

MILITARISATION AND DEVELOPMENT: AN EXPERIMENT IN NATION-BUILDING

by

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INTRODUCTION

The paradigm of development of the metropole is characterised by a parasitic dependency¹ on the Third World and a hegemony of control within the world's capitalist economy. It is not that centre nations cannot, given their technological capability, continue to develop without the heavy reliance on periphery nations but rather that their entire approach to development rests upon the maintenance of this parasitic relationship. It is not that Third World nations are not seeking strategies for transforming this relationship and thus enable their "independent development," but rather that the developed world are unwilling to allow a system upon which they are built and sustained to be transformed into a new international economic order. To recognise this position is to become aware of the tremendous barriers faced by any Third World nation to break out from the syndrome of dependent underdevelopment and pursue a strategy of non-alignment and a goal of self-determined development. Self-determined development by Third World nations would transform the paradigm of development of the developed world — structural changes that the latter would strongly resist.

No one is more aware of the pressures being brought to bear on Third World countries not to alter the parameters of this dependent and non-altruistic relationship than national governments themselves. Military coups, political violence and general unrest in such countries are not entirely unrelated to the machiavellian approach by the metropole to use or influence any means to maintain the system. Moreover, it seems that the transformation and development of the Third World have fallen into the hands of the state in such countries. It is the governments of such countries that largely plan and direct the course of their respective societies. It is they who have to deal with domestic crises as well as external pressures. Scholars and academicians who are very often remote from the seat of power in their society may postulate theories about change and development which are very often ignored by the government of their country or else relegated to filing cabinets or libraries to circulate amidst the hallowed walls of academia. The reality is that governments go ahead with whatever they are doing while ignoring for various reasons, the contributions of leading scholars in their society.

This paper will not be concerned with positing a theory for development but rather with an examination of the attempt by a Third World government to transform and develop its society while pursuing a strategy of non-alignment and self-determination. It will attempt to take the "rulers perspective" and assess the way in which they deal with problematics that are domestic and pressures

that are externally induced. The Co-operative Republic of Guyana is the selected Third World country and the rulers perspective will be that of the Guyana Government. This approach would endeavour to deal with what is rather than what should or ought to be.

Military institutions in Guyana are increasingly being treated by the Government as an institutional mode for transforming and developing the society. There are four key varieties of military and para-military institutions — The People's Army, The Guyana People's Militia, The People's Police and The Guyana National Service. Members of various arms of the ruling People's National Congress like the Young Socialist Movement (Y.S.M.), The Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement (W.R.S.M.), assume a quasi-military status in their manner of dress and patterns of behaviour during ceremonial and important occasions. In a society in which the ruling P.N.C. has proclaimed the policy of the "paramountcy of the Party" over the Government, with the latter being seen as an arm of the Party, the military posturings of the party apparatus and the broad variety of military institutions that have been introduced by the government must be viewed with great significance. The Prime Minister,² who is also head of the Party, has himself assumed the portfolio of Minister of Defence, being directly in charge of all the military institutions except the police, which is a product of the colonial government. Further, the Prime Minister asserted eight years ago: "We are not a militarist country even if we are so inclined" (Burnham, 1970, p. 19). Since that time two additional military institutions have been created, the Guyana National Service and the Guyana People's Militia, with its motto: "Every Citizen a Soldier." Further, personnel in these military institutions are frequently encouraged to become "leaders in the community and leaders in the society." Clearly then, the ruling regime expects the military to play an increasingly major role in transforming and developing the society.

With such considerations in mind this paper would examine the role of military institutions in transforming and developing the Guyana society. Militarisation, it will be argued, is essentially an experimental strategy by the ruling elite in nation building. Further, that military institutions are presently expected to function as an organisational panacea for problems of ethnic conflicts, mobilisation, control and development within the society. Moreover, it will be argued that the problems of development are not entirely unrelated to the social, economic and political legacy of a colonial society and external pressures by metropolitan countries to maintain their dominance in the world system.

2. ON THE NATURE OF MILITARISATION

Militarisation refers to a condition in which increasingly large sections of the population of a society become progressively influenced by or induced in one way or another into military or para-military institutions. It is a condition in which military-type institutions become viewed by the ruling elite as an organisational panacea for the problematics of external defence, social instability, indiscipline and problems of control, national mobilisation and development within a society. It is a social condition in which regimentation is seen as a way of life. Individuals are either involved in or perpetually controlled by military institutions.

A society can be said to be militarised or experiencing militarisation when several distinct military and para-military and quasi-military institutions are set up by a governing elite with the expressed aim of mobilising for one purpose or another the members of the society. A "military" way of life is set up as one of key cultural ideals or values of such a society. As a premium way of life, military status becomes a key variable in determining the class or status rankings of the members of such a society. Militarisation in an ex-colonial society represents a particularly effective method for displacing an "old" indigenous elite and replace them with a "new" and different type of elite.

In order to understand the nature of militarisation in Guyana, it is first necessary to place the society in context. That is, relate it to its colonial past and also to the nature of the decolonisation process it has undergone and is undergoing.

3. THE DECOLONISATION PROCESS

Elsewhere, colonisation was conceptualised as "a system of localised rule or domination by an imperial power over the peoples of another country who, initially at least, may be ethnically and culturally distinct. This system of rule involves political domination, economic exploitation of the labour power of the colonised peoples and the natural resources of their country, and finally, socio-cultural subjugation" (Danns, 1978, p. 11). Decolonisation is conceived as the replacing of foreign domination with an indigenous or national system of rule. It is seen as a process of undoing and doing over; as the systematic destruction of an existing system of foreign domination and its systematic replacement by an indigenous system of rule; the systematic breakdown or transformation of supporting institutional patterns of colonial rule and the creation or re-construction of new or changed institutional patterns of rule; and finally, as the systematic destruction of the social reality of a foreign presence and the construction or re-construction of an indigenous reality. It is not enough to conceptualise decolonisation as the removal of foreign political, economic and socio-cultural domination as is the common practice. It is equally important to recognise that in the very doing away with foreign rulership we in effect are setting up an indigenous rulership.

