is not to be located in explicit references to the differences between geographical entities as such; even though these are important. Rather, the element which preserves the distinguishing features between regions, must be articulated as 'expressions of modes of production and therefore fundamentally the power of one class or frac-

tions of a class over others'.[47] Need I add that in peripheral capitalist formations political power is exercised through the state apparatuses. It is through these mechanisms that a social class, or a fraction or stratum of a class, maintains its dominance in specific conjunctures over other social classes.

Having shown the context within which the concept of internal colonialism is defined, we will attempt to deal with some of the problems which arise in an effort to point out its conceptual limitations. It is obvious from the above formulations that internal colonialism utilises a methodological principle which seeks to explain in various ways the forms of exploitation, domination and dependence which occur between people of different races, colours and cultures, in addition to those which occur between different countries, total populations, nations, geographical areas and regions.[48] The explanations which are advanced, however, become problematical on various levels when the concrete reality is given close scrutiny. An immediate case in point is that of a concrete social formation, the United States, in which 'race relations' phenomena are explicated by way of the paradigm, internal colonialism.

Those who advocate the use of this paradigm assert that racial and ethnic 'minorities' (Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, etc.), are subjected to colonial forms of oppression and exploitation within the geographical boundaries and regions of the United States. Further, these forms and patterns of exploitation bear many similarities to those experienced by countries

which have become integrated into the imperialist chain through various exploitative practices: plunder, slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The adherents of the theory, in addition, state that the crucial element which determines the structure of exploitation is best conceptualised in 'racial' terms instead of class. In other words, that the dominant feature within the American social formation, which aggravates and perpetuates the forms of oppression and exploitation between groups, finds its most explicit expression in racial practices. Therefore, the analytical category of internal colonialism is the best methodological tool to explain these social relations and practices.

Although recognising the complexity of attempting to reduce class relations to race relations and being cognisant of the fact that 'racism' finds its raison d'etre in a specific socio-economic and historical conjuncture, R. Blauner, one of the most articulate advocates of the internal colonialism thesis as an explicative 'model' of certain concrete realities in this concrete social formation, the United States, asserts:

> Unfortunately, social science lacks a model of American society and its social structure in which racial division and conflict are basic elements rather than phenomena to be explained (or explained away) in terms of other forces or determinants. To close this theoretical gap, in part, I rely on the framework of colonialism in the present study.[49]

The first question to be posed with regard to the above conceptualisation of 'race relations' is precisely this: what is the fundamental contradiction within the American social formation? Secondly, can this contradiction at best be articu-

lated by using the category of 'race'? Thirdly, can it be said that the conceptual structure of internal colonialism is theoretically and methodologically adequate to explain the structure of domination and exploitation within the present phase of imperialism?[50] These questions, being inter-related, will be answered as a unit.

The era in which we find ourselves is that of imperialism, an era that is marked by the internationalisation of monopoly capital, dominated by the United States. Also, it is a period in which the international imperialist division of labour has created a situation and world market whereby capitalist social relations have transcended national boundaries and regions, establishing direct domination within the periphery. Capitalist relations of production on a world scale have produced a multiplicity of inter-imperialist contradictions (economic, political and ideological). Within the imperialist nexus, the fundamental contradiction at the level of the class struggle remains that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In social formations themselves, the fundamental contradiction is that between the productive forces and the social relations of production, that is, relations of exploitation between labour and capital.

Considering these previous observations, then, the crucial point to stress is that to elucidate the specificity of social relations within the capitalist mode of production, it is essential for us to utilise a system of concepts rooted in that mode of production. Internal colonialism, however, in seeking to explain the reason for exploitation and domination,

abstracts the category 'race' from the social relations of production and gives it an independent status to describe and 'analyse' complex social relations. In the American social formation, capitalist exploitation and the so-called 'internal colonial relations' exist side by side. Moreover, capitalist exploitation is essentially class exploitation involving economic, political, and ideological practices. Consequently, it becomes very difficult to grasp theoretically, how the category of 'race' can simultaneously analyse class exploitation and domination resulting from uneven development of the capitalist mode of production and, relations of racial, ethnic, cultural or national exploitation and domination as highlighted by 'internal colonialism'.[51]

The theoretical system which is used by internal colonialism does not situate the exploitative practices experienced by the different ethnic groups within the context of the social relations of production within the United States and the international imperialist division of labour. Thus, it is theoretically unsatisfactory. First, internal colonialism obliges us to obscure the fact that internal relations within the United States are conditioned by the class character of the system which is specifically based on the exploitation of labour by capital both within the national boundaries and on the international plane. Hence, the movement of capital from one dominant central formation, the United States, to dominated and dependent ones of the periphery determines the nature and structure of exploitation of social groups within the United States.[52]

Second, the proponents of internal colonialism, in an attempt to show that racial and ethnic oppression supersedes class oppression, fail to pose the structural problems of exploitation rigorously. For example, their typologies seek to establish relationships and similarities between groups that are exploited within the imperialist centre and the dependent periphery, without recognising the methodological implications and limitations of this procedure. By simply explaining 'exploitation' by explicit references to people's similar 'experiences' within different countries, the 'internal colony' school invariably ends up with a subjective interpretation of social relations, the manifestation of a failure to specify the nature and structure of these relations.

Bettelheim, for instance, in his attempt to show the vague and imprecise character of the notion of exploitation if not properly formulated to explain international imperialist relations, asserts:

> Because the concept of <u>exploitation</u> expresses a <u>production relation</u> - production of surplus labour and appropriation of this by a social class - it necessarily relates to <u>class relations</u> (and a relation between 'countries' is not and cannot be a relation between classes) . . . The attempt to 'conceive' of the economic relations between countries in terms of 'exploitation' thus produces a series of concealment effects. It transforms the concept of 'exploitation' into an ideological notion, which instead of describing a relation between classes, is then given the task of describing a group of relations of different kinds that cannot be grasped by a single concept.[53]

Given the fact that the level of development of productive forces and relations of production varies from one social

formation to another, one cannot explain correctly the structure of oppression and exploitation by arbitrarily isolating social groups on the basis of 'racial' and 'ethnic' relations. Instead, one has to look closely at the historical development of the labour process, the forces and relations of production and the structure of exploitation within the concrete conjuncture (i.e. the specific structure of economic, political and ideological conditions within a social formation which shape and direct the class struggles which occur under these three conditions). Thus, the dialectical approach which is a prerequisite to a scientific analysis of a social formation has to be able to explicate the class relations within a formation, and it has to establish the concrete relations between the national formation and the international capitalist system.

In order for this task to be achieved; i.e., to situate racial and ethnic groups within the structure of social production, notwithstanding the fact that members of these groups are agents of classes or fractions and strata of classes defined in relation to the means of production, and having contradictory and antagonistic interests, the correct procedure is to have the analytical tools which can pose, theoretically, the most salient questions of social relations as a totality. By lacking the conceptual arsenal and explanatory potency to raise important questions concerning class struggle, internal colonialism inevitably fails to subject racial and ethnic practices to serious sociological investigation.

It would be incorrect to state that all the theorists who analyse social formations by the use of the 'internal colony'

frame of reference do not pay much attention to economic processes as a basis for understanding 'race relations'. Indeed some of them do recognise the importance of economic factors. What seems to stand out among the leading theorists of the 'internal colonism' current, however, is that they opt for the position which fails to differentiate between class practices and racial and ethnic practices. The structure of exploitation, they assert, is best characterised by racial and ethnic entities. In other words, the analysis in some social formations focuses on the relations between racial and ethnic 'minorities' and, for example, the dominant white society. These relations assume an exploitative and 'colonial' character on the economic, political and ideological levels. Harris however, in his analysis of the United States, explains that it is necessary

> . . . to expose the basic determinants and driving forces underlying these forms . . . More specifically, what is required is a systematic analysis of the internal situation in America on its own terms in the light of some basic set of principles. Such principles would enable us to identify exactly what constitutes a colonial situation in terms of a crucial set of production relations as well as political and social conditions which distinguish it . . . [54]

In the dominated and dependent periphery the productive forces are not highly developed, as imperialism has produced a social structure which blocks their development, and in many parts of the periphery, internal class formation is in its embryonic stage. That is to say, the principal social classes within the periphery manifest a profound dependency on imperialist social relations. Where the acute socio-economic contradic-

tions engender internal disarticulation of social relations, it is erroneous to transpose social relations characteristic of developed capitalist states to those which exist in the dominated and dependent periphery; the peripheral relations have been inextricably linked to an historical process on a world scale - the development of the capitalist mode of production. Any attempt, therefore, to look at different social formations in a mechanistic fashion and to extrapolate historical similarities without placing social relations within these formations in a specific socio-economic and historical framework, suggests a method which does not have much force because it reflects a type of social empiricism. Indeed, an attempt at scientific investigation which does not take cognisance of the historical laws of social development is, above all, deficient.

To return to the notions, namely, exploitation and domination, which are two important concepts in the expositions of the theorists of internal colonialism. These relate to the principal laws of the capitalist mode of production and therefore cannot be reduced merely to the relations between two racial or ethnic groups. In other words, if we are looking at the rate of exploitation between imperialist countries and dominated ones, so as to determine the similarities and differences, the proper course is an analysis which looks closely at the level of development of the productive forces and the corresponding social relations within these countries. Further,

> What is decisive in the relations between the dominating and the dominated countries is not

> so much the <u>increase</u> in the exploitation of the workers of the latter, however real and brutal this may be, as the <u>maintenance</u> of this exploitation. This situation is 'conceived' of, ideologically, as the 'blocking' of the development of the productive forces in the dominated countries. It is because the working of the capitalist world economy essentially requires both maintenance of the exploitation of the working people in the dominated countries, with the draining off part of the surplus value resulting from this exploitation to the metropolitan countries of imperialism, <u>and</u> 'blocking' of the development of the productive forces in the dominated countries, that it is possible to say that world domination of the capitalist mode of production is based upon a <u>two-fold foundation</u> of exploitation - that of the proletarians in imperialist countries (exploitation of whom increases with the development of the productive forces of these countries) and that of the working people in the dominated countries, exploitation of whom also increases, but more slowly, just as the productive forces of these countries develop more slowly.[55]

The 'internal colony' model, though it often makes reference to the socio-economic conditions which reproduce racial and ideological practices and exploitation, invariably remains enmeshed within the realm of an inadequate theoretical system primarily because

> . . . no attempt is made to identify the specific mode of exploitation and domination characteristic of internal colonialism which purports to differentiate it from class exploitation and domination. Instead, there is a general reference to exploitation, used in a descriptive sense, and to undefined states of racial or ethnic oppression and these are in no way linked to the system of class exploitation. The consequence of this is that . . . internal colonial relations are not only left obscure but are said to hold between racial, ethnic, and cultural groups which are analysed as if they are autonomous of the total social structure.[56]

Although we have attempted to demonstrate the theoretical and methodological deficiencies of internal colonialism (and

cultural pluralism), it would be imprecise to state that we have treated every aspect of 'race relations'. Rather, we placed our emphasis on those aspects of social phenomena which have not been adequately treated by the two theoretical approaches and tried to argue that any attempt to explain complex social relations of 'race', 'ethnicity', and 'class' must proceed accordingly with an adequate and rigorous system of concepts or else our analysis becomes static and confusing. We now see clearly that

> If the analysis (of 'race relations') were to be made in terms of class relations, then the internal colonial relation could no longer be conceptualised as a relation between racial, ethnic, etc., groups. But the consequence of the failure to relate classes within racial or ethnic groups to the class structure of the society as a whole, is that racial or ethnic entities are treated abstractly and as if their internal class structures are irrelevant to their existence as groups and to their political and ideological practices . . . To treat such groups (i.e. racial and ethnic) as autonomous and as the salient groups in the society has the consequence of excluding from the analysis precisely those other structures and relations (in particular the mode of production, the class structure, and class relations) which are necessary to an explanation of the nature and relationships of those groups. The point is that to base an analysis on the criteria (race, religion, etc.) by which groups define themselves and the conflict between them is to take as given precisely what requires explanation. For what needs to be accounted for is why these particular groups come into existence and into conflict with one another. This requires an analysis of the conditions which generate particular conflicts and which affect their nature and intensity. Therefore, what is needed is, on the one hand, a description of the ideology and political practices of the ethnic, racial, and national groups and, on the other, an analysis of how they relate to the mode of production and social formation in which they are located. It is thus insufficient to stop at the first stage because this is to abstract from the social totality in which the groups are embedded and which explains them.57

## FOOTNOTES

1. It is necessary to stress that there is a distinction between science and empiricism. Whilst the object of empiricism is 'to make observation, to classify and order what is observed and to make general statements about observed or calculated relations between observables', the object of science is 'rational and abstractive', that is, 'scientific concepts are not direct references to observed entities and events, but are defined in their relationship to one another in terms of theories of which they form a part. Scientific theories explain and predict phenomena 'through the national cumulation of laws'. Cf. Sami Zubaida 'What is Scientific Sociology?' Economy and Society, Vol. 3, No. 1, Feb., 1974, p. 70.

2. M. G. Smith, 'Social and Cultural Pluralism' in Annals of New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 83, Art. 5, p. 767.

3. Ibid., p. 768.

4. M. G. Smith and Leo Kuper (eds.), Pluralism in Africa, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969, p. 3.

5. Leo Despres, Cultural Pluralism and National Politics in British Guiana, Rand McNally Company, Chicago, 1967, p. 16.

6. M. G. Smith, 'Social and Cultural Pluralism,' op. cit., p. 772.

7. Ibid., pp. 774-775.

8. Ibid., p. 769.

9. Joel C. Edelstein, 'Pluralist and Marxist Perspectives on Ethnicity and Nation-Building' in Wendell Bell and Walter E. Freeman (eds.), Ethnicity and Nation Building, Sage Publications, California, 1974, p. 46.

10. M. G. Smith in Smith and Kuper, op. cit., p. 436.

11. M. G. Smith, 'Social and Cultural Pluralism', op. cit., p. 776.

12. Leo Despres, 'Nationalist Politics and Cultural Theory in Guyana' in Trevor Munroe and Rupert Lewis (eds.), Readings in Government and Politics of the West Indies, op. cit., p. 65.

13. Leo Despres, Cultural Pluralism and National Politics in Guyana, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., pp. 25-26.

16. The concept of 'problematic' refers to the underlying structure, methods, principles and conditions which govern a theoretical discourse and render possible the raising of questions in a particular way, while ruling out the raising of others. In order to understand a specific problem, it is necessary for the reader to display not merely an ability for textual comprehension and analysis; rather he should be able to articulate the problematic of the theory in which he is working. Cf. Alex Callinicos, Althusser's Marxism, Pluto Press, London, 1976, pp. 34-38. According to Althusser and Balibar, 'a word or concept cannot be considered in isolation; it only exists in the theoretical or ideological framework in which it is used: its problematic'. See Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, Reading Capital, New Left Books, London, 1975, p. 316. See also Norman Geras, 'Althusser's Marxism: An Account and Assessment', New Left Review, No. 71, January-February, 1972; Nicos Poulantzas in Robin Blackburn (ed.), Ideology in Social Science, Fontana Books, London, 1972, New Left Review, No. 95, Jan.-Feb., 1976, pp. 63-83; Ernest Laclau, 'The Specificity of the Political: Poulantzas-Miliband Debate, Economy and Society, Vol. 4, No. 1, Feb., 1975, pp. 87-110.

17. Leo Despres, Cultural Pluralism and National Politics in British Guiana, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

18. See J. S. Furnival, Colonial Policy and Practice, Cambridge University Press, London, 1948.

19. Ibid., p. 304.

20. Harold Wolpe, 'The Theory of Internal Colonialism: the South African Case', in Ivar Oxaal, Tony Barnet,,and David Booth (eds.), Beyond the Sociology of Development, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975, p. 236.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Sami Zubaida (ed.), Race and Racialism, Tavistock Publications, London, 1970, p. 8.

25. Frederick A. Johnstone, Class, Race and Gold, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976, p. 208.

26. Ernest Mandel's introduction to Marx's Capital, Vol. 1, Penguin Books, London, 1976, p. 18.

27. Frederick A. Johnstone, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

28. Wolpe, op. cit., p. 237.

29. Johnstone, op. cit., p. 209.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p. 211.

32. Cf. John Mepham 'Who Makes History', Radical Philosophy, Winter, 1973, p. 25.

33. Leo Kuper, Race, Class and Power, Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd., London, 1974, pp. 203-204. Kuper adds further that 'theories of plural society or of pluralism stress the cleavages, or discontinuities between sections differentiated by race, ethnicity, religion and culture', Ibid., p. 236.

34. Harold Wolpe, 'Class,,Race and the Occupational Structure', University of London (Institute of Commonwealth Studies), Vol. 2, No. 12, October 1970 - June 1971, p. 100. See also Martin Legassick, 'South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence', in Economy and Society, Vol.3, No. 3, August, 1974, pp. 253-91; 'Legislation, Ideology and Economy in Post-1948 South Africa' in Journal of South African Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1974; 'Forced Labour, Industrialisation, and Racial Differentiation' in Richard Harris (ed.), The Political Economy of Africa, Schenkman Publishing Company Inc., Massachusetts, 1975; Harold Wolpe, 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid', Economy and Society, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1972, pp. 425-56; Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 197-240.

35. Ernest Mandel, op. cit., p. 20.

36. Etienne Balibar cited by Nicos Poulantzas in New Left Review, No. 95, Jan.-Feb., 1976, p. 79.

37. Mandel, op. cit., p. 19.

38. Harold Wolpe, 'Class, Race and the Occupational Structure', op. cit., p. 101.

39. On the subject of 'internal colonialism' see the following: Robert Allen, 'Racism and the Black Nation Thesis' in Socialist Revolution, Vol. 6, No. 1, Jan.-March, 1976, pp. 145-50; Tomas Almaguer, 'Race, Class and Chicano Oppression,' in Socialist Revolution, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1975, pp. 71-99; Tomas Almaguer, 'Towards the Study of Chicano Colonialism' in Aztlan, Vol. 2, Spring, 1971, pp. 7-21; J. M. Blaut, 'The Ghetto as Internal Neo-Colony' in Antipode, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1974; Robert Blauner, 'Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt', in Social Problems, Vol. 16, No. 4, Spring, 1969, pp. 393-408; Michael Burawoy, op. cit., Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, 'Internal Colonialism and National Development' in Irving Louis Horowitz (ed.), Latin American Radicalism, New York, Random House, 1969, pp. 118-139; Gilbert G. Gonzalez, 'A Critique of the Internal Colony Model' in Latin American Perspectives, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring, 1974, pp. 154-61; Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975; William K. Tabb, 'Marxian Exploitation and Domestic Colonialism: A Reply to Donald J. Harris', in Review of Black Political Economy, Vol. 4, Summer 1974, pp. 69-87; Harold Wolpe, 'The Theory of Internal Colonialism, op. cit.

40. Harold Wolpe, 'The Theory of Internal Colonialism', op. cit., p. 229.

41. Ibid.

42. Guillermo Flores, quoted by Gilbert G. Gonzalez, op. cit., p. 155.

43. R. Blauner, op. cit., p. 395.

44. Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, op. cit., pp. 130-31.

45. Ibid., pp. 131-32.

46. Michael Hechter, op. cit., pp. 32-33; Cf., Dale Johnson, 'On Oppressed Classes' in James Cockcroft, Andre Gunder Frank and Dale Johnson (eds.), Dependence and Underdevelopment: Latin America's Political Economy, Anchor Books, New York, 1972, pp. 269-301.

47. See Michael Dunn, 'Marxism and the National Question', Arena, No. 40, 1975, p. 34.

48. Wolpe, op. cit., p. 230.

49. R. Blauner, cited by Wolpe, Ibid., p. 232.

50. We shall soon attempt to show the diverse ways in which a peripheral social formation, Guyana, becomes incorporated into the imperialist chain and the dialectical relationship which results from social formations being dominant in some instances and dominated and dependent in other instances. The point that is being mentioned is that to rely on a framework of 'colonialism' to explain the complex structure of class exploitation whether in the imperialist centre or dependent periphery can only have a limited analytical value and therefore would not be able to articulate concretely the class relations within these social formations.

51. Wolpe, op. cit., p. 233.

52. See Theotonio Dos Santos, 'The Contradictions of Contemporary Imperialism' in Social Praxis, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1973, pp. 209-240.

53. Charles Bettelheim, 'Theoretical Comments' in Arghiri Emmanuel's Unequal Exchange: A Study of the Imperialism of Trade, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1972, pp. 301-303.

54. Donald J. Harris, quoted by William K. Tabb, op. cit., p. 70.

55. Charles Bettelheim, op. cit., p. 304.

56. Harold Wolpe, 'The Theory of Internal Colonialism', op. cit., p. 234.

57. Ibid., pp. 235-38.

# CHAPTER 3

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE FORMATION OF THE COLONIAL SYSTEM

### 3:1 The Early Phases of Domination and Dependence Within Peripheral Social Formations

> Each national economy, which is itself a complex of structures, constitutes a link, either dominated or dominating within world economy, and the contradictions that develop in a given country are not merely 'internal' contradictions, but result also from the mode of insertion of the country in question into the world economic and political complex.
>
> Charles Bettelheim, 1975

This chapter will examine the socio-economic conditions and historical processes which have given rise to the relations of domination, dependence and exploitation within Guyana's social formation; these relations result from the subordination of pre-capitalist modes of production to a dominant capitalist mode emerging in Europe in the sixteenth century. The object is to demonstrate the manner in which this subordination has occurred, that is, how capitalist relations of production on a world scale penetrated the pre-capitalist social formation, integrating it into a specific international division of labour and world market.

The main period of capitalist expansion which is most germane to our purpose, began in the fifteenth century, and

was characterised by the development of mercantilism, the slave trade and the rapid growth of world commerce. Marx has clearly shown how merchant capital when it assumes a position of dominance,

> . . . stands everywhere for a system of robbery, so that its development among the trading nations of old and modern times is always directly connected with plundering, piracy, kidnapping, slaves, and colonial conquest.[1]

Although we commence with the fifteenth century, it was not until the sixteenth that other European countries (Holland, France, and Britain apart from the early colonial powers, Spain and Portugal) extended their activities to the periphery; it is then that we really start to see the effects of the transition in Europe from feudalism to capitalism, and also the effects of this transition in the pre-capitalist social formations in the non-European world. This historical period has been formulated thus:

> Merchant capital discovered what subsequently became the underdeveloped world more than two and a half centuries before the first triumph of industrial capitalism in Britain at the end of the eighteenth century. The vast commercial empires set up first by the Spanish and Portuguese and later by the British, French and Dutch, established the basis of the modern economy. They concentrated vast accumulations of wealth in the form of capital, while overthrowing and pillaging whole civilizations. The creation of the world market, 'the starting point of the modern history of capital', was also a process of destruction. On the one hand it drew the world together into a new global division of labour that opened the possibility of previously undreamt-of increases in men's productive powers; on the other it split it apart, turning this division of labour into a grotesque structure of exploitation and oppression. The foundations of modern development and underdevelopment were laid at the same time and by the same process.[2]

This chapter, then, will present a systematic exposition of the historical development of Guyana from the colonial conquest to the abolition of slavery in the 1830's, and the internal and external contradictions which were concomitant characteristics of its development during that period.

This point of departure, however, immediately poses the question of periodisation of a social formation into the phases of its development. In this discussion, periodisation will not be reduced merely to a necessary sequence of time or to a linear schema of a country's development.[3] Rather, periodisation will take into consideration various moments of capitalist development on a world scale, and its penetrative effects and extended reproduction within Guyana. Also, the class struggles on an international scale and their effects on Guyana will constitute part of this discourse.

It is important to stress this preliminary point about relevant periods if we are to combat certain superficial tendencies and avoid making serious errors, an aspect which is very prevalent in the analyses of Caribbean social formations. Invariably, in attempting to divide history into periods and to reconstruct the social relations underlying colonial conquest, slavery, and colonialism, analyses end up being far too simplistic, and are permeated by bourgeois assumptions and ideological elements similar to those which we have stressed in our analysis of 'race relations'.[4]

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were characterised

by the beginning of domination, exploitation and dependence within the periphery in general and Africa in particular. Because of the importance of Africa to Guyana's socio-economic development during this period, it is necessary to articulate the problematic of the origin of Europe's colonial expansion into Africa. By delineating the significant aspects of Europe's activities, beginning with Africa, we will be in a position to establish the concrete framework to explain their subsequent activities in the Caribbean, and especially Guyana.

Portugal, the first European country to set in motion the movement of international expansion in Africa had in the year 1400, a population of approximately one million. But its intrusion into Africa in the fifteenth century can best be explicated, firstly, by the beginning of capitalist development within the remnants of the feudal order; secondly, by Portugal's position at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, Africa, the Atlantic and the Northern countries; and thirdly, by its poverty, since as the population rose, there was growing emigration.[5]

The fifteenth century, then, was an important phase in world history; the significant role played by Portugal in this early phase of transition from the Middle Ages to the modern era, as it explored and conquered the West African coast, has been explicated by Eric Williams in the following manner:[6]

> Up to 1415, when the Portuguese attacked and captured the Moorish stronghold of Ceuta in North Africa, the world, as known to and by the Europeans, was virtually limited to the world known to the Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians. It embraced Europe, Asia Minor and North Africa - though Alexander the Great and the

> Roman legions had left behind memories of India, and Ethopian civilisation was known to the Greeks. But the Travels of Marco Polo in the thirteenth century whetted the appetite with their descriptions of the Kingdom of Prester John, the empire of the Grand Khan, and the gold of Java and India. With their conquest of Ceuta, the Portuguese set out on their discovery and exploration of the West African Coast. In 1435 they reached Senegal, in 1443 Cape Bojador, in 1446 Sierra Leone, in 1455 Guinea, and in 1481 the Congo.

Apart from the reasons for expansion into Africa which were previously mentioned, there are other factors which contributed immensely to this process. These factors have been clearly identified by V. Magalhaes Godinho in the following terms:[7] (a) the thirst for gold; (b) the political disturbances and depreciation of the late fourteenth century, which ruined the gentry and impelled them to seek their fortune through foreign ventures; (c) the shortage of corn, which drove them to seek new sources; (d) the dynamics of the sugar economy created in Portugal and the island of the Atlantic; (e) the need of such an economy for slaves; (f) the need for gum-lac (for dyes and processing); (g) the need for skins and hides; (h) the extension of Portuguese fishing grounds. Factors (a), (b), (c) and (d) led to the seizure of Tangiers, Ceuta, Ksar al-Kabir and Arcila, in Morocco; others led to the colonisation of Madeira and the Azores, and some took the Portuguese southward along the coast of Africa.

Prior to European conquests of Africa in the fifteenth century and the subsequent penetration of the European economy into the traditional society, most African social formations had assumed a stage of transition 'between the practice of

agriculture (plus fishing and herding) in family communities and the practice of the same activities within states and societies comparable to feudalism'.[8] The productive forces were at a low level of development and the social relations were centred around agricultural production mainly.

As social relations started to develop in an uneven fashion between Europe and Africa, and as they displayed a pattern which was incompatible with the natural development of the indigenous population, the internal and external conditions were being established for the incorporation of these traditional formations into a wider international system of an economic, political and ideological nature. Furthermore, these relations which were reproduced in Africa assumed an antagonistic and exploitative character principally because they emphasised the conditions for the development of capitalism, and these prevented the autonomous reproduction of the African social formations. Indeed what followed, was the internal disarticulation of social relations; i.e., many features of the systems of production were undermined.

An important element which helped to reconstruct African social relations, and which ensured the transference of wealth from the continent of Africa to that of Europe revolved around the question of 'trade'. Trade for Europe had to become internationalised in keeping with the laws of capitalist development. For it was through the internationalisation of trade that relations of domination and dependence were reproduced within the African social formations. Walter

Rodney's analysis of these relations is most instructive:

> The first significant thing about the internationalisation of trade in the fifteenth century was that Europeans took the initiative and went to other parts of the world. No Chinese boats reached Europe, and if any African canoes reached the Americas (as is sometimes maintained) they did not establish two-way links. What was called international trade was nothing but the extension overseas of European interests. The strategy behind international trade and the production that supported it was firmly in European hands, and specifically in the hands of the sea-going nations from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. They owned and directed the great majority of the world's sea-going vessels, and they controlled the financing of the trade between four continents. Africans had little clue as to the tri-continental links between Africa, Europe and the Americas. Europe had a monopoly of knowledge about the international exchange system seen as a whole, for Western Europe was the only sector capable of viewing the system as a whole . . . Europeans used the superiority of their ships and cannon to gain control of all the world's waterways, starting with the western Mediterranean and the Atlantic coast of North Africa . . . Therefore, by control of the seas, Europe took the first steps towards transforming the several parts of Africa and Asia into economic satellites.[9]

As has been mentioned, the extension overseas of Europe's colonial practices (beginning with Portugal) had much to do with the acquisition of gold, gold coins being necessary for the expanding capitalist money economy.[10] Furthermore, the quest for gold, by constituting an integral part of Portugal's exploration and its systematic forms of exploitation, was extended after its conquest of North Africa in 1485, to the west coast of Morocco. As a result, by 1447, a constant traffic with Mesa and the Sus fairs for gold, had materialized (and included trade in slaves, sugar and indigo).[11]

This success in the gold trade facilitated further in-

trusions into other parts of Africa, namely, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea and Sierra Leone; thus in the period 1491-1500, 41,520 gold 'doubloon'* a year were exported to the Portuguese-held town of Sami, and in the years 1486-1500, 6,200 'doubloons' a year were exported to Azemmur (another Portuguese-held town).

Meanwhile in the 1460's, Portugal was obtaining a yield of approximately 20,000 'doubloons' a year from Sierra Leone; and by 1505 their colonial explorations in some regions of Africa had amassed a total of 170,000 'doubloons' of fine gold yearly.[12]

The exploration for gold was so important to Portugal's developing economy, that in 1492 a system of 'barter' was introduced on the African continent, but in reality it was a system based on exploitative social relations. Through the system of 'barter', the Portuguese were able to exchange prisoners for gold; previously in 1447 gold was exchanged for cloth. But what was of crucial importance in the unequal exchange process, was that 'barter' was a manifestation of a non-commercial exchange relationship comprising goods; the goods which were exchanged, however, did not possess a value which was in conformity with the interests of both parties. The Portuguese, in many instances, carried out their trading activities with the threat of violence, the purpose being to obtain the maximum benefits from the exploitative relations. This aspect formed one of the fundamental components of their colonial policy.[13]

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* A 'Doubloon', i.e., Spanish gold coin.

