
# GUIANA AND THE SHADOWS OF EMPIRE

*Colonial and Cultural Negotiations at the Edge of the World*

JOSHUA R. HYLES

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To my daughter, Madison
for reminding me how joyful learning should be

# Contents

# List of Maps

# List of Tables

# Preface

Nowhere in the world can objective study of colonialism and its effects be more fruitful than in the Guianas, the region of three small states in northeastern South America. The purpose of this book is threefold. First, the history of these three Guianas, now known as Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname, is considered generally as a single unit, emphasizing their similarities and regional homogeny when compared to other areas. Second, the study considers the administrative policies of each of the country's colonizers, Britain, France, and the Netherlands, over the period from settlement to independence. Last, the work concentrates on current political and cultural situations in each country, linking these developments to the policies of imperial administrators in the previous decades. By doing so, this book hopes to show how an area that should have developed as a single polity could become a region of three very distinct cultures through the altering effects of colonialism.

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*Chapter One*

# Introduction

Somewhere in the world, on a spring afternoon, the sun warms a pristine stretch of white sandy beach. As gulls bank across the sea breeze and call to one another, waves roll endlessly in and out from the shore. A few miles inland from the water, the crackle of a well-worn loudspeaker and the resonant "smack" of a bat signal to the astute listener that a cricket match is in progress. The stadium lacks the lighting of more modern facilities, and looks almost the same as when it was built in 1884. Two hundred miles to the east, the singing and cheering of the fans is replaced by the sounds of a town hall meeting. Politicians outline problems and plans with their colleagues through rousing speeches in Dutch, echoing high in the tall ceiling of the hall. The simple white building in which the assembly meets is plain, but a sloping roof reminiscent of the government buildings of Asia forms an unexpected pinnacle. Just down the street, a cacophony of voices and accents clamor for attention in the city market, trading freshly baked pastries, flowers, and fruits. The wares are spread out often under old, intricately carved and decorated balconies and colonnades, hinting at their design's heritage in another time and place. Another two hundred miles farther east, new sounds come into range. Here, just inland from the same quiet shoreline, a woman negotiates with her local baker. She is delighted to discover that he has recently arrived here, just like her, and hails from the same neighborhood in Paris. She sorts through her coin purse of Euros to purchase a fresh baguette and some chicory-flavored coffee. Above her, in the deep blue cloudless sky, the exhaust trail of a rocket carrying a satellite for the European Space Agency is just beginning to fade.

If the coexistence of these sights and sounds in such a small geographic area is confusing, it should not be surprising. Few places in the world contain three significantly different cultures in such a small space. If forced to make

an educated guess, most people would suggest a particularly metropolitan region of Western Europe as the only possible setting for these events. But in fact, these roles are regularly carried out not by Europeans, but by the residents of an isolated portion of northeastern South America. The aforementioned quiet coastline is the shore running from the mouth of the mighty Orinoco River eastward, hugging the margins of the Atlantic Ocean. The cricket match is being held in the Bourda Cricket Ground in Georgetown, Guyana, the only cricket test match facility in the entire continent. The town hall meeting takes place in nearby Paramaribo, Suriname in the National Assembly's headquarters, and the bread is being haggled over just down the shore in Cayenne, French Guiana by full citizens of France. These incidents are not accidental or anomalous; they are the direct result of a complex and unique history that has formed the region known as the Guianas, one of the most unique places in the world. The story of the Guianas has not enjoyed the degree of attention from scholars or writers afforded to Africa or Asia, but it has at least as much to teach us. Centuries of varied European influence have affected the residents of these three small countries in immense and fascinating ways, and their unique story deserves to be told.

But history is not an easy subject, and it involves more than simply telling a good story. It demands organization and analysis. Yet, much to the chagrin of many of its students, the human story cannot be neatly delineated or categorized. Though its books separate time into chapters, periods and eras, these spatial measurements are hardly rigid and always ill-defined. For example, defining the time of "Colonialism" or the "Colonial Period" with any degree of precision approaches impossibility. Ask most casual students of history when to mark the "End of Colonialism" on a timeline, and many will point to the 1960s, an era when a large portion of Southeast Asia and Africa declared independence and joined the United Nations as equals. Those interested in the study of the Americas may even suggest the 1980s, when a considerable number of Caribbean islands experienced the same transition. As far as place is concerned, few would suggest using this quiet coastline of South America as the measuring stick or the defining place. But those few, armed with knowledge of the history and the present of this region, could just as easily suggest that the Colonial Period lives on in this remote corner of the world, and that it has not yet ended.

It is here, in an area of the northeastern Amazon known as the Guiana Shield, the Wild Coast, and the Guianas, where the ongoing consequences of European colonization can be the freshest and most acutely perceived. The markers of colonial status are, in some ways, still as tangible today as they were at the close of the nineteenth century. They can be seen by anyone simply by taking the same coastal journey described at the beginning of this book; traveling through these three territories provides a stunning reflection on the cumulative effect of centuries of foreign control. Thus the Guianas—

now known individually as Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname—are the ideal historical laboratory in which to study the cultural outcomes of European colonization.[1] One significant reason the area makes such a good laboratory is, unlike Africa and Southeast Asia, this region was in many ways a relatively homogenous, single "Guiana" before contact.

The pre-Columbian similarities across the Guianas region provide an excellent control for the colonial experiment that would be carried out after the arrival of Columbus—each European country establishing permanent colonies here began from essentially the same starting point. The "opening hand" dealt to each of the future administrators featured a sparse, generally uniform indigenous culture. In fact, the people populating the area were culturally so similar that the explorers who met them had difficulty distinguishing the groups of Taíno, Kalinago, and Akawoi tribes living along the coast (a problem complicated by the fact that many tribes shared very similar Arawak-based languages). Physically, the area also possesses a high degree of uniformity, with geographical, geological, and ecological similarities that warrant calling the whole region by one name. An ecologically, biologically diverse collection of flora and fauna still spreads across the Guianas in modern times, making it a rich and vibrant land with as much appeal and potential as it must have had to its first explorers. Even today, over 70 percent of the Guiana Shield region remains a pristine wilderness, much of it under government protection in each of the respective countries. The region is both united and distinguished by its biodiversity—many plants and animals shared by the three Guianas cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Further, the area's territories are as different from neighboring Venezuela and Brazil as they are similar to one another. Though it is difficult to divide the countries within the region along environmental or biological lines, it is easy to separate the Guianas as a whole from the countries that surround them.

Until European contact, Guiana as a region could easily be defined as a single entity, with similar (yet strikingly complex) animal and plant life. And, living within this diverse environment, a human culture was also shared across the region before the arrival of outsiders. Yet, after four centuries of European colonization, these countries formerly known as British Guiana, French Guiana, and Dutch Guiana have developed widely differing societies, now possessing little in common. What once was a region divided only by cartographers and surveyors is now the quintessence of diverse colonial enterprises.

The Guianas' seclusion, obscurity, and cultural homogeneity contributed to their allure for potential European investment, as the English, French, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese all interpreted the area as a blank slate with great potential and few obstacles. "Blank" or not, though, the Guianas were and are incredibly diverse. The generous area of land in South America's northeastern corner, roughly 181,000 square miles and comparable in size to

California, is an area of stark geographic transitions. As noted, the Guianas straddle the coasts of the calm Caribbean and the more turbulent Atlantic. But, they also mark a significant terrestrial transition, descending from a high and rocky, mineral-encrusted outcropping—the Guiana Shield—southward into the verdant breadth of the Amazon Basin. Along the northern shores, alluvial deposits formed from the tidal undulations of the Atlantic Ocean, along with silt deposits carried by wide interior rivers emptying into the sea, have created alternating series of mangrove forests and parallel sand reefs up to ten miles inland, further isolating this already geographically disconnected region.

## EARLY DESCRIPTIONS

A description from 1788 indicates that the early colonists and explorers glimpsed a strikingly similar land. In the account, John Gabriel Stedman noted that, "Some parts of Guiana present a barren and mountainous aspect," but that the "uncultivated parts of Guiana are covered with immense forests, rocks, and mountains . . . and the whole country is intersected by very deep marshes or swamps, and by extensive heaths or savannas."[2] Now, as then, what the region lacks in size is made up for in natural diversity and abundance.

The Guianas were also unique in their location and in their contact with northern European explorers. This interstice between Caribbean and Atlantic, stony highland and jungle lowland, remained unexploited by either Spain or Portugal throughout the early years of European colonization—Spain's territory ended at the Orinoco River Delta, while Portugal's Brazilian territory faded northward from Brazil into the upper Amazon.[3] Mostly because of its position outside the areas of effective Spanish or Portuguese control, this in-between area came to be known as the "Wild Coast." It represented the only territory truly open to northern European colonists, entrepreneurs, and pirates in South America. Rumors of the existence of a lost Inca kingdom deep in the jungles of Guiana and of its leader, a mythical chieftan known only as El Dorado, added to the area's appeal and sparked the imaginations and greed of British, French, and Dutch explorers alike. Sir Walter Raleigh spent a great deal of time and effort in the Guianas' early exploration beginning in 1594. After Raleigh, other inroads into the Guianas were made. In 1595, English Captain Lawrence Keymis expanded upon Raleigh's surveys by charting the mouths of Guiana's major rivers; in the next year additional charts were made under Captain Leonard Berrie.[4] Keymis and Raleigh returned together on a second voyage in 1616, again on a mission of exploration but really in search of the Incan City of Gold. But more immediately obtainable goals also existed along the Wild Coast. The British wished to explore the potential of a

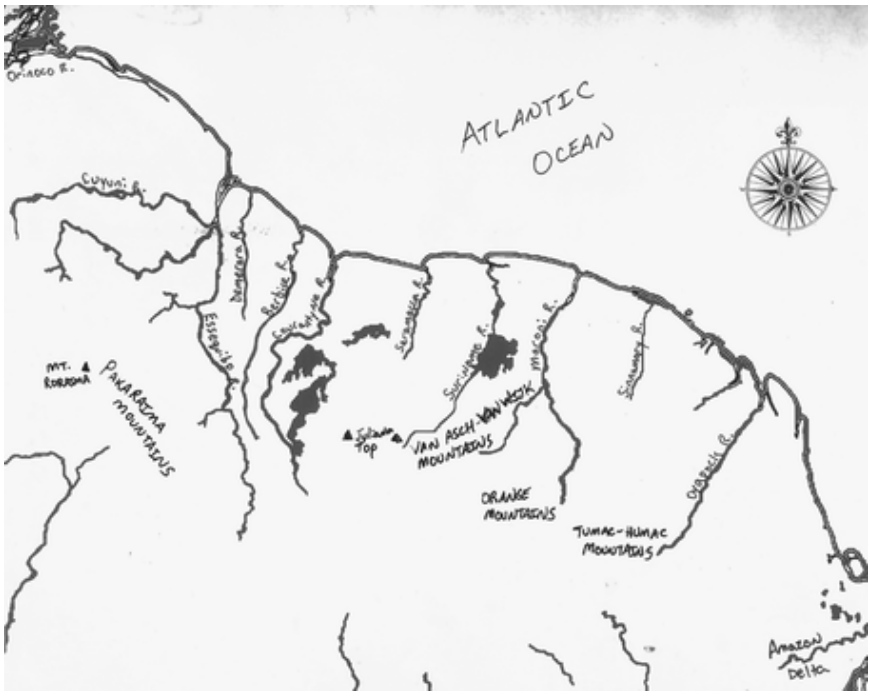


**Figure 1.1. The Guiana Shield**

new colony capable of sugar production. The French exhibited interest in the area as a possible outpost from which to strike at Spanish treasure ships. The Netherlands simply coveted Guiana as an additional link in its ever-growing trade network.

British, French, and Dutch exploration of the area continued throughout the early seventeenth century while the Spanish busied themselves with Mesoamerica and the Andean regions. It was the Dutch who made the first permanent attempts at colonization, first exploring the area under the command of Abraham Cabeliau in 1598,[5] then establishing a permanent trading and salt mining settlement in Guiana in 1616.[6] Permanent replacement of the Spanish military complex by the more trade-oriented Dutch in Guiana opened the door to British and French involvement. Britain and France concentrated their colonizing activities in the Antilles islands northwest of the Guianas at first, but at least provided a cursory exploration of the entire area. In 1602 and 1616, for instance, Sir Walter Raleigh led additional exploration missions up the Orinoco.[7] The area from this point forward played home to a tensely coexisting triumvirate of the Dutch, French, and British, who wove themselves in and out of the written history of the region in a constant give-

and-take of power. A short excerpt from British explorer John Gabriel Stedman's 1788 account reveals all three states actively pursuing separate goals, but pursuing them with equal vigor in the same small space:

> In 1634 a Captain Marshall, with about sixty English, were discovered in Surinam [*sic*] employed in planting tobacco, according to the relation of David Piterse de Vries, a Dutchman, who conversed with them on the spot. In 1640 Surinam was inhabited by the French, who were obliged to leave it soon after, on account of the frequent invasions which they justly suffered from the Caribbean Indians, for having, like their neighbors the Spaniards, treated them with the most barbarous cruelties.[8]

Gradually, wars among the three northern European powers and the frequent renegotiation of treaties formed the power structure in Guiana. Portions of the Dutch colony changed hands several times over the next two centuries, as international conflicts like the War of Spanish Succession caused ebbs and flows of boundaries (the Guianas made easy trading pieces at the diplomatic negotiating table). The Treaty of Breda, signed in 1667 by England, France, the United Provinces (the Netherlands), and the Kingdom of Denmark and Norway at the end of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, had also awarded France a territory in the Guianas. By 1781, the British, fresh from defeat in the American War of Independence, refocused their North American colonization efforts on the area as well.

## THE GUIANAS AS A HISTORICAL LABORATORY

The history of the Guianas and their settlers suggests a fascinating story from a little-known corner of the world—a microcosm of the political and military struggles of Western Europe from the late sixteenth century to the present day. As European explorers penetrated the jungle looking for the golden wonders of El Dorado and traders exchanged sugar, coffee, gold, timber, and slaves, the permanent settlers of the Guianas continued developing their own identity and sense of place in the midst of their isolated exclusion. Beginning with Sir Walter Raleigh's 1596 publication *Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana* and its sequel, *The Discovery of Guiana, and the Journal of the Second Voyage Thereto*, Europeans were introduced to the region's bounty and its potential. The freelance explorer and privateer wrote on a theme that would be continued by colonists and historians alike—from a cultural perspective, the Guianas had become far detached from the Spanish and Portuguese holdings in South America and did not fit neatly with their Caribbean island neighbors either. Guiana represented something different—a New World within the New World.

The legacy of these struggles and the slow cultural assimilation of this land persist together in the cultural expressions of the modern states sharing an inherited history. The British colony, Guyana, achieved its independence in 1966. Suriname, originally Dutch Guiana, followed suit in 1975. French Guiana remains a *département* of France as part of the *Outre-Mer* region, a curious political throwback to an age of imperialism and foreign control. It stands as the only remaining European colony on the mainland of another continent. Though geographically located in football-mad South America, Guyana's most popular sport is cricket, a game millions of its neighbors do not begin to understand. In Suriname, at the head of the Amazon Rain Forest thousands of miles from Amsterdam, athletes still train to represent the Netherlands in the World Cup and in the Olympics, despite living in an independent country. In French Guiana, French foreign legion regiments patrol regularly, guarding the Guiana Space Center, the satellite launching headquarters for the distant European Union.

These states defy geographic logic, and their unique cultural inheritance warrants study. Though possessing a common indigenous demography, a common location, and a common ecology, the three modern Guianas retain few cultural similarities to one another. As a whole, the history of the region can serve as an illustration of colonialism's immediate and lasting effects. Unfortunately, this broader history, a "history of the Guianas" has, until now, not been written. Though there are excellent studies on each colony and modern state independently, and other academic works on the British, French, and Dutch systems of colonial government, very little has been done to *reincorporate* the three modern, separated entities into a comprehensive regional history and study. The historical question presents itself: why did a closely-spaced group of three tiny states, sharing significant similarities in geography, demography, resources, and overall isolation, develop so differently, and what are the differences among the French, Dutch, and British colonial experiences that may have caused such variation? How are full annexation (in the case of French Guiana), full independence (Suriname), and independence with active Commonwealth membership (Guyana) able to co-exist as acceptable political policies in a region that logically should have developed into a single state? Only by studying the histories and cultures of these three territories as a whole unit can these questions be addressed and understood.

The purpose of this book is, necessarily, threefold. First, its goal is to provide a general geographical and early historical description of the Guianas, in hopes of explaining the reasoning behind their colonization by the three northern European powers of the time. Through this explanation, the study also illustrates the homogeneity of the region during the pre-contact period, suggesting that without European involvement this area should have become just "Guiana." From here, the book proceeds into a historical analy-

sis of colonial management in each of the three Guianas. Studying them in turn, differences in political administration and colonial philosophy come to the fore. Finally, cultural differences among the three presently existing states will be considered, and connections will be made. More importantly than anything else, the purpose of this work is to understand the lasting effects of the colonial policies enforced by Britain, France, and the Netherlands during the two full centuries of European rule in the Guianas. Each administrative policy was rooted in disparate experiences and philosophies by the three overseers both in Guiana and in their other colonies, and each has had a profoundly different effect.

The text will accomplish this Guiana-wide history by noting and discussing five distinct periods in the history of the region as a whole. The first period, which can be called the "Homogenous Period," can be written about the region as a whole (Guiana). It runs from pre-history to the signing of the Treaty of Breda in 1667. During this time, the indigenous cultures of the three Guianas exhibited a remarkable degree of similarity. After contact, as well, the external pressures on the small colonies were relatively uniform, since none of the three European powers had established any real foothold and lacked the ability to alter significantly the landscape of Guiana. For these reasons, the Homogenous Period is addressed in a single chapter covering all three areas—until 1667 at least, this region was simply "Guiana."

The second period, the "Demarcation Period," can be sandwiched between the 1667 Treaty of Breda and the signing of the Convention of London of 1814 (two documents that will be discussed in detail later). During this roughly 150 year span, the three European powers shuffled territory and debated (through politics and war) over the control of the area. Again, because of the constant reassignment of territorial control and the sometimes-confusing history of "who administered whom," this period also is analyzed in a single regional chapter. The boundaries set up by the Convention of London remain, on the whole, the same during the present day. Thus, the Demarcation Period ends here. Until this final devision, the Demarcation Period can still be applied rather uniformly to Guiana as a single unit, despite the ebb and flow of outsiders during the time.

After 1814, ownership of each colony was settled—the colonies known as British Guiana, French Guiana, and Dutch Guiana were finally, permanently, attached to Britain, France, and the Netherlands respectively. From this point forward, the three entities took divergent roads, thanks in no small part to the widely varied administrative policies of the English, Dutch, and French overseers. This period persisted until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, and will be defined as the "Active Administration Period." Because so much was done in this century that would affect the cultures of Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname for years to come, a chapter devoted to each country during this period has been included. The Active Administration Period was marked

by a series of obstacles that each colony addressed differently. In particular, the colonies had to deal first with the challenges of the climate and environment, then with the social problems of slavery, emancipation, and immigration, and finally with the rise and fall of sugar as an export commodity. Needless to say, this turbulent century makes up the bulk of the Guianas' history in this text, since it did so much to solidify their respective cultures.

Due to the combined pressures of two world wars, a global economic depression, and the distraction of other colonial problems in Africa and Asia, the British, French, and Dutch all showed decreasing interest and exercised less direct control over the three isolated Guianas during the first half of the twentieth century. This period can be referred to as the "Abandonment Phase," and lasted from World War I until the colonies moved toward independence in the 1950s. The Abandonment Phase, though short, created an interesting laboratory in which to study the effects of colonialism. The active presence for almost two centuries of three different European powers, followed by their relative absence for four decades, gives a glimpse into what policies "worked" and which ones did not once the power vacuum was created. This period will also be addressed in a single chapter, as the abandonment was applied rather evenly to all three Guianas.

Finally, each country is separately considered regarding its modern history and culture, with particular weight given to the cultural legacies of the three overseeing European administrators. The three cultures are now strikingly unique, especially considering the strong similarities they once shared as a single Guiana during their early development. Three chapters, one for each of the modern countries, will discuss this "Decolonization Period," which is ongoing (not just cultural, but political decolonization is even ongoing in one of the Guianas).

Before taking on the task of writing an overarching history of three small states in a remote corner of the Amazon, it would be prudent to ask, "Why give so much attention to such a politically and economically marginalized corner of the world? Of what scholarly use can such a study be?" Other than a fascinating tale of three contrasting journeys toward self-determination, the story of the Guianas is microcosmic; over the course of five centuries, the Wild Coast has been relegated from the center of world interest to its scattered margins. The factors driving these countries from fame to obscurity and transforming a cohesive Guianese territory into three separate, unique polities can be traced back to the altering forces of imperialism. Left untouched, this area would almost certainly have become a single state known as "Guiana." To comprehend how "Guiana" became "the Guianas" is to identify the transformative ingredients of colonialism itself.

## NOTES

1. The spelling of each of these countries is varied. For the purposes of this book, Guiana will be used in reference to the overall region or when discussing the area from a cultural perspective. Original colony names like Berbice, Guyane, and Demerara will be used when historically accurate. Otherwise, British Guiana, French Guiana, and Dutch Guiana will be employed when referring to the colonies after their final delineation in 1814. After independence in the 1970s and 1980s, the independent nations' names of Guyana and Suriname will be used, while Guyane will be employed with greater frequency, though French Guiana is still the recognized name of the territory.

2. John Gabriel Stedman, *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam in Guiana on the Wild Coast of South America from the Years 1772–1777* (1790; repr., Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 23.

3. Ian Rogoziński, *A Brief History of the Caribbean, from the Arawak and Carib to the Present* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1999), 43.

4. Raymond T. Smith, *British Guiana* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 13 and G. C. Edmundson, "The Relations of Great Britain with Guiana," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6, Fourth Series (1923): 2.

5. Odeen Ishmael, "The Guyana Story, Chapter 8," The Guyana Organization, http://www.guyana.org/features/guyanastory/chapter8.html (accessed July 16, 2013).

6. D. A. G. Waddell, *The West Indies and the Guianas* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), 39.

7. Rogoziński, 44.

8. Stedman, 26–27.

*Chapter Two*

# Homogeny and Hegemony

*The Homogenous Period (–1667)*

Guiana was not always a region divided into countries. Before the arrival of European ships, the region served as the home of scattered bands of Taínos, a group of Arawak-speaking indigenous people spread across the entirety of the Greater and Lesser Antilles from Cuba southeast to the Guianese coasts. Further inland, similar groups, also of Taíno descent, occupied the green expanse of the Amazon and Orinoco Basin, from modern day Venezuela eastward into the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso.[1] Rather than a collection of clearly differentiated ethnic groups jostling for territory, as could be found in North America or Africa at the time, Guiana was populated by successive waves of culturally and ethnically homogenous peoples. Most evidence suggests that the Taínos emigrated from the Orinoco and Essequibo River Basin in Venezuela and Guiana into the northern islands, and were then supplanted (and occasionally eaten, according to some accounts) by more warlike tribes of Kalinago (known by the Europeans of the time as Caribs), who departed from these same river valleys a few centuries later.

## PRE-CONTACT INDIGENOUS GROUPS

Many older texts referred to the Taíno as "Arawaks," and the Kalinago have been called "Caribs" for most of recorded history. Taínos have traditionally been defined as peaceful, sedentary, and "amicable" people, while the Kalinago/Carib possess a semi-mythical legacy of bellicosity and, in extreme cases, cannibalism. Modern scholars of course do not subscribe to oversimplifications and generalizations like "bellicose" and "friendly" when describ-

ing these two complex groups. However, this text is a study of European administration of territories and its effect on the history and culture of the Guianas. Therefore, how the Europeans *perceived* these groups is as important to the writing of the Guianas' history as the multifaceted reality of these tribes' cultures and values. Unfortunately, European administrators acted on false assumptions and incomplete or inaccurate assessments of the Taíno and Kalinago people. This text, though, will still make reference to the old European terms generalizations from time to time because of their importance in the shaping of these colonies by outsiders.

Generally speaking, the Taíno and Kalinago tribes were mortal enemies. From Columbus on, Taínos warned explorers to steer away from Kalinago-held lands, and expressed horror when the newcomers did not heed their warnings.[2] The Kalinago were regarded across the Antilles and into South America as fierce warriors and were often associated with a legendary (if not always accurate) taste for human flesh. In the eyes of most Taíno tribes, the Kalinago posed a constant threat. But despite the antithetical relationship, the cultural division between the two groups deteriorated over time through intermarriage, population flow, and the natural change that time brings. Like the rivalry between the British and French, the ebb and flow of power between Taíno and Kalinago interests throughout the Caribbean created a notable degree of intermingling (some forced through capture, some through prolonged contact). This ethnic mixing, particularly in the Caribbean margins like Guiana, eventually produced a relatively homogenous single "pan-Guianese" culture out of the disparate groups. Regardless of their political rivalry, the ethnic and cultural blending between the two groups had reached such a level that by 1492, the Kalinago and Taíno tribes in Guiana were virtually indistinguishable to outsiders like Columbus.[3] Further illustrating this homogeneity, population estimates of the entire Caribbean region (the Greater Antilles, the Lesser Antilles, and the Guianas) suggest no more than 750,000 total inhabitants at the time of contact.[4] With ethnically mixed tribes of so few people scattered over such a vast area, a loosely unified culture can be attributed to the entire Caribbean by the fifteenth century, despite any animosities existing between its two main components. In many ways, pre-Columbian Guiana exhibited an evenly distributed culture—a Pan-Guianese cultural complex existing within a generally Caribbean framework.

## A PAN-GUIANESE INDIGENOUS CULTURE

Though for centuries Taíno and Kalinago did engage in heated warfare, their descendants shared more than they fought over. Both groups relied on intensive cultivation of the cassava as their staple food, used hammocks as their preferred bedding, shared remarkably similar pottery and basketry tech-

niques and styles, possessed a high-ranking medicine man who ritually drank the juice of the tobacco plant, and shared an understanding of the universe that included similar gods and an elaborate code of justice and revenge.[5] The revenge culture, in particular, served as one of the common links of Guianese tribes and distinguished them from neighboring groups in Venezuela and Brazil. For the Guianese Kalinago and Taíno tribes, the culture of revenge killing was elaborate and well-organized. For those who had experienced wrongs, there were four options: direct violence, poisoning of the guilty party, sorcery, or becoming a *kanaima,* a type of ninja-like secret assassin.[6] The concept of the *kanaima* was shared by all Guianese Taíno and Kalinago groups, and is another one of the identifying marks of a pan-Guianese basic culture.

In short, separation from the other Antillean islands made the tribes of the Guianas different. Besides the unique concept of the *kanaima*, the Guianese Kalinago/Taíno tribes also shared a lack of real interest in cannibalism, as opposed to their Caribbean counterparts—accounts of ritual or non-ritual cannibalism among the Guianese Kalinago number far less than those for the Caribbean Kalinago. Additionally, Guianese Kalinagos and Taínos did not use the blowgun, a staple of the Brazilian Amazon tribes to the south.[7] What little cannibalism existing in Guiana seems to have been limited to ritual and associated with the capture of enemies; some evidence even suggests that the practice was not originally Kalinago or Taíno at all, but was instead introduced *after* European contact by the Tupi-Guarani, a group of Venezuelan and Brazilian tribes whose contact with the Kalinago/Taíno tribes increased after European trade began.[8] By factoring in the unique geographical features of Guiana and its resulting isolation from the islands by water and from Venezuela and Brazil by mountains and thick jungle, a unique "Guianese" culture of environmentally influenced, locally specialized Taíno, Kalinago, and Tupi-Guarani descendents common to the entire Guiana region emerged.

Of course, it would be oversimplification to suggest the indigenous cultural complex in Guiana was without variation. But, by the time of Columbus, there were clearly fewer disparities than parallels. Still, as could be expected from such a vast area, a large number of different tribes existed under the Guianese indigenous cultural umbrella. In Guiana, at least seven modern tribes are known to have existed during European contact. Those tribes speaking Carib/Kalinago based languages included the Akawoi, the Arekuna, the Macushi, the Patamona, and the Wai-Wai. Other than these five, a large tribe that spoke an Arawak-based language, the Wapishiana, and the Warrow (or Warau), an outlying tribe speaking an unrelated language but sharing cultural traits with the others, complete the list.[9] These tribes continue to exist today and share many of the same pan-Guianese characteristics mentioned earlier. Though each tribe still maintains a distinct language, all the

tribal dialects (except the Warrow) closely resemble the Kalinago and Taíno language families and share many "crossover" words.

Additionally, archaeological evidence shows remarkable similarities in pottery style across the Guiana Shield's tribes and even suggests that Guianese groups shared a common material culture as far back as 500 AD.[10] Other cultural similarities across the Guianas follow the same pattern as the linguistic and artistic relationships, again revealing the homogeneity of the region as compared to other large pre-colonial territories. Most of this cultural resemblance relates to the unique geography of the region, which isolated the Guianese tribes from outside influences and held new arrivals closely together until their cultures began to meld.

Guiana's pre-contact and contact period also evinced commonality in the food economy. For example, all Guianese tribes cultivated cassava and utilized it extensively as a staple starch.[11] Pre-contact Guianese tribes placed great importance on fishing and shellfish collection, and received the great majority of their terrestrial protein from agouti and iguanas.[12] Because these indigenous groups maintained a coastal bearing, and their prey required little strength or physical prowess to bring down, a fishing-intensive society lacking the hunting rituals associated with other Amazonian tribes developed. Kalinagos later transferred the food culture easily to ecologically similar Caribbean islands. Baking culture also reflected pan-Guianese characteristics; a lack of *metates*, or grinding stones, at pre-contact sites in the Guianas suggests that the early inhabitants relied on softer varieties of maize than other American groups, and were more apt to turn to cassava for bread flour.[13] Basketry also possessed uniformity in style and preparation during the contact period just as it had in earlier times.[14] The basketry and pottery, along with other material culture, was generally shared across the Caribbean, into the Guianas, Venezuela, and other portions of South America by the time of Columbus' arrival.

Culinary, material, and linguistic culture, therefore, had been unified in a pan-Guianese civilization for over a century by the time the Europeans established any kind of foothold in the area. So indistinguishable were the various tribes from one another, at least to European eyes, that the settlers only defined the groups by their stance toward Europeans—explorers and chroniclers grouped hostile tribes together as "Caribs," while they generalized all friendly tribes as "Arawaks," despite linguistic or other affiliations (sometimes resulting in tribes moving back and forth across the two columns as their allegiances shifted).[15] On the face of it, this observation generally held true, as the Europeans had extreme difficulty delineating the tribes based on their appearance, religion, language, or behavior. The distillation into two groups was a classic European generalization and an indicator of broad misunderstanding of the region, and its acceptance reflected a lack of interest in increasing that understanding among the explorers. Nuances aside, though,

the tribes populating the region were culturally analogous and territorially amorphous, spilling across rivers and frequently cohabiting regions. The region and its pan-Guianese indigenous culture group constituted the original "Guiana," a land without predetermined political boundaries. Perhaps the words of Raymond T. Smith in his book, *British Guiana*, serve best here, "The present-day borders of British Guiana are of relatively recent creation and represent the limits of British power and influence in the area rather than the limits of any original natural or social units."[16] Indeed, from the seventeenth century until its modern division, "Guiana" was used to refer to all areas between the Orinoco, the Rio Negro, and the Amazon, and was seen so much as a unified, isolated entity that it was often referred to as the "Island of Guiana."[17] Whatever the Europeans found was in no way pre-demarcated for their convenience, but it was certainly a single, cohesive place.

In short, the culture juxtaposed against the colonizers on the northern coast of South America was generally uniform from the Antilles south into the Guianas. The explorers who trickled in over the first century of contact interpreted the sparse population and standardized culture as a blank slate upon which to create colonies. The first century, however, was only a century of exploration; real attempts at settlement did not begin until the very end of the sixteenth century, a full hundred years after Columbus first spotted the coast in 1498.

## EARLY EXPLORATION BY EUROPEANS

The first explorer to see real colonial potential in the region was Sir Walter Raleigh, who made voyages to the region beginning in 1594–1595. Raleigh's visit to the Wild Coast possessed a dual purpose. The widely publicized rationale behind his voyage was his search for El Dorado, the chief of the fabled city of gold. Raleigh claimed to find the chief's capital city, Manoa, deep in Guiana. His praise for the amount of gold that could be found in Manoa was the keystone of both of his published works on the country, *The Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana*, published first in 1596, and *The Discovery of Guiana, and the Journal of the Second Voyage Thereto*, published in 1606.[18] In both, Raleigh discusses at length the gold-yielding potential of the country, claiming more gold abundance could be found here than even in Peru.[19] To drive the point home, the captain enumerated those tribes of the region known to possess gold plate, and the list is impressive: the "Indians of Trinidad," the "cannibals of Dominica," those of Paria, the "Tucaris, Chochi, Apotomios, Cumanagotos," in the northern region, and the "Guanipa, Assawai, Coaca, Aiai, and the rest" in Guiana.[20] Listed separately based more on their location than on any cultural uniqueness Raleigh could discern, these groups all possessed one key com-

ponent in common; according to Raleigh's estimation, nearly every tribe in the Guianas possessed gold, and most in the nearby area were willing to trade it.

The most striking example of Raleigh's claim is his extensive description (generally based on hearsay) of Manoa, which he claimed to be the famous "City of Gold" sought by nearly every European explorer of the century. In Raleigh's assessment, Manoa and the surrounding kingdom of Guiana were in some way related to a branch of the Inca royal family, pushed out of Peru by Pizarro but maintaining a large portion of the kingdom's wealth.[21] In his journal, Raleigh assures the reader that he himself had seen the riches of Guiana and Manoa, and declares that, throughout the Guiana Shield, there could be found "more rich and beautiful cities, more temples adorned with golden images, more sepulchers filled with treasure, than either Hernán Cortés found in México or Francisco Pizarro in Peru."[22] Whatever his motivation, Raleigh's insistence of Guiana's wealth was unflagging.

Walter Raleigh's guarantee of Guiana's riches can now be interpreted in one of three ways. First, he may have, in fact, been telling the truth, and the riches of Guiana have since been lost to the jungles and the progress of time. If this is so, logic suggests an economic goal for the later occupation, exploration, and colonization of the area. However, the possibility that Manoa was a pure fabrication must also be considered. If this was a "fish story," Raleigh may have simply been engaging in one-upmanship, hoping to be compared favorably to Cortés and Pizarro and build his own reputation at home. The third possibility is less obvious, but a more politically astute move (and Raleigh was known for being a good politician). Additionally, it fell more in line with Raleigh's personal ambitions and dreams. It was no secret that he envisioned an English empire stretching from the Amazon through the Orinoco and into the southern Antilles. This empire would act as a barrier against Spanish hegemony in the Americas and an obstacle to the free flow of Spanish trade.[23] Thus the publication of Raleigh's work extolling the virtues of Guiana may have been a step toward fulfilling this personal goal, along with positioning him as the region's best candidate for governor. Rather than enticing the Crown with military strategy, he may have thought it more effective to tempt with riches, just as he had done with accounts of the richness of Virginia. His final warning to the monarch, that "whatsoever prince shall possess it, shall be greatest, and if the king of Spain enjoy it, he will become unresistable [*sic*],"[24] may shed light on his true intentions. This push for English involvement in the interstice between Spain and its American empire placed Raleigh at the vanguard of English imperialism, seen along with Humphrey Gilbert and John Dee (the first man to use the term "British Empire," in the 1630s), as the "prime movers" of imperialist thinking.[25] Whether or not Manoa was fabrication, truth, or a convenient

bargaining chip, Raleigh succeeded in connecting himself with an imperial vision for England that depended upon the subjugation of Guiana.

Guiana's other early explorers, the Dutch, worked from a different set of priorities during the century of Guianese exploration.[26] In the eighty years between 1568, when the Netherlands was officially formed by an affiliation of Walloon and Flemish provinces, and 1648, when they Treaty of Münster was signed with the Spanish, the Dutch practiced the delicate art of cobbling together different ethnicities and religious faiths into a viable economic entity.[27] At first, the Dutch had concerned themselves more with trade and establishing practical networks and outposts than with claiming tracts of land to act as a buffer against neighboring states. Because their homeland was itself only recently integrated and established, they lacked concern about territorial cohesion abroad.

This variance in focus is clearly illustrated by comparing the comments of Sir Walter Raleigh with those of his contemporary, Adriaen Cabeliau, the clerk for the December 1597 Dutch exploration mission of Captain Jacob Cornelisz.[28] Cabeliau related the voyage of Cornelisz, which seems to have been a survey of indigenous groups and areas of potential trade partnerships, in his diary. Though the Dutch party visited places described by Raleigh as having gold deposits, they found none, and further suggested,

> There is up that river [the Orinoco] in the kingdom of Guiana certainly much gold, as we were told by the Indians from there as well as by our own Indians here present, and the Spaniards themselves say so; but for people busied with trade it is not feasible to expect any good therefrom unless to that end considerable expeditions were equipped to attack the Spaniards.[29]

After a bitter war with the Spanish, the Dutch were in no position or mood to challenge Spanish military authority in the region, but instead chose to busy themselves with trade and seek alliances and friendships with as many of the tribes as possible in the area, hoping to gain their trust and, more importantly, their business, rather than subduing the region by force. This Dutch approach would color the way Guiana, particularly Suriname, would be administered in the years to come.

## WHAT DID THEY REALLY SEE?

Though early accounts varied from vague to wildly embellished, each one built on a specific agenda, it can be reasonably ascertained what the earliest European explorers did see. Like few other places on earth, the physical attributes of the Guiana Shield have not changed significantly in centuries. With so much of the land covered in pristine forests and protected by federal designations in all three countries, what exists now is probably a close ap-

proximation of what was there then. Even if the region lacked its interesting history and varied cultures, it would still be worthy of study from a biological, environmental, and ecological standpoint.