Colonial society is a captive society. It is an authoritarian society headed by authoritarian rulers representing an imperial power. The peoples of a colonial society are not allowed to dictate the domestic policies of their country nor its foreign relations. Further, colonial society is characterised by a marked paucity or an absence of democratic institutions. Any existing social, cultural or ethnic differences among the people are played up and exacerbated by the colonial rulers pursuing a strategy of divide and rule. Since the representatives of the imperial rulers are always a numerical minority, the reliance on the police and the imperial army are pronounced where strategies of divisiveness and conflict amongst the colonised peoples, along with more unobtrusive forms of control carried out by socio-cultural institutions like the church, the schools and the mass media are inadequate to quell rebellion.

Just as colonial society is authoritarian so too is post-colonial society. This is so for several reasons. In the first place the ferment of plural ethnic,

cultural and social conflicts do not automatically disappear with the establishment of indigenous rule. Such structural cleavages were exacerbated if not wholly created by the authoritarian colonial rulers. To maintain social order and to manage and attempt to lessen such conflicts the indigenous rulers are constrained to be as authoritarian as their predecessors. Further, the governmental institutions vacated by the colonial rulers are essentially authoritarian. In replacing the colonial rulers the indigenous rulers must initially, at least, carry on these institutions and gradually attempt to transform them. Thus governmental structures, too, constrain the continuation of authoritarian rule. Indeed, one can add that the entire social structure of post-colonial society is an atavism, and is, too, authoritarian.

In the second place, the indigenous rulers, despite their espousal of the enlightenment ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity had as their only example in rulership the authoritarian colonial rulers. Previously, being not accustomed to occupying top managerial positions and other important positions of institutionalised rulership, the indigenous rulers readily adapt the example they know best — that of their predecessors. During the colonial era they were dominated and occupied subordinate power positions. Now, they are the power holders and must use it, and do use it in an authoritarian fashion.

Thirdly, this authoritarian posturing of post-colonial rulers is encouraged by the dispositions of their peoples. Being accustomed to responding to the authoritarian dictates of the colonial rulers the people never cultivated attitudes of self-reliance and depended on their rulers for their very means of subsistence and to channel their actions. Even the challenge to the colonial establishment by indigenous political parties reflected this passive disposition of the colonial people in the face of authority. In challenging the colonial establishment they sublimated their loyalties and support to local charismatic leaders and their political parties. The surrender to colonial authority was transformed into a surrender to local charismatic leaders. The people more or less effectively challenged the colonial establishment only by surrendering their passions and energies to local charismatic leadership. This challenge of surrender during the latter days of colonial rule became transferred into expectant, if not enthusiastic passivity as the new rulers assumed the reins of power. This dependence on their leaders, who are often regarded as "heroes" or "fathers of the nation," not only sustains authoritarian rule but also inhibits the emergence of democratic institutions.

This argument leads us into a final factor determining authoritarian rule in post-colonial society. Indigenous rulers made grandiose promises of plenty for all; making the "small man a real man" and "Feed, Clothe and House the Nation by 1976." For various reasons, both domestic and foreign, the discussion of which does not fall within the purview of this paper, the promises which resulted in an outburst of rising expectations, were invariably not fulfilled. The rising expectations of the masses have now been changed into a mood of rising frustrations and concomitant restlessness and aggression. Rulers in post-colonial society are presently experiencing both a crisis of legitimacy to their rule and a crisis of credibility to their policies. The atmosphere in most post-colonial societies is one tending towards anomie as the masses of people now view their

indigenous rulers as "betrayers." The attitude of dependence has now become a disposition towards restlessness and uncertainty. In order to maintain social order in their country and to temper this aura of restlessness governments again resort to authoritarian measures.

So far, we have established (a) that decolonisation involves the replacement of foreign rule by indigenous rule; and that (b) colonial rule is authoritarian and so too is the system of rule in post-colonial society. It should be noted that since the socio-cultural institutions of the colonial rulers can never be fully uprooted as they are an integral part of the very fabric of the society, then, decolonisation more accurately refers to the removal of foreign political and economic rule or domination. Further, the identification and characterisation of post-colonial rule or domination as authoritarian is important in enabling us to understand the role of militarisation in transforming the society, particularly since military institutions are essentially authoritarian institutions.

4. THE STATE AND MILITARISATION

The colonial state in the Caribbean preceded the formation of the society (Singham, 1968). The peoples of the region were imported from Africa, Asia and Europe after the establishment of the administrative apparatus for the colonies. The colonies were acquired chiefly through military conquest and were protected from being recaptured through the establishment of military fortresses. The society that emerged, slavery and plantation society was the sheltered product of the militarised colonial state. From the very inception then, militarisation played the key role in the creation and emergence of colonial Caribbean society.

This anomalous emergence of colonial Caribbean society with its imported peoples raises serious questions about the Marxian thesis that the economic substructure of society determines its superstructure which includes the state. The peculiar reality of Caribbean society is that it is the state that preceded the total society and provided an environment for the establishment of a plantation economy. Further, it was the military that enabled the setting up of the state and it was the militarised state which sheltered and set the parameters for the emergence of plantation society.

Not only did the militarised colonial state facilitate the establishment and emergence of the plantation society, but it was also responsible for its maintenance. The governors of the colonies were almost invariably military personnel from the imperial army. The imperial power did not, however, maintain a large standing army in any one Caribbean colony but instead had small detachments. In the event of the threat of a crisis or a civil uprising the imperial power would readily call upon its vast military resource to restore order. The irony of this strategy was that the colonies were effectively militarised without the continuous presence of adequate military reserves. The role of the military in the colonial Caribbean then, was essentially one of repression and control. They provided a sheltered atmosphere for the importation of the ethics of European capitalism which manifested itself in the form of the plantation system.