The fact that the search for gold preoccupied the Portuguese during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and that they achieved success as they exploited areas of West Africa, can clearly explain why other European countries, following Portugal, sought this precious metal. Indeed, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the 'Gold Coast' in West Africa, coupled with areas in eastern Central Africa, had induced colonial powers - Scandinavians, Prussians (Germans), British and Dutch - to engage actively in the colonial process of seeking and exploiting rich gold deposits.[14]

For Portugal particularly, the significance of the amount of gold which was obtained can hardly be overlooked, especially since it had much relevance to the process of primitive accumulation between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries:

> Portuguese gold probably played an important part in the transition from the fifteenth century, the century of the 'gold famine', to the sixteenth century and the 'price revolution'. But Portuguese gold appeared gradually and was not very plentiful; it was obtained by means of exchange, and was never the only factor in Portugal's economy (pepper and sugar were factors too). Gold's importance declined markedly after 1520, and especially after 1540. It could scarcely have played a 'revolutionary' role. Nonetheless it was an episode of major significance in the discoveries as a whole. Gold was diverted from North Africa and the Mediterranean into Portuguese hands and later to the East Indies, and it therefore helped to make Portugal a wealthy, entrepreneurial power, while shifting the main axes of commerce toward the Atlantic.[15]

Apart from the economic instance, there were other considerations which influenced and encouraged European expansion, but all these factors were interrelated. Firstly,

European powers were able to take advantage of the theoretical and scientific knowledge which was available, and which had advanced beyond that previously articulated. This theoretical advance and development of science enabled Europe to become familiar with land and sea routes and geographical locations in Africa. According to Eric Williams:

> In the thirteenth century Roger Bacon's scientific method with its subordination of philosophy to mathematics led him to speculate as to the distribution of land and ocean over the globe, to hazard the view that a few days' sail westward from Spain would lead to eastern Asia, and to anticipate instruments for navigation, the automobile and the crane. The end of the fifteenth century witnessed the scientific method of Leonardo da Vinci, the representative man of the Renaissance, who anticipated the discovery of the law of gravity, designed the first submarine, and clearly foresaw the aeroplane.[16]

Secondly, if the scientific and technological developments were insufficient to explain Europe's thrust, another factor also contributed to this process of overseas expansion, namely, the political instance. That is to say, the historical conjuncture of the fifteenth century was characterized by the emergence of the nation state. And with the emergence of the nation state, the framework was being laid not only for an intensification of the forms of exploitation which were experienced by the European masses themselves, but also for the extirpation, oppression and domination of the masses in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In Europe particularly,

> . . . the old feudal order was being uprooted in the countryside, and the manorial system was being superseded in the fifteenth century by the enclosure of lands for sheep pastures, the basis of the woollen industry. This was the case particularly in England but it also took place in Spain, leaving the peasantry landless, sending them into the towns, converting

> them into vagrants and highwaymen suitable for transportation, by fair or foul means, to any new colonial areas.[17]

Finally, the religious or ideological instance, by constituting a part of the social superstructure, also played an important role in the course of the expansion of the capitalist relations of production in Europe. It is correct to argue, as Rodney does, that by the time feudalism had disintegrated in Europe, religion ceased to dominate politics, geography and medicine, as Europeans in their desire to limit the influence of religion and the church, sought to draw a line of demarcation between the religious and secular spheres.[18] But the efforts of Europeans to distinguish between the religious and the secular aspects of life did not prevent agents of the dominant social formations from using the religious instance whenever it served to justify and perpetuate social relations of an exploitative character in other countries. Thus it was possible, given the function of the ideological level in the social formations at the centre, for Azurra, the Portuguese chronicler of the conquest of Guinea, to justify its conquest in 1453 on the ground that the Africans became 'as good and true Christians as if they had directly descended, from the beginning of the dispensation of Christ, from those who were first baptised'.[19] With the linkage of religion to the dominant economic form, 'the foundation was laid for the association of the churches with imperialism'.[20]

These economic, political, scientific and ideological elements in their totality contributed greatly to European

hegemony and dominance in Africa, but this dominance to a very great extent resulted from the fact that Europe was the first part of the world in which capitalism was born out of the feudal order, and also in which capitalism matured and developed. The birth and development of capitalism in Europe in effect enabled Europeans to obtain an advantage over the rest of the world.[21]

Apart from Portugal's dominating role in Africa in the fifteenth century in which the latter was brought into a dependent relationship with the former, Spain also extended colonial activities to the periphery, i.e., Africa. Beginning also in the fifteenth century, Spain established dominant relations within Africa and, by the mid-fifteenth century, the Spanish interior and the Atlantic coast, Castile, began to exploit the rich gold markets of North Africa.[22]

The quest for gold by Spain precipitated much conflict with the Portuguese who sought to monopolise this rich resource from the western regions of Africa. The conflicting interests of Castile and Portugal had influenced the dynastic union with Aragon (thereby uniting the Mediterranean traditions with the new developments of the Atlantic part).[23] In addition, Castile captured Granada, drove Islam from Spain and established direct military contact with North Africa, the refuge of the expelled Muslims. The success which Spain obtained stimulated her interests in Africa so much that a document dated 1506 had advised the Spanish crown to take advantage of the services of the Andalusians in Africa, . . . 'because they have for many years been

accustomed to carry out assaults in the African mountains, on the Barbary coast as well as the Levant'.[24] Furthermore, the document had indicated that emphasis should be placed on those who possessed much familiarity with Africa, those who were 'accustomed to going to Africa, raiding and assaulting, sacking the camps and villages of the Moors and taking their ships.'[25]

The obsession with gold therefore was one of the most important factors which shaped the early developments between Europe and Africa. The acquisition of gold was inextricably linked to the accumulation of capital and power. And since development of the capitalist mode of production historically assumed many uneven forms, conflicting tendencies between Portugal and Spain which arose were the direct result of each power attempting to assert its dominance over the other.

The conflicts between the two colonial powers for supremacy were acrimonious, even though both powers were Catholic-oriented in an epoch in which the norm was to adhere to the Pope and when the universal claims of the Papacy remained unchallenged by individuals and governments.[26] The struggles, however, were intensified to the point where Portuguese ships were plundered right up to the gates of Mina,[27] necessitating an appeal to the Pope by both parties to arbitrate in the dispute over colonial possessions. The Pope in his capacity of arbitrator assessed the claims of both factions and,

> . . . issued in 1493 a series of papal bulls which established a line of demarcation between the colonial possessions of the two states: the East went to Portugal and the West to Spain. The partition, however, failed to satisfy Portuguese aspirations and in the subsequent year the contending parties reached a more satisfactory compromise in the

> Treaty of Tordesillas, which rectified the papal judgement to permit Portuguese ownership of Brazil.[28]

Although the Pope had much influence on the social relations within the social formations, the economic structure in the final instance remained determinant; that is, although religious and ideological factors mediated at various moments within the European formations, in the final analysis economic considerations invariably determined the extent to which the elements of the superstructure remained potent within the social formations, i.e. relatively autonomous.

Despite the leading role which Portugal and Spain played with respect to the Treaty of Tordesillas which defined the spheres of colonial expansion, their rights to colonial possessions were challenged by the emerging capitalist states, whose basic doctrine was also conquest and colonisation. The papal judgement precipitated reactions from other European countries which were consistent with their objective interests within the developing capitalist world economy. For example,

> Cabot's voyage to North America in 1497 was England's immediate reply to partition. Francis I of France voiced his celebrated protest: 'The sun shines for me as for others. I should very much like to see the clause in Adam's will that excludes me from a share of the world'. The king of Denmark refused to accept the Pope's ruling as far as the East Indies were concerned . . . England, France and even Holland began to challenge the Iberian axis and claim their place in the sun.[29]

Meanwhile in the Caribbean in the last decade of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, the traditional social formations were forcefully disrupted by European invaders; and that disruption, it is fair to assert, was the beginning of colonialism within the Caribbean conjuncture. The beginning

of colonialism and the articulation of the ideology of racism were, as in Africa, primarily conditioned by a set of historical laws: the laws of capitalist development.

As was demonstrated previously, Europe's activities in Africa were a response to the need to develop the capitalist relations of production; and, given the level of development of the productive forces in the European formations in the fifteenth century in science, technology, and also with regard to the military and economic knowledge, the objective conditions were opportune for an extension and intensification of colonial practices in the non-European world. This is the context, then, within which European relations within the Caribbean will be situated.

When Columbus, who was from Genoa, set out for the Caribbean in 1492 as an agent of the Spanish monarchy, he had at his disposal profound knowledge about colonialism which he had obtained from his study of European activities in Africa. Coupled with this knowledge, Columbus had the backing of wealthy financiers and merchants from Europe; they supplied him with the best boats and men to carry out his expedition, but their objective really was the realisation of profit, gold and other commodities.[30] It is clear, therefore, that

> Columbus' discovery was not, some chance 'extra-economic' occurrence. It was the culmination of an internal development in the Western economy, which for very specific conjunctural reasons was reaching out in search of gold and spices. In this search Portugal pioneered the way, while Spain of 1492 and its Andalusian coastal provinces were destined to carry it a stage further . . . Between 12th October 1492, when he reached the first island, and 17th January 1493, when he began the return voyage, Columbus diary mentions gold at least

> sixty-five times . . . Its very naivety is so revealing and there is no doubt that it is dominated and obsessed by hunger for gold . . . The first question he asked on discovering the Caribbean islands was whether there was gold . . . As soon as he saw that the Indians did not value it very highly, and would exchange it for trinkets, he even took the trouble to convince them gold was the only thing he was interested in.[31]

Thus, the quest for gold and other economic considerations which constituted the important aspects of European interest in Africa, also influenced Columbus' voyages further away from the geographical boundaries of Europe. And more importantly, the tendency of Europe to expand to areas of the globe where rich raw materials and resources were available, and where the climatic conditions were appropriate for the growing of certain crops, was conditioned by the internal development and contradictions of the capitalist mode of production within the remnants of the feudal mode in Western Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The emergence of the capitalist mode and the disintegration of feudal social relations gave rise to an urgent need to open up new trade routes, and to seize the riches of those who resided in non-European countries. It was the opportunity to find treasure, land and power:

> The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation.[32]

It is not difficult to recognise why gold and also silver as commodities assumed such importance during the initial epoch

of colonial conquest of the Americas, and also why Europe relied on its military superior power for the process of original capital accumulation. Indeed, the initial phase of colonial expansion had laid the basis for the internally-generated development of productive forces and corresponding social relations within Europe. Simultaneously, socio-economic development in Europe led to the blocking of the productive forces within the pre-capitalist social formations of the Americas, and it also led to the internal disarticulation of social relations within these social structures.

Marx's comments on the possible effects of conquest of pre-capitalist social formations are most apt:

> In all cases of conquest, three things are possible. The conquering people subjugates the conquered under its own mode of production (e.g. the English in Ireland in this century, and partly in India); or it leaves the old mode intact and contents itself with a tribute (e.g. Turks and Romans); or a reciprocal interaction takes places whereby something new, a synthesis, arises (Germanic conquest in part).[33]

In the Americas, for example, colonial conquest resulted in the internal social relations of several social formations being <u>dissolved</u> or <u>conserved</u>[34] as the dominant mode (which in many instances was capitalist) penetrated into the pre-capitalist social formations. Moreover, in the preecapitalist social formations of the Americas, there was an interaction of several modes of production which were articulated and combined in a hierarchical order, primarily because these pre-capitalist modes were subject to the needs and logic of the dominant capitalist mode. In other words, the capitalist mode of production elimin-

ated many non-dominant structures and integrated the elements which survived colonial conquest into its own reproduction.[35]

The Spanish conquest of parts of Latin America was a clear indication of the effects of dissolution or conservation, for in many countries primitive communal relations were not only destroyed but those which survived the colonial conquest were relegated to a subordinate position. Griffin succintly describes some features of this process thus:

> . . . it is still true that one of the greatest tragedies in Latin America was the destruction of the civilisation. The Spanish conquest of Peru was accompanied by profound social, institutional and demographic changes. The wars, epidemics and fierce exploitation of the Indians reduced the indigenous population by a half to two-thirds . . . Cities banished; communal customs of the Inca became an historical curiosity . . . agricultural production declined. The survivors of the conquest became . . . a disorganised mass of humanity. In short, they became an underdeveloped people.[36]

The effects of elimination or conservation of structural features of Latin American social formations were related to the quest for gold. The fact that the European ruling classes obtained profound knowledge from Columbus's first voyage regarding the chances for obtaining gold from the Americas, coupled with the ten percent of all that he had obtained which he had been promised constituted a sufficient condition for reinforcing the amount of men and shipping for subsequent trips to the tropical areas. Thus, when the Ovando expedition was undertaken in 1502, approximately 2,500 men and 4,000 tons of shipping were involved in colonial conquest, the exploitation of gold and silver from the periphery, and in carrying out the

evangelising mission,[37] that is, direct relations of domination. Of course, the material and ideological aspects of Spanish conquest were inextricably linked and are palpably obvious from the following passage:

> So your highness should resolve to make them Christians (i.e. the Indians), for I believe that, if you begin, in a little while you will achieve the conversion to our holy faith of a great number of peoples, with the acquisition of great lordships and riches and all their inhabitants from Spain. For without doubt there is in these lands a very great amount of gold.[38]

According to the entries which were made in the Spanish records of the 'House of Commerce' (Casa de la Contratación) in Seville - the main agency which collected data of economic activities of a colonial nature - a large amount of gold was obtained:

TABLE 1

| | |
|---|---|
| From 1503 to 1510 | 4,950 kilos of gold |
| From 1511 to 1520 | 9,153 kilos of gold |
| From 1521 to 1530 | 4,889 kilos of gold |

Source: Pierre Vilar, op. cit., p. 67 (Citing Calculations of Earl J. Hamilton)

The amount of gold which was siphoned off from the Americas increased considerably to an amount of 42,600 kilos during the period 1551-1560. In material terms, the rate of exploitation was so intense, that it was estimated that the gold which the Indians produced within a thousand years, more for ornamental purposes rather than for profit, was drained away from Caribbean Islands within a relatively short period.[39]

The importance of the exploitation of gold in the periphery for the development of capitalism in Europe was crucial:

> Central and South American gold and silver , . . played a crucial role in meeting the need for coin in the expanding capitalist money economy of Western Europe, while African gold was also significant in that respect. African gold helped the Portuguese to finance further navigations around the Cape of Good Hope and into Asia ever since the fifteenth century. African gold was also the main source for the mintage of Dutch gold coin in the seventeenth century; helping Amsterdam to become the financial capital of Europe in that period; and further it was no coincidence that when the English struck a new gold coin in 1663 they called it the 'guinea'.[40]

It is within this historical conjuncture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, then, that Guyana, too, entered the dynamics of world history. It was a conjuncture whose operative mechanisms included outright plunder, enslavement and murder. Furthermore, it included activities of direct extortion of the wealth of the indigenous populations of the New World and organised extraction of important minerals of the Americas - mainly gold and silver.[41]

This historical exposition has, of necessity, been terse but its object was to bring out some significant characteristics of Europe's expansion into the peripheral countries of the world. In doing this, we attempted to show the importance and interrelation of the economic, political and ideological factors within the international division of labour and throughout the early phase of capitalist expansion overseas. Invariably, Europe's colonial objectives were accompanied by destructive violence, but despite the complex problems in human relations

engendered by the processes of destruction and expropriation, Europe's colonial thrust was seen by its indigenous ruling classes as a pre-condition to further expansion, and also to accelerate, in historical terms, the uneven processes of development.

## 3:2 Mercantile Colonial Conquest and the Establishment of the Plantation Structure

> . . . history should not be understood as a necessary linear sequence, but as several sequences of passage, of shifts in the locus of the functions and consequently of the structural arrangement.
>
> Maurice Godelier, 1976.

Guyana, a very large country in comparison with some other 'neo-colonial' dependencies in the English-speaking Caribbean, namely, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, covers an area of 83,000 square miles, which is approximately the size of imperialist Britain; this area also, far exceeds the territories of its three neighbours combined. Despite its huge size and rich potential, Guyana remains a social formation which is dominated and dependent; that is to say, it is a social formation which is fully integrated into the structure of imperialism.

The major activities within the social formation are confined to a narrow coastal strip of fertile alluvial soil which spans an area of approximately 3,000 square miles; and along this coastal belt, its major agricultural resources, which include rice and sugar, are produced.

Guyana has a relatively small population of about 800,000. This factor (coupled with its multi-ethnic composition) has had some relationship historically to the kinds of problems which have plagued Guyana. These problems of an economic, political and ideological nature have, to the present, seriously affected the path to meaningful and socialist development.

It should be added that 'neo-colonial' Guyana has a class structure in which the peasantry and rural agricultural masses (semi-proletarians, subsistence farming peasants and agro-proletariat), predominate numerically over the urban fractions of the masses. The reason for this situation lies in the fact that, in Guyana, several modes of production coexist. For example, there are pre-capitalist agrarian modes of production - in which the peasants, semi-proletariats and agro-proletariats are enmeshed within a 'subsistence economy'. Pre-capitalist modes also coexist with a dominant agrarian capitalist mode, so that the exploitation of labour-power which is indispensable for the functioning of this dominant capitalist mode is recruited from the peasants, semi-proletariats and agro-proletariats.[42] These pre-capitalist modes, therefore, despite their diversity, are articulated in an uneven manner, with the capitalist mode of production in a complex structure which is structured in dominance; that is to say, the subordinate modes of production are 'structured' by the dominant capitalist mode.

In Guyana, the most important agricultural activities are centered around rice and sugar; the amount of value from

this agricultural resource, sugar, has been exceeding that from the combination of other agricultural crops. Until as recently as May 1976, when the sugar industry was nationalised by the ruling petty bourgeois class which wields State power locally, it was owned and controlled by a dominant metropolitan bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie previously operated eleven sugar factories using modern and technological sophistication to reduce the employment of the labour force. But above all, this class was oriented to practices which ensured that profit was achieved through the exploitation of labour-power.

Much of the coastal region, where agricultural activities are concentrated and where the majority of the population resides, is below sea level. As a result, flooding is only prevented by elaborate sea defences, irrigation canals and drainage systems; these have made it possible to produce sugar on about 110,000 acres of fertile land, rice on more than 250,000 acres, and other crops on approximately 80,000. But the essential point to note is that within Guyana, even though geographically large overall, about ninety per cent of the population inhabit approximately five per cent of the land.[43]

Apart from the coastal region, there are three other main regions which are comprised of savannah, highlands, hilly sand and clay. These three regions encapsulate over ninety-six per cent of Guyana's surface area. The interior savannah is very infertile, and the highland region in the south and southwest is very mountainous covering a geographical area of over half Guyana's total area. Within the highland region itself

are to be found the Imataka Mountains in the northwest, the Kanuku, Kamoa, and Acarai mountains in the south, together with the Pakaraima mountains in the western interior, where Mount Roraima and the Kaieteur Falls of 741 feet high are also located.

Bauxite, the chief mineral resource which contributes significantly to the Guyanese economy, is situated in the south east region; and in the south west region, the Rupununi district is conducive for cattle rearing. Any activity of this nature on a large scale, however, will experience difficulties because the interior region is somewhat distant from transportation and marketing facilities.[44]

Located on the north-eastern littoral of South America, Guyana is bounded by Venezuela to the west, Surinam to the east, Brazil to the south and south-west and the Atlantic Ocean to the north. Since about ninety per cent of the population reside along the narrow coastal strip, the vast amount of land is neither occupied nor developed.

Historically, Guyana has been inhabited by indigenous Amerindians; those who survived the European onslaught were joined by Africans (as a result of the slave trade), East Indians, Chinese, Portuguese (who arrived through the exploitative practices of indentured labour), and other Europeans.* Because of the racial and ethnic diversity of its population, articulating the complex structure of the social formation presents great difficulties at times. The causal factor for this

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* See Appendix A for recent figures of Guyana's population.

complexity has been partly explicated by the following observations:

> (The social formation in Guyana) . . . with (its . . . complex ethnic and racial mix . . . is the outcome of an unsettled colonial history and the continuing search for ways of exploiting its rich potential as a sugar-producing area. It is sugar more than anything else which has made Guyana what it is today, having created the population as a labour supply, completely altered the coastal environment to lay out estates, dominated the country's economy and often had a major and decisive say in political decisions, all of which was aimed at maintaining a convenient supply of cheap labour available for the seasonal tasks of sugar planting. Until the Second World War sugar accounted for some seventy percent of the country's gross exports and this was still more than fifty percent of the 1960's.[45]

The structural relations of domination and dependence in Guyana and the internal and external conditions which gave rise to it go back to the late sixteenth century and the early decades of the seventeenth when the Dutch West Indian Company, through forceful practices, established rudimentary but very effective trading monopolies in Guyana along the banks of the two main rivers: Essequibo and Berbice.[46] That epoch signalled the beginning of domination and dependence of Guyana, and the exploitation of its non-European people. The causal factor for European settlement along the banks of the main rivers can partly be attributed to the fact that,

> . . . the rivers made it easy for the Dutch to get into contact with the Amerindians, with whom they exchanged manufactured articles of trifling value for annato, balsam, copaiba and other commodities, and partly for reasons of defence and security. An added reason was that the riverain lands had easy natural drainage and were not liable to inundation by water from the sea.[47]

When the Dutch settled in 1580, they encountered an indigenous Amerindian tribal structure which formed the basic unit of production, the Amerindians themselves being organized in a primitive communal way. There was collective ownership of property and other means of production (land, tools). The productive forces and corresponding production relations were at a low level of development. Thus the tasks they undertook necessitated the collective use of stones, axes, knives, spears, bows and arrows, etc., which were used for exploiting the environment. Individual ownership of the means of production and products was non-existent, as all those able-bodied members who participated in production relations produced for the whole community.

By employing a natural division of labour which was based on sex and age, the indigenous tribal people were able to carry out diverse activities: some men, for example, engaged in hunting; others made tools, and women performed activities within the home, together with their work in agriculture. In specific terms, the tribal structure was characterized by a set of cooperative relations:

> The original inhabitants of Guyana lived communally in a state of primitive communism. They had no problems of property that were not communal problems, such as the right to hunting grounds as a means of securing food and so on. With the introduction of private property, a great many new problems were created in Guyana, problems which have kept on growing with the passage of time and changes in the social conditions.[48]

Besides there being a simple division of labour, production and the appropriation of the products of labour were

unified since the means of production were collectively owned and the products of labour were distributed among all those who directly or indirectly participated in productive activity.[49] This pre-capitalist social formation was based 'on the direct apprehension of use values, without the intermediary of exchange value'. In other words, since exchange value is a feature of the capitalist mode of production in Guyana the mode of (simple) commodity production did not assume a dominant form.[50]

In attempting to explain the essential features of these pre-capitalist relations, Alex Dupuy concludes:

> . . . all production whether material or immaterial, from the production of food, clothing, shelter, and tools, to the production of ceremonial or religious implements or monuments, including the means of expressing social beliefs, ideas and values, came under the rubric of use values. It follows, therefore, that in such a society there was no division between producers and non-producers, between those who produced and did not own what they produced, and those who did not produce, but who owned and appropriated what was produced; in short, there existed no division between rulers and ruled. In such a society, moreover, the term exploitation has no meaning for it has no material basis for its existence: there were no exploiting and exploited classes; there were no classes at all.[51]

Since there were no class divisions in Guyana prior to European conquest between those who produced and those who did not, a state apparatus was not necesseary to maintain the mechanism of appropriation of the surplus labour; the social formation therefore was articulated at mainly two levels, the economic and the ideological. This mode of articulation is in contradistinction to a class society where there exists a social division of labour into classes.[52]

> In these cases the political level exists as the necessary space of representation of the interests of the various classes and the presence of a state apparatus is a necessary condition of the maintenance and functioning of the mechanism of appropriation of surplus-labour by the ruling class. The presence of the political level and of the state is therefore a condition of existence of all modes of production in which the appropriation of surplus-labour is not collective. If the relations of production distribute the agents of production into classes there must be a state and a political level. If there is no state there is no political level and no politics.53

These various instances or levels (economic, political, and ideological) of the social formation and their modes of functioning in a structure which has no class disparities vis à vis one which has, can account largely for the historical processes and transformations which occurred in Guyana with the advent of European colonisers. For European arrival meant the undermining of Guyana's entire system of social production and the imposition of a new mode of production which was based on slavery.

The Amerindians, who produced agricultural products such as corn, potatoes, cassava, bananas, also cultivated tobacco and cotton. But with the European arrival in Guyana and with the introduction of sugar cultivation in other parts of the Caribbean, a new form of production relations was introduced: that based on a commodity economy.

In order to create the necessary conditions for further colonial expansion in the early seventeenth century, the Europeans did two things: first, Amerindians were captured, some killed, while others were purchased for the use as slaves. Second, by 'alienating' them from the autonomous ownership and

use of their land and products of their labour, Europeans were able to superimpose on those who survived repression, property and production relations of a different kind from those which existed previously. These relations were geared to meet the requirements and needs of the ruling classes of Europe. The new relations also, were dictated primarily by the historical laws of capitalist development on a global scale.

The objective realities of European expansion forced the indigenous people who survived the onslaught which peremeated the Americas to seek new ways and avenues where they could avoid further European enslavement. The level of development of their productive forces was low, therefore, they were unable to match European superior means of repression, preferring to disappear into the interior regions of Guyana. Moreover, in attempting to show their rejection of the dominant social relations of production which were imposed on them by Europeans, they carried out intermittent and sporadic raids on the Dutch colonisers as a form of struggle. These raids were of profound concern to the Dutch who, after recognising that complete subjugation was not at all times an easy task, decided to sign treaties with the Amerindians after their raids on the Dutch in the 1670's to reduce the conflicts between the two groups. In the early phase of capitalist expansion in Guyana, however, 'treaties' with the indigenous masses meant nothing but manipulative forms of social control if military force failed. This contention seems to find its most explicit expression in the fact that

conflicts continued between the oppressor and the oppressed, necessitating further legislation which restricted ownership of 'red slaves' (i.e. Amerindians) by each colonialist to six.[54]

The colonial merchants not having been able to 'dissolve' all elements of the primitive communal mode of production and having failed to destroy completely the traditional social formation were compelled by the imperatives of capitalist development to find other means to reproduce the conditions necessary for perpetual domination, dependence and exploitation. These could only materialize by restructuring the economy and the concrete forms of social organisation in Guyana. This was the pre-condition in order to integrate Guyana into a complex totality of world production-relations, dominated by the capitalist mode extending from Europe. Restructuring concrete social relations, however, immediately posed the question which was so fundamental in the seventeenth century: that of labour. This urgent need for labour-power was the direct result of the specific historical circumstances which have characterised colonial expansion.

No less important was the demands of capitalist social formations from pre-capitalist ones for raw materials, land, and at times of crisis, markets. Indeed, raw materials and labour-power from other subordinate social formations were indispensable for primitive accumulation.[55]

Rodney has clearly demonstrated the importance of raw materials and cheap labour for capitalist accumulation. According to him,

> When Europeans reached the Americas, they recognised its enormous potential in gold and silver and tropical produce. But that potential could not be made a reality without adequate labour supplies. The indigenous Indian population could not withstand new European diseases such as small-pox, nor could they bear the organised toil of slave plantations and slave mines, having barely emerged from the hunting stage. That is why in islands like Cuba and Hispaniola, the local Indian population was virtually wiped out by the white invaders. At the same time, Europe itself had a very small population and could not afford to release the labour required to tap the wealth of the Americas, Therefore, they turned to the nearest continent, Africa, which incidentally had a population accustomed to settled agriculture and disciplined labour in many spheres. Those were the objective conditions lying behind the start of the European slave trade, and those are the reasons why the capitalist class in Europe used their control of international trade to ensure that Africa specialised in exporting captives.[56]

The demand for cheap labour was not merely an aspect of an emerging capitalist world economy whose centre of gravity was Europe. Rather it constituted a structural feature of the development and expanded reproduction of the capitalist mode of production on a world scale. Therefore, it had an international character, was related to the process of unequal development and it composed a fundamental aspect of that development during the epoch of primitive accumulation. Let us examine more closely some of the historical conditions which led to the need for cheap labour in the periphery, and more importantly in Guyana.

During the fifteenth century the exportation of slaves from Africa to the Iberian Peninsula was not only a profitable and customary practice but was an integral part of the socio-

economic development of Portugal and Spain. Slaves were purchased very cheaply from the African continent and shipped to these countries to labour as household servants, stevedores and agricultural labourers. This trade was no accident or haphazard occurrence, but formed a cardinal component of these countries' colonial policies. Thus it is not difficult to grasp the reality that the number of slaves from Africa to Portugal and Spain increased rapidly, and by so doing comprised a sizeable part of the population in these two countries, even outnumbering indigenous whites in some parts of Portugal.[57]

The internal structural characteristics of the European economies in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries testified to the fact that the dialectics of development at the centre and domination within the periphery were essential features of the capitalist mode of production. Certainly it is plausible to contend that each social formation in Europe at that particular juncture had its own historical specificity and as such, the social relations of production with pre-capitalist relations in Africa have varied, depending on particular social conditions and specific circumstances of the emerging capitalist societies. But the whole question of the need for labour was linked to the imperatives of the developing capitalist economies, the labour process constituted the basis within the dominated and dependent periphery by which raw materials were transformed into products destined for European markets.

As Marx correctly demonstrates, capitalism did not develop in isolated, self-contained societies but largely re-

sulted from a multiplication of contacts between Europeans and the peripheral regions of the globe. 'Capitalist production', argues Marx, 'does not exist at all without foreign commerce'. Foreign trade was promoted by merchant capital prior to the capitalist mode of production assuming a dominant position over all other modes in Europe. It was under its auspices that new relations of production came into being in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[58]

> There is no doubt - and it is precisely this fact which has led to wholly erroneous conceptions - that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the great revolutions, which took place in commerce with the geographical discoveries and speeded the development of merchant's capital, constitute one of the principal elements in furthering the transition from feudal to capitalist mode of production. The sudden expansion of the world market, the multiplication of circulating commodities, the competitive zeal of the European nations to possess themselves of the products of Asia and the treasures of America, and the colonial system - all contributed materially toward destroying the feudal fetters of production.[59]

Meanwhile, the transition from feudalism to capitalism had engendered many social dislocations and profound changes in Europe. Already suffering from the effects brought about by the plague epidemics which ravaged the continent in two preceding centuries and which reduced greatly its population,[60] the transition brought about the separation of peasant-producers from their means of production, i.e., the expropriation of the peasantry from the land and the elimination of the right of independent peasant cultivation. The emergence of the capitalist mode of production and a bourgeois class ushered in a new moment in history: the political and economic dependency of the working masses soon became a reality, forcing them to sell their

labour-power on the market for wages.