As one of the least human-influenced areas of the vast Amazon Rain Forest, the Guiana Shield enjoys a dizzying variety of flora and fauna—a collection that most certainly would have impressed the newcomers from Western Europe. The Guyana Tourism Authority calls the modern country the "Amazon Adventure," and for good reason.[30] The geologic formation upon which the three countries sit is ancient, formed millions of years ago during the Precambrian Period. On top of the bedrock, flat-topped mountains called *tepuis* stick out, barren, above the green canopy of thick rainforest. These formations would have been visible from the boats as they approached the land, which had to have seemed as foreign as landing on the Moon. *Tepuis* like Mount Roraima, the largest in Guyana, fueled the imaginations of explorers and adventurers from Raleigh to Charles Darwin.

Within the prehistoric forest, beaches transition to seasonal wetlands and mangrove swamps, which in turn alternate between bits of open savannah and densely covered jungle canopy. The varied terrain provides a wide range of living spaces and nutrients, leaving the Guianas one of the most botanically and zoologically diverse regions on the planet. Early explorers would likely have spotted manatees off the coast first, and then a stunning array of colorful tropical birds. At night, the echoing sounds of one of the world's most diverse bat populations could be heard as they left their caves and trees in search of food. Large porcupines, giant anteaters, sloths, and capybaras (a large semi-aquatic rodent similar to a giant beaver) would have been easily spotted across the region, while jaguars and cougars lurked in the shadows. Capuchin monkeys, named for their resemblance to Capuchin monks, and howler monkeys would have filled the night air with their calls, reminding the Europeans just how distant their homeland was.

Though moderated by northeastern trade winds, the climate in the Guianas would have also presented a new challenge. Summers were hot and humid, with one of the two rainy seasons running from mid-May to August. Winters were also warm and wet; the second rainy season traditionally ran from November to mid-January. In fact, due to their proximity to the Equator, all three of the Guianas experienced (and still experience) little temperature fluctuation. European-like weather patterns simply did not exist here, and unpredictable winds and rain hampered the voyages of even the best navigators.

This tropical New World, in all its strange novelty, enticed not only adventurers and imperialist explorers, but also a long line of naturalists and scientists over the next two centuries. One of the most famous and significant was Robert Schomburgk, a German scientist who visited the region in the early to mid-nineteenth century and published several books, including a

two-volume set on the fish species of the region, the widely read study *A Description of British Guiana,* and perhaps his most recognized work, *Travels in the Interior of British Guiana, 1835–1839*.[31] Schomburgk, asked by the British government to map the territory (and who drew most of the modern accepted border between Venezuela and Guyana), provided for most Europeans the only glimpse they would get of the isolated region. Scientists and naturalists like him often acted as the only source of information for those living in Europe on these faraway places. Many of the Guianas' future settlers would have first been introduced to the colonies through the works of these explorers.

## NOTES

1. Information on Taíno distribution can be found in: Ian Rogoziński, *A Brief History of the Caribbean, from the Arawak and Carib to the Present* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1999); Paul Radin, *Indians of South America* (New York: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1942); and J. H. Parry, *The Discovery of South America* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1979).
2. Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), 17.
3. Paul Radin, *Indians of South America* (New York: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1942), 11–13.
4. Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990): 6–7.
5. Radin, 52.
6. Ibid., 68.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 73.
9. United Nations Development Program, "Indigenous Peoples," DevNet UNDP Development Site, http://www.sdnp.org.gy/gallery/mm/indigenous.html (accessed July 16, 2013).
10. Versteeg, A.H. & F.C. Bubberman, 1992, "Suriname before Columbus," Mededelingen Stichting Surinaams Museum 49A, Paramaribo, Suriname. pp. 3–65; updated Internet version (1998).
11. Radin, 50.
12. J. H. Parry and Philip Sherlock, *A Short History of the West Indies*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 2.
13. Parry and Sherlock, 2.
14. Ibid., 3–4.
15. Smith, *British Guiana*, 12.
16. Ibid., 11.
17. Robert Harcourt, *A Relation of a Voyage to Guiana* (1613; repr., London Hakluyt Society Press, 1928), 4.
18. Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana* (1596; repr., Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1968) and *The Discovery of Guiana, and the Journal of the Second Voyage Thereto* (1606; repr., London: Cassell, 1887).
19. Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*, 10–11.
20. Raleigh, *The Discovery of Guiana, and the Journal of the Second Voyage Thereto*, 40–41.
21. Ibid., 131–141.
22. Ibid., 139.
23. Smith, *British Guiana*, 13.
24. Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*, 100–101.
25. Hulme, 90.

26. French exploration of the area was sparse at best during this time, and will be discussed later.

27. Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600–1800* (New York: Knopf, 1965), 2.

28. Joyce Lorimer, "Introduction," in *Sir Walter Raleigh's* Disoverie of Guiana (Aldershot, UK: Hakluyt Society Press, 2006), xc.

29. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean,* 487.

30. The Guyana Tourism Authority maintains a website at http://www.guyana-tourism.com/

31. Excerpts from these works can be found in *The Guiana Travels of Robert Schomburgk, 1835–1844.* This is a two volume set edited by Peter Riviere and published by Ashgate Publishing in 2006. Or see http://www.guyana.org/suriname/schomburgk.html for an extensive review of Schomburgk's life and works.

*Chapter Three*

# Guiana Asunder

*The Demarcation Period in Guiana (1667–1814)*

One of the most difficult aspects of studying the history of pre-1814 Guiana is confirming which European power controlled each individual "Guiana," during a given period or year. From its original exploration by Raleigh (following initial discovery and voyages by Columbus, Vespucci, and Balboa), Guiana was colonized in staggered, truncated attempts; the coast and the interior of the country proved nothing short of hellish for European colonists, who often succumbed to the torrid climate, myriad dangerous fauna, or tropical diseases flourishing there. As a result, the area retained much of its cultural uniformity over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth century despite efforts at colonization. Simply put, Guiana remained in its original state until the Demarcation Period because no one was successful enough to superimpose a European culture upon any one area of the country.

## ANGLO-DUTCH INTERESTS IN GUIANA

For the British during this period, the Caribbean provided a more attractive staging location for privateering than for long-term colonization. Particularly after the outbreak of war with the Spanish in 1585, English privateers ruled the seas in impressive numbers, bringing in between £100,000 and £200,000[1] per year from raids on treasure ships and Spanish colonies.[2] Dutch privateers also challenged the Spanish ships, especially after 1606. Privateering had become a relatively new venture along the Wild Coast; the root cause of its development by both the British and Dutch was the problem of Spanish harassment. The Spanish warships in the region had been firing on and

boarding any Dutch and British trading ships not involved in trade with Spain.[3] As the privateering became a common way for the Dutch in particular to respond to Spanish aggression, tensions increased. Spain's punitive reactions to privateering attempts escalated, culminating in the 1611 hanging of some Dutch trading ship crewmen accused of piracy by Venezuelan governor Sancho de Alquiza.[4] The Spanish increased their pestering of the Dutch over the next decade, attacking more than just suspected privateers and expanding to all Dutch vessels, public and private. In 1613, Spanish troops raided Dutch trading posts on the Essequibo and Corantijn (or Courantyne) rivers, razing most to the ground. These troops had been deployed into the Guianas from neighboring Venezuela under the premise of stamping out privateering. The army's commander possessed written support in the form of a *cédula* (in effect, a law) issued by the Spanish Council of the Indies and King Philip III.[5] This marked an escalation in armed conflict throughout the Wild Coast region. Until the turbulent early seventeenth century, the isolation of the Guianas had insulated them from the Spanish-Dutch wars going on in Europe. But after the enlargement of military presence and correlative increase in retributive actions, trade ceased almost entirely between the two countries and gave way to military conflict. The change in environment created a deep chasm between the Spanish and Dutch territories of the area and permanently severed the connections between Iberian colonies in South America and those of the Dutch.

As the Dutch aligned themselves against the Spanish, they were forced to establish and defend their own permanent trading posts and forts instead of acting as trading "middle men." This newfound need spurred colonization of the Guianas, which were the only areas of the continent not already under some degree of Iberian (Spanish or Portuguese) control. Following the destruction of their original trading posts in 1613, the Dutch returned in 1615, founding a new settlement at present-day Cayenne (later abandoned in favor of Suriname), one on the Wiapoco River (now more commonly known as the Oyapock) and one on the upper Amazon.[6] By 1621, a charter was granted by the Dutch States-General for another permanent settlement at Kijkoveral, at the confluence of the Essequibo, Cuyuni, and Mazaruni rivers. In fact, the fort and trading post that was built there actually broke ground several years earlier, under the supervision of Aert Adriaensz Groenewegen.[7] Groenewegen developed knowledge of the region while employed by the Spanish as a trader from 1609–1615; after the relationship between the countries soured further, he sought out and received support from his home Dutch government to establish trade with the local indigenous population.[8] Under Groenewegen, Dutch hegemony would continue to grow along the Wild Coast, acting as the region's first antithesis to Spanish control elsewhere.

The British also were attempting small-scale attempts at colonization. Not quite logistically ready for Raleigh's grand imperial scheme, though, they

instead built their earliest settlements as bases from which to exercise their own privateering expeditions against the Spanish. By 1604, British settlers had built an additional village on the Oyapock under the sponsorship of Charles Leigh.[9] Though the little settlement remained intact, it was more through Dutch apathy or acceptance of the colony than British might. The Dutch, in fact, dominated the territory of the Guianas throughout the seventeenth century; either they were direct colonizers or managed the trading of others. One British colonist remarked, "The Dutch gave what they wanted and took what they liked."[10] Either way, the situation in the Guianas was clear—the Spanish controlled Venezuela, the Portuguese controlled Brazil, but the isolation of the Guianas would allow non-Iberian groups to establish a presence there, under the economic sponsorship of the powerful Dutch network now growing in the area.

The differences between the Spanish and the Dutch models for Caribbean and South American administration were stark; while the Spanish were a heavily invested, land-owning and territorially expansionist group, the Dutch were transient and trading-focused, colonizing only enough to secure trade outposts across the region. Unlike the Spanish, the Dutch entrepreneurs who participated in the colonization attempts of the seventeenth century were just as interested in trade with the indigenous as they were in long-term settlement or commodities production.[11] This resulting close relationship with the indigenous groups (first established under Groenewegen) enabled the Dutch to use native opposition to Spanish incursion to their advantage, building a wall of allied tribes between their Guianese settlements and the Iberian lands of Venezuela and Brazil.[12] This effectively allowed first the Dutch, and later the English and then the French, more free rein to colonize than they would have had otherwise, and gave the Dutch a reputation as a culturally tolerant colonizing force, interested more in galvanizing trade alliances than in subjugation of the locals.

The early seventeenth century character of the Caribbean and South America was not constructed in a multinational way, but more a dichotomous one—Iberians collaborating on the one side and northern Europeans (British, Dutch, French) tolerating one another's presence on the other. But by the middle of the century, the Iberians were so far removed from the Guianas that, for the first time, colonies here became established enough to be defined as British, French, or Dutch, rather than simply as non-Iberian. Thus, Dutch accounts of the founding of Guianese territories differ from British and French ones. For the Dutch, the 1621 charter was generally noted as the official beginning of Dutch control. For the British, though, the founding of Suriname was set at 1650, with the founding of the first sizable permanent colony by former Barbadian governor Francis Willoughby, Lord Parham.[13] The differing views on which country controlled which area were as confusing then as they are now.

This confusion and competition over what belonged to which country created a larger problem—infighting between the British and Dutch weakened both colonies and retarded their development into full-fledged colonial cultures. The Guianas were still homogenous as late as 1650, insofar as they were not fully controlled by a single colonizer, but were more a collection of tiny, fragile settlements individually fighting to survive in a sea of inhospitable jungle. Though the Dutch were recognized by the Spanish as the rightful owners of the Guianas in the 1648 Treaty of Münster, their ownership existed in name alone. Dutch cultural influence on the area was too weak to remain unchallenged or unchanged.[14] In fact, in an ironic twist, the Dutch actually founded what was to become British Guiana, while Willoughby and his English colonists founded, in 1650, what was later to become Dutch Guiana.

## THE DUTCH COLONIES SOLIDIFY

Despite their weak military presence following the Treaty of Münster, the Dutch had begun spreading their influence. Though still more focused on maritime trade and its support than territorial consolidation like their British and French counterparts, they were still the first to succeed at establishing lasting settlements. Several heavily-fortified (though sparsely populated) trading posts proved much easier to secure and maintain than the sprawling farming communities founded by the other northern Europeans. Three significant outposts, on the Essequibo (reestablished in 1621 after its destruction in 1613), the Berbice, and the Pomeroon rivers, anchored a trading network in which the Dutch traded with the indigenous tribes for cotton, dyes, and exotic woods.[15] This network, which spread south to the Rupununi River and west to the Orinoco, would be the primary focus of the Dutch until the mid-eighteenth century, rather than plantation farming.

Besides the settlement along the Essequibo re-established in 1621, the trading colony of Berbice was the first permanent settlement and one of the anchoring communities of future British Guiana. Berbice was founded in 1627, and its administration was set up like most other Dutch trading outposts. Distance from the other two major colonies in the region made Berbice's administrators and government very localized and disconnected; in fact, Britain administered Berbice separately from Essequibo (and its later sister colony, Demerara) for over two centuries.[16] The colony first came under the direction of Abraham van Pere of Vlissingen; he and his descendents, all merchants, ran the colony as "*patroons*," semi-feudal, often absentee leaders who appointed a local, ground-level leader, or *commandeur* to handle the colony's day-to-day operations.[17] For all its geographic differences, Berbice could be counted with Essequibo and Demerara as classic

Dutch New World colonies, built as a trade stronghold and ruled by merchant elites.

Though now built as permanent towns, the original Dutch Guianese colonies existed as corporate ventures above all else. Local trade and commerce decisions were made by these *patroons* and their *commandeurs*, and all imports and exports between the United Provinces and their American colonies were coordinated through a central corporation, the Dutch West India Company (WIC). The WIC, like the older Dutch East India Company (VOC), was established to maintain trade through commercial avenues. The WIC and VOC also possessed the power to defend their interests militarily, as both were granted their own armed forces to defend forts and strongholds.[18] It is important to recognize that, though the West India Company did maintain an army and conduct military operations, particularly against Spain, the central Dutch focus remained on commercial expansion above all else; these "corporate armies" existed to protect commercial interests only and not territorial integrity or cultural identity. Some historians, notably Cornelis Goslinga, posit that the WIC was "designed primarily as an instrument of war against Spain."[19] Though Goslinga's history *The Dutch in the Caribbean* is excellent

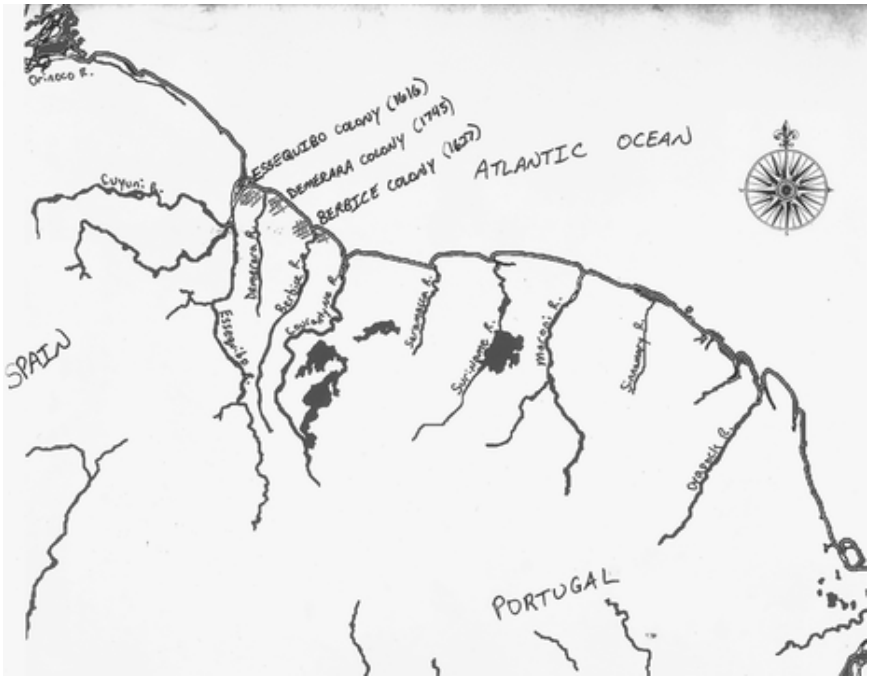


**Figure 3.1. Dutch Settlement of the Guianas**

and crucial to the study of Dutch Guianese history, some issue can be taken with this statement. Contemporary chroniclers like Lieuwe van Aitzema did claim that the WIC was created "to inflict losses on Spain,"[20] but Goslinga misrepresents this as a unilateral focus on war. Direct business and trade competition with the Spanish headlined the Dutch agenda; territorial expansion through military confrontation clearly played a secondary role, as the Dutch never committed a notable number of ground troops to either the Caribbean or Guiana. The "infliction of losses on Spain" should be interpreted more in the commercial sense, following the pattern of Dutch concentration on maritime and inter-indigenous trade begun in the sixteenth century.

## THE ARRIVAL OF GRAVESANDE

The pattern of isolated, scattered settlements based on the securing of trade networks and not the expansion of territory continued to be the *raison d'etre* of the Dutch administrators throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, until a new *commandeur* was appointed in 1743. In this year, Laurens Storm van's Gravesande received a promotion from secretary of the West India Company to *commandeur* of Essequibo. He held the position for three decades, coordinating the development and expansion of the Dutch colonies from his Netherlands home in Soestdijk.[21] Gravesande's tenure brought significant change to the colonies, though his policy was in many ways an extension of his predecessor, Hermanus Gelskerke's. Commandeur Gelskerke pressed for change from a trading focus to one of cultivation, especially of sugar. The area east of the existing Essequibo colony, known as Demerara, was relatively isolated and encompassed the trading areas of just a few indigenous tribes. Accordingly, it contained only two trading outposts during Gelskerke's term of office.[22] Demerara, though, showed great potential as a sugar-cultivating area, so the *commandeur* shifted focus toward the development of the region, signifying his intentions by transferring the administrative center of the colony from Fort Kijkoveral further east to Flag Island, on the mouth of the Essequibo, much closer to Demerara.[23] Gravesande first implemented these policies as Secretary of the Company under Gelskerke. Upon Gelskerke's death, Gravesande continued the expansion of Demerara and the move to sugar cultivation from the more influential and powerful office of *commandeur.*

In an attempt to spur growth of the entire Demerara region, Commandeur Gravesande declared the region open to unrestricted settlement in 1746. Establishing a settlement policy far less exclusive than the Spanish, English or French, he had done something rather unprecedented in the area. In essence, Gravesande had declared the region open to settlement not just for his own countrymen, but to any interested parties, including rival Englishmen.[24] The

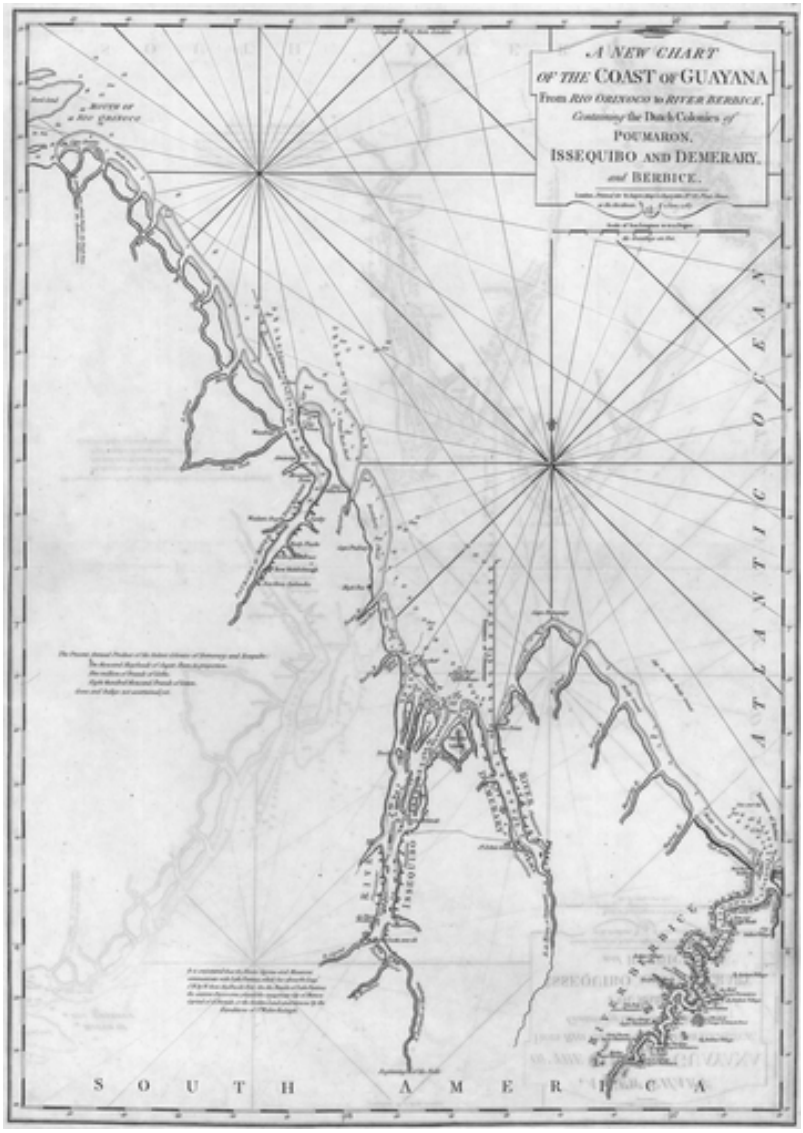


**Figure 3.2. Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice (1797)**
**Image adapted from "A New Chart of the Coast of Guyana from Rio Orinoco to River Berbice, containing the Dutch Colonies of Poumaron, Issequibo and Demerary, and Berbice," printed by Thomas Jefferys for R. Sayer and Bennett Mapmakers, London, June 1, 1787. Available online from the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~2824~310073:A-new-chart-of-the-coast-of-Guyana-# (accessed September 25, 2010).**

plan worked—in four years Demerara grew large enough to warrant its own *commandeur* (Gravesande appointed his son to the position), and by 1760 the colony boasted ninety-three plantations, thirty-four of which were actually English.[25] With the switch to sugar cultivation, Dutch settlement shifted down the riverbanks to the coast, where the crop was more easily grown. Subsequently, coastal Demerara outgrew riverside Essequibo and became the jewel in the Dutch Guianese crown, and Gravesande's legacy continued through his creation of the College of *Kiezers* (Electors). He had created the College of *Kiezers* in 1743 to nominate representatives of the new private plantation owners in Demerara to the Guianese-wide Council of Policy and Justice.[26] His leadership in the fledgling colony's formative years stabilized the entire Dutch portion of Guiana.

## DUTCH ADMINISTRATION AND THE PLAN OF REDRESS

Besides founding three economically and militarily viable colonies in Guiana, the Dutch also provided the foundation for their eventual unification. The Dutch government set out to strengthen the colonies during periods of war at the end of the eighteenth century, during which the colonies were lost to the British and regained several times. To rectify an obvious waning of their influence, the Society of Suriname (*Sociëteit van Suriname*), a private Amsterdam-based company set up the previous century to administer the colonies, made several reforms to the colonies' constitutions in the 1760s and 1770s. The council hoped to strengthen the colonies from within by increasing the power of the wealthy planters in the administration of the region.[27] By 1788, the council consolidated its recommendations into the Plan of Redress. Under it, the individual councils of each colony were merged into a unified Court of Justice, consisting of a *directeur-generaal*, the *commandeur* of Essequibo, the *fiscal* (WIC chief economic officer) of Essequibo, the *fiscal* of Demerara, and two at-large colonists each from Essequibo and Demerara.[28] The administrative consolidation led to an official recognition of unification in 1792, with the colony's name changed to the United Colony of Demerary and Essequebo [*sic*].

Despite the eventual handing-over of the united colony to the British, two aspects of Dutch colonization were solidified and would be implemented in a new location during the following century. First, the ruling council of Dutch colonies remained essentially subordinates of the West India Company and not directly under the crown. By focusing the power of the planters into a few wealthy planters' hands, rather than in the group as a whole, the WIC retained the majority of seats within the Council of Justice.[29] Second, due in no small part to the WIC's continued involvement, the issues of commercial

expansion and corporate growth continued to outweigh any national or ethnic interests growing in the colony.

Though the Dutch continued to retain control at a corporate level through the WIC, Gravesande's opening of Demerara to all interested settlers ultimately allowed sizable British influence into the colony and, in essence, led to the eventual transition of the entire Guiana colony to British control. In an ironic way, this very transition proves that the Dutch focus was always on financial gain and commercial activity—a growing, economically stable colony was more important to the Dutch West India Company and its leaders than a nationally homogenous one. Simply put, Gravesande and the rest of the Dutch administrators welcomed in citizens of a competing imperial power in the name of increasing colonial output and production, despite the implications that increased British citizenship would have in the long run. In the end, the administrators chose profitability over Dutch identity. The multiethnicity of modern Suriname, which will be considered in a later chapter, is the direct outgrowth of this unique attitude toward colonization.

## EARLY FRENCH COLONIZATION EFFORTS

For the French, colonization was quite different, despite similar beginnings. Like the British, French colonists and explorers initially rode in on the coattails of Dutch traders. France's interests in the region could not have stood on their own merit—the much stronger Spanish Empire did not recognize the legitimacy of French claims in the Caribbean or in South America and rejected the very right of the French even to explore the area.[30] But Spain's antagonistic relationship with the larger and more immediately threatening Dutch preoccupied the Spanish king and his appointed governor of Venezuela and Trinidad. This Spanish fixation on stifling Dutch influence caused Dutch Guiana, at this time the closest northern European colony to the Venezuelan border, to become a buffer, permitting French trade and exploration to continue relatively uninhibited.[31] The French were gaining experience in North America as landowners and had become more interested in developing permanent settlements than building simple trading stations. As a result, the first French attempts at settlement in the Guianas were early by comparison—1604—along the Sinnamary River. The premature start cost the French, though, as settlers attempted to move in before they understood fully the land and environment around them, leading to miserable failures. The 1604 settlement along the Sinnamary collapsed within a summer, and initial attempts at settlement near modern-day Cayenne, beginning in 1613, also experienced severe setbacks.[32] French priorities—land acquisition and Catholic conversion—meshed quite uneasily with the difficulties of initial settlement-building on the Wild Coast.

Even as late as 1635, the king of France granted permission to settle the whole of Guiana to a joint-stock company of Norman merchants. They settled near the modern city of Cayenne, but progress stalled almost immediately. Eight years later, a reinforcement contingent led by Poncet de Brétigny found only a handful of the original colonists left alive, living among the aborigines. From the combined total of the original surviving settlers, the reinforcement contingent led by de Brétigny, and a subsequent reinforcement later in the year, only two individuals remained alive long enough to reach the Dutch settlement on the Pomeroon River in 1645, begging for refuge.[33] Thus, French "possession" of modern-day French Guiana is not recognized to have taken place until at least 1637, though some mildly successful trading outposts established as early as 1624 remained viable.[34,35] Cayenne itself, the first permanent settlement comparable in size to the Dutch settlements, lacked stability until 1643, and the Sinnamary River Settlement achieved permanence in 1664.[36] By the numbers, then, the Dutch achieved permanence in the Guianas at least two decades before the French; but this is an unfair comparison, remembering that the two empires employed different means to achieve different ends.

This is not to say that the seventeenth century was not abysmal for French settlers in Guiana. After some degree of stability was achieved in the face of unfriendly indigenous groups, torrid summers, and widespread disease, war broke out in the New World. With French troops primarily concentrated in North America and in more favorable Martinique and Saint-Domingue (modern Haiti, which the French had held since the 1620s), the Dutch captured Cayenne in 1664.[37] The Treaty of Breda (1667) settled wars among the Dutch, English, French, and Danes in both the New World and Europe and temporarily resolved the conflicts in non-Iberian Guiana, too. The colonies of Essequibo and Berbice, briefly occupied by the British toward the end of the war, were returned to the Dutch in exchange for British occupation of New Netherland (now New York) in North America, and the colony of Cayenne was returned to the French.

A history of setbacks and a lack of military presence dampened French interests in the Cayenne area, despite little challenge to the claim from outsiders. A census taken twenty years after the Treaty of Breda indicated only about 600 French settlers in the entire Cayenne region.[38] Throughout the eighteenth century, the situation did not improve. The French considered reinvestment in their Wild Coast colony in 1765, prompted by their territorial losses in North America and the signing of the 1763 Treaty of Paris. Over 12,000 settlers were sent from France to the region around Cayenne (later referred to as Guyane). Within four years, over 8,000 had died from typhoid or yellow fever.[39] No matter the level of investment, the business of empire-building continued to seem easier in the Caribbean than in the inhospitable lands around Cayenne.

Those few colonists with the fortitude to remain in the Cayenne colony did, however, prosper financially through the cultivation of sugar. France was less dependent on colonial output and trade than either the Dutch or the British, so colonists were not required to produce strictly for Paris markets and, for the most part, were left to their own devices.[40] Subsequently, those few French planters who remained could work in relative independence, selling directly to the Dutch or other Europeans and buying cheaper raw materials from the Americans.[41] By the end of the eighteenth century, the prospects for success in Cayenne seemingly improved, and the colonists found themselves in such a good position that they likely could have lobbied for complete independence from the French government. Unfortunately for them, the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 put their issues on hold in Paris—no successful agitation for independence could be mounted. The French colony of Guiana, due first to failure and then indifference, became the French Empire's forgotten possession. After 150 years of shortfalls and untimely distractions, the French imperial presence faded from Cayenne and its environs. Eventually, the French would bring a fresh approach to the region, forged from their past frustration and disappointment. But for now, as the eighteenth century closed, competition in the Guianas had distilled into a two-nation problem.

## EARLY BRITISH COLONIZATION ATTEMPTS

British interest in the Guianas reached back into the sixteenth century, from Sir Walter Raleigh's accounts of the Kingdom of Manoa. His reports, published across England, stimulated interest among adventurers, explorers and settlers eager to make a name or to hide from the name they had already made. As a result, some English settlers accompanied the first Dutch colonizers to Essequibo while others, including the Pilgrims, gave Guiana serious consideration as a place to forge a new life.[42] Scattered British colonies in modern-day Suriname were also attempted, including a settlement on the west bank of the Surinam (now Suriname) River of sixty individuals under the leadership of Captain J. Marshall.[43] Like the French, however, the British initially relied on the Dutch both to finance operations and to act as a buffer against the Spanish. Consequently, British attempts to colonize the area were at first as unsuccessful as those of the French. Religious pressures at home, beginning with the Short Parliament of 1640 and culminating in the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1649, brought a new kind of group to the Guianas—those interested in exporting a culture and its ideologies, rather than those with commercial or territorial interests.

Individuals wishing to transplant their idea of the optimum English culture (be it Catholic or Protestant, Royalist or Parliamentarian) searched all

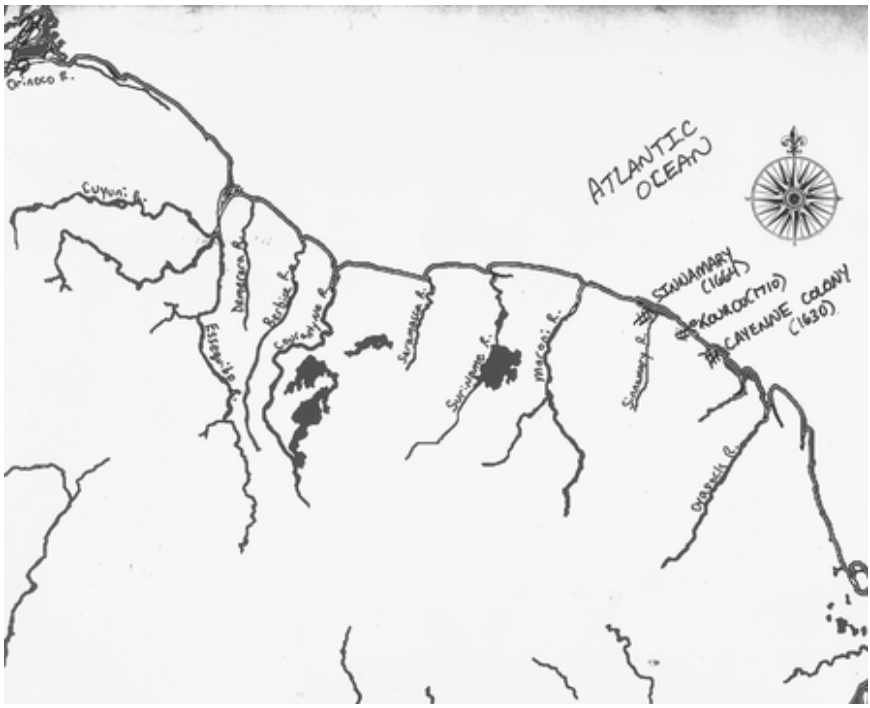


**Figure 3.3. French Settlement of the Guianas**

over the New World for locales in which to establish their cultural values. The types of places British colonizers sought out differed from those of other imperial powers. As a general rule, the British looked for sparsely populated, underdeveloped regions in which to establish colonies, as opposed to the Spanish or Dutch, who hunted for areas with an established population they could either control or trade with, respectively.[44] The difference in selection of settlement sites was no accident and, instead, reflects the colonists' motives. While trade opportunities motivated the Dutch, the desire to transplant their culture to a new place drove many British settlers. With options in the Caribbean dwindling due to war, Central American control by the Spanish nearly assured, and wars escalating in North America, the Guiana region became increasingly appealing to these individuals.

It was in 1650, during the brief absence of the French following their colonial failures of 1645, that the first British charter in the Guianas was granted. Francis Lord Willoughby, the Baron of Parham, a staunch Royalist during the English Civil War, was rewarded for his support with the governorship of Barbados and a charter to settle Suriname by Charles II, the mon-

arch in exile (Willoughby, too, was in exile, ironically living in the Netherlands at the time).[45] This charter, in direct defiance of the Treaty of Münster (1648), consisted of a land grant to Lord Willoughby of the area surrounding modern-day Paramaribo, effectively beginning England's bid for the Guianas in earnest. In that year, Willoughby sent three ships of colonists to Suriname after a scout ship secured a treaty with the indigenous groups there.[46] The colony experienced some success, including the addition of the last 350 French settlers from Cayenne under the command of Braglione and du Plessis, who had sought refuge in the English colony later in 1654.[47] After the addition of the French colonists that year, Willoughby transferred his rights to the son of the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Clarendon.[48] If the Dutch were to colonize the portion of Guiana closest to Venezuela, and the French the area nearest Brazil, then the British had every intention of inhabiting the space between. By 1665, the Suriname River colony supported 4,000 inhabitants and nearly fifty sugar plantations along the river, reaching almost thirty miles southward from the river delta.[49]

The support of Dutch claims to the area, despite British settlement, was strong. The Treaty of Münster, signed in 1648, was part of the larger Peace of Westphalia signed by European powers including the British, Dutch, and Spanish. It effectively granted control of all of Guiana to the Dutch, administered through the Dutch West India Company. Incensed at the British violation of this treaty, a naval force from the Dutch province of Zeeland attacked and conquered the Suriname colony in 1667, at the close of the Third Anglo-Dutch War.[50] The Treaty of Breda (1667), which ended the war, upheld the older Treaty of Münster and granted the Duke of York rights to New Netherland (now New York) in exchange for their formal recognition of Dutch hegemony in the Guianas, including the burgeoning British colony along the Suriname River. These two treaties should have secured the entirety of the Guianas, other than the tiny settlement of Cayenne, and placed them completely within the hands of the Courts of Justice administered by the Dutch West India Company.

Two factors kept this idea from surviving beyond the paper on which it was written. First, the British, unlike the French, had already begun shrugging off Dutch commercial control. In 1651, the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell issued the Navigation Ordinance, the first in a series of laws later known as the Navigation Acts. The ordinance prevented British colonies from contracting Dutch shippers and traders to move goods and services between the colony and the mainland. Though these acts provided a catalyst for the aforementioned Anglo-Dutch Wars, they forced British colonists to keep their money in-house, giving London-based merchants more freedom to operate outside the Dutch sphere of influence.[51] Second, and perhaps more important, was the opening of Demerara to foreign settlement by Commandeur Gravesande in 1738.[52] As previously suggested, this tolerance of British

colonists, and the eventual growth of their influence over the administration of Dutch colonies, was the real beginning of British presence in the Guianas.

## BRITISH ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITIES–CULTURAL EXPORTATION

The opening of Demerara would hardly have been important had another development not been simultaneously occurring to the north. Throughout the seventeenth century, minor nobility and idealists alike were attempting to create their own version of England in the New World, either supported by or in spite of the religious differences and eventual civil war in Britain. This transplanting of British society required money, so the British landholders in the Caribbean concentrated their efforts on sugar production, a significant source of quick wealth. Barbados served as the early leader in sugar production; it was the initial destination of these immigrants due to the lack of unfriendly Kalinago tribes on the island. By the mid-1640s, Barbados contained nearly half the white population of the English and French Caribbean combined, with more royalists on their way.[53] High prices for sugar in the 1650s spurred intensifying cultivation on the island. However, as a result of the intensification, Barbadian soil had degraded so significantly by the early eighteenth century that its sugar output declined by half.[54] By the 1720s and 1730s, the sugar industry collapse had left many British landowners and aristocratic investors looking for new places to set up shop, and Gravesande's opening of Demerara in 1738 could not have been timed better.