This analysis hallmarks the fact that in writing about the nature of colonial society in the Caribbean scholars have largely ignored the militarised

nature of the colonial state. This argument, too, points to the need for a reappraisal of existing theories of the colonial Caribbean based on an assessment of the interplay between the militarised state and the colonial economy. The imperial military halo has always been the most direct and effective means of controlling the colonies and keeping them in check in order to bring about and perpetuate their incarceration in the world capitalist economy.

In the latter days of colonial rule as self-government was given to some of the colonies in the Caribbean, the imperial military functioned to ensure that self-government was administered by local politicians whose policies and outlook were similar and in consonance with imperial expectations (Munroe, 1972). In Guyana, the popular People's Progressive Party (PPP) Government led by Cheddie Jagan⁴ and Forbes Burnham were put out of power for perpetuating socialist policies. The Constitution of the colony was suspended by the British Governor and military detachments sent to the colony along with naval warships to repress any uprising of the people. This authoritarian and high-handed action by the imperial power in arbitrarily putting out of power a democratically elected government was only possible because of the military strength at its command.

The obtainment of political independence necessitated the establishment of indigenous armed forces. The former colonies had a colonial police service and some form of militia or volunteer service that were never really effective in suppressing mass disorder because of the paucity of their numbers. Since the countries that became independent could no longer rely on the imperial power to defend its sovereignty or maintain domestic order in the volatile post-colonial milieu, the setting up of a standing army and the strengthening of the police were imperative. Just as the imperial armed forces supported and fashioned the colonial state so too would the local military fashion and support the post-colonial countries that are experiencing decolonisation. Indeed, the intervention of the armed forces in domestic political crisis in Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Grenada are pronounced.

The indigenous armed forces in the independent Caribbean countries must, then, be seen as assisting the decolonisation process. They are authoritarian pillars upon which the state in the post-colonial Caribbean society can effectively institutionalise and sustain itself. Since decolonisation refers to the systematic replacement of a foreign presence and the establishment of an indigenous and autonomous system of rule, the role of the armed forces must be understood in terms of providing a climate for enabling the transformation.

Just as the imperial armed forces enabled the establishment and institutionalisation of the militarised colonial state so too the indigenous armed forces are functioning to provide a climate for the acceptance and institutionalisation of indigenous rule. The important difference is, however, whereas the imperial armed forces never continuously resided as a rule in any colony, the indigenous armed forces represent a more or less new and permanent institution in the former colonies. The permanence of sizeable armed forces in an independent Caribbean country like Guyana has profound impact on strategies for transformation, as will be later brought out. Further, it should be noted that the

indigenous armed forces were not responsible for the establishment of the state in the post-colonial Caribbean societies but rather for supporting its rule and providing an atmosphere for it to transform the inherited colonial society. Since the state apparatus, like the colonial social structure, is an inheritance, newly created military institutions become instrumental in influencing the patterning of the state in the independent Caribbean countries. In what follows the role of the armed forces in supporting the state in the transformation of the ex-colony Guyana will be empirically examined.

5. MILITARISATION AND TRANSFORMATION

The institutionalisation of indigenous rule in an independent Guyana was brought about by the ruling People's National Congress (P.N.C.) regime. The P.N.C. Government moved into the seat of government in 1964 in coalition with the United Force (U.F.), a party which represented the minority race grouping in the society. The two parties coalesced in order to keep the People's Progressive Party (P.P.P.) out of government after bitter racial conflicts and general national unrest. Although the P.P.P., led by Cheddie Jagan, was in charge of the government from 1957, that party never really effectively controlled the government, since the self-governing colony was still dominated by the imperial authorities. This state of affairs led Jagan to remark: "My party is in office not in power" (Jagan, 1975). In terms of effective control of the government, the indigenous rule must be traced from when the country became fully independent in 1966. However, it can be argued that the conditions for the institutionalisation of indigenous rule began in 1964 when the present regime took office.

Conscious of the importance of the armed forces in strengthening and sustaining his government, Jagan after complaining about the "ethnic imbalance" of the security forces, had a motion approved in the Legislative Assembly for the establishment of an indigenous army. Historically, the local armed forces, which then consisted of the para-military police and the British Guiana Volunteer forces, were manned by mainly black personnel. Jagan's P.P.P. was unconvinced about the loyalty of the armed forces to his government. The move to establish an army under a P.P.P. government was however vetoed by the Governor. It was not until their successors took office in 1964 that the colonial authorities initiated the establishment of an indigenous army. This came in the form of the British Guiana Special Service Unit (S.S.U.) which was set up in February, 1964. The S.S.U. was formed by the Governor after recognition of the limitation of the Police Force and the B.G.V.F. in coping with the upsurge of civil unrest and political violence brought about by racial struggles mainly between the two major ethnic groups; and, the mass hysteria about the socialist propensities of the P.P.P. government. The consent for the creation of the local army, too, came about after the imperial armed forces had to intervene to restore order to the colony and because the granting of independence to the colony was imminent. The S.S.U. had equal amounts of blacks and East Indians and was commissioned with the task of putting down internal disturbances.

In 1964 the total strength of the armed forces was 2,135, which included 500 S.S.U. members and the remaining 1,635 belonged to the police. This represented a ratio of one military personnel for every 300 citizens. In 1965 the

Guyana Defence Force (G.D.F.) replaced the S.S.U., and in 1975 the Guyana National Service was set up followed by the People's Militia in 1976. The total estimated strength of the armed forces now numbers 22,000 (see Table 1) which gives a ratio of one military personnel for every 35 citizens. Indeed, a conspicuous feature of everyday life in Guyana is the omnipresence of uniformed military personnel. The armed forces in Guyana have increased by 1000% since 1964.

