

An Examination of National Service

By JANET JAGAN

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Introduction

THIS pamphlet has been compiled by the Propaganda Committee of the People's Progressive Party from a series of articles written for the **MIRROR** newspaper by Janet Jagan on the subject of national service.

The subject is one that can be described as the most burning issue in Guyana during this period. There has been very strong public feeling about the introduction of compulsory national service.

By far, one of the most disturbing aspects of national service as it exists today is the distorted ideological content of the teaching of recruits. While the PNC government claims that its policies are now based on the tenets of Marx, Engels and Lenin, what is being taught in the national service camps is downright anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. As the booklet illustrates so well, the teaching manual being used in national service camps completely distorts Marxism-Leninism.

Following the publication of this series of articles, there were numerous requests from **MIRROR** readers that they be put into booklet form and this has now been done. Added to the series of articles are the Resolution on national service adopted by the 19th. Congress of the People's Progressive Party as well as excerpts from the section on this subject in the Report of the Central Committee of the 19th. Congress.

The author is a member of the Central Committee and International Secretary of the Party.

October, 1976.

THE HINTERLAND

The Prime Minister, in delivering an address at the official opening of the Faculty of Education Building at the University of Guyana campus on October 17, 1973 made the very first announcement about the government's intention to introduce national service. He said at that time "I think that a young man, or a young woman in these times, should be exposed before entering an institution of higher learning, especially if the State pays for that learning, to the society and give service to that society.

"If I have my way, and subject to the approval of Parliament, aspirants for a degree at the local university would be required to enter into a period of national service after leaving secondary school."

"It seems to me that our young people leaving the secondary institutions should be exposed to at least 12-14 months of national service so they could understand how the farmer thinks, so they could enjoy the beauties of Guyana."

From the time this statement was made to the present, there have been varying positions by the government, sometimes so confusing that it is hard to know what is exactly the real position.

From the tone of this October 1973 address, it appeared that the national service would be compulsory for students in higher educational institutions. Yet only four months later, Mr. C.A. Nascimento, the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister was spouting a different line. In a Government Information Service (GIS) handout of March 26, 1974, Nascimento is recorded as having said, at the Second Annual Graduation Exercises of the Lower Corentyne Government School, Rose Hall, Corentyne — "Because national service is voluntary the choice of whether to participate rests solely with the individual."

But, this is just an aside. Back to the subject of the various objectives which national service is supposed to achieve. As one advocate of national service pointed out, one Balwan Singh of Enmore (reported in a GIS communique of March 29, 1974), national service would help tap the unexploited resources of the hinterland, providing a tremendous amount of fertile and arable land for agriculture. And as the Prime Minister noted "to enjoy the beauties of Guyana."

This is an admirable objective — to open up the hinterland, to have our youths enjoy the beauties of the interior, grasp the grandeur of Guyana's remote areas, 'burst open the hinterland'.

While this is a commendable objective, is national service the way to achieve this objective? Or is there some other means of attaining this goal?

I think there is. And further I think that national service will not solve the problem of opening up the hinterland or even help our youths understand about life in the interior.

A camp is not a reflection of life in the interior. A camp is an organised enclosed area in which a limited number of people live and work under specific conditions. The national service camps have different conditions from those 'enjoyed' by Guyanese living in the hinterland. They have electricity, pure water, refrigeration, medical services, regular mail, beds and mattresses, meat, fish, poultry, margarine, milk, etc. many of these unknown to interior residents.

If we are to burst open the hinterland, to encourage our people to go there to live, there are better and more intelligent methods of so doing. If we were to take all the money poured into national service and convert this into funds to clear lands in the bush and make settlements where people can live and earn a livelihood, we would have done far more to open the interior than two dozen national service camps.

People cannot and will not go into the interior now to live unless they are guaranteed certain minimal conditions. They must have substantial loans to build houses and prepare the lands. They must be provided with the needed services — medical, transport, mail, water, electricity, schools, etc.

Even better than that would be the establishment of co-operatives or collectives, where people together clear the land, till the soil, build their houses, put in the water supplies and sanitation, etc. But again, the planning must be carefully done and the funds must be provided.