The British sugar planters, already far more experienced in the industry than the trade-centric Dutch, took advantage of the Demerara situation, becoming wealthy and increasingly influential in the colony. The use of tidal sugar mills by the British in Demerara, rather than older Dutch windmills, increased sugar output and was part of the reason for the demographic shifts to the coast.[55] British landowners' wealth also increased more quickly due to Gravesande's policy of ten-year exemption from poll taxes for all new immigrants.[56] These opportunities were not ignored by the British refugees from Barbados—by 1760, British colonists outnumbered the Dutch in Demerara.[57] The influx of sugar-growing specialists spurred the economic changes in the colony, too. In fact, by 1770, sugar, rum, and molasses accounted for over 80 percent of total export revenue for the British Caribbean, with much of it grown on plantations in Demerara.[58] Wealth and population were both on the side of the British by this point, and the opportunity to flex this muscle presented itself in 1777, when the United Provinces joined Russia, Sweden, and Denmark in the Armed Neutrality Agreement during the American Revolution. Interpreting the agreement as an affront to British right to rule in the Americas, Britain again declared war on the Dutch. By February 1781 Deme-

rara and Essequibo had been seized—first by privateers and then by Admiral George Brydges Rodney's fleet.[59] A French squadron under the Comte de Kersaint, operating in alliance with the Dutch, recaptured the territories the following year. The Comte, wishing to leave his own mark on history, issued a proclamation to build a new capital for Essequibo; by the time the French left and the colony was returned to the Dutch in 1784, the town was built and growing.[60] In honor of the President of the WIC it was named Stabroek; by 1789 it boasted nearly ninety houses.[61] Despite British advances, the Dutch and French had maintained their hold on Guiana.

Culturally speaking, though, the British were far from absent. The same wealthy British sugar barons who had gained seats in the Court of Justice were still in Demerara, as the Dutch, again more interested in economic stability and trade than nationalism, had chosen not to expel them. After the loss of New York in the American Revolution (which they had gained from the Dutch a century earlier in exchange for, oddly enough, Guiana), the British were looking to recoup some of their original colonial investments outside the United States, and this included a renewed interest in Guiana. Once again, a timely opportunity presented itself. Two years after the formal combining of Demerara and Essequibo in 1792, the Dutch became entangled in the French Revolution and experienced their own revolution. The Prince of Orange and his entourage of aristocrats fled to England, leaving those allied with France to run the country. British planters in Demerara and Essequibo were infuriated at the new government (established in 1795 as the Batavian Republic) and its insistence upon alliance with France.[62] Powerful sugar plantation owners exercised their authority and made use of their connections; in 1796 a British expeditionary force from Barbados was invited in by the planters and asked to occupy the colonies.[63] The Dutch government in the colony surrendered, to the joy of the anti-Batavian planters, and the British military remained as a presence in the colonies. The British forces acted as a military occupying force, not a government, leaving most of the Dutch administration and the stipulations of the Plan of Redress intact.[64] Though officially the Dutch regained full control of their colonies in the 1802 Treaty of Amiens, their power over the colony was no longer a cultural reality—by 1803 the terms of the treaty had expired, war resumed, and the British occupied again, this time for good.

## DUTCH ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITIES—PROFIT, THEN CULTURE

Eighteenth century differences in political administration among the three nations set the stage for later cultural divergence. The Dutch, for their part, continued on a course of "open-source, open-door colonization," selling plots

to the highest bidder and acting merely as economic facilitators of a hybridized culture in Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice. The cultivation of Dutch culture in the area was therefore stunted. Though all three colonies, due to a lack of white settlers, had imported a significant number of slaves for agricultural production, it was the Dutch plantation owners who developed a reputation for cruelty and selfishness in regards to their slaves and employees.[65] Though the Dutch had started out as "friends of the natives," their reputation for economic exploitation and their willingness to allow individual landowners to act with impunity made their culture, particularly their religion, unpalatable to the local indigenous groups, descendents of the pan-Guianese cultural complex Raleigh had found.[66] Exacerbating the problem, slaves routinely escaped into the surrounding jungles, forming bands of "maroons" that larger indigenous groups sometimes absorbed. Revolts originating from these jungles became quite common, both in the Demerara-Berbice-Essequibo colonies and in the Dutch holdings around Paramaribo.[67] A good example of the revolts and Dutch methods of countering them can be found in John Gabriel Stedman's 1788 work *Narrative of an Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*. Included in the work is a description of the punishment administered by Dutch slave-owners to runaways:

> In 1730 a most shocking and barbarous execution of eleven of the unhappy negro captives was resolved upon, in the expectation that it might terrify their companions, and induce them to submit. One man was hanged alive upon a gibbet, by an iron hook stuck through his ribs; two others were chained to stakes, and burnt to death by a slow fire. Six women were broken alive upon the rack, and two girls were decapitated.[68]

The harsh treatment of runaways had the opposite effect from its intentions. Even in 1788, Stedman recognized that this approach only exacerbated the slave rebellion problem.[69] Revolts were common throughout the century, including 1721 in Comowijne, 1749 along the Juca Creek, and 1757 in Tempaty.[70] The heavy-handed policy was not working—in the words of a Dutch colonist, "the Whites were cutting their noses to spite their faces by mistreating their valuable field-hands that they forced them to seek refuge in the forest."[71] The Dutch willingness to live in multiethnic, but not completely equal, colonies allowed for the eventual, total separation of Dutch and maroon settlements.

## FRENCH ADMINISTRATIVE APATHY

British and French policies also differed, starting their colonies along divergent cultural paths. The French political administration was less open to foreign participation in the colonizing process than the Dutch, and the result-

ing smaller population of French Guiana meant fewer slaves in general. The low population meant fewer planters to buy slaves and therefore less capital to entice slave traders to make the expensive side trip to the colony. France's attitude toward Cayenne and environs, as an inhospitable place hardly worthy of serious imperial consideration for anything other than raw materials, drove its policies in the eighteenth century. French apathy toward the colony increased after the failures of 1763–1765, and little policy work was done in Paris in relation to French Guiana in the second half of the century, as the French concentrated on their more hospitable holdings in the Antilles.[72] The British approached the administration of Guianese colonies the same way they approached the rest of the empire—with a focus on the uniform distribution, adoption, and assimilation of British culture across the board. Colonies existed for the good of Britain, just as British culture existed for the good of its subjects, and this was the policy that would continue.[73] The uniform application of British culture had clear demographic consequences. Though not all colonists were perceived as having equal rights (few, if any, in the eighteenth century would have suggested that slaves had equal rights to plantation owners), they were all seen as "British," rather than as ethnically diverse members of a British-administered colony. The policy toward runaway slaves in the British colonies acts as a perfect illustration of the difference. Runaways were prevented by force from running into the interior and forming rival settlements—rather than in Dutch colonies, where runaways that could not be easily dealt with were allowed to form maroon villages in the interior, British colonies actively pursued runaways to bring them back into the settlement.[74] The fear of planters that maroons would assemble in the jungle and start rebellions was well-placed, but it was also indicative of a different attitude. British colonies were British, all of their inhabitants were British, and that was expected to remain so. The very idea of a maroon village not practicing British values existing within the boundaries of the colony was unacceptable to British governors and colonists alike.

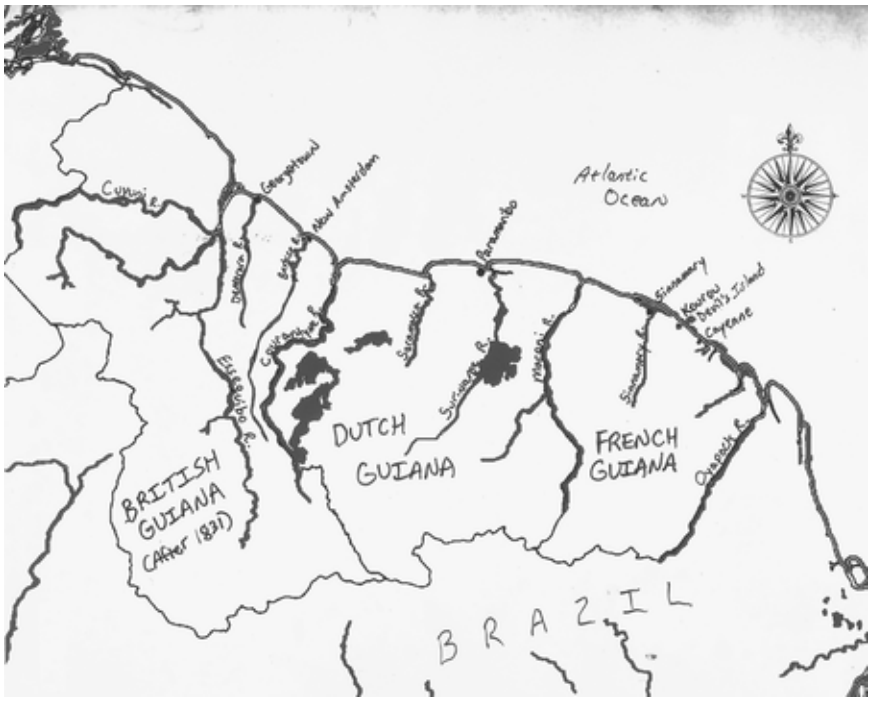


**Figure 3.4. The Guianas' Final Delineation (1814)**

## WAR IN THE CARIBBEAN

During the waning years of the eighteenth century, the final delineation of Guiana would occur. Rivalries between the British and the revolutionary French in the Caribbean escalated into full-scale war in 1793. In this year, the British took Tobago from the French, and in the following year they added Martinique, Saint Lucia, and Guadeloupe with the assistance of French planters loyal to the crown and opposed to the new republican government.[75] All of the islands in the Caribbean changed hands several times; complicating the issue, the Batavian Republic had fallen under French rule and Dutch soldiers were now fighting on the French side along with the Spanish. As a result, the Dutch colonies in the Antilles and in Guiana were captured by the British.[76] War continued off and on until a final peace was signed in 1814 (the Convention of London), heavily favoring the British. By this time France had sold off most of its North American territory in the Louisiana Purchase and had lost all but Guadeloupe, Martinique, and French Guiana in the Caribbean region. The Dutch lost Berbice, Essequibo, and Demerara; these colonies were consolidated under a central British administration and would be known after 1831 as British Guiana.[77] They were granted, in ex-

change, some sugar plantations around Lord Willoughby's original grant in present-day Suriname.[78] What began as a homogenous land, settled by Dutch traders hoping to cut into the Spanish treasury, had become a tripartite canvas upon which the European powers of the nineteenth century could paint their renditions of empire.

## NOTES

1. Adjusted to 2013 values.
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3. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean,* 62–63.
4. Ibid., 64.
5. Ibid., 79.
6. Ibid.
7. Smith, *British Guiana*, 13.
8. Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade: Dutch-Indigenous Alliances in the Atlantic World, 1595–1674* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2011), 106.
9. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean,* 76.
10. Ibid.
11. Peter Newman, *British Guiana: Problems of Cohesion in an Immigrant Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 17.
12. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean,* 76.
13. Simon Cohen, trans., *Historical Essay on the Colony of Surinam* (1788; repr., New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974), 28–29.
14. Reynold A. Burrowes, *The Wild Coast: An Account of Politics in Guyana* (Cambridge: Schenkman Press, 1984), 3.
15. Smith, *British Guiana*, 15.
16. Ibid., 18.
17. Ibid.
18. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean,* 90.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Smith, *British Guiana*, 16.
22. Ibid., 15–16.
23. Smith, *British Guiana*, 15–16.
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28. Ibid.
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30. D. A. G. Waddell, *The West Indies and the Guianas* (Edgewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), 46.
31. Ibid., 39.
32. Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 14.
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37. Ibid.
38. Aldrich, 14.
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40. Waddell, 65.
41. Ibid.
42. Newman, 17.
43. Phillippe Fermin, *An Historical and Political View of the Present and Ancient State of the Colony of Surinam in South America* (London: W. Nicoll, 1781), 11.
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45. Michael A. LaCombe, "Francis, Fifth Baron Willoughby of Parham," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004).
46. Fermin, 12.
47. Ibid., 12–13.
48. Stedman, v.
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50. Stedman, v.
51. McCusker and Menard, 161–163.
52. Burrowes, 3.
53. Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 252.
54. Ibid., 253.
55. Ibid., 258.
56. Newman, 18.
57. Ibid.
58. Davis, 260.
59. Smith, *British Guiana*, 19.
60. Ibid., 20.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., 24.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Boxer, 151.
66. Ibid., 240.
67. The word "maroon" is utilized in the Guianas to refer to escaped slaves and their descendants. Maroons generally live in groups similar to indigenous tribes, often in the interior jungles. More information on the maroons and their influence will be found in later chapters.
68. Stedman, 32–33.
69. Ibid., 35.
70. Cohen, 59.
71. Boxer, 240.
72. Aldrich, 13–14.
73. Waddell, 64–65.
74. Newman, 22–23.
75. Waddell, 71–72.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid., 74–76.
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## *Chapter Four*

# Shackles

### *The Active Administration Period in British Guiana (1814–1914)*

The final division of the Guianas in 1814 created three distinct areas in which imperial administrations with vastly different philosophies could now develop. But despite their divergent administrative philosophies, all three colonies began dealing with similar external pressures. Instead of wars and military occupations, the greatest pressure in the new period was no longer one of foreign policy, but rather the domestic, social issue of slavery and emancipation. Nothing changed the Guianas more in the nineteenth century than the shift away from slave labor, though each colonial administration dealt with the challenges of emancipation differently. The British, now in control of the largest portion of the Caribbean, had to face this issue head-on.

Simply stated, slavery was the fuel that powered the industries of British Guiana. Before the nineteenth century, the necessity of slaves to continue cultivation of sugar and expansion of settlement was generally accepted across the Americas. Slavery allowed larger amounts of land to be brought under the plow, improvements like seawalls and dykes used in tidal sugarcane production to be constructed more quickly, and irrigation systems to be extended more effectively.[1] By the turn of the nineteenth century, slave labor was not only cheap but plentiful; slaves outnumbered white settlers nearly eight to one in the colony.

## SLAVERY—MORALITY *VERSUS* PRACTICALITY

Philosophically, though, the institution of slavery faced a growing moral challenge in nineteenth century England. The ideas of equality and basic human rights championed in the French Revolution of 1789 had spread. Since the Enlightenment, British thinkers, too, had been considering the possibility that slavery was an immoral establishment. The revolution only gave their ideas a louder voice. A significant nineteenth century proponent of abolitionism was William Wilberforce, a wealthy political figure and close companion of Prime Minister William Pitt.[2] Wilberforce, an evangelical Christian, preached at length in large public assemblies, championing the immediate abolition of slavery. Until 1794, he toured the country with abolition lobbyist Thomas Clarkson, exhibiting shackles, branding irons, and thumb screws from the slave trade and telling chilling tales of the hardships found on the Middle Passage for the education of the populace.[3] The cause slowly gained momentum as Wilberforce and Clarkson annually presented abolition bills to the House of Commons through their lobbying group, the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. In 1803, Wilberforce managed to shepherd an abolition bill through the House of Commons, but it failed to pass the House of Lords.[4] Finally, in 1807, political circumstances allowed him to collect the votes necessary in both chambers, and Britain's first anti-slave trade act, the Abolition Act, entered into force on January 1, 1808. Because of the money available through black market slave trading, it would be several decades before the practice would be completely eradicated. But Wilberforce had taken the first crucial steps toward awakening the British public to the moral issues of slavery.

Initial efforts toward emancipation in Britain had little effect in isolated and distant colonies like British Guiana during the early years of the nineteenth century. Slaves still trickled in via the black market, and advertisements for incoming slave shipments were still being printed in the *Essequebo and Demerara Royal Gazette*, the only newspaper of the colony. Rushing to import as many slaves as possible before the Abolition Act achieved fruition, slave traders and owners did a brisk business throughout the year. In January 2, 1807, for example, the paper advertised the arrival of 260 new slaves for sale.[5] In addition to continuation of the slave trade, the country's slave population reproduced itself and abolition of the trade itself did nothing to change the practice of slavery on the plantations. Planters still moved into more fertile territory along the Guianese coastlands until the 1820s, and this increase in productivity and crop yields due to higher soil quality offset the potential economic impact of a stagnant slave trade.[6] Though moral views on slavery were changing in the mother country and better agricultural productivity rendered the slave trade less necessary, slavery nonetheless continued in Demerara, Berbice, and Essequibo at the behest of the aristocratic sugar

planters. Newspapers from 1808 until the 1820s routinely reported on punishment of runaway plantation slaves; a typical entry in August 1808 lists twenty bound for the stocks in Demerara.[7] Conditions at the local level still had to change significantly to catch up with the emancipation spirit in the houses of Parliament.

Further progress toward complete emancipation would not be made in the British colonies until planters deemed it in their own best interest; moral warnings from members of Parliament in a distant land were not going to fit the bill. But while preaching of morality did not stir those in power enough to emancipate, demographic pressures did. Significantly outnumbered by their slaves and mindful of violent events in places Haiti earlier in the century, plantation owners in British Guiana lived in fear of mutiny and uprising. Governor Henry William Bentinck, part of the Guianese ruling elite, wrote to a colleague in Liverpool:

> In a country like this where on an extent of coast of near 150 miles there is a population of only 1,746 white inhabitants and 847 people of colour that could in case of necessity be called on to repel an insurrection of 31,484 male slaves, if such a calamitous event should ever arise, too many precautions cannot be taken to prevent as far as possible the assemblage of negroes in considerable numbers under any pretence whatsoever.[8]

For administrators like Bentinck, the constant fear of mutiny by disgruntled slaves at least provided impetus for considering emancipation or some other concessions as an option to keeping the peace. British landowning elites were dependent upon peace and order, as they possessed no military forces that could suppress a full-scale rebellion.

## CULTURAL AND CLERICAL PEACEKEEPING

Short of total emancipation, the only way to ensure peace and stability was through cultural, rather than military, control. Again, successful exportation and dissemination of culture was a talent the British seemed to possess in surplus, and an awakening of missionary activity from the Baptists and Methodists in the early decades of the century provided extra mortar with which to build cultural cohesion.[9] At first, plantation owners were skeptical of the benefits missionaries could provide them; though all three colonies contained plenty of churches, most planters forbade their slaves from attending services for fear that knowledge of Christian ideas would lead to dissatisfaction with their slave status.[10] The church's important role in peacekeeping would not be realized until the 1820s and later. By teaching slaves that English ideals were Christian and highly valued, and getting them used to the idea of servanthood as a good and holy thing, the effective mission church

could bring the slaves into closer contact with British culture on positive terms.[11] The Demerara Court of Policy finally passed legislation allowing the religious instruction of slaves in 1825, allowing exemption from work from sunset on Saturday to sunrise on Monday for church attendance and, among other freedoms, the right to marriage.[12] Once the freedom to attend church was extended to slaves, the religious education movement went a great distance toward pacifying the majority of the population.

Though they proved effective, religious freedoms and church education did not prevent all revolts. In 1823, two years before the exemption acts were passed, a group of slaves at Le Resouvenir demanded immediate freedom and killed two of their overseers, touching off small-scale revolts and heavy retribution across the colony. Immediately after the first killings, local authorities imposed martial law and killed over a hundred rebels, including John Smith, a missionary with whom many of the slaves had a very positive relationship.[13] Smith, who had known the uprising was likely, had nonetheless tried to counsel against it. The search for a scapegoat after the riots, however, found Smith, and he was tried and hanged for treason by the governor. His case received a great deal of publicity in London, and many defined his death as martyrdom, bringing more colonists and mainland British citizens to the side of complete emancipation.[14] It could be said that the emancipation campaign in British Guiana did not gain real momentum among its citizens until the day of Smith's execution.

## LEGAL AND SOCIAL REFORMS

Complete and immediate emancipation was no easy task for the British governors of Essequibo, Berbice, or Demerara. The laws each colonial leader had inherited were a jumbled patchwork of ordinances and common laws established under older colonial administrations and, often, under other national jurisdictions. For the British governor of the nineteenth century, new social reforms could not even be considered until the existing laws were consolidated and made clear. A British practice through the previous centuries of at least partially adopting pre-existing laws and municipal governments of those colonies seized from other countries resulted in a confusing mixture of British, Dutch, French, and even Spanish laws in use across the British Guianese holdings.[15] Making the problem worse, older Dutch laws in Essequibo and Berbice were designed for a trade-centered colony, and were much more focused on wealth equity and commercial code enforcements, rather than on keeping the peace in a self-sufficient permanent settlement.[16] The process of codifying old local laws and collating the pieces of law code into a single, coherent document was slow, but would bear fruit. To expedite the course of "Anglicizing" the former Dutch colonies and making this pro-

cess easier, the British government officially joined the three main colonies under a single administrative umbrella in 1831.[17] Now known as the Union of Berbice, Essequibo, and Demerara (and later simplified to British Guiana), the colonies could be administered from a single, local administration familiar with the issues of slavery and emancipation.

Action on the issue followed rapidly after unification of the colony. In 1833, Parliament passed the Emancipation Act, which effectively ended all forms of slavery in British colonies.[18] Emancipation advocates hailed the act as a significant step forward, but it did not solve all the problems of British Guianese safety and security. Something had to be done with the thousands of newly-released former slaves; allowing them to melt into the jungles and create potentially dangerous colonies with former runaways was not a palatable option to the British, having seen the tumult such an arrangement had been causing in Dutch Guiana. The British adopted an inspired alternate solution that possibly saved the colony from complete turmoil. Within five years of the Emancipation Act, the government allowed groups of ex-slaves numbering up to sixty or seventy to combine their resources and purchase, at reduced costs from the government, plantations abandoned by planters who could no longer work the land without slave labor. These groups then divided the large land area equally among themselves.[19] These "Free Negro Villages," as they came to be called, were democratically organized and restored abandoned plantations. Along with an economic resurgence, the system allowed free Africans to remain in the British Guianese sphere of cultural influence, rather than moving to the jungle. Though freed slaves were certainly concentrated, they were not a security threat, as they had their own land and interests with which to care. The Free Negro Village system remained effective through its peak in 1852. In this year, the number of ex-slaves working for wages on estates was 19,939, while 44,456 lived and worked in one of the twenty-five communal villages that had been built.[20] Though the system did not always work perfectly and there were scattered instances of violence, it did much to improve the safety and tranquility of the area and to diffuse a potentially volatile social situation.

With such a significant portion of its former slave population moving into these villages, religion and education within the new villages became increasingly important. On one hand, the church provided a "nucleus of activity" in the villages, while the schools educated the children not just in writing and reading, but also in the concept of British cultural superiority, through the insistence that British literary and artistic traditions represented the pinnacle of civilization.[21] The cultural assimilation of the former slaves was treated as a priority by the administration. As a result, British Guiana would increase its "Britishness" in the century to follow. In many ways, the goal of the original British settlers, to build a new and prosperous, "personal" Britain was nearing completion. As previously suggested, the British settlers found a

blank slate in British Guiana. The land had, at the turn of the nineteenth century, a population density of 0.1 individuals per square kilometer; by the turn of the following century, the density had increased to 2.9 individuals per square kilometer.[22] The colony was literally becoming a *British* Guiana, as those espousing British cultural ideals continued to fill in the colonies.

## THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EMANCIPATION

Culturally, adaptations were being made to changing social realities, but there were significant economic issues to address, as well. Though many slaves were able to work the land in their collective villages, converting from a slavery-based plantation economy to an employment-based model of free enterprise and organized labor was not an easy transition. Free Africans still had to find work, and most often this was found with their former masters. The problem of determining fair market compensation for formerly unpaid workers required solutions. The first attempts to solve the problem came through widespread use of a system of apprenticeship. Apprenticing was meant to be an intermediate step between slavery and full rights and privileges, and was officially put into law in 1833. The system required former slaves to work for their former owners for three-quarters of the week without pay for a set term (usually six years); they received a government-regulated payment from the remaining fourth, and possessed the option of buying their freedom at any time with these funds.[23] Even under these imperfect terms, many Africans and African descendents saw the potential for economic improvement and status. Many believed that after the end of the apprenticeship period they would be in a position to demand high wages, since they would become the only group of workers available in the market. For this reason, immigration of free Africans from the Caribbean and the United States into British Guiana occurred frequently, starting with the arrival of a group of recently freed Antiguan slaves in 1834.[24] The apprenticeship system, still far from a fair labor practice, did at least function on some useful level for the free Africans, though it was intended far more to ease the transition for the planter elites than for the slaves themselves.

The planter elites did not, though, avoid rebellion entirely; dissension arose among newly freed slaves in British Guiana during their mandatory unpaid apprenticeships. The ex-slaves in the country were faced with two realities as they served their mandatory apprenticeship. First, they witnessed firsthand the complete freedom of those free Africans that circumvented the system by fleeing into the jungle and setting up cohesive groups there. Second, and perhaps more important, they saw large tracts of land in all directions with great earning potential—far more land than the white elites could ever reasonably oversee.[25] Consequently, the apprenticeship system was ter-

minated in 1838 and the aforementioned Free Negro Villages became the norm for British Guianese residents. Colonial administrators in British Guiana encouraged the founding of these villages, as they concentrated free and peaceful former slaves into economically viable collectives, thus making the entire area safer for those whites who remained in the country and more productive, too. To ensure further peace and security, the government provided the first regular police force in British Guiana in 1839, made up of an Inspector-General, three inspectors, 286 officers, and a forty-horse mounted brigade.[26] The timing of the police force's founding was no coincidence. Protection of the British way of life was the highest priority of the colonial administrators, especially in the face of such momentous socioeconomic change.

Free Africans now able to farm their own lands took full advantage of their newfound liberties. Many carried out their freedom to its maximum extent, preferring to live alone on a very small, but personal, plot of land rather than working for one of the larger collectives.[27] Though participating in the communal farming of a free village was often more profitable, since the costs could be split among the partners and the yields could be higher, a growing number of ex-slaves turned to small plot farming as an exercise in freedom. Between the Free Village Movement and the scramble to own small plots, land ownership patterns in British Guiana underwent a dramatic shift through the 1830s and 1840s. In Berbice, in 1838, 15,000 of the 20,000 residents were newly emancipated, and none were land owners; by 1842, over 1,000 new families owned a total of 7,000 acres along the river.[28] Within a decade, British Guiana developed a landed middle-class composed almost entirely of free Africans. Over £1,000,000 worth of property had been purchased by this new middle class by 1852.[29] In terms of class structures and levels of freedom for those of African descent, British Guiana was undergoing fast, positive change.

The removal of the slavery component of British Guianese plantation culture did, however, create serious setbacks for the economic growth of the country. Labor shortages appeared all over the colonies. The number of plantations fell dramatically. In 1829 there were about 230 sugar and 174 coffee and cotton plantations, almost all of which were fully cultivated. By 1849, 180 sugar plantations remained, and only sixteen small coffee plantations existed.[30] The plantations were becoming an extinct remnant of the old social hierarchy—fewer and fewer workers chose working on the plantation over either free association with others like them or the personal freedom of small-plot farming.

The only way to reverse the precipitous decline of plantations and, by association, the loss of control among the planter elites, was through some new form of labor importation that infused the remaining plantations with cheap labor. Planters and government officials recognized the success of

voluntary African immigration during the apprenticeship period in countering some of the impending labor shortage. On the basis of this experience, the government officials in British Guiana encouraged immigration from other parts of the empire. Prime Minister Lord John Russell informed the British Guianese governor in 1840 that he was unwilling to transfer laborers from other parts of the empire like India (where there was a surplus of workers). But the governor's office and the Colonial Office, which was responsible for the maintenance of all the Caribbean holdings, lifted the embargo on Indian immigration in 1845 despite Russell's stance.[31] The allies of the rich planters in the colony understood this was a necessary development to keep the plantations viable. Those on the ground in British Guiana knew that without an influx of agricultural workers, the colony could not survive in the post-emancipation economy, and made sure the representatives in the governor's office and the Colonial Office supported them through organized importation of new workers.

## THE IMMIGRATION SOLUTION

From 1845–1850, attempts to encourage immigration yielded little. By 1847 the government had spent £360,655 on immigration incentives, but only obtained about 50,000 immigrants: 12,237 from India, 12,898 from other West Indian islands, 8,645 from Africa, and about 16,000 from the island of Madeira.[32] Of these groups, only a small percentage had actually worked on plantations before. Many Africans left their paid positions to join the free villages and make money on their own, while laborers from Madeira had difficulty adjusting to the environment and died at alarming rates. Only the Indians did not experience catastrophic losses, though theirs were still considerable. Local commissions recognized that medical attention and food quality had to be improved for these newcomers to adapt adequately to their new surroundings and provide any sort of usable labor. Thus, compulsory provision of improved housing and medical attention became the administrative priority at the turn of the century.

Better conditions helped. Between 1884 and 1914, 239,000 Indians were brought in as indentured servants, and three-quarters of these immigrants remained after their period of indenture.[33] Indentured servitude provided those in other parts of the empire with a chance to start fresh in a new environment, and this fresh start became much less daunting when the government began touting its improved housing and medical services for those willing to make the journey. These upgrades in services also improved repatriation rates within the colony, meaning more and more new arrivals were choosing to stay after their period of servitude was complete. While the

first half of the nineteenth century was a period of slavery and emancipation, the second half of the century became the age of immigrant labor.

The arrival and successful cultural assimilation of immigrants caused a steady increase in sugar production over the last half-century. From 1830 to 1846, production had dropped from 60,000 tons to 23,000 tons, but after 1848 it steadily increased: 38,000 tons in 1851, 63,000 tons in 1861, and 92,000 tons by 1871.[34] Similar successes were recorded in French and Dutch Guiana when the amount of available labor increased. But the way immigrant laborers were incorporated into society in British Guiana was strikingly different from the methods employed in the French or Dutch colonies. Smith notes that, "the surprising thing about British Guiana is not the diversity of the segments of population, but the extent to which common ideals and aspirations have replaced sectional isolation."[35] The unique British approach to empire, which placed the status of British culture unarguably above that of any other participating group, be it indigenous, Chinese, or Indian, created a central, unifying force. Whatever distinctions immigrants brought with them, like the Indian ideas of caste, were quickly subordinated to British culture. Immigrant laborers who wanted to move up the social ladder had to adopt a British lifestyle and manner of speech in order to be accepted in the ruling class.[36] Rather than separate the different groups further, British ethnocentrism caused British Guianese citizens to coalesce into a single culture, rather than a collection of disparate ethnicities.

In the British colonies, there was no tolerance for being "non-British," so newcomers had to assimilate and adopt the mother culture or risk economic failure and deportation. The Madeirans, for instance, learned to adapt to British culture by learning English and practicing Anglicanism, like most of the emerging middle class in the colony. The Madeirans achieved acceptance

**Table 4.1. Indentured Servants Immigrating to British Guiana, 1835–1917**

| *Country of Origin* | *Number of Immigrants* | *Dates of Main Immigration* |
|---|---|---|
| India | 238,960 | 1838–1917 |
| Madeira and Azores | 31,628 | 1835–1882 |
| Malta | 208 | 1839 |
| West Indies | 42,562 | 1835–1928 |
| Africa | 13,355 | 1838–1865 |
| China | 14,189 | 1853–1912 |
| United States | 70 | 1840 |
| Total | 340,972 | 1835–1917 |

Source: Dwarka Nath, *A History of Indians in British Guiana* (London: Nelson, 1950), 113.

within the community at a faster rate because of this, gaining enough trust from their neighbors to succeed in business. By 1851, over 60 percent of the 800 retail shops in British Guiana were owned and operated by Portuguese Madeirans.[37] Because immigration to British Guiana was based on indentured labor, rather than the immigration of whole families, there was an overwhelming majority of male immigrants, especially among the Indian and Chinese groups. These single men sought out companionship after establishing themselves in the country, and the resulting ethnic miscegenation furthered racial harmony, or at least blurred the lines that divided the groups.[38] Though all were under the yoke of the British Empire, the immigrants could move freely within each others' circles, creating a culture of mixed race individuals who excelled at acting British, in ways that will be discussed in a later chapter centered on cultural studies.

British Guianese governors continued to tweak their policies regarding land ownership throughout the century. Portions of the Crown-owned lands were sold as small lots to peasant farmers of all ethnicities throughout the 1860s, particularly in 1868.[39] British Guiana was becoming a nation of small-scale farmers and land holders. Significant numbers of immigrants from India continued to arrive, taking advantage of these cheap land sales. By 1883, 65,000 Indians were counted in the population of a little over 250,000.[40] Proponents of British culture living in the colony at this time were concerned with such an influx, so measures were taken to ensure the proper absorption of these individuals into the broader British society. For the most part, assimilation of the new arrivals, especially the Indians, was not being done effectively enough by the church. Though Christian ministers were moving into the plantation areas and into the new towns created from the aforementioned social mobility of groups like the Madeirans, they were largely unsuccessful in converting the Hindus and Muslims (about 80 and 20 percent of the population, respectively) who had recently arrived.[41] The burden of cultural absorption and adaptation would instead be placed on the education system.

## EDUCATION OF THE NEW ARRIVALS AND THE COLLAPSE OF SUGAR

To address the need to assimilate further and to collate the new arrivals through education, a noteworthy number of primary schools was established in concentrated plantation areas during the 1850s. Both older, more established settlements like New Amsterdam and Georgetown (upon the British taking over the former Dutch colony, its capital, Stabroek, was renamed after King George), and new towns like Buxton received new schools. The teachers in these schools complained, however, about the irregular attendance of

immigrant children, especially those from India. Seeing that full cultural assimilation could not take place without consistent education, the British Guianese government enacted the Compulsory Education Ordinance in 1876, making attendance compulsory up to the age of twelve for rural children and fourteen for those in the cities. The act also outlawed the employment of children under age nine.[42] Though there was initial resistance from the immigrant groups, eventually most children were enrolled under the new guidelines. In classrooms across British Guiana, children of Chinese, Indian, West Indian, and Portuguese descent studied side by side, learning English, British history, and British literature, along with English sports like cricket, whose wild popularity in British Guiana continues today. The prevailing opinion among British authorities at the time, as reported in the London *Times*, was that the immigrants "not be received as laborers," but as "free settlers" who would need the same cultural assimilation opportunities as any new British citizen.[43] Rather than taking a *laissez-faire* approach to the absorption of new ethnic arrivals, the British governors in the colony, like others across the empire, utilized compulsory education to put a uniformly British stamp on the otherwise mixed culture.

British Guiana survived the impact of emancipation, only to be confronted with a new challenge. As the nineteenth century transitioned to the twentieth, the British would begin to face the problem of "life after sugar." Competition in the sugar market was growing, particularly from Cuban increases in cane production and eastern European production of cheaper beet sugar. The competition was unwelcome, as British Guiana was not in a good position to compete. It was at a geographic disadvantage, with shipping to the European markets costing more and nearby processing centers and domestic markets nearly non-existent. From its beginnings, British Guiana had been a monoculture, existing almost exclusively as an export producer of sugar to the homeland, with the exception of a brief spike in coffee production. For Guiana and other West Indian colonies like Trinidad and Barbados, sugar represented 75 percent of total export earnings by 1896.[44] Increased competition was not the only problem for the sugar-dependent Guianese. As more export markets were opened, prices for sugar continued to fall. Prices had declined by 25 percent from 1805 to 1825, an additional quarter by 1835, and still another quarter by 1850 before steadying, then diving again with the entrance of American-backed Cuban sugar into the world market after 1878.[45] As the economic situation in British Guiana worsened, so did relations between the different ethnic groups, who all sought a scapegoat for their reversal of fortune.

Relations between those of African descent and the Portuguese Madeirans declined throughout the period, and instability in the urban areas followed. The shaky relationship finally ignited in March of 1889, when a young African boy was caught shoplifting a two-cent loaf of bread in a Madeiran

market and was soundly beaten with a stick by the shopkeeper. Rumors began circulating after the apprehension of the boy that the shopkeeper had actually killed him, touching off a series of riots in the Portuguese section of Georgetown. African men from the poorer neighborhoods of the city ran through Stabroek Market, the town's Portuguese district, destroying houses and shops and beating Portuguese citizens. One man was killed, and over 240 members of the mob were arrested in what came to be known as the Cent Bread Riot.[46] Though order was restored and relations normalized, the riot became a tangible example of inter-ethnic frustration. Sugar had sweetened everything, allowing towns like Georgetown to grow, providing new opportunities for immigrants worldwide, and funding the British attempts to assimilate them into a larger imperial culture. But as the sugar went away, so did the financial prosperity that kept the colony going and the reason for the more organized oversight that held the colony together. For British Guiana to survive another fundamental change, it would have to learn to diversify and globalize.

Briefly, British Guiana found an outlet for sugar exports in the United States, negotiating with the North Americans during the 1880s and 1890s. By 1900, the United States was purchasing 75 percent of its sugar exports.[47] The progress was short-lived, though, as the Spanish-American War brought Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines into the American market, destroying the chief market for Guianese sugar within five years. This was compounded by a British shift to the importation of beet sugar, a cheaper alternative. By 1909, British imports of sugar totaled 1.6 million tons, out of which only 129,000 tons were cane sugar.[48] The imperial government once again stepped in to save the Guianese sugar industry. Canada, at the insistence of the London government, signed a preferential trade agreement with British Guiana for the purchase of sugar, giving the industry just enough life to continue limping on. Though at first this seemed like the life preserver the industry needed, it could be argued that the imperial politics which allowed Canada to salvage the British Guianese sugar industry hurt the colony in the long run. While other colonies in the area had to come to grips with a sudden collapse of the sugar industry, British Guiana was not forced to consider diversification immediately. Weaning itself from sugar would be the challenge of the next century, as the character of British Guiana continued to travel in an opposite direction from its sister colonies of French and Dutch Guiana, whose nineteenth century history now must be considered.

