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**Power, politics, and military regimes: Acquiescence, quiescence
and exit in Ghana**

Asumah, Seth Nii, D.A.

Lehigh University, 1988

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POWER, POLITICS, AND MILITARY REGIMES:
ACQUIESCENCE, QUIESCENCE AND EXIT IN GHANA

by

Seth Nii Asumah

Doctoral Dissertation

Lehigh University

1988

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Arts.

August 2, 1988
(date)

Donald H. Barry
Professor in Charge

Accepted August 15, 1988
(date)

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To

Daniel, Deborah, Katherine and Tosha Asumah, and all those who support the struggle for political participation in praetorian regimes.

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I am grateful to the Lehigh University Inter-library Loans Services for their effort in making available to me the Daily Graphic of Ghana from 1966 to the present date. This newspaper provided a solid foundation for the study. Many thanks are also due to Jan Stankiewicz for her typing effort, and Conrad Callender for giving me moral support and sweet inspiration.

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Abstract

What was considered to be unthinkable and a non-issue in military regimes in the Third World during the 1960's and 1970's has now become widespread: political participation under praetorian governments. This investigation focuses on the general question of political participation under three different military regimes that have ruled Ghana from 1966 to the present.

Military leadership models of guardian, arbitrator and direct-ruler type, and three different power dimensions were used to assess political participation and the root causes of acquiescence, quiescence and exit, in Ghana. The study also considers the prospects for demilitarization and redemocratization.

A thorough search of the literature on praetorian politics and political participation was a continuing process during the course of this investigation. The editorials of the Daily Graphic were used as the foundation for the study. Interviews were conducted in London, New York and Washington with government officials, refugees and other citizens of Ghana.

The investigation suggests that political participation does occur in all military regimes but social mobilization and institutionalization have a better chance of success in direct-ruler type regime.

BASIC DATA

Official Name Republic of Ghana
Population. 12, 205, 574
Capital Accra
Official Language English
Other Main Languages. Twi, Fante, Ewe
Ga, Nzema, Dagbani, Gonja, Hausa

Political Structure

Constitution. Provisional National Defense
Council - Proclamation 1981
Highest Legislative Body. None
Highest Executive Body. . . Provisional National Defense
Council (PNDC)
Prime Minister. P. V. Obeng (PNDC)
President Ft. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings
Ruling Party. None
Organizations New Democratic Movement
(Quasi-parties) Defense Committees
Quasi-party Membership. Approximately 30,000+
Armed Forces. 15,600
Police. 10,000

SUMMARY OF GHANA'S REGIME
1957-1988

Regime	Dates of Power	Leader
Convention People's Party (First) Republic	1957-1966	Kwame Nkrumah
National Liberation Council	1966-1969	Lt. Gen. J. Ankrah
Second Republic	1969-1972	Dr. K. A. Busia
Supreme Military Council I	1972-1978	Col. I. K. Acheampong
Supreme Military Council II	1978-1979	Lt. Gen. Fred Akuffo
Armed Forces Revolutionary Council	1979	Ft. Lt. J. Rawlings
Third Republic	1979-1981	Dr. Hilla Limann
Provisional National Defense Council	1981-Present	Ft. Lt. J. Rawlings

Introduction

Thirty-one years after independence, Ghana has maintained a period punctuated by five military regimes, three republics and several abortive coups d'état. In 1957, Ghana became the first African country south of the Sahara to attain independence from British colonial rule. The first five years after independence presents some serious lessons for the country's continuing search for a process of sustained political-economy, liquidation of colonial dependence and fundamental strategy for a viable national political organization and participation.

Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP) remains the longest-surviving government in the political history of Ghana. Nkrumah ruled the country for nine years, disregarding the six years he ruled the country under Britain's directives (1951-1957). Nkrumah spearheaded the Pan African movement which sought to put Africans in leadership positions in all newly independent states. Many observers regarded him as charismatic and an idealist who cultivated a cult personality and dictatorial government.¹

1. David Apter, Ghana in Transition, Princeton, University Press 1971, p. 327 and Robin Luckham, Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana, London. Frank Cass, 1975, pp. 62-88.

Essentially Ghana became a one-party state under Nkrumah. The Preventive Detention Act of 1958 denuded opposing parties by placing their leadership into detention. This act also restricted the press and freedom of association. The CPP extended its control over the entire nation by developing vertical and horizontal institutions. This was done by the creation of functional groups under party control. The Young Pioneers Movement, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the United Ghana Farmers Council (UGFC), were most notable of these groups. On the vertical bases, the CPP permeated every fabric of the Ghanaian society by appointing party members from the lowest levels to the highest echelon of government. Ministers, commissioners, directors and development committee members were all party appointees.

By 1965, Nkrumah entrenched the position of the executive by pronouncing himself president for life.² To fortify the office of the presidency he created the Presidential Own Guard Regiment (POGR) as a counterforce to the Ghana Armed Forces. The armed forces regarded the POGR as a rival group that interfered with their corporate interest.³ This was a contributing factor to the

2. Ibid.

3. Jon Kraus, The Politics of the Coup d'etat, New York. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969, p. 39.

demise of the Nkrumah regime.

The first military regime to enter the political sphere of Ghana was known as the National Liberation Council (NLC). The eight-person ruling council was headed by Lieutenant General J. A. Ankrah. Even though the military overthrew Nkrumah, they formed a tripartite executive branch made up of the police, military and top civil servants. The council's major goal was economic reconstruction and stabilization of the Ghanaian budgetary system.

Politically the NLC practiced the "politics of anti-politics". Here, all avenues for political participation were eradicated. "Politics" in this context includes, but is not limited to bargaining, compromise, negotiations or any give-and-take between the NLC and the populace. To put it most starkly, the NLC conducted government in a political vacuum. Nevertheless the NLC was more anti-Nkrumah than antipolitics. If the "politics" of antipolitics became predominant, it was only to prevent the rise of another Nkrumah.⁴

After three years of quite a peaceful transition, the NLC returned power to another civilian government - Dr. Busia and his Progress Party (PP). The Second Repub-

4. Eleanor E. Zeff, "New Directions in Understanding Military and Civilian Regimes in Ghana". African Studies Review. Vol. XXIV, No. 1, March 1981, p. 59.

lic remained in power for three years, just as had its predecessor military regime (1969-1972). Although the ruling party, PP, was itself amorphous, the middle-class and some of the old elite that was excluded from the CPP became its powerhouse.

Under Busia the power of the state diminished. Although the PP government, included the best professional academicians in the history of Ghana, the party structure remained undeveloped. Suffice it to say that parliament failed to become the instrument of power for the PP government.

The legacy Busia inherited from the NLC government left him with no choice but to devise hard-to-work strategies to combat inflation, corruption and unemployment. Once the PP government was concentrating on economics, politics decayed. Busia was regarded as being pro-British and an anti-nationalist.⁵ The nation recalls the British experience in Ghana and Busia was seen as an extension to British imperialism. By 1972, the military, labor unions and Ghanaians in general were tired of his administration. This resulted in the second military coup d'etat in Ghana.

If Busia exhibited a "wimp" factor and succumbed to

5. Victor Olorunsola, Soldiers and Power, Stanford, California. Hoover Institute Press, 1977, p. 166.

British neo-colonialism, his successor, I. K. Acheampong sought to strengthen nationalism with an authoritarian flavor. The ruling executive of the National Redemption Council changed its name to the Supreme Military Council SMC in 1976, four years after it assumed power. The Operation Feed Yourself program became the cornerstone of the SMC's plan for economic recovery and self-reliance.

As usual, the second military regime also practiced the "politics of anti-politics". Acheampong banned all political parties and put restrictions on all forms of participation. Nonetheless he established a new form of incorporation based on solidifying institutional links.⁶ This was an attempt to reorder state-society relations which was broken during Busia's rule. Technocrats and paramount traditional chiefs had a special place in the decision-making process. But this did not last for long because Acheampong saw to the end of the original coalition of technocrats and soldiers. In place of this coalition, he placed all state organs under military control. Thereafter, the center of power became highly personalized, gyrating around "Acheampongism".

With regard to the regime's duration of office, the SMC appeared to be more permanent than NLC, which main-

6. Deborah Pellow and Naomi Chazan, Ghana: Coping With Uncertainty, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1986, p. 49.

tained a transitional nature. After six years in office (1972-1978) a group of senior military officers demanded the resignation of Acheampong. Lieutenant General Fred Akuffo replaced Acheampong and named the executive body SMC II. In less than year, the SMC II was deposed by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawling for a brief, four month clean-up. This was the first time a military council moved away from elitist politics and incorporated junior officers and the have-nots of the Ghanaian society into the administrative machinery.⁷

The Rawlings' administration had a ten-member executive called the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The AFRCs four month rule was too brief to do any analytical critique or evaluation of its economic and socio-political programs. Nevertheless, one can say with certainty that it was a populist regime that spoke to and for the common Ghanaian.⁸

Rawlings supervised the general elections for the Third Republic. Hilla Limann became president, backed by the People's National Party (PNP). The elite and the academicians re-emerged in the political spectrum. The National Assembly and the Council of State, which encompassed the paramount chiefs and technocrats, became the

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid. p. 50-51.

main instrument of state power. It is noteworthy that Rawlings who returned to the barracks after Limann assumed power was forced to resign. This was an attempt to deprive him of military power and to prevent another coup d'etat. Limann's strategy backfired, and the soldiers of the Recce regiment ousted Limann and reinstated Jerry Rawlings on December 31, 1981.⁹

The short term of the Third Republic can hardly be described as edifying. Most observers believe that Limann's failure was due to his inability to solve the economic crisis, and the political corruption that it engendered.¹⁰ Furthermore, the defects of the Limann regime were an inevitable outcome of the tough events which preceded its coming to power. Nonetheless one cannot overemphasize the fact that Rawlings maintained his post as a "watchdog" on the administration he helped to institute. The second coming of Jerry Rawlings - the first military leader in Africa to successfully stage a second coup d'etat - had a more permanent outlook than the first transitional one.

Six years of Rawlings in power have provided the most vibrant occasion since the Nkrumah regime. One

9. The Daily Graphic, January 2, 1982.

10. Naomi Chazen, An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado. 1983, p. 320, and Jon Kraus, "Revolution and the Military in Ghana", Current History, March 1983, pp. 115-119.

observer has noted about the present regime - The Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC):

In the process, this period put on the national stage at the same time virtually all the legitimizing goals thrown up at various times in 30 years of post-colonial politics, ...uprooting neo-colonialism, social injustice; self-reliance; Pan-Africanism; national unity, abolition of poverty and exploitation, the advancement of indigenous capital, technology and cultures.

No military regime has thus far succeeded in maintaining a credible *raison d'être* through pragmatic reformism, yet allowing sufficient room for some form of political participation.

Purpose of the Study

My intention is to examine the nature of civilian participation under three different military regimes that have ruled Ghana since the overthrow of the first elected president in 1966. The National Liberation Council (NLC) 1966-1969, under Lt. Gen. J. A. Ankrah, the Supreme Military Council I (SMCI) 1972-1978 with Col. I. K. Acheampong as head of state, and the present regime, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) 1981-, will be considered against the various backgrounds of the military rulers' leadership style. Military leadership models of arbitrators, guardians, and direct-rulers will be applied in the study. The analysis of military regime's power dimensions in relationship to participation will enable the

11. West Africa, March 16, 1987, p. 505

study to show the roots of acquiescence, quiescence and why some citizens leave the political sphere, or exit the country in search of participation from "outside." The new process of demilitarization and redemocratization will also be considered.

One might question the intent of this study since it is presumed that participation in a liberal democratic context is not present under authoritarian regimes. This is all the more reason why we should investigate the forms of participation in praetorian politics. Participation in praetorian politics does occur but in different forms due to power dimensions and leadership style of the power holders. This is the main hypothesis of the paper.

The study or question of participation in military rule becomes provocative owing to the fact that many political scientists hold that mobilized participation subverts the principle of authenticity or genuineness in the participatory process. One effect of this implicit bias is that in few instances is an examination of civilian participation under military regimes carried out. In this aspect it is participation in a no-party state.

Ghana is chosen as a case study not only because it is the first sub-Saharan African country to attain independence from colonial rule, but also because it was one of the first to establish in a sequence, a constitutional democracy, one-party system, African socialism, and a

military regime. The country has not only experienced one or two coups d'état, but five. Participation has, thus, taken several forms.

The volumes of literature on the two phenomena - participation and praetorian politics - remain impressive, but very little consideration has been given to the political repercussions that emerge when the two meet directly. From the NLC regime that had no consideration for any form of civilian participation while in power, to the present regime, PNDC, that has shown a lot of interest in mobilizing different groups in political activities, one could always imagine what direction citizen - state relationships is heading.

This investigation also explores the political relationships between civilians at all levels and the praetorian governments in Ghana. It assumes that actions taken by the iron surgeons affect the populace and vice versa. This thus stresses the importance of the degree of the usage of power by the power-holders and how the powerless respond through apathy, political inefficacy or political activism through participation. Given an authoritarian, non-electoral system in all the three regimes in Ghana, different rules, not always found in liberal democratic governments will define and govern participation in this study.

The dissertation consists of five chapters and a conclusion. In the first chapter there is a presentation and discussion of some of the more important theories on praetorian regimes and political participation in the Third World. In chapter two there follows a historic perspective of the armed forces' presence in the political sphere of Ghana. Chapter three presents the first guardian approach to curtail political participation, and the NLC's method for institutionalization and redemocratization. Chapter four concentrates on political participation under the SMC - arbitrator regimes from 1972-1978. The concept of Union Government and opposition to the Acheampong regime is covered in this chapter. In chapter five, political participation is discussed under a direct ruler-type regime. Mass organizations, democratization and the "politics of disintegration of praetorianism" under Jerry Rawlings PNDC - the present regime, are covered. Finally, the conclusion addresses the question of democratizing the military and why in a Third World context both mobilized and autonomous participation remain viable avenues in the participatory process. Acquiescence, quiescence and exit also become integral elements in participation under military rule.

Methodology

An exhaustive search of the literature was an on-going process during the period of preparing the dissertation. The purposes of this search were:

1. To examine the major theories of political participation on comparative bases.
2. To evaluate the validity of the relationships of praetorian leadership style, power dimensions and political participation.
3. To determine whether demilitarization and redemocratization are authentic phenomena under praetorian regimes.

The next step involved a rigorous analysis of the editorials of the Daily Graphic from 1966 to the present. The Daily Graphic is a very important source of information since it is controlled by the government of Ghana. This newspaper has been used by the leaders of the various regimes to express their philosophies and policy objectives to the populace.

Interviews were conducted with civilians and praetorians in government, and with former military and civilian personnel in political asylum in Great Britain and the United States in the summer of 1987. Then names of several interviewees can not be released because they re-

requested absolute confidentiality for security purposes.

That I have confined my interviews to people in Great Britain and the United States is not only due to the fact that it was not practicable for me to travel to Ghana. Such a limit also enable me to draw a greater number of individual comparison between the official viewpoint in the Daily Graphic and Ghanaians in "exit". The fact that I have only dealt with political participation and praetorian regimes in Ghana allows me to make certain generalizations which may be only applicable to that country.

CHAPTER I

A Comparative Perspective on Political Participation With Special Reference to Military Regimes in the Third World

The demise of colonial rule in the Third World was a concomitant of self-determination and independence. It is indubitable that the road to self-governance remained uneven and difficult. Once that destination was reached, the common difficulties which emerge are the maintenance of a stable government and the establishment of a cohesive state. The emerging nations are caught between the structural quagmire of the will to develop and the path to development. This position becomes even more difficult since the unsolved problem of realization of a sustained process of national development is caught within the struggle for political leadership. This struggle for power is not just within the civilian elite but also between the military and civilian establishments. The ramifications for political development of the structural distortion tend to be immensely unpleasant. Dependence on foreign trade, monocultural agronomy, lack of political institutions, hypermobilization of the masses, disequilibrium of state investment in social services and utilities, are some of the problems facing the Third World countries in the process of modernization and development.

Also, the colonial legacies of decaying political structures and economic scarcity have aggravated the internal problems which usually accompany independence. Governments that have arisen on the wreckage of these problematic political structures become vulnerable to challenge within. Most of these challenges result in internal discord, internecine warfares, and most of all, rampant coup d'etats.

There have been over 270 military coups d'etat in the Third World since 1960.¹¹ The large numbers and frequency of these takeovers grant one sufficient grounds to label the period between 1960 and 1980 the "neo-praetorian era" in the developing world. More than 80 percent of military coups in the world occurred within those two decades.¹² Needless to say, the officer corps have been instrumental in spearheading the coup d'etats and establishing their presence in the political sphere. Praetorian politics have permeated almost all aspects of life in the developing world. In countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Dahomey and Bolivia where there has been an average of one military junta every three years since 1965, coups d'etat have become a modus vivendi.

The year, 1987, marks the thirtieth anniversary of

11. Calvin Kennedy, The Military in the Third World, New York, NY, Scribner, 1974.

12. Ibid.

Ghana's independence from British colonial rule. This period is punctuated by three civilian governments, four successful coups d'etat and over ten abortive military take-overs. The picture of political stability looks extremely bleak for Ghana, and it is even more dreary for the neighboring country of Dahomey, now Benin, which has experienced over six successful coups and many unrecorded attempted coups. Military activities in politics in Africa, and the Third World has spread like bush-fire in the past four decades. Needless to say, the most common form of government in the developing world today is military government.

The coup makers have been called "iron surgeons," which reappears in their initial declarations (ID),¹³ to operate or cut "infected" areas of the economic and socio-political infrastructures. They have also been called armed bureaucrats because their governing style and attitude toward politics resemble that of civil servants in the higher echelon. The coup makers will be called praetorians in this paper. Edward Feit may disagree with this term because he believes praetorian societies:

13. Initial Declarations (ID) are the first statements made by new military rulers in connection with their assumption of power.. ID's are found in transcripts of the radio station occupied during the coup.

in an absolute sense, are rare. There are societies that approach a praetorian syndrome and that are comprised . . . of amoral aggregations As indicated, it would be a mistake to assume that states consisting of such amoral aggregations of groups are without institutions.¹⁴

Feit maintains a different perspective from Samuel P. Huntington who believes that a praetorian polity has no political institutions and legitimate political leaders.¹⁵ Feit believes it is misleading to characterize military regimes as praetorian since such description fails to tell us why the polity is praetorian. He sees a praetorian society as one that is submerged in a pool of scarcity, distrust, and misanthropy, but has institutions.¹⁶

The essence of a praetorial polity, as Eric Nordlinger argues, is a situation in which "military officers are major or predominant political actors by virtue of their actual or threatened use of force."¹⁷ Nordlinger claims this situation is analogous to that of the Praetorian Guards during the decline and fall of the Roman Em-

14. Edward Feit, The Armed Bureaucrats Military - Administrative Regimes and Political Developments, Boston, MA, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973, p. 4.

15. Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1968, p. 196.

16. Edward Feit, Op. Cit., pp. 3-4.

17. Eric Nordlinger, Soldiers in Politics, Military Coups and Governments, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, 1977, p. 2.

pire.¹⁸

Ostensibly, military regimes in the Third World are praetorian in nature because almost all of these regimes have primarily chief executives and senior government personnel from the officer corps. They employ force to attain power and remain in power by force. They exercise tremendous amounts of political influence, even though their politics remain behind a facade of apolitical statements and actions. The praetorians attempt to change the socio-political structures of society when they attain power. An authoritarian regime replaces the deposed civilian government. Decrees take the place of the constitution and political parties are at times suspended.