The meteoric growth in the size of the military is paralleled by the

TABLE 1

**ESTIMATED ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTH
OF THE ARMED FORCES ***

	1964	1966	1977
Guyana Defence Force	500	750	4,000
Police Force	1,635	1,881	3,751
National Service	—	—	4,000
People's Militia	—	—	10,000
Total	2,135	2,631	21,751

* Information on the numerical strength of the G.D.F., G.N.S. and People's Militia are classified and not easily obtainable. The figures given were supplied by officers in the respective institutions. Those on the Police were obtained from the 1977 estimates of the Government of Guyana.

increasing proportions of the national budget spent on these institutions (see Table 2). The expenditure on military institutions rose from about 2% of the gross national budget in 1964 to 7.7% in 1973. Between 1973 and 1976 the proportion of expenditure on the military increased steadily and doubled over this period. This marked increase in spending and meteoric growth in size of the military can be attributed to several factors. In the first place, since its independence in 1966 Guyana has experienced incursions and threats of incursions on its territorial borders by its bigger and more powerful neighbours, Venezuela and Brazil.³ Surinam, as well, has posed a similar challenge. These external threats resulted in much attention being given to the military preparedness of the country. In the second place, the coming of independence and the declaration of republic status necessitated the establishment and strengthening of indigenous armed forces since the country could no longer rely on the former colonial rulers to solve problems of internal disorder (and external aggression). Thirdly, increased spending on military institutions, particularly those newly created by the ruling regime, reflects the need to provide new infra-structures and weaponry for them in this formative period of their existence.

TABLE 2

EXPENDITURE ON MILITARY INSTITUTIONS

Year	National Budget	Total Defence Budget	Percentage of National Budget
1973	290,636,261	22,494,569	7.7
1974	358,543,194	38,064,342	10.6
1975	580,701,957	78,917,236	13.5
1976	795,148,167	113,136,610	14.2

Source : 1977 Joint Estimates of the Government of Guyana.

Though the above reasons may in part justify the increases in expenditure and size of the military, they certainly do not explain the variety and overall functioning of such institutions. In short, they may be necessary but not sufficient causes for the increasing militarisation of the Guyanese society.

It appears that in so far as the military can be viewed as institutions of coercion and control, the increases in size and expenditure coupled with the variety of the military are indicative of their role in the institutionalisation of the existing regime. The armed forces in Guyana form veritable pillars upon which the system of indigenous rule has emerged and is becoming crystallised. The armed forces, then, have laid the foundation for the effective displacement of colonial rule and imperialist domination. Just as the colonial armed forces enabled the establishment of colonial rule, in like manner the indigenous armed forces have facilitated the sustaining if not also the establishment of the indigenous system of rule.

Apart from its role in sustaining the government which, as a post-colonial system of rule has a built-in impetus towards authoritarianism, the government itself is placing great emphasis on the role of the military in transforming or remaking the society. The imperial powers had relied on the ethics of an established capitalist system to build the colonial society. The indigenous rulers seem to have a natural propensity and a strong affinity to rely on the military for purpose of actively remaking the independent society. Militarisation in Guyana is seen by the government as an approach to modernisation and development of the society just as much as it is viewed as a strategy for control, mobilisation and external defence.

Militarisation in the society is the ruling regime's way of coping with the volatile post-colonial environment. Military institutions are expected to combine all these roles in their operation. Indeed, strikes by sugar workers⁴ for prolonged periods witnessed the army, the police and members of the National Service providing manpower to cut the cane and thus rescue the sugar crop. With the government being the employer in the nationalised sugar industry, strikes by sugar workers are regarded as politically motivated, since the opposition leader, Cheddie Jagan, is the driving force behind the recognised sugar workers' union, the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers' Union (G.A.W.U.). Thus not only did the armed forces maintain order in the restless sugar belt but they were also seen as contributing to national development by cutting the cane and breaking the strike directed at the government. The army also intervened in bauxite and municipal workers' strikes. Military intervention thus functioned to ensure not only that social order is maintained at all costs but also that efforts at developing the society are not subverted and moreso that a reliable supply of manpower is available in the event of disaffection by regular workers. It seems that so long as military institutions are continuously relied upon by the ruling regime as a panacea for the problems faced by its rule it would be natural to expect the continued expansion of the military and the concomitant process of militarisation of the society.

But why, it may be asked, has the ruling regime developed such a natural affinity for the use of military institutions in supporting their rule and remaking

disciplined formations of their populace. Such strategies, initially at least, are often accomplished by the establishment of various military-type institutions. It is contended that Guyana is no different in respect of its socialist intent and the variety of its military institutions is so indicative.

Because of their ideal bureaucratic nature with their rigid system of delegated authority and personnel control, military institutions immediately lend themselves to strategies of mass mobilisation. Military institutions are authoritarian institutions, with the chain of commands emanating from top downwards and hardly ever the reverse. They are then efficient, if not also reliable systems of control as well as enclaves of manpower which can be channelled towards the objective of multiple societal goals.

A society in which "every citizen (is) a soldier" is a most authoritarian society. Surprisingly, however, such a militarised society with its built-in system of control and coercion may not be conceived as either repressive or authoritarian by its people. This is because people in military institutions tend to accept the normative structure of punishment for disciplinary infractions. The soldier does not like being punished for disobeying commands, but he views as legitimate the normative structures of the institution and thereby grants his officers the right to physically or otherwise discipline him. Successful militarisation of a society is, therefore, an effective method of legitimising or re-legitimising an existing system of rule. They are ideal receptacles for enabling the continuation of authoritarian rule in post-colonial societies.

The Guyana society is plagued by the reality that politics at the level of the masses are conducted along largely racial lines. It is a reality that cannot be wished away that the non-African sectors of the society which represent over 60% of the total population are in opposition to the present rulers largely because of the ethnic question. It is not that the present rulers are not genuinely concerned with bringing about unity in an ethnically plural society, but, rather that the inherited dilemma of ethnic cleavages weighs heavily against voluntary co-operation in the task of nation-building. The systematic enlisting of the people in military institutions is seen by the ruling regime as a way out of this dilemma. One of the expressed objectives of the G.N.S. is "uniting the various racial, social and economic groups in Guyana for our survival and development." Realising the need for internal stability if the task of nation-building is to be undertaken the present rulers are relying on the use of military-type institutions. In what will follow the functioning of the military institutions in Guyana will be examined in terms of their contribution to the multiple goals of nation-building.