## NOTES

1. Smith, *British Guiana*, 26.
2. Rogoziński, 181.
3. Ibid.

4. Parry and Sherlock, 180.
5. *Essequebo and Demerary Royal Gazette*, January 2, 1807, copied in *Colonial Newspapers*, http://www.vc.id.au/edg/transcripts.html (accessed July 16, 2013).
6. Smith, *British Guiana*, 30. Stagnation of the slave trade would have significantly affected the slavery institution, as slave populations were not sustaining themselves demographically, an issue discussed later in this work.
7. *Essequebo and Demerary Royal Gazette*, August 20, 1808.
8. Lord William Bentnick, quoted in Parry and Sherlock, 184.
9. Rogoziński, 181.
10. Ibid.
11. Smith, *British Guiana*, 31.
12. Ibid., 37.
13. Parry and Sherlock, 185.
14. Smith, *British Guiana*, 36–37.
15. Parry and Sherlock, 205.
16. Ibid., 207.
17. Burrowes, 4.
18. Parry and Sherlock, 186.
19. Smith, *British Guiana*, 40.
20. Burrowes, 4–5.
21. Smith, *British Guiana*, 41.
22. Lange, Mahoney, and vom Hau, 1434.
23. Parry and Sherlock, 191.
24. Odeen Ishmael, "The Guyana Story, Chapter 46," Guyana Organization, http://www.guyana.org/features/guyanastory/chapter46.html (accessed July 16, 2013).
25. Parry and Sherlock, 194–195.
26. Ishmael, Chapter 46.
27. Parry and Sherlock, 200.
28. Ibid., 195.
29. Ibid., 196.
30. Odeen Ishmael, "The Guyana Story, Chapter 48," Guyana Organization, http://www.guyana.org/features/guyanastory/chapter48.html (accessed July 16, 2013).
31. Parry and Sherlock, 202.
32. Ibid., 202.
33. Ibid., 203.
34. Parry and Sherlock, 203.
35. Smith, *British Guiana*, 45.
36. Ibid.
37. Newman, 25.
38. Ibid., 26.
39. Parry and Sherlock, 238.
40. Ibid., 237.
41. Odeen Ishmael, "The Guyana Story, Chapter 60," Guyana Organization, http://www.guyana.org/features/guyanastory/chapter60.html (accessed July 16, 2013).
42. Ibid.
43. "Immigrants in British Guiana," *The Times* [London], October 21, 1874, p. 11.
44. Parry and Sherlock, 242.
45. Ibid., 198.
46. Odeen Ishmael, "The Guyana Story, Chapter 46," Guyana Organization, http://www.guyana.org/features/guyanastory/chapter46.html (accessed July 16, 2013).
47. Newman, 29.
48. Ibid., 30.

*Chapter Five*

# The Green Hell

## *The Active Administration Period in French Guiana (1814–1914)*

French Guiana has fought a centuries-long battle with obscurity. Peter Redfield's book *Space in the Tropics: From Convicts to Rockets in French Guiana*, probably the best available book on modern French Guiana, summarizes many historians' views on the area by stating, "French Guiana remains a remarkably insignificant artifact of the political landscape—rarely noticed by most of France, let alone anyone else—as well as one of the least settled regions of the world."[1] Indeed, the French portion of the Guianas, alternately known as French Guiana and Guyane, lies tucked into the outermost corner of this already isolated and esoteric region, forgotten almost as soon as it was explored. The British and Dutch portions of the Guianas were, for the initial few centuries of their colonization, a mixture of British and Dutch settlers and ideals, not separating fully until 1814. The French portion, however, distinguished itself from the other two even earlier. For this reason, this chapter must look before the 1814 tripartite delineation of the region to tease out the foundational elements of French Guiana. For the French, this tiny backwater began as an empty stage upon which to rehearse the principles of empire.

### FRENCH GUIANA'S "LONG CENTURY"

French Guiana's nineteenth century really runs from 1763 to 1895 and can be divided into two distinct phases. During the first half of this "long century," the colonial territory surrounding Cayenne experienced a phase of colonial

experimentation; the second half of the century can best be described as a period of "penalization," in the most literal sense (the colony became solely a penal colony). To consider the first phase, the experimentation phase, one must consider the fundamental differences between French Guiana and its British and Dutch neighbors to the west. British and Dutch Guiana enjoyed success as plantation colonies as early as the mid-seventeenth century. As a result, the methods applied to their settlement and control remained, at least until emancipation, relatively static. French Guiana, however, enjoyed no such fortune. The experimentation by the French, alternately attempting to make the area a settled colony and a dumping ground for prisoners, was based on a lack of immediate success or investment return. Because the colony suffered a terrible start, the French government was often perplexed regarding how to administer and improve it.

Two factors contributed to French Guiana's failure as a settled, plantation economy. The first was a simple problem of geography. French settlers decided to occupy the low-lying, swampy areas around Cayenne, and began the arduous work of draining the marsh. The swamp was not their only option: higher, more easily drained ground was available, but this area lacked the fertility of the swamplands. Prioritizing agricultural fecundity over infrastructural soundness, the Frenchmen chose poorly. As a result their colonies languished in perpetually shifting, marshy, malaria-infested swampland in the river deltas.[2] The second factor, more difficult to resolve, was a chronic lack of labor. Even slavery, the traditional quick-fix for labor shortages in British and Dutch Guiana and even in other French Caribbean colonies, failed to prosper in Cayenne. The colony surrounding Cayenne simply did not provide enough incentive for slave traders to set up shop. Whereas nearly three hundred slave traders relocated from Nantes to Martinique between 1715 and 1775, where the slave trade was brisk, only eleven relocated to Cayenne in the same period.[3] The chief deterrent of slavers considering Cayenne was geographic—the harbor was substandard and difficult to navigate, the prevailing winds and currents made it easier to travel to the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and the distance to other French colonies was too great to make any money on side ventures.[4] No one ever "passed through" French Guiana, and there just was not enough money to be made there to justify a special trip. Thus, settlers were sparse and slaves were few and expensive, so the French Guiana project lacked the draw of a vibrant market for goods or slaves to establish the economy as quickly or to the same levels as its western neighbors.

## EFFECTS OF THE TREATY OF PARIS AND REVOLUTION

Things were not going well in France's other imperial endeavors, either. The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1763, stripped France of an enormous chunk of its North American holdings, causing a renewed desperation in the monarchy to establish successful colonies elsewhere. One of the treaty's primary negotiators, César Gabriel de Choiseul, had been the French Minister of Foreign Affairs since 1761. Choiseul felt keenly the need to recoup losses of territory under his watch. He began a directed attempt at renewed colonization of Cayenne just after the treaty was signed.[5] In 1763–1764, under his direction, France dispatched over nine thousand colonists, including recently displaced Acadians and other French Canadians, to the Cayenne area, following with several thousand more to a new colony at Kourou the following year. A combination of disease and mismanagement claimed nearly all the lives at both locations, and within three years the venture had claimed over fourteen thousand lives and cost nearly thirty million *livres*.[6] What was supposed to provide redemption of the French experience in the New World had instead become the latest and largest in a series of colonial failures from which the French imperial psyche would struggle to recover.

These failures confirmed the French government's long-held suspicion that French Guiana was "uncolonizable" and that its land and climate were deadly to French settlers. Later documents from French parliamentary debates over the resettlement of Guiana refer to the disasters at Kourou and Cayenne habitually.[7] No debate over the colony's potential went unmarred by references to its unfortunate past. A new myth about Guiana emerged among the French—rather than a land of gold and opportunity, the Wild Coast was a tomb. Thus, it became increasingly difficult to convince French settlers to undertake the journey to Cayenne. For those who hoped to secure the colony, a bad reputation and a poor location made things difficult. Human resources compounded the problem. There simply were not enough workers there to share the burden with new settlers, and, though sugar was growing in areas where there were enough workers to run the plantations, the taste of slavery was beginning to sour on the European palate.

The outbreak of the French Revolution contributed to the slow death of the French Guianese plantations. Provoked by ideas that redefined equality and the rights of man, the leaders of the French Republic abolished slavery in 1793. But like in British Guiana, the practice of informal slavery continued in remote areas despite the law, while the support for complete abolition faded with the short-lived power of the revolutionaries.[8] Napoleon, recognizing the need for cheap (or, better yet, free) labor, reinstituted slavery in the colonies in 1802.[9] In nine short years, slaves in French Guiana changed status from slave to free, then back to slave again. This sudden change might have caused upheaval within the colony; however, other than a few minor

insurrections in Cayenne following the 1802 announcement, nothing approaching the size of slave rebellions in Guadeloupe or Haiti occurred. Instead, French Guiana's isolated and sparsely-populated character made it a relatively quiet colony, and subsequently a convenient site for deportation of rebel leaders and enemies of the state.[10] Death rates among these exiles were similar to those of the Cayenne and Kourou settlement expeditions, further confirming the colony's negative reputation as a deathtrap for French settlers.[11] From its inception, the colony had witnessed a parade of setbacks. The revolutionary government and then Napoleon both sought to turn the region into a profitable one, either through reinstitution of slavery or use as a detainment facility.

## THE FIRST PENAL COLONY EXPERIMENT

Ironically, Britain had developed the foundations for the penal colony settlement plans France deployed in Guiana. Throughout the previous century, the British government had been dealing with a rapid rise in the population of petty criminals and political rebels by transferring them to Georgia and the islands of the Caribbean. Though modest in scale, averaging approximately seven hundred convicts per year, its success sparked interest among French government officials.[12] The success of Australia, too, opened the minds of other governments to the possibilities of using unsuccessful territories as penal colonies. Many heeded the words of Jeremy Bentham, who said, "Australia is the penal colony that we can cite as a model, by reason of its choice of locale, the efforts which prepared its colonization and the success that crowns it each day."[13] Thus, while a new revolutionary government was taking control and wrestling with questions of human rights and proper punishment, references to the successes of the British in the Pacific were occurring frequently. Recognizing this success, the government in Paris sought to turn its fortunes using a model already succeeding for its rival in other parts of the world.

In 1791, while Bentham was still praising the successes of the Australian experiment, doctor and naturalist Jean-Baptiste Leblond returned to Paris from Cayenne, having completed a search for quinine in the Guianese jungle. While back at home, Leblond shared glowing accounts of French Guiana's potential with anyone who would listen. He planned to revitalize the colony and to clean up urban areas at home by shipping mainland French indigents to work the land.[14] Another recent returnee, Daniel Lescallier, supplemented Leblond's campaigns by authoring *Exposé des Moyens de Mettre en Valeur la Guyane Française*, a treatise on French Guiana's agricultural potential and how to develop it.[15] These ideas garnered enough interest in the French Assembly that it decided to test the area beginning in 1792, designating it as

an official deportation destination for priests who refused to accept state supremacy. Three years later, political exiles joined the priests transported to Cayenne.[16] Before the end of the decade, the area had already come to be known as the Dry Guillotine; these events, occurring just as slavery was in flux, would set into motion French Guiana's "penalization period"—its development as a penal colony in the second half of the century. Though it was not the agricultural utopia and refuge for indigents envisioned by Leblond and Lescallier, French Guiana finally showed promise as a useful possession.

By the start of the nineteenth century, however, the French Guianese penal colony evinced no more signs of success than its predecessors. In 1809 the Portuguese, with British assistance, seized the territory and held it for five years until its return to the French under a new Treaty of Paris.[17] After the exile of Napoleon, France entered into the Bourbon Restoration period (1815–1848), characterized by restored and strengthened monarchial control. The self-sufficiency and home rule of outlying colonies reverted to pre-1763 levels, with all French Caribbean colonies losing their power of self-determination and even representation within the French Assembly.[18] Returning to pre-revolutionary ideas about the place of the colonies, the Bourbons interpreted the French Caribbean as existing solely for the benefit of the mainland and strictly controlled it from Paris, adapting their administrative approach to the colony to meet whatever needs were most pressing at home. As a result, shifts between a settler colony and a penal colony focus alternated throughout the Bourbon Restoration. For example, after initial attempts at expanding the penal colony failed due to an outbreak of yellow fever, the Bourbon monarchy initiated a new colonization effort in 1819. Pierre Marie Sébastien Catineau-Laroche, a traveling land speculator and author of *De la Guyane Française*: *de Son État Physique, de son Agriculture, de son Régime Intérieur, et du Projet de la Peupler avec des Laboureurs Européens*, requested permission to take three hundred peasant farming families into the interior, give them chartered lands, food, and clothing, and start a farming settlement.[19] The governor of Cayenne sharply discouraged the plan, finding it too dangerous to implement. Instead, a private company's plan to bring in 100,000 French cultivators over a ten year period was adopted, with the continued involvement of the land broker. Catineau-Laroche surveyed land along the Mana River in 1821 under this assignment, issuing a report the following year praising the potential of the land and suggesting a plan to combine the cultivators with army conscripts.[20] New, conflicting reports surfaced concerning what conditions there would really be like, so he only managed to install a small company of military workers and fifty apprenticed orphans that summer. Within two years, over a million francs had been spent and only three families had been permanently installed.[21] By 1825, both experiments—penal and pastoral—were struggling to bear fruit.

## THE FAILURE OF FRENCH CULTURAL ASSIMILATION ATTEMPTS

Acculturation attempts by the church were failing, too. In that year, Mère Anne-Marie Javouhey, a superior of the Saint Joseph of Cluny Convent, took over administration of Catineau-Laroche's settlement and added thirty-six nuns and forty farmers (in hopes of establishing a religious outpost); they, too, would abandon the area by 1827.[22] Javouhey succeeded nonetheless in establishing French Guiana's first real mission designed to acculturate the indigenous population. This mission served multiple purposes: spreading French culture, encouraging trade between settlers and the indigenous population, and providing for religious activity.[23] This outreach to the local tribes illustrates a more fundamental concept regarding Franco-indigenous relations in South America. Rather than in North America, where French fur traders and missionaries alike built hybrid cultures by negotiating with and living among many indigenous groups, relations with the indigenous peoples in French Guiana were conducted exclusively by the church.[24] Prior to their expulsion from the colony in 1762, French Jesuits had independently spearheaded efforts to build relationships with the indigenous tribes, similar to the process in Canada.[25] After their expulsion, though, it was left to smaller enclaves like the convent led by Javouhey to build on these relationships. A lack of settlement and economic success caused the government in France to lose any interest it had in developing a shared culture with these local tribal groups. Jahouvey's mission, then, was the only real attempt at indigenous relations since the departure of the Jesuits. The government's disinterest, and its decision to leave the job of indigenous relations to the church, reflected a larger truth—until French Guiana could show more profit potential, either as an agricultural plantation economy or as a penal colony, Paris would invest little in its development or in the assimilation of its native people, seeing both as a waste of time and money.

Local French Guianese officials, in efforts to support their own causes, continued to search for ways to make the colony viable. The fact that an increase in available labor could rescue French Guiana was not lost on them. The governor of the colony, for instance, noted in 1828 a need to increase slave numbers, but a lack of legal means to do so. In a letter to the Paris government he wondered, "if the employment of a certain number of white convicts would be suitable to the cultivation of our land, without clashing too obviously with our colonial system."[26] But this early in the century, lack of interest in the colony meant the necessary infrastructure linking the penal installation and the plantations had not yet been developed, so the replacement of slave labor with convict labor never fully materialized. To address the lack of colonists and by extension, laborers, the Bourbon monarchy did grant French Guiana a five-member oversight committee in 1823, designed

to advertise the colony to potential settlers and investors and to serve as stewards of its resources. Illustrative of French Guiana's second-class status, however, Martinique and Guadeloupe were granted nine-member committees with broader powers.[27] By 1825, the islands had received a full charter with a governor and general ruling council, whereas French Guiana remained administered by a Paris-appointed governor and an almost entirely Parisian absentee council.[28] French Guiana would be doomed in an inescapable colonial paradox—it was sparsely populated because of its lack of production, and its lack of production would continue to stem from its sparse population.

## CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

The granting of localized ruling councils to the more profitable, well-connected colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe further highlighted French Guiana's lack of independence or support in Paris. The French government continued to administer the colony directly, as a territorial possession rather than a self-sufficient colony. This policy of centralized government control, with all decisions made in Paris by Parisians, and not by any Guianese constituency, would continue to be the Bourbon approach for the entirety of the restoration period.[29] As long as this period—characterized by frustration with the lack of production and accompanied by strict, centralized control from Paris—continued, the growth of the colony and its self-sufficiency would be stunted.

Despite its lack of true localized government or support, French Guiana did experience a moment of relative prosperity after the July Revolution of 1830. Dealing with the upheaval of the revolution temporarily relaxed the mainland's control over the colony, allowing local governors to act with more latitude. This resulted in a brief spike in the importation of slaves, primarily through the Dutch trade. In the years following 1830, the slave population in French Guiana expanded to 19,000, and increases in the production of spices, cotton, sugar, and indigo naturally followed, giving French Guiana the first real economic successes since its inception.[30] Had these circumstances remained static, the colony might have enjoyed enough success to be considered a viable colonial and cultural investment similar to the British model; however, the colony experienced too much flux and change in policy due to regular political upheaval in Paris. Britain's period of relatively stable government and regime continuity allowed its colonies to make gradual, long-lasting adjustments to face challenges like emancipation and the collapse of the sugar industry. For the French colonies, though, the political climate was never placid enough in the nineteenth century to secure the foundations for successful cultural exportation. Instead, French Guiana continued to exist somewhere in the background, its potential never fully real-

ized, and its significance never really accepted; it was simply disregarded as an insignificant partner in empire, and thus did not receive any cultural investment, or any other kind, from the French.

By the time the July Revolution of 1830 had subsided, centralized Parisian control again returned to French Guiana. This political group, though, favored democratic governance more than the Bourbons had. In 1833, a new colonial charter applicable to Guadeloupe, Martinique, Ile de Bourbon, and French Guiana was passed. The charter allowed for local assemblies to be formed similar to those that had existed before the Bourbon Restoration, in the aftermath of the first great revolution.[31] The post-July Revolution French idea of localized control should not be confused with the British or with the government directly following the French Revolution, though. Though democratic in nature, the new overseers remained strict. The French Guianese selected delegates to represent them, but the representation was done in Paris, not at home. The colonial council could not regulate colonial commerce either, so the real interests of the Guianese planters were hardly represented. Planters received punishment for doing anything outside the French regime (e.g., authorities in Martinique were recalled to Paris for reprimands over purchases of farming tools from the United States).[32] Though revolution brought with it a brief period of more local governance, political influence of the planter class, and production through the growth of slavery, the revolution quickly faded too quickly. The government in Paris was soon replaced by a centralized bureaucracy that favored Parisian interests over local, Guianese ones.

## SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION IN FRENCH GUIANA

Slavery was dying in French Guiana, too. The British Emancipation Act of 1833 had significant influence on French attitudes, and by August of that year the monarchy had ordered a complete slave census.[33] Guianese Planters correctly feared that this was a buildup to total emancipation. Signs of the emancipation movement's momentum abounded. The *Société pour l'Abolition de l'Esclavage* was formed by 1834 in Paris.[34] Projects suggested by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1839 and Victor de Broglie in 1843 each recommended emancipation over a six year period, with indemnities paid to the planters. Smaller bills followed, including the emancipation of slaves on public lands and a credit fund for the introduction of European indentured laborers to replace them. By 1844, the Mackau Laws established the policy of gradual abolition.[35] In 1848, four years after the policy's adoption, and in the midst of another revolution, abolitionist Victor Schoelcher proposed the final abolition bill, which authorized compensation to slave owners in return for complete emancipation.[36] Though it took several truncated steps due to

the lack of consistent government in Paris, slavery in the French West Indies and French Guiana had finally come to an end.

Just as in British Guiana, French planters now had to navigate the treacherous economic reality of a slavery-free agricultural export economy. The effects of emancipation in French Guiana were just as immediate; most ex-slaves left the plantations for good in order to practice subsistence agriculture on small plots known as *abattis*.[37] This new shift toward small-scale farming for personal gain by the area's largest labor source caused all hopes for the agricultural development of the colony to fade. Unlike most other parts of the Caribbean, French Guiana's small population could not reorganize and adjust economically. Additionally, the sparse population of slaves (the largest labor force by percentage, but still a small number when compared to British Guiana) had access to a vast amount of land available for the founding of the small-scale *abattis*. So, unlike British Guiana, the French Guianese plantation system completely disintegrated and left little economic or agricultural infrastructure behind, preventing the emergence of a "*nouveau* farming class." The few remaining white planters, along with colonial officials still hoping to turn French Guiana into a profitable venture, tried encouraging the immigration of contract laborers, just as had been accomplished in British Guiana.[38] Africans, Indians, Chinese, and Madeirans were all recruited, but France's attempts fell short of Britain's, because there was simply not enough incentive to entice new workers.[39] French Guiana was left looking for ways other than immigration to solve its newest labor woes.

## EMANCIPATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

The final rejection of slavery by the 1848 revolutionaries and their selected Under-Secretary for Colonies, Victor Schoelcher, was based on the sweeping ideal of universal manhood suffrage and full abolition in all the colonies. Schoelcher, for his part, believed strongly in these ideals, but his tenure would not last long enough to see them realized. The *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon and the establishment of the Second Empire in 1852 returned control to the monarchy, stifling the chances of French Guianese self-rule or self-restructure, as they had been under the Bourbon Restoration and the House of Orleans.[40] The destruction of slavery as an institution under the revolutionaries and the recentralization of government in Paris that followed under the Second Empire ironically worked together to deny the French Guianese any autonomy or hegemony over their local affairs.[41] The republic-kingdom cycle was once again complete, and France again had to justify the costly maintenance of its only South American colony. Without slavery or a viable plantation economy, a shift in focus was crucial.

The establishment of the Second Empire demanded profitable colonies that were not only French by association, but also in its best economic interest. Rather than fully assimilated, equal partners in the French Republic, as they would have been during the revolutionary years, areas like French Guiana were expected to take up the yoke of empire again and simply turn a profit for their royal investors.[42] The pressure on French Guiana to succeed increased due to failures in other parts of the empire, as it had in 1763. Elsewhere in the Americas, French interests were suffering severe setbacks. Besides a very public failure in Mexico in 1838–1839, the French had tried and failed to overthrow the *caudillo* Juan Manuel de Rosas in Argentina. Seeing that Rosas was politically entrenched in the country, the French signed a treaty in 1840 relinquishing colonization plans in Uruguay in return for Rosas' cooperation and discontinuation of forced conscription of French settlers in Buenos Aires.[43] Despite the treaty, Rosas and the Argentines nevertheless continued to be a thorn in the side of the French, and in 1853 an additional treaty was signed among Argentina, Britain, France, and the United States, in which France was forced to agree to free navigation of the Rio de la Plata. These South American setbacks left French Guiana the only French holding on the continent, and increased pressures on it to become useful and profitable.

There were those in France who retained the opinion that the colony could best succeed as a penal detention facility, even after interest in the concept had waned during subsequent revolutions. The 1848 Revolution and the establishment of the Second Empire four years later, though, had marked a turning point in the penal colony debate. The crushing of the June Days uprising had produced over twelve thousand political prisoners.[44] These prisoners, deemed dangerous to the current regime, needed to be removed from continental France and placed in a "fortified enclosure," or at least in a remote location in which they could not start trouble.[45] French Guiana's perfect fit for these deportees and its experience in handling political prisoners made it a logical solution.

## PHASE TWO: DEVIL'S ISLAND

In response to the sudden increased need for detention space, Devil's Island Penitentiary was established in 1851, on an island just off the coast near Kourou. It gained notoriety almost instantly as the "Green Hell" in which political prisoners often carried out life sentences (usually a "life" sentence in this inhospitable environment turned out to be much shorter than the prisoner had hoped).[46] The French Assembly passed a collection of laws codifying the penal experiment and establishing French Guiana as the official detainment facility for the entire French Empire. A law establishing standard conditions

of penal transportation was ratified on May 30, 1854, and continental French *bagnes*, or prison colonies, began closing: Rochefort shuttered in 1852, Brest closed in 1858, and Toulon was abandoned by 1873.[47] To save money and to concentrate its authority, the government moved the inhabitants of these prisons, along with the thousands of other dissidents yet to be assigned, across the ocean to Devil's Island. The invention of the steam engine and its subsequent improvements had begun making transatlantic travel more feasible and affordable, as well as reducing the need for criminal labor to power galleys.[48] This combination of circumstances allowed the largest French penal experiment to date—and the first public "success" of French Guiana—to unfold.

## THE PLIGHT OF THE CIVILIAN CLASS

It is important to remember here, in the mid-nineteenth century, that French Guiana was not populated *entirely* by prisoners. Small-scale farmers, free blacks, and petty local officials appointed to administer the otherwise insignificant colony still remained, though in small numbers, and many still hoped for ways to make the settlement prosper without turning it into another Botany Bay. Hope blossomed in 1855, with the discovery of gold in the Sinnamary River. This breakthrough set off a miniature gold rush of locals and foreign adventurers seeking to make a fortune in the colony's inhospitable interior.[49] The discovery of gold and the economic potential it provided furnished local residents with some sense of self-importance, resulting in a newly-developed interest in autonomy. For the first time, French Guianese agitated with the Parisian government in earnest for increased control over their own affairs, particularly in reference to the growing penal establishment on Devil's Island and the closure of French prisons elsewhere. This petition was reported on and supported by the writers of *The Times* in London, who faulted "erroneous administration" for the continued transport of prisoners without the consent or counsel of the other colonists.[50] How the French government responded to this newfound desire for dominion among its colonists (supported by their British neighbors) further separated the cultures and ideologies of French Guiana from its neighbors.

Seeking a louder voice in the administration of their settlements, residents of the town of Kourou petitioned Louis Napoleon in 1856, protesting their selection as a penal detention facility. They reassured the Parisian monarchy they were not against the idea of the penal system, or the "principle of transportation," but they expressed concern about their settlement's future: "We only protest today, Sire, against the arbitrary processes by which we are obliged to either take our risks and live in peril amid the prison population, or to abandon our lands without any remuneration."[51] In other words, the Kou-

rou residents sought either representation or compensation, a seemingly reasonable request. The residents, however, quickly learned the negative consequences of pursuing self-rule under a Napoleonic regime. Though their petition might have been considered by the equal-rights-minded rulers of the Second or Third Republic, the aristocratic members of the Bonaparte regime appeared less than moved. French Guianese representation had already been suspended from the French Assembly a few years earlier, in order to quell anti-Devil's Island rhetoric, and the new petition was met with a harsher suspension extending to 1871.[52] Though the gold rush benefited the local economy (and still does), the Second Empire had selected the penal colony as French Guiana's primary purpose, and the colony would be made to support Parisian interests, not its own.

Devil's Island continued to grow over the following decade. By 1866, the penal colony had registered 17,017 convicts, including 594 colonials, 329 high-risk political prisoners, and 212 women.[53] It was brutally effective. Of the 17,017 total, 6,809 would die from disease, 809 would disappear or escape (escapees rarely appeared again—most were presumed dead in the jungles or the sea), 1,770 were allowed to return to France, and only 166 chose to remain in French Guiana at the completion of their sentences.[54] The territory's potential as an agrarian settlement and bastion of the mother culture, as British Guiana was becoming, had been traded for temporary success as a penal colony. It should be noted here that British Guiana also hosted penal settlements throughout the nineteenth century, most notably Her Majesty's Penal Settlement of Mazaruni. Never, though, did the British indicate intentions to make Guiana entirely a penal colony, unlike French intentions with Guiana. It was abundantly clear that British Guiana was primarily an agrarian settlement that hosted some prisoners, whereas French Guiana was a prison colony that neighbored some scattered French settlers. Thus, the single-purpose colony surrounding Cayenne, now without self-government privileges after the rejection of the Kourou petition, began hosting an increasing number of prisoners each year of the following decade. Curiously, government documents referring to French Guiana before 1870 always referred to it as a "colony." After 1870, marking the end of a decade of petition rejections and increase in prisoner transportation, many documents from the same offices began referring to Guiana as a "possession,"[55] This simple change of a single word hinted at a profound shift in the attitude of France toward the Guiana territory. Though Britain administered its Guianese possession as a cultural outpost and full-fledged "Little England," France henceforth treated its holding as a territorial asset only, meant to be governed from the center of France's unitary government system—not a "Petite France," or a French cultural outpost, but a portion of France itself.

## RESULTS OF THE UNITARY GOVERNMENT POLICIES

This unitary idea meant that French policy was made in Paris and Paris alone. Economic policies, chiefly those regarding the sugar trade, were routed through the French Assembly—colonial assemblies were an insignificant player in French imperial administration.[56] Due to this fundamental difference in colonial policy with the British, French Guiana never experienced long-term, steady growth of its political influence or its economic power. A series of revolutions—and reassessments of just how strong the central government's power should be—created myriad policy changes and regular removals of autonomy from French Guianese settlers. Each government, upon its installation (usually by force), had to prove its power before the French public, struggling to regain imperial control and recentralizing the government to prevent leaching of power to the periphery.[57] The reassessment, not surprisingly, began anew in 1871 with the transition to the Third Republic. The ideals of the Third Republic were encapsulated by Prime Minister Jules Ferry, who in 1885 defined French imperialism as having three motives: industrial growth, a mission to "civilize," and competition with other imperial powers.[58] Though the "burden of civilizing" the indigenous people is reminiscent of British imperialist thought *à la* Rudyard Kipling, it was secondary to industrial growth and competition motives, which played out on a much higher frequency. French governments did not create schools for cultural assimilation, nor did they even support attempts to do so by missionaries like Mère Javouhey. They did, however, pour money into recruitment of plantation laborers and transportation of prisoners. French Guiana had never been, nor would it be under the new Third Republic, a French cultural outpost.

Any arguments suggesting the French government considered Guiana anything but an imperial storage facility must consider the debates over prisoner transport from the 1860s into the 1880s. The South Pacific island of New Caledonia was, like French Guiana, a penal territory held by the French Empire. It had received white prisoners since 1864, and was the preferred place for convicted whites because of its reputation as more amenable to colonization and its similarities to Australia.[59] For the next thirty years, debates over whether or not New Caledonia should remain a penal colony continued in Paris. By the 1880s, the government had spoken, determining that New Caledonia was simply too promising as a French colony to be wasted as a dumping ground for convicts.[60] Exclusive transportation of white prisoners to New Caledonia ceased permanently in 1887, and French Guiana became the destination for all races of prisoners. Under new legislation by the Third Republic government, all French imperial citizens between the ages of twenty-one and sixty, regardless of race, who were convicted of more than seven offenses or sentenced more than twice for periods longer than

three months, could be classified as recidivists and sentenced to French Guiana for life.[61] Dual death sentences were thus carried out—recidivists were sent to die on Devil's Island, while Guiana itself was condemned to languish as a colonial backwater for criminals. French Guiana's death sentence was both tangible and psychological—it would be the only "possession" deemed substandard enough to house all of France's least desirable citizens.

The French imperial view of Guiana as its closet, back yard, or storage facility was built on a foundation of its early failures as a settlement, and exacerbated by the government's desire to justify its investment. A tumultuous political century complicated the problem further, fundamentally altering the way this portion of Guiana was administered and developed.[62] Disagreement over how to structure the future of the colony, define its purpose, and craft its administration prevented a central focus from forming in regard to French Guiana, and it essentially fell into a kind of Green Hell of its own. Peter Redfield, whose work began this chapter, and has been the most comprehensive to date in the analysis of the French possession, explains the challenge of the colony best: "As time passed and my research continued, I began to realize that an obsession with 'development'—or rather its persistent absence—ran deeply through the soil of French Guiana, inseparable from the history of the colony beneath the department."[63] Though the concept of "civilizing" the area was indeed strong, a French government in flux and its quest to prove competence put the slower-moving goal of cultural assimilation on the back burner. Almost all French territories experienced some degree of this phenomenon. With the possible exception of Senegal, most of the colonies were ruled in cooperation with local rulers with very little interest in replacing aspects of indigenous cultures with French ones.[64] Anthropological historian Dana Hale suggests that this general lack of interest in cultural assimilation would have been especially true in French Guiana, because the failures of the past and the dim forecast for future successes would have made cultural integration seem like more effort than it was worth.[65] Unlike in other areas of the French Empire, any resources spent in French Guiana seemed to show little promise of return.

## A FORGOTTEN PRISON

Just where in the hierarchy of French imperial priorities French Guiana ranked can be determined by a review of France's appraisals of its other possessions. First of all, a firm distinction was maintained between continental French citizens and those who resided in the colonies, either as settlers or natives. Those in the colonies were seen as "subject to the power of the French state," and this power was fully external to them; as non-Frenchmen, they neither participated in its exercise nor in its negotiation.[66] Those in

France and those in the rest of the empire were separated in terms of class and power. But within the colonies, too, there was a "hierarchy of races" based on past French experiences with different indigenous groups and how interested they were in assimilating each group into French culture. Hale argues that the native Guianese would rank below even sub-Saharan Africans because of their small population and the French dislike of the region based on its early failures.[67] When the desire for productivity and the low placement of French Guiana on the imperial hierarchy are considered together, the French disdain for its South American possession becomes clearer. Though it could certainly not abandon the possession completely, thus admitting defeat to its rivals in South America, France had no desire to continue investing money in what had become simply a rug under which French social problems were swept.

The hierarchy persisted through the end of the nineteenth century, as France redirected its attention fully to its African investments. French territorial holdings in Africa grew from 1,000,000 $km^2$ to 9,500,000 $km^2$ in the years from 1880 to 1895, and the inhabitants under French rule increased from five to fifty million.[68] The implications of the new African focus, paralleled by the British, were not the same for all the Guianas. Britain had established a long-term, viable settlement in British Guiana, begun the process of assimilating the native cultures, and now had the luxury of allowing the colony to govern itself to a large extent. This allowed British Guiana to continue functioning on its own in the face of crashing sugar prices and a shift of the homeland's attention to the challenges of Africa. French Guiana, though, had been administered entirely from Paris, had hardly been settled permanently by any group of size, and had no stable, hybridized culture in place. It was, for all intents and purposes, a warehouse for the rest of the French Empire. When French interest shifted out of the Caribbean and into Africa, then, French Guianese prospects dimmed with it.

In the spring of 1895, a prison transport ship, the *St. Nazaire*, arrived on Devil's Island with its routine load of political prisoners and convicts. But despite the average nature of the voyage, among the boat's compliment of prisoners was an inmate of unusual stature and circumstance. Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jew and a decorated French military officer, would begin his sentence to decay on Devil's Island after a show trial and a quick verdict. Though his initial steps onto the Wild Coast would not be heard much past the breaking waves on the island's rocky shore, his punishment, suffering, and eventual redemption would spark outrage, sympathy, and support across the ocean. If it had not been made clear before, it would soon become obvious—the Green Hell was no place for rehabilitation, nor was the surrounding colony a place for development. The story of Dreyfus and, consequently, other Devil's Island convicts, would bring France's quiet failure in the tropics to the global stage. Just as the sugar collapse would remake British

Guiana in the coming century, the Dreyfus Affair and the slow collapse of faith in the penal colony system would alter French Guiana's image and its place in the world. While the British Guianese faced a change in economy, French Guiana faced the new century with a complete loss of identity.

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## *Chapter Six*

# A Dutch Emulsion

## *The Active Administration Period in Dutch Guiana (1814–1914)*

As the nineteenth century dawned, Dutch Guiana found itself an ingredient in a stew of Guianas. The Dutch colonial experiment had simmered along with its neighboring colonies, one embracing its mother culture (British Guiana) and another feeling abandoned by it (French Guiana). This mottled mixture of European colonies was not only geographical but also cultural and political. The Dutch applied the British model of total assimilation to the *economic* aspects of the colony, but French-style *laissez-faire* when it came to cultural differences among its people. The willingness of the Dutch to open their colony to any ethnic group, as long as it was profitable, created a collection of cultural flavors that was difficult to balance. However, their appetite for profit resulted in a willful ignorance of other issues and kept the Dutch from becoming too involved with the day-to-day drudgeries of maintaining this dish of disparate ingredients. But to this Dutch mixture was added, like in the other colonies, the issue of emancipation—a hard element to digest for those wishing only to make a profit. Dutch Guiana's composition was different from its British and French counterparts; the Dutch administered Dutch Guiana for economic profit alone, and the way they would handle emancipation would further delineate Dutch Guiana's culture from that of the others.

### FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Though the Dutch empire maintained through the West India Company had always been economically centered, Dutch focus on financial development

deepened during the nineteenth century. After the realization that the fabled Manoans and El Dorado would not likely be found in Dutch Guiana, the government of the Netherlands first took a dismissive approach similar to the French—if money could not be made, why bother? Documents from the time reflect this attitude. When describing the colony's boundaries in descriptions and documents, Dutch officials and explorers spoke exclusively of the coastal boundaries. The government found the inland boundaries inconsequential, as the interior promised little profitability and had been settled by a small number of insignificant farmers. The Dutch possessed no desire to spend money on survey teams to demarcate such irrelevant territory.[1] Furthermore, the farmers who occupied Dutch Guiana rarely owned the land but instead worked for absentee landlords. Over 80 percent of the plantations established by 1813 were owned by individuals not living in Dutch Guiana.[2] The Dutch were investors, not colonizers.