Nordlinger writes:

. . . the praetorians establish an authoritarian regime that is closed to popular participation and competition. . . . Thus participatory and competitive structures as well as those that allow for mobilization and penetration from above, are eliminated.¹⁹

Nordlinger's assessment of civilian participation and mobilization under authoritarian regimes is correct to some extent. Nevertheless some authoritarian regimes are now opening new doors for participation. The Rawlings regime, as we shall see later on, is doing what its predecessor failed to do. Aside from allowing the emergence

18. Ibid., p. 3.

19. Ibid., p. 6.

of many organizations into the political sphere, the regime itself has helped with the creation of key mass organizations. The People's Defense Committees (PDC) and Workers' Defense Committees (WDC) are examples of political institutions outside the apparatus of the military regime in Ghana.

As Robert Kaufman notes in several Latin American cases, military politics since the 1970s has taken a new direction of liberalization and democratization. He, however, points out that "social-economic setting has significantly limited the kinds of options available to democratizing elites."²⁰ The military elites also find it necessary to create coalitions of entrepreneurs, military, and middle-class interests as first stage of the democratization process. The disintegration of the coalition usually gives way to reestablishment of a civilian regime or a new military regime with a different leadership composition of officer corps and civilian technocrats. The "democratization" process in praetorian politics implies, in Kaufman's words, "movement toward a political system characterized by competitive elections, civil liberties, and the toleration of significant "loyal

20. Robert R. Kaufman, "Liberalization and Democratization in South America: Perspectives from the 1970s," in G. O'Donnell, et al, ed., Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspective. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1986, p. 85.

opposition."²¹

But Kaufman fails to recognize the context of "democracy" in a praetorian polity when he later states that:

For my purposes, the concept of "democracy," whatever else its social content, must include the basic electoral and representative features of Western-style polyarchies.²²

This has been one of the major flaws in the study of developmental politics: using value-laden definitions from Western democracies which may not be appropriate for a Third World country. Fred van der Mehden suggests that we should be careful about using concepts like "democracy" and "development" which are based upon values of the western industrial revolution.²³ K. H. Pfeffer concurs by maintaining that definitions that are based on the assumption that acceptable standards of democracy and development are the ones from Western democracies, are often loaded with values and prejudices.²⁴

Another failure in Kaufman's assertion of the democratization process in military regimes is his comparison of the Latin American countries with Spain and Portu-

21. Ibid., p. 100.

22. Ibid.

23. Fred R. Van der Mehden, Politics of the Developing Nations, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1978, pp. 4-5.

24. K. H. Pfeffer, "Is Pakistan an Underdeveloped Country?", Pakistan Today, 1960, Op. Cit., p. 28.

gal.²⁵ This misses the point of time of event. If Europe went through a similar process, it did so over 500 years ago, and conditions in Latin American and military regimes in the Third World presently are different.

It is essential to emphasize that the democratization process does not tie the Third World countries to a set of goals found in the Western democracies. The process under military rule may not be the best but it provides the framework for the achievement of objectives for the military government and provides a firm platform for demilitarization and redemocratization.

Although representation in the liberal democratic electoral sense does not exist under military regimes in Ghana, my intention is to examine all avenues for citizen-state interactions in the light of the regime-type and political context that the particular regime creates. Democratization will, therefore, include movement toward political involvement that will provide a chance of receiving desired benefit in return. This does not have to include basic electoral and representative features of Western-style democracies, but basic collaboration with other community members at local, regional or national levels. The main point here is the realization of the

25. Robert Kaufman, Op. Cit., p. 91.

military government to acknowledge civilian participation in the political process of a praetorian polity.

The literature on demilitarization and democratization is spearheaded by proponents who believe the military has no business in the political sphere and should go back to the barracks. Alain Ronquie (1986, pp. 100-108), Philippe C. Schmitter (1973, pp. 180-181), Manuel Antonio Garreton (1986, pp. 120-122), Eric Nordlinger (1977, pp. 204-210), Souk J. Sohn (1968, pp. 102-121), Edward Feit (1969, pp. 487-497) and Henry Bienen (1968) all hold similar views that if the military is embarking on new projects of demilitarization and democratization, it is only a facade behind which it strengthens its hegemony and legitimizes itself, at least, as a bona fide, de facto institution for modernization and development. Alain Ronquie distinctly expresses this view in his assessment of military-dominated politics in Latin America. He writes:

If elected governments have legitimacy by virtue of their origin, de facto governments have legitimacy only by the way they exercise power, . . . The justification is certainly superficial--a facade behind which quite different practices are promoted. Civilization of the military state, however extensive, is by no means the same as return to "democratic normality."²⁶

26. Alain Ronquie "Demilitarization and Military-dominated Politics in Latin America," in O'Donnell et al, ed. Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1966, pp. 110-115.

Robert Pinkney, writing about the first military regime in Ghana, The National Liberation Council (NLC), made similar remarks. In both economics and politics, the NLC left a legacy of unfinished business. The only success one could talk about was its (NLC) ability in destroying what it disliked than in building what it desired.²⁷ Even though the NLC lifted the ban on political parties, it only did so on its way to the barracks. This means a political vacuum was created and the new Busia regime and the Progress Party had to start political education afresh.

It is interesting to note that while the NLC was in power, General Ocran, one of the leading conspirators behind the first coup, was already writing about the overthrow of the Busia regime if it fails to perform beyond expectation.²⁸ Ocran's "prophecy" occurred in 1972-- another coup d'etat. This evidence clearly suggests that the most common aftermath of a military regime is another military regime. Until praetorians create well-established political institutions and allow some form of participation while in power, their successors will always have to deal with an economic and political vacuum.

27. Robert Pinkney, Ghana Under Military Rule, 1966-1969, London, Methuren & Company, 1972, p. 152.

28. A. K. Ocran, A Myth is Broken, London, Loughman's, 1969, p. 94.

The military's role in development and modernization has stimulated much interest. For John Johnson, the military is the necessary and effectual institution for improving the political and economic infrastructures of emerging nations.²⁹ Modernization theorists such as Lucian Pye strongly believe that modern institutions are the sine qua non of development and that the most modern organization in the Third World is the military.³⁰

Eric Nordlinger maintains a contrasting view from the modernization theorist above. He asserts:

The praetorians have been called "iron surgeons" because of their intention of restoring the body politic to good health. Surgery is needed in many instances. But the₃₁ iron surgeons regularly cut in the wrong places.

It is interesting to know that the ongoing debates are immensely submerged in areas that perceive the military as an isolated establishment; we tend to neglect the society they rule. The praetorians cannot rule in a vacuum, as such. We need to discuss their involvement in politics against the background of the populace. The study of political participation under military rule is very essen-

29. John Johnson, The Military and Society in Latin America, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1961, pp. 4-10. Also, The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1962, pp. 9-11.

30. Lucian W. Pye, Aspects of Political Development, Boston, MA, Little Brown, 1966, p. 218.

31. Eric Nordlinger, Op. Cit., p. 204.

tial in this aspect.

A. Participation Redefined

Electoral activities, lobbying, individual activities, organizational activity other than lobbying, and violence are often included in the repertoire of political participation. It is noteworthy, however, that many authors, scholars, and students differ on forms and organizations that are involved in the process of participation. In many honest attempts to define, or perhaps describe, participation, political scientists and students alike have excluded violence which has been a major form of participation in the Third World. This is not the case any more. There is now general agreement that violence plays a pertinent part in political participation. Political violence has led to the destruction of property and human life. A modicum of political violence has occasionally led to a more satisfying result. The American, Russian, and Mexican revolutions, Ted Gurr holds, were the products of sanguine, but beneficial violence.³² Political violence in the Third World is rampant due to the perceived discrepancy between what people have and what they think is justly theirs, plus the absence of institutions through which peaceful change seems

32. Ted Gurr, Why Men Rebel, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1970, p. 3.

possible. Their needs and wants are apparent in the distribution of economic and political goods and services. Gurr notes that most political violence in different places emerges due to the concept of "relative deprivation," which he defines as "perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities."³³ In the study of political participation in the Third World, the theory of relative deprivation has proven to be useful in analyzing different forms of violence, including coups d'etat, turmoils, and civil wars.

John Dollard et al, relate violence to the frustration-aggression thesis.³⁴ This thesis maintains that aggression which results in violence occurs because of frustration. The theory postulates that frustration induced by the social system creates the socio-political strain and discontent that, in turn, are a sine qua non to pre-condition of violence.

For the purpose of this paper, it will suffice to be reminded that violence is an important form of participation, and the phenomena which encompass relative deprivation may be ethnic conflicts, nepotism, bribery and corruption, economic stagnation, and concentration of political power.

33. Ibid., p. 37.

34. John Dollard et al, Frustration and Aggression, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1939, pp. 10-18.

In order to avoid any kind of naive reductionism in defining political participation under military regimes, a number of definitions have to be considered. The attempt at this juncture is to make sure that we do not have too broad or too narrow a definition that will exclude or include activities, actors, and organizations that will make the theme of this paper meaningless. Yet great caution is exercised in introducing discussions on participation from authoritarian and democratic regimes alike. This will enable the reader to understand why a particular definition was avoided or chosen.

Political scientists have long been debating the meaning and forms of political participation. Jerry Hough, writing on political participation in the Soviet Union, asserts that it should not include only autonomous but also mobilized political participation. Hough adduces figures which show increases in participation in different Soviet organizations for a twenty year period (1954-1976).³⁵ The organizations and adult participants include party members and candidates, deputies to local soviets, trade union members, Komsomol members, ac-

35. Jerry Hough, "The Brezhnev Era: The Man and the System," Problems of Communism, Vol. XXV (March-April 1976), pp. 1-17; also in "Brezhnev Era and Citizen Participation," in The Soviet Crucible. The Soviet System in Theory and Practice. Samuel Hendel, ed., Fifth Edition, 1980, p. 223.

tivists in independent organizations, and people's auxiliary policemen (druzhinniki).³⁶

With reference to the above-mentioned groups one could easily deduce from their composition that the majority of them will fall under "mobilized participation." The question is, "do groups like the ones in question participate genuinely?" Furthermore, can the activities of such groups be regarded as forms of participation? Donald Barry holds a different view of participation in the Soviet system. In his article "A Criticism of Hough's Views," Barry writes:

. . . Hough calls this political participation, but I find it hard to take this assertion seriously. Does it really make any sense to call Komsomol or trade union membership either "voluntary" or "political participation?" The very structure and ground rules by which these organizations . . . operate serve to deny the possibility of meaningful participation.³⁷

Barry believes that the mode of participation by these groups falls short of political participation in the actual sense of the concept. He goes on to say that if participation exists at all, "at most they engage in a charade of participation."³⁸

The Hough-Barry debate distinctly amplifies the un-

36. Ibid.

37. Donald Barry, "A Criticism of Hough's Views." The Soviet Crucible, The Soviet System in Theory and Practice, in Samuel Hendel, ed., Fifth Edition, 1980, p. 228.

38. Ibid.

settled arguments on what forms and institutions should be included in the definition of political participation. The question becomes even more touchy when it is in connection with political systems which are outside of the Western democratic types. One thing that should be emphasized is that whatever the regime, citizen-state relationships are seldom direct. Rather, they are almost always carried out through intermediaries such as neighborhood associations, unions, professional groups, political parties, or a vast number of special interest groups. Another important point to stress is how these groups are formed in different nations. Henry Dietz writes:

In some nations, groups may form at the grass root level; in others, elites may control both the number and the membership in these groups. Nevertheless, though specifics differ across regime types, the functions of the groups remain the same: to allow interest articulation and aggregation to take place and to facilitate as well as control³⁹ demand-making aimed at the political system.

Participation under military regimes in the Third World and especially Ghana has many things in common with what Hough describes in his article. It is the praetorians in power who usually make efforts to mobilize the populace. As Dietz asserts, the praetorian elites may control both the numbers and membership, but the un-

39. Henry A. Dietz, Poverty and Problem-Solving Under Military Rule: The Urban Poor in Lima, Peru, Austin, TX, University of Texas Press, 1980, p. 5.

derlying factor of making easy and controlling demand-making on the political system remains the same. Under most authoritarian regimes, government establishments spearhead the creation and maintenance of politically relevant organizations. It should be emphasized that in the Third World where socio-economic mobilization is galloping ahead of political institutionalization, efforts by governments to create political institutions is a step in the right direction. What Barry is arguing about, which is also a concern of this paper, is the degree of effectiveness and efficiency of an organization which is supposed to be involved in activities which will influence the policies of its "creator."

Marrying Barry and Hough's perspective will seem very suspicious. Nonetheless, this analysis will use Hough's idea on the forms and groups involved in the participatory process because it best fits participation in praetorian politics, but will also refer to Barry's concern on the degree of effectiveness of such mobilized organizations and interest groups. Needless to say, we should be cautious about shifting definitions from one political system to the other. Perhaps the definitions of political participation are inadequate, perhaps including government created organizations in political participation emasculates the participatory process, perhaps

not. Anyway, this paper would be inadequate if an explicit and concise definition is neglected.

Samuel Huntington and Joan Nelson define political participation as "activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision-making."⁴⁰ Huntington and Nelson's definition excludes activities of governmental officials, party officials, political candidates, and professional lobbyists.⁴¹ Huntington and Nelson's definition seems adequate, nonetheless it fails to consider or include the main category of persons in the Third World who are solely in charge of the mobilization process. If we exclude, for instance, some governmental officials or party officials (especially opposition party officials) then we do not have much to work with. My departure from Huntington and Nelson's definition begins where they eliminate the "brains" and "engine-blocks" of mobilization in the Third World. In Ghana, for instance, the Council for Civic Education's main objective is to help form groups and train citizens in effective ways of making demands on the government in power. The Council is also charged with educating interest groups and unions in the participatory process. This Council is responsi-

40. Samuel Huntington and Joan H. Nelson, No Easy Choice. Political Participation in Developing Countries, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1982, p. 4.

41. Ibid., p. 5.

ble and accountable to the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the senior civil servant in charge of all activities, including mobilizing citizens. This, thus supports the facts that government officials control and encourage participation. Exclude them and there would be absolute apathy.

Also, in machine politics or patron-client relations it could be realized that many of the patrons are top civil servants, landlords, or people who hold top party leadership positions and their inclusion in the participatory process is very essential. Huntington and Nelson note that:

Possible patrons include . . . higher-status members of home-place associations or churches; and of course, politicians and bureaucrats at all levels of the national and local hierarchy.⁴²

It is interesting to note that even though Huntington and Nelson exclude government officials and politicians in their definition they come back to include them in patron-client relationship which is a form of political participation in the Third World. In the quid pro quo of politics, the patron's position is indispensable. Omitting their franchise in any definition will thus upset the equation of participatory calculus. At this juncture it would not be an exaggeration to succumb to the notion

42. Ibid., p. 128.

that participation in the Third World is not just by "private citizens" as Huntington asserts, but by all individuals, including top level bureaucrats and politicians.

In a more recent article, Joan Nelson affirms that the working concept of political participation has been transformed in the past twenty years.⁴³ She has certainly moved away from her past image of interconnecting the concept of participation and that of democracy. Nelson writes:

If we are to look more seriously at participation in non-democratic contexts, we should examine not only those instances where regimes have tried to mobilize and channel mass participation . . . but also at a range of more specific, narrow-gauged institutions and arrangements that permit particular groups to exercise some influence on issues of importance to them.⁴⁴

A manifestation of the participation Nelson talks about is what the Rawlings regime in Ghana has been encouraging since 1981. The PNDC, with the help of the Council of Civic Education (CCE) have been able to form organizations like the New Democratic Movement (NDM); Movement for Peace and Democracy (MOPAD), and Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards (KNRG). The PNDC has also permitted local

43. Joan Nelson, "Political Participation", in Myron Weiner and Samuel Huntington, Understanding Political Development, Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1987, p. 152.

44. Ibid., p. 152.

tribal and professional groups like the Ghana Teachers Unions to organize on regional and national levels to facilitate political participation on all levels of government.

In search for a definition, that is not value laden, from a Western perspective - that is, one that could fit a non-democratic context and a praetorian polity, Henry Dietz and Richard Moore's definition is the most suitable. The authors define political participation as

any activity which aims at the provision of desired needs or goals through attempts to influence a favorable distribution of governmental outputs, frequently but not always through attempts to influence and attitudes or actions of power holders.⁴⁵

This paper will submit to this definition because it is suitable for participation under authoritarian or military regimes. The definition strips participation of its traditional Western liberal-democratic context in a manner that expands the scope of the concept to embody several individual experiences.⁴⁶

This definition takes into consideration situations where electoral systems may not exist, which is the case in many military regimes. A definition of participation that presumes that private citizens be able to elect

45. Henry A. Dietz and Richard J. Moore, Political Participation in a Non-Electoral Setting: The Urban Poor in Lima, Peru, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 1979, p. 20.

46. Ibid.

those who maintain power or govern, or that the citizenry be able to influence policy decisions places a requirement that could not be satisfied under military regimes where, most of the time, constitutions, elections, and even party politics are suspended or dissolved.

As Richard Little notes, a definition such as Dietz and Moore's (used in this analysis) is distinctly instrumental in that citizenry involvement has a ramification both for the individual and the political system,⁴⁷ other than overt private citizen's purposes to create an impact on public policy and elections within the system. Whether mobilized or autonomous, the citizen's involvement results in forms of activism that produce objectives, materials, values and attitudes. Indubitably, under military regimes the scope and intensity of participatory activity may depend upon how much "space" the incumbents intend to provide for participation. A military regime's attitude toward civilian participation may vary according to the type of regime's power dimension and leadership style. The succeeding paragraphs will discuss the impact of power on participation under military regimes.

47. Richard Little, Michael-Smith, ed. Perspective in World Politics, London, Open University Press, 1978, p. 12.

B. Power Dimensions, Praetorians, and Participation

To explain why the PNDC has remained so committed to its role of political organizer and why the NLC and SMCI failed to take that responsibility, one has to examine leadership style and power dimensions of the praetorians of the three different regimes. Power dimension in this analysis involves the different levels and extent to which power holders use their position to encourage or thwart political participation.

Power has remained a common term from time immemorial. We speak of people's power, horsepower, economic power, elite power, et cetera. Power is used in almost every discipline, but one cannot over-emphasize its consistent and perpetual usage in the field of political science. Power is referred to as the ability to control a situation or other people. As Peter Odegard notes, "Power in human affairs involves the control of human behavior for particular ends through the expressed or implied threat of punishment for those who fail to comply."⁴⁸ Thus, power in praetorian politics becomes the main tool of shaping organizations and policies. Nonetheless, absolute power is often avoided unless it is very necessary. Praetorians become cautious in their

48. Peter Odegard, Political Power in Social Change, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1966, p. 76.

exercise of power because over-dependence on it may trigger suspicion for plotting a "self-centered" coup. By the same token they may have to use adequate power to "get the job done," establish their legitimacy, or prove their *raison d'être*.

The first power dimension the praetorians may employ is what John Gaventa calls "the one-dimensional approach."⁴⁹ Here, the praetorians' use of power is so severe it does not allow much space for participation. Political participation at this point is a non-issue, nevertheless top civil servants and technocrats become the main vehicles for political activity in relation to government functions or policies.⁵⁰ There is a high generation of acquiescence and quiescence within the populace at this level. But it should be noted that the resultant political environment is not just because of too much exercise of power but also the presence of powerlessness within the populace. One could deduce from this situation that non-participation emerges not only because of the "perpetrator's" actions but also because of the "victim's" inaction. If the elite or unions succumb to the

49. John Gaventa, Power and Powerlessness. Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley, Chicago, IL, University of Illinois Press, 1980, p. 5.

50. Note the definition for participation in this context included individual citizens and their activities in relationship to governmental functions.

status quo, there is no reason why the church, as in many Latin American countries, should fail to fill in the space for some form of participation.