The structural transformation of the dominant European world-economy could not have absorbed the 'marginalised' strata of the population, as the emerging bourgeoisies who were assuming control of the means of production and influencing the state needed only a limited amount of workers to man their banking houses, shipyards and mercantile establishments.[61] In England, for instance, the land to which peasants were formerly united, and which they exploited to provide for their basic needs soon became land for grazing sheep whose wool was needed to boost the nascent textile industry.[62]

The rise of merchant capital in Europe influenced Caribbean development such that it was possible for migrants to emigrate to these distant lands to function in diverse capacities. Migration was conceived by the ruling classes of Europe as a means for the accumulation of capital. It constituted also the objective basis for the development of the productive forces and corresponding social relations within Europe. Whilst the population figures at the end of the sixteenth century were very small - (Spain having aight million people approximately, France sixteen million, England five million, the Netherlands less than three, and Portugal one million)[63] - and might not have been construed as conducive for emigration purposes, yet the socio-economic realities of capitalist development in Europe militated against any such proposition. Surely, an adequate labour force in the tropical and distant lands was a <u>sine qua non</u> to capitalist development. Thus between 1620

and 1642 about 58,000 Englishmen and women were taken to the New World; likewise thousands of Frenchmen populated the Caribbean.[64]

> The financing and organisation of the ships and supplies necessary for the transportation of thousands of men and women across the Atlantic were provided by merchants, by ships' captains, and by groups of investors organised into trading companies, optimistic that their outgoings would be returned to them in profits made from the sale of new world products. Companies like the Virginia Company of London or the French Compagnie des Iles d'Amerique received royal licences and patents granting them exclusive trading and jurisdictional rights. In return they were required to carry migrants to the Americas and to pay various taxes and duties on colonial commodities.[65]

The main groups of immigrants (some went voluntarily) that set out to exploit the new world, or to achieve objectives which could not have been realised in their own countries comprised, first, the dispossessed, the poor, minors, peasants, labourers, unskilled workers, apprentices and criminals. These were compelled and contracted through historical necessities into indentured labour covering a period of five or seven years. They were also given a free passage and, on completion of their services, were allotted portions of land of approximately five acres, which allowed them to engage in small scale production. The social relations of production which governed the activities of immigrants who laboured on the plantations prior to the introduction of African slave labour, assumed a temporary slave nature in the context of the expanding capitalist world economy.[66]

Second, mainly female white slaves were sent to the Caribbean, to become wives of the colonials in preference to

the indigenous Indian women.[67] Despite the fact that those who were actually shipped to the Caribbean as white slaves were small in numbers, the fact cannot be concealed that their objective class position was defined by the existing class interests of the colonists, rather than by their ethnic identification. That is to say, this group comprised a form of cheap labour.

Thirdly, a small group of people - a class of property owners, and educated - migrated by covering their own expenses,[68] espousing a philosophy that was oriented to the acquisition of wealth, power, ideological privilege and control. But this group remained dependent and acted as agents of the ruling classes of Europe.

The general thrust of migration practices was consistent with mercantilist theories of that era which advocated putting the poor to industrious and useful labour. These theories also conceived of emigration - voluntary or involuntary - as a means whereby some problems in the European social formations could be alleviated: relieving the number of the poor, the dispossessed and the exploited, and finding more profitable occupations abroad for idlers and vagrants at home.[69] These patterns of migration revealed the following trends:

> A regular traffic developed in these indentured servants. Between 1654 and 1685 ten thousand sailed from Bristol alone, chiefly for the West Indies and Virginia. In 1683, white servants represented one-sixth of Virginia's population. Two-thirds of the immigrants of Pennsylvania during the eighteenth century were white servants; in four years 25,000 came to Philadelphia alone. It has been estimated that more than a quarter of a million persons were of this class during the

> colonial period, and that they probably constituted one-half of all English immigrants, the majority going to the middle colonies.[70]

The quest for labour as an integral aspect of mercantilist arrangements also took the form of kidnapping in towns such as Bristol and London, where certain adults and children, whose unequal circumstances and dependent relations forced many to accede:

> Adults would be plied with liquor, children enticed with sweetmeats . . . The captain of a ship . . . would visit the Clerkenwell House of Correction, ply with drink the girls who had been imprisoned there as disorderly and 'invite' them to go to the West Indies. The temptations held out . . . were so attractive that . . . husbands were induced to forsake their wives, wives their husbands, and apprentices their masters, while wanted criminals found on the transport ships a refuge from arms of the law. The wave of German immigration developed the 'newlander', the labour agent of those days, who travelled up and down the Rhine Valley persuading the feudal peasants to sell their belongings and emigrate to America, receiving a commission for each emigrant.[71]

The history of the seventeenth century relating to immigration and settlement in the Americas has revealed that the majority of exploited classes, indeed Europeans in general, who migrated to the English colonies of Virginia, Maryland, Carolina and the Caribbean, were not firmly committed to working as plantation labourers. Those who exercised control over the European exploited classes that migrated to the New World went to become rich; the exploited classes themselves that emigrated were forced to do so because the European economies, given their levels of development, could not absorb all those who were expropriated from the soil within the European countries

themselves. This latter group having been separated from the soil

> . . . simply waited for the right moment to escape from the condition that had been imposed on them, and when as in most instances they failed to establish themselves as planters or proprietors, they emigrated as soon as they could to the temperate colonies where they could at least be sure of finding a way of life more suited to their habits and greater opportunities to better themselves. This unstable labour situation on the plantations lasted until the definitive and general adoption of African slave labour. The European colonist then came to occupy the only position he felt was his due, that of overseer, manager, or master of the large rural estate.[72]

Dutch colonists in Guyana pursued similar objectives to those which permeated the Caribbean. As soon as the Dutch moved away from barter with the indigenous people to the cultivation of crops which was their real interest, the problem of labour had to be solved. Since the system of land distribution did not permit small-scale peasant ownership, other means had to be found. Besides, Dutch workers objected to working on the plantations as labourers; as a result no substantial progress was possible until labour was obtained.[73] Prado attempts to explain this unwillingness of Europeans to work the land in the tropics as labourers along these lines:

> The European did not bring to this alien and difficult land the disposition to serve his interests by devoting his physical labour to the land. He came to organise the production of highly valuable commercial commodities, as the promoter of a profitable business undertaking, and only under constraint did he come as an actual worker. Others were to do this for him. The initial selection between settlers who came to the temperate zone and those who came to the tropics was made on this basis. Of his own accord, the European settler came to the tropics only when he could be

> in a position of command, when he had the means or aptitude to become a master, when he could count on others to work on his behalf.[74]

Those who were forced to work in the absence of an indigenous population proving able to meet the requirements for the exploitation of labour, were African slaves. Europe, having almost completely liquidated the entire Indian population in most parts of the region needed external sources of labour-power. In addition to the need for labourers to work the plantations, these labourers were to come from an area which was well-populated, easily accessible and most important of all, from a region whose loss of labour could not have precipitated any serious consequences for the developing European economies. In fact, Europe felt 'unconcerned about the economic consequences for the breeding region of wide-scale removal of manpower as slaves. Western Africa filled the bill best'.[75]

Thus, the seventeenth century, during which African labour was sought as a solution to the complex social relations which arose in the pre-capitalist social formations in the Caribbean with the advent of European conquest, was characterised by the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Combining superiority in weaponry and navigation technology, a new kind of international division of labour and overseas Empire which was introduced on a world scale earlier was intensified; and its raison d'etre involved 'foreign treasure and slaves', exchange of manufactures for raw materials, colonial rivalries and contradictions which hastened the development of nation-states, and a new class of traders that encouraged and stimulated rapid technological

advances. These factors in their totality contributed immensely to the development of European social formations at the expense of the peripheral formations of Africa, Asia and the Americas.[76]

The slave trade in Guyana was initiated under the mercantilist monopoly of the Dutch West India Company in the second half of the seventeenth century and it had subsequently occupied a dominant position in Guyana. This dominant position can be explicated by the fact that the Dutch, French, and British having made an inexorable thrust towards capitalist development, were able to challenge successfully Portugal's monopoly over the slave trade in certain areas of Africa.[77] Using strong naval power, capital and shipping resources of the Dutch West India Company, the Dutch managed to defeat the Portuguese vessels on the high seas, established contact themselves with Africans and set up permanent settlements of their own on the Guinean coast which were specifically designed to ensure regular shipment of slaves to the Caribbean. The defeat which the Portuguese had suffered at the hands of the Dutch, French and British [78] was sufficient not only for these countries to be able to increase the slave traffic and expand sugar production in their respective colonies, but it also facilitated expansion by other maritime countries, namely, Sweden, Denmark and Germany.[79]

Marx has demonstrated that Holland's colonial dominance in the seventeenth century in many regions of the world resulted

undoubtedly from the advanced level of development of its productive forces. This level explains to some degree how, for example, Portugal, a feudal dependency of other European social formations, became vulnerable in its struggles with the Dutch commercial bourgeoisie, while this class was still in the process of formation. We will soon recognise that the propensity of the Dutch to expand in a country like Guyana is directly related to the pattern of development which it attained in the seventeenth century.

> Holland, which first fully developed the colonial system, in 1648 stood already in the acme of its commercial greatness. It was 'in almost exclusive possession of the East Indian trade and the commerce between the south-east and north-west of Europe. Its fisheries, marine, manufacturers, surpassed those of any other country. The total capital of the Republic was probably more important than that of all the rest of Europe put together'.[80]

Holland, however, was not alone in the exploitation of its own indigenous masses and the reproduction of the conditions of exploitation in its colonies. Indeed by the seventeenth century, the other European formations were engaging simultaneously in the exploitation of their own people and the people in the peripheral areas of the non-European world. At that time the joint-stock companies were the most powerful organisations which were engaged in slave trading, coordinating the activities of their agents in the colonies. The joint-stock company was an organisation in which the capital of various merchants was amalgamated or centralised, thus facilitating the construction of ships, the raising of armies, and even the formation of States.[81]

The outstanding companies which were involved in monopoly slave practices and trade in colonial products were found in all the main colonial countries in Europe; the Oost-Indische Companie in the Netherlands, the East India Company and the Hudson Bay Company in Great Britain, and the Compagnie des Indes Orientales in France,[82] not to mention the Royal African Company created in 1672, which was also involved in many ways in slave-trading.

These companies, among them, transported large numbers of slaves to all parts of the world; their primary function was to labour on large agricultural plantations, and their activities involved producing sugar, coffee, cotton, rice, indigo and tobacco for the European markets. The large traffic in slaves and the vast profits which were amassed from it, despite bourgeois protestations to the contrary, become palpably clear from the following observation:

> Between 1636 and 1645 the Dutch West India Company sold 23,000 (Africans) for 6.7 million florins in all, or about 300 florins a head, whereas the goods given in exchange for each slave were worth no more than fifty florins. Between 1728 and 1760 ships sailing from Le Havre transported to the Antilles 203,000 slaves bought in Senegal, on the Gold Coast, at Loango, etc. The sale of these slaves brought in 203 million livres. From 1783 to 1793 the slavers of Liverpool sold 300,000 slaves for £15 million, a substantial slice of which went into the foundation of industrial enterprises.[83]

Even though it is very difficult to determine precisely the number of slaves who were actually transported to Guyana in the seventeenth century, the historical evidence has shown that as early as 1627 the agents of the Dutch ruling classes had established the military and economic infrastructure[84]

necessary for the importation of slaves; that is to say, the socio-economic conditions and political relations which were of decisive importance for the development of material production were reproduced in Guyana.

The attempt to ascertain the accurate figures for slaves arriving in Guyana in the seventeenth century is difficult mainly because the fraudulent tendency at that time was for colonists who had a profound economic interest in smuggling slaves to manipulate or even withhold data.[85] Jagan, for example, notes that according to the data available, slaves have only been recorded as having arrived in Guyana in 1672.[86] Without being too polemical about his contention we suggest that, given the nature and rapidity of the slave traffic in the Caribbean in the seventeenth century, and also the fact that the Dutch West India Company had set up mercantile trading posts along the banks of the main rivers in Guyana from as early as 1621 or even prior to that date, slaves were reaching the Guyanese shores before 1672.[87] While extensive development of sugar plantations did not occur until the eighteenth century, plantation agriculture had made an impact in Guyana from about 1650 when conflicts between the Dutch and Portuguese planters forced the former out of Brazil. These planters found some consolation in the fact that they were able to travel to Guyana accompanied by their property; in short, they took their slaves with them. The important fact, though, was that there was some evidence that sugar was being produced fairly rapidly and further, the first shipment of sugar to the European markets occurred in 1661. In 1665 John Scott recorded that in his raid on the

colony of Essequibo he seized 74,758 pounds of sugar;[88] this suggests the presence of slaves in significant numbers in Guyana in the mid-seventeenth century.

### 3:3 The Plantation Structure

It becomes apposite at this point of our study to delineate, on a general level, some of the essential features of the 'plantation structures' which were established in many parts of the peripheral world. In view of the fact that, in historical terms, the imposition of the 'plantation system' and its corresponding structure of social relations have been instrumental in shaping many peripheral social formations and their mode of insertion into an imperialist, international division of labour, it becomes meaningful to describe some of the cardinal features as these have been constituted in social formations in parts of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and in the southern parts of the United States.

Although we recognise that the structure and historical features of 'plantation systems' in peripheral parts of the world are conditioned by specific historical laws which characterise and govern each of these concrete national formations, yet there are some similarities in most of these peripheral social formations, particularly with regard to their modes of articulation within the structure of world production-relations.

Rodolfo Stavenhagen in describing the fundamental features of the plantation structure in tropical areas of the world

presents the view that,

> Plantation agriculture was established by the colonial administration or directly by foreign capitalist corporations (e.g. Firestone in Liberia) in some areas only. Plantations are large, complex business enterprises which involve an advanced division of labour, a large organised work force, some sort of structured system of labour relations, the use of modern specialized technology, bureaucratic administration, well-developed accounting systems, and considerable economic investments, which presuppose direct involvement in the capitalist market. By their very nature and the fashion of their establishment in colonial and underdeveloped countries, plantations constitute typical enclave economics.[89]

It will be apparent from these remarks that many of the features of plantations, especially with respect to their technological sophistication, have developed simultaneously with the capitalist mode of production on a world scale. The peripheral formations, however, were subordinated to the dominant capitalist mode. Thus, given the structural relations between the dominant and subordinate formations, plantations in the dependent periphery, in terms of their organisational structures had a profound impact on the social relations of production within the formations where they were established. This is the result of the encapsulation of peripheral social formations where plantations predominate into an international imperialist system. Greaves, for instance, formulates the role of plantations and their significance within the international division of labour thus:

> Historically and economically the plantation system is fundamentally international in character. Wherever it is found it derives from external stimulus and enterprise; it has always depended on external markets; and it is still largely involved in

> external finance. Because of this character the plantation has been associated with most political and international developments of modern times; mercantilism and free trade; slavery and independence; capitalism and imperialism.[90]

L. C. Gray also, in attempting to articulate the structural characteristics of the plantation system and the international conjuncture within which it functions, elaborates his findings this way:

> The plantation system had its genesis in the economic organisation of the early joint-stock company . . . The plantation system was the natural successor of the colonising company. With quasi public functions of the colonial foundation accomplished and the functions of government taken over by public agencies (after the initial private colonising investments had largely proved to be commercial failures), the remaining task was to finance immigration and settlement. The plantation system afforded a convenient method of uniting capital and labour in the business of production. It would have been impracticable for the European capitalist to advance to each labourer the necessary expenses of emigration and settlement, leaving him to work out his own success and to repay the debt at will. The planter was the effective agent through whom European capital might be so employed, and the plantation was the agency of colonial expansion which brought together and combined three separate factors in utilising the natural resources of the New World; the labour of the industrial servant or the slave, the capital furnished by the European merchant, and the directive activity of the planters. In some instances, of course, the planters themselves furnished part or all of the capital . . .[91]

Thus the plantation system, which was historically constituted within the periphery as a mono-productive economy and which generated economic relations which were subject to the fluctuations and crises of the world market of one commodity, was structurally dependent. It was also inextricably linked to its European matrix. In Europe were to be found not only the judicial and administrative appratuses which coordinated

relations which affected the colony, but more importantly, the commercial and financial centers which controlled the demand for products and the supply of slave labour.[92]

The introduction of the plantation system centered around commercialised agricultural staples which were destined for the world market. This meant that the most fetile lands in the pre-capitalist formations were restructured and cultivated effectively in a way which ensured that tropical agricultural crops were produced most profitably on a large scale with the use of large groups of slaves. In order to increase the rate of profit generated by 'international' commercial relations, it was necessary also for the colony to be established as an extension of the metropolis through the totality of commercial, naval, military and political links. These links with the dominant centre were designed to achieve two objectives principally:

(1) The links were explicitly established to protect vital economic and strategic interests which were related to capital accumulation and expansion. Since the socio-economic relations in the colonies were objectively determined by the interests and needs of the dominant classes of the capitalist social formations in Europe, the links were established to thwart encroachment on the colonies by other European colonial powers;

(2) Strong economic, military and political arrangements were construed as a means of controlling agents of the metropolitan ruling classes in the colony, in the event of their seeking to assert themselves in any manner which was antithetical to the

interests of the bourgeoisie in the metropolitan centres of Europe.[93]

The concomitant ideology of capitalist development in Europe and the theoretical basis for its expanded reproduction within the periphery where plantation structures were in abundance were clearly postulated by the bourgeois philosopher J. S. Mill who, in showing how the capitalist centre systematically dominates the colonial, dependent periphery and transforms it in the process, writes with regard to the Caribbean:

> These (the West Indian plantations) are hardly to be looked upon as countries, carrying on an exchange of commodities with other countries, but more properly as outlying agricultural or manufacturing establishments belonging to a larger community. Our West India Colonies, for example, cannot be regarded as countries, with a productive capital of their own.[94]

And if these observations are not definitive, we find a more cogent statement being made by Mill when he argues the following:

> The West Indies . . . are the place where England finds it convenient to carry on production of sugar, coffee and a few other tropical commodities. All the capital employed is English capital. Almost all the industry is carried on for English uses. There is little production of anything except staple commodities, and these are sent to England not to be exchanged for things exported to the colonies and consumed by their inhabitants, but to be sold in England for the benefit of the proprietors there. The trade with the West Indies is therefore, hardly to be considered as external trade, but more resembles the traffic between town and country, and is amenable to the principles of the home trade.[95]

It is clear, then, from the preceding discussion that the structure of plantation system which historically developed in the colonial and 'neo-colonial' periphery, was dominated and dependent in all its manifestations. Emphasis was placed on the

production of agricultural crops for the export markets. The dominant form of labour used in cultivating these crops was of a slave-based or indentured nature; in short, forced labour characterised the production process for a considerable period.

The importance of forced labour lay in the fact that pre-capitalist modes of production were dissolved or conserved so as to integrate structurally the pre-capitalist social formations into a system of world production-relations. In the early periods of capitalist development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mercantilist practices were the order of the day. Expressed in the form of trade and geared essentially to meet the interests and needs of the metropolises, the basis for 'unequal exchange' and unequal development was laid.

Most plantation societies while specialising in a single crop, have been vulnerable in many respects to the historical laws of capitalist development, and have been unable to generate any <u>self-centered</u> development. Samir Amin demonstrates this contradictory process whereby the metropolises as the chief beneficiaries in this international division of labour, reproduce conditions of exploitation, domination and dependence in the periphery as a result of the expansion of the capitalist relations of production:

> The model of capital accumulation and economic and social development at the periphery of the world system is not in any way similar to the model of self-centered development. An export sector was created at the beginning, determined from the center. Exports were to be central in creating and shaping the market in the dependent capitalist country . . . the products exported by the periphery are mineral or agricultural primary products, in

> which a given region of the periphery has a particular natural advantage (abundant supply of ore or tropical products) . . . (the crucial factor, however, is that), . . . the products of the periphery were exported to the centre rather than used to fuel an indigenous process of accumulation. The reason for the creation of the export sector was to obtain for the centre products that are basic to constant capital (raw materials) or to variable capital (food products) at production costs lower than those at the centre for similar products (or of substitutes in the case of specific products such as coffee or tea).[96]

The principal observations which have been made thus far about the 'plantation' have revealed generally that its constitution in peripheral social formations was the direct result of a whole series of factors; the main factors include conquest and the establishment of the colonial system. The totality of this process historically has culminated in the destruction of the objective conditions for the autonomous development within the peripheral social formations in which the plantation system was established. Needless to emphasise that the distortion of these conditions was due mainly to the penetrative effects of the capitalist mode of production, and the integration into the international capitalist system of pre-capitalist social formations.

On the most fundamental level, the plantation, by its specific nature and composition, has been able to generate a tremendous amount of profit from the heyday of the 'primitive accumulation' of capital on a world scale, and in many parts of the world it continues to be the mechanism through which surplus labour is exploited. From its inception during the era of mercantilism to the present era which is dominated by monopoly

capitalism, the plantation system has participated in capitalist market relations and has been integrated into the mechanism of capitalist reproduction, and these factors can partly explain the reason for its survival throughout different periods of capitalist development.[97]

These characteristics of the plantation system compel us to examine the specificity of the historical process in Guyana in which plantation agriculture was the predominant form of social activity in an environment permeated by slave labour. This inevitably means an articulation of the social relations of production and the class basis of the plantation structure.

## 3:4 Social Relations of Production and Class Conditions of the Plantation System

> Sugar and Africans grew alongside one another, this was the great contradiction undermining . . . the whole system of production. Two essential premises of the capitalist system were present in the new sugar enterprises: the production and circulation of commodities. But the fundamental base was lacking: the wage-worker. Thus we have the slave system, but slavery for the production of commodities destined for the world market. It differed from the capitalist production system not only in the form in which killing work hours were imposed, but also in the impossibility of constantly revolutionizing production methods, an inherent part of capitalism.
>
> Manuel Morenzo Fraginals, 1976.

To begin our analysis of the social relations of production in Guyana from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, and also to explicate the forms of exploitation which were characteristic of the slave mode of production, it is

necessary to reiterate that conquest and the establishment of private property in land through the introduction of the colonial system were pre-conditions for the bringing into the existence of the slave mode of production. What were some of the basic characteristics of the slave mode which was introduced into Guyana in the seventeenth century? To answer this question we now need a definition of a slave which is applicable to our analysis.

According to Robert A. Padgug, a slave is one

> . . . who owns or controls neither his own labour-power nor the means of production with which he produces, and whose entire product is forcibly appropriated by another; the latter retains that portion which is called the product of 'surplus labour', while returning to the slave as the direct means of his or her livelihood that portion which is the product of 'necessary labour'. In addition, . . . the slave is normally outside of the dominant community in which he performs his labour, either because he has in some manner (debt, for example) lost his membership in it, or because he originally belonged to another community from which he was alienated by purchase or warfare or the like. Because of his external relationship to the dominant community, the slave can be bought or sold or otherwise alienated and exchanged, and is, as a labourer, subject to an amount of direct force normally greater than that found in other labour relationships. Thus the slave is both a producer of objects (often in the form of commodities) as well as an object himself (often, again, in fact a 'commodity'); that is, he is defined as the property of others, although not necessarily their <u>private</u> property.[98]

Let us delineate the fundamental elements which underlie this definition. Firstly, a slave does not own or control the means of production of his own labour-power. This can be expressed briefly by stating that the slave is involved in a dependent relationship within the sphere of production, a relationship in which his task is carried out by direct compulsion.

Second, the product of 'surplus-labour' is appropriated forcibly by a class of non-labourers:

> . . . in the West Indies and the islands of Portuguese Africa . . . on the great plantations . . . in these tropical areas, even the slave's food was generally not provided by the master; the slave had to produce this himself by working a tiny plot of ground on Sundays and the products from this labour constituted his store of food. On six days of the week the slave worked on the plantation and received in return none of the products of his labour. This is the labour which creates a social surplus product, surrendered by the slave as soon as it is produced and belonging solely to the slavemaster.[99]

The third element emphasises the fact that the slave is 'estranged' from the dominant community in which he is forced to produce. His activity is thus assessed primarily by its relationship to the production of commodities for the world market. The final element focuses on the slave being the property of the slave master, therefore he can be bought and sold. He is seen as an object by the very fact that he is regarded as the property of others and can be sold on the market.

Slavery which was introduced into the Americas and the Caribbean, was not chiefly related to race or climate, the importance of these factors notwithstanding. The basis for its introduction, however, is to be sought in an economic explanation:

> Its origin can be expressed in three words: in the Caribbean, Sugar; on the mainland Tobacco and Cotton. A change in the economic structure produced a corresponding change in the labour supply. The fundamental fact was 'the creation of an inferior social and economic organisation of exploiters and exploited'. Sugar, tobacco and cotton required the large plantation and hordes of cheap labour, and the small farm of the ex-indentured white servant could not possibly survive.[100]

Slavery, then, as it was historically constituted in the Caribbean and Guyana cannot be reduced to explanations on the basis of 'race' but rather must be articulated as an integral part of capitalist development.

> Slavery in the Caribbean has been too narrowly identified with the (African). A racist twist has thereby been given to what is basically an economic phenomenon. Slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery. Unfree labour in the New World was brown, white, black and yellow; Catholic, Protestant and pagan, . . . (slavery) had to do not with the colour of the labourer, but the cheapness of the labour.[101]

This link between slavery and the development of capitalism largely explains the tendency for sugar expansion in Guyana in the eighteenth century. What was significant about extensive cultivation during this period was not the revolutionizing of the poor productive forces to increase the surplus product. This was not possible within the narrow confines of the slave economy. Instead the sugar industry was characterised by certain <u>quantitative</u> changes which contributed to its growth. These changes included more canefields, more woodcutting, kettels, molds, carts, oxen, barracks, huts, and above all, more slaves. But this process did not involve altering the previous relations of production, and the method which was used to extend agricultural production had serious repercussions on the whole of Guyanese life.[102] This is how Fraginals describes certain features of the slave economy and its relationship to capitalism in the eighteenth century:

> . . . in . . . colonies the application of cooperation rests on a regime of despotism and servitude which is almost always a slave regime. In this

> it differs from the capitalist form, which from the outset presupposes the existence of free wage-workers who sell their labour to capital. We are dealing with a quantitative change in an agricultural industry, where the relatively large labour force revolutionizes the objective conditions of the work process, although the system as such does not change. Its form is that of a production mechanism whose parts are human beings. The operation retains its manual character, depending on the strength, skill, speed, and assurance of the individual worker in handling his implement.[103]

In Guyana (prior to emancipation) it was virtually impossible to ascertain the number of slaves on the plantations. This was so because there was the tendency among planters to avoid the head tax which was imposed on them. It should be mentioned that the value of the estate was always determined by the number of slaves on them, but planters by making false tax returns were able to conceal their wealth.[104] In 1762 a modest estimate revealed that Guyana's slave population was slightly over 8,000. In 1817, however, when the first registration was made, the slave population was approximately 102,000.[105] By 1831 two years prior to the abolition of slavery the settlements of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice which were captured by the British from the Dutch were merged into British Guiana. The population of Guyana at that time included 3,500 whites, assisted by 7,500 'people of colour' (originally illegitimate children of white planters), who exercised control over 89,000 African slaves.[106]

It will be observed despite some lack of precision in these numbers, that the slave population declined from what it was in 1817. The reason for this decline lay in the fact that slaves were not allowed to add to their number through natural

increase 'so long as the stock could easily have been replenished by the purchase of additional slaves'. That became a possibility only after the abolition of the slave trade,[107] which created certain internal dislocations within the existing relations of production especially with regard to labour. In addition, many Africans died from diseases as their value was not maintained by the provision of adequate health facilities. Women also died from ill-treatment by the white slave owning classes and their agents during advanced stages of pregnancy.[108] In short, the slave owning class dictated the pace of the entire society. Jagan demonstrates that a clear line of demarcation was drawn within the Guyanese social formation between the ruling classes and the oppressed masses:

> . . . Everything revolved around sugar, and the sugar planters seemed to own the world. They owned the canefields and the factories; even the small pieces of land rented to some of the workers for family food production belonged to them. They owned the mansions occupied by the senior staff, and the cottages occupied by dispensers, chemists, engineers, bookkeepers and drivers. They owned the logies (ranges) and huts where the labourers lived, the hospitals and every other important building . . . Even the churches and schools came within their patronage and control. The plantation was indeed a world of its own. Or rather it was two worlds: the world of the exploited; the world of whites and the world of non-whites. One was the world of managers and the European staff in their splendid mansions; the other the world of the labourers . . . The plantation hierarchy had an unwritten but nevertheless rigid code. Managers and overseers could have sex relations with non-white women, but intermarriage was strictly forbidden . . .[109]

Slavery, as it was established in Guyana's social formation, was a distinct mode of production which coexisted with diverse modes. For example, there were remnants of the primitive communal mode of production which were structured in subordination

to the new slave mode; but in a wider context, the slave mode of production in Guyana had developed within the context of modes of production which were dominant on the world scale. For it is

> . . . only by comprehending the precise manner in which 'commodity' slavery relates to the wider society in which it originates, and by ascertaining whether it is the determinant element in that society, can we discover the nature of particular slave systems and explore the general features of slavery as a whole.[110]

It is necessary to delineate Guyana's class structure around the 1770's by pointing out the objective positions of agents within the structure of production. The plantation structure at that time allows us to distinguish four basic groups:[111]

(1) A group of non-producers, resident in Europe that constituted a fraction or stratum of the ruling class in European formations - namely, Dutch, French, and British.

(2) A group of agents, non-producers, in Guyana itself representing the class interests of the capitalist stratum in Europe. Members of this group were Managers, Planters, Overseers, coupled with the strata of state functionaries - civil servants, military and para-military officers.

(3) A group of petty bourgeois agents - Artisans, lower level colonial civil servants, military and para-military fractions.

(4) A group of producers, African slaves and indigenous Amerindians.