7. NATION-BUILDING, DEVELOPMENT AND MILITARY INSTITUTIONS IN GUYANA

There are several imperatives of nation-building in post-colonial society. These are :

- (1) Establishing a system of indigenous rule to replace the colonial state.
- (2) The emergence, creation or adaptation of an ideology to guide social action in transforming the society.
- (3) Providing a stable climate for development by in one way or another minimising

the society? Morris Janowitz (1964), John J. Johnson (1962) and Lucian Pye (1964) have argued that in new nations like Guyana the armed forces are developmentally superior institutions and also congenial receptacles for introducing and bringing about social changes.⁵ But this recognised role of the military as a modernising force does not explain its functioning in other independent Caribbean countries like Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica. In none of these Caribbean countries have the military been given such a prominent nor active role in societal transformation. Moreover, Guyana with its four main variety of military institutions — the Guyana Defence Force, the Police, the People's Militia and the Guyana National Service — has set a pattern of militarisation unlikely to be followed by its West Indian neighbours. It seems then that the process of militarisation in Guyana is a conscious and deliberate strategy by the ruling regime to provide an institutional mode that can successfully decolonise the society and at the same time mobilise the people for purpose of nation-building and development.

The factors contributing to the increasing militarisation in the Guyana society can be attributable to :

- (1) The need to have armed forces as an independent republic.
- (2) The threat of territorial aggression and incursions by bordering countries.
- (3) The provision of institutions to absorb the growing masses of unemployed and underemployed.
- (4) The creation of new institutions to attain the goals of modernisation and development in a volatile post-colonial milieu.
- (5) The mobilisation and control of the population for achieving national objectives.
- (6) The decolonisation of the society through institutionalising and sustaining the rule of an indigenous regime.

6. MILITARISATION — AN EXPERIMENT IN NATION-BUILDING

The impetus towards the militarisation of the Guyana society by the indigenous rulers did not initially emerge as the conscious and deliberate strategy it has now become. In the first place, the regime postulated a "co-operative socialist" philosophy allegedly related to Marxist-Leninist principles. The tendency is for countries whose rulers embrace socialist ideologies to heavily militarise their society in order to defeat the "enemies of the revolution." The Soviet Union, China and Cuba are cases in point. Citizens who are in opposition to such policies for transition or else in opposition to the system of rule are immediately labelled, if not also treated as "enemies of the revolution." The maintenance of strong military institutions to regulate internal political behaviour and to counter imperialist aggression becomes imperative if such systems of rule are to go unchallenged. With a pragmatic and eclectic disposition towards borrowing ideas, the indigenous rulers in Guyana may not unnaturally have followed this approach. Indeed, the styling of the Guyana Defence Force as the "People's Army" and the naming of the Militia as the "People's Militia" can be said to be identical with the pattern, of the symbolic uses of politics by the states in the above-named socialist societies.

In societies that style themselves socialist there is a tendency to pursue strategies of nation-building and development by the mass mobilisation and

- acts of internal disorder and unrest.
- (4) Inducing techniques of social mobilisation of the populace for attaining national objectives.
 - (5) Setting up new or changed institutions for bringing about development.

In the early 1960s the government saw co-operatives as the vehicle for socialist transformation and as an organisational panacea for the imperatives of nation-building. The emergence and growth of co-operatives have not, however, lived up to the expectations of the regime, which is constantly being pressured by the people to provide solutions to the problems of underdevelopment. It seems that the ruling regime has now turned to military institutions to boost the key role expected to be played by co-operatives in societal transformation. The "military sector" is a new sector and joins the co-operative, public and private sectors in the task of economic development of the society.

The Guyana Defence Force

The People's Army (G.D.F.) was set up in 1965 and its key role then was defending the country's borders against external aggression along with that of maintaining internal social order. In connection with this role the G.D.F. had on three occasions to encounter actual combat related to border defence. In January, 1969, some ranchers in the Rupununi district who were known supporters of the United Force, the party representing the mixed, Portuguese and Chinese minorities, launched an uprising with the aim of bringing about a secession of that district from the rest of the country. These ranchers with a gang of Amerindians attacked the police station and other government offices killing and injuring some officials in the process. The army moved into the area and put down the uprising, but not before the ranchers fled across the border to Venezuela. Again, in 1969, the army captured some Surinamese in the New River area on the Corentyne coast who had invaded Guyana's territory and had plans for setting up a large scale settlement. Thirdly, soon after independence, the mighty Venezuelan army invaded and occupied Ankoko Island and defied the much smaller and less equipped G.D.F. The matter was, however, temporarily resolved through diplomatic channels and the signing of a treaty.

In April, 1970, however, after a mutiny by the neighbouring Trinidad and Tobago Regiment, the ruling regime in Guyana immediately set out to redefine the role of the local army. The Prime Minister, who is also Minister of Defence and Chairman of the Defence Board, called upon army officers to give their unconditional loyalty to him, based on an appreciation of the co-operative socialist philosophy of his government. He commissioned the army with the task of building all major interior roads, and with their knowledge and commitment to his government's philosophy, to turn out "leaders in the community, and leaders in the society" (Burnham, 1970). The army then was expected to lay the foundation for the increasing mobilisation and militarisation of the rest of the society.

The Prime Minister further sanctioned that the army had a key role to play in national development. As a large reserve of disciplined manpower, the army has been engaged in building roads and airstrips in the remotest regions of the country's hinterland, performing mercy missions for the sick and the

suffering, providing medical treatment for those remote from medical facilities, farming, fishing, hunting and in many other areas contributing in a more or less significant way to the country's development.