It is noteworthy, however, that one-dimensional power in praetorian politics departs from Gaventa's assertion on the grounds that he looks at power under a somewhat democratic system while this study considers power in an authoritarian regime. The different forms of governments (democratic and autocratic) see power and forms of participation differently. Nevertheless, power dimensions have significant impact in both regimes. Some of the effects of power on participation will be seen in other chapters in this essay.

C. The Two-Dimensional Approach

The exercise of power at this dimension affects not only participants but the power holders also have strategic plans of excluding certain issues that they perceive may emerge in the process of participation. Schattschneider notes:

Whoever decides what the game is about also decides who gets in the game. . . .Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out.⁵¹

51. E.E. Schattschneider, The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America, New York, NY, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960, pp. 71, 105.

The praetorians have a great reputation for this level of power usage. They use the legal system by formulating decrees that suit their purpose. In Latin America, praetorians who use this power dimension operate behind the facade of business and corporation. Thus, those who are allowed in the participatory process are business tycoons and their associates. In Africa, the technocratic elites are allowed in the process of participation. Antonio Garreton paints a vivid picture of this situation by stating that a hierarchical leadership which offers programs of reconstruction becomes the crucial element at this stage.⁵²

Acquiescence and quiescence which result from inaction within the process of participation by the deprived groups have direct linkage to power.

D. The Three-Dimensional Approach

Much more space for participation is allowed at this stage. Nonetheless the praetorians get very involved in the participatory process by helping to create institutions and using their power in shaping and determining programs and policies of the society. From birth, these

52. Manuel Antonio Garreton, "Political Processes in an Authoritarian Regime," in Samuel and Arturo Valenzuela, Military Rule in Chile: Dictatorship and Oppositions, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, p. 158.

institutions are highly mobilized. With time, they gain maturity and begin to acquire semi-autonomous status. Members pursue the benefits for being in the group, rather than singing praises for its "creator." The iron surgeons at this juncture make sure ideology prevails in the institutionalization process. Issues are made to seem more sociological rather than political. The citizenry believe it is their civic duty to participate in nation-building and reconstruction. Gaventa notes that the three-dimensional approach helps us to understand how power shapes participation patterns of the relatively powerless.⁵³

The Rawlings Regime in Ghana, as we shall see later in this paper, is pursuing the third-dimensional approach in exercising power. The Peruvian military regime is another advocate of this power usage. It is important to stress that praetorian power-dimension is often, but not always, recognized in their leadership style. The following paragraphs will briefly discuss the governing style of military regimes.

E. Leadership Style

Praetorian leadership style could be categorized according to how leaders relate to the political arena.

53. John Gaventa, Op. Cit., p. 13.

Several important attitudinal attributes, such as their bias against mass political activity, and creation of technocratic-bureaucratic structures, will enable this analysis to generalize as to what type of praetorians ruled Ghana in the three different regimes. Praetorians differ from each other basically with regard to the degree of intervention and the way and manner they exercise power. They may utilize one or a combination of the different power dimensions discussed in the preceding paragraphs. Their leadership style has significant impact on political participation and national policy goals. Three forms of leadership style could be identified in the Third World. These include direct rulers, guardians, and arbitrators.⁵⁴

F. Direct Rulers

Praetorians who exhibit direct ruler-type leadership style are very popular with three-dimensional power usage. Their power dimension permeates every activity in the society. As Nordlinger affirms, "they not only control the government but dominate the regime, sometimes at-

54. Different authors have different typologies of leadership styles of praetorians. Claude Welch, 1974, for instance, observes four typologies: direct guardianship, arbiters, factional and postcolonial guardians. The typologies may differ slightly, but the common denominator to all of them is the degree of overt participation of the praetorians in politics.

tempting to control large slices of political, economic, and social life through the creation of mobilization structures."⁵⁵ No assertion fits the direct rulers better than the above. These rulers may outlaw an institution that existed during the status quo ante; nonetheless, they built new organizations to replace the old ones.

The military establishment for direct-ruler type is usually very large. The civil service or bureaucracy becomes a strong appendage of the establishment. Within the inner circle of the administration is the core group -- a technocratic utopia. The team of military-civilian experts handles governmental operations in strict administration terms. With reference to citizenry, participation under such regimes, a highly mobilized form of involvement, with several paramilitary groups spearheaded modernizing projects. By the same token, a very strong military organization whose strength exceeds the civilian institutions always prevails.

The 1973 military coup which overthrew the government of President Salvador Allende created a direct-ruler type of praetorian government. For example the Chilean

55. Claude E. Welch and Arthur K. Smith, Military Role and Rule: Perspectives on Civilian-Military Relations, North Scituate, MA, Duxbury Press, 1974, p. 69.

praetorians in its 1974 Declaration of Principles, clearly stated the Pinochet regime will remain in power indefinitely until the task for reconstructing Chile is completed.⁵⁶

A similar picture could be painted out of the leadership style of the present Rawlings government in Ghana. It has changed the basic power structure of the Ghanaian society, created a number of quasi-political organizations, and plans to stay in power until the revolution is won.

G. Guardian Leadership

Ask for "iron surgeons" and we should be able to show you this type of praetorian. They believe that if "surgery" is needed for a country with deteriorating socio-economic and political infrastructures, they are the ones to count on. In times of crises, it behooves them to take charge since they believe the ruling elites have failed. Nordinger notes:

Basically, they intend to correct what are seen to be the malpractices and deficiencies of previous governments. They are "iron surgeons" ready⁵⁷ to make some incisions into the body politic.

56. Genaro Arriagada Herrera, "The Legal and Institutional Framework of the Armed Forces in Chile," in S. Valenzuela and A. Valenzuela, Military Rule in Chile, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins Press, 1986, p. 119.

57. Eric Nordlinger, *Op. Cit.*, p. 25.

In this pattern the military is less authoritarian. Looking at it as a whole, they resemble transitional reformists. Trade unions, some old parties and interest groups are allowed to exist. Needless to say, leadership in these groups are purged or expelled. But the praetorians fail to embark on institutionalization or even social mobilization. Thus, a process of political decay begins with the guardians and political vacuum emerges when they return to the barracks.

The 1971 military intervention in Turkey resembles a guardian regime. Frank Tachan and Metin Heper note that the coup was the culmination of a deteriorating political situation marked by a rising tide of violence, fragmentation of political parties, and weak government.⁵⁸ The Turkish praetorians did not seize power overtly but only exercised veto over civilian authorities with aims of maintaining the political and socio-economic status quo - very typical of guardians.

In Ghana, the Ankrah regime, NLC, overthrew Kwame Nkrumah only to play a guardian's role. Many functions of government were left in the hands of trusted civilians who shared the regime's basic ideals. Their involvement with building institutions and social mobilization was

58. Frank Tachan and Metin Heper, "The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey," in Comparative Politics, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1983, p. 23.

limited. Even though they returned to the barracks to enable a civilian government to take charge, they did so only because their loose, superficial manner of governing was not helping them any longer. They had to find their way back to the barracks.

H. Arbitrators

The praetorians at this juncture act as referees. They really do not mean to be involved with the day-to-day affairs of the nation. They use one-dimensional power which is supported by veto powers over policies and disputes. They endeavor to preserve the status quo. Like the guardians they are less involved with building political institutions. Worst of all they fall short of effective purging of former party or union officials. Their inactivity exacerbates the already deteriorating situations in the society. This, in effect, calls for full control of the government or total withdrawal from the political sphere.

During President Frondizi's incumbency, between 1959 and 1962, the Argentine Praetorians acted as arbitrators in making several demands on the government. In 1962, they finally took full control over the government. Also, in Ghana the Supreme Military Council under Col. Acheampong displayed an arbitrator-type military government. Being unable to purge former party members or co-

opt participation, it launched a massive attack on its opponents. For this reason, many civilians simply actively withdrew from the Ghanaian political arena. The SMC was not able to effectively use its veto power. After the demise of the regime, Ghana was in a state of political and economical disarray.

The pendulum of praetorian politics in Ghana is swinging so fast. Over time, this dynamic reduced the ability of civilians to participate in any form of political activity. Those involved in mobilized groups tend to be disinterested in many events. Acquiescence, quiescence, and exit become alternative choices in political participation. As Hirshman (1970), Orbell and Uno (1972), Huntington and Nelson (1976; 93-103) and Gaventa (1980, 3-22) point out, a person in a specific setting has three basic options if he is unsatisfied with prevailing conditions: he can do nothing, he can complain, or he can leave.

In the Ghanaian case, the form of participation under the three military governments has taken an interesting pattern. The more involved the praetorians are in the participatory process, the more organizations that join the revolution. One point that should be emphasized is that, in absence of any form of mobilization, the masses will only dwell in a political decay. The power-

holders' undue use of "power", or lack of it, will only create a vacuum in the political sphere. Whether mobilized or autonomous, the praetorians will always recognize that political participation is indispensable.

CHAPTER II

A Historic Perspective of the Ghanaian Praetorians

Ghana is among the first African States to succumb to a military encroachment of the political sphere. Before 1966, the Ghana armed forces remained dormant with regard to politics. This dormancy could be attributed to absence of conflict between soldiers and civilian governors. The traditional model of civilian control was most highly developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century monarchies, where European aristocracy simultaneously constituted the civilian and military elite. It is noteworthy that even as the two groups became somewhat distinctive, with different men serving different roles, their interests and outlooks were not dissimilar.

British colonization of Ghana, then Gold Coast, made the Gold Coast Regiment as an overseas appendage of Her Majesty's armed forces. Commanded by some 100 British officers and non-commissioned officers, the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) was formed from four countries, viz, the Gold Coast, Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The main objective of the WAFF was to operate jointly to support and protect British imperial interests.

The Ghanaian soldiers fought in Togoland and the Cameroons against German troops during World War I.¹

1. Frederick Lugard, The Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa, London, William Blackwood Ltd., 1923, p. 610.

Needless to say none of their soldiers was commissioned in the officer corps. Nevertheless, Ghanaian soldiers attained officer status after World War II. These officers spearheaded the indigenous officer cadres after independence in 1957. Before independence, a handful of junior officers became intermediaries for Her Majesty's armed forces. The rank and file of the Gold Coast Regiment increased fifty fold. The WAFF, after WW II, increased from 6,500 to 176,000 men.² This increment brought pressure on Britain to promote experienced and qualified African soldiers to officer status.³

Britain's response to the pressure mounted by the African soldiers in general, and the Ghanaian soldiers in particular, commenced the Africanization program in the Armed Forces of Ghana. In form and function it was based on indirect rule, vis-a-vis the French process of assimilation. The French sought to create as many "black Frenchmen"⁴ as possible. In French West Africa, the soldiers had to speak French, act, behave, and think like Frenchmen. In Ghana, the British did it differently. The indirect process allowed only a handful of

2. F. M. Bourret, The Gold Coast, Cal., Stanford University Press, 1952, p. 151.

3. Ibid.

4. Ernest W. Lefever, Spear and Scepter, Army Police, and Politics in Tropical Africa, Washington D.C., The Brookings Institution, 1981, p. 37.

Ghanaian junior officers to experience the acculturation process. These officers then, would pass their experience down to the rank and file. This meant that the British senior officers had no direct contact with non-officers of the Ghana Armed Forces. Ernest Lefever's appraisal of this process indicates:

The British premise was more protective and paternalistic and sought to transmit British culture and morals primarily to a small African elite.

A political sociology of the officer corps of Ghana Armed Forces still portrays an elite group who come from middle class background, and maintains inherited membership in British fraternities and military academies. These sociological characteristics are not only prevalent in the Ghana Armed Forces, but characterize the whole of the English speaking African countries.

The Ghanaian officers, particularly those who had their training in England, were absolutely immersed in the British military tradition of civilian supremacy, which favors non-interference in politics. They remained apolitical. Their training at the Royal Military academy at Sandhurst, Aldershot and Chester provided them with the most conservative political and cultural outlook anyone could imagine.

5. Ibid., p. 38.

Colonel A. A. Afrifa, one of the leaders of the February 24, 1966 coup that overthrew Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, made a recollection of the training he and his colleagues had in Britain:

Now I look back on Sandhurst with nostalgia. It is one of the greatest institutions in the world. Through its doors have passed famous generals, kings and rulers. I can now remember men like King Hussein of Jordan and Aylib Khan of Pakistan. I left Sandhurst, crossed the Wish Stream, looked back at my old school, and was filled with boundless gratitude. Sandhurst deepened my understanding of the world and also opened to me a new world of adventure and tolerance.⁶

One could deduce from the assertion above that military officers in Ghana have remained non-political even immediately after independence. It should be emphasized that the gradual increase in numbers of the Ghanaian officers played less than a significant role in the political events that led to independence. Political dormancy prevailed in the military for over ten years after independence. This is because both officers and non-commissioned men held a professional and instrumental view against political and conspiratorial tradition such as ones that have occurred in Sudan, Togo and Dahomey. All these countries share one thing in common -- rampant coups d'etat, i.e., excessive interference of the mili-

6. A. A. Afrifa, The Ghana Coup: 24 February 1966, London, Humanities Press, 1966, pp. 51-52.

tary in politics. One commentator on military politics in Africa notes that the difference between the Ghanaian officers after independence and the other countries mentioned earlier in this paragraph is that the Ghana armed forces absorbed Western modes of behavior and thought more fully than those of any other tropical African Country.⁷

The year 1966 produced a different picture from what had been seen of the praetorians of Ghana. The officers awoke from their political sleep in response to the first president's interference with the corporate interest of the military. The Ghana Armed Forces, just like any other public institution, is much concerned with the protection and betterment of its own interests. Nkrumah disregarded the importance of military corporate interest therefore intervening in the long established autonomy in managing the praetorians internal affairs. Nordlinger notes:

In Ghana Nkrumah's interference constituted a concerted attempt to achieve complete control and political conformity by influencing promotions and assignments. In 1965 he ordered the early retirement of the two highest ranking officers because they objected to the removal of the President's Own Guard Regiment....As a result of this action the Ghanaian officers and men felt that their General as well as they

7. William F. Couteridge, Military Institutions and Power in the New States, New York, N.Y., Praeger, 1965, pp. 100-105.

themselves had been humiliated.⁸

President Nkrumah's increasing arbitrary and demagogic behavior also gave the praetorians a reason to be politically inclined. At this juncture, the Ghanaian officers began to realize their self-images as leading nationalists. They identified with the nation. What is good for the praetorians is also good for Ghana. Sovereignty, national honor and power dwell with and within the armed forces. The officer corps' presence in the political sphere becomes a sine qua non, considering their perceived identification, the identification of the nation with the military.⁹

A. Transition from Gold Coast Regiment to Ghana Armed Forces

The Gold Coast Regiment was very well organized, trained and equipped. Perhaps it was the best armed forces trained to fulfill the biggest domestic role in Commonwealth defense in West Africa.¹⁰ The main change from Gold Coast Regiment to Ghana Armed Forces was, therefore, one of nomenclature. Between 1957 and 1959 there were 220 British officers and 25 Ghanaian officers.¹¹ These

8. Eric Nordlinger, Soldiers In Politics. Military Coups and Governments, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977, p. 74.

9. Ibid., p. 65.

10. Lefever, Op. Cit., p. 40.

11. Jon Kraus, "The Men in Charge," African Report April, 1961, pp. 17-18.

numbers changed more in favor of the Ghanaians by 1961. The officer corp's composition during this period included 150 Ghanaians and 230 Britons, with the Chief of Defense Staff still a Briton.¹² The Chief of Defense Staff and his deputies exercised decisive control over all military affairs. Although the Ghanaian officers were competent, they then lacked the experience and tradition needed for promotion to higher command.

Ghana has a syncretic society but there were no formal tribal quotas with regards to recruitment. It is interesting to note, however, that most of the Ghanaian officers come from the southern part of the country, where the Europeans first made contact. The non-commissioned officers and enlistees were from the backward north. Almost all the pilots and technical staff for the navy and air force were southerners. If there were any tribal tensions in the recruitment process, it only involved the Ashantis, who were prohibited from enlisting in the Gold Coast Regiment and the Ghana Armed Forces because of their periodic conflicts with the British.¹³ This prohibition was withdrawn after the

12. Ibid.

13. The Ashantis were one of the strongest empires which resisted British invasion. A proud, self-conscious, cohesive and irrepressible people with strong warrior tradition were only subdued during the Yaa Asantewa War of 1900.

British vanquished the Ashanti Empire. Nonetheless, the Ashantis maintained their arrogance, and as a form of retaliation refused to join the British in any undertaking, including enlisting in the Ghana Armed Forces. This situation changed gradually and by 1956 about 5 percent of the army was Ashanti.¹⁴

The land forces of the army were organized into two brigade groups, each with two infantry battalions, a field engineering unit, an independent reconnaissance squadron and communication and medical centers. The headquarters of the land forces is at Burma Camp, in the nation's capital. Takoradi, Tema, Kumasi, and Temale are all regional capitals that maintain battalions. The Ghana Military Academy was established in 1960 with Britain's help and is located at Teshie, about ten miles to Accra.

Partisan politics were alien to the officer corps even three years after independence. The whole nation was preoccupied with the process of reconstruction after the departure of the British. The army, per se, was more concerned about maintaining its position as one of the best in West Africa. Recruiting and training cadets became its main objective. The government backed up the prae-

14. Gutteridge, *Op. Cit.*, p. 60.

torians with sufficient budget and helped to protect the army's corporate interests. This, in effect, created an amicable and smooth relationship between the Armed Forces and the first government of Ghana.

If there was ever a rift between the civilian government and the praetorians, it only started when Major Benjamin Awhaitey, a Ghanaian Commander at Gifford Camp in Accra conspired with one of the top officials of the opposition party, the United Party to overthrow the Convention People's Party's government.¹⁵ The United Party Official, R. R. Amponsah was detained, and the army commander was retired from the Ghana Armed Forces.

The evidence on the conspiracy still remains inconclusive. Nevertheless the incident alerted the President, Kwame Nkrumah, that there was always a likelihood of coups d'etat in Ghana. The incident also sensitized the President to a degree that he ended up creating a personal army to protect himself -- the President's Own Guard Regiment. This unit was made to be only responsible to the President and did not answer to the Chief of Defense Staff or Commander in Chief of the Ghana Armed Forces. The unit also had better pay and equipment at the expense of the regular army. One thing that remained

15. Lefever, Op. Cit., p. 42.

crystal clear was that the Awhaitey issue was a harbinger of future rift between the 1957 government and the officer corps.

B. The Nkrumah Administration and the Officer Corps 1959-63

A subterranean tension prevailed throughout the administration of the First Republic. The politicization of the Ghana Armed Forces coupled with ruthless methods of dealing with the opposition party became a major concern of the officer corps. Among other things, Nkrumah used the Protective Detention Act of 1958 (PDA) as a weapon to silent anybody who challenged his raison d'etre. Many politicians served time for disagreeing with the government. Military and police officers were also concerned about Nkrumah's successful efforts to arrogate political power to himself and galvanize the nation and Africa into different political activities. They were suspicious of his grandiose dream for one Africa -- a United States of Africa. Despite the aforementioned concerns, Nkrumah obtained maximum loyalty from the officer corps.

Nevertheless, by 1961, some members of the officer corps were becoming gradually politically conscious. Those who became more politically aware were the officers on study-abroad programs in European military academies.

Among this group of officers was A. A. Afrifa, who was one of the master brains behind the February, 1966 Coup.

One cannot only discuss the military's active involvement in Ghanaian politics unless the main issues which precipitated these coups are covered in detail. Among the factors that could evolve into coups d'etat are: interference with the corporate interest of the military, military autonomy, politicization of the military and performance failure of incumbent civilian politicians and government. The major factors that eroded the legitimacy of the Nkrumah regime and helped to build interventionist motives within the officer corps are performance failure and undue interference in the military corporate interest.