The main social classes in the social division of labour were the slave owners and the slaves. Apart from the slaves'

objective position within the process of production, their relationship to the means of production was sanctioned by law. What, then, was the distinction between slavery as a legal institution and slavery as a mode of production within the Guyanese social formation? According to Hindess and Hirst,

> . . . where slave labour forms the basis of production, the mere possession of a legal title to slave property does not give the owner effective possession of the slave as a productive labourer. The effective possession of slave property, where the labour process is based on slavery, depends on the capacity of the owner to set the means of production in motion. Thus the effective possession of slaves presupposes the possibility of the application of their labour power to some definite activity of labouring. The non-labourers must own not merely slaves but the instruments of production, raw materials and means of subsistence for the slaves. In the slave mode of production the entire set of elements necessary to constitute the process of production are the property of the non-labourers. Slaves are separated from the means of production and they are unable to set the means of production in motion (and therefore reproduce themselves except through the agency of the non-labourers). It is this separation of the labourer from the means of reproduction of his labour-power which is the mode of subsumption of the slave labourer as the possession of the owner of the means of production.[112]

In Guyana's concrete situation, the slaves who were transported from Africa represented the most able-bodied strata of the population since the tendency was to obtain young men and women between fifteen and thirty-five years who were most capable of producing under oppressive social conditions. Though the shipment of Africans across the Atlantic was an impetus to European development, it represented simultaneously the loss of potential strata of the African population.[113] In Guyana, slave relations dominated all sectors of the economy, but the slave mode which was introduced during the mercantilist

era cannot be seen in the same way as the slave mode of production which was a feature of the Greco-Roman world. The distinguishing feature of the slave mode which was introduced into Guyana was that it was an extension of the dominant capitalist mode emanating from Europe. Despite having a similar economic form to that of classical slavery, this slave mode was enmeshed in a different set of relations, which can explicate 'the circumstances of its birth, the more advanced epoch in which it grew, and the specific part it played as an agricultural branch of the expanding capitalist world market'.[114]

The fact that European colonial powers participated in the world market and that the effectiveness of each country's practices corresponded to the level of development of its productive forces and social relations, can partly explain the conflicts between agents of the dominant social classes in the different European formations. For example, in the late eighteenth century there were approximately 380 separate plantations established from the mouth of the Essequibo River to the Pomeroon. The hegemonic position which the Dutch had earlier established was eroded as other European countries mainly British, pursued their respective interests in the area:

> The seventeenth and eighteenth century rivalries among the great powers of Europe were almost always projected into Guiana and for nearly two hundred years after the first Dutch settlement had been planted, British, French and Dutch vied with each other for possession. The territory thus changed hands on several occasions before finally becoming part of the British Empire.[115]

Despite the intermittent and sporadic conflicts between European powers, the dominant class conditions remained intact.

Slaves continued to produce within a slave state which was vulnerable to external threats, but which sanctioned internally the antagonistic class relations. And the mode of extraction of the surplus-product remained exploitative in its character. But this exploitation is not to be explained simply by inter-European rivalries but rather from the social relations of production which governed the Guyanese social formation. Under these conditions in which the slave mode of production was firmly entrenched

> The whole product of the direct producers (slaves) goes to the non-labourers (slave owners). The master owns the product of the slave's labour just as he owns the slave - the capacity of the slave to labour is an attribute of use-value of this form of property. The slave receives the means of the subsistence. In the slave mode of production the reproduction of labour-power is assimilated to the renewal of the stock of fixed capital: there is no distinction between constant and variable capital, the slave is no different from any other form of capital investment in machines, animals, etc. . . . In the slave mode of production the mode of appropriation of the surplus-product is a function of the slave being the property of his owner. The three levels of the relations of production form a unity: the separation of the labourer from the means of production and his subsumption within capital make the product of the labourer the property of his owner. The form of property, chattel slavery, its effective guarantee by the state, and the effective separation of the slave from the means of production are necessary for this mode of appropriation of the surplus-product to be constituted.[116]

By the eighteenth century the plantation system was fairly well developed and the concomitant class relations displayed clear lines of demarcation. The Dutch had arrived in Guyana in 1581 and, having initially established at first trading posts along the banks of the Essequibo, Berbice and Corentyne (and later Demerara) rivers, had by the eighteenth century con-

centrated production along the fertile coast, and instituted a colonial state whose repressive-legal apparatus functioned to reproduce the conditions of production of the slave mode; i.e. through relations of domination and exploitation. In other words, functionaries of the state structure as agents of the ruling class were also in a position of power to dictate and perpetuate the relations of domination/subordination. But this was not without its contradictions; some Dutch soldiers who recognised the realities of slavery and the capacity in which they functioned as agents of an oppressive system rebelled against the system in 1733 and 1734, also in 1751. The rebellious soldiers were later captured and,

> . . . by the verdict of the court-martial, the principal culprit was sentenced to be hanged; but that degrading death was spared him and he was shot instead. (What a substitute!). The ringleaders were banished from the colony to New England and the rest subjected to other punishments.[117]

To this point of our analysis we have demonstrated that a slave mode of production, as an organised economic system of production, was imposed on Guyana subordinating the primitive communist mode to the slave mode of articulation. The totality of the economic, political and ideological instances generated relations of dependence. At the economic level, the slaves who were concentrated on large plantations and who worked in large groups produced sugar, the main crop, for the world market. Slave production as it developed in Guyana used an extensive acreage of cheap land to increase production. The planter class had introduced relations of private property; thus they had an

effective monopoly in land. This monopoly which they exercised (apart from it having a relationship to their objective position in the structure of production as slave owners), was linked to production for the capitalist world market; hence they were subject to capitalist calculation.[118]

Politically, struggles between the slaves and the ruling class were characteristic of the slave mode of production and required repressive means for the slave-owning class to maintain its dominance. In other words, a colonial state was established; it was defended by functionaries and its institutions were the mechanisms through which relations of domination and subordination were produced.

Ideologically, a racist ideology also mediated within the structure and became an important aspect of the slaveowners' policies. But the ideological element which was related to the regulation of social relations between the two main groups - Europeans and Africans - was the mechanism which perpetuated the ideological struggle between the slaveowners and the slaves. Also, it helped to reproduce relations of domination and subordination. What, then, are the principal manifestations of the ideological instance in a social formation? In any social formation where class disparities underlie its structure, individuals occupy posts as agents of production, exploitation, repression and ideologization, which are centered around the social relations of production. Thus, within a concrete conjuncture,

> . . . all ideology represents in its necessarily imaginary distortion not the existing relations of production (and the other relations that derive from them), but above all the (imaginary) relation-

> ship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them. What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relations of those individuals to the real relations in which they live.[119]

The ideology of racism, therefore, which permeated the slave structure in Guyana, had its material basis in the existing social relations of production, that is, the economic structure of Guyana constituted the foundation on which the relations of ideological domination/subordination arose.

We are now confronted with a very complex problem, given the historical specificity of slavery in Guyana. Also, given that the economy of Guyana was slave-based and co-existed with other modes of production which were dominant on the global scale, how are we to characterise the economy: 'capitalist', 'slave', 'colonial' or 'plantation'? For there is no doubt that the planter who was either a resident within the colony or an absentee operator who hired an overseer to manage his estates was engaged in capitalist relations on a world scale.

> The planters were equally at the mercy of the market when they came to buy their supplies or to borrow money . . . They regarded (themselves) as (businessmen) who invested capital in land, slaves, and other means of production and expected an ample rate of return upon (their) investments. The plantation was operated as a large-scale commercial enterprise and its accounts were reckoned in terms of annual profit and loss. The planters . . . were actually subjected to capitalist conditions, connections, and concepts as strongly as the merchant who bought the cotton or the manufacturer who had it spun and woven into cloth. The slave economy . . . had a peculiarly <u>combined</u> character. It was fundamentally an archaic pre-capitalist mode of production which had become impregnated with the substance and spirit of bourgeois civilization by its subordination to the system of . . . capitalism.[120]

To answer the question posed, it is necessary to understand the concept 'structured in dominance'. In other words, an economy might reveal some essential internal characteristics but these characteristics do not develop in isolation, particularly since the national economy is linked to modes and systems of production on a world scale of which one is dominant. Therefore, it is within this international capitalist division of labour that Guyana has been structured. There are many social theorists[121] who have attempted to explain the dominant relations of production characteristic of the social formations in the peripheral parts of the world. We will consider some of these positions in the process of developing our own.

The major issue in the analysis of these peripheral formations is centered around the concept of capitalism and its mode of articulation. Further, it revolves around slavery and capitalism as systems of social production. Marx in his analysis of the relationship between capitalism and slavery writes:

> In the second type of colonies - plantations - where commercial speculations figure from the start and production is intended for the world market, the capitalist mode of production exists, although only in a formal sense, since the slavery of (Africans) precludes free wage-labour, which is the basis of capitalist production. But the business in which slaves are used is conducted by capitalists. The method of production which they introduce has not arisen out of slavery but is grafted on to it.[122]

Again he postulates:

> Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given the colonies their value; it is the colonies that have created world trade, and it is world trade that is the pre-condition of large-scale industry. Thus slavery is an economic

> category of the greatest importance. Without slavery North America, the most progressive of the countries, would be transformed into a patriarchal country. Wipe out North America from the map of the world, and you will have anarchy - the complete decay of modern commerce and civilization. Cause slavery to disappear and you will have wiped America off the map of nations. Thus slavery, because it is an economic category, has always existed among the institutions of the peoples. Modern nations have been able only to disguise slavery in their own countries, but they have imposed it without disguise upon the New World.[123]

It is in attempting to explain the dialectics of the relations characteristic of slavery, colonialism, and also of capitalism that many analyses of peripheral structures have encountered serious theoretical difficulties.

An example of this theoretical current is Andre Gunder Frank who, in attempting to locate the development of the capitalist centre and the domination and dependence of the periphery, articulates the nature of these relations in these terms:

> Underdevelopment far from being due to any supposed 'isolation' of the world's people from the modern capitalist expansion . . . is the result of the integral incorporation of these people into the fully integrated but contradictory capitalist system which has long since embraced them all.[124]

The assertions which can be elicited from Frank's typology revolve around these inter-related elements, all of which explain the dependent nature of the peripheral economies: (1) Latin American social formations have had a market economy from their inception. (2) These social formations were capitalist from the beginning. (3) The cause of under-development in the periphery is to be articulated by its mode of insertion into a world system of market relations dominated by capitalism. This process of 'integration' into the capitalist system through a process of 'satellisation' can be recognised by the agro-export

enclaves within the dominated formations. All these three assertions, according to Frank, are the result of a single historical process, identical in its essential aspects from the sixteenth to the twentieth century.[125]

Samir Amin, whose view of the social totality of the dependent periphery from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century assumes a position similar to Frank's, does not state, however, that the peripheral structures were capitalist from the sixteenth century. In other words, Amin identifies two sets of structures; namely, pre-capitalist structures prior to the imposition of European rule and peripheral capitalist social formations which come into being completely in the era of imperialism. With respect to the plantation systems imposed in the New World, however, he writes:

> Plantations of America . . . in spite of their slave-based form of organisation, do not constitute autonomous societies (which would be slave-based); . . . the slave-based mode of production is here an element of a non-slave based society, i.e. it is not the dominant feature of that society. The latter is mercantilist; and the trade monopoly - which under its control and for its benefit, sells the products of these plantations on the European market, thus quickening the pace of disintegration of feudal relations - was the dominant feature of the plantation economy. The peripheral American society was thus an element in the world structure whose centre of gravity was in Western Europe.[126]

Furthermore,

> European merchant capitalists, who held the monopoly of this exploitation, thus accumulated the money capital needed for the subsequent complete development of capital. The forms assumed by the exploitation might be various: pseudo-feudal (the ecomienda of Latin America), pseudo-slave-owning (mines), slave-owning (the plantations of Brazil, the West Indies, and the British colonies in the southern part

> part of North America). They were nonetheless in the service of nascent capitalism: they produced for the market, which forbids us to confuse them with the true feudal or slave-owning modes of production.[127]

Another school of thought attempts to develop a concept of the 'colonial modes of production' to counter the approach which defines capitalism as a system of market relations, as well as the approach which emphasises the social relations of production. In fact, this approach which uses the colonial modes of production as a point of departure rejects both the feudal and capitalist characterisation of the peripheral social formations. The basic position of this school states that 'colonialism must be understood in terms of a specific mode of production, neither feudal nor capitalist though resembling both at different levels'.[128] Furthermore,

> The colonial modes of production were precisely the circuits through which capital was drained out of the colonies in the form of bullion, consumption goods, raw materials and so on. The financing of primary accumulation outside the colonial world was their chief historical function and it was this fact which determined their peculiarly retrograde logic . . . the colonial modes of production transmitted to the colonies the pressures of the accumulation process in the metropolis without unleashing any corresponding expansion in the forces of production.[129]

Without attempting to group these three schools together as though they posed the question of the structure of non-capitalist social formations within the same problematic, there is one element which permeates the work of all. That is, all three schools are concerned with the structure and historical development of peripheral social formations and their modes of insertion into a structure of world production relations dominated by the capitalist mode of production. But in attempting to explicate

correctly the totality of social relations underlying the peripheral social formations, their analyses encounter some serious difficulties. Let us examine briefly a few of these theoretical defects, beginning with Frank's typology.

In Frank's analysis, the crucial aspects of his argument is that the social formations of Latin America have been capitalist by virtue of their being incorporated into the capitalist world-economy from the beginning of their colonial history:

> A mounting body of evidence suggests . . . that the expansion of the capitalist system over the past centuries effectively and entirely penetrated even the apparently most isolated sectors of the underdeveloped world.[130]

The problem with Frank's interpretation of Latin American social formations is that he has not been able to develop adequately a concept of mode of production, and further his explanation of capitalism is vague, unspecific, and problematical. For he seems to argue that the elements which constitute capitalism are: (a) a system of production for the market, in which (b) profit constitutes the motive of production, and (c) profit is appropriated from the direct producer by a class of non-producers.[131] These characteristics of the capitalist mode of production, however, reveal an absence of the concept of social relations of production and therefore are unable to specify the social relations engendered by this mode.

> The feudal or capitalist character of a mode of production is determined by its relations of production or class relations. It is not determined by trade connections. The capitalist mode of production is commodity production so developed that labour-power has become a commodity and the owner of this commodity is 'free' to sell it in the market. The relationship that Latin America maintained with the rest of

> the world during colonial times did not bring about a mode of production which divided Latin American society into capitalist and wage labourers. During this time, Latin America was characterised predominantly by a mode of production whereby large aristocratic landowners extracted surplus through the enforced servitude of Indians: firstly, in economic units characterised by subsistence levels of production and in units that marketed a surplus; and secondly, by plantations where local and foreign entrepreneurs extracted surplus through the slavery of imported Africans.[132]

By failing to centre his analysis around the social relations of production, and in his attempt to delineate the structural relations between the outward-directed economies of Latin America and the European metropolises, Frank's problematic is unable, by its methodological confines, to articulate rigorously the

> . . . structure of non-capitalist social formations, the effects upon these of different forms of capitalist penetration, the bases for the existence of these different forms, the bases for the development of capitalist production itself, and more complex problems, . . . such as the extent to which elements of the superstructures of non-capitalist social formations can continue to 'survive' and be reproduced even when a capitalist mode of production is dominant.[133]

Frank, not having taken a perspective which will enable him to pose and answer questions relating to the social relations of production, is unable to explicate the historical specificity of the peripheral formations and further, the precise manner in which they have been inserted into an international economic, political and ideological complex. In fact, Frank, by the logic he employs, one which is oriented to explaining structural contradictions resulting from unequal relations in the market, cannot understand that within a social totality there are several modes of production structured by the domin-

ance of the relations of production. Consequently, within a social formation, a mode of production is dominant when it is able to subject the other modes of production to its own mechanism of reproduction.

It is precisely on the basis of recognising the dominance of the relations of production that Laclau was led to formulate that

> (the) pre-capitalist character of the dominant relations of production in Latin America was not only not incompatible with production for the world market, but was actually intensified by the expansion of the latter. The feudal regime of the haciendas tended to increase its servile exactions on the peasantry as the growing demands of the world market stimulated maximization of their surplus. Thus, far from expansion of the external market acting as a disintegrating force on feudalism, its effect was rather to accentuate and consolidate it.[134]

To assert as Frank does, that the social formations of Latin America and by implication the Caribbean were capitalist in the sixteenth century would be to obfuscate and conceal the pre-capitalist forms of articulation which coexisted with the dominant capitalist mode. The problem with this position is that by identifying the principal elements of capitalism with merchant capital and long distance trade, Frank is unable to pose rigorously the question of social relations which have developed within these formations. This is not a minor point since it is of considerable importance for determining the political strategies for structural transformations of dominated and dependent social formations.

Maurice Dobb, also, has stressed the importance of locating the essence of capitalism not in a spirit of enterprise, a

system of exchange, or market relations but in a particular mode of production. That is to say, he suggests that we must not articulate the structure of capitalism in terms of producing commodities for the world market. Rather, its logic is to be sought in a system under which labour-power 'itself becomes a commodity' which can be bought and sold on the market like any other commodity.[135]

The 'colonial modes of production' thesis does raise some theoretical problems, but since it is still in an embryonic stage and needs more specific application to concrete situations, it will not be very fruitful to elaborate its weaknesses at this stage. This is due partly to the recognition of one of its advocates that the thesis has not been explicitly formulated as yet.[136] A cursory glance, however, will show that its assumptions are still characterised by some of the theoretical problems posed with regard to a definition of capitalism. And since the theory seeks to establish a particular mode of analysis of the colonial conjunctures, it seems that it still has to prove that this new system of concepts is adequate to explain, in these structures, the dialectics of domination and dependence. In other words, from a methodological standpoint, the theory has some conceptual limitations, similar to Wallerstein's schema of 'the world system' and J. R. Mandle's characterisation of Guyana as a 'plantation economy'.[137]

On the basis of the preceding discussion, we contend that none of the positions briefly covered seems adequate for an explanation of Guyana. We prefer to characterize Guyana from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, when slave-labour

constituted one of the important forms of social activity, as a social formation in which there existed the slave mode of production. But the slave mode was incorporated into a system of world production relations; that is, it was dominated by capitalist relations.

Since in the sixteenth century capitalism was only emerging in Europe, it seems most bizarre and imprudent to elaborate an analysis of Guyana as if it were capitalist during that epoch. Surely, plantation owners were capitalists by virtue of their external relations with Europe, but the dominant mode of production in the social formations permeated by slave relations was, according to Marx, only formally capitalist. Because of this, that is, because slave-owners produced with slave labour, the slaves themselves in Guyana were enmeshed within a multiplicity of ambivalent relationships. On the one hand, they produced the main crop, sugar, within Guyana itself, destined for European markets, under a slave-owning class of non-labourers. On the other, they were incorporated into a set of productive relations whose modes of operation were, in the final instance, determined by the needs and social relations of Europe.[138] These complex relations, however, do not invalidate the argument that slave-owners who were dominant in Guyana were involved in a set of relations in which the dominant mode of production was only formally capitalist:

> It is formally capitalist because its beneficiaries participate in a world market in which the dominant productive sectors are already capitalist. This enables the landowners in the plantation economy to participate in the general movement of the capitalist system without, however, their mode of production being capitalist.[139]

It is plausible to contend, then, that the mode of production in Guyana from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century was one which was based on slavery. But the social relations in Guyana's social formation during that period cannot be isolated from the system of world production-relations. Large scale agricultural production, mainly sugar, for European markets constituted an essential feature of the international process in the era of mercantilism, but the system of social relations characteristic of the internal structure of Guyana was based on slavery. The specific conditions for the establishment of the slave mode as a subordinate form of production to the capitalist mode were met. On this basis, we feel that there is much justification for concurring with the theoretical statement of Hindess and Hirst who posit the following:

> If we examine the plantation systems of the West Indies and the Americas . . . we find the following conditions:
> (a) slave labour forms the basis of social production, it is not supplementary to any other labour system;
> (b) The slaves work in gangs on estates/plantations, they are separated from the means of production and are not merely legally unfree direct producers;
> (c) slave labour-power is a commodity and the slave is a form of capital;
> (d) The product of slave labour is sold as a commodity.
> These conditions mean that the basic element which constitute the relations and forces of production of the slave mode of production are present. If such a combination, relations/forces, exists, then in some form, the slave mode of production is present in the social formation. Slave labour under these conditions cannot be a mere substitute for wage-labour. The system of production in question exists within the limits set by the forces of production of the slave mode of production . . . (The slave mode) is present in the following form: it is a mode of production subordinated to the capitalist mode of production within the international division of labour and the world market created by capitalism. The conditions of reproduction of the slave mode of production under these circumstances

> depend upon the capitalist system; upon world demand for the commodities it produces, competing regions and methods of production, alternative sources of investment, etc. To say that a mode of production is subordinate in a combination is to say that it depends for its conditions of existence on the mode or modes with which it is combined.[140]

We have to this point examined the development of the slave mode of production in Guyana and its subordination to the dominant capitalist mode which emerged in Europe in the sixteenth century. Economically, slaves affected profoundly the labour process and the system of social production. Slaves were seen as a commodity, separated from their means of production, and were engaged in the production of tropical agricultural crops for European markets. Politically, slaves did not possess any rights, were excluded from the dominant relations of the society in which they were forced to labour and their social relations were 'blocked', i.e. they were not allowed to develop as a class of producers. The conditions under which slaves produced had a class basis with the two fundamental social classes being the slave-owners, i.e. non-labourers; and slaves, i.e. labourers. These class conditions were sanctioned by the colonial state and its apparatuses which functioned to cohere the social formation (e.g. through slave laws, force, etc.), and to reproduce relations of domination and subordination. Ideologically, racism mediated within the structure and served to reproduce the class relations between a class of labourers (Africans, Amerindians), and a class of non-labourers (i.e. Europeans). These contradictions were to develop in a more complex form after the abolition of slavery in the 1830's.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, p. 331.

2. Geoffrey Kay, Development and Underdevelopment: A Marxist Analysis, MacMillan Press Ltd., London, 1975, p. 96.

3. Cf. Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

4. Examples of these simplistic but useful approaches are the following: (a) Leo Despres, op. cit., Joseph Landis, Race Relations and Politics in Guyana, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1971; David Lowenthal, West Indian Societies, Oxford University Press, London, 1972; Raymond Smith, British Guiana, Oxford University Press, London, 1962.

5. Pierre Vilar, A History of Gold and Money, 1450-1920, New Left Books, London, 1976. Cf. 'From 1415 when the Portuguese captured Ceuta near Gibraltar, they maintained the offensive against the Maghreb. Within the next sixty years, they seized ports such as Arzila, El-Ksar-es-Seghir and Tangier, and fortified them. By the second half of the 15th century, the Portuguese controlled the Atlantic coast of Morocco and used its economic and strategic advantages to prepare for further navigations which eventually carried their ships around the Cape of Good Hope in 1495. After reaching the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese sought with some success to replace Arabs as the merchants who tied East Africa to India and the rest of Asia' (Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Tanzania Publishing House, Dar-es-Salaam, London, 1972, p.85

6. Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro: The History of The Caribbean (1492-1969), Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1973, p. 13.

7. V. Magalhaes Godinho, cited in Vilar, op. cit., p. 49.

8. Walter Rodney, op. cit., p. 46.

9. Ibid., pp. 85-86.

10. Ibid., p. 94.

11. P. Vilar, op. cit., p. 50.

12. P. Vilar, op. cit., pp. 50-52.

13. Ibid., pp. 57-58.

14. W. Rodney, op. cit., Chapter 3.

15. P. Vilar, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

16. Eric Williams, op. cit., p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 16.

18. Walter Rodney, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

19. Eric Williams, op. cit., p. 15.

20. Ibid.

21. Walter Rodney, op. cit., p. 88; see also Karl Marx: Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit., Part VIII.

22. P. Vilar, op. cit., p. 58.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

25. Ibid.

26. Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, Capricorn Books, New York, 1966, p. 3.

27. Pierre Vilar, op. cit., p. 60.

28. Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, op. cit., p. 3.

29. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

30. Pierre Vilar, op. cit., p. 63.

31. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

32. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 703. See also Keith Griffin, Underdevelopment in Spanish America, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1969; see also, A. Z. Manfred (ed.): A Short History of the World, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974.

33. Karl Marx, Grundrisse, Penguin Books, London, 1973, p. 97.

34. See Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, op. cit., p. 22.

35. Cf. Maurice Godelier, 'On the Definition of a Social Formation', Critique of Anthropology, No. 1, Spring, 1974, pp. 63-72.

36. Keith Griffin, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

37. P. Vilar, op. cit., pp. 64-66.

38. Christopher Columbus, cited in Vilar, op. cit., p. 64. Consider also these comments from a set of Barcelona merchants writing to the King of Spain around 1450: 'Consider how sweet is the name of peace, the fruit of it is sweeter . . . And with such peace, most excellent Lord, your subjects and vassals could gain great profits as they could engage in commerce in the lands of the Sultan, and so increase their goods and merchandise', (Ibid.).

39. Ibid., pp. 66-67.

40. Walter Rodney, op. cit., p. 94.

41. Cf. The Black Liberator, Vol. 2, No. 2, Oct., 1973-May, 1974, pp. 131-32.

42. Cf. The Black Liberator, Vol. 2, No. 3, June 1974-Jan., 1975, pp. 218-219.

43. Philip Reno, The Ordeal of British Guiana, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1964, p. viii.

44. Alan H. Adamson, Sugar Without Slaves, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1972, Chapter 1, See also Raymond Smith, op. cit.

45. Eric R. Hanley, 'Race, politics and development in Guyana' in Ivar Oxaal, Tony Barnett and David Booth (eds.), Beyond the Sociology of Development, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975, p. 131.

46. See Adamson, op. cit., Smith, op. cit., Cheddi Jagan, The West on Trial, International Publishers, New York, 1972.

47. Cheddi Jagan, op. cit., p. 47.

48. H. J. M. Hubbard, Sunday Graphic, January 6th, 1974, p. 4.

49. Alex Dupuy, 'Spanish Colonialism and The Origin of Underdevelopment in Haiti', Latin American Perspectives, Vol. 3, No. 2, Spring, 1976, p. 5.

50. See Samir Amin, 'In Praise of Socialism', Monthly Review Vol. 26, No. 4, Sept., 1974, pp. 1-16.

51. Dupuy, op. cit., p. 6.

52. Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production, Routledge and Kegan Pual, London, 1975, pp. 29-30. It is important to stress the difference between primitive communism and advanced communism (socialism). The former is characterised by (1) Collective Ownership of surplus-labour (2) The

absence of class relations, the state and politics (3) The mode of production consists of the articulated combination of the economic and ideological levels. (4) Low level of development of productive forces (5) simple division of labour. On the other hand, advanced communism is characterised by (1) Complex redistribution of social product according to social needs (2) Production is centralised and scientifically planned (3) Complex division of labour (4) Highly developed productive forces; see Hindes and Hirst above, Chapter 1.

53. Ibid.

54. Joseph Landis, op. cit., Chapter 2.

55. See Barbara Bradby, 'The Destruction of the Natural Economy', Economy and Society; Vol. 4, No. 2, May, 1975, pp. 127-161.

56. Walter Rodney, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

57. Philip S. Foner, History of Black Americans: From Africa to the Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom, Greenworld Press, Connecticut, 1975, pp. 97-100.

58. See Tom Kemp, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

59. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. III, op. cit., p. 332.

60. Cf. Caido Prado (J.V.), The Colonial Background of Modern Brazil, translated from the Portuguese by Suzette Macedo, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1967, p. 11.

61. Philip S. Foner, op. cit., Chapter 5.

62. Caido Prado, op. cit., p. 14.

63. See Eric Williams, History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago, Andre Deutsch, Ltd., London, 1964, Chapter 3.

64. Richard Simmons, 'North America and the West Indies', in Douglas Johnson, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

65. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

66. Ibid., pp. 12-13; see also Caido Prado, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

67. See Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro, op. cit., p. 38.

68. Richard Simmons, op. cit., pp. 12-13

69. Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

72. Caido Prado, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

73. Cheddi Jagan, op. cit., p. 27.

74. Caido Prado, op. cit., p. 17.

75. Immanuel Wallerstein, The Modern World System, Academic Press, New York, 1974, pp. 88-89.

76. Cf. Michael Barrat Brown, The Economics of Imperialism, Penguin Books, London, 1974, p. 73.

77 See Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro, op. cit., pp. 42-43; Alex Dupuy, op. cit., p. 23.

78. Philip S. Foner, op. cit., p. 109.

79. Ibid., Cf. 'The leading discoverers, explorers, and settlers of Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, Dutch, and English origin sailed across the Atlantic for very material, even transparently mercenary, motives, They aimed to grab wealth by opening new trade routes; plundering the natives of precious metals; selling and exploiting slave and indentured labour; growing cheap crops of staples like sugar, tobacco, and indigo for the world market; and planting colonies to produce other articles of value for the European economy (furs, hides, lumber, fish, etc.). The coastal colonies were outposts of business enterprise, branches of the budding, bustling commercial capitalism which flourished under monarchical regimes as in France, or under republican auspices as in Holland, and Cromwellian England'. George Novack, American Revolutionary Heritage, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1976, pp. 13-14.

80. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 705.

81. Cf. Moeletsi Moerane, 'Towards a Theory of Class Struggle in Southern Africa', Maji Maji, No. 21, July, 1975, p. 11; See also Marx: 'Accumulation, the gradual increase of capital by reproduction as it passes from the circular to the spiral form, is clearly a very slow procedure compared with centralisation, which has only to change the quantitative groupings of the constituent parts of social capital. The world would still be without railways if it had to wait until accumulation had got a few individual capitals far enough to be adequate for the construction of a railway. Centralisation, on the contrary, accomplished this in the twinkling of an eye by means of joint-stock companies' (Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 588).

82. Ernest Mandel, Marxist Economic Theory, Merlin Press, London, 1971, p. 109.

83. Ibid., pp. 109-110.

84. Paul Singh, Political Thought in Guyana, University of Guyana, Georgetown, 1972, p. 9.

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# CHAPTER 4

# THE QUESTION OF RACE IN A COLONIAL FORMATION

## 4:1 The Abolition of Slavery

> The threat of general slave insurrection undoubtedly hastened the day of emancipation in the British West Indies. Other factors . . . played their part, such as the glutting of the world market with sugar, . . . the high price of slaves, the rigid flexibility of the sugar plantation economy, the change of the British economy from a commercial economy dependent on imports to the Indies, to an industrial economy, and the pressure of abolitionists in England upon the government.
>
> Philip S. Foner, 1975

The plantation structure, which was set up in Guyana along the banks of the main rivers, even though it developed slowly was by the end of the eighteenth century consolidated along the coast, where an infrastructure was established to facilitate the export of agricultural crops. This consolidation along the coast transformed the whole social formation and led to the establishment of a new socio-economic system.