Against the background of army insurrections in Latin America and other Third World countries, the demand for loyalty by the army to the government and its socialist outlook was crucial. The G.D.F. was made aware of the government's intention to nationalise foreign-owned enterprises and was urged to support this venture. Army personnel who display anti-government, or, more specifically, anti-party sentiments are identified and weeded out of the force. In Chile, the military overthrew a democratically elected civilian government embarked on socialist transformation of that society and returned nationalised enterprises to multi-nationals. In Guyana, the ruling regime was determined not to have a recurrence of the Chilean experience. The re-orientation of the army and the re-definition of their role in the Guyana society was necessary if the regime was to sustain their role as well as bring about the desired societal transformation. Since the army was defined as "leaders in the society, and leaders in the community" and are expected to be in the forefront of the thrust towards development and nation-building, then their commitment to the regime is all the more greater. Indeed, so successful is the imagery of the army's involvement in the tasks of nation-building and development that not only are they styled the "people's army" but the people themselves are regarded as "the army's people" (The Scarlet Beret, 1971, p. 14).

The army was cradled by the governing regime and it is the single institution that is most *au fait* with government's policies and the ideology of the ruling P.N.C. party. The G.D.F., then, represents one of the new or changed institutions set up by the government to accomplish the other objectives of nation-building and development. Because of internal domestic political pressures, stemming from the crises of credibility and legitimacy being experienced by the government, however, the G.D.F. is constrained to focus its energies primarily on problems of maintaining order and social stability. Its role at present, then, is one of defending the regime and very little effort is now being given to the other tasks with which it has been optimistically commissioned.

The Police

Unlike the G.D.F. the para-military police force is a product of colonial rule and thus was initially not taken fully into the confidence of the indigenous rulers. Like the army, the initial role was that of maintaining order and defending the country's borders. Unlike the G.D.F., however, they engaged more in the day to day administration of law and order. Even during the colonial era, the police in remote areas functioned as postal agents and carried other forms of "non-police" government services to the people in the interior. With the coming of independence and the establishment of indigenous rule, the role of the police too was re-defined. No longer are they to be aloof and hostile to the public they serve but were now expected to be the "people's police" and be involved in communal projects as "leaders in the community." The police soon followed the army in fully endorsing the ideology of co-operative socialism and in wholeheartedly supporting the ruling regime.

In their anxiety to demonstrate loyalty to the regime, the police established consumer's co-operatives, co-operative credit unions, co-operative housing schemes and placed ideological instruction as a key aspect of their training programmes. The police are expected to detect detractors and other "enemies of the socialist revolution" who are considered as inhibiting the government's plans for nation-building and development. Along with these functions, police engage in farming, establishing gardens around police stations, self-help building of houses and stations in keeping with the government's philosophy of self-reliance.

Like the G.D.F., the police have contributed a great deal towards the maintenance of stability in the country. Since the present regime attained power in 1964 there has been no significant civil unrest as was constantly evident during the latter phase of colonial rule (Mars, 1975). This is due in no small measure to the vigilance of the police, who are also too busy with the day to day administration of law and order and buttressing the regime to pay much attention to developmental projects in the communities.

The Guyana National Service

The G.N.S. was set up by the ruling regime with the expressed purpose of bringing about the task of nation-building and development. The co-operative movement was not progressing as the government had anticipated. People seem to lack a spirit of entrepreneurship or a disposition towards self-reliance. Further, the ideological thrust of the regime lacked a stable or readily adaptable institution out of which the "new Guyana man" can be moulded. Also the great bulk of the population is crowded on the coastlands while the large, rich interior areas remained sparsely populated. A perusal of the objectives of this paramilitary organisation indicates that it was set up to:

- (a) provide training and skills which are consistent with national needs;
- (b) increase national production;
- (c) provide manpower for development;
- (d) achieving self-reliance;
- (e) developing and populating the hinterland;
- (f) developing an understanding of national objectives;
- (g) rescue and relief operations during national disaster, emergencies or catastrophes;
- (h) uniting the various racial, social and economic groups in Guyana for our survival and development;
- (i) national defence.

Clearly, the objectives of the G.N.S. summarises in no uncertain terms the role the military institutions in general and the G.N.S. in particular are expected to play in the tasks of nation-building and development. In accordance with the statutes enacting the National Service any and every citizen of Guyana can be called upon by law to do national service if necessary. Again, the militarising intent of the ruling regime became more obvious by its enactment of such statutes. It is not by coincidence that the top officials of the G.N.S. are police and army officers on secondment. The Director-General is a Deputy Commissioner of Police, the Assistant Director-General (Training) is an Assistant Commissioner of Police. Other top officials include seconded majors,

captains and lieutenants from the G.D.F. The Prime Minister and Minister of Defence himself takes personal charge of the National Service Secretariat which is the governing body of the institution.

The G.N.S. has branches in primary and secondary schools as well as the local university, and the teacher training institutions. It is expected to socialise or re-socialise the members of the society from as young as eight years old into developing a sense of national consciousness, a socialist orientation, and a commitment and loyalty to the government. In doing this the National Service is organised to invade the structure or permeate the frame-work of other established institutions such as the educational system, the military, industry, correctional and penal institutions and so on. Whereas the task of engaging in development projects and hinterland settlement is somewhat more secondary to the G.D.F., the Police and the People's Militia, these tasks are seen as central to the role of the G.N.S. The G.N.S. is expressly concerned with the nation-building and development of the entire society. In principle at least, the G.N.S. is seen as the nucleus institution, the prototype from which the "New Guyana" will be patterned. Out of this institution it is expected that the "New Guyana Man" as conceived by the ruling regime will emerge.