Nkrumah consolidated power by extra-legal means, and emasculation of the opposition, the United Party. The leadership of the opposition either left the country and sought political asylum elsewhere, or challenged Nkrumah, and ended up in detention. As already mentioned earlier in this chapter, a presidential act made this sort of detention legal. Dr. J. B. Danquah, one of the opposition leaders, died in detention. Dr. K. A. Busia, another staunch opposition leader, spent part of his political career in exile in London. It is noteworthy that after Nkrumah was overthrown, K. A. Busia became president of

the second republic.

A powerless, de facto opposition and suppressive laws seemed to back the president in all his endeavors. He waved the flag of African Socialism in Ghana and preached pan-Africanism abroad. All these activities did not prevail unchallenged. The elites in the Convention People's Party started getting suspicious of the president's undertakings. There was gradual development of paranoia within the party, which later led to a rift between the elites. After a bomb was thrown at Nkrumah's car in Kulungugu, he purged the party leadership and his cabinet.¹⁶

The reshuffling of the cabinet did not help the internal security problems. Another bomb was thrown very close to Flagstaff House, the President's residence. In response, Nkrumah turned to the Soviet Union for support. Almost all his security advisers were Soviet-bloc state personnel. The officer corps was not very pleased with this situation -- a form of "neo-colonialism" in the armed forces, with top advisors all foreigners. A subterranean opposition to the foreign advisers prevailed in the armed forces during this time, adding more damage to the already deteriorating internal security problems. To

16. Ibid., p. 45.

neutralize this situation, Nkrumah was proclaimed president for life.¹⁷ He also assumed personal control over the civil service, a move designed to increase civilian control over the armed forces and police.

In 1961-62, the officer corps became very worried about the president's new officer training program in the Soviet Union. This was because in the past, training had been done in Western military academies, and with a new Eastern direction, there was a presumed tension within the officer corps -- Soviet vis-a-vis British ideology. Alexander eloquently expressed these misgivings when he was relieved of his position as a three star general of the Ghana Armed Forces:

The President proposes to send 400 potential officers to the Soviet Union for training. I have done all I can to persuade him that such action is neither necessary nor prudent....It is unwise for several reasons. Firstly, it splits the training and outlook of the officers into two camps, and can breed neither contentment nor efficiency. Secondly, I consider that such action may in the long-term prove dangerous to the President himself.¹⁸

Alexander's premonition was confirmed by subsequent occurrences in the Ghana Armed Forces. Some few "bad" men who were rejected by the Ghana Military Academy were sent to the Soviet Union for training. On their return,

17. Ibid.

18. H. T. Alexander, African Tightrope: My Two Years as Nkrumah's Chief of Staff, New York, Praeger, 1966, p. 34.

aside from their disappointment with the training, they swam in a deep pool of disillusionment, as a result of their overseas experience. The attitude of the Soviet trained officers developed into a permanent rivalry between Western and Eastern trained officer corps. This rivalry continued until Nkrumah was deposed.

C. Towards the 1966 Coup

Nkrumah saw the Ghana Armed Forces as a symbol of national harmony and a powerhouse to thwart any subversion. Nonetheless he continued to be plagued by mere ambivalence toward the regular army. That is, Nkrumah gave the regular army half-hearted support, and at the same time praised them for being one of the best in West Africa. The elite army, the President's Own Guard Regiment (POGR), increased from one to two infantry. In July 1965, the POGR was made a distinct and separate unit directly responsible to the president. This unit was comprised of 50 officers and 1100 men, all considered "super elites".¹⁹ More friction and conflict developed between the super elites and the regular armed forces. The POGR members were not only loyal to the President, they deified Nkrumah and called him "osagyfo" -- meaning the messiah. The officers of the POGR became divine followers,

19. Lefever, Op. Cit., p. 55.

or the president's disciples. Their role transcended the boundaries of mere military officers. They were security advisers, party elites, the secret service, and almost every thing except playing president. This resulted in two top officers, Major General S. J. A. Otu and Major J. A. Ankrah, losing their jobs for speaking up against this elite group.

Nkrumah equipped the POGR at the expense of the Regular Army. This put the corporate interest of the Regular Army in jeopardy and in absolute disequilibrium. General Afrifa noted:

We were also aware that members of the President's Own Guard Regiment were receiving kingly treatment. Their pay was higher and it was an open fact that they possessed better equipment.²⁰

One could deduce from the well-founded reservation made by Afrifa that at that juncture Ghana was ripe for a coup d'etat. Nkrumah himself sensed the possibility of a coup and prophesized it, but only to blame military coups on neo-colonialists.²¹

Three weeks after the President's address to Parliament, and his departure to Hanoi, Vietnam, Ghana experienced its first coup d'etat. On February 23, 1966, 600 men from the North, 350 miles from the Nation's capital,

20. K. A. Afrifa, The Ghana Coup, p. 103.

21. Parliamentary Debates, Official Record, Accra, Ghana Government Printer, 1966, Columns 2 and 3.

stormed the Flaggstaff House, Nkrumah's residence, and took power. The POGR guards were taken by surprise but refused to surrender. The battle between the coup makers of the Ghana Armed Forces and the loyalists, POGR, lasted for seven and a half hours. The coup makers aside from the Flaggstaff House, siezed the OSU Castle -- Government House and the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). The coup was not bloodless. There were several conflicting reports about the number of casualties. The death toll for Ghanaians alone reached over fifty-two, not to mention, several East European advisers were killed in the Flaggstaff House attack. Since the number of advisers killed were not published and the evidence was not conclusive, the facts about casualties is not known for sure to the present day.

The coups was a masterpiece of accurate timing, absolute secrecy and great efficiency both on the part of the planners and those who did the actual execution. Even though the 1966 coup was a military junta, the state police's role in it cannot be over-emphasized. J. E. O. Nunoo, Assistant Commissioner of Police and A. K. Deku, Deputy Commissioner, both supported the coup strongly. If the Ghana police concurred to the army's action, it did so because it found itself in the same predicament, or even worse than the military. The police were crucial

because it was their intelligence that led to the arrest of top government and CPP officials throughout the country.

The 1966 coup d'état, therefore, symbolizes the beginning of a neo-praetorian era in the military-political history of Ghana. The Officer Corps started from a position of a passive, apolitical institution moving to an active political group, even though they still vehemently denounce pure politics, claiming they most certainly govern without politics. The soldiers' self-image as highly competent and rational decision makers help them to maintain their apolitical stance in government; decision making without politics.²²

The immediate, spontaneous, and national support for the first praetorians of Ghana caused a quick collapse of the ever-popular and deeply entrenched Convention People's Party (CPP). This came as a surprise to several observers. It was soon realized that the support the CPP had was not quite genuine. The CPP's support failed to capture popular loyalty. Perhaps it was only Nkrumah's presence that created the supposedly popular support it had before, or, maybe the propaganda of the one-party press was very effective.

22. Eric Nordlinger, Soldiers in Politics, p. 45.

Despite the coup in Ghana, the Chinese went ahead and gave Nkrumah a 21-gun salute and treated him as a head of state. Nkrumah never reached Hanoi, which was the main destination of his itinerary for peace in Asia. Sekou Toure, Guinea's president, gave his old friend a honorary title of co-president of Guinea, and offered Nkrumah political asylum.

Although Nkrumah enjoyed head of state status in Guinea, he lived in a deep pool of disillusionment for the rest of his life. One point emerged for sure in many of his radio broadcasts from Conakry, and that portrayed his basic philosophy -- the coup makers have been inspired by neo-colonialists. It was also very clear that Nkrumah was overly concerned with African unity and international affairs, that he neglected domestic politics. The Armed Forces had a different perception. They were concerned with the domestic issues and their corporate interests. They saw Nkrumah and the CPP as saboteurs of the politico-economic infrastructure. The praetorians had a picture which might best be painted by Frantz Fanon. He writes:

For if you think that you can manage a country without letting the people interfere, if you think that the people upset the game by their mere presence, . . . then you must have no hesitation: you must keep the people out.²³

23. Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, New York, 1964, p. 139.

The praetorians kept Nkrumah and the CPP out of the political arena just like the Roman Praetorian Guards did many years ago.²⁴ What was significant about the Ghanaian take-over was that the praetorians became the ruling body. In Rome, the praetorians appointed the Senators and served as watchdogs. The first coup itself was an isolated phenomenon and did not follow a series of overturns in the developing nations. Analyses of the coup have focused almost entirely on Nkrumah's personality.

The praetorians who took power in 1966 invited the police to join forces and establish a ruling National Liberation Council (NLC) with General Ankrah as chairman. By design, the NLC members reflected the regional, tribal and religious diversity of the syncretic society of Ghana. Four days after the inauguration of the NLC members into office, the chairman made a radio broadcast which is particularly, relevant to this study. General Arkrah made these general accusations against the deposed regime:

Until the historic coup last Thursday, one man had collected all power into his own hands. The right of the people to vote at a free general election for their own chosen candidates was reduced to a formal, unpractical privilege of

24. Edward, Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 2 Vols., New York, Modern Library, 1957.

sanctioning the election of such candidates as Kwame Nkrumah himself nominated.²⁵

One could learn from this announcement that even the praetorians were concerned about political participation during the Nkrumah regime. The NLC denounced mobilized participation as observed during the reign of the CPP. One is then faced with the question regarding the levels and nature of political participation under the praetorian regime. If the NLC were in favor of fair elections, autonomous participation, freedom to form organizations that could speak their minds without persecution from a ruling party, then the soldiers had all the chance in the world to prove to the populace that they were the iron surgeons, or redeemers, they claimed to be. There is no doubt they had a difficult inheritance. They had to prove their *raison d'etre*, to move rapidly toward democratization and finally to work diligently toward the process of demilitarization. All these tasks cannot be fully accomplished by isolating the civilian population. By the same token, the power holders had to be in control of the affairs of the nation. Civilian participation will, therefore, depend on the leadership style and power dimension of the NLC. The succeeding chapter will analyze and discuss the machinery of control and participation under the first praetorian regime of Ghana.

25. Transcript of Radio Ghana announcement by the army, February 24, 1966.

CHAPTER III

Praetorian Guardians and Political Participation In Ghana 1966-1969

The National Liberation Council (NLC) spearheaded the neo-praetorian era in the political history of Ghana. This military regime ruled the country for three years (1966-1969) and returned power to the civilian government of the Second Republic. The military intervention of 1966 did not come as a great surprise because of the deteriorating socio-economic and political infrastructures of the Nkrumah Administration. Also, by 1966 Sudan, Togo, Dahomey, Zaire, and Upper Volta, all sub-Saharan African countries, had experienced some form of military intervention. As a guardian regime, the NLC was committed to preservation of the basic status quo, which could, in part, be defined as the period before the Convention People's Party became the only de facto political party of Ghana.¹

The initial declaration of the NLC pronounced an end to the CPP and the 1960 Constitution of Ghana. All

1. Before 1960, there were two de jure political parties, the Convention People's Party and the United Party. Nkrumah, through the Protective Detention Act, arrested the leadership of the opposition - the United Party. The opposition was emasculated by several acts that made any challenge to the CPP a crime.

political activities were declared illegal, and the leading cadre of the CPP was arrested and placed in protective custody. Ironically, the soldiers released five hundred political prisoners held under the Preventive Detention Act and directed all principal secretaries, head of departments and other members of the public service to maintain their positions. It is noteworthy that the majority of those who were asked to remain in their positions had strong connections with the leadership of the CPP. Nonetheless, they could not be relieved of their positions because they controlled the administrative apparatus of the country. The praetorians depended on the civil service and the technocratic elites of the old opposition party to rule the nation.

If the Ghanaian guardian regime remained unique, it was so because it was a coalition government made up of the officer corps of the military and the national police. The Council consisted of seven men: Lieutenant-General Ankrah, Chairman/Head of State, E. K. Kotoko, A. K. Ocran and A. A. Afrifa, all military officers. J. E. O. Nunoo, J. W. K. Harley and B. A. Yakubu were police officers. The police officers who accepted the invitation to serve on the Council had to be grateful because they shared similar concerns as the praetorians. The Police Department was helpful in arresting the unscrupu-

lous politicians of the Nkrumah regime. Although the 1966 coup generated public support, the police still had to control rioters and demonstrators who jubilated and took advantage of the situation and looted many stores, immediately after the coup.

The NLC demonstrated every characteristic of a praetorian guardian regime. It staved off political change and tried to maintain political order by controlling the government itself. The NLC did so because it maintained the belief that the political elites had failed in their programs. Nordlinger noted:

Basically, they intend to correct what are seen to be the malpractices and deficiencies of the previous government. They are "iron surgeons" ready to make some incisions into the body politics, but doing little to replace what has been cut out or even to ensure that the surgical operation has lasting consequences, after the praetorians discharge the patient.²

Paradoxically, the NLC removed politics from the life of Ghanaians, yet they strongly appealed to the civil services, the paramount chiefs and the rest of the nation to get involved with reconstruction programs. One commentator vividly described the guardians; "to the NLC, politics was a matter of extravagance and sensible people could do without it."³ It is interesting to note, how-

2. Eric Nordlinger, Soldiers in Politics, p. 25.

3. Robert Dowse, "Military and Police Rule" in Dennis Austin and Robert Luckham, Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana 1966-1972, London, Frank Cass and Company, 1975, p. 19.

ever, that after two years the praetorians did not only allow supposedly non-political groups to join the participatory process, but also helped in the formation of political parties to help develop and elect people to the new Constituent Assembly.

It is a truism that some form of participation from the general populace was deemed necessary for the success of public policy. The NLC only sought participation from "administrative-cum-technical elites"⁴ at the input stage of the policy making process, which is typical of authoritarian regimes. Nonetheless, they still appealed to the general public for support--a support for policies they had no say in formulating. This sort of selective participation created more problems for the NLC because program beneficiaries tended to compete, or even fought at the distribution phase of several programs. Absent the input needed to facilitate a fair public policy, stakeholders only expressed their opinions or grievances at the output phase. For instance, the NLC had no public hearings or debates on the devaluation of the Ghanaian currency - the cedi, or the privatization program which gave away many state farms to foreign owners because there was not enough capital in Ghana for the citizenry to compete for the deal.

4. Ibid.

Absent political parties, political action committees and interest groups, the civil servants became the main group of citizens that influenced or helped shape the policies of the nation. The role of the civil service was greatly expanded. This was in sharp contrast with its earlier position under the Nkrumah regime. Many bureaucrats were brought into the policy making arena and were relied upon as major liaisons between the praetorians and the general public.⁵

The corporate alliance of the NLC and the civil servants went without criticism. The "new intelligentsia,"⁶ a group of teachers and university professors who have vehemently criticized the Civil Service under Nkrumah, was first to question the new role of the civil servants. The assertion of Adu Boahen, a history professor at the University of Ghana, regarding the activities of the civil servants provides a clear picture of this connection. "It is the same Civil Servants who helped Nkrumah on his golden road to dictatorial rule [and] who are still at the helm of affairs."⁷

5. R. L. Harris, "The Effects of Political Change on the Role Set of Senior Bureaucrats in Ghana and Nigeria," Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 13, 1968.

6. The new intelligentsia is the group of academicians that emerged after the "old intelligentsia" - the group that supported the old regime was deposed. The old intelligentsia inherited the legacy of the British colonial rule after independence.

7. Legon Observer, July 8, 1966.

Does it matter - matter, that is, to the guardians? As guardian praetorians, the NLC had to rely on some group to run the country, and the civil servants best fit into the picture because they belong to the administrative apparatus of the nation. Also, the civil servants embraced the alliance with enthusiasm because the praetorians were quick to reinstate the Civil Service Commission which was abolished under the old regime. They had no choice but to support the "iron surgeons" who made incisions in other areas of the body polity, except the civil service.

The preeminence of key elements of the NLC leadership style and power dimension in relationship to what groups were allowed to participate is not a coincidence. This had been part of the outlook of praetorian regimes since the neo-praetorian era.⁸ The guardian praetorians used a "first dimensional power"⁹ to admit only specific groups in the participatory process. Here, brute force was not employed to stop people from participating. Nonetheless, only selected groups were mobilized to be part of the process of participation.

Aside from the civil servants, the NLC assiduously sought the support of the paramount chiefs of Ghana. Why

8. See page 15.

9. See page 37.

was it necessary to include the chiefs? It is worth noting that from time immemorial, the paramount chiefs have been known to be the natural rulers of the land. From them was derived traditional authority. In the institution of chieftaincy are enshrined the basic democratic values of Ghana. A. A. Afrifa noted:

Chieftaincy is an institution that must be respected and protected. It is the embodiment of our souls. The chiefs are the traditional focal point of a people's collective activity.... It is in these roles that chieftaincy provides the momentum for our people's advancement.¹⁰

The Nkrumah regime denuded the institution of chieftaincy. Therefore, one can understand the motives behind the NLC's drive to involve the chiefs once again. Just as all guardian regimes would do, the NLC endeavored to restore the status quo before the CPP government got in power. Thus, each new step taken by the praetorian to mobilize participation ended up in narrowing the participatory spectrum without validating the regime's rationale to those locked out of the process. It is interesting to note, however, that the NLC demoted chiefs recognized by Nkrumah as "paramount" and reinstated those who lost their status during the period of the CPP government. 334 chiefs of the Nkrumah regime were either deposed or

10. A. A. Afrifa, The Ghana Coup, N. Y., The Humanities Press, 1966, p. 115.

demoted, and their replacements emerged from a pool of chiefs who opposed the CPP.¹¹ No matter how political the role of chiefs appeared, the institution received widespread support both from the populace and the praetorians.

The NLC also courted the Ghana Bar Association (GBA), the universities and former United Party members - the opposition to the deposed regime. The judiciary also played a critical role. Judges and lawyers were appointed to diplomatic missions, investigating commissions, the Electoral Commission and the Constitutional Commission. What appears to have happened is that, since the NLC felt that it could not allow free and open participation from all groups in the society, it opened more access to technocrats and groups who were denied access in the Nkrumah regime. It could be realized that at this point the NLC was not interested in mobilization of the masses. Nevertheless, it is easy to note that mobilization was geared towards certain sectors of the society that maintained some leverage to criticize the praetorian regime - thereby making them silent.

One interesting feature of the NLC was its similarity in structure to the administration of the British colonial government before the independence of Ghana in

11. The Daily Graphic, November 30, 1966 issue.

1957. Chiefs and appointed advisors were in charge of local governments. Support for national policies came from administrators and selected groups like the lawyers and technocrats. The various "apolitical" committees also resembled the former British legislative and Executive councils.¹² The only difference between the colonial regime and the praetorians was that before 1957, Ghanaians did not participate in the policy making process but were involved in the implementation process. During the reign of the NLC, selected Ghanaians participated in all phases of the process. Participation in the NLC involved more Ghanaians than it did in the colonial period. Nonetheless, the basic principle remained the same - "trust only the established."¹³

A. Institutionalization By the NLC

One of the major problems of political participation, according to Samuel Huntington, is that, "equality of political participation is growing much more rapidly than is the art of associating together. The rates of mobilization and participation are high; the rates of organization and institutionalization are low."¹⁴

12. Op. Cit., Robert Dowse, p. 23.

13. M. Wright, The Gold Coast Legislative Council, London, Faber and Faber, 1947, p. 10-15.

14. Samuel Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," World Politics, XVII, No. 3.

Huntington's observations have been taken very seriously by several praetorian governments, and the NLC was not an exception. As a guardian regime, the praetorians were careful not to maintain a state where participation would gallop ahead of institutionalization. For this matter, the regime made sure that the groups that were allowed to participate became instruments to achieve certain purposes. These groups were to acquire "functional adaptability"¹⁵ in their processes. For instance, the chiefs of the different localities were required to make allowances in their programs to facilitate implementation during the next regime.