Having had a dose of the mess made already by the government ventures in the interior and the ghastly failures, one hesitates to make these suggestions under the present scheme of things. The so-called co-operative ventures at Matthews Ridge and at Butenabu in the Mahaicony River and in other areas of the country are sharp warnings that the partisan policies of the government have led us into ruin and fabulous waste of public funds.

So these suggestions are made, keeping in mind the need for a different approach, an end to discrimination, for equal opportunities for all and most of all, for genuine democracy.

As we are today, compulsory national service is not solving our problems; it is only compounding them.

MANUAL LABOUR

In discussing the stated objectives of national service, it is noted that one of these is for youth to be orientated to use their hands, not to scorn manual labour and thus to remove prejudices that may exist among students who may feel that they are too 'big' or learned to soil their hands.

This too is a commendable objective. If our society is to move forward, our youth must be prepared to do all kinds of work and all work that is purposeful must be respected. If our schools are only producing white collar workers, then the whole society will suffer as a result.

During colonial times, a great premium was placed on white collar jobs, with a post in the civil service being the "end-all" of ambitions to succeed in life.

If such prejudices are to be removed, then the premiums placed on such employment must come to an end. At present, this is not so in practice. The best jobs are still in the civil service and in the professions and while this continues to exist, our youths are bound to be influenced by the status quo.

The 'cushiest' and best paid jobs still remain in the civil service and in the state corporations. We see it every day. It is a rare sight to see a civil servant in a bus or peddling a cycle. They all have cars, provided by credit given by the government. They get not only fat salaries, but various forms of allowances and privileges. Until this system of building a bureaucratic elite is discontinued, our young people will continue to look on white collar jobs as the highest and most desirable goal. Just sending youths to national service camps will not succeed in erasing this idea unless the whole structure is dismantled.

The other side of the coin is that factory and field workers and peasants continue to have the lowest incomes in Guyana. In socialist countries, many of the so-called 'blue collar workers' (those that do not sit at desks) frequently receive higher pay than professionals and white collar workers. But this system does not prevail in Guyana.

Our farmers, for example, are moving away from the soil, not because they do not like farming, but because incomes are too low. To survive, many are seeking new opportunities for employment that provide better incomes.

Sugar workers, the largest group of industrial workers, are underpaid. Their counterparts in other areas of the Caribbean obtain better pay and conditions of work. That is another reason

SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

One of the objectives of national service is to develop the necessary skills and attitudes that go with and into nation building and national development.

This objective can be divided into two aspects, the development of necessary skills for nation building and the attitudes that go with national development.

As far as teaching our youths the skills needed to develop the nation, the sad fact is that the institutions which now provide such education are unable to handle the number of applicants. The reason for this is the shortage of teaching staff, equipment and the limited accommodation.

The Guyana School of Agriculture has perennially suffered from an imbalance between applications and available places. In 1972, 600 youths applied to enter the school, but only 10 were admitted. This year, the Principal of the Guyana School of Agriculture announced that of over 800 applications, only 60 places were available.

At the Government Technical Institute, in 1972, 8,000 applied but only 700 found places. Even with two technical institutes, the majority of the large numbers applying for admission are rejected.

Are we to suppose then that national service is really going to supply these needs for the development of skills? If the technical and agricultural institutions cannot find sufficient well trained teachers, how will national service recruit them? The answer is that the teaching of skills in the camps is at a much lower level than that in the institutions, not only because of the quality of or quantity of teachers, but because at national service camps it would be impossible to provide the teaching aids and equipment found in these institutions. It is hardly a debatable point that the level of teaching will be lower, and probably of not much use.

There are other considerations, too, in this issue of teaching skills. It is not only the teaching of skills that is necessary, but some means of holding on to the skilled personnel that emerges from the various institutions, including nurses' training.