National Service is a novel institution. It is a unique experiment in nation-building. Although National Services can be found in Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana, the wide scale with which it is envisaged has been unparalleled elsewhere. Despite the laudable objective of the G.N.S., presently, it resembles little more than an amorphous, ill-structured military institution that has achieved very little of what it sets out to accomplish. Because of the lack of proper planning, resources and skilled personnel many of the schemes the G.N.S. has set up have failed. Cotton production has fallen through and the scale of planning for other agricultural, industrial and mining projects has not been realised. The G.N.S. was expected from its inception to be a largely self-reliant institution which after the initial investment will generate self-growth and wealth for the country. However, the realities are that the G.N.S. is not expanding as rapidly as was expected despite enormous investments put into it by the ruling regime. Instead it has begun to contract and it appears that Papaya, one of its major centres in the hinterland, will be closed down for financial and other reasons. Also, the G.N.S. has slowed down considerably its expansion and personnel recruitment scheme after it was found that galloping expansion was posing serious administrative and managerial problems. In the 1976 Annual Report it was stated :

"The service tried desperately to restrict further expansion as we started experiencing difficulty with staffing. Our expansion rate during 1975 was astronomical and we were unable to find new staff quickly enough. Those recruited from 'Civvy' street could not be properly trained to perform the onerous duties expected of them and this was causing serious problems on Centres, e.g. insecurity, frustration, disenchantment and ambivalence resulting in a high staff turnover."
(Annual Report for G.N.S.: 1976)

The upshot of these deficiencies in the G.N.S. is that it faces a dilemma of operationalising multiple goals amidst chaotic administrative conditions. The organisational confusion of the G.N.S. has resulted in it rapidly becoming a

rigidly authoritarian institution where functional superiors demand compulsive obedience and inflict punishment thus further reducing morale. Indeed, its main success is in the performance of purely military duties with which larger sections of the G.N.S. are becoming increasingly concerned. The theme song of the G.N.S. "I want to build this land that belongs to me" reflects aspirations that are a far way off from becoming a reality.

The Guyana People's Militia

The People's Militia is a military institution set up in 1976 by the ruling regime with the expressed aim of making "Every Citizen a Soldier." As if the other three institutions were not enough the Militia was established to :

- (a) Provide a framework on which during a period of rising tensions mass preparations for emergencies can be carried out.
- (b) Support the People's Army in all of its functions when called upon to do so.
- (c) Assist the People's Police in the maintenance of law and order when called upon to do so.
- (d) Provide a reservoir of trained recruits for the army.
- (e) Contribute to the life of the community by engaging in productive work and providing a labour rescue organisation in an emergency.

The recruits for the militia initially, at least, were largely drawn from the various branches of the ruling party. It appears that the militia was seen as necessary in the face of increasing threats to the power position of the ruling regime, particularly in the face of the restlessness of the populace who have built up an attitude of cynicism towards the government because of its failure to provide answers to the problems of underdevelopment. Its role in nation-building is primarily one of buttressing the regime while at the same time encouraging the people as a whole to be a part of the government's militarised approach to nation-building and defence. The Militia is defined as "a military body of citizens, trained in military skills, imbued with a high sense of loyalty and dedicated to the nation and its programme for socialist development" (The Guyana People's Militia, 1976).

The Militia is still in the process of crystallising its organisation and its military presence is yet to be felt. With its motto "Every Citizen a Soldier," the Militia forcefully reflects the ruling regime's intent on militarising the society and of viewing military institutions as an organisational panacea for the problems of nation-building and development.

8. THE RULER'S PERSPECTIVE

So far we have examined the four major military institutions and established their functioning as the major approach to nation-building and development in Guyana. It is in the rationale given for the formation of the Militia that we find the essence of the ruling regime's thinking behind their militarisation strategy. The rationale given for the formation of the Militia which is expected to make every citizen a soldier, are :

- (1) Grave threats have been posed to the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the State of Guyana. These threats have been posed by foreign powers who are opposed to the Government's thrust to abolish capitalism, eradicate foreign exploitation and make national independence meaningful.

- (2) The Government has gradually and deliberately over the past ten years re-possessed the natural resources of the country and taken control of the commanding heights of the economy through a process of nationalisation of foreign enterprises.
- (3) In the political sphere it has unapologetically accepted socialism as an ideological programme and position for total development.
- (4) It has pursued a non-alignment policy and has been a tireless fighter in the Non-Aligned Movement seeking to follow its own path of development without participating in the global power struggle. It has also resolutely opposed apartheid, zionism and neo-colonialism and has upheld the right to self-determination of nations.
- (5) Because of the above which the Government sees as whole-heartedly embraced by the Guyanese people, foreign states have disapproved and sought to "destabilise" Guyana by spreading vicious lies about the country. The ultimate objective of this campaign is to demonstrate that Guyana under its present Government, is a threat to peace, and thereby to create the conditions for intervention in order to preserve "peace" in the hemisphere.
- (6) In order to defend the country effectively against this threat, a large portion of the civilian population needs to be mobilised, trained and equipped to carry out defensive duties, while maintaining normal economic production. The setting up of the Militia is further viewed as necessary because Guyana's borders are long and the country is large in comparison to its small population and is therefore vulnerable not only to direct foreign intervention but also infiltrated agents acting in the interest of hostile powers. The small size of the combined security forces and the large area over which it is responsible make it difficult to move regular troops quickly from place to place whenever the need arises, either for internal or external security or defence against external aggression. It is therefore the people themselves that must provide the surest guarantee for maintaining peace and defending the country. (The Guyana People's Militia: 1976)

In this declaration, the various imperatives of nation-building in the post-colonial society of Guyana are seen by the indigenous rulers as primarily the task of military institutions. Militarisation is seen as the organisational essence for transforming the Guyana society. Like the colonial state, the post-colonial state is a militarised one. Military institutions in post-colonial Guyana are meant to replace the plantation of the colonial era as the paramount and definitive system of social organisation. In colonial society the imperial military sheltered the plantation society. In post-colonial Guyana indigenous military institutions are expected to both shelter and form the very fabric of the society. The realities are, however, that the process of militarisation as a strategy for nation-building and development have only just begun and are yet to score significant successes. It remains in this its formative stages an experiment in nation-building.