The slowness of development of the plantation structure in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can partly be explained by the conflicts and contradictions among the leading colonial powers - Dutch, French and British - for possession of the colony. According to Adamson, Guyana was of economic importance as the conditions in the country were conducive for large-scale production particularly after the Dutch planters began their exploitation of the Demerara region in mid-eighteenth century. By opening the Demerara region for settlement the

preconditions were established in Guyana's history for plantation hegemony.[1] It is significant to stress, however, that Dutch planters were not the only class of slave owners to recognise the importance of the Demerara region, but the British as well:

> The founding of Demerara and the move to the coast are associated with another development of great significance, the transfer of British capital and British slave labour from the Caribbean islands to Guyana. Well before the end of the eighteenth century, the soil of many of the islands had begun to wear out. By contrast, Guyana possessed a soil so rich that little more was required than 'to plant in the rainy and to reap in the dry season and the Earth gave her increase without manure, the plough or the harrow'. Guyana also enjoyed 'the advantages of freedom from hurricane, of regular and abundant rains, of plentiful crops of sugar and of cotton, of the ability to supply ample provisions for (African) consumption, and of mildness and wholesomeness of climate.[2]

Meanwhile, the mercantilist practices of the Dutch West India Company were not always compatible and consistent with those of the private planters in the colony. This was evident when occasional conflicts occurred between the agents who represented the Company's interests and the private planters who were dependent on the company for defence, slaves, and European supplies.[3] But these internal conflicts were only a microcosm of the entire colonial process; the real conflicts were among the colonial powers whose objective was to obtain a dominant position inside the social formation. There was some evidence of this between 1650 and 1763, a period which was characterised by class struggles among the principal colonial powers. Furthermore, as the productive forces of France and Britain

developed, the Dutch colonies in Guyana were increasingly vulnerable to British and French sea power.[4]

Our preceding discourse stressed that the mode of production which dominated Guyana in the early phase of its history and under mercantile colonialism was not an autonomous mode in the sense that it grew organically out of the contradictions of a previous mode of production. Its constitution was not a process independent of the laws of motion of the capitalist world economy. On the contrary, its imposition as an dependent mode of production, and the laws which governed its structure and modes of reproduction, were derived from its subordination to capitalism through a multiplicity of social relations and arrangements extending from Europe. Guyana, therefore, was integrated into the sphere of commodity production on pre-capitalist foundations, centering around the production of agricultural crops for European markets, produced by exploitative practices, backward techniques and low levels of productivity.[5]

The slaves of Guyana, who, by the end of the eighteenth century were cultivating staple crops on various estates along the coast, rebelled against the oppressive social conditions. Starting with non-cooperation and passive resistance, their struggles against the slave-**owning** class of Europeans and its modes of exploitation, culminated in violent forms of rebellion.

The most vivid manifestation of organised struggle in Guyana which was an attempt to seize state power occurred in 1763 when a stratum of the class of slaves attempted to overthrow the government of the Berbice region in Guyana. Cuffy, one of the revolutionary leaders, proclaimed himself Governor

of Berbice, instructing the Dutch Governor, Hoogenheim, to leave the colony with other state functionaries.[6] It was not possible, however, to defeat the Dutch slave-owning class, chiefly because the colonial state was aided by its metropolitan superior body in suppressing the revolutionary struggle of the slaves against domination.

Slave rebellions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were not unique to Guyana. Between 1772 and 1823, there were several more revolts in Guyana; but in Haiti in 1804, under the revolutionary leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture, a landmark was created in world history. The effect on the slave-owners was profound and after 1804, when the independent republic of Haiti was established every white slave owner in Jamaica, Cuba or Texas, lived in dread of another Toussaint L'Ouverture'.[7] Further, there were revolts in Montserrat in 1776, in Barbados in 1816 and several Maroon Wars of Independence in Jamaica.[8]

While in many instances these revolts had effects on the pre-capitalist social formations, invariably they were unable to alter fundamentally the structure of the relations of domination and exploitation. The nature of dependent social formations in general where the slave mode was instituted, and in Guyana in particular, made it difficult for slaves to articulate their interests in collective terms, i.e. as a class; more importantly, as an exploited class. Marx in writing about the conditions and circumstances which characterised, for example,

the French peasantry, which militated against their acting as an exploited class, contends:

> In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local inter-connection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organisation among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name . . . They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented.[9]

But the period between 1789 and 1848, the period of the 'dual revolution', was significant not only for European social formations but also for those peripheral social formations in which the slave mode of production was established. The period generally was characterised by

> . . . a transition to the era of modern industrial capitalism, to bourgeois society; and what made it revolutionary was not only the attempt to break the fetters of earlier social and political orders which were believed to stand in its way, to construct an international system suited to the expansion of capitalism, but (also) . . . two further factors. First, the mobilization of the common people which this revolutionary transition implied . . . (and) second, difficulties of developing industrial capitalism itself which still found itself hampered by the very narrowness of the front on which it had broken through.[10]

The effects of the dual revolution (i.e. French and Industrial) not to mention the American Revolt of 1776, were the establishment of the necessary infrastructure for new forms of activity on a world scale which involved an accentuation of the uneven processes of development.

The rise of industrial capital in the centre or core states of Europe meant, in effect, that the supremacy of merchant capital which previously had dominated social relations on a world scale, had been challenged. Not only was merchant capital challenged, but it was to assume a subordinate position to industrial capital's mode of functioning.

The transition to industrial capital and the contradictions within the global, historical process, created the basis for new areas of colonial expansion. The objective requirements of capitalist expansion led to the transformation of social relations within the colonial periphery and it is against this background that we must locate the abolition of the slave trade, and subsequently slavery. But first let us briefly mention some of the reasons for the decline of merchant capital, Geoffrey Kay, for example, describes the underlining reasons for this decline very potently:

> Merchants do not make their profits by revolutionising production but by controlling markets, and the greater the control they are able to exercise, the higher their rate of profit. For this reason merchant capital tends to centralise and concentrate itself into monopolies even faster than productive capital . . . The merchant capital in the days of its supremacy before the advent of industrial capitalism never embraced the advantages of competition but strived to form monopolies wherever it could, locally, in particular markets and internationally. It eschewed the principles of laissez-faire and sought state support for monopolistic privileges. As a result the contribution it made to the development of the forces of production was always ambiguous. Rising out of the pores of feudal society, it broke down the coherence of the old economic order subjecting production to the rationality of the market and acted as the medium through which the law of value first entered economic history. Yet it was constitutionally incapable of consummating the process it set in motion.[11]

In Guyana, the antagonistic social relations between the slave owning class and the slaves were aggravated as a result of the changes in the nature of capitalist relations of production. Since the planters were agents of the metropolitan bourgeoisie, as the social formations in Europe were restructured to accommodate socio-economic changes there, the new relations brought about by those changes were also produced in modified and uneven forms in the periphery. That is to say, the sugar planters themselves because they were capitalists by virtue of their objective position within the international division of labour and world market were forced by the logic and imperatives of capital itself to introduce some changes into their methods and conditions of production;

> The (sugar planter) of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries expressed himself in bourgeois terminology. A producer of merchandise for the world market, he had points in common with the European bourgeois. He lived in a period when sugar production was still a primitive task, to be performed by brute physical strength and by quantity rather than the quality and technological state of labour. Since the industrial machinery for sugar production did not yet exist, slavery was a solution to the labour problem and the slavemaster could permit himself the contradictory prerogative of talking and acting like a bourgeois. The sugarocracy's bourgeois attitude made it strive incessantly to revolutionize its instruments of production. Its members fully realised that they could only maintain their predominance by abandoning primitive methods and obsolete mercantile relations. Economic transformation implied technical modification. Besides land, slaves and money, they had to find thinkers, erudite men with some knowledge of the dark and remote world of figures and formulas.[12]

Given that changes were necessary within the social and material conditions of production with the rise of industrial capital, a contradictory aspect of the Guyanese social formation hindered

any move to introduce changes. Whilst the planters subscribed to the bourgeois world-view of revolutionizing the means of production within the pre-capitalist social formation they were not pure bourgeois but masters of slaves who subjected their labour force to various forms of extra-economic coercion.[13] In short, they were combining slave and capitalist relations of production within the world economy.

The abolition of slavery is a very complex phenomenon and has stimulated many discourses on the circumstances surrounding it. ' The rise of industrial capital as the principal source of wealth and of capitalist development precipitated changes to make national and colonial policy more consistent with the new hierarchy of interests.[14] The changing social relations required certain transformations (socio-economic) in the periphery because 'the restrictive trade practices and monopolistic privileges which sustained the commercial explosion of the sixteenth and most of the seventeenth centuries - built around the slave trade, colonial plantations, and monopolistic trading companies - did not provide the most effective environment for a nation on its way to become the workshop of the world'.[15] The abolition of slavery, therefore, provided the avenue for further development of the productive forces of Europe and the accumulation of capital. Thus, after May 1st 1807, no British ship was allowed to engage in the slave traffic and from March 1st 1808, it was not permissible to import slaves into any British colony from any ship.[16]

Although the British bourgeoisie abolished the slave trade in 1807, other European countries abolished the trade at

different times throughout the nineteenth century. For example, Denmark ended the slave trade in 1802, the United States Constitution, written in 1787, made provisions for its termination in 1808 and by the 1820's France, Holland and Sweden had accepted the principle of abolition by passing a set of anti-slave laws.

> Such laws and attempts to enforce them by no means stopped the trade, so long as there was buoyant demand for this commodity and good profit from dealing in it. Some decline in the demand for slaves did follow the final emancipation in 1833 of slaves in British possessions. On the other hand, the demand for slaves elsewhere in the Americas took on new life - e.g., to work the virgin soils of Cuba and Brazil and to pick the rapidly expanding U.S. cotton crops to feed the voracious appetite of the British textile industry. Accordingly, the number of slaves shipped across the Atlantic accelerated at the same time Britain and other maritime powers outlawed this form of commerce.[17]

In the British colonies of the Caribbean the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 resulted in an internal disarticulation of social relations in the slave economy. It was necessary for the British bourgeoisie to compensate the sugar planters who were on the verge of bankruptcy resulting from a rupture in the sugar industry induced by the decline of the West Indies sugar economy. Paradoxically, a considerable amount of the compensation money received by planters at the time of the termination of the slave trade went to London bankers to repay debts which they had incurred.[18]

The slave mode of social production was of fundamental importance to a slave-owning class of planters who regarded it as the basis of their wealth and power. In other words, the slave-owning class found much difficulty in extricating itself

from a set of relations which not only generated its wealth but maintained its rule. Simultaneously these social relations were the great brake, the chain shackling this group to an obsolete system of production preventing the thrust to full capitalist development.[19]

By the time the slave trade was abolished in the British colonies in 1807 the surplus product which was appropriated by the slave-masters contributed to the industrialisation of Europe and the rapid development of its productive forces:

> The most spectacular feature in Europe which was connected with African trade was the rise of seaport towns - notably, Bristol, Liverpool, Nantes, Bordeaux and Seville. Directly or indirectly connected to those ports, there often emerged the manufacturing centres which gave rise to the 'industrial revolution'. In England, it was the county of Lancashire which was the first centre of the industrial revolution, and the economic advance in Lancashire depended first of all on the growth of the port of Liverpool through slave trading.[20]

Given the fact that most of the European powers were inextricably linked at a particular juncture to the international slave traffic, it is accurate to argue that they all benefited from this form of international commerce, whether marginally or greatly. It is no accident, therefore, that in the eighteenth century the West Indies accounted for approximately twenty per cent of France's external trade, and other beneficiaries of slave-trading practices during this period included the colonial powers previously mentioned (Germany, England, Portugal, Spain, Holland). Besides, in North America, the ports of New York, Portland and Boston all played a major role in this commercial activity.[21] It is important to note, however, that although these features

can only be explicated satisfactorily by an examination of the concrete structures and histories of these social formations, yet it would be illusory to believe that the slave trade was not instrumental for the early accumulation of capital, which was essential for the transformation of social relations in Europe.

In the Caribbean, the abolition of the slave trade led to a series of surreptitious activities:

> What had been a legitimate branch of commerce was now clandestine smuggling, a breach of the law. Further legislation passed in 1811 made the traffic a felony, punishable with transportation . . . (Yet) the end of the slave trade did not precipitate the end of plantation slavery . . . The planters of the Caribbean - English, French, Dutch or Spanish - thought only in terms of a slave system: they could not think beyond that system, and they did not want to go beyond. The system was theirs - they were the masters - yet the system also had them in its grip. Sugar was what gave meaning to the Caribbean. Sugar dictated the economic structure, the political structure, and the social structure.[22]

Another major change of the early nineteenth century in Guyana was that the country came under the control of the British ruling class, after insistent conflicts between the Dutch and the British resulted in the Dutch planters' defeat and British assumption of full control over the colony in 1803. The change in Guyana brought about by Britain's victory over its colonial rival established the basis for a new system of social relations in Guyana. For instance, as early as 1796, specualtion and expansion were accentuated as the British consolidated their position and commenced restructuring the dependent social formation of Guyana to the needs of British capitalism. Britain had a larger market than the Dutch, and the French wars escalated the

prices of tropical crops.[23] But the important point to note is that these new developments in Guyana were conditioned by Britain's need for expansion and profit.

> A flood of newcomers, looking for instant wealth, poured into the colony. Most were planters from the islands, and they brought their slaves with them. The result in Demerara was a demographic explosion, the population rising from 29,473 in 1795 to 39,232 in 1798. Slaves accounted for over 90 per cent of the increase. The export of staples expanded even more impressively. Between 1789 and 1802 the export of sugar rose by 433 per cent, of coffee by 233 per cent and of cotton wool by 862 per cent. For the planters of Guyana this was indeed the golden age. For a short period profits were legendary. In 1798, one of the larger estate owners John Daly, was reaping a net income of twenty to thirty thousand pounds. A cotton planter, it was said in 1799, could make a profit of six thousand sterling on a crop of sixty thousand pounds. The fact that the yield is inconceivable only emphasises the reputation the colony had acquired as a place where instant fortunes could be made.[24]

The period in Guyana between the abolition of the slave trade and that of slavery itself must be regarded as one of 'transition' as countries in Europe were industrialising their economies and trade relations which were predominant during the mercantilist era shifted in emphasis, i.e,, new relations of production were introduced into the colonies. Instead of being primary purchasers of products coming from colonial outlets, the industrialising countries sought markets for their industrial goods. These new developments meant that the peripheral formations were more important, since more raw materials had to be rapidly exploited from them for the needs of the metropolitan economies. This necessitated, in some instances, overcoming the inadequate level of development of the productive forces in the colonies by the introduction of new methods of production

coupled with new investments. The internal structure of the economies in the colonies, however, remained largely deformed and stagnated despite any such efforts. Moreover, the opposing class relations between the producer, and the non-producer who appropriated to himself the surplus labour of the former, were intensified. Thus, the production relations which men entered into were, objectively speaking, antagonistic.

Although merchant capital had been **succeeded by industrial** capital in the metropolises, the changes brought about by the decline of the former were not unproblematical. And because of the dominant position which merchant capital had established in the colonial periphery, a series of contradictions - both internal and external - arose:

> It (i.e. merchant capital) could never overcome its specific nature of merchant capital and realise its general nature as capital; it could never break out of the sphere of circulation and impose the law of value directly on the sphere of production. It corroded the feudal order but in the last analysis was always dependent upon it. It was revolutionary and conservative at the same time. It opened the way for industrial capitalism but also blocked its progress. In eighteenth-century Britain it frustrated the rising class of industrial capitalists by denying them free access to markets and forcing them to operate within its own monopolistic market structures; it prevented free competition between the new and the old orders. It created the pre-conditions for a thorough-going revolution in the means of production, but its fractional interests, its desire to protect narrow monopolistic privileges, blocked their realisation. As a result the first struggle of industrial capitalism was against its own progenitor: the industrial revolution was a historic defeat for merchant capital. Its monopolistic privileges were attacked and destroyed by the new order whose call to battle was laissez-faire, free trade and competition.[25]

The change from merchant to industrial capital had an effect on the periphery from the beginning. The planters in

Guyana, as agents of the metropolitan bourgeoisies, were not in any formidable position to block this new thrust for colonial expansion. Whereas the Dutch had entrenched themselves in the seventeenth and a greater part of the eighteenth centuries, their hegemonic position became vulnerable once Britain had asserted itself as the leading capitalist power. The control of the agricultural factories was no longer an exclusive monopoly of the Dutch but changed to a more sophisticated and aggressive power, Britain. But it was not just simply a change of control over a class of slaves from one country to another, from the Dutch to the British. It was a change which brought into being new social forces and class relations within the indigenous social structure:

> The slave trade disappeared with the end of mercantilism, i.e. essentially with the advent of the industrial revolution. Capitalism in the centre then took on its complete form; the function of mercantilism - the primitive accumulation of wealth - lost its importance, the centre of gravity shifted from the merchant sector to the new industry. The old periphery, America of the plantations and its periphery - Africa of the slave trade, had to give way to a new periphery. The function of the new periphery was to provide products which would tend to reduce the value of constant capital and that of variable capital used at the centre: raw materials and agricultural produce. The terms under which the exchange which supplies these products to the centre are advantageous are the terms which are revealed by the theory of unequal exchange.[26]

During the period of transition in which the colonial social formation was in the process of integration into the structure of British capitalism, the internal class relations within the Guyanese formation, from the objective position of the slaves, were not changed since property relations had re-

mained intact and the relation to the means of production had assumed a similar form to that which pervaded the social formation under Dutch control. Further, the mode of appropriation of surplus-labour (relations of production) and the mode of real appropriation (productive forces) characteristic of the slave mode did not alter during this period. A class of non-labourers still had effective possession and control of the slaves, in addition to owning the means of production.[27] In other words, the British colonisers were in a formidable position, indeed they had the exclusive monopoly to set the means of production in motion. Slaves in these new relations were still separated from the means of production and thus were unable to reproduce themselves without the support of the slave-owning class.

As to the mode of appropriation of the surplus product, the British were the new owners of the entire product which the class of slaves produced, exporting it to European markets and thereby contributing to the establishment of a strong capitalist economy in Europe. The subordination of merchant capital in Guyana to the logic of industrial capital extending from Europe was to set in motion and establish the basis for the integration of Guyana into the full capitalist system The export-dependent nature of Guyana's social formation was perpetuated and sustained, and the laws governing the structure were still determined primarily by its objective position within the international capitalist system; that is, Guyana's social formation remained subordinated to the dominant capitalism within the European conjuncture. The pre-capitalist character of the domin-

ant relations of production were conserved during this transition period and the mode of exploitation was not reduced but was intensified throughout the country.

While the Dutch exercised control over the colony, the region of Berbice developed independently of Essequibo and Demerara, but once the agents of the British ruling classes took firm control of Guyana, activities of the three colonies were coordinated and subsequently united under the name of British Guiana in 1831.[28]

The reasons for this coordination are not difficult to decipher. First, it should be emphasised that those who exercised actual control over the colonial state in Guyana were the agents of the metropolitan bourgeoisie in Europe. As such, they were a dependent group and relied on external sources of support to maintain their predominance whenever the system was threatened from within by the slaves. Secondly, the decision to unite the three colonies was seen as an effective step to integrate the whole colony into the production-structure of capitalism and an international capitalist division of labour. Third, by uniting the three regions and, in effect, the social formation, the state was in a better position to mediate in the reproduction of the positions of its functionaries, and also, to reproduce the antagonistic class relations in Guyana's social formation. These relations which we have clearly demonstrated involved the two principal classes, a class of non-labourers which was dominant economically, politically and ideologically and a class of labourers which was dominated economically,

politically, and ideologically.

We can now close with a few remarks on the abolition of slavery proper in Guyana in 1834 after a set of bourgeois repressive laws were revoked in 1833 by an Act of the British Parliament, which became effective in the subsequent year. From the slaves' standpoint, however, the class conditions governing their existence did not alter much until after 1838, for the four years between legal abolition and actual emancipation, slaves were still confined to the plantations under what was described as the 'apprentice system', a variant of the slave system itself. The real reason for this confinement lay in the fact that the local ruling classes sought time to adjust to a new system of social relations. As capitalist relations of production expanded to all corners of the globe the contradictions of the slave mode of production were aggravated. The slave system was now regarded by the dominant social forces of capitalism as contradictory to the course of history, morally undesirable and economically inefficient. Moreover,

> . . . the abolition of unfree labour cannot be analysed simply in terms of economic calculation. The forces of bourgeois society were opposed to slavery and serfdom not simply because they believed them to be economically undesirable, nor for moral reasons, but because they seemed incompatible with a market society based on the free pursuit of individual interest. Conversely, slaveowners . . . on the whole stood by the system because it seemed to them the very foundation of their society and their class. They might actually find it impossible to conceive of themselves without the slaves . . . who defined their status.[29]

The ideas that emerged out of the French revolution

coupled with other factors, affected the slave trade and abolition of slavery, as slaves in the colonies seized every opportunity to emancipate themselves:

> The conditions that underlay the abolition of slavery: One set of factors lay in the world development of capitalism in itself. The bourgeoisie's seizure of power in the French Revolution destabilized that nation's colonial regime and undermined the slave system by promulgating the doctrine of the rights of man as a universal dictum. In England, the expansion of its capitalist might into Asia gave rise to a powerful political interest counter to that of the West Indian planters; plus, the success of the industrial revolution, created the material base for envisioning a liberal bourgeois order with thorough formal equality. In the United States, the demise of slavery occurred in the midst of a war that established the further course of capitalist development . . . The other source of abolition lay in the role of black people in the Americas. Denied the right to reconstruct their own societies, they strove to survive and reconstitute themselves as a people . . . [30]

The abolition of the slave trade and slavery created a rupture in the plantation structure through a shortage of labour resulting from former slaves leaving the plantations to become peasant producers. Some of them purchased land from bankrupt planters with the money which they saved during their period of apprenticeship, while other squatted on unused but cultivatable land.[31] Through the acquisition of land it was possible for Africans to set up villages on the periphery of the plantations. A stratum, however, migrated to the cities to seek employment for wages as service workers in shipping and transport, while some became carpenters, joiners, etc. It was not possible for Africans to move to the interior in large numbers since the colonial state prevented any move in this direction by imposing exorbitant prices on land in the interior.[32] This departure from the planta-

**tions after** 1838 accentuated an existing shortage of labour which was the result of a slave population decline in Guyana by over twelve per cent between 1817 and 1833. In 1811, the number of slaves was 71,180, in 1817, 79,197 and in 1828, 68,326.[33] The identification of the slave-owners with the specific conditions of production in Guyana was so strong that 'a fraudulent inter-colonial trade in domestic slaves soon grew up and attained large proportions. Between 1808 and 1825, a total of 9,250 domestic slaves was imported into British Guiana'.[34]

There were other factors which contributed to the rupture in the colonial system - namely, the changes in staple production patterns, a revolution in British trade policy, and a transition from a slave system to a system of social relations based on a free labour force, not to mention the bankruptcy of a number of slave owners.[35] Meanwhile, a new international division of labour was established after the transformation of the old colonial and mercantilist system, the abolition of the slave trade and slavery and the repeal of the Corn Laws and Navigation Acts in the 1840's[36] These changes created a tremendous impact on the peripheral social formations for they constituted the basis by which Britain was able to disseminate its influence to other regions of the world.

> The repeal of the Navigation Acts acknowledged the new reality: the primacy of Britain's navy and merchang shipping. The repeal of the Corn Laws (which had protected agricultural interests) signalled the maturation of the Industrial Revolution. In the light of Britain's manufacturing supremacy, exclusivity and monopolistic trade restraints were less important

> than, and often detrimental to, the need for ever-expanding world markets and sources of inexpensive raw materials and food. With the new trade strategy, under the impetus of freer trade and technical progress, came a broadening of the concept of empire. It was found that the commercial and financial advantages of formal empire could often be derived by informal means. The development of world-wide trade network, the growth of overseas banking, the export of capital to less advanced regions, the leading position of London's money markets - all under the shield of a powerful and mobile navy - led to Great Britain's economic pre-eminence and influence in many parts of the world, even in the absence of political control.[37]

Although the Caribbean in general and Guyana in particular were identified with sugar production for the overseas market, the changes in the international division of labour affected the relations of production in these countries; they established the conditions for further capital accumulation and an increase in the rate of exploitation. The dependent character of the social formation could not have generated any development of internal labour and domestic markets, and because of this, the relations of production were invariably subjected to the inherent laws of capital accumulation and overseas expansion.

In the Guyanese concrete situation there was a short period at the end of the eighteenth century when other crops were cultivated by the direct producers, i.e. slaves. During this same period, Guyana had the 'distinction' of being the 'greatest' cotton producer in the world and the greatest coffee grower in the British Empire. Then, around 1810, one notes the beginning of a decline. There is a marked drop in cotton and coffee output and a corresponding rise in sugar'.[38] The figures below (see Table 2) indicate the overall trends.

TABLE 2

Sugar, Cotton and Coffee Production

In Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice,

Five-Year Averages, 1814-1833

| | Sugar | | Cotton | | Coffee | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Period | (Hogsheads) | Index | (lbs.) | Index | (lbs.) | Index |
| 1814-18 | 21,770 | 100 | 8,422,154 | 100 | 10,817,440 | 100 |
| 1819-23 | 36,322 | 166 | 4,963,499 | 59 | 7,100,300 | 65 |
| 1824-28 | 57,715 | 265 | 3,867,400 | 45 | 6,081,885 | 56 |
| 1829-33 | 71,496 | 328 | 1,741,059 | 20 | 5,165,618 | 47 |

Source: Cited in Adamson, Ibid., p. 25.

The decline, or more precisely, the annihilation of Guyana's cotton industry was a product of the development of capitalism on a world scale. The British who had made inroads into the colony from the mid-eighteenth century or even earlier, concentrated on sugar production instead of cotton and coffee. More land was cultivated and the British invested a large amount of capital into the colonial formation; hence the pattern was established where there were five British sugar plantations under cultivation for every sugar plantation under Dutch control. A further reason for concentrating on sugar instead of other crops was its profitability:[39]

> 'It is unfortunately but too true', wrote the governor in 1829, 'that cotton has lately so fallen in value as not to repay the expenses of its cultivation, which is therefore about to be universally abandoned. Coffee although better than cotton for the planters, is still but little profitable. Sugar is the only produce of export which now affords a reasonable return upon the capital invested'. A sugar plantation required one African for every acre of land; the average return was estimated at £50 per acre. A cotton plantation required one African for every two acres, each acre producing on an average 600 bushels of half a pound of cotton each . . . A coffee plantation required two Africans for every three acres of land. Allowing 450 bushels per acre, and one and a half pounds of coffee per bushel, the average return per African on a coffee plantation valuing the product at 8 pence per pound, was £33 15/-; . . . for the year 1796-1797, the average return from sugar, cotton and coffee was in the ratio of 40:30:27.[40]

If the internal production returns were a contributory factor to the decline in cotton and coffee production in Guyana, a more important factor seemed to be the large scale production of king cotton in the southern regions of the United States and the inability of the British planters to withstand competition on the world market. Ceylon having a large labour force which

was cheap, also produced coffee on the world market at a price which prevented Guyana from competing. By the time slavery was abolished, millions of Africans were shipped across the Atlantic to various parts of the world and several were killed. But the system of social production had demonstrated that two essential premises of the capitalist mode of production had affected the structural relations within the social formation, namely, the production and circulation of commodities.[41] The relations within the Guyanese social formation, however, were not capitalist chiefly because the essential element of the capitalist mode of production, i.e., wage-labour was absent:

> The capitalist mode of production differs from the mode of production based on slavery, among other things, by the fact that in it the value, and accordingly the price, of labour-power appears as the value, or price, of labour itself, or as wages.[42]

Thus, the slaves within Guyana had produced commodities for nearly two hundred years for overseas markets and once these commodities had entered the sphere of circulation in the world market it was not possible to determine whether they were produced by slave or free labour. Further, once they had entered the world market they were just goods to be brought and sold.[43] Yet the slaves were enmeshed in a system which was not only oppressive, but it was a system which differed from the capitalist system on the basis of the form in which the conditions of labour were imposed. Besides, the slave system was different from the capitalist one because it was impossible for the former to revolutionize the productive forces, an inherent aspect of capitalism.[44]

## 4:2 The Transition Period

Although merchant capital assumed a subordinate position to industrial capital with the triumph of the industrial revolution, it continued to play an important role in the periphery as the laws of industrial capital reduced the colonial dependencies to mere markets and not as a sphere of direct investments on a large scale and capital accumulation.[45] The role which merchant capital was forced to play in the periphery as a subordinate form of capital to industrial capital has been formulated thus:

> . . . if merchant capital retained its independence in the underdeveloped world, it was no longer allowed to trade solely on its own account but was forced to become the agent of industrial capital. In other words, merchant capital in the underdeveloped world both retained and lost its independence. It remained the only form of capital present: but within the world economy as a whole it became an aspect of industrial capital. In other words, merchant capital in the underdeveloped countries after the establishment of industrial capitalism in the developed countries in the nineteenth century existed in its two historical forms simultaneously. At one and the same moment it was the only form of capital but not the only form of capital. This apparent paradox is the specifica differentia of underdevelopment, and its emergence as a historical fact in the course of the nineteenth century marks the beginning of underdevelopment as we know it.[46]

The capitalist international division of labour created a situation in the nineteenth century in which it was necessary to modify the relations of production in the peripheral countries in order to integrate them into the complex structure of the international capitalist system. The industrial revolution paved the way for the development of the productive forces and corresponding social relations in Europe. Workers were free

to sell their labour-power on the market for wages. But the laws of industrial capitalism resulted in the extension of its activities abroad, and that meant coming to terms with the internal disarticulation of social relations which were the products of the dominance of merchant capital within the periphery.

The modifications which occurred in Guyana after the abolition of slavery were all related to the rupture in the system to which we earlier referred. The most important factor was that the external source of labour supply, which was so vital to expand the production of sugar, was not available. Therefore, an alternative labour force had to be found to alleviate the problem. Another factor which aggravated the situation was that ex-slaves were now free to sell their labour-power, which in essence meant that they were placed objectively in a position to struggle for better conditions if they chose to work on the plantations.

The foundation of the plantation structure had been shaken: sugar exports to overseas countries declined from 46,605 tons, the average for the years 1831-35, to 26,780 tons, the mean for the years 1846-50, a decline of 38.6. This decline in the export of sugar was simultaneously compounded by a fall in the resident estate population from 84,915 to 39,375, a decline of 53.6 per cent.[47]

Although emancipation of the slaves brought about some changes in the system, structurally the system was incorporated into capitalist production-relations on a world scale so that the class conditions between the rulers and the ruled were modified rather than structurally transformed. Moreover, Guyana

was still a sugar colony of large planters, the largest of whom were absentees who, in the final analysis, had full control over the colonial state. The metropolitan bourgeoisie in Europe was assisted by a class of slave owners and a class of functionaries who were responsible for supervising the social formation and for maintaining its unity.

The Africans' attempt to set up small villages and to pursue independent peasant farming failed for several reasons. Firstly, the state functionaries did not consider spending public funds on drainage, irrigation, and sea defence schemes which were and still remain of crucial importance in Guyana, as compatible with their social interests.[48] These measures could not be carried out by a class of producers who had just moved away from a set of social relations which were most brutal, exploitative and without remuneration for their labour. Secondly, the colonial state had instituted legislation to ensure that the emancipated slaves were still integrated into the modes of operation of the plantation system. This legislation was in the form of exorbitant rates and taxes imposed on peasants, and part of what was collected went towards infrastructural development in the form of drainage and irrigation schemes.[49] When, however, the system of apprenticeship of slaves was instituted for a transitory period 1834-1838 prior to final emancipation, the objective of the slave masters, was to create the material conditions for the reconstruction of the system of production to incorporate new changes; that is, it was a temporary way out until external sources of labour-power

could be obtained. This development, however, created many difficulties for the class of producers, i.e. former slaves, for though slavery had been abolished legally, in practical terms the economic circumstances surrounding plantation agriculture still required that the producers be separated from the sphere of the means of production. They managed, however, to adapt themselves to the choices available within the colonial state. The apprentice system in Guyana, therefore, was a modified form of slavery in which the producers were locked into a structurally dependent relationship within the social division of labour. This relationship was not incidental but followed from the objective laws of a social formation which was in the process of transition from slavery to a system of production which was based on wage-labour.

