

Militarism

Of entrance we leave clear these three concepts:

. **Military** = the normal activity of the military function to the service of the native community (security and sovereignty) to defend it against internal and external enemies. It is a honest, useful and necessary profession in all the Polis that it builds homeland. All the countries have their Armed forces to exception of some few ones that they have only National Guard.

. **Militarism** = activity beyond the limits of the military thing, looking for unilateral supremacy of the military institutions on the political (civil) headquarters.

. **National Security**. The commonly accepted definition, like it was implanted in several régimes of the South Cone, is that of the Superior School of War from Brazil:

National security is the relative grade of guarantee that a State can provide to the Nation that rules, in a certain time - through political, economic, psycho-social and military actions - for the attainment and safeguard of the national objectives, in spite of the interns or external, existent or foregone antagonism.

When the military ones intervene in the political life of underdeveloped countries - like it has been the case in some countries of Latin America - they usually make it for different reasons and circumstances.

-As guarantors of the *integrity and national unit*: in front of processes of national dislocation, of serious deterioration of the political system, of regional or social unmanageable divisions, of possible loss of the sovereignty for the penetration of

international powers, the Armed forces have arisen before the population's eyes like the symbol of the national unit and the defenders of the Nation.

-As instruments of *political modernization*: in front of the inefficacy of political corrupt régimes to assist to the order and progress of the nation, in front of the inability of the civil leaders to solve the economic and social problems, the Armed forces - frequently the only body rationally organized and resolutely modern of the society - they have entered in scene like agents of a modernization process.

This has given place in Latin America to an ambivalence of military régimes and different models:

1) régimes of conservative court

In some cases, the Armed forces have intervened to eliminate governments that fancied too weak before threats of popular movements or of the international communism, and they appeared quite bound to social dominant and very concerned groups to preserve the status quo.

The cases could be pointed out in those that the military ones overthrow in Argentina to the president Frondizi (1962), in Peru to the president Prado (1962), in Guatemala to the president Fuentes (1963), in Ecuador to the president Arosemena (1963), in Dominican Republic to the president Bosch (1963), in Honduras to the president Villeda Morales (1963), in Brazil to the president Goulart (1964), in Bolivia to the president Paz Estensoro (1964), in Argentina again to the president Illía (1966). This was a first gust in Latin America. among the years 62 and 66. A second gust is given in countries like Chile, when Pinochet overthrows to Salvador Allende to establish a military régime that it lasts from 1973 up to 1990, and in Uruguay the military ones govern from 1973 up to 1984 when one chooses as president to Julio M. Sanguinetti.

2) régimes of progressive court

In other cases we find in Latin America military dictatorships that are professed "revolutionaries" and they have in common trying to brake the economic foreigner penetration, an international smaller alignment with USA and the intent of carrying out certain social popular reformations. Three countries serve as example: Peru with Velasco Alvarado's military régime (1968-1975), Panama with the governments of National Guard of Torrijos and Noriega (1968-1990) and Bolivia with reformist military governments as those of Obando and Torres (1969-1971).

Judgment elements

It is necessary to know how to distinguish the several forms of the preponderant role that assume the military ones in the government. Both first they can be judged more benevolently than the third, because those two are simple cases of authoritarianism (of personal character, of temporary and pragmatic leader), while the third form constitutes a true case of dictatorship, of strong ideological character and search of long permanency.

First form. Personal intervention of the Army exists when it is forced to take the power to solve serious problems and urgencies of the Polis, and then to summon to free elections, allowing the civilians to continue taking the institutional course.

Second form. Military government's form exists, for one period more or less long, as a result of political and/or socio-economic contradictions that have overflowed the capacity of solution of the political parties and of the ordinary régime of formal democracy.

Third form. It also exists military government's of dictatorial form and sometimes totalitarian. It looks for to be perpetuated in the power with all the means within their reach; the transformation that it tries to make of the society supports in an utopian-ideological base (sometimes of Populist sign or 'Justicialist' one, sometimes of Fascist sign, sometimes of Socialist one). This third form was that of the régimes of National Security and on the other hand that of the régimes with elements Marxist-

populists. It implies a political autocratic and 'totalling' ideology that it goes against the principles and practice of an authentic democracy.

When in Latin America practically between 1984 and 1990 you returned in all the countries to régimes of representative democracy (Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Guatemala, Panamá, Nicaragua, Haití), a more serene and more objective valuation of the phenomenon *Latin American dictatorship* can be attempted, either of right or of left, of nationalist inspiration or of Marxist revolutionary one.

a) All have had a *temporary character*. None of these authoritarian régimes has been definitive neither it has been able to be perpetuated. The circumstances that seemingly legitimated them they changed; the attempted reformations were assumed with another sign; the engaged "revolutions" could not be carried out. The fact is the precariousness and impermanence of these dictatorial régimes.

b) All have invoked a *seemingly majority back*. Initially they used the coercion, the name of the 'people', against the politicians, against a feeble democracy, against a social or economic breed, against a minority of privileged. But that supposition of popular support became in against, when the civil society could be expressed freely and with full guarantees. Where free elections were allowed, the régimes fell for will of the sovereign people.

c) All have had a *pedagogic character*. The process has served so that the masses compare several régimes, be disappointed of political promises of different color, reject bad habits and pernicious sequels of public previous administrations, and take conscience that the native destinations are always in their own hands.

Summary of positive and negative aspects

Assuming in block the controversial process of last dictatorships in Latin America, it is necessary to recognize that they have left more negative results than positive ones.

1. As *positive* it could be recognized in some cases that certain military régimes (among them some of National Security) were in their moment a cohesive and

initially effective force against the communist subversion and the growing misery, in countries that were being eroded for the social anarchy and politics and for the economic chaos. In the case of the Sandinista régime it was positive the overthrow of the Somoza dynasty and the recovery of the power for the people, the association forms and popular participation that were able induced. And it was some success in the fields of the education, the health, the culture. Add a certain one taking of distance of the international Yankee imperialism.

2. As *negative* it is a fearful balance of all the military dictatorships that could be identified in the following items:

* The first, that have adopted, in most of the cases, a new model of development, liberal and capitalist, very open to the penetration of the foreign capital, with advantages of capital accumulation and big disadvantages of injustice social and inadequate distribution of the benefits between the popular classes and excluded sectors. In all the cases the handling economic of the State was disastrous and it ruined the flimsy economy of the country.

* The second, that have established an autocratic régime, tramping basic elements of a political democracy (representative system, free and universal vote, public participation, plural debates). Their '*totalling*' *conception* is criticized - similar under some aspects with the totalitarian conception of the Fascism and of the Communism - looking for to accumulate an absolute, overbearing power and absorb the civil society.

* The third, that they have incurred in the *ethical absurdity* that "the end justifies the means." With such of achieving goals -under the label of "national objectives" or "goals revolutionaries" or "national ideal"- these régimes justified any State intervention, although people's fundamental rights were run over.

* The fourth, that they have *divorced the nation of the people*. They governed supposedly for the polis, without the polis. The "functional" elite or "revolutionary" thought (military+ burocrats+ technocrats), they decided and they acted for the

people, but without consulting it. They refused the popular participation and the free game of the intermediate groups in the handling of the public thing.