The figures on emigration of skilled Guyanese are chilling. Large numbers of skilled persons are departing yearly for permanent residence abroad. Take the figures of trained nurses. From 1968 to 1972, out of 1,147 students admitted for nursing training, only 267 graduated. And at the same period 323 nurses left Guyana. These figures expose two problems; one, of the exodus of qualified nurses, needed so badly here and the other

why the sons and daughters of sugar workers are seeking higher education in order to climb out of the poverty and misery they face daily.

So that, working with a cutless or tools, has not meant a better standard of living. National service will not correct this situation. But higher remuneration will!

Many of the youths who are now being told that they will have to be inducted into national service if they desire higher education, have had a lot of experience working with their hands. Many of them have been in the fields and farms since their childhood and are no strangers to the cutlass.

Thus, we come back to the pertinent question. Is it necessary to go to national service camps to achieve this objective? Or can this objective be achieved in other ways?

Work study, which exists in Cuba is more to the point. This exists, too, in some capitalist countries where engineering students, for example, spend half their time in the class rooms doing theory and half their time in related factories learning the job at first hand and applying the theories they have learned in a practical manner.

This is a more realistic approach. A woman student learning sociology, for example, need not go to a national service camp to learn how to plant and pick cotton. Her time would be better spent examining on the spot sociological problems of the nation—housing, care of the aged, movements of people from city to town, overcrowding and its effects, problems of poverty which produce crime, malnutrition, etc. She could also spend time working in related institutions. Her field of study would be enriched by these practical experiences.

This is yet one more reason why national service should not be compulsory and need not be in the service of the nation.

of the unusually large number who do not finish training. The number applying for admission to nurses' training may now diminish with the new requirement that women applying for nurses' training are obliged to sign forms that they agree to do national service as one of the conditions of learning nursing.

It should be clear from these figures that the problem of teaching skills is one that should be solved in a different manner from that of sending youths to national service camps. The technical and agricultural institutions, which are the best places to teach skills, should be enlarged to take in larger numbers. More funds must be provided for this purpose.

Then, the government should set its mind to the task of solving the emigration problem. A Commission could be set up to investigate the reasons for the mass emigration that continues to this day. Some of these reasons have been stated before, but they can be summed up to include the great dissatisfaction and sense of injustice arising out of discriminatory practices, mainly in employment, promotions and selection for scholarships. It also includes the fact of low wages and high living costs, compounded by poor social services, and the expectation of better conditions abroad.

There is also another problem in the teaching of skills, not earlier mentioned. This concerns the quality of teaching in primary schools which results in children not being properly taught. The Minister of Education sometime ago referred to the fact that three-quarters of the children finishing primary school could not read properly. This surely will not provide good material for the learning of technical skills, which requires some basic education on which to build.

On the question of attitudes of youths which should be developed in the right direction, what assurance do we have that this will be achieved at national service camps? A lot depends on the quality of those who give leadership and guidance, many of whom we understand, need such training themselves. Bringing youths together in a camp should be a good means of developing correct attitudes, but this depends on so many things. It depends on the type of morality which prevails, not only in the camps, but in higher places. Youths see that those who are the most deceitful, most opportunistic and the 'smartest' in such attitudes as cunning and 'getting on', do the best. They're the ones on top, with the best jobs, biggest houses and cars.

Until this blight is removed from our society, until bribery, corruption, nepotism and favouritism are destroyed, they will continue to be cancers which will grow and corrupt our youths.

We need new attitudes to build a new society, but it requires much more than just the hope that this can be achieved in national service camps. After the period in the camps, then what? Our youths are then exposed to the corrupting influences that permeate our society as it is now.!

RACIAL HARMONY

Another of the objectives of national service as enunciated by the PNC government, is the sharing of common experiences and the working together of all racial groups with the objective of bringing them closer together.

If national service could really achieve this purpose of ending the differences between Guyanese, bringing them closer together, solving some of the racial antagonisms that exist, it would be a worthwhile goal.

However, this requires careful examination. If the problem was as simple as bringing opposed groups together and letting them understand one another better, this might provide the solution. Unfortunately, it is not so uncomplicated.