The role of the colonial state was particularly significant in this regard; it had to implement the necessary legislation to effect this transition and also had to reproduce the conditions to sustain the new relations of production in the colonial formation. This increasingly important role of the colonial state had serious consequences for the majority of the population since the class practices of the state functionaries had imposed certain limitations on the distribution of landholdings which were unfavourable to the development of the productive forces. This point has been rightly developed by Adamson who states:

> None of these developments (relating to the survival of sugar) could have taken place without the conscious

> intervention of the planter-controlled colonial legislature. Of course, colonial legislatures were always subject to the veto of the Colonial Office. But after 1838, this veto was used with less and less frequency. The situation was not without irony. Westminster, having destroyed slavery in the name of . . . free trade, now seemed indifferent to the reconstruction of some of the worst appects of the pre-emancipation agrarian system. The essence of that system lay in the denial to the labouring population of free access to land, capital, and education and the concentration of these goods in the hands of a small number of (often absentee) estate owners. Before 1833, this relationship was established and maintained through slavery; afterward it was preserved by a restrictive land policy, by fiscal control, by subsidized immigration and by indenture.[50]

Clive Thomas has pointed out unequivocally that the establishment of an independent peasantry in the Caribbean (after emancipation of the slaves) never became a reality, primarily as a result of the class practices and conditions of production which underlay the dependent social formations in which the plantation structure was the leading instrument of colonialism:

> . . . the plantation system cannot coexist with an independent peasantry. To the plantation, the peasantry is always first and last a reservoir of cheap labour. As such the creation of the peasantry and the degrees of freedom this class will be permitted over the country's material resources are ultimately dictated by the extent to which, through economic, social and political control of the labour market, the plantation is able to make labour both cheap and available. The peasantry is therefore in perpetual conflict with the plantation. This is a life and death struggle. The birth of an independent peasantry can only be achieved on the destruction of the plantation.[51]

In other words, the abolition of slavery, given the level of development of the social relations of Africans at that time, could not liberate them, for even though they were now free to sell their labour-power, the most fertile lands within

the social formation remained in bondage.[52] That is to say, slavery was legally terminated, but the means of production were still owned and controlled by a class of non-producers. Further, there was a connection between the sugar plantations de facto and economic servitude. In Guyana,

> . . . sugar created an authoritarian system in which labour was assembled to work together, intensively, to extract the sugar from the cane. Everybody in a sugar colony from the governor and the wealthiest merchant or landowner down to the meanest field hand was involved in the production of sugar for a distant market. The laws, the revenues, the communications - all were created for a single purpose; and unless the economic base was transformed everything would continue to function to serve that purpose, under a system of slavery and under a nominal system of free labour.[53]

## 4:3 The System of Indenture

> The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this, however, is founded the entire formation of the economic community which grows up out of production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form. It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers - a relation always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labour and thereby its social productivity - which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state. This does not prevent the same economic basis - the same from the standpoint of its main conditions - due to innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural environment, racial relations, external historical circumstances, etc., from showing infinite variations and gradations in appearance, which can be ascertained only by analysis of the empirically given circumstances.
>
> Karl Marx, Capital, Vol.3 (791-92)

The introduction of large scale migration to Guyana in the nineteenth century was seen by the colonial state in conjunction with the metropolitan bourgeoisie in Europe as a tangible solution to the structural problem of a labour shortage. When the process of immigration was introduced in 1834, the metropolitan colonial bourgeoisie in Britain and its subordinate agents in the colony, were exercising full control over all regions of the country. At the end of the transition period in 1838 by which time the labour market was restructured to accomodate new social and dependent relations, the peripheral social formation was characterised by three sets of predominant production relations: (a) private ownership and control of the means of production; (b) relations of domination-subordination engendered by the objective, immanent laws of capitalist development, by the conditions and manifestations of an international division of labour; and (c) private appropriation of the surplus labour. This third set of relations which composed the basis of exploitation in Guyana has been generally formulated by Emmanuel Terray in these terms:

> For exploitation to exist, it suffices that there be extortion, i.e. forced levy and appropriation of surplus labour by others, regardless of the purpose to which the product of this surplus labour is put, whether it be used for expanded reproduction of the mode of production, the immediate or conspicuous consumption of the non-producers, or whether it merely circulates under their control or is hoarded by them. In other words . . . even if the intensity and social effects of exploitation vary according to the use made of extorted surplus labour, the fact of exploitation itself is independent of such use.[54]

We shall show that the practice of immigration to Guyana constituted the basis for reproducing relations of ex-

ploitation. But as we have indicated when examining the slave mode of production, the relations of exploitation express production relations - production of surplus labour by direct producers which is appropriated by a class of non-producers - which of necessity have a relationship to class relations.[55] The immigrants to Guyana in the nineteenth century came from diverse parts of the world encompassing chiefly Portugal, India, China, Africa and other Caribbean countries. The first recorded number of 396 arrived in Guyana in 1838 from India, but immigrants continued to come throughout the century.

The system of indenture in Guyana was tantamount to semi-slavery. It contracted workers from outside the country to labour on the plantations for a number of years - usually five to ten - in return for a free passage and a portion of land after they had completed their tasks. These labourers, particularly the East Indians, practically saved the sugar industry from complete collapse. Although they were given the option of returning to their countries of origin at the completion of their service, we will presently see that the structural relations characteristic of the dependent social formation, Guyana, militated against any large scale emigration from Guyana after completion of duties. Migration, then, constituted a structural aspect of the peripheral formation and was linked also to the structure of the labour market. Hobsbawm in delineating the conjuncture within which immigration as a structural phenomenon assumed an important role, writes:

> Population movements and industrialisation go together, for the modern economic development

TABLE 3

Indentured Migrants Introduced into British Guiana from Various Sources, Migrants Returning to India and Immigrants from West Indian Islands, 1834-90

| Period | Indentured Migrants Introduced | | | | | | | | Migrants from the West Indies | Total Migrants |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | India | Madeira | Africa | China | Other Private Schemes | Total Introduced | Returning to India | Net Total Introduced | | |
| 1834-40 | 396 | 608 | 91 | - | 1,470 | 2,565 | - | 2,565 | 8,092 | 10,657 |
| 1841-45 | - | 5,601 | 5,829 | - | 568 | 11,998 | 482 | 11,516 | 4,378 | 15,894 |
| 1846-50 | 12,374 | 11,156 | 4,699 | - | - | 28,229 | - | 28,229 | 428 | 28,657 |
| 1851-55 | 9,981 | 6,544 | 994 | 647 | - | 15,377 | 1,908 | 13,469 | - | 13,469 |
| 1856-60 | 16,206 | 4,373 | 971 | 6,008 | - | 27,558 | 1,975 | 25,583 | - | 25,583 |
| 1861-65 | 15,654 | 226 | 1,476 | 5,975 | - | 23,331 | 1,316 | 22,015 | 6,848 | 28,863 |
| 1866-70 | 22,436 | 1,351 | - | - | - | 23,787 | 1,265 | 22,522 | 3,282 | 25,804 |
| 1871-75 | 24,355 | 1,120 | - | 388 | - | 25,863 | 3,620 | 22,243 | 8,827 | 31,070 |
| 1876-80 | 27,374 | 1,237 | - | 515 | - | 29,126 | 5,269 | 23,857 | 4,045 | 27,902 |
| 1881-85 | 20,500 | - | - | - | - | 20,500 | 7,335 | 13,165 | 4,143 | 17,308 |
| 1886-90 | 20,471 | - | - | - | - | 20,471 | 9,414 | 11,057 | 974 | 12,031 |
| TOTAL | 169,747 | 32,216 | 14,060 | 13,533 | 2,038 | 228,805 | 32,584 | 196,221 | 41,017 | 237,238 |

Source: Cited by G. W. Roberts and M. A. Johnson: 'Factors Involved in Immigration and Movements in the Working Force of Br. Guiana in The 19th Century', Social and Economic Studies, Vol.23 No.1, March, 1974, p. 69.

> of the world both required substantial shifts of people, made it technically easier and cheaper by means of new and improved communications, and of course enabled the world to maintain a much larger population. The mass uprooting of our period was neither unexpected nor without more modest precedents. It was certainly predictable in the 1830's and 1840's. Still, what had previously been an increasingly lively stream seemed suddenly to become a torrent . . . The void left by the banning of the slave-trade was to some extent being filled by transports of 'indentured' labour, mainly from India and China, whose conditions were scarcely better. One hundred and twenty-five thousand Chinese arrived in Cuba between 1853 and 1874. They were to create the Indian diasporas of Guyana and Trinidad of the Indian Ocean islands and Pacific, and the smaller Chinese colonies in Cuba, Peru and the British Caribbean.[56]

The rise of industrial capital in Britain drove the peasants off the land and by so doing created a cheap labour force, a class of proletarians, for industrial expansion. By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century Britain had unquestionably asserted itself as the leading industrial and commercial capitalist country in Europe. The proletariat had to work in factories in industrial towns thereby requiring tropical products such as tea, coffee, sugar, etc. for European workers and their families.[57] The requirements of the centre stimulated and expanded production of primary products in the periphery where the organic composition of capital was low; labour-intensive methods of production were employed, and where labour-force had been subjected to extra-economic coercion.[58]

The contradictions engendered by the decline of the West Indies in the 1830's and 1840's after slavery was abolished, were not totally surmounted in the early stages of indenture.

Some of the planters found difficulty in accepting a new system of social production, one whichwas based on the co-existence of wage-labour and indentured labour. The struggle between the planters and the colonial state, forced many planters to seek options abroad where some of them continued to make their fortunes in sugar, whilst others changed to coffee production which they thought would enhance their chances of making profit. This movement by both groups was away from the West Indies to other countries where plantations were established, namely, South Africa, Ceylon, Malaya, etc. And as the production of tropical crops expanded in many colonies, the demand for managers, overseers and other agents of the bourgeois classes of Europe escalated.[59]

Whilst conflicts emerged within the ruling class in Guyana, there were also class struggles between the freed slaves and the planters as the dominated group attempted to set up villages adjacent to the plantations along the coast. This movement to the villages was rapid, and it was estimated that out of an approximate total of 85,000 slaves recorded in the colony in 1834 only 19,939 indigenous Africans were residing on the estates in 1851.[60] The ruling class was very concerned with the migration patterns especially since an alternative supply of labour was not guaranteed at this juncture. They had some apprehension that Africans may move to the interior to develop villages instead of settling along the coast where the conditions were appropriate for the ruling class to induce the labourers to return to the plantations as wage-labourers.

The Africans, however, did not move to the interior region in any large numbers. Instead, they attempted to obtain lands along the coastal region despite the measures taken by the colonial state to block this advance.[61] The measures taken were in the form of manipulating prices of land but they have to be situated within the framework of the internal contradictions of Guyana at that time. Africans were able to obtain some small plots of land regardless of the repressive laws of the state chiefly because some owners of estates regarded the sale of private lands to Africans as a means to offset some of the financial debts which they had incurred after emancipation. Coupled with this, the Africans for their part, sought every opportunity to establish themselves as peasant cultivators with the lands which they had purchased:[62]

> . . . the freed slaves set themselves peacefully to purchase land in parts of the colony nearest to large cultivations . . . Twenty-five to fifty heads of families united and put their savings together. The sum reached ten, thirty and nearly eighty thousand dollars . . . they paid the whole or a large part of the price in cash and became proprietors of a property which they worked in shares or which they sub-divided into distinct lots.[63]

As we argued previously, the tendency to squat on Crown Lands in Guyana's interior was frustrated by the colonial state, yet by 1850 some Africans were able to squat on both sides of the Demerara. The squatters were engaged in petty commodity production, namely, fishing, the production of ground provisions, and small scale trading in timber, charcoal and firewood. These commodities were specifically produced for exchange; hence what

was obtained on the open market for them was used by the Africans to provide for their basic needs.[64]

As to indenture, the bulk of the immigrants to Guyana came from India; they were bound to the plantations for their period of service. But the basic determinant of this process was not merely the country of origin of the immigrants, although this is not to be obscured, but more importantly, the functions which immigrants had in a dependent social formation which was structured in dominance.

The primary function of immigrants in Guyana in the latter half of the nineteenth century was economic, that is, they were recruited to fill the places on the plantations which were left vacant after Africans were emancipated. The Industrial Revolution had made an impact on Guyana, for as early as 1805, the steam engine for crushing sugar-cane was introduced. The effect of this was an increase of sugar production. By 1814, for instance, production of sugar had reached a proportion of 14,000 tons annually.[65] The arrival of immigrants occurred at a time when the productive forces, though still inadequate and obsolete, had improved, in order to increase production.

Despite having a source of cheap labour from overseas, the ruling class was always confronted with the problem of Africans not being profoundly interested in wage-labour; they preferred subsistence cultivation, since Guyana has the space for this kind of activity. The Africans' aspirations did not get very far, as the planters 'deliberately destroyed the fruit trees to deprive the emancipated slaves of a source of susten-

ance which competed with employment on the sugar plantation'.[66] The point which is worth making is that in Guyana at that time, the dominant social relations governing the plantations structure permeated the entire society, i.e. the ruling class exercised its dominance over the entire formation. The specific manner in which places were reproduced in the Guyanese social formation created antagonisms between the Portuguese and the Africans which were conditioned by their objective relationship to the means of production:

> An abundant supply of cheap immigrant labour brought with it other problems. The Africans who formerly obtained part-time work on the sugar plantations, now had to depend almost entirely on their own farms for subsistence. By this time the Portuguese had practically monopolised the retail trade and many were in the wholesale business as well. This was made possible because credit facilities were liberally granted to the Portuguese while they were severely restricted for the Africans. The Portuguese imported cheap goods and assisted in reducing the cost of living, but the arrival of cheap foodstuffs also lowered the prices of farm produce.[67]

Chinese immigrants also arrived in Guyana after a programme for immigration had been firmly established by the colonial state, so that between 1853 and 1879, 14,002 Chinese immigrants arrived. Large scale immigration was not confined to Guyana. In fact, immigration had become a basic feature of the whole Caribbean: Trinidad, Jamaica, Grenada, Cuba, etc. It has been estimated that the total immigration to the Caribbean in the nineteenth century from Africa, Asia and Madeira exceeded one million people, or approximately 10,000 people a year. The massive use of immigrant labour in the Caribbean continued throughout the nineteenth century.[68]

After 1838, significant changes started to occur within the state; these changes were an attempt to establish the domination of the capitalist mode of production in the entire colonial formation. The transition from the slave system to a new system of production based on a combination of free wage labour and indenture created the basis for its increasingly important role. During this early period of indenture the dominant production relations which pervaded the social formation during slavery were not structurally transformed in their entirety as superstructural elements (political and ideological) of the slave mode were conserved and reproduced.

The bulk of indentured immigrants were separated from their means of production and were incorporated into a structure which was dominated by a class of non-labourers. Effective possession of property and the most fertile land was in the hands of this class, thus the agents of the ruling class were in a potent position to set the means of production in motion. But some changes in the colonial state did necessitate an expanded bureaucracy.

> The growth of central government activity and services to replace the paternalistic rule of the planters necessitated an increase in the size of the administration, and reforms in the methods of taxation and in franchise were now necessary . . . The Colonial Office treated British Guiana (i.e. Guyana) as a special kind of Crown Colony in which the Secretary of State represented the interests of the unrepresented sections of the population. Despite the influence of the planter group, the power of the Crown was used to great effect in pushing through limited developments in social services and in ensuring the administration of some kind of justice, but even the Colonial Office accepted the view that the future and prosperity depended upon the sugar industry.[69]

The relationship of the private planters to the colonial state was not without conflict particularly since the practice

of the British bourgeoisie was to make the colony self-sufficient by refusing to inject large sums of capital into it.[70] This aspect of its policy was especially evident in Guyana in the 1840's, a period when it was necessary to obtain capital to finance the immigration schemes.

The private planters, for instance, attempted to raise the necessary capital for immigration purposes but their efforts were blocked by the colonial state; in effect this meant that the metropolitan bourgeoisie was not prepared to support their objective.[71] It must be re-emphasised that the crisis in the sugar industry created by the new relations of production was instrumental in determining the policies of the metropolitan ruling class towards the colony. But these policies, according to Kay, were characterised generally by a multiplicity of ambiguities. At one moment the metropolitan bourgeoisie encouraged capital in the colonies and when contradictions arose there was profound reticence to allow large-scale investments in them.[72]

This tendency of the metropolitan bourgeoisie and its subordinate agents in the colony of assuming an ambivalent position with respect to the social formation, was a clear manifestation of the class struggles which developed within the international conjuncture at the end of the slave period. Concerning Guyana particularly, the position which the colonial state had taken previously vis-à-vis the planters on the question of capital investment in the immigration programme, was subsequently changed as fractions of the British bourgeoisie were in conflict over its economic viability, and they also struggled over free trade. The strata that struggled for free trade were victorious, but it is pertinent to mention that what

free trade in reality meant 'was not free trade between the colonies and the rest of the world as much as free trade between British capital in the colonies and capital in Britain. It was a policy aimed to serve narrow sectional interests dressed up in general terms'.[73]

Meanwhile a fraction of the bourgeoisie in Britain struggled effectively for immigration as a form of cheap labour-power to expand sugar production in Guyana, and to overcome the social dislocations which were produced by the dissolution of the slave mode of production. The result was a new policy which was implemented by the Colonial Office in 1843, and which entailed a system of

> . . . state-controlled and state-conducted immigration from West Africa The following year a similar policy was extended to Asia. Immigrants were to be carried by ships chartered by the British government . . . During the same year (1844) Lord Stanley advised Trinidad, Jamaica, and British Guiana that they would be allowed to raise loans for immigration (up to £250,000 for Trinidad, £500,000 each for Jamaica and British Guiana), which could be secured by the colonial revenues.[74]

In Guyana, during the period of indenture the dominant mode of production was capitalist, which was combined in a very uneven way with pre-capitalist relations characterised by the relations underlying the system of indenture and also by subsistence farming which peasant producers were engaged in. But other economic forms were also reproduced within the social formation, for example, petty commodity production. But as we will soon demonstrate these pre-capitalist modes of production com-

prised the material basis for the reproduction of capitalist relations of production, and also for the reproduction of the class struggles between the two principal classes, a class of non-producers that was dominant economically, politically, and ideologically, and a class of producers, i.e., emancipated slaves, indentured immigrants and indigenous Indians, that was dominated within these three spheres.

In order to reproduce the relations of domination - subordination in Guyana, it was necessary to maintain an inflexible 'stratification system' which blocked the development of the productive forces. In other words, the socio-economic and political composition of the labour force explains partly the reason for reproducing a rigid hierarchical structure and the uneven social processes in the Guyanese social formation.

If we were to examine the overall structure of the Guyanese social formation during the epoch of slavery, it can be postulated that the social division of labour was comprised mainly of two antagonistic classes, a class of slave owners and a class of slaves. But these two groups involved in the process of production were, in addition to their class determination, white and black respectively. Thus, the class struggles engendered by their opposing positions within the structure of production also had a superstructural element, racism, whose ideological mediation assumed a pervasive character. In fact, the ideology of racism and its concomitant characteristics sustained the system of exploitation and dependence. Further, within the plantation economy there developed a middle stratum, i.e.

mulattoes, whose class determination within the productive structure was also important since it was a contributory factor which prevented the direct producers from cancelling out the predominant social relations.

The structure of indenture, however, and the objective positions of the principal groups in it, aggravated the socio-economic contradictions between labour and capital, particularly when the labour market was affected and had to adjust to the logic of international capitalism and the contradictions of the capitalist world market.

The immigrants who were recruited after 1838 from India, Portugal, the West Indies, Africa and China (see Table 3 above) were bound to the plantation during their time of service. They were recruited on the capitalist market and functioned as labourers in Guyana. Within this colonial formation the nature of the production system was structured in such a way that within the division of labour a tiny minority monopolized the surplus product. This class of non-producers, Europeans, owned and controlled the means of production, hence they decided on the distribution of the surplus. In other words, the distribution of the social wealth produced by the indentured labourers (and wage-labourers, i.e., freed slaves) coincided with the social relations of production within the plantation economy:

> The so-called distribution relations, then, correspond to and arise from historically determined specific social forms of the process of production and mutual relations entered into by men in the reproduction process of human life. The historical character of these distribution relations is the historical character of production relations, of which they express merely one aspect.[75]

The capitalist ruling class paid meagre wages to the producers giving higher rates to those who performed 'tasks' which required brute physical strength. Those who did the digging, clearing and planting operations fell into this category and were the best paid. Those who were not included in this first group composed the weeding gang whose task was to clear the growth around the young cane. This latter group included women and men who were not needed for the first group; in addition there was a group composed of convalescents and youngsters. Despite these diverse categories, workers were paid according to the tasks completed on a day-to-day basis.[76]

The nature of the production system was not fulfilling the human needs of the workers since the system was by definition oppressive, a form of semi-slavery. It was based on a very arbitrary practice which curtailed wages of workers whose tasks were not completed at the end of the day. The contradictory aspect of this relationship, too, was that the labourer did not have any safeguards within the system of social relations which imposed limits on maximum hours of work per day. Consequently the hours expended on the plantations were enormous and from the 1830's when the sugar industry was plagued by crises to the early 1900's the wages obtained by the direct producers were a shilling a day or five shillings a week. This remuneration however, is somewhat deceptive especially since it represents peak rather than average wages.[77]

> . . . these wages probably represent an overestimate of how much was paid to the labourers, for they had to accept payment of wages in arrears, while they were subject to stoppages of an almost arbitrary sort, for incomplete work, breakages,

> items in lieu of pay, and fines for absence from work . . . The custom of keeping back the pay of the estate workers, at least for one month, but more often for two or three months, represents another consequence of the background of slavery: the employers did not really accept an obligation to give their people wages.[78]

The essential difference between the positions of Africans and the indentured labourers lay in their respective relationship to the dominant relations of production. Whilst Africans were free to sell or withold their labour-power, indentured labourers were bound to the plantations by contract. In this 'transitional' period characterised by a combination of modes of production, the subordinate social relations were not allowed to develop since these relations were overdetermined by the internal and external contradictions of the capitalist mode of production. To be more precise, there was no real development of the productive forces in Guyana because it was necessary at that time for the ruling class of non-producers to reproduce the conditions necessary to insert the colonial formation into the dominant structure of world capitalism. This was done by keeping the plantation economy largely oriented to the export of primary products. As a result, the relations of exploitation were ensured precisely because the relations of production were not stimulating the productive forces. The development of the productive forces was further distorted by the reliance on cheap, unskilled labour which was obtained from other peripheral parts of the world. And with the availability of an external source of cheap labour-power it was possible to depress the wage level within Guyana thereby making it very difficult for Africans to cover the cost of land for subsistence cultivation.

It is particularly significant that in Guyana after 1850, immigrants arrived rapidly to labour on the plantations after a temporary suspension in the early 1840's resulting from an epidemic in Guyana in 1841.[79] The colonial state was playing an increasingly important role during this period as the social formation was penetrated by capitalist relations, and was integrated into a system of production-relations dominated by Britain.

Despite the immigration programme being fairly well established after 1850, the tendency was for labour-power to be recruited primarily from India. There are several reasons for this. First, Indian labourers had some knowledge of agriculture. Second, Portuguese immigrants were declining as a result of deaths from plantation labour; and also from smallpox, cholera and yellow fever. Between 1850 and 1851, 8,816 died out of a population of 16,744.[80] There was also a large proportion of immigrants from China beginning in 1853 but it was only for a short period, thus after 1865 immigrants from Portugal and China in general declined.

As was the pattern when Europeans migrated to the New World in the seventeenth century, the greatest proportion of immigrants to Guyana from Portugal was drawn from the oppressed classes: peasants, labourers, unskilled workers, the 'marginalised' masses, and those whose existence was dependent on the fruits of productive labour through such activities as thefts, criminal acts, extortion and beggary In Guyana, however, these groups saw an opportunity to accumulate wealth, an opportunity

to assume a formidable position vis-à-vis the African, Amerindians and East Indian masses within the structure of production, though one which was in subordination to the dominant classes in the colonial formation. From as early as 1843, there was the tendency among Portuguese to move away from the plantation into more lucrative commercial activity. The colonial state, from an economic standpoint, was not prepared to block this movement away from the plantations, chiefly because their productive capacity was highly questionable for an industry which had to be competitive on the world market. The deaths were far too frequent and it was felt that in the circumstances, large supplies of cheap labour from India could fill the places which were being reproduced in the social formation.

Since labour is the source of all wealth, the possibility for capital accumulation by the capitalist class lay in the increased supplies from India given the problems which the Portuguese were experiencing with plantation labour in Guyana, and also the fact that the bulk of Chinese immigrants arrived in Guyana over a ten-year period. The places which were reproduced in the concrete conjuncture were better served by Indian labour power. It is within this socio-economic context that large numbers of immigrants from India arrived in Guyana in the second half of the nineteenth century. By this time immigration had become an integral aspect and a structural feature of the colonial economy as the dependent social formation became integrated into the full capitalist system.

The plantation system had become linked to the lives of a substantial part of the work force, producing a seasonal crop,

paying poor wages, employing semi-slave and free labour power, using obsolete productive forces and relying on the state apparatuses for perpetuating and maintaining class disparities. These social relations, however, were invariably affected by the concrete struggles between the main social classes and class fractions. A clear example of struggle inside the social formation was apparent during the period of indenture when the African being dominated ideologically and oppressed by the dominant relations of production, perceived the immigrant labourer as a threat to his existence, consequently he displayed much hostility towards the immigrant worker believing that he (the immigrant worker) was objectively placed in a position which increased the rate of exploitation generally and also the rate of surplus value which was appropriated by the ruling class.

It cannot be denied, however, that the reason for the African posing the problem in ideological terms was directly related to the low level of development of social relations among the oppressed masses in the social formation as a whole. It is not surprising, then, that a tendency also developed among Indian workers to articulate problems produced by the dominant relations of production in ideological terms. Ernest Mandel however, demonstrates, that it is important to adhere to the fundamental principle of class analysis in delineating the relationship between the individual and the historical process; a formulation which is also appropriate for understanding the relationship between the Africans and other indentured immigrants in Guyana:

> We do not deny that every individual can be considered as a relevant object of study, that his life-process can be dialectically examined and explained. But obviously, what we are practising in such theoretical activity is individual psychology, not sociology. This procedure is all right as long as we are dealing with individuals who play only a marginal role in the historical process; . . . one cannot explain the historical process as a simple interaction of individual psychologies, as a myriad of intertwining 'case histories'. What this understanding demands is a conceptual <u>social</u> mediation: that of social class. World history is not a history of conflicting individuals (although these individuals are very real and sometimes very important); world history is a history of <u>class struggle</u>. The combination of individual aspirations, needs, strivings and ideas which are relevant for the understanding of history is their combination in social classes. The conflicts which shape history in civilized life are the conflicts between social classes or inside social classes.[81]

In other words, the conflicts between these social groups were a manifestation of the class struggles produced by the structural changes in the colonial economy, and the organisation of the labour process. But the way in which these conflicts were articulated tended to conceal their real basis which was rooted in the <u>social relations of production and social division of</u> labour.

The immigrants - and it is important to point out here that our emphasis is on the East Indians who were confined to the plantations - like the Africans before them, were not a part of the dominant community in which they were forced to produce. They were uprooted and recruited from their environment to produce surplus for a capitalist class under servile conditions.

As capitalist relations of production developed in Guyana

in the second half of the nineteenth century, a commercial class composed of small shopkeepers, petty traders, vendors of food and hardware, and moneylenders, emerged.[82] This class of small traders consisted mainly of the Portuguese and Chinese strata who concentrated their activities in the urban centers of Georgetown and New Amsterdam. The important point to note, however, is that these class fractions were weak and dependent on the capitalist ruling class for their survival since this class was in firm control of the economy and the state apparatuses. The objective position of the Portuguese stratum within the process of production has been neatly summed up by Despres:

> The Portuguese, unlike the Africans and the East Indians, did not establish themselves as independent peasant farmers when they left the sugar estates. Instead, they became peddlers, hawkers, pawnbrokers, and small shopkeepers. By 1851, when an ordinance was passed providing for the licensing of all shopkeepers, the Portuguese had virtually taken over the retail trade of the colony. Fifty-eight per cent of the shops in Georgetown and fifty-four per cent of those in New Amsterdam were licensed to Portuguese. Portuguese merchants also owned sixty-five per cent of the shops licensed in rural areas. Over the years, many of these small businesses were expanded into large operations. At the same time some of the profits made in retail trade were invested in other enterprises. In the 1880's, for example, the Negro pork-knockers who carried out expeditions to the goldfields were primarily financed by Portuguese merchants. Similarly, Portuguese merchants also provided much of the capital needed to develop the diamond and timber industries.[83]

It is characteristic of a dominated and dependent social formation whose production relations are chiefly oriented for export, that the internal class relations would reflect the socio-economic contradictions which pervade the social formation. There was some evidence of this in Guyana during the era of in-

denture as the Portuguese were slowly evolving into a petty bourgeois class.

The Portuguese stratum was able to expand its commercial activities primarily because of the assistance which this group received from the colonial state. This assistance was in the form of credit from the colonial ruling class; it composed an avenue which the African, for instance, could not have exploited. The availability of credit to the Portuguese and its refusal to the African, was the mechanism which was used by the ruling class to reproduce the relations in which the African stood to capital, and at the same time it constituted the means for excluding him from competing with this stratum.[84] The consequence of these struggles between the Portuguese and the African was profound hostility between these two factions which culminated in a riot in 1856. Of course, this display of hostility was only a tangible expression of a more deep-rooted conflict between the rulers and the ruled:

> Practically every Portuguese shop in the country was destroyed before the rioting was brought under control. Following this disturbance, the government recovered the cost of compensation to Portuguese merchants by issuing a special Registration Tax. The tax was levied on the whole population, but the burden of its payment fell heaviest on the African peasants. This, needless to say, contributed little to the improvement of relationships between the two groups.[85]

Within the social division of labour, the Chinese also extricated themselves from coercive plantation labour as soon as their contracts were terminated. Despite being somewhat cognisant of the simple techniques of agriculture, they opted for other occupations such as pork-knockers, balata bleeders etc.