The Constitutional Commission also strengthened the institution of chieftaincy. It did that not only to make a case for the preservation of the institution for the sake of tradition, but also mapped out carefully what role the chiefs should play in the constitutional scheme of things in Ghana. The institutionalization process even though was deemed necessary, the NLC capitalized on it to boost their legitimacy, as bona fide rulers. We should be reminded that once a praetorian government attains power through extra-legal means, the question of legitimacy reappears in almost all their programs. The

15. Functional adaptability pertains to the ability of an organization to change its functions to suit its environment.

beneficiaries for the institutionalization program wholeheartedly embraced it. The "stake-losers" on the other hand looked at it with contempt.

The NLC did not fail, again, to use its first dimensional power in the institutionalization process. Robin Luckham commented:

The probability that the military would accept the Constitution lay of course in the NLC's choice of the people who were to draft it. The Constitutional Commission was made up of respectable public figures. Eleven of its seventeen members were members of the Political Committee which the NLC had established in June 1966. Most had been leading figures in the nationalist movement in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The majority had either opposed the CPP from the start or became disillusioned with it later on.¹⁶

The participatory process thus included institutionalization of major segments of the educated class - the intelligentsia, the chiefs and the younger civil servants. This does not mean the general public was totally disregarded. The guardian regime's approach was to mobilize the trade unions and use the leadership of these unions as liaisons. Other organizations, such as the Employers Association, Farmers Union, the Drivers Union, the Trade Unions Congress, the Ghana Law Students Association, and the Market Women's Union became part of the process. But

16. Robin Luckham, "The Constitutional Commission," in Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana, London, 1975, p. 66.

as Luckham observed, the role of these groups gave legitimacy to the procedure or process of participation rather than shaping of policies in a definable way.¹⁷ This meant the praetorians even though allowing some form of participation, still had the power to do or undo.

Paradoxically, the NLC demonstrated their support for the few groups mentioned earlier in this paper, making sure participation remained within the confines of these organizations. Nonetheless, the Center for Civic Education was reconstructed to advise, educate and help the populace understand the need for forming organizations and to help rebuild Ghana. The interesting thing was that the praetorians were quick to make decrees that placed difficulties in the way of potential organizations.

Ethnicity emerged as a big problem within some of these organizations. The National Liberation Movement, mainly Ashanti, and Northern People's Party - Northerners, only relied on, and accepted members from the same ethnic background. Even within the NLC there appeared to be some friction between the leadership, which was based on ethnic lines. In general, however, there was no clear evidence of organized factionalism within the police or army, but the leaders became divided on personal and eth-

17. Ibid.

nic grounds. It is noteworthy that in many syncretic societies, ethnicity becomes an issue in organizations. It happened in the NLC, but the praetorians were quick to confront this problem without disrupting their program on institutionalization.

The problem of ethnicity may have subsided within the NLC by their second year in office. But the press, Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times, continued to pursue the issue. The papers, for instance, attacked the Commissioner of Trade, R. S. Amegashie, an Ewe, for being the only civilian on the Executive Committee.¹⁸ The papers also claimed that the dominant positions in Ghana were "held by one ethnic group."¹⁹ Harlley, the Commissioner of Police and a member of the NLC, publicly suggested that the media attack was ethnically motivated. The praetorians, even though they downplayed the media attack, they did not hesitate to dismiss four senior editors of the government-owned press.²⁰

The irony that surrounded these dismissals was that it was the same regime that promised the press unlimited freedom in what they could write.²¹ Yet the praetorians wasted no time in censoring news that the public deserved

18. The Daily Graphic, 24 October 1967.

19. Ghanaian Times, 24 October 1967.

20. Ibid., November 2, 1967.

21. The Daily Graphic, December 12, 1966.

to hear. This suggests that praetorian regimes do not fail to maintain their hegemony even after they have selected or allowed certain special individuals or groups into the participatory process.

In this analysis, I endeavored to illustrate how the NLC went about their institutionalization process. It is evident that even though the praetorians preferred decision making without politics, the institutionalization process was highly political because it involved certain groups, what they did, and how they did it. Also, if there was power-sharing, the praetorians reserved the greater proportion of power to themselves. Indubitably, the institutionalization process did not only consider power with the NLC but also "qualified power" within its selected allies. Excluding popular participation and autonomous institutionalization, it is easy to understand why the forms of participation and institutionalization the praetorians chose complemented what is usually found in non-praetorian regimes.

On the one hand, the process expressed the weak features of the NLC: the inability of the regime to respond to the general public in a reasonable manner, the erosion of certain support, the need to regain it, and the need to respond to internal anxieties about the future of Ghana. On the other hand, the new rules of the game of

participation and institutionalization were by definition part of the process per se. Thus, the rules served as instruments of consolidation which provided a platform for a new social order.

B. Demilitarization and Redemocratization

I turn now to more particular matters - to a discussion of the NLC's attempt to turn the military power it had unlawfully acquired into some more permanent structure of civilian rule. This may require full participation from Ghanaians on all levels of the general society. The military government had to adopt a new method of doing things. This denoted a period of transition, and gradual recession of their direct involvement in the politics of the nation. When they seized power, the NLC promised to return to the barracks when Ghanaians were ready to engage once again in party politics. They honored their promise by lifting the ban on party politics and permitted more civilians in the decision-making sphere, while they stayed back and watched.

The demilitarization process began with an establishment of a timetable by the NLC to return to the barracks. By March 1967, Dr. Busia, Chairman of the National Advisory Committee, argued in one of his public lectures that "people were generally skeptical about the professions of military regimes either to stability or

democracy."²² The NLC, therefore, needed to plan for an early return to the barracks. It is interesting to note that Busia was appointed by the NLC as chairman of the political Committee, National Advisory Committee and the Center for Civic Education, positions he used to reinforce and expand his political linkages.

Each step toward demilitarization increased the tempo of political activity and stimulated political participation. These steps included a formal announcement of a timetable to hand over power by September 30, 1969, the dissolution of the National Advisory Committee, to enable its members to actively participate in politics, and the information of a Constitutional Committee and Constituent Assembly. The numbers of military officers holding governmental positions began to shrink at this juncture. Aside from the NLC itself, there were only eight other military administrators for the regions. The function of the military officers by that time was more ceremonial in nature.

A major instrument that indirectly promoted autonomous participation was the 1969 Constitution. This was particularly unique in the history of praetorian politics. There have been relatively very few occasions when citizens have engaged in so self-conscious an exercise in

22. West Africa, April 18, 1967 and Daily Graphic, April 2, 1967.

the making of a constitution. In this respect, the basic principles of the power of state and the political life of Ghanaians were discussed publicly and in depth. There were several innovative and democratic features of the 1969 Constitution. Among these features were the Office of the Ombudsman designed to investigate citizens' complaints and an independent Electoral Commission made up exclusively of civilians.

Interest aggregation for both established and newly-emerging socio-political groups was very prevalent at the hearings. Aside from the special groups like the National House of Chiefs, the Bar Association, the Trade Union Congress and the National Students Union, the Market Women's Organization and private citizens without organizational membership were encouraged to appear in several hearings of the Constitutional Committee.²³

The Constitution itself became symbolic in the demilitarization process in that it was indicative of an end to a militarized society and also welcomed a Second Republic of Ghana. Yet one must also admit that the document was as much a blueprint for the days gone by as it was for the day yet to come. Luckham wrote: provision for change in the future was all too often sacrificed to provide strict constitutional guarantees against the alleged

23. Ibid, November 9, 1968.

abuses of the past.²⁴ No matter how universalistic the document was, there was evidence that it was not entirely free from the interests, status and concerns of the architects who put it together. For instance, the interests of the praetorians and the civil service were more than adequately safeguarded. The powers of the Civil Service Commission and that of the Commander of the Army and Chief of Defense Staff were strengthened.²⁵

The NLC, on the advice of the Constitutional Commission, organized an election on a non-party basis to choose a Constitutional Assembly. The praetorians proceeded by way of indirect election from voluntary organizations and statutory bodies. This gave the entire society a chance to participate in some way. The 150 members Assembly was made up of forty-nine people from the regional capital, eighteen farmers, nine chiefs and members of professional bodies like the Ghana Bar Association, National Association of Teachers, Ghana Registered Midwives, Ghana Manufacturers Association, the Trade Union Congress, the Christian Council of Ghana, the Universities Union and the Judicial Council. The praetorians reserved fourteen seats for either themselves or their per-

24. Op. Cit., Luckham, p. 68.

25. The military demanded ex officio representation of members of Armed Forces Council at cabinet level. The civilians disagreed with the idea and it was dropped in the final document.

sonal nominees. Whether this was meant to promote special interest or not, it is the writer's belief that the soldiers still held tight to their use of first dimensional power, even while supporting a process of democratization.

From the beginning of the democratization process, it appeared to have attracted participation from the commoners or those who had been locked out of the process when the praetorians took power. But as things proceeded, the commoners began to lose interest. The elite of the society took control one more time. Even the Constituent Assembly was flooded by membership with persons of elitist background. Of the occupational groups, lawyers were not only the largest, but had the greatest influence over the debates and proceedings. Absent political parties, there was a gross amount of incoherence in the Assembly. There was nothing like party discipline or caucuses and whips. When time came to require majority votes, everything simply seemed impossible.

Apparently, the NLC's exclusion of parties in the Assembly was to ensure limited politicking. Nonetheless, this precaution did not prevent persons who intended to run for office from indulging in the "politics-of-going-back-into-politics."²⁶

26. Robin Luckham and Stephen Nkrumah, "The Constituent Assembly - A Social and Political Portrait," in Denis Austin, Politicians and Soldiers, London, F. Cass, 1975.

The Constituent Assembly became a forerunner of the future Ghanaian Parliament. The only difference that existed between the former and the latter was that the Assembly was under the guardianship of praetorians while the Parliament was exclusively civilians.

The NLC Political Parties Decree was released on April 28, 1969, acknowledging the birth of over twenty organizations. They included the All Peoples Party, the People's Popular Party, the Black Power Party, the Labor Party, the Progress Party and the National Alliance of Liberals, just to name a few. The Prohibited Organizations Decree, designed to disqualify ex-CPP members from party politics, banned the People's Popular Party because most of the party's ideas and membership completely resembled that of the CPP. The NLC's reintroduction of party politics was overshadowed by fears of a revival of the immediate past. If the only way to get back into politics without the participation of those who maintained power before the military regime, was to include exclusivity clauses in the decrees, then the praetorians were quite successful in doing that, even though they claimed it was a fair and participatory process.

The final stage of the democratization process was the 1969 elections whose prime purpose was to achieve a democratically-elected civilian government to which the

praetorians could hand over power. It was almost certain at this point that the praetorians were no more interested in politics, or, rather, had realized that they cannot govern without allowing some form of participation from the populace. This was voluntary disengagement - a back to barracks oddity. Why is voluntary disengagement odd? What factors motivated the NLC to withdraw as soon as the ban of political parties was lifted? What made the NLC believe the next civilian government would be free from the iniquities of its predecessor? The answer to these questions is not far-fetched. As a guardian regime, the NLC simply attained power to redeem Ghanaians from the atrocities of the CPP government and once that goal was achieved, they felt they had to leave politics to the politicians.

It is indubitable, at least to the writer's belief, that the praetorians disengaged due to unexpected difficulties they encountered as governors. No one put this better than Eric Nordlinger:

To govern is hardly as simple and straightforward as the officers had imagined prior to the coup, and certainly not as easy as they would have liked. ... After two or three years it is not uncommon to find the praetorians increasingly frustrated, disillusioned with government and with themselves as governors. ... Their negative governing experiences can best be dispelled by vacating the seat of power.²⁷

27. Eric Nordlinger, Soldiers and Politics, 1977, p. 145.

To some observers, the National Liberation Council accelerated the transition to civilian government because it was unable to keep up with politics and how it (politics) affected the military.²⁸ To others, the NLC lost its hegemony as a dominant block due to its obsession with ethnicity and intramilitary rift.²⁹ No matter how one looks at the democratization process, it is evident that the praetorians were more than willing to go back to the barracks even before the civilians thought about giving politics another chance.

The road from almost no participation to mobilized participation, institutionalization, and democratization remained uneven for many citizens who resided in the remote areas. The praetorians were more concerned about participation in the core areas like Accra, Kumasi, Tema, Cape Coast, Takoradi and Temale. The peripheral areas were almost neglected. This does not mean that some form of participation was not in existence in these areas. Although organizations had always been meaningless to the villagers, the NLC made sure the Center for Civic Education gave instructions and coached people about duties and the ethical character of participation. These lessons, even though they appeared abstract to the vil-

28. Ibid.

29. Anton Bebler, Military Rule in Africa: Dahomey, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Mali, New York, Praeger, 1973, p. 53.

lagers, still prepared them for some level of involvement, or, perhaps, in a sense, acquiescence.³⁰

The value of the study of political participation in an African praetorian context may have broader implications: it is a truism that many Latin American and South East Asian countries maintain similar features of participation under praetorian regimes. Activity or non-activity by citizens in the periphery always affects issues at the core. Thus, disputes over land, farming difficulties, and conflicts between two villages dwelling in relative quiescence, go a long way toward explaining the debates between leading groups in the cities. The fact remains that since most praetorian regimes in this era are developing nations, with agriculture as the main foreign exchange earner, it is almost impossible to neglect the countryside in the calculus of political participation.

Of political significance was the conflict between Akin and the Krobos over land ownership around the Buti Falls. This was an old dispute which re-emerged during the 1969 elections. Both disputants organized groups in their villages and towns to put pressure on the NLC, and

30. A majority of the villagers preferred to stay out of politics during the military rule. This gave a dualistic perspective in participation. The cities remained very active in some form of participation while the countryside acquiesced. Nonetheless, participation on community level in local organizations or clubs continued to function.

Commission of Enquiry to find ways and means of settling the dispute.

As land becomes a major factor in peasant politics in the remote areas, farmers tend to live in constant fear of changes in the affairs of the nation, which directly or indirectly affect product prices and standard of living. Also, their conservative nature begins to change - becoming gradually radical in pursuit of particular needs in their quiet domain - the secluded village. Together this particular concern amalgamates and turns into class politics. An observer noted:

They (farmers) tend to be individualists, acquisitive and interested in political power - a personal acquisitiveness and a dependence on the Central government which have undermined traditional authority. The politics of the cocoa farmer is a peculiar type of class politics embedded in a traditionalist matrix, a curious mixture of populism and egalitarianism expressed in hierarchical forms.³¹

On a whole, political participation with regard to demilitarization and democratization that interested the urban dwellers did not have much effect on the villagers. What was more important was participation only on a problem-solving basis. It should be emphasized, however, that voter-turnout during the 1969 elections only proved that patron-client relationships in the villages remained

31. J. A. Peusah, "Politics in Abuakwa" in Dennis Austin, Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana, London, Frank Cass, 1975, p. 217.

the strongest mobilizing factor in peasant politics. Their interest was based not on candidates or platforms. The villagers turned out in their numbers only because the land-owners requested all loyal farmers to do so. Patrons promised clients protection and financial support in return for votes. For a poor farmer who considers his daily bread before any other activity, that was not too much to ask from the landlords. The Daily Graphic noted:

Such patronal political instructions as was put about under these conditions was certainly likely to represent the coercive repression of the desires of individual voters....it was purely an economic threat.³²

Both in the urban areas and the villages, there were no cases of violence as a form of participation, or even oppositions to the NLC or the groups that emerged as political parties. Those who did not go along with the praetorians or the groups that were seen to be active stayed out of politics altogether. Presumably, some Ghanaians were more active on local and regional levels - those were the chiefs. Others participated very little, while still more became involved in one specific way or another. The landlords were more involved in this "specialized" form of participation. On the national political spectrum, there remained some sort of balance be-

32. The Daily Graphic, August 29, 1969.

tween the civil servants and the elites on one side and the very diffused interest of the other groups on the other side.

In looking back to the three or four years of the NLC's rule in Ghana, one can hardly say that political participation fell short of the definition in a praetorian context.³³ Based on the types of groups and modes of participation from 1966 to 1969, and by analyzing participation in 1972 under the Supreme Military Council, (SMC), one can certainly ascertain that even in the same country, participation varies depending on the type of praetorian government.

C. The Second Republic - 1969 to 1972

Political participation took a more Westernized form of party politics between 1969 and 1972 under the Progress Party (PP) government which succeeded the National Liberation Council. Dr. K. A. Busia and the Progress Party's victory in the 1969 elections solely depended upon the efforts of the NLC. The support base of the PP government was then very different from that of the First Republic. The PP government created a professional alliance which alienated the "rank and file" workers and the farmers of Ghana. The composition of the Busia re-

33. See page 34 on participation.

gime's cabinet, right from the inception of the Second Republic, reintroduced the "gap" between the elite and the general populace. This unbridged gap facilitated the creation of a coalition of students and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) opposition to Busia.

Busia overreacted to this coalition by suppressing avenues of participation, including the banning of strikes and public gathering. Within two years of its inception, the government of the Second Republic which was elected through democratic means had displayed gross symptoms of authoritarianism. Busia publicly defied the Supreme Court's ruling of unconstitutional dismissal of several civil servants.³⁴ The PP government's action of reducing the military budget became the major contributing factor to the demise of Busia and the Second Republic of Ghana. Even though the students, labor and the ordinary citizens were fed up with the elitist PP government, they were not all that excited about another military regime - the Supreme Military Council.

D. Envoi

The National Liberation Council, the first praetorian guardians of Ghana, employed first dimensional power to encourage special groups to participate in the

34. The Daily Graphic, June 16, 1971.

affairs of the nation. As guardians, their leadership style was purely anti-CPP and anti-socialist. From the beginning of their rule, they were suspicious of the masses but gradually opened access to the rest of the public unions' ex CPP members. Even though, the NLC created several institutions to improve mobilized participation, Ghanaian politics under the soldiers became elitist politics, with a majority of the people acquiescing to the wishes and policies of the military-civilian elite alliance. In such a regime, the problems of participation and policy-making which I have noted to this point are resolved mostly by the "alliance," and the praetorians' ability to summon and mobilize special groups. Their actions, I should emphasize, almost always define the pattern of process which seems strong and irreversible.

CHAPTER IV
Political Participation Under An Arbitrator Regime
1972-1978

The National Redemption Council (NRC), which changed its name to the Supreme Military Council (SMC), after the Reorganization Decree of 1975 raised the curtain for the second act of the political melodrama of Ghana. The heroes of yesteryear are discredited, defamed and vanquished. They assume the role of villains. New heroes are greeted with immaculate praise and crowned with laurels. The NLC wore the victor's crown and the mantle of the deposed CPP government for three years and handed them over to the Progress Party government. The Progress Party was identical in every aspect to its predecessor, the NLC. The party, as it was put together, had exercised a distinct appeal for a number of special interest groups. It represented the new intelligentsia, the senior civil servants and the lawyers. Busia's government was impeccably similar to the praetorian regime that witnessed its birth, except that the Progress Party government wore civilian attire and operated behind a facade of a party system. One observer noted: "the civil servants had served the NLC... loyally, and could look to Busia's government as the continuation of the NLC's rule in civil-

ian dress."¹

Understandably, it was the same "bus," but a different "driver." Nonetheless, after the praetorians left the stage, the Progress Party maintained civilian supremacy over the armed forces. The party removed the General Officer commanding the Armed Forces from the proposed Council of State and reduced the representation of the army and police of the Armed Forces Council. Indeed, the army and police vacated every position on the political arena. As a result, the people of Ghana ceased to believe there was any Department of Defense -- until Busia's government was ousted by yet another group of praetorians.