We must get to the root problem of these differences. If we can eliminate the causes of such differences because they do exist, then we could better bring about the unity that is so necessary if our country is to move forward.

People of different racial groups have lived peacefully together in friendship and co-operation before and can do so again. In fact we see it everyday when their common interests unite them. The strike of nurses, a recent example, proved this point quite well. This confrontation with the administration over discontent in working conditions resulted in a common front between nurses of all racial groups.

It illustrated too that the way to racial unity is through class struggle. Workers irrespective of race come together on common issues and this unites them and pushes to the background any other differences that may previously have existed.

The sugar industry is another example. The complete shut-down of all sugar estates in the autumn crop last year and the overwhelming vote of confidence in GAWU at the recognition poll on December 31 clearly demonstrated workers' unity, entirely devoid of any racial differences. Struggle has brought sugar workers of all racial groups together; class struggle which certainly has not ended in Guyana has united workers!

When villagers have representative local Government, this too will ultimately succeed in bringing the rural population closer together, as they will then be equal partners in building the nation and sharing responsibility.

Ending discrimination which today exists at all levels is the

very best way of bringing about harmony between peoples. It is no use bringing different groups together in national service, with the hopes of achieving understanding and harmony and then having the same people go back into a society where inequality and discrimination are the order of the day.

It is like sending a child suffering from malnutrition to a hospital for cure, but who has to return to an impoverished home where he cannot get the necessary food to prevent the same condition from recurring.

Guyana is not in reality a stratified, racially divided nation. Racial antagonisms have been deliberately created, first by the British colonialists. This division was nurtured and revived when the CIA interfered in Guyana in the sixties and was aided and abetted by unpatriotic forces within the country. It has survived to this day because of a continued policy in that direction with jobs, scholarships, promotions, loans and land allocation etc., being given on a partisan-racial basis. The issue of the Non-Pareil co-operatively occupied lands being handed over, without consultation or consent, to another group illustrates this tragic fact of life in Guyana.

Until such malpractices are stopped, a solution cannot be reached. A year or even more years in national service camps cannot solve such problems. It is a superficial and unrealistic approach and can bring no permanent results.

The government must get down to the root causes and when these are solved, the artificially created antagonisms will come to an end!

No Compulsory National Service for women!

There is little doubt that one of the most sensitive issues in Guyana today is that of the government's decision on compulsory national service for women.

If we are talking about the need for national unity in the face of the enemy at our borders, then it can be stated without fear of contradiction that one of the gravest obstacles to national unity is this very matter of requiring women to attend national service camps in the interior.

Much has been said and rumours circulated about what goes on in the camps, a lot of which is bunkum, and I for one find more logical and substantial reasons to oppose the compulsory induction of women into national service.

As a woman, and one who has believed in the ideology of Marxism-Leninism for the past 38 years, I would urge that for many reasons, women must not be forced into national service camps.

First of all, any government which claims, as the PNC does, that it believes in socialism and is moving in that direction, would never consider the use of coercion to achieve its aims. This is totally contrary to the basic socialist principles. **You do not build socialism by coercion! You build socialism by involving the people!**

The customs and culture of people must be respected! Deeply rooted feelings, habits and traditions cannot be changed by coercion and force. They may be changed, in the course of time, by wise and humanitarian handling, but not by threats and compulsion.

In the case of a great number of Guyanese, the custom is that unmarried women do not live out of the home. The majority of those women who go to the urban areas for education or work stay with relatives. This is part of a deep-rooted cultural pattern. Some may argue that this is old fashioned and not in keeping with women's liberation. But factors as they exist must be given top priority.

There are also married women who are being inducted into national service and this is a violation of the sanctity of the home. Why should a married woman be required to leave her husband for a year to serve in an interior camp? The only way this can be acceptable is if it is done purely on a voluntary basis. No other can be acceptable!

The government should ask itself a serious question. Why is

it that in only two countries in the whole world there exists compulsory national service for women? They must ask and investigate why is it that the socialist countries do not have compulsory national service for women.