Some also found employment in the timber industry and the civil service whilst others entered the retail trading sector in the urban centres, in large rural villages or in the peripheral regions of the plantations.[86] When the labour market was stable, i.e. when the supply of labour power to Guyana was assuming a regular form, sugar production was increased. Between 1846-1850, Guyana produced 26,780 tons of sugar and between 1866-1870, 61,083 tons were produced. Indeed, output continued to raise until 1890, and between the years 1886 and 1890, Guyana produced 115,184 tons of sugar for the export market.[87]

The colonial state was playing a very important role during this period of expansion. It was able, through its practices to regulate commercial transactions among metropolitan-based export-import firms, i.e., between the commercial bourgeoisies. It regulated shipping and trade, maintained a garrison, and organised the repressive state apparatus (police, prisons, etc.).[88] Besides, it played a large role in almost every sphere of the social formation, directing many infrastructural projects. In short, the function of the state was to maintain the unity and cohesion of the dependent social formation, by concentrating and sanctioning the dominant relations of production.[89] Smith has elaborated the specificity of these functions thus:

> During the early part of the nineteenth century (the State's) . . . sphere of activity increased to include such matters as the better regulation of roads and bridges, the control and policing of Georgetown, and so on, but the most important extension in its functions arose as the consequence of the various measures initiated by Parliament in England. After the passing of the Emancipation

> Act these functions increased considerably. Provision had to be made for the establishment of a paid magistracy to replace the old Justices of the Peace; an expanded police force was necessary; new bases of taxation had to be devised to replace the head-tax on slaves and to provide for the greater number of government services; . . . central government regulations were necessary . . . in the administration of . . . communities . . . education and health; and (the government) became deeply involved in the various schemes for the importation of labourers for work on the sugar estates.[90]

As can be derived from our discussion to this point, the class structure during the period of indenture in Guyana in the nineteenth century assumed the following pattern.[91] First, there was the metropolitan bourgeoisie in Europe, a class that in the final analysis exercised full control over the colonial state. Second, within the dominated and dependent social formation itself there was a group of agents, i.e. non-producers, who disposed of the means of production (i.e. capitalist planters, 'overseers', etc.). Because of the important role which the colonial state had to play, it was necessary to have a group of state functionaries who directed the state apparatuses (e.g. governor, state bureaucrats, etc.), and who were closely linked to the group of non-producers. Third, there was the petty bourgeois strata of freed mulatto slaves, lower level state functionaries in the civil service, in the police force, prisons, together with the strata of Portuguese, Chinese, and to a lesser extent, African petty traders. Finally, there was a group of producers - urban labourers, i.e. emancipated Africans, indentured agricultural producers (primarily the Indian masses), peasant farmers, artisans, and of course, indigenous Indians.

All these agents occupied objective places within the social division of labour, places which were always determined by the class struggles within the concrete social formation. For instance, during the epoch of slavery, the principal struggles within the social conjuncture were between a class of slave-owners and a class of slaves. The distribution of agents of production within Guyana was the effect of a specific articulation of modes of production which were combined in a hierarchical order, and dominated by merchant capital. The roles of the other strata (i.e. governor, state bureaucrats, etc.) were always determined by the course of the struggles between the two opposing classes. During the period of indenture these struggles were intensified as the contradictions between capital and labour became acute. The relations between indentured immigrants and the state apparatuses were antagonistic in all their manifestations. Immigrants were employed to produce in a social formation where capitalist exploitation combined with exploitation through bondage:

> . . . planters wanted their coolies at work, in hospital, or in gaol: the system was designed to place a high proportion of the Indians in gaol or under some other penalty or punishment. The system was operated by making the coolie live a life similar to that of a convict . . . Even when the period of indenture was completed . . . the ex-indentured Indians were required to carry an identifying document, usually called a <u>livret</u> which described the place and nature of their work. Absence from the estate without a pass . . . was an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment . . . The award of punishment . . . was arrogated to the planters as their right, derived from the days of slavery. Beating or flogging occurred . . . (and) the cattle whip was employed.[92]

In Guyana, Europeans were identified with private property, domination and advancement, i.e. they were seen as the groups which set the means of production in motion, and whose objective function in the process of production and in the capitalist international division of labour contributed to the poorly developed productive forces in Guyana. By contrast the direct producers (Africans, Indians, etc.), were identified with inferiority, subordination and objectified labour. Thus, the structural position of these principal classes within the colonial economy engendered internal contradictions (economic, political, and ideological) between on the one hand the oppressed masses, and on the other, the class that extended its domination throughout the social formation, i.e., a class which was linked to the capitalist world economy and one which was protected by the capitalist class(es) in Europe.

The indentured labourers were forced to work for six days a week. The East Indian masses formed a 'reserve army' of labour in the class structure and therefore had an effect on the class struggles between Africans and the non-producing strata of Europeans residing in Guyana. By having an adequate supply of India labour, it was possible, given the historical development of the dominant relations of production, to undercut wages of Africans who continued to work on the plantations or were forced by circumstances to return to them so as to provide for their basic needs. By wages being depressed the planters were in a formidable position to increase the rate of profit. Generally, the class relations exacerbated relations

between ethnic groups in Guyana; this was due to the disparities in the distribution of social agents in the structure of production:

> (The) early division of labour occupationally and geographically according to race tended to prevent integration and to arouse racial hostility. (The source of conflict), was the division of plantation labour into 'field' and 'factory'. The Indians, the 'field slaves' were the . . . lowest paid; the Africans, the 'house slaves', who provided the factory labour and the domestic retinue were . . . better paid. The 'mixed' races were the . . . best paid, and constituted the bulk of the emerging middle class.[93]

Furthermore, during the second half of the nineteenth century when the system of indenture was imposed with much rapidity, the functions of the state were not only to contribute to class divisions by sanctioning the exploitative relations between the planters and the direct producers, but also to contribute to internal divisions between a class of producers operating under forced labour (i.e. indentured Indians), and a class of producers operating under conditions of free wage-labour (i.e. Africans). Therefore, the divisions in the occupational structure were only an aspect of the exploitative social relations and the concrete struggles inside the social formation; these relations also encapsulated political and ideological forms of domination and subordination. It is precisely the different groups' relationships to the means of the production within the social division of labour, together with the property relations and the mode of extraction of surplus labour that best explain the various struggles in Guyana during that specific period (i.e. of indenture).

These relationships immediately pose a number of very pertinent questions in connection with the analytical distinction between the 'free' labourer and the labourer who is 'forced' to labour under conditions of commodity production for the world market. We have argued, thus far, that after 1838 in Guyana there was a transformation in the social relations of production which was brought about chiefly by (a) the triumph of industrial capital at the centre over merchant capital, subordinating the latter to its own mode of functioning; (b) the disjuncture in Guyana brought about by the abolition of the slave trade and slavery (c) improvement in the productive forces in order to produce increased quantities of sugar at diminishing prices on the capitalist world market, thereby increasing the rate of profit; and (d) a system of indentured labour.[94]

Africans, having been emancipated, were in a position to sell their labour-power as a commodity on the market. The conditions under which labour-power is sold as a commodity on the market by the individaul producer, has been posited by Marx along these lines:

> . . . labour power can appear upon the market as a commodity, only if, and so far as, its possessor, the individual whose labour-power it is, offers it for sale, or sells it, as a commodity. In order that he may be able to do this, he must have it at his disposal, must be the untrammelled owner of his capacity for labour, i.e., of his person.[95]

In other words, in a social formation where the capitalist mode of production is the dominant feature of the system and where labour-power has become a commodity, the worker sells to the capitalist not his labour but his <u>labour-power</u>, 'his

capacity to work for a given period of time'.[96] Under determinate social conditions, then, the worker is in a position 'to transfer it (i.e. his labour-power') from one master to another, to move freely in search of the best market for his labour-power. Or, in other words, he is not subject to non-economic coercions'.[97] On the other hand,

> Forced labour economies, however, are not only subject to a variety of forms of appropriation of the surplus (slavery, rent, tribute, share-cropping, debt-peonage, etc). They are also characterised by a multitude of different forms of non-economic coercion. It might be possible however, to group these roughly as repressive (organised physical repression) and ideological. In some instances, the state itself is the prime enforcer of such non-economic coercion by means of legislation backed by ideology and enforced by its monopoly of the legitimate means of force. In other situations, the role of the state itself may be weak in comparison with the repressive or ideological weapons in other hands: of local agents (the feudal lord, the slavemaster), of the colonial metropolis (generating an ethos of racism) or even through manipulation of the institutions of the direct producers themselves.[98]

Thus, in the transitional conjuncture elements and relations of the slave mode of production were combined with those of peripheral capitalism and these elements and relations generally characterised the structure of the social formation in Guyana. By assuming a transitional form, this meant that within the social formation some, but not all, of the conditions of existence of each mode of production were satisfied.[99] For instance, we have argued previously that there are several modes of production coexisting in a concrete social formation but in their specific combination the social formation is structured in dominance, that is, one mode of production dominates the subordinate modes by inserting them into the mechanism of its

own reproduction. Let us examine more closely the social formation during the epoch of indenture.

It is possible to distinguish in Guyana during the period of indenture a variety of modes of production integrated into a complex of social relations and forces of production dominated by capitalism. First, there was subsistence cultivation by peasant producers using family labour, poor productive forces, and a simple division of labour. The major groups engaged in this form of activity were Africans and Indians who left the sugar estates to reside in villages which were peripheral to the plantations, and also the indigenous Amerindians whose base was in the interior regions of Guyana. Second, there were producers involved in petty commodity production which is a form of self-organised activity. These producers were engaged in production of commodities for exchange.

> Their use value lies in the fact that they can be sold on the open market and the money used by the producer to buy subsistence necessities such as cloth for clothing, building materials, . . . cigarettes as well as food. In addition the cash earned in this way is needed to pay the government tax.[100]

It is important to make a distinction between independent commodity production and petty capitalism. This distinction is a crucial one especially when capitalist relations of production begin to penetrate the heartof the social formation. Under these conditions, it is possible to accumulate money on the local market which can be used for other purposes beyond subsistence needs. If such a situation arises we have objectively the conditions being established for petty capitalist production,

but then this mode of organisation will be governed by the laws of motion of capital (e.g. competition, concentration, accumulation, etc.). With independent or petty commodity production, however, the emphasis is on subsistence and not on accumulation and the final products of labour have the stamp of the individual producers on them.[101] It was very difficult for the formation of an indigenous capitalist class in Guyana during indenture since any group which displayed a potential for capital accumulation was always at the mercy of the colonial state which protected the bourgeoisie's interests. And it is important to add that the European bourgeoisie and its agents in the colony controlled the access to the raw materials (e.g. transport, shipping, finance), the most fertile soil in the country (i.e. plantations); they controlled private property, the cities and ports, and above all, the labour-power of a sizeable portion of the population. For instance, the capitalists through the use of force and other coercive measures were able to determine how labour-power should be used as labour to produce sugar for the European market.

The third mode of production which permeated the Guyanese social formation during indenture was capitalist consisting of workers being free to sell their labour-power to a class of capitalists for wages. That is, the bulk of the producers on the plantations were 'wage-slaves' in the sense that they were separated from their means of production, had no control over the products of their labour, and were subjected to various forms of exploitation, domination and dependence. Although

there were producers who were in a position to withhold their labour-power from the market, to do so would have resulted in starvation and the perpetuation of backward social relations. It is particularly significant that the plantation owners with the assistance of the state apparatuses at times were able to prevent producers who left the estates, from reaping ground provisions which they had planted and they also stopped fishing in trenches belonging to the estates.[102]

Throughout the nineteenth century, Guyana's history had been characterised by a movement away from the plantations; as both Africans and Indians moved to villages the state reproduced the places on the sugar estates to be filled by more Asian immigrants. This measure ensured a greater extraction of the surplus product from the direct producers. The figures below (Table 4) are indicative of the population movement throughout the late nineteenth century: that of movement away from the estates; and that of large concentrations of East Indians on them, who produced under exploitative conditions which were sanctioned by the repressive laws of the state.

The movement to the villages and the problems associated with it were always compounded and exacerbated by the internal and external contradictions of the capitalist mode of production. The class of merchants and planters was able to maintain its hegemonic position with the assistance of British capital, and by exercising its domination over the social formation, in effect it was also trying to establish itself as a powerful social force within the international division of labour.

TABLE 4

Total and East Indian Populations on Sugar Estates and on Villages, Settlements and Farms, Proportions of East Indians, for Three Counties of British Guiana, 1861-91

| Census Year | Sugar Estate Population | | Population on Villages, Farms and Settlements | | Proportion % East Indian on | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | East Indian | Total | East Indian | Sugar Estates | Villages, Farm Settlements |
| | | | Demerara | | | |
| 1861 | 25,164 | 11,830 | 37,051 | 1,917 | 47.0 | 5.2 |
| 1871 | 39,696 | 26,177 | 46,554 | 1,562 | 65.9 | 3.4 |
| 1881 | 51,156 | 31,520 | 61,112 | 6,908 | 61.6 | 11.3 |
| 1891 | 56,749 | 44,800 | 54,864 | 13,188 | 78.9 | 24.0 |
| | | | Essequibo | | | |
| 1861 | 12,996 | 5,853 | 12,577 | 861 | 45.0 | 6.8 |
| 1871 | 16,547 | 10,549 | 18,575 | 721 | 63.8 | 3.9 |
| 1881 | 18,366 | 11,625 | 27,186 | 4,673 | 63.3 | 17.2 |
| 1891 | 18,868 | 14,463 | 25,993 | 8,846 | 76.7 | 34.0 |
| | | | Berbice | | | |
| 1861 | 8,954 | 4,798 | 15,165 | 206 | 53.6 | 1.4 |
| 1871 | 11,616 | 7,813 | 18,504 | 453 | 67.3 | 2.4 |
| 1881 | 14,712 | 9,273 | 24,325 | 2,889 | 63.0 | 11.9 |
| 1891 | 14,713 | 12,509 | 24,756 | 6,437 | 85.0 | 26.0 |

Source: G. W. Roberts and M. A. Johnson, op. cit., p. 81.

But the paradoxical aspect of capitalist development on a world scale was that merchant capital having been eliminated in Europe did not have such an experience in the colonial peripheries. Indeed, the objective conditions under which it functioned in the dominated and dependent peripheries were different. Their economies were externally oriented, and were imposed and dominated by the centre. In these circumstances, the dominance of merchant capital over these social formations was a much more powerful one, as these social formations did not comprise self-centered and integrated systems; thus it gave rise to a 'sharp rupture' in the international conjuncture. This is how Kay puts it:

> . . . merchant capital in the underdeveloped world does not have local roots but originated from the developed countries The underdeveloped countries were drawn into the world market in a way quite different from the developed countries. They were the colonised not the colonisers, and of all the many consequences of this fact one stands out. Where the destructive depredations of merchant capital were controlled in their homelands by the state and the powerful social classes represented within it, there was no force to withstand it overseas. Wherever it went sooner or later it broke down all opposition and pursued its interests in a completely unrestrained fashion. Whereas in Britain, for example, merchant capital could only operate within definite political limits which recognised other social interests . . . In (the periphery) . . . no such limits existed . . . The result was not the relatively slow transformation of the economic structure on the basis of which a revolutionary reconstruction of the social and political order could eventually take place; but a sharp rupture in the process of historical development . . The degree of social incoherence that arose would have made the establishment of industrial capitalism impossible even if this had been historically practical . . . What it made essential, was external colonial domination, either direct or indirect . . . [103]

The principal objective of the state and the planters was to increase sugar production and overcome the tendency

towards the decline in the rate of profit. But the role of sugar in the Caribbean had been changing since the late eighteenth century when the British West Indies lost its monopoly because of increasing competition on the world market. For example, there was competition from Brazil, Cuba, Java, Mauritius, etc.[104]

Another crucial factor which challenged the British West Indian monopoly was the introduction of beet sugar by European countries. Its introduction and subsequent development on the world market were phenomenal. Between 1859 and 1860 the production of beet sugar on a world scale amounted to 451,584 tons. The impact of beet sugar on the system of world production-relations was tremendous since this figure represented

> . . . one quarter of the world's total sugar production, slightly more than one-third of the world's total cane production, slightly less than two-thirds of the total Caribbean production. In 1894-1895 total world beet production amounted to 4,725,800 tons, more than ten times as much as in 1859; it was three-fifths of the world's total sugar production, one-third more than the world's cane production, three and a quarter times the total Caribbean production.[105]

Indeed, this rapid increase in beet sugar production was an instrumental factor in the development of the productive forces and corresponding social relations of Europe. Its importance to capitalist development has been formulated by Williams in this way:

> The development of the European beet sugar industry was more dramatic than the striking developments which had taken place in the Caribbean and, in their day, astounded the world. The European beet sugar industry represented the triumph of science and technology. It was the great school of scientific

> agriculture. Where the Caribbean planter remained dependent on the man with the hoe, the beet cultivator introduced deep ploughing . . . Beet introduced a new element into the agricultural rotation, and the methods it required stimulated a vast increase in the yield of cereals. Well adapted to small holdings, the industry was based on a separation of the agricultural and industrial phases, brought winter employment to the countryside, checked the drift to the towns, and provided an enormous quantity of cattle feed.[106]

In the meantime, in Guyana a period of transition to peripheral capitalism was also characterised by the development of the productive forces. In the sugar industry, there were improvements in cultivation techniques, partly facilitated by Britain's industrial dominance and the growing need for better mechanisms for the colonial appropriation of the surplus product. Steam engines, cane carriers, improved transportation and communication systems comprised the basis of the advance. Moreover, these changes were regarded as essential to enhance the export process, and for the industry to remain a profitable undertaking. The changes in the techniques of fertilization and irrigation which were introduced into the sugar industry in Guyana under British rule were sufficient for Guyana to be easily regarded as having, after emancipation, the best cultivation and transportation systems throughout the British West Indies.[107]

The question to be posed at this moment relates to the structural position of the Indian masses after leaving the oppressive conditions of plantation labour. Although not being able to leave the plantations until the 1870's yet they, unlike the Africans who preceded them, were able to become a class of peasants with less difficulty than their fellow workers. Given

their specificity at this juncture within the structure of production, what factors were instrumental in the formation of an Indian peasantry?

Despres explicates the relationship of these two groups to the dominant relations of production in order to prove that the contradictions of the colonial economy had an effect on the social organisation of these groups:

> The government . . . did not relax its efforts to conserve the colony's labour resources by establishing an independent peasantry among the East Indians. Crown lands continued to be made available to those Indians who wished to purchase them Plantations continued to be purchased for organising land-settlement schemes . . . The Indian peasantry, in effect, was created by the colonial government in British Guiana. Because of government policies, the Indian peasants were able to avoid most of the difficulties that beset the African peasantry. The land-settlement schemes, for example, were provided with governmental aid and governmental supervision. Unlike the plantations purchased by former slaves, the land-settlement schemes were kept in fairly good repair. Also because of governmental supervision, the problems of land fragmentation that prevented the Africans from effectively developing a cash crop economy did not exist for most Indian peasants.[108]

Given the 'laws of motion' of capitalist development and the 'sharp rupture' in the international conjuncture produced by the rise of industrial capital in Europe, the plantation economy experienced some structural changes. The sugar producer had the last differential in British duties removed around 1846 hence the Guyanese economy had to compete in the world market even with those areas of the world which still employed slave labour. The national ruling class was able to overcome a series of difficulties by reducing wages in the colony, and by developing the productive forces. Thus, sugar

production rose from an annual average of 56,802 hogheads in 1855-57 to 96,092 in 1870-72.[109] This trend continued into the 1880's despite price and market difficulties. The development of the productive forces ensured the increase in production, and in addition to having an external source of labour-power, the sugar industry was in a position to be competitive in the capitalist market.[110]

Now, an examination of the social formation and the position of agents within the structure of production reveals that capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production were basic features of the dominated and dependent social formation. Plantations utilised both wage-labour and semi-slave labour, conserving very many elements of the previous slave mode. For many indentured immigrants were illiterate, unskilled, and working with the assistance of very few instruments.[111] In other words, the processes of domination created the conditions for blocking the development of their productive forces in Guyana during the period of crisis and change which so often were features of the colonial economy.

The colonial state, given its role in the process of production played a very prominent part during this period. It injected vast amounts of capital into the immigration schemes, designed to make them effective; this step was seen as salutary and the only solution to the disjuncture within the social formation, brought about by a labour shortage. The modifications which occurred in the colonial formation in the late nineteenth century are a clear indication of the new role which this dominat-

ed formation had to play in the new international division of labour. As capitalist relations of production were strengthened in the social formation, i.e., as these relations became increasingly dominant, there was a rise in the organic composition of capital which was necessary to develop the productive forces and thus to expand sugar production for the international market.

The relationship of the state with the process of private capital accumulation was of principal importance during this period; it did not constitute an independent force within the capitalist world economy because of the poorly developed productive forces and relations of production in Guyana. The structure of the state in Guyana during the period which we are focussing on - and even from the beginning of colonial production - was always determined by the dominant relations of production extending from Europe. It influenced capitalist and pre-capitalist relations, directing production to overseas market.

> But access to the productive resources which determined success or failure on the market was directly controlled by the State. The state, in turn, was not an independent force but directly dependent on the balance of social forces in the system which it notionally controlled, and most especially upon the dominant economic forces in the metropolitan country and their local representatives. The colonial state can therefore be viewed as the managing agent of the dominant private interest in the capitalist system, with a vested interest in maintaining their dominance inside colonial society.[112]

Multinational corporations (e g. Booker Brothers) began to establish themselves in Guyana from the early 1850's. They purchased estates by taking 'advantage of the difficulties into

which the volatile state of sugar had thrown many of the weaker and smaller planters, (buying) them out cheaply (and achieving) . . a commanding position in the Guyanese economy".[113] By purchasing these estates from smaller planters, they were at the same time opening the avenue for amalgamation and concentration of sugar estates. It is very significant that after multinational firms began to penetrate the Guyanese social formation, the number of sugar estates was diminished. This was especially necessary under the dominant capitalist relations of production which tended to reduce the labour force by the use of advanced technology, the objective was to make the sugar industry more competitive on the world market.

Returning to the question of the East Indians in the social division of labour, it is important to point out that after they completed their period of indenture in Guyana, they had the option of returning to India. The laws which governed their mode of existence on the sugar estates were very repressive, and represented a movement 'back to slavery' since the immigrants were not allowed during their period of contract to set themselves up as producers independently of the class which exercised control over the conditions of their labour. In other words, the immigrants, by the structural position they occupied within the social division of labour were at the mercy of their employers, the planters.[114] Whilst in the Guyanese social formation, the earlier movement of Africans off the plantations had brought about a social dislocation within the structure, the movement of indentured immigrants off the plantations after their period of contractual labour, had a relationship to

the surplus labour which planters had at their disposal. Immigrants were not allowed to remain on the plantations until death, primarily because it was necessary for the state to reproduce places on the estates which were filled by cheap, young, unskilled, immigrant labour. The East Indian population in rural villages started to increase through this new trend, but especially after the system of reindenture was terminated in the early 1870's. It was estimated that between 1872 and 1876 East Indians left the plantations for villages at the rate of approximately 3,000 annually.[115]

The immigrant workers through their struggles with the dominant social forces, were unable to restructure the existing social relations of production, but their objective position within the social formation even though dependent, intensified the class contradictions and struggles within the structure dominated by backward capitalism This was particularly evident in respect to the structural features underlying the indentured system itself. To be more specific, the indenture system was conditioned by many contradictory elements which were the products of the capitalist mode of production and its expanded reproduction.

Now the system of indenture was regarded by the classes that dominated the Guyanese social formation as an appropriate substitute for African slaves who had previously supplanted the white indentured servant.[116] The arrival of Asian labour-power was seen as a solution to the problem of a shortage of labour and was the means to overcome certain limits which endangered

the existence of the productive system, the system having experienced a series of crises. The system, therefore, could have saved itself only by certain structural changes, of which the inflow of Asian labour-power constituted the chief element. But in contracting Asian immigrants, it was necessary to offer free return passage on completion of their contract. To the capitalist in Guyana, however, the offer of a free passage posed many problems and as such incurred much resentment from a fraction of the capitalist class.

Sugar production in the colony was always linked to external forces and class relations in the international conjuncture. Therefore to offer a free return passage to immigrants was seen by some agents of the capitalist class as unprofitable, especially since the tendency was for some immigrants to return to India. New modes of exploitation had to be introduced to counter this tendency: that of reindenture.

The specific form reindenture assumed was for immigrants to work on the plantations for another five years, after which they were offered small plots of land to cultivate crops. Guyana is a large country, but this cannot conceal the contradictions of capitalist production relations. Indeed, in the late nineteenth century, several hundred acres were granted to a number of Indians. For instance, between 1898-1899, Indians obtained 5,992 acres. In addition, 10,957 acres were obtained by them during the period 1891 to 1913. Obtaining land was a means of improving themselves. Thus, in 1911-12, the value of Indian landed property was assessed at $972,761.[117]

Although these concessions on the surface seemed extensive given the level of development of Guyana in the late nineteenth century, they must be situated within the context of the social relations of production and the class struggles which permeated the social formation at that time. The inducements to Asian immigrants were the mechanisms by which, first, wages were depressed on the estates to intolerable levels, for the availability of an abundant supply of cheap, unskilled immigrant labour comprised the material basis for blocking the development of social relations. Second, the class struggles of the African and Indian masses were fragmented as they were kept in subordination, bondage, and dependence not only by economic exploitation, but by political and ideological domination. Third, by keeping wages low, production costs were reduced; this was especially important during the era of imperialism when competitive capitalism gave way to monopoly capitalism at the end of the nineteenth century. And when monopoly capital becomes the dominant form of capital, the tendency is to 'prevent any local capitalism that might arise from competing with (it); the development of capitalism in the periphery was to remain extroverted, that is, based on the external market and would therefore not lead to a full flowering of the capitalist mode of production in the periphery'.[118]

The final difficulty with the system of indenture was that Indian immigrant workers, on returning to India, took their accumulated savings with them. Although the majority of indentured immigrants remained in Guyana, the number that returned and the amount of money they took with them were a sufficient

condition to cause some concern to the ruling class. They had to bear the cost of repatriation especially at a time when the sugar industry was experiencing another crisis precipitated by the emergence of beet sugar in Europe. During the period between 1835 and 1918, Guyana had received a total of 341,491 immigrants, 236,205 of whom came from the Asian subcontinent and approximately 70,000 of whom returned to India taking with them over three million Guyanese dollars.[119]

Mandle summarizes the effects of the complex process of migrant labour on the Guyanese social formation in a very clear way:

> Both the government and the sugar industry much preferred that the migration occur within Guyana rather than back to India. Village dwellers provided much of the extra labour force needed by the plantations during periods of peak demand, such as the cane cutting season, when the labour-absorbing capacities of the industry were very high. Similarly, the labour potential represented by the village population exerted a downward pressure on wage rates - a pressure which would have tended to decrease if repatriation had assumed large proportions . . . (Also) the flow not only represented a substantial drain on the colony's resources but also tended to reduce the cost-minimizing effects of immigration.[120]

The problems associated with immigration in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were compounded by the contradictions of capitalism in its imperialist phase. When Lenin Lenin[121] articulated the problematic of imperialism, the basis of the imperialist-colonial relationship was the process of polarised production and the system of unequal exchange (import of raw materials cheaply from colonial formations and export of manufactured goods that realised 'capital accumulation'). What characterised that period was the export of financial

capital from the imperialist metropolises to the dominated and dependent peripheries. This link of financial dependence not only led to a circular flow facilitating capital accumulation within the imperialist metropolises, but it established the mechanisms whereby the dominated and dependent social formations were firmly inserted into an imperialist social division of labour and an international system of world production-relations.[122] This resulted in the internal disarticulation of social relations within the dependent formations, the blocking of their productive forces, and uneven development. All these factors established the conditions within the dependent social formations for the reproduction of the relations of domination, exploitation and dependence. In short, the development at the imperialist centre resulted in a lack of self-centered development within the periphery.

During this period of imperialist penetration of Guyana, commercial capitalism which previously dominated the social formation was replaced by monopoly capitalism. This form of penetration brought about changes in the social relations and class conditions of the plantation economy, as monopoly capital controlled the land, the state and was the largest employer of labour-power. By 1884 a few major multinational corporations were able through capitalistic practices to maintain a downward pressure on wages and through improvements in manufacture and yield were able to increase the rate of profit.[123]

These developments in Guyana can also be considered in the context of the decline of the sugar industry in the 1880's.

The struggle between beet and cane sugar which led to a crisis in the Caribbean, also produced a corresponding decline in immigration. Whilst in the years 1860-1880 there was a large influx of immigrants into Guyana, the number arriving after 1880 declined; (Table 3); this trend continued until the end of immigration around 1920. With the injection of finance capital into the sugar economy, it was necessary, in order to prevent the complete collapse of sugar, to rationalise production, a measure which required less labour. One of the ways in which this was done was by reducing the number of sugar estates:

> The number of operating sugar plantations fell from 105 in 1885 to 84 in 1890 and 46 in 1904. Between 1855 and 1884 the gradual reduction of the estates had been largely a matter of amalgamation and concentration. But now the outright abandonment of cultivation which had characterised the crisis of 1840's reappeared. Of the 63 plantations that disappeared as independent entities between 1885 and 1904, 42 were abandoned and only 17 were amalgamated. Nor was abandonment restricted to the weaker residents: 17 of the 42 abandoned belonged to large absentees.[124]

These changing relations of production intensified the struggles between the ruling class and the masses but they were hindered by the fact that there was no internal organisation (i.e. trade union) capable of co-ordinating these struggles and translating them into positive action. Yet the sugar industry throughout the nineteenth century was plagued by strikes and riots necessitating the use of other workers as 'strike-breakers' against those workers who attempted to improve their socio-economic conditions.[125] Of course, the strikes in the sugar industry were violently suppressed by the colonial state

which was not prepared to tolerate any form of concrete struggle within its borders. Many other factors militated against organised struggles of workers on any large scale: physical isolation of estate populations from each other, lack of effective leadership partly conditioned by a low level of development of social relations, the removal of potential leaders from specific areas, and the conflicts within the working class engendered by the coexistence of a free labour force and one which was based on semi-slavery.[126]

The impact of monopoly capital on the dependent social formation was profound. It was an impact not only on Guyana but was extended to the entire West Indies.