As investors, strict economic control of the colony was paramount to the Netherlands government, and thus it did not allow Dutch Guianese to trade with any nations other than the mother country until 1848.[3] Though the Dutch would permit anyone *into* the colony, even British settlers, their control over the economic activities of the colonial residents *in* the colony was total. As part of its strict economic policy, and in addition to its stringent import control, the Dutch government augmented its profit margins by investing minimally in the development of the colony beyond its raw materials-processing capacity. Even when situations on the ground suggested more direct investment was needed, the government proved hesitant. For example, when overall cultivated acreage declined due to crop failure later in the century (50,000 cultivated acres in 1848 fell to 40,000 by 1862), allocations for infrastructure to improve output never increased. Infrastructural allocations for *all* Dutch colonies (globally) never, at any time during the century, rose above 0.1 percent of the total budget. Remembering that this was the total for all Dutch colonies combined, and that Dutch Guiana was one of the least funded colonies of this group, the 0.1 percent number becomes even more miniscule.[4] The colony received virtually no investment, and would not until it first showed revenue potential. Such was the policy for the strictly profit-minded Dutch imperialists.

Money talked in Dutch Guiana—possession of it determined who enjoyed the right to speak in the government. Because Dutch Guiana was a full-fledged agricultural export colony until 1866, it was administered by the largest plantation owners united in a court of authority known as the *Hof van Politie*. As long as the plantation owners continued sending profits back to the home country, they were allowed legislative control through the *Hof*; however, as the agricultural sector declined (which will be discussed in greater detail later), the *Hof* was replaced by the *Koloniale Staten*. It took over permanently in 1866; plantation owners ceased to dominate the body,

and by 1901 membership had been expanded to all taxpayers with an annual income of over 1,400 guilders.[5] Though the occupations of government leaders changed over the century, their financial requirement did not. Contributors to economic well-being were given positions of authority, and all others were not.

## THE *KOLONIALE STATEN* SYSTEM

The Dutch home government had created the *Koloniale Staten* as a constitutional, quasi-representative government designed to leave most governing in the hands of local, wealthy legislators, but answering more to the continent than the *Hof* had. Creation of the *Staten* allowed for fiscal control by responsible parties loyal to the Dutch government without the expense of creating a full colonial parliament. Through this body, the colony was given the right to submit and approve its own budget, but with economic stipulations. As long as the Dutch controlled the books and received acceptable levels of profit, they were willing to leave the colonists to their own devices. However, in the agreement setting up the new *Koloniale Staten*, the colony could lose the privilege of budget creation in any given year if one of three issues was present: if a Dutch subsidy was needed to supplement the colony's funds (which was nearly always the case), if the Dutch ruler withheld approval because of poor economic performance of the colony (a very vague term), or if the colony failed to meet the imposed budget deadline.[6] Clearly, Dutch Guiana's level of independence was not based on its ability to stand on its own culturally, or on its inhabitants' self-sufficiency, but rather on its timely revenue contributions alone.

The government's interest in Dutch Guiana did not go much beyond these budgetary issues. Slavery kept it running at a profit, only nominal subsidies were needed to keep it "in the black," and significantly increasing its output would require more time and money than the government was willing to invest. Until something changed the *status quo*, there was no need or desire for additional action on the part of the home government. In fact, the budget for Dutch Guiana was traditionally one of the very last items discussed before the Christmas recess marking the end of the year's parliamentary sessions. Furthermore, important issues for the colony were often "automatically" passed rather than debated. Most representatives to the body could not have debated effectively about the colony even if they had wanted to, since reports took so long to trickle in from South America that they usually did not arrive in the offices of the States-General (the Dutch parliament) until the budget had already been passed anyway.[7] As long as the slaves worked and the money arrived in the coffers regularly, Dutch involvement in the day-to-day activities and cultural development of the colony was nil.

Dutch involvement in the colony's *assets*, though, was considerable, and no asset was more closely monitored or brutally exploited than its slaves. Because slaves were treated as capital, rather than humans, Dutch slave owners developed a reputation for brutality. The resulting high mortality rates of the African slave population, a by-product of this brutality and the inhospitable climate conditions, shaped the culture of Dutch Guiana. Because the ratio of Africans to Europeans was higher here than anywhere else in the region, and because the high mortality rate meant most slaves on a given plantation were recently arrived replacements(more freshly "African" and not yet acculturated), violent resistance and maroonage occurred at much higher rates in the Dutch portion of Guiana.[8,9] The high frequency of runaways and armed rebellion would suggest a historical question—was the Dutch treatment of slaves that much harsher, or did the Dutch simply pull captive Africans from tribes with a stronger tradition of armed resistance?

## A REPUTATION OF BRUTALITY

This question of harshness is answered in the quantitative data from Dutch Guianese plantations. From 1668 to 1823, between 300,000 and 325,000 African slaves were imported into the Dutch plantations; in 1823, the total population of African descent in the colony hovered around 50,000.[10] Conversely, the British and French colonies in North America imported a comparable number of slaves over the same period, numbering around 427,000; but by 1825, the United States alone had a black population of over two million.[11] Though these are absolute numbers, they still represent an interesting comparison of mortality. Despite a century and a half of reproduction and growth, Dutch Guianese slaves decreased in number by 85 percent, while those in the United States had quadrupled in the same period. Though manumission certainly contributed to the higher number, an 85 percent decrease despite reproduction and growth was incredibly high, meaning Dutch slaves were dying before producing offspring. Thus, if mortality did not occur more often, it at least happened more quickly. The discrepancy was not just a North American phenomenon, either. Jamaica and Saint-Domingue, which had comparable notoriety for slave brutality and similar environmental conditions, still exhibited less mortality than Dutch Guiana. Jamaican slaves decreased by around 50 percent over the same period, while the slave population of Saint-Domingue declined by around 45 percent.[12] Estimates from other sources further support the grim picture of Dutch Guianese slave mortality. Another source suggests the average number of slaves imported annually from 1650-1826 was between 1,500 and 2,000, a slightly lower total of about 250,000 slaves. The 1943 census of Dutch Guiana reflected only 70,415 individuals of African descent.[13] Even factoring in the less-than-

perfect census methods of counting maroon villages, this 72 percent decline in population is astounding when considering there had been over a century of reproduction and growth by the 1943 count and similar male-female ratios in Dutch Guiana to other comparable areas. Neither French nor British Guiana matched these figures, either; in fact, slaves did no worse than free settlers in French Guiana, where the mortality rates of the two were nearly identical through the heart of the nineteenth century.[14] By all accounts, the slave trade in Dutch Guiana was disproportionately fatal. This pattern had been established for over a century in the colony, as the Dutch slave traders spent more time replenishing declining slave populations in the Guianese plantations than any other sector. Though the Dutch were not the sole providers of slaves to all colonies in the New World (the Portuguese trafficked slaves in large numbers as well), the pervasiveness of the Dutch slave trade makes it a good reflector of overall trends and allows comparison of the numbers to be feasible. Over 40 percent of the total number of slaves delivered by the Dutch to the New World went to Dutch Guiana. Only 6 percent went to Brazil, nine to British Guiana, four to the Antilles, and about 30 percent to the rest of Spanish America.[15] The fact that more captive Africans were going to Dutch Guiana than to much larger Spanish colonies is striking and reflects a critical demand for new slaves in the colony. Further, the data from the nineteenth century only included slaves traded up to 1814, when the Netherlands abolished its slave trade. An estimated 300,000 additional slaves (not found in the numbers above) were smuggled into Dutch Guiana after abolition and before emancipation.[16] The colony's prosperity was clearly built on the backs of captive Africans, and the Dutch desire for profitable colonies kept the demand for them high.

This insatiable need for affordable labor made the idea of abolition and emancipation difficult to accept for planters in the Dutch colonies, especially Dutch Guiana. The Netherlands, principally in regard to the West Indies, possessed an absence of any noteworthy abolitionist movement. In contrast, the British had developed abolitionist traditions and movements over a century earlier, as had the French.[17] For the Dutch, the idea of complete abolition with no economic offset seemed financially irresponsible; instead, Dutch planters and most representatives in the *Hof van Politie* preferred a practice known as *manumission* in the years leading up to emancipation in 1863.

## EMANCIPATION THROUGH MANUMISSION

Because slavery was seen as an economic problem rather than a social one among the Dutch planters, an economic solution was preferred. This came in the form of manumission, or voluntary abolition by the slave owner under certain restricted conditions. To increase production, Dutch plantation own-

ers offered the possibility of manumission after a period of increased productivity or hard work. They also utilized manumission to keep housing or food costs down in lean years. Not all maroons in Dutch Guiana, therefore, were escaped slaves, as was generally the case in British Guiana; instead, some had simply been cut loose and sent away to save the owner money. This process was not without government regulation, either, since money could also be made from the manumission itself. Until official emancipation in 1863, Dutch Guiana's colonial court required slave owners to petition for permission to manumit a slave legally. These petition letters, called *requesten*, were then approved or denied by the court, with the costs of filing usually deferred to the slave owner but occasionally billed to the slave, if he or she had gathered enough funds from side ventures to fund his or her own manumission.[18] Of all the Guianas, manumission on a large scale was unique to Dutch Guiana. Again, this is hardly surprising, as Dutch imperial administrators placed economic feasibility above all other issues.

This is not to say that manumission was without benefit to the slaves, as well. For many captive Africans, staying near family or close to friends made running away and joining maroon communities in the jungle unattractive; manumission allowed them to stay close and remain on the right side of the law. Basically, the courts defined manumission as a legal transfer of property; in this case, the slave was allowed to purchase himself or herself. Despite the challenges of manumission and the obstacles a newly freed slave faced, the process became a noteworthy cultural phenomenon throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. While only 5 percent of all Dutch Guianese were free citizens in 1738, the proportion rose to 15 percent by 1830 principally through manumission and continued to increase until emancipation.[19] For the Dutch investors, the process was simple—import slaves at a rate necessary to overcome their mortality, increase production by providing them incentives to work through the promise of manumission, and leave them to their own cultural devices before and after manumission, as long as they continued to create profit. Pro-abolition legislation passed in the neighboring British and French Guiana, however, forced the Dutch to reconsider the role slavery played in their economic system; but their economic success would defer the issue at least for a while.

Like its British counterpart, Dutch Guiana developed a strong plantation economy during the first half of the nineteenth century. Sugar plantations skyrocketed in number during the previous century, while cotton and coffee both experienced a surge at the turn of the nineteenth century. After the previous century's increase, the number of sugar estates experienced a steady decline through the nineteenth century. Though this seems incongruous at first, the decline in estates was not due to a declining economy but rather an increase in efficiency. In 1862, for instance, only half the number of sugar plantations existed as had in 1714. The 1862 total sugar production for the

colony, though, was twice that of 1714.[20] Thus, Dutch Guiana's economic growth, riding on the backs of sugar and slaves, mirrored that of British Guiana. But, rather than amplifying assimilation policies and acculturation programs as the British had done, the Dutch viewed the subsistent colony as not in need of fixing. Captive Africans were left to develop their own cultures independently. Because so many were recent arrivals (due to heavy workloads and resulting mortality), Dutch slave communities retained a much stronger African cultural element than their British counterparts. These isolated, strongly African slave populations also felt more independent because of the Dutch *laissez-faire* approach to cultural assimilation. Meanwhile, as production increased on the larger, more efficient plantations, small-scale plantation farmers were edged out of the agricultural business. The smaller farmers needed to release slaves to reduce costs, and the larger farms no longer needed as many unskilled laborers. More slaves than ever found themselves in the position to lobby for manumission.

## VAN DEN BOSCH'S SLAVERY STUDY

Dutch authorities noted the change in labor patterns. In 1828, in response to these developments and as part of a campaign to simplify administration, King Willem I appointed a personal representative, Johannes Van den Bosch, to investigate Dutch Guiana's labor situation. Van den Bosch concluded that slavery had become no real asset to the colony, and that once neighboring British Guiana abolished it for good, it would become increasingly difficult to maintain the existing slave population.[21] His conclusions garnered support over the next decade, as more Dutch officials determined that slavery was outliving its usefulness. Planters began to focus on continued mechanization and intensification, rather than land acquisition and increasing the number of workers.[22] This policy saved them the costs of housing and feeding large slave populations, not to mention the hassle of acquiring and disciplining slaves themselves. As the British and French altered their slave policies, slaves became exponentially harder to procure and keep in Dutch Guiana.

In fact, slavery might have died out by the middle of the 1840s in Dutch Guiana, were it not for a curious political development. Van den Bosch had suggested merging the Dutch Antilles and Dutch Guiana into a single colony, administered from Paramaribo, as a way to reduce administrative costs and streamline the government. The king accepted this suggestion and merged the colonies, placing the capital of all Dutch colonies in the Americas in Paramaribo. Both Van den Bosch and the monarch expected too much too soon, though. By 1845, the unified Dutch colonies had not yet realized any marked increase in agricultural profits, nor did the Netherlands experience any real decrease in subsidy requests from the colonies. Due to this perceived

failure in economic performance, the Netherlands government scrapped the plan and returned Dutch Guiana to its own administrative district.[23] Though on the surface this seemed like a routine economic decision that only affected the way the colony was administered, there were deeper implications. The public failure of Van den Bosch's plan opened the door for critics of emancipation to attack his credibility on that issue, too. Damage to Van den Bosch's reputation as a visionary for Dutch Guianese progress allowed his political enemies enough firepower to keep slavery alive for another eighteen years.

## POST VAN DEN BOSCH

Nor did subsequent administrations improve labor issues. The next governor-general, Reinier Frederik Baron van Raders, who had originally been appointed to take over the new united government in Paramaribo in 1845, supported emancipation, but his costly proposals for improving river transportation and providing better care for slaves lost him support within the thrifty Dutch government at home. Overall, his tenure failed to achieve anything other than the opening of the colony to free trade.[24] Though this was an important accomplishment in its own right, it only expanded export opportunities; it did nothing to change the labor situation within the colony.

Calls for comprehensive emancipation fluctuated over the course of the next decade. The *Hof van Politie* wished to eliminate slavery in order to reduce administrative costs but could not do so without compensating the planters, who still maintained a strong hold over the colony's economy. The fact that such a large majority of *Hof* representatives were planter elites meant that without an ample compensation plan, no emancipation program would receive enough votes to pass. Though many in Dutch Guiana agreed that emancipation simply would not be possible without the propping up of the plantations through subsidies or other remuneration, they also realized that the cost of this compensation would be massive. Census data reported 33,000 slaves remaining on plantations in 1853, and the Dutch government could scarcely afford the per capita compensation the planters in the *Hof* were seeking.[25] The plantation economy became ensnared in a financial conundrum—without proper reimbursement, planters were hesitant to emancipate, but without emancipation, many incurred the high costs of maintaining slaves they no longer needed. Consequently, over the course of the 1850s, the Dutch debate over abolition paralleled the economic market's peaks and valleys.[26] Eventually, though, the rising cost of maintaining a slave population either fully captive or on the "manumission track," coupled with the decrease in demand for large numbers of slaves, forced the Dutch planters to accept the abolition solution. For most in the *Hof,* emancipation was a business decision; it had never been an ideological debate at all. But

they certainly intended to negotiate the best possible financial settlement for themselves and their planter colleagues.

The social change of emancipation inevitably arrived, and the demands of the planters to be subsidized presented new challenges to the Dutch governors. The first bill for the full abolition of slavery throughout the empire reached the States-General on July 17, 1856, though it did not pass and enter into force until May 7, 1859.[27] The bill abolished slavery beginning in 1860 for the East Indies, and beginning in 1863 for Dutch Guiana and the West Indis, with owners allowed three hundred guilders for each slave they released.[28] Fear among the white minority that free Africans from British Guiana would make their way into Dutch Guiana and cause an insurrection before emancipation could occur resulted in a decision to keep the reins tightened on Guianese slaves for the additional three years.[29] The agreement was a significant victory for plantation owners. Compensation for the Dutch Guianese slave owners was set at three hundred guilders per slave, a full hundred guilders higher than the rate paid to farmers in the Antilles. Considering the planters were being paid triple value for many slaves they really no longer needed anyway, the abolition bill's passage illustrated the power of the Dutch Guianese "plantocracy" as long as it continued turning a profit.[30] The States-General in the Netherlands, ready to rid itself of the slavery issue, authorized the compensation. In all, almost ten million guilders were paid out, most of which came from surpluses earned from the colony on Java.[31] But the compensation did not solve all the planters' problems; though better technology and smaller operations meant that the plantation owners required *fewer* slaves, they certainly could not operate without *all* the slaves. Another economic decision would need to be made if production were to continue at its current levels.

The solution to the economic woes caused by emancipation was *Staatstoezicht*. Under this program, newly free Africans were required to work as contract employees for a plantation owner of the freedman's own choice, under supervision of the state, for a ten year period. The *Hof van Politie* believed this would provide three advantages: a peaceful transition from slavery to free labor, training of free Africans for the new "responsibilities of free citizenship," and the guarantee of an adequate supply of labor for plantation owners during the transition out of slavery.[32] Like manumission, the solution of state supervision acted as an economic response to an economic problem and had little to do with social or cultural issues, short of making plantations more secure and less prone to slave rebellion. In short, the Dutch government wanted to turn its slaves into wage workers who would work harder to purchase their freedom rather than assisting them financially in an immediate transition to free citizenry.[33] Additionally, this allowed the process of manumission to continue in a new way—slaves could purchase an early release from their contract from a plantation owner with their earnings.

Captive Africans were no longer slaves, but as "free" citizens they were still required to purchase the complete freedom to work where they pleased.

Despite the policy's thinly veiled parallels to slavery before emancipation, the idea of *Staatstoezicht* actually worked better for many slaves than it did for plantation owners. Many former slaves purchased their freedom much earlier than the end of their ten-year contract period, and then achieved the acquisition of their own small subsistence farms, as they had in British Guiana.[34] For plantation owners, *Staatstoezicht* did not provide the decade-long cushion of cheap labor they had hoped to use to replenish the labor supply. The abolition of slave labor was exacerbated by a quickly dwindling paid labor market (since many former slaves valued personal independence more than a wage, which they had never had before, anyway). Smaller farmers who could not afford to mechanize and increase efficiency instead took their compensation money from the Dutch government and left Dutch Guiana. A resulting lack of investment capital remaining in the colony, coupled with the labor shortage and increased competition with other sugar producers, including Cuba and colonies in the East (with the opening of the Suez Canal), squeezed out many of the remaining mid-range sugar growing operations.[35] This left an unusual dichotomy in Dutch Guiana—agricultural production came either from very small plot farms or giant, centralized conglomerates, which needed more capital to grow. The chasm was exacerbated by an exodus of middle class farmers, a segregation of free black subsistence farmers, and an 1870 petition by the prominent planters to Willem III requesting direct financial aid to prop up the failing plantation economy.[36] He granted the request but was, at this point, funding only half of a colony. Prominent white planters, a smaller segment of the population than ever before, were tied to the purse strings of the Netherlands, while independent free Africans built communities and networks of small plot farms deeper in the interior with little interest in cooperating with their former overseers to build a unified polity.

The Dutch problems of administration developed into a unique issue. At this time, Britain was trying to unify its colony, assimilate its colonists under one cultural rubric, and stamp out maroon rebellion. France was changing its vision for Guiana from a cultural outpost and viable self-ruling colony to a storehouse and penal institution administered directly from Paris. The Dutch, because of their financial policies and lack of investment in the inclusion of free blacks into Dutch Guianese colonial society, found themselves governing two fundamentally separate colonies. One colony was a white European urban settlement along the coast, with an infusion of free Africans who were willing to live shoulder-to-shoulder with their former overseers and attempt a life in the city. The second was a strongly independent network of maroon communities in the interior. Before considering the new urban Dutch Guiana, we must first consider the fate of this interior population.

## THE MAROONS OF DUTCH GUIANA

Richard Price, whose work on the Guiana maroons has been among the most extensive studies of the group to date, sums up the differences between Dutch Guiana's maroons and the maroon communities of the rest of the region:

> For some 300 years, the Guianas have been the classic setting for maroon communities. Though local maroons in French and British Guiana were wiped out by the end of the eighteenth century, the maroons of Suriname, known as 'Bush Negroes,' have long been the Hemisphere's largest maroon population. With the possible exception of Haiti, these have been the most highly developed independent societies and cultures in the history of Afro-America.[37]

The way the Dutch managed both slavery and emancipation directly caused this independence. The seeds of an independent maroon society had been planted much earlier than the moment of emancipation.

Sociologist and cultural anthropologist Humphrey E. Lamur, from the University of Amsterdam, explored further the roots of Dutch maroon society in an article for the *Journal of Black Studies*, in which he used data and anecdotal evidence from Vossenburg, a typical pre-emancipation plantation in Dutch Guiana. At Vossenburg, like most other plantations, slaves lived for over two centuries as harshly oppressed people who first had to learn how to survive in their hostile environment. As the group developed and negotiated ways to continue their survival and improve their quality of life, the slave societies on Vossenburg created a strongly unified culture, a family arrangement, and a networking system based on reciprocity and collective responsibility.[38] Because of the severe level of oppression and the harshness of slave life in Dutch Guiana, the bonds built among the slaves of the Dutch colony emerged comparatively sturdy.

More evidence of this strong bond among the slave communities and the maroon societies that grew out of them is found in the ways that white plantation owners dealt with the outlying communities. Rather than taking an assimilative approach as the British had, the Dutch planters applied a sort of *apartheid* in Guiana to protect themselves. Social policies *discouraged* assimilation particularly across racial lines. Slave owners prevented the captive Africans from developing skills that could later harm them by strictly limiting their workers to the performance of certain types of labor only.[39] Additionally, slaves were even required to wear different colored clothes from their masters and were forced to play different music.[40] Though these restrictions existed to some degree in other slave holding societies in the New World, the Dutch approach took *apartheid* further, even placing obstacles in the way of slaves' conversion to Christianity.[41] Other colonies (see French

Guiana, for instance) had used Christianity as an acculturation and assimilation tool.

The cultural *apartheid* policy had the reverse effect from what was intended. Maroon communities increased as oppressed slaves ran away to the interior and joined the growing population. Though living outside the parameters of the colony provided these runaways no political power, maroons routinely exercised their collective strength during the pre-emancipation nineteenth century. For instance, after poor health conditions and malnourishment killed over fifteen thousand slaves in the 1819 smallpox epidemic, riots and insurrections by maroons incensed at the poor treatment of their compatriots (and often family members) became commonplace.[42] In 1821, rioting maroons made their way into Paramaribo and set fire to over four hundred houses. Additional arsons occurred in 1832.[43] The maroon invasion of the capital illustrated a clear symptom of the stresses within a society wrestling with the marginalization of such a significant portion of its population.

The presence and resilience of the maroon culture in Dutch Guiana continued to strengthen because the Dutch did little to incorporate them. Moreover, since the brutality of the institution meant a greater percentage of new arrivals from Africa (as replacements), the slaves were less "Europeanized" than those in other colonies. But, as mentioned earlier, they also "Creolized" faster, meaning they combined their existing traditions into a single village or community network, establishing a new Afro-American, "Creole" culture along the way, rather than simply remaining divided along old African tribal or linguistic lines.[44] The rapid Creolization cannot be explained by slave origins either—slaves in British and French Guiana generally came from the same areas, the same African tribes, and through the same traders. The groups of captive Africans arriving in the Guianas were relatively similar across the three colonies.[45] Yet, the Dutch slaves created more successful and more hybridized long-term societies, a direct result of the way the colonists were governed.

## "MAROONAGE" AND CULTURAL HYBRIDIZATION

The methods Dutch slave owners used contributed heavily to the formation of these societies. First, the Dutch plantation owners purposefully bought slaves from different regions who spoke different languages, in order to decrease the chance of rebellion. This worked in the short term, but also created a situation in which slaves were forced to develop a mixed language intelligible to all in order to communicate effectively. What first kept them apart linguistically spurred their Creolization later. Second, the Dutch practiced the unique method of keeping families together, particularly mothers

and children. Not surprisingly, this was mainly an economic decision—slaves tended to work harder when family units shared the labor, and their resale value was higher when in a pre-configured work unit.[46] The practice created the unusual combination of strong families within ethnically, linguistically, and tribally blended communities. Family traditions had been strong to start, but multi-tribal slave communities formed out of necessity; fathers and mothers could only protect their children by forming a collective village to raise and help protect the child. The village had to hybridize its cultures, share its strength, and work collectively on the basis of reciprocity, or risk putting its children in jeopardy. The decision to create a unified, multicultural slave (and later maroon) community reflected in the way children viewed their elders—children in these slave and maroon communities often called many different men "father."[47] This simple cultural phenomenon represented a significant sociological event—the slaves learned to unite and work together sooner than their overseers. While not necessarily successful in staving off mortality rates, this method was a great success in cementing maroon culture together.

Other evidence of this successful hybridization of culture exists. Linguistic evidence abounds; three new languages were created by the slaves of Dutch Guiana—Sranan, Ndjuka, and Saramaccan. Speakers of one could usually understand the other.[48] The three languages formed as successful hybrids of approximately 20 percent English, 20 percent Portuguese/Spanish, 10 percent Dutch, and 50 percent mixed African tribal languages.[49] The languages, spoken by nearly all of the maroon communities, still exist today—a testament to the success of the marginalized African population in retaining their cultural foundations and building upon them.

The communities also thrived because of a hybridization of crops. The mixture of slaves of differing origins made possible the introduction of new food groups, including improved varieties of yam, ackee (an African fruit similar to the Asian longan), and breadfruit, in the communities. These slaves took what they learned from the globally savvy Dutch farmers and added it to a community corpus of knowledge about native African cultivation. This created a varied and nutritious dietary foundation for maroons living in the jungles, both before emancipation as runaways and afterwards as free farmers.[50] For the remainder of the nineteenth century (and a great deal of the twentieth), *apartheid* allowed the maroons to develop a fully viable culture parallel to the Dutch under a single Guianese umbrella. Dutch Guiana had become a collection of mini-Guianas.

## THE CESSION TREATY AND IMMIGRATION

The marginalization of captive Africans in the Europeanized portion of the colony may have resulted in additional freedom of the maroon communities, but it restricted the economic freedom of Dutch planters, now supported by neither slave *nor* wage labor. The first attempts after the abolition of the slave trade to increase available labor were domestic. The government of the Netherlands suggested—and attempted—the importation of Dutch farmers, *Hollandsche Boeren*, to work on understaffed or deserted plantations. In 1845, the first group settled in Voorsburg and Groningen, but had been given inadequate provisions. Of the first 384, 189 died of typhus, fifty-six returned to the Netherlands, and only about a hundred survived long enough to move up the Suriname River, settling a few years later for good near Paramaribo.[51] The plan succeeded only marginally; though a small enclave of *Boeren* descendents still exists in modern Suriname, they never arrived in large enough numbers to check the decline in labor force availability.[52] An 1858 expedition, another minor attempt, brought five hundred Chinese farmers from Macao. After hardships similar to the *Boeren*, these few Chinese farmers did become quite successful, a precursor to the eventual long-term solution to labor shortages.[53] Though these attempts represented a good start, it had become clear that a concerted effort from the Dutch government was necessary to counter the severity of the labor shortage. The *Koloniale Staten*, successor of the *Hof van Politie*, took up the issue.

In February 1868, the *Koloniale Staten* issued a letter to King Willem III requesting that the government consider the possibility of funding and supporting a mass immigration project. The letter was introduced to the States-General as a bill, "to promote the importation of free laborers to the colony of Suriname."[54] The bill was divisive, particularly when a fund to support the immigration project was proposed. After two years of strident debate, a diplomatic agreement on another front presented a lower-cost alternative to financing immigration. A treaty between the Dutch and British designed to consolidate territory under each empire's control entered the negotiation phase by early 1870. Dutch minister of foreign affairs Theodorus Roest van Limburg and British minister plenipotentiary to the king of the Netherlands, Edward Harris, forged an agreement giving the British control of present-day Ghana, while the Dutch received from Britain full control over the Indonesian island of Sumatra.[55] The British had already been moving some imperial subjects from Sumatra and from India to their colonies in the west, including British Guiana, with some success. With the mechanisms for recruitment and transportation already in place in British India, van Limburg suggested saving valuable funds by using the existing British system to obtain laborers for Dutch Guiana.

The States-General agreed, and in 1870, before the final signing of the treaty (now known as the Cession Treaty), an additional agreement was added, allowing the Dutch government to recruit freely any laborers interested in leaving India for Dutch Guiana. In return, the Dutch promised that these Indians would remain subjects of the British Empire during their tenure as wage workers in the Dutch plantations.[56] This agreement was the ultimate illustration of Dutch economic priority. The Dutch government was willing to concede its own sovereignty by relinquishing authority over settlers living in its own colony in return for the chance to recruit new workers and increase agricultural production. If it had not been clear before 1870, it was patently so after the signing of the treaty with Britain—the Netherlands put no priority above economic success, while the British valued retention of sovereignty over their subjects over all else. This was the fundamental difference between the imperial ideals of British and Dutch Guianese administrators.

The Cession Treaty marked a new phase in Dutch colonial development centered upon the encouragement of immigration. By June 5, 1873, the freighter *Lalla Rookh* arrived in Fort Nieuw Amsterdam, having left Calcutta with 399 new Indian immigrants. Though the British had been importing Indian wage laborers for thirty-five years already, for the Dutch it was a new process, as emancipation had officially occurred only a decade before, and the *Staatstoezicht* plan was still in effect for another month. Nonetheless, the Dutch planters wanted no interruption in the supply of labor, so these immigrants had been offered, with permission of the British crown, a five year sight-unseen contract to work on the plantations.[57] The indentured laborer immigration project achieved the most success in augmenting the labor force to date. Between 1873 and 1916, over 34,000 Indian indentured laborers arrived.[58] For many Dutch planters, choosing to utilize this new, cheap labor source meant severing the connection with free Africans completely, causing a deeper rift between the two cultures now developing parallel to one another in Dutch Guiana.

The experiment was by no means a perfect system. The first Indian workers had been conscripted from the homeless and indigent in Calcutta and had no knowledge of agriculture, no experience working for Dutchmen, and often substandard health and fitness from the start.[59] Because the program was under-funded, the recruiters had a smaller, cheaper pool from which to draw labor. Though these initial groups succeeded enough to justify continuation of the plan, they did not thrive enough to stay once their indentured period was over, reflected by repatriation rates of 2 percent for British Guiana and 30 percent for Dutch Guiana.[60] Nonetheless, once the States-General opened the gates of Indian immigration, the process never reversed; from 1873 on, Dutch Guiana would be a pluralist society, made up of independent maroons, financially motivated Dutch planters, and a working class of Indians.

With under-funding causing concerns about the quality of workers coming from Calcutta, debates began in the States-General over who should bear the burden of funding the immigration project. How much government involvement there should be in the granting of immigration funds also developed into a hotly contested issue. Meanwhile, the planters, still centralizing and mechanizing their operations, formed stronger collective groups. But their success still lagged behind the business operations in the Dutch East Indies—businessmen in this portion of the empire soon supplanted the local Dutch Guianese plantocracy's influence over government decisions.

## NHM AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE JAVANESE

The largest corporation of the Dutch East Indies, the *Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij* (or NHM), began in 1824 by the royal decree of Willem I in order to manage and grow trade between the Netherlands and the East Indies. Through the 1870s, NHM expanded its operations to the West Indies, including the purchase of land and sugar processing facilities in Dutch Guiana. NHM officials believed keeping the facilities staffed with workers to be paramount, so they used their financial influence to broker a deal establishing a government-supported immigration fund to cover portions of transportation and repatriation costs, as well as the salaries of emigration agents and recruiters, which passed by two votes on November 11, 1879.[61] The quality of workers recruited for the NHM plantations and the private ones alike improved, and the program of immigration continued to be the solution of choice to keep workers supplied to Dutch Guiana.

Nonetheless, the Indian immigrants had remained colonial British citizens and subjects of the British crown. Doubts about the dependence on a foreign power for a labor supply grew by means of a renewed nationalism movement in the Netherlands. These ideological challenges, and the concomitant rise of an anti-emigration movement in India, reduced the annual number of immigrants from India by 1889. Once again, Dutch Guiana faced a crisis of labor shortages. The NHM, banking on fifty years of experience in the Dutch East Indies, believed the solution could be found on the islands of Java and Madura. In 1873 and 1883, the company attempted to supplement Indian immigration with imported laborers from the islands but met with resistance from the Dutch government. The States-General disagreed with the idea of migrating people from an already profitable possession when it could just as easily recruit them from elsewhere.[62] But changes in ideology both at home and abroad caused the Javanese immigration movement to gain popularity through the 1880s. NHM was finally provided a license in 1889 to import about a hundred Javanese workers on an experimental basis. Preparations began, and 94 Javanese arrived in Dutch Guiana in 1890. They succeeded to

such a degree that overseers requested about six hundred more in 1893.[63] Even though their production did not entirely live up to the expectations created by the NHM lobbyists, the Colonial Ministry continued sanctioning Javanese migration until the 1940s; by the time the program ended in 1945, nearly 33,000 Javanese had come to Dutch Guiana.[64] Another ingredient had been added to the ethnic stew.

The real reason for encouraging Javanese immigration rested, as always, on economic issues. Javanese laborers had developed a reputation for willingly accepting lower wages. With this in mind, NHM began lobbying for increased Javanese labor in Dutch Guiana to lower its own administrative costs. New governor Titus van Asch van Wijck convinced more private plantations to sign onto the idea and hire Javanese workers on a trial basis in 1891.[65] These workers in no way revolutionized production, but were sufficient for the purposes of plantation work and continued to be imported. Their lack of desire to remain in Dutch Guiana was similar to the Indians who had entered the country, however; repatriation rates for both groups were too high for the tastes of the Dutch government.[66]

## DEALING WITH REPATRIATION

In 1895, the Dutch Guianese *Koloniale Staten* sought to reduce repatriation rates by offering land and a small cash payment to those wishing to stay after their indentured servitude expired. First, the government nationalized land

**Table 6.1. Immigration to Dutch Guiana, 1873–1932**

| *Years* | *British Indians* | *Javanese* | *Total Immigrants* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1873–1877 | 4,281 | 0 | 4,281 |
| 1878–1882 | 2,384 | 0 | 2,384 |
| 1883–1887 | 3,928 | 0 | 3,928 |
| 1888–1892 | 4,870 | 94 | 4,964 |
| 1893–1897 | 5,112 | 1,480 | 6,592 |
| 1898–1902 | 2,562 | 3,546 | 6,108 |
| 1903–1907 | 3,386 | 3,014 | 6,400 |
| 1908–1912 | 4,966 | 2,550 | 7,516 |
| 1913–1917 | 2,815 | 1,738 | 4,553 |
| 1918–1922 | 0 | 8,835 | 8,835 |
| 1923–1927 | 0 | 6,578 | 6,578 |
| 1928–1932 | 0 | 4,137 | 4,137 |

Source: Hoefte, *In Place of Slavery*, 62.

that had previously been owned by the now-departed middle class farmers. The colonial administration divided these lands, called *gouvernements-vestigingsplaatsen*, or "government settlements," into small plots and leased them, with the smallholders not allowed to purchase the land outright or have permanent rights to it.[67] For the first six years, however, rent was free, and after that period the lease conditions remained low. The other category of land grant, more difficult to control, was nationalized land available for outright sale. This land was not leased and had to be developed fully by the colonists without support from the government, but they would fully own it. Most of this land was found in the western districts of Coronie and Nickerie. The prospect of free and clear titles to up to ten hectares of land and the chance for personal profit did keep many indentured servants from leaving, but it had another effect—it caused fewer indentured servants to renew their period of indenture.[68] Thus, the institution of indentured labor declined, just as slavery had.

Despite the decline of indentured servitude, the institution brought a significant number of Javanese and Indian settlers into the colony. Unlike government policies toward indentured servants in British Guiana, however, the Dutch made no real centralized attempts to educate or acculturate the new immigrants, primarily because the Dutch governors did not know whether to consider the Indians and Javanese as temporary or permanent residents. The *Koloniale Staten* relied on reports from the agent-general, the officer put in charge of supervising the immigrants and seeing to their needs. This officer worked in partnership with the British consul in Dutch Guiana, who also had

**Table 6.2. Repatriation Rates from Dutch Guiana, 1878–1932**

| *Years* | *British Indians* | *Javanese* | *Total Repatriation* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1878–1882 | 809 | 0 | 809 |
| 1883–1887 | 1,640 | 0 | 1,640 |
| 1888–1892 | 1,758 | 0 | 1,758 |
| 1893–1897 | 818 | 18 | 836 |
| 1898–1902 | 1,186 | 36 | 1,222 |
| 1903–1907 | 1,551 | 924 | 2,475 |
| 1908–1912 | 501 | 1,675 | 2,176 |
| 1913–1917 | 1,063 | 0 | 1,063 |
| 1918–1922 | 1,860 | 338 | 2,198 |
| 1923–1927 | 118 | 205 | 323 |
| 1928–1932 | 111 | 2,383 | 2,494 |

Source: Hoefte, *In Place of Slavery*, 64.

jurisdiction as per the original treaty of 1870. The first agent-general, Johan Cateau, worked closely with the British consulate to set up improved medical care and living conditions for incoming Indian workers, largely utilizing the immigration funds provided to him by the States-General beginning in 1878.[69] This close relationship was not always the case, though, and often acted as one of the obstacles to a consolidated policy in regard to the immigrant laborers.

## THE DUTCH GUIANESE EDUCATION SYSTEM 1890–1927

The agent-general's chief instrument of assimilation and integration on the local level was the district commissioner. The agent-general's office assigned each of these nine officers to a district and gave them the task of routine supervision of working conditions, education, and plantation productivity. But because their task focused more on the economics of productivity, which required endless gathering of taxes, compilation of statistics, and census taking, the district commissioners had little time for any cultural assimilation work. Indentured servant communities, like the slave communities that preceded them, were thus largely ignored.[70] The primary way the British Guianese government acculturated immigrants was through a centralized education system; but because the Dutch saw the indentured laborers as temporary employees rather than potential new colonists, their education did not receive priority. Educational opportunities did have to be provided, but administration in the schools was provided by the corporation, and not the direct supervision of the government. Therefore, the corporations often selected school staff members from the immigrant community rather than from the colony.