By an ill-conceived and ill-considered act, the government is aiding and abetting divisions in the country. It is also creating the climate for exactly what it does not want — a greater exodus from Guyana. If it wishes to stop the exodus, the government must change its methods of dealing with the people of this country.

Compulsory national service is now being applied at the University of Guyana. Women, according to the plan now in operation, will have to serve a year at an interior camp if they wish to be students at the University of Guyana. This has led to the drop-out of a number of women students. It has also led to a large number of women seeking and wishing university education, refusing to enrol under these harsh conditions. The end result will be that opportunities open for the development of educated women will be lost and fewer women will be involved in the professions and other areas of employment requiring educated women.

We cannot over-look the aspect of racial discrimination. The University of Guyana and the Government of Guyana have never answered charges of discrimination when 63 students were listed for compulsory induction into national service last year. Of the 63 listed 53 were Indo-Guyanese. And of the 25 women included in the 63 names, about 90 per cent were also Indo-Guyanese. Some have left their studies to avoid induction and others were dismissed from the university for refusing to attend national service.

These are the negative results of trying to force people to do what they will not do. It is not the way to govern a country and it goes against the most fundamental tenets of scientific socialism.

OBSTACLE TO UNITY

Compulsory national service in Guyana has so far been applied only to students attending the University of Guyana.

This has already led to the dropping-out of a number of students who have refused to go to national service camps, the majority of whom are women. It has led, also to a reduction in the number of women applying for entry to the University.

A great controversy raged at UG last year on this issue, particularly in view of the examination then going on for ways of relating national service to university study.

A sub-committee of the Academic Board, during the latter part of last year, met on more than one occasion to discuss methods of integrating national service within the university.

The Vice Chancellor had visited Cuba with other academics

to observe how national service was implemented in that country. A report was to have been made on this, but nothing further has been heard.

In Cuba, what we call national service is known as work study. Work study, which exists in a number of countries, means the blending of work and study, or theory and practice. Students in technical fields for example, not only learn the theory of the subject they are studying, but they learn how to apply this theory by working in related factories and workshops.

This is not national service as we know it in Guyana, for in the work study as exists in Cuba, students do not leave their studies for a year or more and go away to a camp to do work unrelated to the field in which they are studying. The intention is to create the skills needed for nation-building; in Cuba that means socialism—to help the growth of industries and agriculture, but not to allow the student to live in an ivory tower isolated from reality. That is why there is a well-planned combination of work and study. The student is oriented ideologically, so that he will not leave the country where his skills are needed and also, his contribution will be made with full understanding of the goals of the nation.

A well-planned work-study programme at the University of Guyana would be useful in preparing students to make a worthwhile contribution to the development of the country.

Also, such a programme would not prevent women, who fear compulsory national service, from having university education. The main fear of parents and young women is that girls will be forced to spend 1—1½ years in an interior camp. Most women students would not be averse to doing practical work in institutions, schools, hospitals, communities, etc. which relate to their studies.

Although the PNC and its women's arm talk a lot about women's rights and women taking their rightful place in society, they have neglected to understand the real problems of women, or to seriously try to help women. Instead, they have taken the worst possible position by making national service compulsory for women. This shows not only a complete disregard for the interests of women, but, as well, a dangerous lack of understanding of cultural patterns and traditions. If not a lack of understanding, which is a charitable evaluation, then this is nothing less than lack of respect for such traditions and cultural patterns.

Compulsory national service for women is divisive and leads in a dangerous direction. It is unacceptable to a majority of Guyanese and should be removed immediately. If it is allowed to continue, it will remain as one of the main obstacles to national unity.

MILITARY TRAINING

Military training is said to be one of the components of national service. But the government is already spending huge sums on security. The combined expenditure on security is now some \$90 million annually, or 13 per cent of the national budget. In June last, a supplementary financial paper assigned the sum of \$13,684,200 for a People's Militia. We now hear that a Military College will soon be established. If this is done, the total sum will rise much higher. Even so, it is anticipated that the budgetary allocation for security for 1977 will rise much higher than the present sum.