> The most important sources of finance capital were the British merchant companies which came to dominate the West Indian sugar industry after 1880 . . . these merchant firms alone possessed the capital necessary for significant investment in the newer techniques of production . . . The rise of these large, foreign based, companies is the single most important development in the West Indian sugar industry during the last two-thirds of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the emergence and success of these companies mark the beginning of a fundamental change in the organisation of the West Indian economies. Dispassionately shifting production and investment from estate to estate and colony to colony, these new enterprises were no longer bound by tradition, nostalgia and status considerations which had proved so important to earlier planters. With consummate skill and almost ruthless efficiency, these firms combined their ability to command massive outside credit . . . The ultimate result was the transformation of . . . plantations into modern, industrial enterprises . . . the multi-national corporations in the Caribbean.[127]

## 4:4 The Rice Industry

It will not be correct to complete this chapter without making reference to the rice industry which emerged in Guyana in the late nineteenth century. This industry, however, had to function within the context of the class conditions that characterised the plantation economy. The offer of portions of land to Asian immigrants at the end of their contract on the sugar estates necessitated certain modifications in the state laws with respect to landholdings. Prior to 1890, the state laws with respect to land had stipulated that the minimum size of a lot should be 100 acres to be sold at ten dollars per acre. Subsequent legislation, however, reduced the price significantly to one dollar and later to fifteen cents per acre. In addition, land could be obtained in 25-acre lots instead of 100-acre lots.[128] These modifications in the social relations of production were an expression of the internal socio-economic contradictions of the social formation. They generated a response among the Indian masses who were settling in villages.

Indian peasants turned to rice cultivation after leaving the plantations in the 1880's. The rupture in the sugar industry in the 1890's was an impetus to engage in alternative forms of production. But there were other reasons why Indians chose rice cultivation. First, the conditions were appropriate for rice production and the Indians had some knowledge of its methods of production. Second, it provided the opportunity to establish

themselves economically thereby reducing the rate of exploitation to which they were subjected whilst on the sugar estates. Third, those who were involved in production could utilise unpaid family labour. Fourth, there was an adequate domestic market in Guyana for this agricultural product.

Though many East Indians cultivated rice, others turned to the retail trade challenging in some way the monopoly of the Portuguese and Chinese in this sector although it must be emphasised that the Portuguese were beginning to enter the import-export trading sector. The importance of rice cultivation to the East Indians, however, was not in doubt. It experienced a period of rapid growth until after World War I. The figures below indicate some features of its growth between 1898 and 1917.

TABLE 5

Changes in Rice Industry, 1898-1917

| | 1898-1902 | 1903-07 | 1908-12 | 1913-17 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Production (tons) | 3,824 | 10,621 | 30,006 | 36,336 |
| Acreage | 6,778 | 17,712 | 39,746 | 49,695 |
| Export (tons) | - | 5 | 3,120 | 10,760 |
| Import (tons) | 14,693 | 8,092 | 2,519 | 159 |
| Domestic Availability (tons) | 18,517 | 18,708 | 29,405 | 25,735 |

Source: J. R. Mandle, op. cit., p. 38.

It follows from the above table that rice production was geared mainly for the internal market and the commodity, during the period of its rapid growth, was not imported on any large scale, particularly after 1907. The rice industry had some fine moments during the First World War when the West Indies had been unable to obtain its supplies from the Far Eastern countries. The consequence of the curtailment of supplies from distant sources was that

> . . . producers and merchants rushed to make profits out of the export of rice. The rush was so frantic that the supply was severely overstrained and local prices shot up, with the result that the Governor temporarily banned the export of rice. After the war, the shortages from the Far East continued and the price and output remained high.[129]

Despite the success of rice over a short period, the situation changed as soon as the circumstances on the world market were different; i.e., as soon as the Far Eastern countries had overcome the difficulties which emerged with the war, they regained their original markets in the West Indies and the temporary success of Guyana's rice industry quickly declined.[130]

It was very difficult for large scale rice production to develop next to the sugar industry, or for an indigenous capitalist class to emerge from rice cultivation during the period when it experienced a momentary success. This is so because the sugar industry, even given its declining position in world-wide capitalist production-relations, did not allow any form of agricultural activity to challenge its hegemony in Guyana, not even in a marginal way.

> The sugar industry attempted to adjust to the problems created by rice by rearranging the timing of its harvest so as to move its period of peak labour demand to a season when intense attention to paddy was not required ... . Despite the problems created by the emergence of the rice industry, the sugar planters did not attempt to block its expansion in the villages. Their acceptance of the growth of the village industry probably reflected the reported views of 'one of the oldest and most popular managers in the colony', that by allowing sugar workers, both indentured and unindentured to grow rice, 'general dissatisfaction' was avoided and as a result the planter 'has a happy body of people working willingly for him'.[131]

Therefore, the development of large-scale capitalist production in the rice industry was severely restricted by the imperatives of capitalist production-relations on a world-scale, and also by the imperatives and internal dynamic of the sugar industry itself. It is interesting to note, however, that the integration of Guyana into the complex structure of capitalism had more to do with slavery, sugar and indenture rather than with any other form of productive activity. Indeed, the social contradictions, modifications, ruptures and changes which permeated Guyana's social formation from colonial conquest to the abolition of indenture in 1917, were the manifestation of the development of the capitalist mode of production on a world scale and the insertion of Guyana into its economic, political and ideological complex. The result of capitalist reproduction in Guyana was not only the internal disarticulation of social relations, but also the establishment of the objective conditions for peripheral capitalism.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Adamson, op. cit., p. 21.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 19.
4. Ibid.
5. See Jairus Banaji, 'Backward Capitalism, Primitive Accumulation and Modes of Production', Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 3 No. 4, 1973, pp. 395-97.
6. Cheddi Jagan, op. cit., p. 30.
7. Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, op. cit., p. 202.
8. Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro, op. cit., p. 196.
9. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', Selected Works, Vol.1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 479.
10. Eric Hobsbawm 'The Crisis of Capitalism in Historical Perspective', Socialist Revolution, Vol. 6, No. 4, Oct.-Dec., 1976, p. 82.
11. G. Kay, op. cit., pp. 97-98.
12. Moreno Fraginals, op. cit., p. 31.
13. Ibid.
14. Cf. Harry Magdoff, 'European Expansion Since 1763', Encyclopaedia Britannica, No. 4, 1974, pp. 890-893.
15. Ibid.
16. Hugh Tinker, A New System of Slavery, Oxford University Press, London, p. 1.
17. Harry Magdoff, op. cit., p. 892.
18. Ibid.
19. Moreno Fraginals, op. cit., p. 18.
20. Walter Rodney, op. cit., pp. 95-97.

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23. Adamson, op. cit., p. 24.

24. Ibid.

25. Kay, op. cit., p. 97.

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35. Adamson, op. cit., p. 25.

36. Harry Magdoff, op. cit., p. 892.

37 Ibid.

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40. Ibid.

41. Moreno Fraginals, op. cit., p. 18

42. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 3, op. cit., p. 30.

43. Harold Baron, op. cit., p. 3.

44. Fraginals, op. cit., p. 18.

45. Kay, op. cit., p. 100.

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51. Clive Thomas, 'Black Exploitation in the Caribbean' in Orde Coombs (ed.), Is Massa Day Dead? Anchor Books, New York, 1974, p. 129.

52. Cf. Tinker, op. cit., p. 2.

53. Ibid., p. 3.

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60. Mandle, op. cit., p. 20.

61. Leo Despres, op. cit., pp. 45-54.

62. Ibid.

63. Felix Millivoux, 'Demerara: The Transition from Slavery to Liberty', cited by Mandle, op. cit., p. 23.

64. Ibid.

65. Eric Williams, Journal of Negro History, op. cit., p. 363.

66. Ibid., p. 378.

67. See Cheddi Jagan, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

68. Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro, op. cit., p. 350

69. R. T. Smith, op. cit., p. 40.

70. Cf. Kay, op. cit., p. 106.

71. Adamson, op. cit., p. 43.

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73. Ibid., p. 107.

74. Adamson, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

75. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 3, op. cit., p. 883.

76. Tinker, op. cit., pp. 182-186.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Cf. Adamson, op. cit., p. 44.

80. Iris Sukdeo, op. cit., p. 97.

81. Ernest Mandel, New Left Review, No. 56, July - August, 1969, p. 71.

82. Cf. Reno, op. cit., p. 7.

83 Despres, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid., p. 64.

87. Mandle, op. cit., p. 20.

88. R. T. Smith, op. cit., p. 40.

89. Cf. Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, op. cit., pp. 22-25.

90. R. T. Smith, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

91. Cf. Aubrey Armstrong, op. cit., p. 5.

92. Tinker, op cit., pp. 191-92.

93. Jagan, op. cit., pp. 290-91.

94. E. Hobsbawm, 'The Seventeenth Century in the Development of Capitalism' in Eugene D. Genovese (ed.) The Slave Economies, Vol. 1, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1973, p. 151.

95. Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, p. 165.

96. Cf. Ernest Mandel, Introduction to Marx's Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 50.

97. See Martin Legassick, 'South Africa: Forced Labour, Industrialisation and Racial Differentiation' in Richard Harris (ed.), The Political Economy of Africa, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1975, p. 234.

98. Ibid.

99. Cf. Barry Hindess 'Introduction to 'State Property and Socialism', Economy and Society, Vol. 2 No. 4, Nov. 1973, p. 387.

100. Cf. J. S. Kahn, 'Imperialism and the Reproduction of Capitalism, Critique of Anthropology, No. 2, Autumn, 1974, p. 8.

101. See James O'Connor, 'A Note on Independent Commodity Production', Monthly Review, Vol. 28, No. 1, May, 1976, pp. 60-63.

102. Cf. Maurice St. Pierre 'Apprenticeship, The Village Movement and the Struggle for Independence' in Aubrey Armstrong (ed.) Studies in Post-Colonial Society, African World Press, Tennessee, 1975, p. 84.

103. Kay, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

104. Cf. Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, op. cit., p. 152; From Columbus to Castro, op cit., pp. 135, 380-385.

105. Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro, Ibid., p. 380.

106. Ibid.

107. Richard A. Lobdell, "Patterns of Investment and Sources of Credit in British West Indian Sugar Industry, 1838-97, Centre for Developing-Area Studies, McGill University, (Reprint Series, No. 24, n.d., p. 34)

108. Despres, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

109. Adamson, op. cit., p. 178.

110. Ibid., pp. 178-179.

111. Kay, op. cit., p. 102.

112. E. A. Brett, Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1974, pp. 285-286.

113. Adamson, op. cit., p. 174.

114. Ibid., p. 54.

115. Ibid., p. 94; See also Mandle, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

116 Cf. Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro, op. cit., p. 351.

117. Ibid., p. 353.

118. See Samir Amin, Accumulation on a World Scale, op. cit., p. 148.

119. Adamson, op. cit., p. 46; Mandle, op. cit., pp. 33-37.

120. Mandle, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

121. See V. I. Lenin: Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism in Selected Works, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970.

122. Cf. Henry Veltmeyer, 'The Development of Revolution' (Unpublished Paper) McMaster University, 1972, p. 68.

123. Adamson, op. cit., p. 206.

124 Ibid., p. 209.

125. Ibid., pp. 153-155; Jagan, op. cit., p. 40.

126. Adamson, Ibid., pp. 154-159.

127. Lobdell, op. cit., p. 53.

128. Mandle, op. cit., p. 37.

129. Colin Henfrey, op. cit., p. 136.

130. Ibid.

131. Mandle, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

# CHAPTER 5

## CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to demonstrate the dependent nature of the Guyanese social formation and its complex structure of social relations from colonial conquest in the (late sixteenth and) early seventeenth century to the abolition of indenture in 1917. In this discussion we have argued that a scientific understanding of social relations within a concrete conjuncture requires a system of concepts which provides an adequate basis for analysing concrete social relations, their contradictions and structural transformations. In other words, 'the adequacy of theoretical concepts in corresponding to their theoretical object must always be established before these concepts are used in the analysis of particular social formations'.[1]

In attempting to establish our position we examined first, some of the theoretical and methodological principles of historical materialism and postulated that the concepts of social formations, modes of production, forces and relations of production, class struggles, the state, etc., constitute the most adequate concepts to articulate rigorously the structures of oppression, exploitation and dependence.

Although the concepts of historical materialism were explicitly related to the development of the capitalist mode of production, we argued that they are useful explanatory

categories for an understanding of the social relations concomitant with pre-capitalist societies. The adequacy and effectiveness of these concepts, however, must be determined by a concrete analysis of a concrete situation.

We explicated that a social formation is a product of a concrete historical process encompassing a variety of modes of production which are structured in dominance, i.e., one mode of production dominates the other modes in a social formation and integrates the subordinate modes into its own (i.e. dominant mode) mechanism of reproduction. That is to say, a mode of production assumes a dominant position within a concrete social formation''when the reproduction of the relations of production specific to it are ensured (politically, economically and ideologically). This dominance, however, can be exercised over differing labour processes whose process of inter-relation must form part of the object of the theory of the structure and reproduction of the mode'.[2]

Thus, a social formation does not only comprise an economic level but also political and ideological levels. All levels are important for an articulation of the structure of a social formation, but in a complex structure of social relations, the economic instance is determinant.

In a concrete social formation the specific way in which various modes of production are combined is determined by the concrete historical processes within this given formation and the level of development of the forces and relations of production. And the contradictions between the productive

forces and relations of production, i.e. the class struggles, determine the overall character of the social formation.

The second aspect of our study focused on two approahes to the study of 'race relations', namely, cultural pluralism and internal colonialism. We rejected these approaches by pointing out their theoretical and methodological weaknesses and limitations. Our rejection was based primarily on the fact that these two theoretical positions do not pose the pertinent question of 'race' within a general theory of modes of production and class struggles; instead there is a preoccupation with ' racial, ethnic, tribal, religious and regional groups' and a description of the social structure of which these groups comprise a part. Whilst these approaches emphasise some elements of conflict within a social totality, the underlying structural basis for the conflict between groups is concealed. That is, cultural pluralism and internal colonialism do not properly locate the social groups in question within a historically determined system of social production, a task which requires structural analysis. Rather, they make descriptive analysis of visible social relations. Such schemas are not useful for an understanding of concrete historical processes and struggles since they obfuscate them by failing to articulate the objective positions of social classes within the social division of labour, and also the structural determination of classes within a concrete conjuncture.

Having established a theoretical framework, I attempted to identify and clarify some of the processes involved in the

changing nature of Guyanese society since colonial conquest. Centering my analysis on the social relations of production, I examined the historical conjuncture which brought Guyana into a dependent relationship with Europe and which subsequently resulted in Guyana's insertion into the dominant structure of capitalism.

In Guyana, the social relations of production which were established were structured to meet the needs of the capitalist economy. At each stage of development of the social formation a set of class relations emerged; these functioned in a manner which ensured a progressive integration into an international capitalist system and division of labour. In order to integrate the peripheral social formation into a system of world production-relations dominated by Europe, different measures had to be taken.

The primitive communal relations in Guyana were virtually destroyed and a new mode of production which was based on slavery was installed. But slavery was not the dominant mode of production since the Guyanese social formation was structured in dominance under the dominance of merchant capital whose centre of gravity was Europe. Nevertheless, the social relations of production in Guyana from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century were features of the slave mode. In the social formation during this period, the social division of labour comprised two principal classes which were determined by the structure of the relations and forces of production.

The two principal social classes comprised a class of non-producers and a class of direct producers. The former owned and controlled the means of production and possessed the power to set the means of production in motion. On the other hand, the latter as direct producers were the property of the slaveowners, were separated from the means of production, and they produced commodities, mainly sugar, for sale in European markets. Since the labour-power of the slaves was a commodity and the slaves themselves comprised a form of capital, the slaves were dependent on the slave-owning class for maintaining themselves. The slaves lived in legal bondage outside the dominant community, and were regarded by the ruling classes as legally unfree, direct producers; they were like objects; they were chattels.

The entire product of the slaves throughout the epoch of slavery in Guyana was appropriated by the class of non-producers, whether they were agents of the Dutch or British ruling classes. The abolition of the slave trade and subsequently slavery in the nineteenth century, set in motion new relations of production. While under the conditions of existence of the slave mode of production, the slaves were unable to reproduce themselves except through the agency of the slave-owning class, the changes brought about by their emancipation meant that they were in a position to sell or withold their labour-power.

The abolition of slavery, however, created a rupture and an internal disarticulation of social relations within the Guyanese social formation. There was a severe shortage of

labour; the sugar industry was severely shaken, and several planters who comprised a dependent group, and who conducted their activities in a social formation which was subordinated to capitalism within the international division of labour and the world market, went bankrupt. These relations in their totality also precipitated the need for internal and external changes within the international division of labour.

The slave trade and slavery assumed much prominence under the dominance of merchant's capital. Through trade and control of the market, merchant's capital controlled the slave trade and also the production of sugar for European markets. The rise of industrial capital, however, subordinated merchant's capital on a world scale to its logic and mode of functioning. But merchant's capital had established a formidable position in the periphery, and although it remained an agent of industrial capital, it was not until after the Second World War that industrial capital was able to penetrate effectively into the periphery. Its penetration, though, conserved the deformed and stagnated structures instead of dissolving them.[110]

To overcome the socio-economic problems created by the emancipation of slaves in the 1830's, thousands of indentured labourers were imported into Guyana mainly from India, but also from the West Indies, Portugal, China and Africa. This introduction of indentured labour reinforced the specific characteristics of the colonial economy: the predominance of agricultural crops with low levels of productivity, which were exported to European markets; the conservation of many elements

of the slave mode of production, particularly with regard to the political and ideological relations. These relations comprised the basis for the reproduction and aggravation of relations of domination, dependence and exploitation.

During the epoch of slavery and also indenture, the ideology of racism was an integral element of the system and formed a complex unity with the economic and political instances. This combination was instrumental in sustaining and perpetuating antagonistic social relations within the social formation. The ideology of racism mediated not only between blacks and whites but also between blacks and Indians.

These specific characteristics of the dependent social formation, i.e., Guyana, in their totality have contributed to the very low level of development of the productive forces and the social relations throughout the colonial period which we have isolated. Agricultural output was always affected by the obsolete productive forces and class struggles were also a basic feature of the system. But the internal dynamic of the system impeded any attempt to challenge the dominant relations of production.

Meanwhile, the changing conditions of production after the abolition of slavery precipitated a movement of Africans to peripheral areas of the plantations where they cultivated certain agricultural crops as peasants. This thrust, however, was always thwarted and compounded by the immanent laws, the structural contradictions and the social interests underlying the structure of the plantation economy. Many Africans were

forced to migrate to the cities to seek employment in shipping, transport, services, etc. A few engaged in retail trade, some turned to petty commodity production, while a small number went into the interior regions of Guyana. Indeed, there were Africans who were forced by the material conditions of production to return to the plantations as wage labourers.

The Portuguese and Chinese strata on completion of their period of indenture turned increasingly to commerce and retail trade in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They were later joined by a stratum of East Indians and these groups formed the nucleus of a commercial petty bourgeoisie which emerged in Guyana towards the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth century. It must be understood, however, that these class fractions together were essentially a dominated and dependent group whose specificity was always determined by the contradictions between the two main classes inside the social formation. Thus, what leverage they enjoyed was always articulated by their subordinate relationship to the dominant social forces and their objective position within the process of social production and the class struggles in Guyana.

The majority of East Indian masses turned to peasant cultivation, chiefly rice, after the end of their services on the estates. The slow development of Guyana's productive forces coupled with the decline of sugar prices on the world market produced by competition from beet sugar, affected the plantation economy near the end of the nineteenth century. The conditions of reproduction of the immigrants in the social division of labour started to change. There was no need any longer for

large scale immigration because multinational enterprises began to employ advanced technology which necessitated the disposal of labour-power. That is, immigrants constituted a 'reserve army' of labour and were subjected to the laws and tendencies of the capitalist mode of production. Wages were kept low, workers had no political movement to coordinate their demands, consequently they experienced intense exploitation since their surplus labour was appropriated by a class of non-producers. Further, their subordinate position within the class struggle resulting from their relationship to the means of production was always an instrumental factor to maintain certain ideological and political divisions in the working class. Hence the economic divisions were reinforced by the political and ideological divisions.

Moreover, the integration of Guyana into the imperialist social division of labour in the late nineteenth century inhibited the development of an internal market; and this process produced many problems for those workers who attempted to introduce petty commodity production and peasant cultivation in villages adjacent or contiguous to the plantations. Any move in this direction was always challenged, manipulated or dictated by the colonial state in order to protect the interests of the dominant social classes in the society, and to ensure that the conditions for peripheral capitalism were not undermined.

Upon examination of the complex social processes within Guyana during the epochs of mercantile colonialism, commercial capitalism and monopoly capitalism, we developed the central

thesis that the relations of 'race' which historically permeated Guyana's social formation during slavery and indenture were essentially class relations; and that these relations were dialectically linked to the class conditions and contradictions of the colonial economy. These relations were mediated, reproduced and sustained by the ideological and political instances, and were conditioned by Guyana's relationship to the capitalist world economy.

Throughout Guyana's colonial history the economic, political and ideological instances were inextricably linked and it was on the basis of this linkage that it was possible to insert the entire social formation into the international capitalist complex. By so doing, relations of domination, dependence and exploitation were reproduced These relations were the manifestation of uneven processes of development which were conditioned by the development of the capitalist world economy.

This study has been a very critical one. It was only a modest effort to delineate a very complex process and an attempt to come to terms with a multiplicity of theoretical, methodological and concrete issues in a non-empiricist manner. Its object was to correct a very simplistic and ideological approach to the study of concrete social relations. More precisely this study sought to demonstrate the theoretical adequacy of class analysis to the study of some of the intricate problems of the Guyanese conjuncture over a specific period. Therefore, there may be several weaknesses in this exposition. It represents, however, only a process in our development; and even

if many of the arguments have been weakly articulated, it will have served its purpose if it generates some serious discourses among those who recognise the need for rigorous analysis of the Caribbean conjunctures as a whole. A rigorous articulation provides the only means for a clear understanding of the central economic, political and ideological issues which have dominated the historical development of the Caribbean in general, and Guyana in particular. This articulation of the Guyanese conjuncture, however, leaves no doubt that it can only be demonstrably understood by the application of a theoretical system, a problematic, which allows us to pose rigorously and explicitly formulate the issues which permeated this study: that of historical materialism.

The tasks that lie beyond this study are arduous but indispensably necessary; they revolve around a set of complex questions. First and foremost, what is the real nature and structure of the Guyanese social formation in the twentieth century? Second, what have been the changes in the social formation which have facilitated the establishment of peripheral capitalism? Third, what is the class basis of the 'neo-colonial' state with capitalism having established the conditions for its reproduction and domination over the other modes of production? Fourth, what is the role of racism within the dependent social formation? What are the prerequisites to restructuring the oppressive conditions in the social formation? Fifth, what are the complex mechanisms within the peripheral capitalist state which prevent autonomous or self-centered development;

which have aggravated and perpetuated relations of domination? Finally, what are the factors which militate against structural transformation of the existing social relations of production?

These are the most germane and pointed questions to which serious work must be directed. It is not just a question of making vacuous statements which call for a new system of social production based on 'cooperative socialism', but which lack any dialectical connection and linkage to the struggles of the oppressed. The tasks ahead require a rigorous and dialectical theory which is able to articulate the complex social relations and social processes within Guyana. Any endeavour of this kind requires that the class struggles within this dependent and peripheral capitalist state and also within imperialism, be given primary importance because the class struggle is the motor of history and advances it.[3] Thus, future efforts require concrete studies of class relations so as to be able to comprehend the dynamics of world history, the class struggles of the Caribbean masses, their modes of domination, exploitation and dependence, and also the underlying social forces and relationships which historically have blocked their liberation as a class from imperialism, and which continue to impede their struggles. These efforts will be restricted, however, unless they are situated in the concrete struggles of the exploited masses that is, 'the exploited social classes, social strata and social categories, grouped around the exploited class capable of uniting them in a movement against the dominant class which holds state power'.[4]

In other words, these efforts must identify in theory and in practice with the class struggles of the oppressed masses - wherever they may be.

FOOTNOTES

1. Cf. John Taylor, Critique of Anthropology, Nos. 4 and 5, Autumn, 1975, p. 129.

2. Cf. John Taylor, Critique of Anthropology, No. 6, Spring, 1976, p. 58.

3. Louis Althusser, 'Reply to John Lewis', Marxism Today, October, 1972.

4. Ibid., p. 315.

# APPENDIX I

## Population of Guyana at December, 1966 (Estimate)

| Racial Breakdown | Male | Female | Totals | Percentage of totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| East Indians | 172,930 | 169,260 | 342,190 | 50.80 |
| Africans | 101,250 | 106,620 | 207,870 | 30.80 |
| Mixed | 40,840 | 40,560 | 81,400 | 12.06 |
| Amerindians | 15,740 | 15,720 | 31,460 | 4.64 |
| Portuguese* | 2,780 | 3,340 | 6,120 | 0.90 |
| Chinese | 2,300 | 1,860 | 4,160 | 0.60 |
| Other Europeans | 720 | 760 | 1,480 | 0.20 |

(*) In official statistics Portuguese are classified as a separate ethnic group.

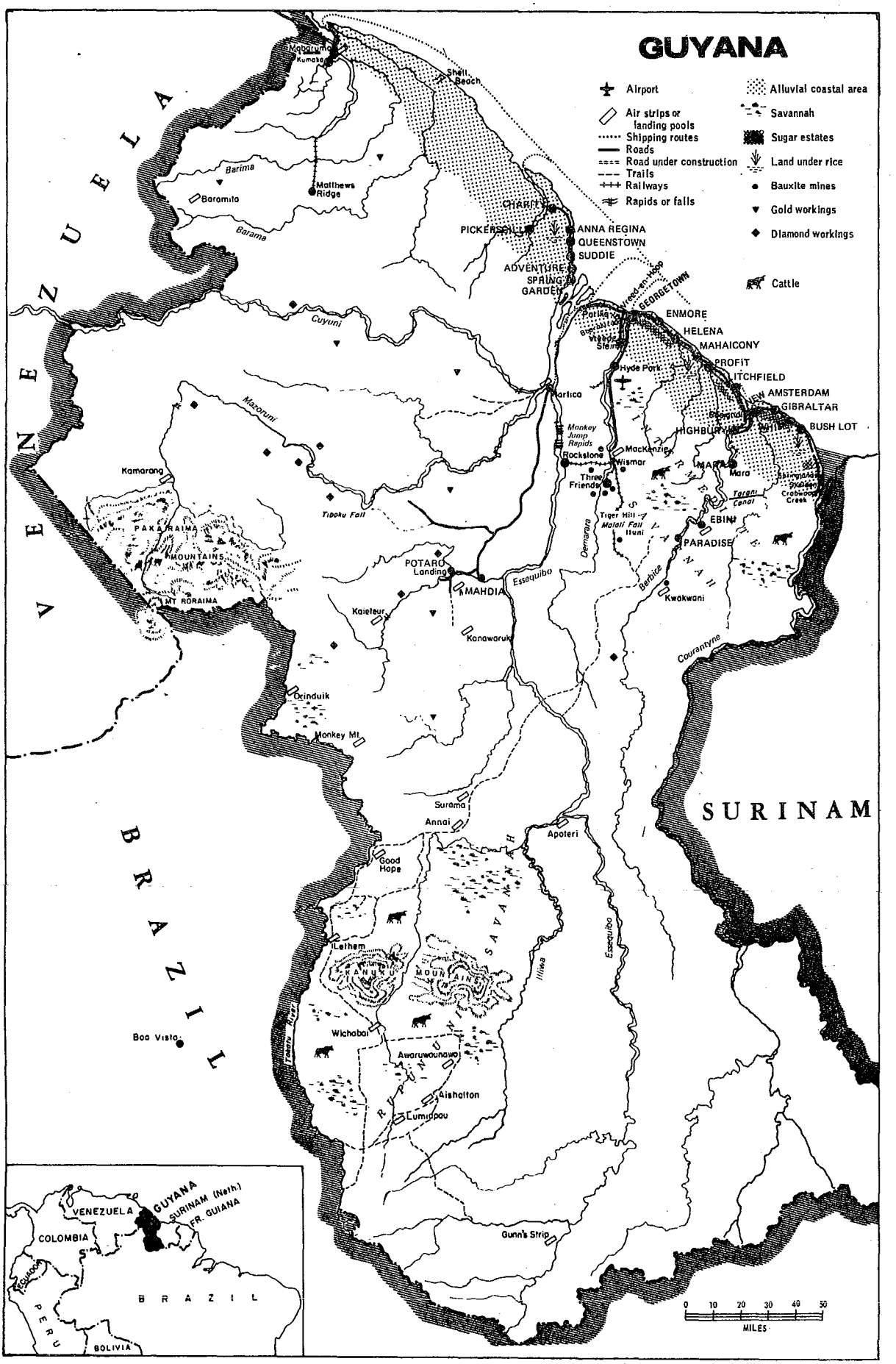
Source: See Jagan, op. cit., Appendix, p. 422.

# APPENDIX II

## Rural-Urban Distribution of the Population of Various Racial Groups in Guyana, 1960

| Racial Group | Urban | Rural | Interior | Total Percent | Total No. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indians | 14 | 85 | 1 | 100 | 267,840 |
| Africans | 49 | 47 | 4 | 100 | 183,980 |
| Mixed and Others | 61 | 30 | 9 | 100 | 83,136 |
| Amerindians | 4 | 19 | 77 | 100 | 25,450 |

Source: See Landis, op. cit., p. 66.


GUYANA
Airport
Air strips or landing pools
Shipping routes
Roads
Road under construction
Trails
Railways
Rapids or falls
Alluvial coastal area
Savannah
Sugar estates
Land under rice
Bauxite mines
Gold workings
Diamond workings
Cattle
VENEZUELA
BRAZIL
SURINAM
Mabaruma
Kumaka
Shell Beach
Barima
Baramita
Matthews Ridge
Barama
CHARITY
PICKERSGILL
ANNA REGINA
QUEENSTOWN
SUDDIE
ADVENTURE
SPRING GARDEN
GEORGETOWN
ENMORE
HELENA
MAHAICONY
PROFIT
ITCHFIELD
NEW AMSTERDAM
GIBRALTAR
BUSH LOT
Cuyuni
Mazoruni
Kamarang
Tiboku Fall
PAKARAIMA MOUNTAINS
MT RORAIMA
Hyde Park
Kartica
Monkey Jump Rapids
Rockstone
MacKenzie
Wismar
Three Friends
HIGHBURY
MARA
Mara
Canal
Crabwood Creek
Tiger Hill
Maloli Fall
Ituni
EBINI
PARADISE
Demerara
Berbice
Kwakwani
POTARO Landing
MAHDIA
Essequibo
Kaieteur
Konawaruk
Courantyne
Orinduik
Monkey Mt.
Surama
Annai
Apoteri
Good Hope
Lethem
KANUKU MOUNTAINS
SAVANNAH
Ilikwa
Boa Vista
Tacutu River
Wichabai
Awaruwaunawa
RUPUNUNI
Aishalton
Lumidpau
Gunn's Strip
0 10 20 30 40 50
MILES
VENEZUELA
GUYANA
SURINAM (Neth.)
FR. GUIANA
COLOMBIA
ECUADOR
PERU
BRAZIL
BOLIVIA

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