Under these parameters, the first "coolie school" opened at Mariënburg plantation in 1890. The school's first teacher, predictably, was an Indian immigrant—the corporation found Indian teachers both more readily available and less expensive than bilingual Dutch teachers. The teacher, Ahmed Hosen, was fluent in Hindi and Urdu, and taught the children of Mariënburg's workers exclusively in these native languages.[71] Dutch Guiana's Inspector of Education, H. D. Benjamins, did not support education in the native languages, preferring the assimilative technique of teaching in Dutch, but economic interests of the colony prevailed, and more expensive bilingual Dutch teachers were not hired.[72] Because of this disparity in teaching methods, Dutch Guianese immigrant children received a quite different education from their counterparts in British Guiana. There was precedence for this; British instructors had taught English in British Guianese slave schools since the British took the colony in 1814; slave children in Dutch Guiana never received Dutch instruction, though maroon children between

the ages of seven and twelve did receive some introduction to the language (but not until 1876).[73] Teaching the language to the children of temporary employees simply did not seem important to most Dutch administrators.

Compulsory education for Indian and Javanese children never ranked high on the agenda. In 1891, only about 20 percent of Indian children between the ages of seven and twelve attended school, and these children did not integrate into the national education system until 1907.[74] The "coolie schools" were completely separate and not held to the same standards as the colonial white schools, and little to no effort was made to integrate any faster. In fact, even after the school system officially incorporated Indian children into the same schools as other children, they remained in separate classes taught in Hindi for several decades more.[75] The lack of assimilative education did not stop with language, either.

In British schools, the "superiority of English civilization" received special emphasis, but no such curriculum existed in the Dutch coolie schools.[76] Children learned little of Dutch culture outside the plantation, and the parallel development (rather than the hybridization) of cultures continued. Adults also possessed little knowledge of Dutch culture. In an attempt to tighten control over its workers, plantations like Mariënburg strong-armed employees to do business only with their company store instead of in town. Unlike their British or French counterparts, Dutch planters received permission, even encouragement, to run stores directly from their plantations. Some areas even passed laws that *required* plantation workers to shop exclusively at the plantation store, which naturally developed inflated prices.[77] For the Dutch, *apartheid* was the cultural order of the day, and economic monopolization was their method of controlling immigrant subjects.

The Dutch priority of economic development over cultural hegemony stands in stark contrast to the British model. The original treaty for dealing with the immigrant population from India provided the quintessential example of the divergence of ideologies. Until 1927, the Hindustani of India existed as legal British subjects, answering both to the Dutch agent-general and the British consul in Paramaribo. The consul had the right to communicate with the indentured servants before and after their distribution into Dutch Guiana, freely and without restriction.[78] The local government did not like this arrangement, but the position of the Netherlands States-General remained clear—workers were more important than jurisdiction. This theory drove the *apartheid* policies, and its lack of cohesive assimilation strategies resulted in a concurrent strengthening of immigrant cultures and disappearance of cultural hybridization.

## OIL AND WATER, SEPARATE CULTURES

Dutch Guiana became unique among the Guianas as a collection of disparate, independent groups sharing little real cultural exchange. The Dutch enjoyed much more economic success than the French, so their attitude toward the other cultures within the colony (and the colony itself) was not simply indifferent, but their administrative style remained so heavily focused on profitability and economics that they did not share any of the British desire for cultural homogeneity or hegemony. As long as profits came in, different ethnic communities remained separated and, essentially, self-governing.

The "mixing but not melting" emulsion of cultures in Dutch Guiana most clearly presented itself in Paramaribo. Members of all the cultures moved into the city but maintained the traditions that prevented their successful mixing in other areas. As the capital of a rapidly mechanizing agricultural colony, Paramaribo became a haven for former agricultural workers displaced by technology or freed by emancipation or manumission. When the colony consisted entirely of middling plantations, this was not the case. For example, Paramaribo accounted for less than 10,000 of the 49,000 residents of Dutch Guiana.[79] The population consisted of mainly whites, but even this demographic segment was hardly homogenous—Sephardic Jews from Brazil and the Netherlands accounted for almost a third of the 3,360 whites in the colony, while French Huguenots, Englishmen, and German settlers were nearly as numerous as the Dutch, who constituted a minority even within the European population.[80] This lack of demographic majority even in Paramaribo explains much of the Dutch posture in the coming decades—they were too few in number to be in a strong position in regard to government policy or cultural dominance. The will of the Dutch settlers simply could not be enforced, especially if it was such a low priority in The Hague.

## PARAMARIBO, THE COSMOPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT

Paramaribo's growth as a multiethnic city really began with Van den Bosch's suggestion of merging Dutch Guiana and the Dutch Antilles into a single political unit. Though the unification did not last, Paramaribo's tenure as the metropolitan center of the western Dutch empire, cultivated by its first governor-general, Paulus Roelof Cantz'laar, endured.[81] As plantations slowly declined in size and power, Paramaribo emerged as a center of Dutch Guianese activity. By 1830, about 27 percent of the population resided there, more than double the percentage just seventy years before.[82] Slaves in the city found more opportunities to make money through side business ventures and developed more contact with whites overall; and while the two groups did not blend, whites' views on manumission and emancipation in Paramari-

bo did begin to diverge significantly from those in the rural areas. Because of this friendlier atmosphere, and as Paramaribo's influence increased, more free blacks moved to or remained in the city.[83] The influx of free Africans meant a strange marriage of *apartheid* and urbanization—distinct, isolated cultures learned how to live cheek-to-jowl with one another without fully integrating or becoming subservient to one dominant culture.

The resulting mosaic of Paramaribo represented a harbinger of things to come for modern Dutch Guiana. Neighborhoods did not segregate along racial or class lines; Europeans, Jews, free blacks, and even those with some indigenous ancestry (known as "free coloureds") lived next to each other, though housing varied in quality. Whites and wealthier free blacks and free coloureds occupied the houses on the street, while lower class slaves (and later free Africans) lived in the enclosed yards behind them. Slave populations constantly rotated between Paramaribo and surrounding plantations, and white populations changed continuously with the frequent arrival and departure of sailors, soldiers, would-be plantation administrators, and bureaucrats.[84] The only real ethnic mixing that took place was in the music of Paramaribo, which Creolized parts of European, African, Caribbean, and even later Indian and Indonesian music into one of the most eclectic and pluralist modalities in the world.[85] With the musical hybridization leading the way, much of the twentieth century culture of Dutch Guiana emerged from Paramaribo's urban mosaic. One of Suriname's first accredited Hindustani teachers, for instance, moved to Paramaribo after teaching on the plantation schools. This Hindu Brahman, J. P. Kaulesar Sukul, became an influential political leader, and the mentor of Jagernath Lachmon, who later led the first and most dominant Hindustani political party in Dutch Guiana.[86] The Paramaribo emulsion, a microcosm of the larger Dutch Guiana emulsion, would be the training ground for leaders of the ethnically based, separate-but-equal political parties of the next century.

## AGRICULTURAL STRUGGLES

Despite the growth and cosmopolitan success of Paramaribo, the nineteenth century passed as an endless parade of crises and transitions for Dutch Guiana. The colony experienced enormous changes in its purpose, moving from a successful plantation economy to a pluralist society built on the margins of sugar producing mega-corporations. In 1832, plantation estates numbered 431; in 1846, there were 383. Following a fatal epidemic of yellow fever in 1851, marking the low point in Dutch Guiana's economic development, estates declined even more precipitously. In 1853 there were 263; ten years later, there were just 217 estates with 41,000 cultivated acres and 32,000 employees. By 1873, the estates had dropped to 123, the acreage to 25,000

acres, and the workforce to 13,000 laborers.[87] Though, as mentioned before, this reflected an increase in efficiency and not a decrease in production, changing labor circumstances still required immigration to keep the balance. So much demographic shifting took place that the recruitment of laborers from other continents continued to be a necessity. Changes had become so severe that in 1863, the total population of Dutch Guiana was actually less than it had been in 1830.[88] Consolidation of land, reduction in the workforce, and movements of people (blacks to the interior and the city, whites back to the Netherlands, and Asians into Dutch Guiana as plantation laborers) created upheaval on an unprecedented scale.

A global downturn in sugar prices also necessitated consolidation and modernization of the plantations. In 1864, a kilogram of sugar sold for 0.26 guilders; the average price by 1939 was 0.04 guilders.[89] As the plantation economy contracted in response to the new market restrictions, more unskilled agricultural workers and free Africans lost employment and immigrated to Paramaribo to find non-agricultural work. Corporations also responded with increased mechanization and efficiency measures. NHM, a Dutch-based corporation, purchased Mariënburg plantation in 1880 and promptly outfitted it with electric lights, a railway, and the new vacuum pan system (which increased sugar cleaning and processing efficiency). The corporation renovated all its buildings with iron fittings, and the processing capacity increased to 300,000 kilograms of sugar cane a day, making it the second largest mill in the world.[90] This marked a significant transition in Dutch Guiana—sugar was becoming big business, and it was now being managed by larger corporations with fewer workers. Furthermore, these fewer workers were usually imported from other areas of the world where the corporation had connections. Consequently, Paramaribo and other urban areas became the destination of displaced workers. An overall lack of interest in combining these cultures under a central Dutch umbrella—through assimilative education or non-*apartheid* practices—meant the emulsion remained and future leaders of Dutch Guiana would have to negotiate the fractured nature of the resulting society.

In effect, the changes to Dutch Guiana's plantation economy changed the entire country's fate. The colony itself was becoming a mosaic: a cosmopolitan city surrounded by a collection of mega-plantations, with a vast network of maroon communities in the interior. But even the vast mechanization and downsizing of mid-size plantations could not keep up with global changes in trade. Until 1883, Dutch Guiana's exports had all been sugar-based—sugar, molasses, and rum were the three most profitable commodities; however, from 1883 on, growers in Jamaica, Java, and even sugar beet growers in Europe were flooding the market and undercutting prices. Sugar had provided 80 percent of the export economy in 1873, but only 3 percent by 1920.[91] Many attempts to diversify failed—cacao crops failed in 1895 due to

witch-broom disease, and the fledgling coffee industry could not compete with Brazil's. Attempts to grow bananas failed in 1907, a casualty of the spreading Panama leaf disease. Disadvantageous freight rates, slower shipping times, higher wages, and a series of plant diseases placed Dutch Guiana firmly behind the other Dutch colonies in the east, and many others in the west, in agricultural and economic growth.[92] Colonists and administrators realized that Dutch Guiana, even after the modernization and consolidation efforts of NHM and other corporations, would not be able to thrive, or possibly even exist, as a purely agricultural economy.

Hopes for diversification echoed those in British Guiana when explorers discovered gold along the Suriname River in 1875. The *Koloniale Staten* granted the first gold mining contracts by the end of the year, in hopes that this would provide a new source of income. By 1882, about 6,000 square kilometers of concessions had been granted, yielding around five hundred kilograms of gold total.[93] In 1905, a railroad was built from Paramaribo to open the fields.[94] The gold rush, though, proved too small to diversify the economy. It did, however, bring still more individuals of varied ethnic descent (including Brazilians, Americans, Venezuelans, and other Europeans) into the country in search of personal fortunes, creating a society made up of even more fractured ethnic pieces. Without significant gold production, and in the face of ever-declining agricultural export dollars, the fiscally-focused Dutch began referring to Dutch Guiana as a "burden."[95] The government would have to find a new way to keep its collection of divergent cultures viable, or develop an approach to rid itself of the responsibility altogether.

As Dutch Guiana entered into the twentieth century, it joined the other Guianas in a time of uncertainty. British Guiana struggled with a collapse in sugar prices and agricultural restructuring under the steady hand of the British government. French Guiana faced a decline in the popularity of the penal colony system and the potential loss of the only profitable venture in its history, along with an utter loss of French interest in developing the area. Those in Dutch Guiana endured all of these problems—the Dutch wanted nothing to do with an unprofitable colony, and the hodgepodge of cultures would have to find a way to work together to diversify and survive.

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22. Hoefte, *In Place of Slavery*, 12.
23. Goslinga, *A Short History of the Netherlands Antilles and Surinam*, 155.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Knight, 169.
27. Newton, 174.
28. Because the Netherlands was on the silver standard at the time, three hundred guilders would have equated to 2.8 kilograms of fine silver buillion.
29. Newton, 174.
30. Hiss, 107.
31. Hoefte, *In Place of Slavery*, 14.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., 12-13.
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55. Ibid., 30–31.
56. Ibid.
57. Rosemarijn Hoefte, "A Passage to Suriname? The Migration of Modes of Resistance by Asian Contract Laborers," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 54 (Fall 1998): 19.
58. Prakash C. Jain, "Indians Abroad: A Current Population Estimate," *Economic and Political Weekly* 17, no. 8 (February 20, 1982): 300.
59. Hiss, 113.
60. Hoefte, *In Place of Slavery*, 56.
61. Ibid., 33.
62. Ibid., 44.
63. Dew, 28.
64. Hoefte, "A Passage to Suriname?" 19.
65. Hoefte, *In Place of Slavery*, 49.
66. For these purposes, "repatriation" refers to the rate at which laborers returned to their native country, rather than remaining in Dutch Guiana.
67. Ibid., 56.
68. Ibid.
69. Dew, 26.
70. Hoefte, *In Place of Slavery*, 87.
71. Ibid., 174.
72. Ibid.
73. Newton, 174.
74. Hoefte, *In Place of Slavery*, 174–175.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., 163.
77. Ibid., 115.
78. Hoefte, "A Passage to Suriname?" 21.
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80. Oostindie and Paasman, 353.
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93. Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism: Colonies and Foreign Policy 1870–1902* (New York: Berg Publishers Limited, 1991), 150.

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*Chapter Seven*

# The Experiment Neglected

*The Abandonment Period in the Guianas (1914–1950)*

One morning in 1928, upon returning to his laboratory in London, Alexander Fleming made a startling discovery. After working with several Petri dishes of *staphylococcus* bacteria and failing to clean his experiments properly, he left for the day. The dishes sat unsupervised overnight, in the darkness of the laboratory. Upon his return, Fleming found that his experiment had been fundamentally altered—encroaching upon the bacteria was a colony of blue-green penicillin mold. The experiment, due to his neglect, looked nothing like it had at inception. This accidental discovery occurred during an era in which a similar kind of sloppy experimentation and abandonment was taking place. As the British, French, and Dutch averted their gaze from the New World and returned it to old European conflicts and new African challenges, the Guiana experiments lay fallow. By the time social and political turmoil thrust the little colonies back into the spotlight, the Guiana experiment had been eternally and irrevocably altered. The foundations each administrating power had built over the previous centuries would profoundly affect the future development of the runaway dominions.

## UNREST IN BRITISH GUIANA

In British Guiana, rapid social changes brought about by a growing immigrant community, followed by economic changes stemming from a collapse in sugar prices, produced a volatile climate. British bureaucratic talent willingly transferred or was sent to Africa, while and emerging lower middle class of non-European teachers and shopkeepers supplanted the once-power-

ful Guianese plantocracy. Labor and ethnic representation issues continued to grow through the opening decades of the twentieth century; by 1915, non-Europeans constituted the majority in the British Guianese colonial legislature.[1] Despite declining bureaucratic participation and the growing power of its subjects, though, Britain remained in *cultural* control of British Guiana. The British government retained power over the colonial constitution and elections, having appointed a powerful governor to oversee a bureaucracy of transplanted Londoners.[2] It is important to remember that the European population of British Guiana, unlike that of its Dutch counterpart, was overwhelmingly British; British citizens dominated the demography and the government, so their interests never seemed at risk.[3] Nonetheless, with less backing from a government now more interested in its African holdings, British planters and local government officials experienced growing unrest as the population of immigrants, free Africans, small-plot farmers, and factory workers sought increased agency.

The unrest first manifested in several sugar factories and large plantations in 1905 and 1906, when riots interrupted production on an unprecedented scale. These riots often originated in the protests of fledgling unions and workers' organizations, made necessary by the mechanization in the sugar and mining industries. Indian workers in British Guiana had diversified their employment across multiple industries; 70 percent of Indians lived on plantations in 1890, but by 1911 less than half did.[4] By the time World War I had taken its toll on European production and demand for colonial crops rebounded, these Indians and their fellow workers found themselves in the position to lobby for better labor conditions and higher wages through the union system. Lower middle class European factory workers unionized, too—Hubert Critchlow formed the British Guiana Labor Union in 1919 for this group, and other workers unionized along their respective ethnic lines.[5] Within three decades, British Guiana possessed fifteen unique trade unions, most established by and for specific ethnic groups.[6] Ethnicity drove social organization membership as well—as early as 1916, the Chinese Association and the British East Indian Association, both ethnic social groups, formed in the colony. The Portuguese Benevolent Society followed a year later.[7] The early stages of unionism and ethnic division, entwined uniquely in British Guiana, had appeared.

Britain still held more interest in cultural hegemony than the economic kind, though the war had temporarily required a tightening of economic control. The British Empire had been engaged in free trade up until the war, and only during the conflict did dominions like British Guiana receive tariff preferences to help them compete with suppliers outside the empire. Almost immediately after the war, the British largely rescinded these preferential tariffs, even as other imperial powers remained isolationist and protective of domestic agriculture and industry.[8] Only World War I (and, later, the Great

Depression) caused the British government to attempt imperial economic consolidation and protectionism of its colonies. Thus, it was not economic compliance the empire sought from Guiana, but cultural loyalty.

## BRITISH CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY (1928–1939)

In an attempt to reestablish cultural primacy after the inattention of World War I, the British revoked local majority control in the colonial legislature in 1928, giving power back to British administrators and plantation owners.[9] They also amended the colonial constitution to replace the old Court of Policy (the original colonial administrative body) with a new Legislative Council. This council consisted of the powerful, London-appointed governor, the British colonial secretary, the appointed attorney general, eight nominated officials, five nominated planters, and fourteen members elected from the colony.[10] The government designed these constitutional changes specifically to give the home government tighter command over the ethnically unstable colony.

This "Crown Colony" system did preserve British supremacy, but it was poorly timed and created local resentment. The constitutional changes had been part of an overhaul of the imperial system, in which the government sought more oversight of nominations and the appointing of governors. But the onset of a global depression in 1929–1930 made the British rulers, now firmly reestablished, seem economically unreliable to the colonists. Accordingly, an increase in strikes and riots began in 1934.[11] London, seeing the possibility of a full-scale revolt, introduced reforms suggested by an investigative committee, the Moyne Commission, in 1938. These included an expansion of democracy by reducing property and income qualifications for those wishing to run for election to the Legislative Council.[12] These reforms quieted the protests for a while, but only by giving local leaders and parties more power. When Britain again ignored colonial issues to deal with problems closer to home, at the onset of World War II, the imperial administrators had unwittingly given the colonists, through these reforms, even more tools for augmenting their power and influence.

## THE RISE OF CHEDDI JAGAN AND THE PPP

For the duration of World War II, the British colonies suffered especially. Not only were locals being called to the front lines to serve as troops (the Guianese served with the British West Indies regiments), but also standards of living at home declined. The average working class family in wartime Georgetown earned an average of $7.41 per week, but spent $8.23 on high-priced food and necessities.[13] The situation became dire for Guianese fami-

lies, who now looked to their unions and ethnic organizations to seek political change at home. Local leaders emerged from the disgruntled masses to address these issues. Chief among them was Cheddi Jagan, a U.S.-educated son of an Indian sugar estate foreman. At the age of twenty-nine, Jagan rode the wave of discontent among middle class voters and won election to the Legislative Council from the East Demerara district in 1947.[14] Jagan's ascendancy marked a transition for British Guiana—though Britain's cultural influence remained strong, its political grip was weakening. The colony's multiple ethnic parties began attempting to occupy this resulting power vacuum.

As the first individual to unite the ethnic factions with any degree of success, Jagan would become an important figure in British Guiana. While serving in the Legislative Council, he developed a political relationship with African barrister Forbes Burnham. Together, they formed the People's Progressive Party (PPP) in 1950. The British, returning from the war to find their control of British Guiana in jeopardy again, attempted to appease the colonists by granting universal adult suffrage in 1952. Though protests and anti-British rhetoric diminished, the maneuver removed too much London influence from the government and gave more power to the emerging local middle class.[15] The PPP included much of this middle and the large lower class, including small farmers, sugar factory workers, bauxite miners, local shopkeepers, domestic laborers and longshoremen, some local businessmen, many of the unemployed, and many independence-minded youth.[16] Britain's colony was now, politically speaking, completely out of its control.

Under pressure to preserve some supremacy, Parliament offered a new constitution in 1953. The compromise document, drawn up under the recommendations of a three man commission under the chairmanship of Sir E. J. Waddington, established universal suffrage, a bicameral legislature (an elected house—the House of Assembly, and an appointed body—the State Council), and an Executive Council.[17] The new cooperative government hoped to please both the ethnic parties and the business interests of British investors. It failed to do either, as the fractured ethnic parties had already developed a common, anti-British voice. Fearing a complete loss of authority, Parliament responded by forcing the new legislature and executive council into an advisory-only role and giving the British-appointed governor full control of the state.[18] The PPP swept elections in 1953, as it moved in a more Marxist, anti-monarchical direction. Despite the success of 1953 though, the PPP split in 1955 along primarily ethnic lines; Jagan's pure Marxism and his political partner Forbes Burnham's softer socialist ideals could no longer work under the same umbrella. Indian support remained in the PPP, while Burnham's fellow African descendents followed him in forming the PNC, or People's National Congress.[19] A smaller party, the United Force (UF), formed later in 1960, comprised of Portuguese, Chinese, and mixed race

businessmen.[20] Jagan's PPP and Burnham's PNC both won a significant number of elections through the remainder of the 1950s and the early 1960s.

Tensions, however, increased dramatically, and questions emerged about whether British Guiana would be controlled by the British, a political party based on one dominant ethnicity, or by an ideological, class-based party like Jagan's Marxists. Further rioting and labor strikes in 1962-1965 led the British Colonial Office to offer a conference on independence, in order to distance itself from the growing strife. Britain granted its colony independence on May 26, 1966; the new nation dropped the "British" moniker and changed its name to the indigenous spelling—Guyana.[21] As an unstable political cacophony of ethnically and ideologically-based parties, the first independent Guiana was born. Nonetheless, forced to sink or swim, the Guyanese learned to cooperate across ethnic and ideological lines to form a constitutional cooperative republic. With Guyana's independence secured, this study of colonialism and administration can now leave the realm of political history. Guyana's modern cultural makeup, both consciously and unknowingly formed by British policies and practices, will be considered in the final chapters.

## THE DRY GUILLOTINE

On the other end of the Guiana Shield, on its modest cape thrust into the equatorial Atlantic, French Guiana had grown far distant from its British equivalent. Guyane, as it would come to be called more frequently, experienced equal suffering, but less upheaval, sparse ethnic division, and few attempts at reinvention or reformation. French Guiana was a different kind of experiment—a settlement with no settlers, anchored by sleepy Cayenne. Its appearance in the early twentieth century was best described by exiled prisoner René Belbenoit in his memoir *Dry Guillotine*. He describes Cayenne thus:

> Although it is the main city of one of the oldest possessions under the French flag, it is the capital of a colony without colonists. For who would establish himself in a region where, at every moment, he comes face to face with none but convicts?[22]

The colony—and its capital—now existed for only one reason. France had abandoned its colonization experiment completely, and intended to use it instead to store the products of other failures of society, tucking them away to protect the French self-image of purity behind a vast wall of ocean.

The French Guianese culture existed as a culture of exile. Other than the few farmers and miners eking out subsistence in the inhospitable clime, only four types of recognized citizenry existed, all *bagnards* (residents of the *bagne*, or prison settlement). Those convicted under common law and exiled

(*transportés*), those convicted of political crimes (*déportés*), and recidivist criminals under life sentence (*relégués*) shared the land with *libérés* who had served out their sentence and remained exiled but unconfined.[23] Whether incarcerated or not, all had been sentenced to share French Guiana, and all arrived the same way. After a waiting period on the Ile de Ré in northern France, they were locked into eight cages of sixty to eighty prisoners each. Threatened with jets of steam from the boiler by the watchful guards, they spent fifteen to twenty days on ships similar to the old slave trading vessels, bound for a truly terminal destination.[24] No colony-building opportunity, no economic investment, and no rehabilitation awaited them.

In the words of Belbenoit, "The policy of the Administration is to kill, not to better or reclaim. To the Administration, the men who arrive on the convict ship are things to be disposed of."[25] Prisoners were rarely even issued clothing during their entire stay in Guyane.[26] Those lucky enough to have less than a life sentence eventually earned release from the confines of the prison or one of the maximum security islands (including Devil's Island, made famous by several famous memoirs to be discussed later). These *libérés* remained under a sort of parole (*doublage*) that required them to stay in Guyane either for a length of time equal to their original sentence or for life.[27] During the *doublage*, they remained under constant threat of new sentences for any rule infraction; many found freedom just as difficult as confinement. It proved nearly impossible to find employment, because those few employers in the colony preferred convict labor (it was free, after all) over paid labor. Local laws also forbade ex-prisoners from working in restaurants, selling drinks, or opening their own businesses, while simultaneously requiring that they be employed as a condition of their parole. This *doublage* system persisted in full until 1925, when some reform was introduced, though most former convicts did not prosper any better after its passage.[28] Everywhere, the colony and its "colonists" received reminders of Guyane's second-class status. Belbenoit reflects the ubiquitousness of the penal colony resident:

> The convict is everywhere; he overruns the town. At the far end of the town, near the sea with its back to the great rainforest, is the penitentiary. There are no walls around it—for what use would these be, when a convict wanders alone . . .[29]

## NEGATIVE PUBLICITY AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES

The condition of French Guiana did not go unnoticed by its neighbors, either. The British saw the penal institution as a "plague on the face of civilization," and often refused to hand over fugitives to the French consul.[30] For French citizens in Europe, the penalization of Guyane also emerged as a subject of

discussion. A great deal of negative publicity resulted from the embarrassing Dreyfus Affair, in which Alfred Dreyfus spent four and a half years in exile on Devil's Island. Though many insisted upon his innocence and publicly railed against the charges of espionage that had been brought against him, the French government refused to budge. He was returned to France for a retrial in 1899, but it would be 1906 before the Jewish captain was fully exonerated.[31] Discussions of Dreyfus' innocence invariably accompanied news of the atrocities associated with internment in French Guiana, and his cause became intertwined with a more general cause of rejecting the penal colony as an institution.

Writings about the French Guianese state of affairs gained in popularity throughout the years between Dreyfus' arrival and the end of World War II. Emile Zola initiated the criticism of the French justice system in his open letter to the French president. The letter, entitled "J'Accuse . . . " appeared in the Paris newspaper *L'Aurore* in 1898 and lambasted the French government for its anti-Semitism and barbarism shown through its continued maintenance of the colony.[32] After Dreyfus' exoneration, memoirs like Belbenoit's *Dry Guillotine,*[33] a true account, and Henri Charriére's *Papillon*,[34] mostly fictional, captured the imaginations of North American and European readers, continuing to erode the reputation of the penal colony system and of France itself. W. Somerset Maugham's short story, "An Official Position," perhaps most damning of the institution, tells the story of a convict-turned-executioner in order to attack the humanity of France's penal colony system.[35] From the writing of "J'Accuse" in 1898 until the publication of "An Official Position" in 1940, the French imperial system as exercised in the Guianas came under unprecedented negative scrutiny.

## FRENCH INTERPRETATIONS OF IMPERIALISM

Why, then, did the French not abandon French Guiana as they had come so close to doing so many times before? Had the colony not become more trouble than it was worth? Curiously, while interests in New World colonies waned on the part of the British and Dutch, French focus increased. Granted, French Guiana existed as an afterthought; economically and militarily the colony had been abandoned in favor of Africa and Asia just like its counterparts. But French Guiana remained a part of the overall French imperial scope because France's desire to maintain territory originated in neither economic profit (as with the Dutch), nor a need to spread a self-proclaimed "superior" culture (as with the British). Rather, the French used imperialism in the twentieth century to fend off the threat of obscurity and wipe away the specter of defeat. While literature highlighted France's failure, it also spurred its imperialism. Albert Sarraut's *Mise en Valeur des Colonies Français*

(1923), among other works published between the world wars, suggested a kind of human solidarity in French imperialism and offered reassurance. France had fallen behind Germany in military might, area, population, and industrial output, and already suffered from a "sense of national fatigue, uneasiness, doubt . . . " about its place in the world when compared to Britain, Russia, and the United States.[36] This book and its equivalents suggested to France that glory could still be found in its empire, even after the losses at home from World War I, including significant defeat and loss of life and property in places like Verdun, where all metropolitan Frenchmen could witness the devastation and feel the loss firsthand. The French imperial experiment was designed not to create new bastions of culture, but to resurrect the old one.

For this reason, France developed a renewed interest in the colonization aspects of Guyane, and attempted to diversify the agricultural and mining economy by adding rum production, rosewood timber, and balata gum to its exports. Though these additions met with minor success for entrepreneurial individuals like Jean Galmot, one of Cayenne's richest citizens, the overall top-to-bottom economic growth the French government sought was not achieved.[37] The lack of economic success frustrated colonial administrators, and in 1930 French Guiana was divided in two. The northern region, administered by a governor-general appointed from Paris, held the European population and the penal colonies. The southern interior, known as Inini, was controlled by the governor and a separate council. Though this operation intended to allow the government to administer the "productive" coastal regions differently from the largely unexplored interior, it resulted simply in a further separation of the indigenous and maroon populations of Inini from the French colony.[38] French Guianese experienced the same ethnic separations as those in British Guiana, with two major differences. First, the French recognized only two ethnic groups: Frenchmen, and everyone else in Inini. Second, because those from Inini had been dismissed and no assimilation had taken place, the coastal colony became a completely European "petite-France" while Inini continued to appear as foreign to Europeans as it had been when Columbus arrived almost five centuries before.

## LÉON BLUM AND LABOR REFORMS IN GUYANE

The separation and subsequent administrative intensification in the coastal regions could not prevent the economic depression of the 1930s from affecting Guyane, either. With the global depression reducing demand for luxury items, tropical commodities from the colony fell in price. Colonial businesses went bankrupt while indebted investors lost property and savings.[39] Just as in British Guiana, disgruntled middle class workers sought more radical

change. The economic crisis had the same effect in France itself—a debilitation of centrist political parties and the rise of leftist parties like the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO), a socialist-leaning party, and the French Communist Party (PCF). The loss of the center also led to significant right-leaning reactionary political parties like the Republican Party of Liberty (PRL). In 1936, the SFIO, PCF, and the Radical and Socialist Party formed a leftist alliance bringing together socialists, communists, radicals, and quasi-communists and called it the Popular Front. Under the leadership of Léon Blum, the Popular Front won a parliamentary majority in France in the May 1936 election.[40] Blum's fundamentally different government would briefly reform the interpretation and administration of French Guiana.

Blum and his Colonial Minister, Marius Moutet, introduced a series of labor reform and indigenous rights legislation to the French Assembly and managed to get most of it passed into law. The worker-friendly reforms reduced strikes and rioting, while the indigenous reform kept the residents of Inini from rebelling against their inclusion in French Guiana. Additionally, Moutet began the process that abolished transportation of prisoners to the penal colonies in 1938.[41] Though the Popular Front government would not last beyond 1937, and the upheaval of German invasion a few years later would put further reforms on hold, the Popular Front gained a great deal of popular support throughout France and the colonies.

The Popular Front's policies should not, however, be confused—reform did not mean retreat, and even Moutet and Blum agreed that France should remain an empire and renovate its image through successful mastery of its colonies. Moutet had spoken toward the end of his term of a "colonial rule" that acted as "fraternal solidarity." It is clear that even Moutet had no intentions of abandoning the empire, but simply hoped for a "more humane type of colonization."[42] The people of France, through elections and polls, seemed to be in agreement. In early 1939, an opinion poll taken among the residents of France included the question, "Do you think it would be just as painful to cede a piece of the colonial empire as a piece of French territory?" The pollsters reported a surprising set of answers. Fifty-three percent agreed wholeheartedly with the statement, with only 43 percent in opposition.[43] A newfound desire to maintain empire had been discovered in the wake of defeat and the gloomy outlook for other threats to come. The French empire, after all, provided some sense of compensation and reassurance to French citizens about their present and future, and its necessity spurred French imperialism forward while the Anglo-Dutch version receded. Through the troubles of World War II, the French citizens would need to hold onto this vision of strength more than ever.

In the war years of 1940-1945, the French Empire descended into severe disarray. The population was split between Free French and Vichy governments, and these authorities struggled politically with one another in a near-

civil-war. American and British troops occupied most of the colonies, including French Guiana, to protect them from invasion in the absence of their French defense. American occupation especially brought with it an anti-colonial ideology and further highlighted the weaknesses of France, both to its own colonies and those abroad.[44] U.S. newspapers regularly reported on shortages of food and supplies in the colony, often presenting them as symptoms of a failing empire.[45] The situation seemed worse because of France's position as master over the colony; ironically, French Guiana itself could probably have survived independently were it not for France's own needs. Until 1943, the colony had mined over 280,000 pounds of gold; but the two world wars had caused the more modern machinery that would have otherwise been available to the mines to be used elsewhere by the French government. As a colony, Guyane could not utilize its gold profits to *buy* better machinery from elsewhere, so the vast gold reserves, easily twice as large as what had already been extracted, proved unavailable to the colony (and much of it was unavailable to France, as well, since quality of production equipment was so low). What profits could be made from the smaller scale mining operations helped neither France nor the colony, as much of the gold was intercepted by the British in Trinidadian ports to prevent it from reaching the Germans.[46] The gold rush could have emancipated French Guiana in the 1940s, but it was timed poorly, and the war prevented its success. As for France, for the second time in the century, it was showing its weakness both at home and in the colonial periphery.

## DE GAULLE'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

Though France survived the war as a polity, the French collective ego and morale emerged badly bruised. General Charles de Gaulle suggested in his *Mémoires* that France's postwar role and its psychological recovery would depend upon the full recovery and restitution of its empire.[47] His influence in French politics persisted throughout the postwar years, so when constitutional conferences began and discussions of how to build the new Fourth Republic commenced, his suggestion met with approval.[48] During the talks, often led by provisional president de Gaulle, the concept of a "French Union" was formed. More powerful than simply a continental France with colonial appendages, the French Union would be a single, unitary polity. The union would consist of continental France, colonial departments, and colonial territories. This would be administered through a single High Council and a revamped French Assembly, to which colonies would send elected representatives. Colonial representatives made up one half of the assembly, while French representatives would constitute the remaining half. These two legislative bodies would act only as an advisory body to the supreme central

authority, the new National Assembly in Paris.[49] This would be the first step in a policy that would change the empire from a traditional collection of colonies to a geographic extension of the central state.

A series of laws designed to protect the empire from dissolution and re-center power in Paris followed, as the new National Assembly wove them into the new constitution. The Houphouët-Boisny Law ended forced labor in all colonies on April 11, 1946, the Lamine Guèye Law made all French subjects in the empire full citizens of the French Union on May 7, and the "old colonies" (Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, and Réunion) were made into *départements*.[50] These *départements* were no longer colonies, but provinces—on paper, the difference between Normandy, Burgundy, and French Guiana disappeared. Capital flowed into the colonies through the new *Fonds d'Investissement et de Développement Économique et Social* (FIDES), based in Paris and administered by French, not colonial, officials.[51] By October, 1946, the French Union, the result of these constitutional changes, became official.

France completed the transformation of its old penal colony into a fully-incorporated *département* in 1952, when Devil's Island and its associated institutions were closed for good. The French had responded in a wholly different way to the problems of their wayward colonies. Rather than giving them independence and hoping for a continued informal, cultural association, the French turned empire to state, and colony to province. "French Guiana" was now Guyane, *département d'outre-mer*; its government institutions, flag, legal codes, currency, and even postage were all identical to Paris, and Guyane would possess no more autonomy than Alsace, Brittany, or Midi-Pyrénées.[52] French Guiana was now, unalterably, a part of France itself.

## DUTCH GUIANA AFTER SUGAR

The Netherlands dealt with the same economic and ideological challenges in neighboring Dutch Guiana, but their experiment developed in a fundamentally different direction. Dutch Guiana had been built as an agricultural export colony for purely financial reasons. The Dutch had little interest in exporting their culture, nor in saving political face (a threat to the Dutch legacy did not exist in the same degree as the perceived threat to French hegemony during the wars—for one thing, the Dutch really did not compete with Germany to near the degree that France did). Their concern held more immediacy—Dutch Guiana persisted as a collection of divergent ethnicities attempting, and failing, to grow *any* crop at a profit.

The collapse of the sugar industry in Dutch Guiana did not stand as its only agricultural failure. The Dutch attempted, like the French and British, to diversify the economy, but a considerable run of failures put the colony's

future into question. Programs to replace sugar with cacao met with some initial success; by 1895, cacao had become the colony's most valuable crop. But the entire industry was destroyed, as noted earlier, by witch-broom disease; Dutch government funds to fight the spread of the disease lagged, and by 1905 the crop had been reduced by 60 percent (by 1940, drought and the disease had combined to reduce it further—almost 98 percent).[53] An attempt to supplement the economy with the cultivation of bananas met a similar fate. Agreements between the government and the United Fruit Company brought banana plantations to Dutch Guiana by 1906; but disappointing returns, the realization that banana cultivation required more labor than in Central America, and another disease (Panama Leaf Disease) broke the contract in 1911.[54] Diseases and the onset of economic depression suppressed the market for other items, too, such as coffee and cotton. Only rice succeeded over the twentieth century (primarily *after* the world wars), due in large part to the expertise of Indian and Javanese immigrants in its cultivation.