At the same time that the government spends fantastic sums on security it is spending relatively smaller sums on social services like health, housing and education. Housing was awarded only \$7.7 million in the last budget, a mere 1.1 per cent of the total budget with health receiving \$35.8 million, some 5.3 per cent of the budget.

Now that we are establishing a People's Militia, the idea of military training at national service camps becomes even more unnecessary and a weak excuse.

What is the point of having military training at national service camps when training will also be given on a geographic basis in the building of a People's Militia? Will the training be different, and if so, why? Units of a People's Militia, formed in all the strategic areas of Guyana, will provide better guarantees for the country's security and better methods, of training, once the will to do so is there.

Also, the People's Militia is a voluntary body, which means that Guyanese are not coerced into joining, but do so of their own free will. And this will lead to better attitudes, improved co-operation and genuine expressions of patriotism. Surely this is what we want!

It must also be kept in mind that persons who have received military training in national service camps cannot be readily collected together for the purpose of defence as are those in the GDF and the People's Militia. After a year at a national service camp, recruits go back to their homes and are thus dispersed to different parts of Guyana. If they join a Militia unit, they will still have to undergo training so that there is uniform preparation of all members of the units and also, in order that they work as part of a team and co-ordinate with the others in whatever defence tasks they may be assigned.

We have heard, too, that the kind of military training being given in the national service camps is unsatisfactory and not

uniform. Some get military training and some do not. Even the level of training is under question, most of the time being spent on routine drills that are more suitable for a standing army.

It comes to this, then, that military training, which we have been told is one of the important features of national service, is "neither fish nor fowl". To give this as one of the fundamental reasons for inducting youths into national service is a feeble excuse.

WARPED IDEOLOGY

The Government claims that national service has several purposes. One is to orient young people ideologically for the building of socialism. Another is for youth to learn to work with their hands and to remove the prejudices against manual labour. They will learn skills, they will receive military training, they will learn the beauty and importance of the hinterland, and people will learn to work and live together.

All of these are commendable objectives. However, the question is firstly, whether these objectives are being achieved by attendance at national service camps, and secondly, whether other means can be used to attain the same objectives.

Let us examine the first objective. The matter of correct orientation is one that can be challenged by the type of ideological orientation being given at the national service camps.

In the Special Training Manual used in national service camps, we see that it is stated that the Guyana Government's intention is to make the co-operative movement the 'cornerstone' of the nation's economic life. This is no way to build socialism. Co-ops are useful, but to make these the 'cornerstone' of the country's economic life is a distortion of scientific socialism.

This and the next quotation do not square up with the PNC's assertion that its ideas are based on Marx, Engels and Lenin.

From the Manual in use at the camps we see this type of distortion of socialism being taught:

"It is argued that both the capitalist and communist systems have at least one important thing in common; at the top of the bureaucratic ladder, a few powerful people make the important economic decisions and enjoy virtual absolute control of the economy, while the workers' participation at policy level is minimal, if not imaginary. Under communist systems, the workers are mere servants of state monopolies. In theory the workers own the state, but in practice the state is controlled by a few privileged persons. In Guyana, however, it is envisaged that the mass of people will be provided with the opportunity for a real, not imagined, share in the economic pie of the nation. The people

will control the nation's economic life because the co-operative sector, owned and controlled by the small man, become the major source of the nation's wealth".

This is not only revisionism, but also downright reactionary. It is a false interpretation of the meaning and practice of socialism. What utter nonsense to say that the workers in socialist societies are the 'mere servants' of state monopolies. It completely negates the very basis of scientific socialism which is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the working class — the highest form of democracy (socialist democracy) with the highest degree of people's involvement.

If our youth are to be subjected to this type of brain-washing then national service is only serving anti-communism and we will not be preparing our youth to build a socialist state, but something else!

Besides, teaching at the national service camps falsifies our history. It attempts to brain wash the recruits into believing that the PPP fought against independence, while the PNC is supposed to be the leader of the independence movement in Guyana! What a distortion! I have seen top PNC members who actually tried to break up independence marches and demonstrations by the PPP in the fifties and sixties and are now big shots in the PNC!