Precisely why the military intervened just after three years of civilian rule was reinstated was not fully clear, and is still not clear today. Most probably it was a combination of several factors, including the tempering of the military corporate interest and politicization of the military.² The justification for the coup was later on extended to include deteriorating economic conditions. Colonel Acheampong, who spearheaded the

1. Dennis Austin, Ghana Observed, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1976, p. 159.

2. The transcript of the initial declaration (ID) of January 13, 1972, pronounced a cut in the military budget and poor conditions in the Ghana Armed Forces. This poor condition was linked to deterioration in economic infrastructure.

coup, had served under the NLC as a Regional Commissioner. Perhaps this gives us sufficient grounds to add "ambition" to his list of grievances. This ambition to rule was denied because of the coming to office of Busia and the Progress Party.³ Unlike the first praetorians, Colonel Acheampong had his hands full since he had to protect his regime from the supporters of the Busia regime, defenders of Nkrumaism, ambitious soldiers and discontented politicians.

The supreme Military Council (SMC), perhaps, had the toughest time trying to explain its *raison d'être* as governor because by 1972 Ghana had tried quite a number of blueprints of government -- single party rule, a two party system, parliamentary government and military rule. Nonetheless, Colonel Acheampong took his case straight to the peasants of Ghana. The SMC advocated participation by millions of peasant small-holders by suppressing the hostile political elites, the intelligentsia, and the combating parties. Finding a civilian base of authority with poor peasants and illiterates was not an easy choice, but it appeared that was a logical point of action because the peasants were locked out of the process of participation in the Busia regime.

The SMC's leadership style could be termed "prae-

3. Op. Cit., Dennis Austin, p. 163.

torian arbitrator-type."⁴ Colonel Acheampong's regime consequently evidenced a deep concern for the warring political parties in Busia's government. That was why it took power. As an arbitrator regime, the SMC maintained that it stepped in to clean up the mess of the civilian government.⁵ Some arbitrator regimes may shy away from exercising governmental control themselves, but the SMC felt it will better attain its goals by working with the Civil Service and some unions and cooperative groups, and at the same time becoming a referee for the various groups.

It should be emphasized that, over time, even praetorians who choose to remain on the sidelines, as referees, regularly transform themselves into "direct-ruler types"⁶ after tasting political power. Arbitrator praetorians are also noted for exercising excessive amounts of veto power on the actions of their "self-created" groups. The SMC endeavored to preserve the status quo before the NLC took power -- that is going back to Nkrumahism. Here, maintenance of balance of political power, or

4. The Supreme Military Council parallels Stepan's "moderator model," although his conceptualization includes civilians' acceptance of the military coup, which was not the case in Ghana in 1972. See p. 45 and Stepan 1967, pp. 61-66.

5. Daily Graphic, January 14, 1972.

6. See page 41.

perhaps, imbalance of it among contending groups, was very important. Political activity intensified as it gradually moved from inter-elite conflict to peasant squabbles, and from mass politicization to an eventual withdrawal from the state political sphere.

The SMC used "second power dimension"⁷ in opening up access to the participatory process. It did this by, first, detaining the leaders of the deposed Progress Party and 1,300 other politicians.⁸ All political parties were banned and non-political associations were advised to curtail their activities. The SMC also released a decree prohibiting attacks on the regime's actions, and imposed limitations on freedom of speech. These actions were aimed at depoliticizing old political networks and denuding organizations that could pose problems in the affairs of the praetorian arbitrators.

The approach of depoliticization at the initial stage of praetorian rule is similar in almost all types of military rules. Guardians and arbitrators alike would detain ex-politicians or leaders of the deposed party. But in stark contrast, the 1972 coup also initiated a phase of military reformism. This did not occur in 1966. The SMC insisted upon a rigid army-based hierarchical

7. See page 38.

8. Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times, January-February 1972.

structure based on military supremacy. Here, civilians became subordinates to their military counterparts. Thus, ultra-authoritarianism remained the chief characteristic of the SMC.

Even though six middle echelon officers and one civilian made up the SMC, the center of power was highly personalized, revolving around the whims of Colonel Acheampong, the head of state. Appointments, promotions, and decision making in both the Civil Service and the military were exclusively controlled by the head of state. Not only did Acheampong advocate Nkrumaism, but acted in many respects like Kwame Nkrumah, without "politics." A new form of authoritarianism was experienced in Ghana at this point, which spelled out participation through reordering of the state under repressive and exclusionary powers of the head of state.

A. On Participation: Compulsory Association

The SMC launched the Operation Feed Yourself (OFY) program as a vehicle to enhance participation on a corporate-functional basis. Regional Development Corporations were created to mobilize the populace and galvanize them into forming cooperatives. Discussion and activities of these cooperatives were required to be "apolitical." Needless to say, in the absence of political parties, members of the farming cooperatives did not hesi-

tate to use the organizations as platforms to pronounce their grievances, or attract government attention on issues of concern.

A concerted effort was made to disengage the local population from politics by redirecting all affairs into "productive activities." Economics and self reliance became the linchpin of the SMC's policy for civilian participation. The regime believed that economic sufficiency would eventually lead the way to some political activity. When the SMC took power, Ghana was importing more than 50 percent of its food and raw materials, although it maintained adequate natural and human resources to "feed itself."⁹ The soldiers, therefore, took advantage of the situation and "forced" agriculture on every organization in the country. The Daily Graphic noted:

Ghana had the effective weapons to fight the enemies in the OFY programme and self-reliance policy. There is ample evidence to support the Chairman's view in the available evidence on the "Operation Feed Yourself Campaign"... But the ability to achieve this aim, would largely depend on total involvement of everyone.¹⁰

Farming became avocation for students, professional societies and trade unions. Any organization that neglected the OFY program became an enemy of the state. In-

9. Deborah Pellow and Naomi Chazan, Ghana: Coping With Uncertainty, Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1986, p. 57.

10. The Daily Graphic, April 2, 1975.

dividuals in such organizations were labeled as "economic saboteurs and disgruntled politicians,"¹¹ whose diabolical activities tend to perpetuate poverty and fascism. The irony of this program was that it tended to mobilize politicians who were forbidden from political activities to find "shelter" and harbor such activities under the pretext of farming.

It was not unusual to find government employees who lacked knowledge in farming being absent from work and using farming as an excuse. The most absurd cases occurred in the urban areas, where lack of arable land caused workers to travel sometimes fifty miles, only to fulfill the government's desire of total participation in the OFY program. Classes in schools and universities were cancelled on Fridays to enable students to participate in the farming program. While agricultural products may have increased in the remote areas, the case in the urban centers was quite contrary. If anything happened at all in the urban centers, it was not farming but a state of euphoria in mobilized participation.

Once again, there was an alliance which resembled that of the NLC's. But the SMC alliance excluded the chiefs and sought solid support from the technocrats in the bureaucracy (civil service). To ensure military-

11. Ibid.

bureaucratic coalition at the core, Acheampong rehired many civil servants dismissed by the deposed Progress Party regime. Naomi Chazan writes:

Acheampong sought an alliance between the military and the civil service: a coalition based entirely on state-centered, ¹²purportedly apolitical occupational groups.

Other groups that were permitted entrance into the participatory process were the trade unions, National Union of Ghanaian Students (NUGS), the peasants and the planters. Religious bodies also gained entrance into the process. It should be emphasized, however, that aside from the technocrats, all other groups participated in acquiescence and quiescence. This occurred because the tone in politics and society was authoritarian. It was impermissible to question the judgement or decision of Acheampong. His personal qualities were emphasized and closely associated with praetorian ability.

Central to all this arbitrary rule, the state was nonetheless a weak institution; weaker by far than other social establishments and organizations such as religious groups, the family, patron-client relationships and the elite class. Private interest tended to dominate public ones. The populace experienced alienation from the rul-

12. Naomi Chazan, An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics, Managing Political Recession, 1969-1982, Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1983, p. 235.

ing praetorians and the state. Ghanaians became mere recipients of edicts and military decrees. The people saw their role as one of making constant effort to beat the system through bribery and corruption, cheat the government by not paying taxes, and avoiding contacts with the praetorian establishment. Thus, a passive state developed at the initial stages of the SMC rule, but this did not last too long before a wave of opposition started.

B. Opposition to the Arbitrator Regime:
Problems and Dynamics

Analyzing opposition under an authoritarian regime runs the risk of limiting one's self to dominant actors, thus reducing the room for the phenomena of opposition. I have chosen to tackle this theme because opposition in praetorian regimes becomes a significant political issue, especially when discussing political participation. Instead of showing just the stages of development in the process of opposition, I will endeavor to focus on what in my opinion, appeared to be "problematic" as far as opposition under the SMC is concerned.

The crucial element in describing the opposition in Acheampong's administration was the problem of the "politics of antipolitics."¹³ In this juncture, the elimina-

13. "politics of antipolitics" in praetorian regimes assumes repression of opposition, silencing or censoring of the media and subordinating all organizations to the objective of the regime. See Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr., 1978, p. 12.

tion or restriction of participatory avenues and the intent to eradicate politics altogether produced an adverse effect on the SMC. Between 1972-1975, a vehement protest from the Ewes in the Volta Region, based on ethnic injustice, provoked the SMC to enforce tougher measures on organizations with membership based on ethnic lines. These measures triggered Ewe discontent, resulting in direct confrontation between the Volta Region and the praetorians.

It should be emphasized that part of the Ewe activism was a continuation of past antagonism to the Busia regime, which also had its roots as far back as 1956, when part of the Ewe tribe demanded secession in order to join Togo, a neighboring country of Ghana. Acheampong and the SMC admonished the Ewes lest they agitate against the praetorians. Several arrests were made over the issue of secession, warnings were posted and the Volta regional commissioner was changed.¹⁴ The President of Togo, General Eyadema, also a praetorian governor, openly sided with the Ewes against Acheampong. The Movement for the Liberation of Western Togoland, an organization that spearheaded the opposition, generated and galvanized support from both Ghanaians abroad and many Togolese. President Eyadema, hoping to make matters worse for Acheam-

14. The Daily Graphic, July 10, 1973.

pong, demanded the extradition of Bonito Olympio, son of the deposed president of Togo. He also advocated that Ewes fight for the separation of the Volta region from Ghana. This means that opposition during the SMC's reign transcended local boundaries -- it reached international borders.

Beside Ewe unrest, Akan groups were proclaiming their discontent, intergroup animosities were erupting, and interregional squabbles were on the rise.¹⁵ In Tamale, two Muslim factions feuded and the government was hard pressed to control the situation. Ga, Fante, Asante, Brong, and Akim, all different ethnic groups, joined the opposition. Kumasi became the powerhouse of anti-government organizations. How did the problem of ethnic opposition get out of control under a regime that has been cautious of such opposition? Among the issues that provoked ethnic opposition was the hasty politicization of ethnic groups in the Busia regime. Instead of incorporating representatives of all the different ethnic groups in the policy making process, Acheampong excluded a number of already sensitized groups. At this point, ethnicity generated massive opposition in reaction to the regime's policy of exclusivity.

15. West Africa, 2928, July 23, 1973.

The regime's policy of "deculturalizing" ethnic groups also appeared to be very harsh. For example, surnames that bear ethnic meanings and distinctive tribal facial marks were ordered to be eradicated.¹⁶ The word "tribe" was banned from all documents. This was a step to eliminate tribal forces which opposed the policy of the SMC. Unfortunately, or fortunate enough for the opposition, the regime's policy on deculturalization backfired, creating more ethnic unrest. There were, no doubt, many people who regarded the SMC's policy on deculturalization as a new form of neo-colonialization, thus rejecting it outright.

Between 1975 and 1978 the deteriorating economic infrastructure caused the opposition's activities to transcend ethnic boundaries. Class groups and multifaceted social groups joined the ever-growing opposition, to demand policy changes from the praetorian regime. Naomi Chazan observed:

The objectives of these demands, cast in class and ethnic terms, was to effect substantive shifts in the uses of state power... The multiplicity of sources of protest and the vagueness of objectives left the impression that activities at this confluence lacked cohesion and direction.¹⁷

16. Republic of Ghana: Two Years in Office of Col. Ignatius Kuto Acheampong, Accra, Office of the Press Secretary of the NRC, 1975, pp. 57-59.

17. Op. Cit., Naomi Chazan, p. 243.

At this juncture the opposition remained autonomous, springing out from all walks of life. Nonetheless, it lacked organization and direction but was yet sufficient to alert the SMC of the state of the affairs of the country. Petitions, public commentary and constant demonstrations against praetorian measures became the fashion of the time. The SMC acknowledged the fact that it has lost the quiescence and acquiescence that allowed it to rule with an iron hand. It had to respond to the civilian unrest in one way or the other.

The SMC had two choices in dealing with the prevailing unrest. It could either employ a second dimensional power approach, whereby, it could suppress and harass its opposition, or it could vacate the seat of power and return to the barracks. Smartly enough, Acheampong refused to make a choice between the two approaches. He employed a "combine tactics" of applying coercion against his opponents and at the same time vaguely announcing the handing over of power to a civilian government. Interestingly, Acheampong's proclamation of return to democracy came in a broad form of a Union government concept.¹⁸

18. Acheampong's Union government concept comprised of a non-party government which must include the military, police, professional and ethnic groups. This is an extension of the "politics and antipolitics." It assumes government without politics or governing in a political vacuum.

It is not far-fetched to note that the SMC regime was entrapped in an ambiguous political quagmire. On the one hand, it was ready to relinquish power. On the other hand, it wanted to be present in the political arena. Needless to say, the concept of Union government (Unigov) backfired, only to provide a firm ground for the opposition to galvanize support from the elites and university students. Now, the opposition had the ammunition for a solid organization -- direction, focus, and support from the elite.

C. Union Government: A Concept of Selective Participation and Opposition

The SMC's announcement of the Union government (Unigov) concept ignited a much more vehement opposition nation-wide, from 1977 to 1978. The praetorian regime's intent for this announcement was to sell the concept as, at least, a partial panacea for its reluctance in opening up avenues for participation across the board. One thing that was clear and certain about Acheampong's move for Unigov is that, in an attempt to, somehow, appease the opposition, he rather exposed the SMC to heated public debates. The Chairman of the SMC thus set the stage for an overt protest against himself and the notions he sought to propagate.

It was easy for the Ghanaian public to notice that

it was being left out once again in the participatory process. This triggered a widespread demand for structural change in the executive council of the praetorian regime. Aside from the public request for change in government policies, a more radical effort was launched by students and academicians to bring about more basic change in regime.¹⁹ The main goal of the students and the academicians was to "push" the soldiers back to the barracks before their departure from the political spectrum was due. To put it starkly, the opposition wanted to seize state power by "overthrowing" the military regime.

As public pressure mounted, the SMC directed its frustration into aggression, by threatening to arrest the opposition and denying anti-Unigov demonstrators a fair hearing.²⁰ Regardless of the threats, student demonstrations continued. One student was killed, and several others were injured in confrontation with police and the military.²¹ As a result of this tragedy, the three universities of Ghana were closed. After the closure, the military regime attempted to send all students to the state farms to work. This was an ill-planned program and it ended in a fiasco. Acheampong was, then, forced to reopen the universities, but at this point, the students in-

19. Daily Graphic, May 10, 1977.

20. Ibid., June 3, 1977.

21. Ibid., June 17, 1977.

sisted that the soldiers should vacate the seat of power.

The end of June 1977 was met with more support for the students. The Association Recognized Professional Bodies of Ghana (ARPB), became the spearhead of the general opposition. This association was comprised of university professors, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals. The ARPB published a resolution calling for the resignation of the SMC and documented several cases of malfeasance and nonfeasance.²² This call was supported by the Christian Council of Ghana. Nevertheless, the Christian Council softened their position by asking the SMC to "come out with a proclamation of a program of handover to an elected representative council which will act as an interim government to prepare the country for a return to constitutional rule."²³

Acheampong and the SMC maintained their irrepressible posture. On July 1, 1977, he responded to the general outcry for his resignation in a public radio and television broadcast.²⁴ He promised the nation that his administration had no intention of stepping down. By the same token, he promised to allow more participation

22. "Resolution Adopted by the Nation Executive of the Association of Recognized Professional Bodies on Thursday, June 23, 1977.

23. Memorandum from the Christian Council of Ghana, June 1977, p. 2.

24. Daily Graphic, July 2, 1977 issue.

of civilians in the affairs of the nation. The broadcast did more harm than good. The ARPB called for a withdrawal of services, and by the day following the broadcast all major service sectors in the country were on strike. The trade unions joined the strike, and Ghana was in civilian revolt.²⁵

The soldiers did what they can do best: used force to reduce the revolt to a state of quiescence. Acheampong resorted to violence and acted with arrogance in negotiations with the professional leaders. Only after the praetorians had called in some very honorable Ghanaians as intermediaries did the ARPB agree to call off the strike. The SMC also agreed to submit a timetable for their departure from the political arena. The balance of state power, at this point, was shifted towards the opposition.

Once the SMC announced a departure date from the political scene, the opposition directed its efforts to a referendum on the form of government Ghana would like to have. Indubitably, the Acheampong administration would have preferred a peaceful, regime-controlled constitution that would include the military in the political process. Nonetheless, the regime did magnify its weakness in accepting a return to the barracks in the first place, not

25. Ibid., July 3, 1977 issue.

to mention its inability to deal with Ghana's problems. Viewed in this perspective, the referendum became a viable platform for organized public opinion. In it, the public was able to evaluate the performance of the SMC and make recommendations as to what form of government would suit the political system of Ghana.

It is interesting to note that even when pressure was being mounted against the military to leave the political sphere, Acheampong still maintained his concept of Unigov. In a report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Unigov, Acheampong claimed:

In talking about Civilian Rule, I do not really mean full Civilian Rule, there must be Police-Military participation, if you want to see any peace and harmony in the country.²⁶

The SMC's version of Unigov campaign hurt the credibility of the soldiers more than it helped them at the last stages of their rule. The future of military participation in politics became the major issue at the Ad Hoc Committees' debate.²⁷ The military, thus, turned what it wished to remain a nonissue into the main issue of contention in the Unigov debate.

At the other end of the Unigov spectrum, was the debate on whether a party or non-party system would be bet-

26. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Union Government, p. 144.

27. Daily Graphic, October 6 and 7, 1977.

ter for Ghana. It appeared that the praetorians wanted to maintain their anti-politics position by supporting a Unigov without political parties. The SMC made an enormous effort to make the structure of Unigov the center of the referendum campaign. But that effort was a fiasco. The structural question did not sway public opinion either towards military participation or a "no-party" Unigov. Failing at every tactic and strategy in the Unigov campaign, the SMC reverted to the use of brute force against the opposition. At the same time, the government courted support from several youth councils which received financial support and protection from the soldiers.²⁸

Most revealing were the social roots of the Unigov campaign activists. The major, traditionally politically sensitive groups -- ethnic, religious, professional and academicians were in the camp of the opposition. These groups provided the foundation from which the opponents of the military regime attracted their support. The groups themselves had been highly politicized and institutionalized from the time of the First Republic. This

28. The pro-Union government support was carried out by organizations sponsored by the SMC under the facade of "youth councils." These organizations included the Ghana Youth Club, the National Youth Council, Ghanaian Peace and Solidarity Council and the African Youth Command.

time, they only had to mobilize those outside position in controlling the affairs of the nation.