Failures in large scale plantation agriculture caused a general shift, starting around 1900, from plantations to small-scale cultivation on small strips of land. In Dutch Guiana, a tenant or individual owning family farmed each strip of land. While in 1900, plantations grew 90 percent of crops and small farms produced just 10 percent, the number had reversed totally within fifty years.[55] Local, small-scale crop production led to a more clannish, isolated population. The Dutch government retreated from power as its interest in Guiana waned and its profits and interest in Southeast Asia increased. Ethnic divisions increased, too, as families began farming their own land and shared space with other ethnic groups on the large plantations less.

## ETHNIC DIVISIONS IN DUTCH GUIANA

Ethnic disharmony inflated quickly as the Dutch invested elsewhere and local power vacuums appeared. Colonial governments reported unrest among indentured Indians and Javanese in 1884, 1891, 1902, and 1908, each outbreak successively worse.[56] Throughout the first decades of the century, this ethnic strife accelerated and manifested in violence. In addition to the aforementioned general riots, Javanese workers attacked Dutch managers at Mariënburg in 1905 and 1924, and armed revolts of Indians on the plantation appear in records in 1929 and 1935.[57] Until the economic situation of immigrants (and the colony, on the whole) improved, the Dutch had to contend with social upheaval.

Dutch Guianese development projects designed to improve the agricultural and industrial sector lacked backing from the States-General, and the economic setbacks of World War I and the Great Depression retarded progress further. Colonial governors appointed two commissions in 1911 and

1916 to study economic issues in the colony and make suggestions for their alleviation, but these reports (like the budgets) were ignored by the States-General or arrived too late to be considered.[58] Furthermore, with economic issues to deal with in the Netherlands, the legislature concerned itself only with a balanced budget, not floating the economies of struggling colonies. The government in The Hague was "haunted by the fear that the colony would cost more and more," and therefore expressed an unwillingness to increase its subsidies or offer any further economic assistance.[59] This *versoberingspolitiek*, or restrictive policy, eliminated both expansion and constructive planning through the end of World War II.

Colonial administrations within Dutch Guiana tried to resolve the problem of funding outside of the States-General. Governor Arnold Baron van Heemstra, who served from 1921–1928, appealed to Dutch private investors in hopes of getting an influx of capital but met with little success. His successor, Abraham Rutgers (1928–1933), pushed The Hague to underwrite mechanization projects within the rice industry; the government remained, as always, reluctant to invest.[60] The Great Depression brought increasing hardships to the colony, while the mother government was showing little concern for its problems. This combination of hard times and the feeling that the Netherlands simply did not care paralleled situations in British Guiana, and similar political developments inevitably followed.

Though ethnically based political parties certainly formed, the ideologically-based working-class political parties experienced the first spikes in popularity in Dutch Guiana. In response to a disinterested government, a socialist-leaning Committee of Action presented the governor with an extensive "Plan of Labor" in 1931. It met with apathy and dismissal, leading to public criticism of the government by an even more aggressive and extremist party, the *Surinaamsche Volksbond*. This party urged citizens to riot and violently resist the Dutch, making regular police and military intervention necessary in the colony during the early 1930s.[61] Ethnic and racial uprisings accompanied the disharmony. Riots in Paramaribo broke out in 1931 and 1933, and an attempted communist *coup d'etat* in late 1933, known as the De Kom Affair, signaled the colony's unsteady political situation to the rest of the world.[62] Struggles between the people of the colony (represented by the *Koloniale Staten*) and the Dutch interests (represented by the governor) intensified throughout the Great Depression.

## DUTCH ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE

In order to quell social unrest and forcefully suppress the bitterness of the already emasculated *Koloniale Staten*, The Hague bequeathed absolute power to the colonial governor in 1936.[63] The States-General believed a stronger

local hand was needed to keep the colony profitable and in line. Nevertheless, conflicts between The Hague and Paramaribo continued to intensify, not only due to this rescinding of autonomy but also to annual increases in Dutch Guiana's subsidy requirements. Budgets submitted by the *Koloniale Staten* were generally ignored, since the colony needed more and more subsidies to stay afloat, and the States-General would often make unilateral cutbacks on funding for the colony's projects without notifying Paramaribo's officials at all.[64] By 1941, in the midst of World War II, these struggles reached an apex. Bos Verschuur, a sympathetic member of the colonial assembly, began regularly opposing legislation requested by Governor-General J. C. Kielstra. He also sought an audience with Queen Wilhelmina in her temporary London office to voice his displeasure at the colony's direction. In response, Kielstra jailed him for disobeying the established chain of command; the jailing resulted in the resignation of several other *Staten* members in protest.[65] In elections the following year, Verschuur and the resigned members won reelection with higher voting majorities. This clearly marked a severe setback to Dutch power in the colony.

The Netherlands could not count on its colonists to "buy into" the Dutch imperial model, because they had, up until this point, treated the Indians and Javanese as temporary citizens and the indigenes and maroons as inconsequential. As a result, the Dutch had not entered into any assimilative education program for preparing their colonists to be "good citizens." In the 1930s and 1940s, the education of the population had not really changed; one third of Guianese children attended Catholic private schools, another third attended public government schools (often, as mentioned, in their own language), and another third attended Protestant private schools.[66] Children rarely learned Dutch, nor were they being socialized into Dutch culture or belief in the Dutch government system in any organized way. Further, the Dutch government did not require indigenous and maroon children to attend school at all.

Since none of these disparate ethnic groups grew to hold the Dutch system in high regard, political mobilization along ethnic lines strengthened during the Depression and through the early postwar years. Queen Wilhelmina had promised, at the close of World War II, an increase in Guianese home rule, and had suggested the possibility of universal adult suffrage. The possibility of this complete suffrage in the colony touched off a political struggle; the Creole elite fundamentally opposed universal suffrage, as it would limit the Europeanized Creoles' power in the colonial government. But retaining limited suffrage would virtually guarantee the continued political exclusion of Indian, Javanese, and African Creole workers.[67] Ethnic political parties, like those in British Guiana, mobilized in response to the suffrage debate.

## RISE OF THE ETHNIC POLITICAL PARTIES

The growing power of the immigrant groups could not be ignored. Indians, for one, had increased in the urban areas, and their influence spread to other groups seeking more voice in government. In fact, by 1937, Indians made up over half of the population in most districts, but only 6 percent of eligible voters.[68] These disenfranchised Indians joined Javanese workers in creating the United Hindu Party (VHP) in 1949. This party joined the primarily Catholic, lower-class Surinam Progressive People's Party (PSV) and the Indonesian Joint Peasants' Party (KTPI) in united opposition to the suffrage *status quo*.[69] Against this coalition, the *Nationale Partij Suriname* (NPS), the dominant political party among Creoles (a hybridized ethnic group made up of mixed ethnicity individuals), formed the basis of opposition to expanded suffrage.

The campaign for change began during the difficult days of the Depression, but the power of the parties did not increase until their funding was amplified by the success of the mining industry. Dutch Guiana experienced better wartime and postwar years than their French neighbors, due to the success of its only stable venture through this period—bauxite mining. The bauxite industry originated not with Dutch, but rather foreign, investment. The Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) purchased rights to land in Dutch Guiana and opened mines beginning in 1915 through its subsidiary, *Surinaamsche Bauxiet Maatschappij*.[70] ALCOA dug several new mines over the next decade. The first shipments of bauxite from Moengo, the colony's largest deposit, arrived in 1922; by 1925, the company had added a washing and drying plant designed to improve the quality of ore for export.[71] Luckily for Dutch Guiana and ALCOA, World War II aircraft production brought high demand for bauxite, and those associated with the industry in Dutch Guiana made considerable profits during the 1940s.

These fortunes, along with a better economy and higher wages for many of the ethnic groups working in the mining industry, supported the new opposition parties. They stood for the increasingly vocal ethnic groups of the colony in opposition to the old European/Creole regime. Dutch government officials had grown woefully out of touch with the issues of these different constituencies. Civil servants working in Dutch Guiana had no real knowledge of the customs or concerns of those they served; whereas those servants assigned to Java were trained for several years in the language, religions, and customs of the country, no such training existed for those destined for Guiana. In fact, most civil servants in Dutch Guiana had actually been trained for Java instead.[72] As a result, all the political parties of Dutch Guiana except for the NPS shared a disdain for Dutch government policy.

These parties also shared objectives—increased autonomy within the kingdom framework, decentralization, economic support, educational equal-

ity, and so forth. But ethnic divisions remained firm, so the parties divided from one another based solely on their ethnic differences.[73] Between 1945 and 1952, other minority political parties formed, most tied to a specific ethnic group, including the Progressive Surinam Popular Party, the National Surinam Party, the Hinudstani-Javanese Party, the Negro Political Party, and the Christian Socialist Party.[74] The States-General now faced a dizzying array of groups lobbying for greater autonomy and for their own ethnic concerns. The fears of the legislature thus manifested fully. Though Dutch Guiana was starting to make money again as a bauxite producing colony, the headaches associated with squelching multiple rebellions and paying for the needs of myriad constituent groups had overmatched the benefits.

The Dutch tried one last fix during the turbulent years of the late 1940s and early 1950s. In September of 1948, the States-General passed a new revision to the Dutch constitution. Similar to France's plan, the Dutch monarchy would be a "tripartite kingdom" consisting of the Netherlands, the Antilles, and Dutch Guiana, effective by 1950. This kingdom would be represented by a Council of Ministers from all three areas, and supervised by the monarchy. It was the first time Dutch Guiana had been formally represented in The Hague or treated as any sort of equal in administration.[75] But it was far too little and much too late to solve the deepened rifts among the ethnic groups. There was no unifying culture, no "Dutch umbrella" under which to unite the bickering factions.

## THE GOLDEN HANDSHAKE

Into the 1950s, Dutch Guiana's economic situation improved due to bauxite production and modest successes in rice cultivation; but its social situation had not, and the Netherlands grew weary of maintaining such an expensive and difficult dependent. Seeing the improving economy as a chance to extract itself slowly from the perpetual economic support of its colony, the Netherlands offered public capital investment in these industries through its Prosperity Fund and technical support from employees recently leaving Indonesia upon its independence.[76] In 1947, the government set up a welfare fund which promised an annual deposit of eight million guilders for five years, a ten-year plan to prepare land for rice cultivation, construction of a hydroelectric plant on the Suriname River at Brokopondo, timber clearing, mineral and farming research, road building, aerial mapping, and, of course, financial planning. The entire plan cost the Netherlands 260 million guilders, one-third of which became a gift and the rest a loan.[77] Though an expensive venture, the Dutch believed it would cost them less to wean the colony off of support this way than to continue investing in it as if it were a Dutch state.

It took nearly three more decades before the Netherlands could successfully wean, then shed, its colony. The final severing of the umbilical cord occurred abruptly in 1975, when Paramaribo and The Hague reached an agreement regarding full independence. The Dutch would agree to ten years of severance pay to the Guianese government, known as the "Golden Handshake," and in return the colony would take on its own affairs, including defense and foreign policy, and restrict immigration so there was not a mass exodus to the Netherlands if things got rough. Dutch Guiana adopted the name "Suriname" officially in 1975, upon its independence.

The Guiana colonial experiment performed by the three Western European imperial powers had changed during the darkness of two world wars and a Depression. With the supervisors of the experiment absent, the three Guianas experienced incursions and immutable change. All felt the same external pressures through the turbulent first six or seven decades of the twentieth century. Economic setbacks and aversion of attention by their respective imperial administrations led to social unrest. This unrest resulted in political mobilization and ethnic divisions, culminating in an explosion of political parties and destabilization in British and Dutch Guiana. Conversely, political destabilization, the loss of imperial reputation due to negative publicity, and economic stagnation in French Guiana led to a tightening of French control and a reinstitution of empire. Two Guianas emerged independent, while one was pushed away from autonomy.

This work can now turn away from the consideration of policy and administration. A key argument now is able to be responsibly addressed—that three tiny colonies, once homogenous and isolated, have developed into three unique and distinct entities completely due to their administration over three centuries of colonialism. The imperial decisions of the British, the French, and the Dutch made over these centuries acted as the primary, if not the sole, agent in the development of three separate demographies, political structures, foreign policies, and cultures. These four aspects of Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname can now, in turn, be considered.

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*Chapter Eight*

# Cricket and McCartney

*The Decolonization Period in Guyana (1950–)*

Since its independence in 1966, Guyana has found itself ensnared in a political interstice. It did not resemble other South American nations of comparable size like Ecuador or Uruguay, nor did it completely match its Caribbean counterparts like Grenada or Trinidad and Tobago. It was not totally British, but certainly not indigenous to the degree of a state like Bolivia. Further, it was neither capitalist nor communist. In short, the Guyanese have negotiated their way through nearly five turbulent decades of independence on their own, unique terms. Despite the changing circumstances, Guyana's demography, internal political structure, foreign policy, and culture are the colonial vestiges of British administrative decisions during the colonial period.

## A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

The first and most obvious colonial legacy in Guyana is the country's ethnic diversity. The opening of British Guiana to settlers from across the British Empire, most notably Indian wage laborers, led to one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the world and one of the Western Hemisphere's most anomalous. By the time of Guyana's 1980 census, the descendents of Indian immigrants constituted about half the total population.[1] African descendents of former slaves comprised about 30 percent, while a "mixed ancestry" group (defined here as mixed European and African ancestry) made up an additional 12 percent. Indigenous groups, which British settlers had, for the most part, pushed toward Brazil or Dutch Guiana, made up only 4 percent by 1980.[2] Continuing this trend up through recent years, the largest ethnic group

in the 2002 census remained the Indian population, still comprising almost 44 percent of the total population, with African groups at 30 percent and mixed ancestry groups increasing to nearly 17 percent.[3] After the carefully controlled immigration projects of the previous century, a balance between Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese ethnic groups continues to be the demographic marker of modern Guyana, while an ever-growing mixed ancestry group suggests an even more balanced future.

It should also be noted that the total population of European descent in Guyana has remained comparatively low since the settlement of the area. In 2002, only 476 individuals (0.06 percent) were counted as having purely "White" ancestry, making this the smallest group in the census by far.[4] The European percentage of the population has been slowly decreasing, in fact, since the close of World War II.[5] For Guyana's history, Europeans have controlled its culture despite their strikingly low relative numbers. Though many ethnic groups are now actively involved in the administration of Guyana, the fact that such a tiny European minority remains viable in the government reflects the vestiges of British colonial influence. Coincidentally, the demographic movement over the past decade in Guyana actually mimics that of Britain itself, particularly in its growth among Indians. Now in both Georgetown and London, curries are among the most popular meals.

Guyana has been dealing with the steady arrival of non-Europeans for longer than the United Kingdom. Consequently, differences among ethnic groups in Guyana are often less obvious than in London. Though the country still struggles with how to negotiate these ethnic differences, the groups maintain one commonality—British culture has, over the years, been applied to all groups equally and steadily. The grafting of this common culture onto groups of such considerable variation has provided a common denominator, sometimes allowing the groups to reach consensus more easily. Physical traits may even follow cultural ones—country studies of Guyana point out that the country's disparate ethnic groups have come to resemble one another culturally and even physically more than those of their countries of origin.[6] In other words, an Indian living in Guyana often exhibits more cultural and physical similarities to an African in Guyana than another Indian abroad. The demography of Guyana remains the result of patterns set into motion during the colonial period—a population moving toward homogeny under the cultural influence of a European minority.

## POLITICAL UPHEAVAL AFTER INDEPENDENCE

The movement toward homogeneity and cooperation has not been without struggle, though. From a domestic policy perspective, the divergent ethnic groups submerged under minority dominance were a volatile combination in

the early years of Guyanese independence. As expected, the newborn country underwent a series of violent political changes in the decades following 1966; but despite the upheaval, the legacy of British colonial rule can still be easily discerned in today's Guyana. Actually, this period of political struggle was as much a result of British administrative methods as in spite of them. Guyanese citizens had become accustomed to life under a powerful, assimilative central government in the colonial period. Thus, when independence was granted and the Guyanese worked to structure their own government, a political norm was already in place upon which to model the new government. Logically, the easiest route toward stable independence would be to continue the tradition of a strong central government similar to that which had ruled over the colony for the previous century. But, by the time the colonizers had left Guyana in 1966, no single ethnic party had garnered the kind of support or funding to take over the country entirely. Thus, parties that were hardly ready to wield it nonetheless sought solitary control rather than attempting to run the country through multiparty cooperation and consensus.[7] It would be several decades before the Guyanese political system would begin moving away from a collection of fragmented political parties and toward the search for a cooperative functionality.

Each of these ethnically-based parties sought the same domination the British had exercised over the colony in the previous centuries. In essence, the parties each hoped to replace the British ruling elite in an even swap, rather than by creating a new system. One historian describes this as a "machinery of domination" resting on "a tripod of political hegemony, economic control, and exclusive access to strategic extranational resources."[8] With most colonies in the British Empire, the tripod was not left vacant upon British administrative departure. In the years leading up to each colony's respective independence, the Crown and Parliament would institute a series of reforms designed to transfer power slowly to the local populace. These reforms usually included the expansion of local government and the state apparatus (transferring more powers from the Colonial Office to the governor's offices), a general expansion of suffrage and electoral reform, and efforts to improve infrastructure and human development. Before Guyana's turn at independence, this had become the general procedure for decolonization across the British Empire.

The timing of Guyanese independence, however, prevented this pattern of transfer from playing out. At the time of independence, Cheddi Jagan's PPP looked to be the majority's choice as the heir of Guyanese leadership, with Forbes Burnham's PNC poised to take a sizeable minority of parliamentary seats. Due to the radical Marxism of Jagan's PPP and the ties to Communist governments that both Jagan and Burnham had cultivated, Cold War Britain felt it could not leave an independent Guyana in the hands of the elected party. In anticipation of a Communist takeover should the Guyanese elect the

PPP, the British government suspended the constitution in 1953. Additionally, the colonial government tolerated and possibly even encouraged ethnic and political agitation in order to destabilize the PPP's power, and even manipulated many lower-level elections to produce pro-capitalist outcomes.[9] A September 1953 report by the governor of British Guiana, Sir Alfred Savage, illustrated the British view of the Guyanese political landscape and the active role British administrators took in the forging of Guyanese political structures. In reference to the political situation, Savage stated, "There is no real political opposition to the party in power [the British]. There are too many parties and independents and again no apparent leadership. Attempts are now being made to correct this in relation to the forthcoming bye [sic] election."[10] Savage's collaboration with the British government to keep pro-British leaders installed was aggressive, and this platform included the encouragement of further political fragmentation. Thus, even the political party structure now existing in Guyana is in some ways the offspring of British involvement and planning.

## CULTURAL INHERITANCE AND WALTER RODNEY

The domestic priorities of the post-independence governments bore striking resemblances to their British predecessors, as well. Influenced by the success of British assimilatory education, each ruling political party, beginning with Jagan's PPP, placed a premium emphasis on education. The parties publicly argued that education provided the best instrument to develop a skilled labor force and to provide economic equity. While this was certainly true, critics also pointed out the tendency of the PPP and Burnham's PNC to use education systems as a way to spread political propaganda.[11] Further flaming the academic debate over Guyana's political value system, the country's most famous and groundbreaking historian, Walter Rodney, was writing books on African history and Marxist values. Rodney's most recognized book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, published in 1972, was based on the notion that Africa had been consciously exploited by the Europeans. His Marxist, anti-imperialist analysis was polarizing but academically sound, and mirrored the intellectual current in other academic circles in Latin America. Rodney certainly was not writing in a vacuum. He was condemning European behavior in Africa in his book just a year after Eduardo Galeano published *Open Veins of Latin America*, the 1971 classic history of Latin America also written from a staunchly anti-imperial, anti-European point of view.[12] This rhetoric posed a serious threat to the *status quo*. Possibly recognizing the potential power of the intellectuals and Rodney's strong ties to them, the incumbent Guyanese government assigned prominence to the education system, appointing district officers to inspect local schools and creating the

Ministry of Higher Education to oversee Guyanese universities in 1980 (coincidentally, Rodney was assassinated in the same year). By 1988, the government allocated 7 percent of the gross domestic product to education expenditures.[13] Throughout the 1980s and up to the present, most government leaders have been teachers (including presidents Forbes Burnham and Desmond Hoyte), or children of teachers.[14] The educational focus remains—Guyana's education expenditures are 8.3 percent of its GDP as of 2010, one of the highest percentages in the world.[15] Politically, Guyana's preoccupation with education can be added to the list of British colonial legacies, a direct descendent of Britain's policy of cultural assimilation through a universal British curriculum.

Other political culture is uniquely British, as well. One of the best examples of English legal influence is Guyana's relatively liberal interpretation of "morality law." As late as 2006, the country was one of only three in Latin America (Central America, South America, and the Spanish portions of the Caribbean) in which abortion was completely legal.[16,17] The other two, Cuba and Puerto Rico, can be explained based on their Communist approach and subsequent suppression of the church on issues like abortion, and inclusion in the United States' legal framework, respectively. Guyana's abortion law mirrors that of the United Kingdom and not of its South American neighbors, despite a separation from Britain of over four decades. Gun control laws are similar in their stringency to those found in the United Kingdom today, though recently in 2013 opponents of government control of personal weapons have blocked further gun legislation.[18] Laws regarding homosexuality and gay rights are less liberal in Guyana than in the United Kingdom, but much of this can be attributed to the fact that the United Kingdom changed its laws on homosexuality to be more lenient starting in the 1960s, when Guyana was separating itself. More recently, the Guyanese have begun following British leads here, too, and are beginning to lift laws limiting the rights of homosexuals. In Guyana's political structure and its political values, the remnants of British influence can still be easily observed.

## GUYANA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Political legacies not only can be found in these domestic policies, but also in the country's foreign policy programs. With the exception of a brief communist leaning under Forbes Burnham, Guyana's international relations have been funneled through the United Kingdom via membership in the Commonwealth of Nations and through the Caribbean by membership in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Except in territorial disputes with Venezuela and Brazil and nominal participation in the Organization of American States, Guyanese rulers generally ignore Latin America. Above all else, Guyana

remains a Commonwealth nation, despite its distance of over four thousand miles from London. Given Britain's less than impressive economic condition in the 1970s relative to the much larger economies of the United States and the Soviet Union, it had little to offer as a "big brother"; nonetheless, Guyana's government aligned itself with British politics and foreign policy and not with the U.S. backed North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Soviet Union backed Warsaw Pact. The young country's choice of the Commonwealth as its vehicle for international engagement could not have been an economic decision, as Britain was clearly in the weakest position of Guyana's political suitors. The choice of Commonwealth was instead a testament to the new country's strongly English cultural inheritance.

Guyana's other international affiliation during the initial stages of its independence was with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), a neutral organization founded just a few years before in 1961. But comparison between involvement in the fledgling NAM and a Commonwealth built on the foundations of the Victorian empire can further illustrate Guyana's pro-Anglo tendencies. Guyana's attendance statistics from NAM and Commonwealth meetings, in particular, serve as a valuable reflection of the country's early priorities. Guyanese government leaders attended 56 percent of all NAM annual conferences during the first two decades of independence, but over 70 percent of the Commonwealth meetings.[19] The country's preference for Commonwealth participation began as a logical extension from its time as a colony, but remained strong instead of waning over time. The abilities of the British Foreign Service and the Commonwealth to adapt and retain global relevance went a long way in helping retain countries like Guyana on the active membership roles. Adaptation was achieved through a series of British government reforms and changes to Commonwealth structure.

## IMPERIALISM OVER THE RADIO

The first of these occurred in the same year as Guyanese independence; in late 1966, the Colonial Office was merged with the Commonwealth Relations Office to form the Commonwealth Office.[20] The Colonial Office had been the chief government agency dealing with the colonies since 1854, as a subdivision of the War Office. The newer Commonwealth Relations Office was an innovative department created after the independence of India in 1947, and was designed specifically to maintain and improve relations with colonies after their independence. The new Commonwealth Office would deal with both current and former colonies, suggesting that a new philosophy had developed among the British administrators—that there were still enough similarities between current and former colonies that the government could use the same office to oversee all relations with them. This new admin-

istrative center provided a more centralized, unified approach in dealing with British overseas territories, holdings, and former colonies, placing all the bureaucratic talent in the same office. Strengthening the bureaucracy in hopes of preserving some cultural authority over the vestiges of the empire became the new British imperial method. But this method was built on earlier foundations—since the first assimilative education programs in British Guiana, the United Kingdom showed far more interest in cultural assimilation and dominance than its fellow imperialists in the Guiana Shield.

Continuing the new pattern of bureaucratic centralization, another merger occurred two years later when in 1968 the Foreign Office (the superior organ for non-Commonwealth foreign policy in the United Kingdom) and the new Commonwealth Office merged to form the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, or FCO. The new office's jurisdiction expanded to incorporate distribution of culture and ideology on behalf of the British government. This jurisdiction included oversight of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service, the arm of the British Broadcasting Corporation responsible for broadcasting outside the British Isles. As the premier vehicle for maintaining Britain's cultural integrity and interests worldwide through popular media, the BBC World Service became an active and effective way to disseminate British music, news, and interests abroad, including Guyana.[21] It was through the BBC World Service, administered by the FCO, that foreign relations and cultural legacies merged for the digestion of the masses. Though the empire had certainly disintegrated, Britain's cultural hold showed signs of becoming stronger than ever.

The BBC had carried "popular imperialism" to all corners of the empire since the close of World War I. By providing coverage of patriotic events, playing national music, and selecting symbolic, nationalist, and royalist programming, the BBC World Service served as Britain's culutural ambassador to the rest of the old empire.[22] The BBC's provision of a forum for British popular music secured Anglo culture in areas that may have otherwise rejected it, and the global popularity of British culture, particularly the rock music movements of the 1960s, kept the retention of British lifestyles and connections *en vogue*. The opinion that popular music helped smooth the relations between suzerain and colony and served as a crucial factor during decolonization will be considered later.

In Guyana, the infrastructure upon which these cultural inroads were constructed grew throughout the decades following independence. By 1978, Guyana had two high-powered radio stations—the Guyana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) and Radio Demerara. Radio Demerara was founded in 1951 by a British company and spent its first three decades under contract to carry at least twenty-one hours of BBC programming a week.[23] The predecessor to the GBC, the Guyana Broadcasting Service (GBS), also began as a British-run station in 1958, but was nationalized under the Burnham adminis-

tration (1966–1980) as GBC. These two networks laid the foundation for future radio programming as Guyanese broadcasting began to diversify, and their ties to the BBC helped continue the tenacious hold that British culture enjoyed. The model was still the same in the British Isles, as well—the British government maintained full control of radio programming even in the home country, and Guyana's network reflected this policy.

British influence over Guyanese radio continued. On July 1, 1980, the GBC and Radio Demerara reorganized, emerging as a single unit with a slogan of "One Station, Two Channels." Channel One, the more traditionally British channel, operated on the frequencies formerly used by Radio Demerara, while Channel Two, a regional channel, utilized a smaller transmitter and a more local, Guyanese approach to programming, a remarkably similar structure to the BBC 1 and BBC 2 structure in place in the United Kingdom. Channel One eventually became Radio Roraima, while Channel Two became the Voice of Guyana (Roraima would cease operations and be replaced by 98.1 FM in the middle of the 2000s).[24] In 2004, both channels of the GBC merged with Guyana Television Broadcasting Company Limited (GTV) to form the National Communication Network, Incorporated (NCN).[25] Though this constant reorganization and reprogramming seems confusing, some interesting trends can be noted. Over the course of twenty-five years or more, Guyanese listeners maintained an interest and a demand for British-oriented programming, making the pro-BBC stations at least as successful as the more locally-oriented ones and necessitating their continued existence.

Changes in programming were accompanied by a crucial development in the Guyanese radio and television industry. Despite earlier nationalization under Burnham and attempts to make NCN more "Guyanese" than British, the radio and television units of the corporation (GBC and GTV, respectively) both joined the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA). The CBA, as a specialized organ of the Commonwealth, provided technical support and program funding the Burnham administration and its successors could not match, and had partnered with the BBC to provide high-quality programming and workshops to CBA member stations. These workshops helped facilitate a return to BBC and Anglo-friendly programming policies reminiscent of the 1960s and 1970s, when the stations were under direct British control.[26] Radio broadcasting is one of the most culturally pervasive avenues the United Kingdom and its Commonwealth use to maintain their interests in the old empire, and Burnham's failure to keep the Guyanese radio broadcasting operations "in-house" ensured that pro-British messages and British cultural programming would continue in Georgetown and its outliers.

## AN "INFORMAL EMPIRE"

Throughout colonial times and even after decolonization, Britain has utilized education, broadcast programming, and other forms of cultural dissemination to create an "informal empire." This informal empire is purely cultural, rather than politico-military, and now stands as the strongest remaining form of British influence. Without military presence or force, Britain's informal cultural empire has allowed the Commonwealth to remain a small, inexpensive, but effective organization. Cultural similarities shared through popular music and common media systems make it much easier to hold vastly different states like Guyana within the Commonwealth system. Unlike the budgets and bureaucracies of many other international agencies, the Commonwealth's secretariat has remained relatively small, with an operating budget of only ten million U.S. dollars and a staff of just over four hundred at the beginning of the 1990s.[27] By avoiding charges of extravagance and waste, the organization has kept from being overly politicized and instead serves as an informal unifying body for like-minded members of Britain's informal empire, and as a low-pressure outlet for Guyanese participation in world affairs.

Guyana's other preferred foreign policy vehicle developed during its independence movement, when the country entered into the first Caribbean trade agreement. Signed in 1965 by Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean Free Trade Agreement (CARIFTA) aimed to balance trade in the Anglophone Caribbean and to provide countries like Guyana an outlet for goods outside of the United Kingdom.[28] Despite its stated goal, CARIFTA and its successor, the CARICOM, are vestiges of British colonial administration in their own right. CARIFTA was not a pan-Caribbean effort to achieve unity and equality (it lacked any non-English speaking members), but rather a reaction to Britain's entry into the European Economic Community (EEC). Guyana joined CARIFTA because it was still economically tied to Britain, and its leadership recognized that British trade interest now focused on Europe, and not on the political or economic strengthening of former territories.[29] Guyana clearly preferred Britain as a trading partner, but the focus of London on joining the new EEC forced a reluctant Guyana to look elsewhere for trade. Furthermore, during its initial years in CARIFTA, Guyana participated only sporadically, mostly to corral support from its neighbors in border disputes with non-CARIFTA-member Venezuela.[30] Thus, Guyana's ties with its Caribbean neighbors were not cultural and voluntary, as with the Commonwealth, but rather an economic last resort, after Britain shunned trade with the country in favor of closer trade ties with the EEC members. Certainly, the Guyanese rulers saw economic potential in CARICOM membership (and rightfully so), but the association that founded CARIFTA and CARICOM was rooted in a much deeper cultural association—all the members of the original treaty

were former British colonies with close economic and political ties to London.

## BURNHAM AND HOYTE—A PENDULUM OF POLICY

A period of socialism in the 1970s and early 1980s under Burnham provides an aberration against which the most recent decades contrast. His administration as prime minister, then president, was marked by a post-independence search for global legitimacy and small moves toward socialism, highlighted by the nationalization of the mining industry in the 1970s. Culturally speaking, the general public of Guyana maintained its British roots and cultivated them with tools like the BBC; but at the top, Burnham sought to prove Guyana could stand alone on its own political terms.

During his administration, this pursuit of recognition and legitimacy on the world stage dominated policy, resulting in an unusual foreign-domestic relationship—for the first time, foreign policy determined national interest, rather than the other way around.[31] Most notably, Burnham openly courted ties with the Soviet Union and Cuba throughout his administration, causing concern in both the United States and the United Kingdom that communism would gain a foothold in South America. He also briefly increased Guyana's participation in the Non-Aligned Movement at the expense of Commonwealth participation, personally attending the annual meeting in 1970 and even hosting the NAM conference in 1972.[32] Though these events combined with Walter Rodney's revolutionary writings at the time, concerns that Guyana would become another Cuba never came to pass. Guyana's overtures to the Warsaw Pact stayed feeble at best—rarely amounting to more than saber-rattling for the purposes of getting the rest of the world's attention. After Rodney's death in 1980 and Burnham's in 1985, Communist rhetoric faded. In a way, even the pro-Communist foreign policy of Guyana under Burnham formed indirectly as a response to British neglect, and thus can be counted among Britain's remaining legacies.

After Desmond Hoyte ousted Burnham in the 1984 election, Guyana's foreign policy took a more conservative, Commonwealth-friendly approach that endured into the new century. The Hoyte government turned its attention to more pressing domestic/economic issues, leaving foreign policy headaches to the Commonwealth, in which Guyana remained an active participant.[33] Thus, despite the anti-British rhetoric of Forbes Burnham's administration, Guyana has since focused on maintaining close, positive relations with the United Kingdom through the Commonwealth. After CARIFTA failed to be recognized as a regional power by the rest of the hemisphere, ongoing border disputes with Venezuela have kept Guyana looking to its mother country for protection, even after over forty years of independence.[34]

The country's preference for Britain over its neighbors in South America revealed itself most clearly during the United Kingdom's 1982 dispute with Argentina over the Malvinas (Falklands) Islands—Guyana was the only South American nation to express full support for the United Kingdom.[35] Recent Guyanese foreign policy rests on membership in the Commonwealth and CARICOM; Guyana's choice to join the Caribbean Community proves its cultural separation from Latin America (Caricom's headquarters is now in Georgetown), while its active membership in the Commonwealth reflects a continued British influence over foreign policy and culture.

## BRITANNIA'S MATERNITY

Rooted in assimilative education in the nineteenth century and manifesting in Guyana's pro-United Kingdom foreign policy, British cultural influences in the country are even stronger than its demographic and political legacies. The most ubiquitous cultural inheritance, the English language, keeps Guyana tied closely to its former overseer. English is the official language of the country and has become the primary language of nearly all Guyanese residents, with the exception of some elderly South Asians and Amerindians. English is pervasive in Guyana and dominates the lexicon of its Creole dialects.[36] The speaking of English as the official government and business language keeps Guyana as linguistically linked to Britain as it had been during its period of assimilative schooling.

Another well-documented British connection can be seen in Guyanese popular music. Though local bands influenced by reggae, calypso, and Indian musical styles are common, a strong secondary music scene, British pop/rock music, has been spread across the country by the BBC and its subsidiaries and associated networks for decades. British pop music worked in Guyana through a kind of cultural reciprocity. The BBC-affiliated stations and the "pro-British" education of the population over decades laid the groundwork for a general social acceptance of British music when it arrived; in turn, the popularity of British bands, particularly in the 1960s, tempered Guyanese opinions about the British and smoothed the way to Commonwealth cooperation, rather than distanced independence.

The best musical example of this cultural reciprocity could be found in Britain's most popular export through the 1960s, the Beatles. The Beatles experienced success on a global scale, including in Guyana, bridging a widening cultural chasm between former colonies and Britain by achieving airplay and record sales success in both places. In order to accomplish this transoceanic feat, groups like the Beatles encouraged acceptance of British rock music in places like Guyana (this was done by the BBC) and cultivated an appreciation of foreign musical styles in Britain. By integrating musical

styles from abroad, particularly India (increasing their popularity greatly among the many Indian immigrants in Guyana), the Beatles took the most adaptable and transportable cultural element, music, and created a common cultural ownership between British and former colonial citizens.[37] In early 1967, at the height of the Guyanese independence movement, the Beatles were chosen to represent the British Isles on the special television program *Our World*. The BBC televised the program in over thirty countries including Guyana, to more than half a billion people.[38] Designed to showcase nations' contributions to world culture, the show and the Beatles' selection brought the point home—the world identified the Beatles with Britain and all things British, and it approved.

The world clearly equated the Beatles with Britishness, but their popularity in recently independent dominions like Guyana did not suffer because of it. On the United World Chart, which takes popular music sales and radio play from all world markets into account, the Beatles claim sixteen of the hundred most successful records of all time, more than any other group. Globally, they had more number one hits as a group than any other band in history not only in the United Kingdom, but in the "Old Dominions," Australia, Canada, the United States, Ireland, and New Zealand, and the "New Dominions," including Guyana.[39] Still played liberally on Guyanese radio, the Beatles and their pop music successors represent one of Britain's most enduring and beloved legacies in Guyana.

Britain also left behind a rich architectural tradition, particularly in Georgetown. One needs look no further than the cover of Steve Garner's book *Ethnicity, Class, and Gender: Guyana 1838–1985* (cited earlier in this text) to find the tenacity of the English architectural heritage in far-flung Guyana. The cover features a Tudor-style clock tower, one of the many buildings in the country built not to local specifications or to meet tropical needs, but to resemble England as closely as possible. Other notable buildings include the Law Courts Building on Croal Street in Georgetown, opened in 1887 and sporting a statue of Queen Victoria.[40] Even earlier examples occur along the Avenue of the Republic in the capital, where architect Joseph Hadfield's Parliament Building has sat since 1833. This building, modeled after British government buildings, housed the offices which sold land to the free Africans and the chambers of Parliament, most recently addressed by Queen Elizabeth II in 1994.[41] British cultural inheritance is therefore as much visual as auditory in Guyana.

## THE CULTURE OF SPORT

Lastly, the Guyanese cultural ties to Britain cannot be discussed without considering the country's most popular sport, cricket. Sport's seemingly

harmless and neutral exterior often effectively hides political undertones, and cricket is no exception. It is what Helen Tiffin calls "the most insidiously influential of all imperial cultural forms."[42] In a non-threatening way, cricket served as a substitute for more direct military and political adaptations of imperialism. Cricket's popularity surged during the second half of the nineteenth century during the post-emancipation social restructuring in the colony. With shifting socioeconomic classes and an uneasy relationship with the home country prevailing, cricket became a political consideration in its own right by allowing classes and ethnic groups to settle questions of rank on the pitch instead of in the streets.[43] The period of upheaval following independence, marked by reorganizations and reinterpretations of community and caste, allowed cricket to become a powerful tool wielded by those who directed community restructuring processes. Ethnic groups sought superiority through athletic competition, and lower classes looked to the sport as a way to challenge the elite. As a result, cricket clubs organized themselves along the same ethnic and economic lines as political parties, providing an interesting parallel to politics in the colony.[44] Further, this quintessentially British sport mirrored British governing policy through the formalization of rules, organization of the administering bodies, location of governing headquarters, and symbolism of the game itself.[45] All of these aspects of cricket would be applicable in Guyana.