In terms of effectively mobilising the population the militarisation strategy is so far making very slow progress. This is so for several reasons. In the first place, the regime is experiencing serious crises of credibility and legitimacy. Many Guyanese people consequently have a cynical if not also pessimistic outlook on anything the government undertakes. While not engaging in any "active unrest" against the government for fear of the symbolic strength of the existing military institutions there is an aura of mass "passive unrest" in the society. People are fleeing or else making attempts to flee the country in droves for the United States, Canada or Britain, as evidenced by the long queues of persons waiting daily outside these foreign embassies. Serious shortages of

basic food items, medicines, prolonged water, electrification and communication problems contribute to this mass hysteria. The military institutions are largely avoided by the masses of students coming out of secondary schools and colleges. It is only the black working class, because of lack of other employment opportunities, who largely people these institutions. The East Indians and other ethnic groups avoid as far as possible these military institutions, based on their overall opposition to the government. There is no guarantee that their voluntary or coerced induction into these military institutions would mend racial differences or ease racial tensions. Indeed, despite its nationalistic outlook the black dominated government would harbour fears about mass East Indian recruitment into these military institutions. It seems that the government must first obtain the voluntary loyalty and commitment of the other ethnic groups as well as the Guyanese people in general before the militarisation process can be quickened and become a success.

The ruling regime must first seek the legitimacy it has lost and restore credibility in its rule and ability to govern before it can risk making "every citizen a soldier." Failing this, and if the mass opposition to its rule continues in the face of increasing economic hardships in the society, the established military institutions can degenerate into instruments of repression. So far, none of the four military institutions are considered repressive or do any of them intimidate the people. Continued pressures on a government that is unable to provide answers to the economic hardships facing the society can result in fascist governmental rule, aided by military institutions whose personnel can be quickly turned into a privileged elite in the society.

CONCLUSION

Governing in a volatile post-colonial society like Guyana is an onerous and unenviable task. Because it is underdeveloped and because the indigenous rulers have nationalised 80% of the economy⁶ and are now the main employers of the working population, the label of the "new colonisers" seems an adequate one to describe the regime insofar as people perceive no significant improvements and even deterioration in their material condition. The authoritarian rule that was characteristic of the "old colonisers" was repressive and wholly exploitative. The natural resources of the country and its labour power were utilised to fill the coffers of the metropolitan rulers. In contrast, the authoritarian rule of the post-colonial government — the "new colonisers" — reflects a genuine concern to find solutions to the problems of dependent underdevelopment. Militarisation is viewed as a strategy for overcoming such problems. The military of the colonial era were almost exclusively instruments of repression and control. The military of the post-colonial Guyana are meant to be instruments of decolonisation, nation-building and development. It is not that, symbolically at least, they are not instruments of control, but rather that the purpose of such control is to provide an atmosphere for the increasing militarisation of the society as a whole and subsequently its transformation. The military is expected to be the society and the society is expected to be the military.

The indigenous rulers have taken a bold step in the direction towards transforming the society and creating a new nation. They have challenged the

multi-national corporations and have largely supplanted the old local colour class elite without bloodshed. The non-aligned path on which the regime has attempted to embark represents a courageous step towards breaking the stranglehold of the world's capitalist system. If the indigenous rulers of other post-colonial societies should follow the Guyana example in terms of such things like nationalisation and non-alignment then the centre nations would be seriously affected and the balance of power and influence among nations in the international arena would radically alter.

The Guyana example represents a serious attempt by the present indigenous rulers to pursue a course of "independent" development and to alter its dependent or satellite status in the hegemony of the international capitalist system. As a post-colonial society, however, it is faced with the harsh realities of inter-ethnic conflicts, a paucity of capital resources and technological know-how, and an inherited syndrome of authoritarian rule that can ultimately frustrate the very path it has designed for its development. Pressures from centre nations (both internal and external) to preserve their dominance and maintain their dependent development are major obstacles to the progress of the society. Militarisation as a strategy for nation-building and development can successfully challenge the multiple obstacles facing this post-colonial society. The realities are, however, that it is an experiment which, if successful, can point out directions for change in other such societies; if unsuccessful the militarisation process can collapse into a nightmare of fascist rule.

This paper has hopefully drawn attention to the need to consider the ruler's perspective in the affairs of new nations. It is a small contribution to a larger sociology of domination or rule and should serve to remind scholars that in positing theories of development and nation-building that the perspective of the institutionalised power holders should always be taken into consideration.

FOOTNOTES

1. The word "dependency" is used here in a sense that is contrary to its current meaning among the school of literature emerging out of Latin America and the Caribbean known as "dependency theory." (See for example the works of A. G. Frank, Pablo G. Casanova, Osvaldo Sunkel, Norman Girvan, George Beckford, Clive Thomas, as listed in the bibliography. For a brief review of some of these works see Paget Henry's dissertation on Decolonisation in Antigua). A parasite is dependent on its host. The metropole is a parasite that heavily relies on the Third World for among other things raw materials and cheap labour. Because of this "dependence" by the metropole, the Third World is kept in a state of dependent underdevelopment.
2. Although Prime Minister Burnham is not known to have had any previous military training he, nevertheless, wears the attire of a general in the G.D.F. and similar uniforms for the National Service and the Police.
3. With its small population and limited resources Guyana cannot realistically provide armed forces to match the military might of its two powerful neighbours. It thus has to rely on international pressures and diplomatic negotiations to avert the threat of territorial incursions.
4. Sugar represents the largest industry in the society.
5. In the English speaking Caribbean, military institutions may be congenial but not necessarily developmentally superior institutions since these countries are totally open to westernising influences and do not have hard core traditional communities like countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.
6. The foreign owned financial institutions are still largely untouched by the regime.

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