The opposition was forced to operate within a highly restrictive framework of second dimensional power.²⁹ It remains a mystery, however, that with all the suppression and humiliation, the opposition maneuvered and cultivated more support for the day of the referendum. In order to escape the iron hands of the soldiers, some of the top leaders of the opposition fled to London on the eve of the referendum.³⁰ There, the Chief Opposition leader announced that he had evidence to prove that the results of the referendum was fabricated.³¹

The results of the ballots proved the praetorians to be victors, but in light of the events that took place on voting day, it is highly impossible to accept the official results at face value. Among several factors that gave the results a questionable character were: the disappearance of Justice Abban, the Electoral Commissioner, on the eve of the referendum; the conflicting results of the April 3 count and the results that were published by the Daily Graphic and West Africa Magazine on April 17; and the high percentage absentee of voters -- suggesting

29. See pp. 38-39.

30. Among these leaders was Nang Akufo-Addo, Chief opposition leader.

31. West Africa, May 8, 1978, p. 906.

that many ballots of the opposition were discarded.

The irregularities at the polls were so clear that the government lost its entire legitimacy. The outcome of the referendum did one good thing for Ghanaian politics -- people were once again prepared to participate, even though the military attempted to dominate and subjugate political participation.

D. The Demise of the Arbitrator Regime:
Unfinished Democratization

The irregularities at the polls for the referendum, coupled with military brutality, did not dissolve the opposition to the Acheampong regime, but underscored both the extent of citizenry discontent and suspicion of the soldiers. In imposing a greater limitation on political participation after the referendum, Acheampong determined to retire the entire nation into acquiescence and quiescence, but this action triggered more civil disobedience. In response, Acheampong gave up all pretense of co-opting participation and launched an all-out attack on his opponents. By reverting from a strategy of partial concession to one of overt repression, the SMC traded in its quest for legitimacy with an open use of force. 350 leaders of the opposition were arrested and many others left the country for fear of repression.³²

32. Daily Graphic, March-April 1978.

Meanwhile, a new Constitutional Commission of 23 members was established under the chairmanship of Dr. T. A. Mensah, a civilian who had remained neutral in the Unigov campaign. Less attention was given to the Constitutional Commission. People failed to attend the Commission's hearings. The few people who attended the hearings went as protesters. The rest of the nation regarded the work of the Commission as ludicrous and absurd, because it was created only to fulfill the desire of the unscrupulous praetorians.

A civilian coup d'etat has never occurred in Ghana before. But by June of 1978, many observers wondered if the country was not ripe for such a coup.³³ From the opposition's point of view, the possibility of accelerating the demise of the SMC regime and replacing it with a democratic government faced sets of problems. First, there could be another coup d'etat from a small coterie of praetorians and opportunists who clustered around Acheampong in a desperate attempt to cling to power. This would turn Ghana again into the hands of the military. Second, even though the country wanted to get rid of the praetorians, it had not adequately prepared itself for civilian rule,

33. See Naomi Chazan and Victor Le Vine "Politics in a Non-Political System: The March 30, 1978 Referendum in Ghana," African Studies Review XXII 1, 1979, p. 33-36.

because the military did not allow civilian participation in the regime. Third, the political diversity of the opposition as well as its problematic process of confrontation reduced its ability to perform as a true political actor. The opposition, had become adaptive and reactive to the dynamics generated by the SMC and perhaps would not be able to lead the country.

Political participation under the SMC can only be described as a process of systematic participatory deterioration. Even though the violent confrontations and civilian demands led to the end of the SMC, internal squabbles and cleavages became much more pronounced. Furthermore, state power did not rest with civilians, but with another praetorial regime, SMC II. The democratization process ended abruptly, while the political system remained frozen. Acheampong's world disappeared, but it became necessary for Ghanaians to discover new parameters for action and participation in a type of society which has experienced two praetorian regimes in the past.

E. Praetorian Situations and the Third Republic:
1978-1981

The dismantling of the political and economic infrastructures in the Acheampong regime created a state of turmoil after the SMC was ousted. Even though General Akuffo, who succeeded Achaempong assumed power with the

intent of restoring order and direction for the country, government became meaningless to the people. Mass rejection of the new praetorian government, the SMC II, was seen in the form of strikes, rural withdrawal from state-run activities and several demonstrations.³⁴

Upon its assumption of power, the SMC II took certain defined steps to establish its *raison d'être*. Among these steps was the release of persons detained during Acheampong's duration of office. Also, amnesty was granted to all those who were in political asylum abroad. To reduce the presence of military personnel in important governmental positions the SMC II retired several military commissioners and replaced them with civilian personnel.³⁵ This action was also seen as a sign for goodwill.

Immediately after neutralizing many of Acheampong's supremacist policies, Akuffo proceeded to release his views publicly, about handing over power to civilians. At this juncture, one could easily deduce from the policies and programs of the SMC II that it was more of a praetorian situation, an interlude, than a "regime." It is only a praetorian situation because a group of the officer corps used force to overthrow the Acheampong regime. It is not a praetorian regime because it "demili-

34. Jon Kraus, "Ghana: The Crisis Continues," African Report 23, No 4, 1978, p. 14-21.

35. *Ibid.*

tarized" the executive and commissioners, and filled their positions with civilians.

Pandemonium continued, despite Akuffo's efforts to bring tranquility to the nation. Akuffo's eleven months of fruitless attempts to change the image of the military, revamp the economy and reconstruct the decayed political infrastructure, met its final blow on June 4, 1979, fourteen days before the general election for the return to civilian rule.

The June Fourth Revolution was led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, a thirty-one year old idealist, who led an abortive coup on May 15, 1979, was detained but escaped detention. The June Fourth Revolution was planned and executed by a group of junior officers. This created a rift between the senior and junior officer corps of the Ghana Armed Forces. Almost all the ex-military leaders in previous regimes were either executed or faced the death sentences.

Rawlings formed an executive council named the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) to replace the SMC II. The new executive was faced with three major quests. First, to solve the conflict within the military. Second, to develop a housecleaning program that would eradicate corruption, profiteering and indolence. And third, to supervise the elections and return the country to

civilian rule.

The AFRC was quite successful in carrying out two of the three major tasks within months of assuming power. Rawlings galvanized support both from the soldiers and the populace. Nonetheless, the problem of corruption and indolence has become a modus vivendi and only time could help him to uproot these practices or behavior from the people. The housecleaning activities affected the civil service the most. By the time the operation was completed the entire state apparatus had been shaken.³⁶

Over a dozen parties emerged when the ban on politics was lifted. Six survived to contest the elections. The People's National Party (PNP) won the elections, with Dr. Hilla Limann, a Sisalla from Upper Ghana, as president of the Third Republic of Ghana. Working under severe conditions, Hilla Limann failed to provide the leadership needed to bring the country back to "normal." Two years after the praetorians gave the civilians a chance to rule, Ghana returned to the status quo before Rawlings took power.

It is interesting to note that when Rawlings handed power to Limann, he warned the civilian government that he would be a "watchdog", ready to seize power again if

36. Naomi Chazan, An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics, Boulder CO, Westview Press, 1983, pp. 320-321.

the Third Republic fails. Rawlings kept his promise and successfully staged another coup on December 31, 1981.

CHAPTER V

Direct Ruler-Type Praetorians and Political Participation 1981-

"Holy War Declared": this was how the headlines of the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times read after the December 1981 coup d'etat. The dailies proclaimed the second coming of Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings by underscoring his warning to return to power if the civilians he relinquished power to in 1979 failed to establish a solid *raison d'etre*. In the initial declaration Rawlings announced:

Today we initiated a holy war... There is no justice in this society and so long as there is no justice, I would say there shall be no peace.

The "injustice" Rawlings was talking about was economic injustice. Although the Limann administration inherited adverse socio-economic infrastructures, Ghana submerged into a definite economic chaos, coupled with corruption and inequality, during the short reign of the Limann government. Prior to the December 1981 revolution, state power had deteriorated: the civilian government lost control of almost all state institutions and no one paid any allegiance to the Limann government, except the elites of the People's National Party (PNP). The military coup that overthrew the PNP government was,

1. West Africa, January 11, 1982.

therefore, far less violent because it had the support of the general public.

Thus, although coups d'etat, per se, are illegal in Ghana and many other countries due to the use of brute force and subversion, Rawlings' second coup maintained all the necessary accoutrements of legitimacy except its violation of the election process. Nonetheless, the return to power of a handsome, young and charismatic lieutenant was saluted with much enthusiasm. As a populist, direct ruler-type praetorian, Rawlings moved away from the norm of governing by a military executive composed of senior officers. Himself a Flight Lieutenant, he only associated with the rank and file and junior officers. He believed that Ghana's dependence on both military and political elites had led the country astray. It was time, therefore, for the workers and the "commoners" to save the country from the unscrupulous elites.

The "holy war" of Rawlings revolved around his person, but he promised to return power to the people immediately after he and the people have achieved both economic and political "justice" and independence. The "holy war" carried with it the hope of national resurrection with the concrete backing of students, urban unemployed, trade union members, farmers, petty traders, wage laborers and the radical intellectuals. These diverse

groups stood united from day one because they had been literally locked out of the participatory process for the past twenty-five years. This meant, for the first time, the urban elites - technocrats, politicians, professionals and wealthy business people had to remain on the sidelines and watch.

Ghana has never experienced a Marxist regime and the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) is certainly not building a Marxist regime in a Soviet context. But the composition of the PNDC's coalition has every resemblance of the type of regime Leon Trotsky theorized would emerge in the Third World during the "Permanent Revolution."² At this juncture, the military could be surrogate for the proletariat and the farmers (peasants), and through the efforts of the workers' regime, there would be "true democracy" - "a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants."³ Rawlings promised to return power to the people after he had been victorious in his "holy war" against corruption, inequality and the unscrupulous "old elite."⁴

But as Donald Ray suggested, the PNDC was divided, as to what strategies would be appropriate for the re-

2. Leon Trotsky, The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects, New York, NY, Pathfinder Press, 1978, pp. 10-15.

3. Ibid.

4. Jon Kraus, "Rawlings' Second Coming", African Report, XXVII, No. 3, 1983, p. 61.

volution.⁵ One group wanted to move quickly to build a Bolshevik-style revolutionary party, without the rich, and break ties with multinational companies, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, since these organizations were regarded as imperialistic.⁶ The other group, which was in Rawlings' camp, believed that Socialism could be accomplished through the alliance of all classes. Nonetheless, the workers and the peasants would lead the revolution.⁷

Proponents of the second strategy gained the upper hand after Rawlings publicly announced that the country needed help from the "so-called" imperialist organization. In short, the second strategy is directly linked to the "two-stage" revolution of the Mensheviks: the military will work together with the wage-workers, the farmers and the bourgeoisie - a democratic stage, and then return power to the workers and the farmers - the socialist stage.

Bogdan Szajkowski characterized the PNDC as a Marxist regime because of the long-term crisis factors in Ghana and the final response by Rawlings in a revolutionary manner, to bring the country out of a national political decay.⁸ This time, the praetorians needed more

5. Donald Ray, Ghana: Politics, Economics and Society, London, Frances Printers, 1986, pp. 27-29.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Bogdan Szajkowski, The Establishment of Marxist Regimes, London, Butterworth Scientific, 1982, p. 168.

than a mere coup d'état. The December 1981 coup was a revolution because its architects sought to involve the entire grass root population of the country in a massive reconstruction.

Deborah Fellow and Naomi Chazan only observe the PNDC as a new type of praetorian populist regime, with some neo-Marxist advisers.⁹ But, whether or not the regime is Marxist or shares Marxist ideology could better be judged, only with time and history. For the purpose of this exercise I will focus primarily on the PNDC's exceptional ability to use "third dimensional power"¹⁰ to mobilize the populace into participation. The leadership style of the praetorians and the process of demilitarization and redemocratization are also addressed.

Although all the analytical and political ramifications are not always spelled out, it is largely affirmed that the PNDC's presence in Ghanaian politics cannot be defined as simple historical parentheses, or, as a temporary interruption of the PNP's rule - because the Rawlings regime is still alive and kicking. Nor can it be thought of as a "necessary" formula for the resolution of the socio-economic and the political problems that had

9. Deborah Fellow and Naomi Chazan, Ghana: Coping with Uncertainty, Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1986, p. 76.

10. See page 41.

confronted the nation since independence. Nevertheless, the revolutionary approach in solving problems and mobilizing the nation "from below" gives one the reason to believe that the PNDC is a direct-ruler regime that has become permanent caretakers of a permanent crisis.

A. Mass Organizations Under the PNDC

The PNDC, in their reconstruction efforts, did not replace existing institutions, but complemented them. There was a dualistic approach in policy formulation and implementation. Although the government agencies were still in charge of carrying out day-to-day operations, Ghanaians were incorporated into the planning and implementation process. This was done by creating a network that maintained oversight prerogatives and checks over the courts, civil service and all other activities in the country. In every community, township area and neighborhood, the PNDC created People's Defense Committees (PDCs) and Workers Defense Committees (WDCs) to organize development programs and formulate policies.

Theoretically, there was a hierarchy of defense committees that extended from the village level with membership of between 40 and a hundred through regional levels, and up to the National Defense Committee (NDC), spearheaded by the Chairman of the PNDC. The National Defense Committee consisted of a secretariat, which coordinated

the administration of the Regional Secretariats via the department of the NDC. These departments included: (1) Administration; (2) Projects and Programmes; (3) Education and Research; (4) Information and Press; (5) Complaints and Investigation; (6) Monitoring and Coordination. It is noteworthy that these departments were separate from the civil service, and the NDC, which controlled all the committees, was very parallel to the politburo of the Soviet Union. In connection with political participation, the PDC's and NDC's served as apparatuses of popular participation, a communication linchpin between the people and the leadership, and powerhouse for political control.

Initially, the PDC's and NDC's were created to serve as forerunners for a future revolutionary party.¹¹ Nevertheless, the prime reason for putting together the defense committees was dropped after some of its organizers became involved in an abortive coup d'etat. After the coup attempt in 1984, the defense committees were restructured and renamed Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR). The CDR embarked on a major campaign for national democracy and expansion of membership and patriotic activities.

11. Interviews, London, England, June-September 1987.

The irony in the participatory process was that people who had often been included in pre-revolutionary power structures were this time excluded. Some of these people were the chiefs, the wealthy and the political elites. Many chiefs believed they possessed indivisible right to rule, and as a result they resisted the activities of the defense committees. This resistance led to internecine warfare between the chiefs and the defense committees. In effect, if we consider the positions of the defense committees as defensive or reactive type, a holding action, the PNDC has effectively used a third dimensional power to create an institution to replace chieftaincy. The attempt to maintain a revolutionary reconstruction of all institutions of the society meant chieftaincy had to be subdued.

As for the defense committees, political education and a para-military acculturation, were thoroughly disseminated via radio and television broadcasts, public speeches, seminars and lectures. Some members of the defense committees received education from abroad. Interestingly, most of the overseas programs were situated in Libya, a socialist country, Bulgaria, and other communist bloc countries.¹² Upon completion of their study abroad, the defense committee cadres were put in charge of admin-

12. Interviews, London, England, June-September 1987.

istering community projects. In this position, they engage the community in political discussions, leadership training and most importantly, community reconstruction projects. These projects included, but were not limited to, operating the local People's Shop, road maintenance and some community sanitation work.

Absent de jure political parties, the defense committees were designed to provide a medium for the masses to participate in the political decision-making that affected parts of the day-to-day lives of the people.¹³ Aside from the decision-making aspect of the defense committees, they served as local agents of revolutionary control to thwart any efforts of insurgency. Since the PNDC promised to hand over power to the people after the revolution had been won, the defense committees were also charged with recruiting and training talented people who would be solely involved in the process of future democratization. A close assessment of these functions gives one a concrete impression that the defense committees are nothing but the nuclei of a new revolutionary vanguard party.¹⁴

In many cities, towns and villages, the Workers' Defense Committee represented the civil servants in differ-

13. Donald I. Ray, Ghana: Politics, Economics and Society, Frances Printer, London, 1986, p. 79.

14. Ibid, p. 80.

ent aspects. Although it was independent and did not interfere in matters such as the working conditions of government employees, the People's Defense Committees (PDC) was always on top of issues affecting the standard of living of the people. The PDC, in order to effectively protect the employees' interest, was directly involved in the distribution of scarce goods. The PNDC dispatched essential commodities - rice, milk, soap and bread - as well as agricultural necessities, like fertilizers, tools and insecticide to the PDC for distribution to workers.

To enable the entire populace to participate in the affairs of the nation, the Youth and Women's Organizations were created to attract market women, housewives and high school children. Even elementary school children became part of the mass organization for the revolution. Donald Ray notes:

The central thrust of the revolution's youth policy was to inject into the youth, the spirit of patriotic nationalism and feeling of oneness and Pan-Africanism, with a view to creating for them a national continental identity... The revolutionary leadership wanted to build mass-membership youth organizations that would implement these political values as well as development projects.¹⁵

Before the revolution, there were several youth organizations, viz, the Ghana United Nations Student and Youth Association, the Africa Youth Command, and the Mus-

15. Ibid., p. 91.

lim Youth Association. The post revolutionary periods saw to the creation of two other youth organizations that owed primary allegiance to the PNDC. These organizations were the National Youth Organizing Commission and the Student Task Force. The membership of the Student Task Force was drawn from the universities, post secondary schools, and high schools. The students were involved in projects such as road repairs, community health projects, agriculture and political education. Most of the political education was comprised of seminars and lectures on patriotism and practical socio-economic problems that face the nation. These teachings tried to avoid rhetorical theories.¹⁶

The pre-revolutionary youth organizations were courted to join the revolution. With little resistance, some of these groups were reconstructed into a mass revolutionary youth organization. But this happened only after the Secretary for Youth and Sports, Mr. Z. Yeebo, criticized the pre-revolutionary youth organizations for indulging in counter-revolutionary acts.¹⁷ It is noteworthy that all these youth organizations were based on the structure of the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement, under Kwame Nkrumah, in the First Republic. Nevertheless,

16. The Daily Graphic, April 6-13, 1982.

17. The Daily Graphic, March 9, 1982.

"ideology" and idolization of any one person was avoided.¹⁸

The wife of Flt. Lt. Rawlings spearheaded the formation of the women's revolutionary organizations. Ghanaian women were mobilized into a mass national democratic movement to combat the subjugation which had been their traditional station in life. Nana Agyeman Rawlings, spouse of the Chairman, stated that women could occupy the same positions as men to achieve a democratic revolution. They (women) would only be successful if they regard themselves as equals and not inferior to men.¹⁹ In the middle of November 1984, the women's organizations were reorganized and put under one structure, the All Women's Association of Ghana (AWAG), in Accra. Under the chairpersonship of Mrs. Aanaa Enin, the Association coordinated the concerns of women's organizations throughout the country.

Without going into a detailed analysis here, we must recall that at the end of the Limann regime, women lived through a crisis which can be defined as a decomposition of the socio-political role of Ghanaian women without the emergence of an alternative role to effectively replace what had decayed. Women were almost non-existent in the

18. Interviews, Washington, D.C., June-September 1987.

19. The Daily Graphic, May 17, 1982.

political spheres of past regimes. Thus, the All Women's Association of Ghana's (AWAG) call for women participation was greeted with great enthusiasm. Nevertheless, cultural diversity and the tendency to blame women in Ghana for allegedly contributing to their own inferiority in the political sphere resulted in a demobilizing effect. To put it starkly, many women felt they had not made a difference in the political arena, and their presence would not make a difference in the revolution, either.²⁰

As newcomers to the ever changing kaleidoscope of praetorian politics, the revolutionary women's movement was a mere embryo mass organization compared to the omnipresent defense committees. Even at present, the organization seeks to extend its membership and leadership not only over socio-economic activities but also the entire range of state decision making. Without a doubt, the fact of the creation of the AWAG is indicative of self-consciousness and perception on the part of revolutionary leadership in women. If anything at all, women's presence was acknowledged by the PNDC and the populace as essential in the participatory process.