If it is intended to give our youths socialist-ideological orientation, this could be done in our school system — high schools, technical institutes, Critchlow Labour College, Agriculture School, University of Guyana, Co-op College, etc. Also, the mass media is not being used to teach Guyanese on the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism. The only sector of the mass media which consistently carries ideological material is the 'MIRROR' newspaper. What about the Chronicle and Radio GBS? These are powerful means of educating the masses, but are not being used for such purpose.

When occasionally the news media ventures forth into such fields it frequently distorts the theory of Marx, Engels and Lenin. A more recent example of this was a government spokesman over the radio who used an unscientific propaganda line by dividing the world into White versus Black, North versus South and ignoring historical development as well as the reason for the worsening conditions brought about by capitalist-imperialist exploitation.

RESOLUTION ON NATIONAL SERVICE Adopted by the 19th CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY held on July 31-August 2, 1976.

This 19th Congress of the People's Progressive Party; Noting that the PNC regime with contemptuous disregard for the views of its large majority of Guyanese continues in a very high-handed manner to institutionalize National Service;

Observing that National Service instructors distort our historical development, disseminate vicious anti-Communist propaganda and attempt to revise the scientific principles of Marxism-Leninism;

Firmly convinced that National Service is increasingly being used as an instrument of coercion and as a vehicle for blatant discrimination;

Noting further that by its compulsory nature National Service promotes disaffection and constitutes a violation of the Fundamental Rights Section of the Guyana Constitution;

Realizing that this Scheme goes contrary to the mores, customs and traditions of the vast majority of Guyanese;

Realizing further that the attempt to propagate National Service and to turn it into a showpiece results in a massive waste of human and material resources;

Proposes that to organize our young citizens for the meaningful development of our country:

- (a) a joint Committee of the PPP, PNC and other truly representative organizations should be set up to handle the questions of recruitment into a scheme, on a fair and principled basis. The said Committee should be responsible for discipline;
- (b) women and girls should be excluded from any compulsory schemes;
- (c) entry into the service should not interfere with the course of studies of students;
- (d) there should be a joint PPP-PNC Committee to prepare the political courses to ensure that the ideological content is in keeping with Marxist-Leninist principles;
- (e) military training should be given to all recruits;
- (f) any service for our young people should not be the instrument to cow, harass, suppress, humiliate or embarrass them, but to mould a healthy and positive character and offer every opportunity and facility for their all-round development and emphasising on their creative talents and skills.

**EXCERPTS FROM THE SECTION ON NATIONAL SERVICE
IN THE REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO THE
19TH. CONGRESS OF THE PPP HELD FROM JULY 31, TO
AUGUST 2, 1976.**

As regards compulsory National Service, our Party was the first to launch an attack against it in 1973. We saw it as a vehicle to distort the political history of Guyana, to brainwash the youth that ours is an anti-national, anti-patriotic Party which had fought against independence, and that the PNC is the only true patriotic and revolutionary party.

We saw National Service also as a PNC para-military force to back up the coercive apparatus of the state in maintaining a minority Party in power.

National Service through its teaching manuals and instructors is also spreading the reactionary and utopian ideas of the PNC.

The claims made by the government for National Service—orientation of the youth; familiarisation with the interior; discipline; work-ethic; different racial groups sharing common experience — are exaggerated.

National Service is not the only means for orientation. This can and should be done through our school system, youth work and adult education. In any case, teaching manuals and instructors are actually spreading downright reactionary ideas and carrying out anti-PPP indoctrination.....

.....If national service is to be made compulsory for men, in addition to the points just enunciated (similar to Resolution on p. 15), we demand:

- a fair system of recruitment on a lottery basis,
- equal opportunity legislation and an independent Commission to administer the Act with equal representation for government and the opposition.

If our members and supporters must give free labour to build the nation, they must in turn receive equal treatment. National oppression must end. All Guyanese must be treated alike. We will never accept second-class citizenship status for any Guyanese. We have fought against colonial slavery. We will never tolerate any other form of slavery! Down with inequality and coercion!

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