The revolutionary youth mass organization still remains rivaled by the pre-revolutionary youth organiza-

20. Interviews, New York, June-September 1987.

tions. The abortive coup d'etat of November 1982 and its political and psychological ramifications led to an exodus of the revolutionary youth organization leadership to London, England. Among these people was the Chairman of the National Youth Organization Commission.²¹ Aside from these shortcomings, the organization has remained successful in providing a forum for political participation for the young.

B. Opposition to the PNDC

In praetorian regimes, the crucial element in describing the opposition is the problem of the elimination of the political arena. However, the elimination or emasculation of the opposition under the PNDC did not have the same effect as it did during the Acheampong regime. Political opposition to the Rawlings regime ran the gamut from resignations from the revolution, to criticism from some churches, to organizing solid political movements such as the Campaign for Democracy in Ghana, to specific efforts to oust the PNDC from power.²²

Under the PNDC, there emerged two forms of opposition. A "partisan" opposition was composed of those who confronted the regime on purely ideological grounds. The

21. Interviews, London, June-September 1987.

22. Donald Ray, Ghana: Politics, Economics and Society, 1986, p. 99.

other opposition was based on politically-motivated economic problems that faced the country.²³ Economic opposition itself could be put into two categories. The first deals with economic efforts designed to sabotage the government's effectiveness, which in effect weakens the regime's political base. The second is comprised of activities of economically disadvantaged citizens, to influence government to direct its policy goals towards their needs.

The politics of scarcity becomes the main weapon of the economic saboteurs. They hoarded or restricted the supply of essential commodities to market places, thereby creating "artificial shortages." If this maneuver affects a total market in a community, the members tend to put pressure on the representatives of the government to react to the situation. Among several techniques employed by the opposition during the early rule of the PNDC, was the diversion of government resources to different destinations, or, for personal use.²⁴ Civil servants who opposed the regime also failed to sign bills of lading for shipment of commodities from storage areas to the communities.²⁵ Donald Ray noted:

A timber merchant complained to Rawlings and the Secretary for Finance that his timber ex-

23. Ibid.

24. Interviews, London, June-September 1987.

25. Ibid.

port were being held up at Takoradi port because the official in charge of signing the necessary export document had not been at his post for six months and his deputy had not been seen for a month.²⁶

During the second year of the PNDC rule, the relationship of the state to the economy underwent a significant transformation. The role of the state as producer and regulator, even though it remained the same, involved more citizen participation. These changes were directly associated with the revolutionary character of the praetorian regime, with, in other words, its endeavor to restructure the economy and society in order to generate a new socialist model of development. Economic opposition, on matters of this kind was regarded as a crime. Special courts called Public Tribunals, were set up to deal with economic obstruction.²⁷ Hundreds of cases were brought before the tribunals and sentences ranged from incarceration to execution. For instance, an opposition member who stole from the Ghana Commercial Bank was sentenced to death.²⁸ It is noteworthy that it was not only opposition members who were convicted and punished, but also soldiers who were caught in undesirable acts were, as well, detained or executed.²⁹

26. Op. Cit., Donald Ray, p. 101.

27. West Africa, January 18, 1982.

28. Amnesty International, "Death Penalty Log", October 1983, p. 1.

29. Ibid.

"Partisan" opposition under the PNDC occurred mostly abroad. The Campaign for Democracy (CFD), and the Ghana Democratic Movement, both based in London, have membership in West Germany, United States, Togo and Nigeria.³⁰ Major Boakye-Djan, who had a long history of friction with Rawlings, founded the Campaign for Democracy to denounce Marxism, which has been associated with the PNDC. In a no-party state, it is very difficult for the opposition to function effectively, unless the praetorians recognize its existence. The effectiveness of opposition groups had been minimal in comparison to the opposition in the SMC and previous regimes. The only significance of the opposition abroad has been to act as external irritants to the PNDC by making hostile statements and influencing Western governments to deny aid to the Rawlings regime.

In a similar manner, the internal opposition remained fragmented. Perhaps the opposition's major problem is not merely to structure agreements at the top, but to realign itself to the civil society. By doing this, there would no doubt be a shift from dealing with the new form of neo-Marxism to traditional democratic values of Ghana. At this moment, the opposition is failing to present a coherent strategy for generating support to con-

30. Interviews, London, June-September 1987..

front the praetorian regime. Nonetheless, the hierarchies of the major Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, and some professional bodies have continued to put pressure on the PNDC, to include them in the decision-making process.³¹

Political opposition to the Rawlings regime has also taken a more costly approach -- plots and abortive coups d'etat. These attempts, coupled with assassination, are indicative of alternative forms of opposition under the PNDC. The emerging patterns of these plots and attempts give one a concrete reason to characterize the actions as forms of opposition. Among several reported attempts, Amnesty International reported coup plots of March, July and October of 1982.³² In 1983, there were three attempted coups, one in 1984 and another one in 1985.³³ If the PNDC failed to learn anything at all, the regime became aware that the opposition was growing and was within striking distance of subverting the regime. The regime resorted to sentencing attempted coup makers to death, and perhaps the death sentence had remained the only effective deterrent to the opposition to this day. Needless to say, the problems of the opposition cannot be considered in static form. There has been considerable

31. The Daily Graphic, July-October, 1984.

32. Amnesty International, July 1983, p. 12.

33. Ibid., August 1985, p. 3.

evolution. This has taken the form of regrouping and adaptation of old structures like workers unions and churches.

C. Democratization Under the PNDC: The Politics of Disintegration of Praetorianism

At this point it would be useful to specify a bit more clearly the scope and limits of the democratization approach adopted by the PNDC. As noted from the beginning of this chapter, the defense committees and the rest of the mass organizations represent to some extent a kind of nonrepressive democratic alternative in a framework of "praetorian socialism." This presupposes a partial but systematic link between the formation of civilian-praetorian direct ruler regime at a first phase, and a complete civilian regime at the second phase. The political implications of the democratization process is difficult to define with scientific precision. Whether the present system has in fact produced "tinted" democratic society due to the degree of participation depends upon the national configurations of the mass organizations, and on the ways and means they have been organized to better affect the political economy of Ghana.

It is interesting, however, to note that the democratization process started within the military itself. The soldiers became partners of the defense committees in

development projects. Efforts were made to improve the conditions of the police and army ranks which were neglected in previous regimes. The military was required to change their image as instruments of oppression, and, even Rawlings and the PNDC promised to help the military eradicate the attitudes of antagonism between the soldiers and the public.³⁴

As already mentioned in this discussion, the PNDC affirmed that social justice necessarily includes an end to oppression and exploitation of all women. Thus, necessary preparations were made to include women in leadership positions. The PNDC made laws to deal with outmoded customs that have adverse impact on women.

In order to facilitate the democratization process, a National Commission for Democracy (NCD) was formed. This Commission was chaired by Justice D. F. Annan, also a member of the PNDC. The Commission was charged with designing new blueprints for the future political system of Ghana. It was also responsible for restructuring the local government system by decentralizing the machinery of government and increasing the function of local government.³⁵ In an address to the fifth annual delegates' conference of the national association of local councils,

34. The People's Daily Graphic, November 2, 1984.

35. West Africa, January 12, 1987, p. 65.

Flt. Lt. Rawlings maintained:

To give meaning to the concept of popular participation in the democratic process we have to make room for local government elections... we promise to call a national conference which will establish a national front of all identifiable groups of patriotic and democratic-minded individuals and organizations in the country... Also, development of "true organs of revolutionary popular power" will be proclaimed as the only way of ensuring the reality of "popular participation in the decision making process."³⁶

It is important to emphasize that the PNDC seized office through a military coup d'etat; and although they must, somehow, share the power de facto with other institutions and organizations in the country to legitimize the democratization process, they still have the final word. But they made sure that their actions would enhance the preparation for the quest for democracy. Consequently, notwithstanding the regime's authoritarian orientation, the PNDC has remained somehow accountable to the general public in its own way. For instance, the government has increasingly reached out to some of its earlier opponents, including chiefs, social groups and churches for consultation with the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) and the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), in regards to demilitarization and realization of "true democracy."³⁷

36. Ibid., pp. 66-67.

37. Ibid., P. 66 and interview, New York, June-September 1987.

In summary, Flt. Lt. Jerry Rawlings and the PNDC subordinated the chiefs, the civil service, the "old" political elites and the officer corps in the beginning of the democratization process. Eventually, the PNDC focused on the issue of national integration understood as the assimilation of the ensemble of the society's interests to common objective of revolutionary "true" democracy. A series of institutional changes widened popular participation. Nonetheless, pragmatic political acculturation has taken the place of the official rhetoric that took over the theme of the revolution at its inception. Timothy Shaw notes that the "hardy days of populism have yielded to a pragmatic reformism"³⁸ in the present days of PNDC rule.

But one tends to question the reasoning behind the PNDC's policy for setting up a commission to find out what it meant for the regime to introduce a more fundamental system of democracy, especially since the praetorians assumed power to engage the nation in a new form of "true" democracy. Like the Constitutional Commission, its predecessor praetorian regime, Ghanaians have remained skeptical about such commissions. Although the formation of the National Commission for Democracy may symbolize good intentions, it is evident that it led to

38. Timothy Shaw, "Continuity or Change", West Africa, London, March 16, 1987, p. 107.

erosion of some of the revolutionary fervor.³⁹ Nevertheless, no praetorian regime in Africa has been so successful in legitimizing itself through grass-roots participation as the PNDC. On the sixth anniversary of the revolution in December 1986, Rawlings related the following to the journal, African Report:

It is true that we have not quite institutionalized the new forms of participatory democracy that we are committed to developing, but the building blocks are being put in place and in many ways, there is real participation in the affairs of government, particularly by sections of the community who previously would not have been allowed a voice... Of course, for those who are looking for participation in the form of a Westminster-style parliament,... there is no participation. The starting⁴⁰ point is the grass roots where the people are.

The socio-political underside of such a statement is not all that pleasant to contemplate, so far as the political elites and officer corps are concerned. Even so, it is possible that the populace might find it some reward in this form of participatory democracy. It may be far from the Western liberal democratic perspective. But even the limited form of democratization envisioned here would supersede existing patterns of repressive praetorian regimes that had ruled Ghana.

39. The National Commission for Democracy encouraged all who wish to participate to establish the new system to come forward with ideas. This gave the "old politicians" a chance to restore their old systems along with the abuses that come with it.

40. African Report, November-December 1986.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS: Interpretations and Limitations of the Study

The increased importance of the need for political parties and autonomous, as opposed to mobilized political participation under praetorian governments appears to re-emerge under all the regimes studied. However, as this investigation has suggested, groups will succeed in maintaining some form of autonomy and identity, denying the praetorian regime that created them absolute authority in controlling their (groups) actions. The "politics of antipolitics" which places limitations on organizational and electoral activities, rather than undermining politics, contributes to reducing the power of the praetorian leaders.

In terms of leadership style, the present military regime, - PNDC, seems to stress public involvement in the affairs of the nation. When contrasted with its predecessor regimes - NLC and SMC, the PNDC almost appears to be a fourth republic. If it has gained legitimacy, it is so because it opened the avenues for participation through mobilization and institutionalization. The transitional nature of both the Ankrah and Acheampong regimes gives the Rawlings administration a more permanent mien.

It is possible to describe the Rawlings regime as one which fits the general pattern of a pragmatic populist praetorian regime which came to power to implement a more dynamic model of development in accordance with a "new" public support - the backing of those who have been locked out of the political process. Observers such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which loaned money to the Rawlings regime when it first took power, and Sixty Minutes, a CBS News Broadcast, gave the regime a citation for being a role model for military regimes in developing the economic and political infrastructure of Ghana.¹

The key is that a characterization of regime must transcend the limits of mere characterization of government. Regime assessment must go beyond government actions and intentions and analyze the nature of participation, including that of opposition elements within and outside the country. If this is done, one can understand the political culture of a people, and particularly why some praetorian governments are more acceptable to the people than others.

I am not making a case for differences in political culture in the same country. Nor am I arguing against

1. West Africa, April 14, 1988, and "Ghana", Sixty Minutes, a CBS News Broadcast, May 1988.

the illegitimacy of all praetorian regimes. What I am suggesting is that a taxonomy of praetorian leadership style and power dimension cannot rely solely on the regime's structure, but must take into account the contexts within which the regime and the mobilized group, or, the opposition, related to each other. The important difference between the NLC or SMC and the PNDC is not seen in the degree of authoritarianism, because there is no doubt all military regimes are authoritarians but in the regime's ability to use its authoritarian nature to promote sound economic and political programs.

This investigation of the nature of political participation under military rule in Ghana was done in part to face the challenge posed by several unanswered questions from the literature on praetorian politics and recent Ghanaian experience with the military. It will be, therefore, proper in this concluding chapter to make reference to some of these questions, and share some thoughts about future research.

The study points out that the demise of civilian regimes does not necessarily end political participation in Ghana. Ghanaian political studies have in the past directed their attention from colonialism² to nationalism,³

2. David Apter, Ghana in Transition, New York, Atheneum, 1966.

3. Adu Boahen, Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, London, Longman 1975.

from multi-partyism to no-partyism,⁴ and from civilian regimes to military regimes.⁵ In this study, the emphasis was moved from the macro to the micro political perspective - considering the specific question of political participation.

Studies on Ghana per se maintain an impressive tradition; this dissertation has endeavored to make a contribution to these studies. It also sought to tackle the delicate question of political participation under military rule which has not been tackled in detail by any publication so far. Although much work has been done on the military,⁶ and on political participation⁷ separately, nowhere has a detailed study been done on participation in a no-party state or in a military regime. Perhaps this is because of the presumption that authoritarian regimes suppress the channels for participation. Also, studies on political participation in the Third World have always used criteria from the Western liberal democracies, such as voter turnouts and party activities to evaluate forms of activities and the nature of participation in the de-

4. Dennis Austin, Ghana Observed, Manchester, UK, Manchester University Press, 1976.

5. Robert Pinkey, Ghana Under Military Rule, London, Methuen.

6. Dennis Austin and Robin Luckham, eds., Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana, 1966-1972, London, Frank Cass, 1975.

7. L. K. Crah, Ghana National Democracy, London, Star Research Publications Society, 1970.

veloping nations. This sort of evaluation fails to recognize conditions in the Third World which are very different from the Western industrial democracies.

Another aspect of participation that the study sought to explain is political activity outside the country - exit. This form of participation has been poorly analyzed, or even scorned in developmental literature. In praetorian politics, many people who fearing persecution and prosecution, leave their countries to seek political asylum elsewhere, but still actively indulge in politics, become the "external hand" of the opposition. Their "participation" abroad sometimes tends to be even more damaging to the praetorian regimes credibility than the opposition within the country. In the case of Ghana, the present opposition to the PNDC is not all that cohesive. Nonetheless it has been able to develop linkages in London and Hamburg to solicit funds and distribute pamphlets which aims at discrediting the Rawlings regime.⁸

This investigation drew particular attention to the processes of demilitarization and redemocratization which have received scant attention in African politics, com-

8. Interviews, London, England, Summer 1987.

pared to Latin American politics.⁹ Perhaps the inclusion of civilians, or a military civilian coalition in a praetorian regime is superficial - a facade behind which the praetorians seek to expand their power. Nevertheless, in the Ghanaian case, demilitarization eventually led to civilian regimes. But nobody put it better than Alain Ronquie. He stated:

"Civilization of the military state, however extensive, is by no means the same as a return to democratic normality."¹⁰

This statement runs parallel to the demilitarization process in this study.

For many Third World countries the road to democracy is still long and uncertain. Several civilian governments have tried the blueprints of the Western industrial democracies, only to experience failure. The redemocratization process by the military provides a "new" form of representation and participation which is not clearly defined. By the same token, the process produces a degree of "acceptable" political behavior and "selective repres-

9. Alain Ronquie, "Demilitarization and the Institutionalization of Military-dominated Politics in Latin America", in O'Donnell, G. ed., Transition from Authoritarian Rule, Princeton University Press 1978, pp. 108-137 and Juan J. Linz, "The Future of an Authoritarian Situation or the Institutionalization of Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Brazil", in Authoritarian Brazil, Alfred Stapan ed., New Haven, Yale University Press, pp. 233-354.

10. Ibid.

sion."¹¹ The process seeks to include those who want to conform or participate in "quiescence" and throw opponents off balance. Both the NLC and the PNDC, to a certain degree, prepared the nation to accept the notion that elections are not synonymous with democracy. The democratization process in praetorian regimes may therefore be devoid of elections. But one should not confuse the contexts of this process, for I am not considering the prospects for Western liberal democracy marked by pluralism and free market principles, but a system that tends to enlist public support and citizenry concern in policy-making. For a fruitful result, the democratization process should reinforce many of the propensities of the target populations, so that their support is likely to abet the participatory process.

As is true of autonomous participation, the importance assigned mobilized participation differs from one praetorian regime to another. Significantly, though, these organized effective mass groups, such as the ones found under the PNDC regime, show the greatest level of institutionalization. This observation needs to be further examined. The same assessment could be made of leadership style and the level of institutionalization.

11. Robert Kaufman, "Liberalization and Democratization in South America", in O'Donnell, G. ed., Transition from Authoritarian Rule, 1978.

The direct-ruler type of praetorians tend to be more successful in establishing a coherent and adaptable organization than guardians and arbitrators. Perhaps this is because direct-rulers become more than mere instruments for achieving specific goals for the organization. Instead, they help the organization to maintain a capacity to expand its activities over its basic functions.

Conceptually, this investigation renders a tentative conclusion that there are some relationships between power dimension, leadership style and political participation. There is a need to further develop this hypothesis through quantitative analysis. In this respect, a range of variables that have not been studied in this investigation could be dealt with in detail. On this basis a series of analytic tools could be used to transcend the limits of what was attempted in this exercise. For this reason, my basic hypotheses are advanced tentatively, with the possibility of their being rebutted on critical examination.

The three regimes studied, and the three types of leadership styles and power dimensions used in this investigation, are admittedly arbitrary. I could have used the other military regimes not covered in detail in the investigation, or defined power dimension, political participation and leadership style differently. The three

regimes used here represent my own best judgement of concrete typology of praetorian regimes. But some other typology may be more useful for certain kinds of study aimed at other purposes.

A major shortcoming in methodology which was eventually turned into an asset for the study was my inability to conduct interviews in Ghana. Because of this, I conducted interviews with representatives of the Ghanaian government in London, New York, and Washington. Most important, and what makes this shortcoming rewarding, are the differences found between what some of the New York government officials said and what their counterparts maintained in London. One cannot totally rule out problems with interpretation and semantics; however, there were a number of disagreements between some government officials.

The investigation further suggests that editorials in particular, and newspapers in general, are useful and valid resources of information in the developing world and they can be used as acceptable reference for scholarly work.

Political participation in praetorian politics is relatively new, both in Ghanaian and in developmental perspectives. Ghanaian politics exemplifies the intricacies of comparative politics with special reference to the

Third World: it details the neglected subject of political participation under authoritarian rule; it establishes the root cause of acquiescence, quiescence and exit; it embodies the uneven route to demilitarization and democratization. Finally, the investigation suggests that contrary to popular opinion, participation does occur under praetorian regimes, but in different forms.

This research is not intended to undermine past studies on participation, but rather to add a new dimension of participation under a "no-party" system, to the subject, and to direct researchers to the importance of such studies in this neo-praetorian era. The findings in this investigation are only beginnings, but until much more substantive research is done, this will undoubtedly have a significant effect on the practices and teachings of political participation in praetorian regimes.

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