Participating with other Caribbean nations as part of the West Indies cricket team (the "Windies"), Guyanese cricketers are unsurprisingly are among the country's most famous athletes. As early as 1950, men of varied ethnic background, most notably Indian, were playing for British Guiana on the West Indies team.[46] Winning the World Cup in the crucial years 1975 and 1979, when Guyana was seeking legitimacy and recognition, allowed the Guyanese to use cricket as a way to bolster their national image and achieve the kind of global recognition sought by the Burnham administration. Guyana's obsession with the sport has continued, culminating in the hosting of the 2007 World Cup in Georgetown. The country has been very successful both in growing cricket's popularity within its borders and using it as a nationalist tool and challenge to former colonial authority.[47] Ironically, though, Guyana's very use of cricket as a way to challenge British authority in fact reaffirms the presence of a British "informal empire"—cricket was invented and first played in Britain, then transferred to its colonies. By utilizing a British social tool, rather than a Guyanese one, to challenge British authority, Guyana verifies its cultural benefactor.

## THE FUTURE OF GUYANA

However one interprets Guyana's past, its future lies in the hands of those who manage its natural resources and whose interests they serve. The economic potential of Guyana and its neighbors is significant. Gold and oil have both been discovered in large quantities across the Guiana Shield and neighboring offshore continental shelf. Natural gas deposits abound, and both mineral and agricultural resources are healthy. Guyana and its neighboring Guianas are also water-wealthy, with well-irrigated fields and ample access to clean, fresh water—a luxury many former colonies in Africa and elsewhere have lacked. However, Guyana holds the geographic misfortune of being positioned between Venezuela, a country seeking to increase its regional presence at the expense of its political relationships with the United States and Western Europe, and Brazil, a behemoth in both size and population now flexing its economic and political muscle more than ever.

While many Guyanese voters and politicians favor a more slow and balanced approach to economic growth, taking into account the protection of the environment and its precious ecological resources, the Brazilians and Venezuelans have hoped to establish a faster pace. At many times, the "road to the top," economically speaking, runs through Guyana. As Guyanese Prime Minister Samuel Hinds said in a 2010 interview by the *New York Times*, "Sleeping with a big neighbor, 200 times your size, you know they might not intend it, but if they roll over it could be the end of you."[48] The statement sums up what may be Guyana's largest problem—it is a tiny country surrounded by policies and agendas much larger than its own. Construction projects including roads, damns, port dredging, and drilling are all being proposed both within the country and by its neighbors hoping to cash in on a share of the resources. Simply put, Guyana may be too small to resist the external pressures of those wishing to pull it and its resources into their own agendas.

Culturally, Guyana should be more fragmented, yet it retains many elements of its British past and fails to reject these remnants of colonialism as an independent state. The extreme ethnic diversity brought on by British immigration policies during the nineteenth and twentieth century has resulted in a curious lack of nationalism. No single ethnic group has dominated the demography enough to obtain total hegemony, but all have been strong enough to resist an across-the-board Creolization.[49] More simply put, Guyana has no ethnic nationalism, nor any overarching Creole version, either. The only things shared by these cobbled-together ethnic groups are elements of British culture. As Guyana continues learning how to cope with its fractured demography and disparate political factions to face its external pressures, one truth has endured for nearly two centuries—"Britishness" (found in language, music, architecture, and sport) remains the only ideology these myri-

ad groups truly share. It represents the one common foundation all Guyanese can build a unified nation upon, here in the only English-speaking enclave on the South American continent.

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*Chapter Nine*

# Odd Man Out

*The Decolonization Period in French Guiana (1950–)*

Regarding demography, internal politics, foreign policy, and culture among the three Guianas, French Guiana is the outlier and the exception in almost all respects. An uneasy marriage of coastal Parisian transplants and inland Amerindian groups, French Guiana (now known by many Frenchmen as Guyane) plays host to the European Space Agency, tightly monitored from thousands of miles away. Residents pay for groceries with Euros rather than local currencies. Though the hulking edifices of Devil's Island still stand, the *département* has traded prisoners for transient aerospace workers and expatriates, who now outnumber the descendents of indentured laborers and plantation owners by a gigantic margin. Home soil is guarded not by a local state militia or paid army of citizens, but by the French Foreign Legion, a group of mercenaries counting only a handful of French Guiana residents in its company. Most striking of all, these residents are not called "French Guianese" or "Guyanaise." They are simply "French." In fact, Guyane's only similarity to its Guianese counterparts is that it, too, possesses an inescapable colonial legacy. Remnants of empire are, in fact, strongest here, for according to Paris, there are only two Guianas—Guyane is not a Guiana at all, but simply another province of continental France.

## THE UNIQUE DEMOGRAPHY OF FRENCH GUIANA

Demographic statistics for French Guiana differ sharply from the rest of the Guianas, and many of the differences can be traced back to French variations in administrative policy. Life expectancy, for instance, is much higher in the

French territory than in either Guyana or Suriname. Curiously, in 1950, life expectancy statistics across the Guianas were comparable—life expectancy at birth was 50.3 years for French Guiana, 50.8 for Guyana, and 54.4 for Suriname.[1] The similar numbers precisely reflect the level of involvement among the three imperial powers during the "Abandonment Period" of 1914–1950—low, but equivalent across the board. The best French and British administrators had departed for Africa while the rest of both governments busied themselves in recovery from two world wars. Though the Netherlands also experienced rebuilding during the time, it retained a bit more interest in its South American holdings. This slightly more attentive caretaking caused improved health and marginally improved life expectancy figures. By 2004, however, the discrepancy had swung heavily in French Guiana's favor. Life expectancy at birth for French Guiana jumped to 72.5 years (an improvement of 22.2 years over just five decades), while Suriname only increased to 68.5 (14.1 years) and Guyana barely reached 60.1 (9.3 years).[2] The figures reflect a harsh truth difficult to swallow for proponents of self-determination. Simply put, French Guiana's absorption into France allowed it to benefit from the mainland's comprehensive health care system and funding for medical care, while Guyana and Suriname paid a price of lower quality health care in return for political autonomy.

Ethnic demographics, also, reflect differences in past colonial administration and further isolate Guyane from its neighbors. French Guiana, for instance, chose abandonment of the plantation economy in favor of a penal colony when their agricultural enterprises fell flat and the colony began losing money. Therefore, while the cultural shock of emancipation plunged British and Dutch Guiana into critical labor shortages, the French colony experienced little real change. Not in need of immigrant labor to replace plantation slaves in large numbers (since there never were many anyway), the French never pursued an immigration program like their neighbors. As a result, only around 4 percent of people in French Guiana are Indian, and only about 4 percent more are Chinese.[3] Instead, the overwhelming majorities in the state are mulattos and Creole blacks, who make up approximately two-thirds of the population; Caucasians, almost always from metropolitan France, make up 12 percent, a much higher percentage than either Suriname or Guyana.[4] A clear absence of Asian ethnic groups, the direct result of a dismissal of immigration programs by the French government, distances Guyane from its neighbors.

## A CAPITAL CITY IN NAME ALONE

A different population makeup is not the only demographic legacy of French imperial rule. Internal political structures unique to French Guiana also di-

rectly resulted from this relative ethnic homogeny and its administration. Guyane has almost always been administered from Paris rather than from Cayenne; British and Dutch Guiana have both enjoyed at least some access to local governing bodies and parliamentary organs during their respective histories. Because Guyane had no effective local bureaucracy throughout the nineteenth century, and little local representation in the twentieth, few reasons existed for the formation of political parties (politics simply were not happening in Cayenne). The ethnic breakdown augmented this phenomenon; over three-quarters of the population was white or of mixed Creole descent leading into the twentieth century. Rather than a development of ethnically-based parties looking out for the welfare of their specific constituencies, French Guiana remained a colony of Creoles reporting directly to Paris, with neither an "axe to grind" nor a stone upon which to grind it.

Guyane's uniquely Creole demographic, coupled with a fragile but profitable mining economy and vigorous migration to and from France, has stifled calls for independence at the grassroots level. First, as previously stated, there are no real coherent political parties in the country as a result of the lack of ethnic competition and local decision-making.[5] Second, over the centuries, French Guiana has existed for only one purpose at a time in Paris' eyes. Failing first as a profitable agricultural colony, it was converted to a penal colony. Upon the collapse of the penal colony, primarily due to extraordinarily negative publicity, several mining operations moved in, hoping to capitalize on bauxite and gold deposits in the area. French colonization of the Guianas had been flighty at best, focusing on a single money-making venture at a time, and then abandoning it completely for something new. The lack of economic diversification accompanying French Guiana's "parade of purposes" left behind a very fragile economy tied tightly to continental French purse strings. A consistent flow of monetary support from France—approximately US$500 million per year—supplements the economy and, in turn, makes residents who depend on it quite uncomfortable with the idea of independence.[6] In January 2010, voters rejected a referendum on increased autonomy with a nearly 70 percent vote against on a turnout of 48 percent.[7] The last demographic anomaly, constant migration of French citizens to and from France and a 33 percent transient population, keeps French Guiana from developing any real sense of nationalism, since over a third of the population is only there temporarily anyway.[8]

## THE GUIANA SPACE CENTRE—EUROPE'S NEWEST COLONY

The transient population of French Guiana primarily exists because of the *département*'s newest purpose, as a host for the European Space Agency's Guiana Space Centre (GSC) and the many temporary aerospace and

contracted jobs that accompany it. Next in the parade, the GSC has replaced mining and penal colonies as "the" central source of French Guianese income; the facility brings in over a billion U.S. dollars a year (the vast majority of which makes its way back to Europe) and accounts for nearly a third of the jobs in the territory and over half the tax revenue.[9] Guiana Space Centre represents both sides of the colonialism debate. On the one hand, the center brings many of the highest-paying jobs and much of the auxiliary business to the territory—income that would never have come otherwise; on the other, residents of Guyane hold no shares in the facility, nor does much of its revenue remain in the local economy. To some, GSC represents progress in the third world. To others, it is simply another repository of wealth stolen from one land and siphoned off to another.

The story of the creation of the GSC and the determining of its location provides a window through which modern French definitions of empire can be viewed. First, the center's very conception resulted from changing French views on imperialism. Recovering from two demoralizing defeats in World War I and II, both at the hands of the industrially, territorially, and militarily surging Germans, and the loss of Indochina, the French found themselves nostalgically yearning for the time when France ranked among the most powerful countries in the world. Devastated financially and humiliated militarily, the new French government (the Fifth Republic, formed in 1958 under the leadership of Charles de Gaulle) sought to recover its global image through technological, rather than military or economic, independence. As the twentieth century moved into the Cold War era, strategic weaponry, satellites, and space exploration became the indicators of a successful state. The French, determined this time to be on the winning end of the race, invested every franc they could into research and development, culminating in the founding of the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES, the predecessor to the French space agency) in 1962.[10] Having spent much of the twentieth century "losing face" either in war or in literary propaganda (recall Somerset Maugham and Emile Zola), the French government focused on regaining its political edge through technology. CNES would need a new launch facility, though—the original site had been located in Algeria, which had just won its independence in a tumultuous and bloody revolution.[11] The hunt began for the next suitable site for the CNES facilities.

The negotiations that would finally land CNES in French Guiana bore striking similarities to the discussions on where to locate France's penal colony a century earlier. Above all, the French sought a prime location from which to launch rockets *within French territory*. Regaining some political clout would be impossible if France succumbed to renting facilities from other European countries. The launch facility had to be located on French soil. Once again, New Caledonia and French Guiana competed for the top consideration and, in 1964, French Guiana won out again. CNES listed seven

criteria for judging potential sites in its 1964 survey: the potential for placing satellites in both polar and equatorial orbits, proximity to the equator (which reduced the amount of fuel needed to achieve speed), a surface area large enough (and population density low enough) to ensure launch safety, a deep-water port facility, an airport capable of receiving long-range aircraft, proximity to Europe, and political stability.[12] Based on these desired criteria, a report was compiled to determine the optimum location for this newest colonial experiment.[13] By January 1965, the Guiana Space Centre initiated operations in Kourou and opened to international organizations or foreign governments requiring launch facilities for space projects. France had traded its penal colonies and its mining camps for a space facility that now dominates the economic and political landscape of the tiny South American territory—without the space center, Guyane might now be independent but underdeveloped; with it, French Guiana joins, and reaps the benefits of, the more stable French economy.

## THE FIFTH REPUBLIC'S IMPERIALISM

Explaining exactly how and why French Guiana is still part of France requires some background information on the development and interpretation of France's Fifth Republic. Like the British and Dutch, the French had virtually abandoned their Guiana during the first half of the twentieth century. For the British and Dutch, however, expansion of democracy through suffrage reforms preceded their downfall, as new political parties clamored for support from the newly enfranchised. France, on the other hand, had kept its overseas territories out of the business of voting. In 1936, there were only 432,122 qualified voters in all of the French overseas territories combined, and most of these were European transplants, not natives or Creoles.[14] This underlies a uniquely French attitude toward empire in the twentieth century. The French had never been interested in assimilating native groups, granting them suffrage, and then encouraging them to set up mini-Frances around the world—this was a British model. The French government possessed no interest in a hands-off, solely economic relationship with its colonists either—this was a Dutch model. Rather, the French sought after World War II an expanded and resurgent "whole" France, in which they rejected the idea of colonial autonomy or separation from the homeland.

In 1944, as World War II came to a close in Europe, the Free French government met in Brazzaville, Congo, to consider the direction France and its empire should take. The Brazzaville Declaration officially spelled out France's desires, asserting that the spirit and methods of French colonization should expand democracy for native citizens of the colonies, but should not allow for autonomy, any attainment of self-governing status, or any possibil-

ity of development outside the French sphere.[15] The Free French government determined that for France to survive and maintain its influence the empire must be saved, colonies must not be allowed to break away, and strong, centralized laws must be applied equally across all holdings, regardless of geography or culture. Though some voiced concern that specific needs of colonies could not be met by a "one-size-fits-all" legal code, the new French attitude toward empire moved forward.[16] Retention of its current colonies and recovery of its reputation became the chief pillars upon which France would be reseated.

By 1958, Charles de Gaulle had been leading a concerted French effort to rewrite the Constitution and form a new kind of empire. The Constitution of the Fifth Republic achieved ratification in that year, marking one final shift in French policy toward its colonies. The Fifth Republic under de Gaulle hoped to redefine the empire in a way that would both strengthen and streamline it. Independence movements in Africa had become bloody and costly (particularly in Algeria), and de Gaulle, like British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, recognized that the winds of change were blowing and suppression of these movements would bankrupt Paris. His solution materialized in an offer to each of the republics in French Africa. Each state could select the "assimilation path," which would make it a *département*—a fully integrated, equal part of France with all the rights and privileges of metropolitan French citizens, but with absolutely no home rule or autonomy. The alternative, the "independence path," would grant the country independence but would sever it completely from French economic aid and military protection.[17] Every polity in French Africa chose independence.

## DOMS AND TOMS

The Fifth Republic's Constitution did not, however, offer this choice to holdings outside of Africa, where de Gaulle had the most experience. Instead, the ten remaining non-African French territories were left in their original categories as established in 1946 by the Fourth Republic. The *territoires d'outre-mer*, or "TOMs," included French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna Island, Saint Pierre et Miquelon, Mayotte, and the French Southern and Antarctic Lands, and retained certain local statutory laws and limited self-government. The *départements d'outre-mer*, or "DOMs," included France's four "ancient" colonies—Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, and French Guiana. The DOMs were fully incorporated into France, with no legal or administrative differentiation from France itself.[18] Assigning Guyane a DOM status sent a strong message—as an equal part of France, it had no more legal right to agitate for home rule or independence than any province in metropolitan France.[19] Rather than being seen as a colony seeking autono-

my, a DOM appealing for greater autonomy would be interpreted as a rebellious province.

French Guiana's foreign policy, then, cannot be compared to the other Guianas simply because it does not have one. But the lack of a foreign policy is a French colonial legacy of the most obvious kind. Internationally, French Guiana is represented only through France; it has no representation in the United Nations, and is only allowed to send two deputies to the French National Assembly (Réunion, a much smaller entity, is allowed five, while Martinique and Guadeloupe, also significantly smaller, are allowed four each).[20] The *département* of Guyane can only interact with its Caribbean neighbors in CARICOM through France, which is an observing member, so attempts to forge regional ties have been frustrated. Today it is easier for a resident of French Guiana to travel to Germany or Spain than to visit another of the Guianas.[21] These oddities make tracing current political and cultural circumstances in French Guiana back to their French administrative origins a relatively easy task.

Politically, Guyane is a vestige of the past; its DOM status confounds those who believe that imperialism died in the twentieth century. The French, though, have never been shy about sharing their logic and reasoning on why French Guiana should be enveloped by France, thousands of miles away. Since the days of de Gaulle, the French government has tried to regain some of its pre-war legitimacy; imperial holdings provide some validity to that self-image. In short, French Guiana remains part of France so France can feel better about its place in the global hierarchy. Pierre Messmer, Minister of the Army under de Gaulle, explained the retention of fellow DOM Réunion by stating, "It is not material interests which tie Réunion to the metropole, it is political, human, physical, and spiritual unity. Réunion is France in the Indian Ocean."[22] The same principle can be applied to French Guiana—proof of French influence over Guyane is easy to obtain. The territory is literally still part of France.

## AN IMPERIAL MILITARY PRESENCE

The only other French political influence visible in French Guiana today is the presence of the Foreign Legion. Another vestige of colonialism, the Foreign Legion is a unit of mercenary soldiers hired by the French government to protect overseas interests. Hired from areas outside Guyane, the Foreign Legion represents the pinnacle of French imperial involvement in the area. Permanent Foreign Legion installment began in 1973 after the establishment of the Guiana Space Centre. The Third Foreign Infantry Regiment, which had previously been stationed in Madagascar, was relocated to the territory of Guyane once the space center and surrounding mining operations

became important enough to warrant full-time protection. This regiment is still based in Kourou and now consists of five companies of around six hundred soldiers in all.[23] These soldiers serve two or three year tours of duty in French Guiana, and are assigned to headquarters in Kourou, a support team, an infantry unit, or one of two units assigned to perform joint operations with local police forces.[24] The Foreign Legion also established, in 1986, the French Jungle Training Centre in nearby Regina. This facility acts as the primary location for training French soldiers for jungle combat. This group, which rarely includes citizens of Guyane, is the primary military presence in the *département*.

The history and purpose of the Foreign Legion in French Guiana confirms France's priorities in the region and reminds locals of their unique relationship with France. The unit had been reassigned primarily because of France's scaling back of efforts in Africa after the loss of Algeria and other colonies.[25] The Third Regiment took on the duty of, not surprisingly, providing security for the Guiana Space Centre in Kourou—little French interest, especially military interest, had existed in the area until the building of the space center. Since its arrival, the units of the Third have added patrols of the Sinnamary gold mining region to their assignments, primarily to discourage illegal gold mining.

The mining is a serious issue in the country, worthy of a significant portion of the Foreign Legion unit's time and resources. As many as a thousand clandestine mines exist along the river in the jungle, most worked by illegal Brazilian immigrants that could number as high as 15,000.[26] Protecting the only other significant source of income in French Guiana from these *garimpeiros* is only half the job—the pollution from these clandestine mines has negatively affected water quality in the Sinnamary and Oyapock River Basins, so the Foreign Legion's presence there also has an environmental impact.[27] The Third Regiment still oversees security for the launching facility, too, and also supervises jungle training for other Foreign Legion units in the Guianese portion of the Amazon.[28] Despite its small size, the Foreign Legion can be found in many parts of the French territory, and has become part of the fabric of life in Guyane.

## UNIFIED IN LANGUAGE AND MUSIC

A lack of French desire to assimilate and consolidate the colony in the nineteenth and early twentieth century has led to cultural developments parallel to the demographic Creolization of the *département* mentioned earlier. Other than the demography of the province, the linguistic makeup is the most obvious indicator of this hybridization. A recent study reports that, despite a large quantity of different ethnic groups in the province, less than 18,000 of

French Guiana's 192,000 residents primarily speak a language other than French Creole.[29] While comparing the linguistic composition of French Guiana to Guyana, the administrative differences shine through. Britain, which followed an aggressive assimilatory policy toward its colonists, left in its wake a vast majority of Standard English speakers in Guyana. France, which avoided costly assimilation projects and generally left the widespread colonists and indigenes to their own devices, left a Creolized colony behind in which frequent interaction among ethnic groups without centralized French education present led to a hybridized, Creole French language that does not strongly resemble the original French tongue.

Music in French Guiana followed a similar trajectory. During the first gold rush, in the late nineteenth century, coast-dwelling European and Creole African prospectors moved south into the territories of various indigenous groups like the Nkyuka and Aluku. Trade exchanges developed, and often the Creole prospectors would welcome indigenous tribes or maroons from the jungle to their nightly dances. Since the Creole music was, itself, adapted from African sources, the maroon musicians quickly learned the tunes. Maroons and Amerindians both were introduced to European instruments like the clarinet and concertina, and this lively evening exchange developed into a hybridized music form that can be heard throughout French Guiana.[30] This hybrid genre, called "*aleke*," has become a form of rebellion—Creolized culture in French Guiana, which includes basically every ethnic group *but* the French ruling elite, shares this music, particularly in multiethnic towns like Saint-Laurent.[31] The result is a musical division similar to the division of French Guiana itself (into the French coastal areas and the vast interior), in which all the groups lacking political power have combined their cultures, including their music, in a show of solidarity against French imperial intrusion.

The *aleke* street and club musical styles dominate the lower and middle class areas of French Guiana where Creole traditions have been forming for over two centuries, but the broadcast airwaves of Cayenne, Kourou, and the comparatively metropolitan coastal region are dominated by French interests. Commercial radio is provided chiefly by two corporations, both France-based and French-owned. The larger of the two stations is operated by Radio France Internationale, which is partially funded by the French government and provides Paris-based programming and popular French music.[32] The same updates on French politics, Paris weather reports, and European Union informative pieces are broadcast through Cayenne and Saint-Laurent as in Marseille or Lyon. The smaller station, Radio Guyane, also plays heavily France-based news and music, though some local *aleke*-style songs work their way onto the play list. Nonetheless, Radio Guyane also headquarters in France; it is operated by Réseau France Outre-Mer (RFO).[33] Three television networks broadcast in French Guiana, though the largest by far is Télé

Guyane, a public station also owned by RFO and serving primarily metropolitan French interests.[34] More than 70 percent of French Guiana's trade is with France, and its music and news agencies reflect this heavy French influence accordingly.[35] The business of radio and television, much like the other business of the country, is a French enterprise operating abroad.

## FRENCH INVESTMENT IN THE TERRITORY

Guyane, then, is more like a Creolized version of France than the French version of the Guianas. Demographically, politically, and culturally, the *département d'outre-mer* known as Guyane or French Guiana is unlike Guyana and, as will soon be illustrated, vastly different from Suriname, as well. European Union investment in health care is reflected in its mortality statistics, particularly in the leaps forward after the establishment of the Fifth Republic (since 1946, French Guiana has received health care funds directly from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of France (MES) and is administered through this federal agency).[36] As opposed to the other two Guianas, with locally run health care systems, the French state is directly responsible for the health care system in Guyane. Though there is some division of labor between local-level administrators and the government in Paris, the vast majority of training and funding comes directly from Paris, a much more positive financial footing upon which to build a health care system.[37]

The civilians of French Guiana enjoy universal health insurance plans similar to those found in Europe; even the lowest-income sectors of the territory receive a large percentage of government-funded health care and access to services. In 1988, a law created the French Agency for the Safety of Health Products, the French Food Safety Agency, the Institute for Health Surveillance, and the National Committee for Health Safety, all of which have the resources and jurisdiction to monitor health situations in the far-flung colony.[38] In many ways, the French Guianese health system enjoys the best of two worlds—financial support of a prosperous European country on the one hand, and participation in the conferences and best-practices sharing events sponsored by the Pan American Health Organization, which is an active international force for medical research and training throughout the Americas.

## THE FUTURE OF FRENCH GUIANA

With a population made up primarily of transient continental French citizens, mercenary Foreign Legion officers from across the globe, scattered indigenous-descent and Afro-descent villages in the sparse interior, and employees of the European Space Agency, the territory of French Guiana is barely

South American at all. Only around 5 percent of all people living in French Guiana were actually born there.[39] The demographic situation, therefore, really prevents French Guiana from developing a nationalism movement. There are simply not enough "real French Guianese" to agitate for such a status, and the manner in which they are governed by France suppresses this further.

Politically speaking, the only difference between Guyane and Brittany (roughly the same size) is representation in the French National Assembly. Weather reports on Guyane are routinely presented in Paris, as if Guyane was simply a part of France just outside of Paris. The French attitude that modern DOMs and TOMs are as much a part of metropolitan France as any city within its borders tamps down any real interest in independence—residents do not identify the territory as their cultural homeland, and the economic and security benefits gained from French citizenship are too good to risk.

In its language and music, there are rumblings of a national spirit. The creation of a "French Guianese musical culture," through the hybridization of its language and music, can be directly traced to France's *laissez-faire* approach to colonization before de Gaulle. But it is still vastly different from its counterparts on the Guiana Shield, and these smaller, cultural discrepancies sum up to the ultimate disparity. Imperialism in French Guiana remains so tenacious, and the colony remains so culturally and politically enveloped in mother France, that it has become the only mainland territory in the world that is still owned by an overseas power.

## NOTES

1. Guzmán, et al., 546.
2. Ibid.
3. "French Guiana: Demographic Breakdown," Nationmaster, http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/French-Guiana (accessed July 16, 2013).
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6. Larry Luxner, "French Guiana: Separatists Clamor for Independence," Latinamerica Press, http://www.luxner.com/cgi-bin/view_article.cgi?articleID=661 (accessed July 16, 2013).
7. British Broadcasting Corporation, "Regions and Territories: French Guiana," BBC News Online, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/3516572.stm (accessed July 16, 2013).
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10. Redfield, 119.
11. Anatoly Zak, "History of the Launch Site in Kourou, French Guiana," Russian Space Web, http://www.russianspaceweb.com/kourou_origin.html (accessed July 16, 2013).
12. Ibid.
13. Redfield, 117.
14. Martin Deming Lewis, "One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The 'Assimilation' Theory in French Colonial Policy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, no. 2 (January 1962): 153.

15. Lewis, "One Hundred Million Frenchmen," 129.
16. Majumdar, 235.
17. Lewis, "One Hundred Million Frenchmen," 131.
18. Constitutional reforms, including the most recent in 2003, have restructured the French overseas holdings thus: *départements d'outre-mer* remain Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, and French Guiana, with Mayotte scheduled to join them in 2011. *Territoires d'outre-mer* now only refer to the French Southern and Antarctic Lands. A new designation, *collectivités d'outre-mer*, includes French Polynesia, Saint Pierre et Miquelon, Wallis and Futuna, Saint-Martin and Saint Barthélemy (the last two seceded from Guadeloupe in 2007 and were granted COM status). New Caledonia has been given the designation of *sui generis* territory, meaning it is slated for an independence vote between 2014 and 2019.
19. Aldrich and Connell, 163.
20. A current list of deputies can be found at the website of the French National Assembly Website, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/elections/2007/resultats/LDD_DEP.csv.asp (accessed July 16, 2013).
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## *Chapter Ten*

# Acculturati

*The Decolonization Period in Suriname (1950–)*

While Guyana is a stronghold of British culture adopted by an ethnically diverse population, and Guyane is a Creolized outpost of France and the European Union, Suriname's identity is elusive. The long-term effects of ethnic and cultural mixing, loosely supervised by an absentee investor, moved to the fore during Suriname's initial years of independence after 1975. The Dutch had managed the transition to independence like they had always administered the colony—distilling it to a business relationship. Ready to cut ties with its burdensome colony, the Netherlands authorized a large payout to Suriname called the "Golden Handshake" as a guilt-free way to extract itself from colonial management. The new state left behind, Suriname, would have to develop its own brand of nationalism. Dutch colonial administration had left behind as Suriname's bequeathal a dizzying array of self-sustaining ethnic groups struggling to find a unified voice and a place in the world. As with the other two Guianas, Suriname's demography, domestic politics, foreign policy, and cultural traditions will be discussed and linked to Dutch imperial protocols.

## A FRACTURED DEMOGRAPHY

Suriname's demographic makeup, like Guyana's, is the direct result of concentrated immigration programs originally designed to bring in indentured laborers to work the plantations. Because of additional efforts made late in the nineteenth century to reduce repatriation rates, Suriname developed a more balanced demographic composition than its neighbors. Population stud-

ies performed in 2009 list the demographic breakdown as: 27 percent Indian, 18 percent Creole, 15 percent Javanese, 15 percent Maroon, a little over 12 percent Mixed, just under 4 percent Amerindian, and just under 2 percent Chinese.[1] Modern Suriname, with such a varied and evenly distributed population, has not surprisingly experienced many "growing pains" as it attempts to create a single national spirit from so many diverse sources.

As expected, initial attempts to unify the country after independence in 1975 failed, resulting in a collapse of the fragile Surinamese democratic system, an "on-paper" framework left behind by the departing Dutch. The difficulty in crafting national unity showed itself fully in February 1980, when a military junta led by Dési Bouterse overthrew the government of then-president Henck Arron (Bouterse is himself half Chinese and half Creole). This *coup d'etat*, now known as the Sergeants' Coup, was led by a group of soldiers called the *Groep van Testien* (Group of Sixteen), which Bouterse led. The council renamed itself the National Military of Suriname and established martial law within the country. The military enforcements included an evening curfew and severe limitations on personal freedoms and freedom of the press and assembly.

Because legislation had been unable to bring the country together, the military stepped in to forge a nation at gunpoint just five years into its nationhood. It would be 1985 before Bouterse's junta agreed to allow elections for a new National Assembly. The assembly consisted of thirty-one representatives—fourteen from the military, eleven from trade unions, and six from the business community, an obvious collision of military ideology and the traditionally pro-business influences.[2] Though a military government temporarily held power, Dutch methods for structuring government and handling procedure still appeared in the actions of the Surinamese bureaucrats, whether military or civilian.

## AFTER THE JUNTA: COALITION POLITICS

In 1987, the military party finally met defeat in general elections and another halting attempt at unifying the country's disparate groups began. The 1987 election signified a shift in strategy; the military junta had not been defeated by a single political party, but by several parties working together in a coalition. The 1987 winning coalition was known as the Front for Democracy and Development (an alliance of the National Party of Suriname, the Progressive Reform Party, and the Party for National Unity and Solidarity).[3] This time, the coalition won forty of the fifty-one available seats in the National Assembly. Though coalition governments had been utilized before (the original 1975 government was constructed from a coalition), 1987 marked the most successful election for a coalition platform in Suriname. It also signaled a

turning point; coalition campaigns and alliance governments have been the norm for Surinamese politics since 1987. Though the electoral process would be interrupted again in 1990 (another Bouterse *coup d'etat*, this one only lasting about a year), a change in the character of Surinamese political parties had begun in earnest. The New Front for Democracy and Development added the Surinamese Labour Party to the old three-party alliance and won the outright majority in the National Assembly again in 1991, 1996, and 2001. In the following 2005 election, the coalition lost some seats, but retained control of more seats than any other party or alliance. Coalition politics are now the normal method for winning assembly seats and presidential elections in Suriname. Much of this can be traced back to the fact that the Dutch left no cohesive assimilation or unification strategy behind, and that no ethnic group enjoyed a majority on its own. Surinamese politicians realized the need to find new ways to cooperate in order to be elected and came to the realization that the path to victory necessarily passed through multiple ethnic groups.

The Dutch program of paid immigration in the latter half of the nineteenth century created the diversity and the tension existing among ethnic groups in today's Suriname. Unlike Britain, which gathered its indentured laborers from its other colonies (hence the larger percentage of Indians in Guyana), the Dutch brought in a wide range of settlers from all over the world (both Dutch territories and otherwise), with no plan of how to integrate them into Dutch society through education or otherwise. As each group became self-sufficient and isolated in practice, the power of the ethnically based political parties associated with each constituency grew. Experiencing electoral deadlock throughout the 1980s, Suriname endured racial rioting, violent civil war, and military overthrow. Only the development of coalition-based campaigning and alliance-based government began freeing the country from its political gridlock.

The political behavior begun in 1987 remains visible in today's Suriname; the 2010 Surinamese parliamentary election featured several coalition groups, including the powerful Mega Combination, all seeking a majority of the fifty-one available parliament member seats.[4] But despite adopting a workable political strategy to negotiate the state's deep chasms between ethnic groups, struggles about how to build a viable state out of these groupings still abound. Illustrating this struggle, the 2010 election finished with the stunning election of Bouterse as president (his first term as an elected president). Though many decried the election as a step backwards for Suriname, one positive hint at the future can be found from its results: Bouterse found his way to the presidential office this time not by violent military overthrow, but through the organized use of a democratic election and the compromise of a political coalition.

## A NEW ATTITUDE ON EDUCATION

The lack of a cohesive strategy to assimilate diverse groups under a single cultural umbrella did not alarm the Dutch, who were more interested in economic issues anyway, but plagued the Surinamese heirs to the republic. The newly independent Surinamese government would take the first steps toward assimilation policy, attempting to acculturate its citizens to a Surinamese national identity. Ironically, the government of Suriname adapted its acculturation strategy from its British neighbor—Surinamese nationalism (itself a brand new idea) will be spread primarily through a government-funded public school system. A public education campaign that had existed for over a century in Guyana was finally, in the late 1970s, being implemented successfully in Suriname.

Suriname's government recognized the importance of assimilative education in a way the Dutch had never addressed; but the new country's need to bring these groups together under one national and ideological banner far exceeded any sense of urgency on the part of the Dutch. The Netherlands always had the option of leaving the colony if things began to fall apart; those who call Suriname home now do not feel they have the same luxury, and must make things work on a practical political level. The Surinamese Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture defined the need in 1986, stating, "Familiarity with the cultural expressions of one's countrymen generates mutual understanding and respect, and so creates the conditions needed for unity and national solidarity."[5] With this statement, the Surinamese government presented its master plan for building solidarity and forging a real state from so many constituent parts.

To support this master plan, the Surinamese education department also applied for and received US$13.7 million in loans from the Inter-American Development Bank to continue the modernization of rural schools and the training of teachers.[6] The Surinamese plan for education reform is based on a two-phase model. Phase I has focused on a basic curriculum for the entire national system, particularly grades 1-8, and the construction of teacher housing in the country's interior. Phase II, slated to begin in full by 2017, is intended to focus on the improvement of learning outcomes in the secondary school systems.[7] One of the key components of both phases of the education plan is the development of Dutch language teaching, testing, and curriculum in all grade levels. If it accomplishes nothing else, the education plan at the very least seeks to unify the country under a single language for the first time since Arawak was the area's *lingua franca.* Suriname's political structure and its newfound focus on public education, then, have been reactions by the new country's fragile government to the by-products of division and multiethnicity left behind by the Dutch administrators of the previous centuries.

## DEVELOPMENT OF A FOREIGN POLICY

Internal political restructuring and education reform were not the only aspects of Surinamese national culture requiring redefinition (or, in some cases, definition) after independence. Without the Netherlands to act as its diplomatic proxy, as it had for almost four hundred years, Suriname's government had to create its own foreign policy, too. The rapidity with which the mother country severed ties once the process started made this an even more difficult adjustment for the Surinamese government, as there was no real diplomatic framework upon which to build. From the close of World War II on into the 1950s, it seemed the Dutch treatment of its overseas colonies would parallel France's. The loss of Indonesia in 1949 had damaged the Netherlands' imperial psyche in much the same way the defeats of World Wars I and II had disillusioned the French. In a similar response aimed at retaining the rest of its empire, the Netherlands presented a renegotiated constitution in 1954.[8] This new agreement, the *Statuut voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden,* or sometimes just called the *Statuut*, re-chartered the Kingdom of the Netherlands as a tripartite monarchy, with the Netherlands, the Dutch Antilles, and Suriname treated as equal partners.[9] The intention of the new charter was to allow the parts of the kingdom (the Netherlands, the Antilles, and Dutch Guiana) to control their internal affairs with some degree of autonomy, but would deal with external foreign policy issues and larger, "whole kingdom" issues through consultation and equal cooperation.

This new United Kingdom of the Netherlands seemed to be a more equitable division of power among the individual parts of the kingdom than the redevelopment of the contemporary French Union and its successor, the Fifth Republic. Both constitutions sought to "equalize" remaining parts of the respective empires, putting all the colonies on some degree of equal footing politically with one another. But the French did this all under the supervision of Paris, which remained on a clearly elevated level of hierarchy as compared to the rest of the new France. The new Netherlands, though, seemingly created three separate yet equal components of one single political unit. But one fundamental exception to this equality set Suriname on a shaky path after independence—though more equitable in its power sharing than its French counterpart, the Kingdom of the Netherlands did not apply the concept of equal partnership in the areas of foreign relations or defense on any level whatsoever.[10] The handling of foreign policy continued to rest completely in The Hague until Suriname's 1975 independence, giving the Surinamese little chance to build their own partnerships with Europe and other world powers or to train its own "homegrown" diplomats. Thus, the underlying theme of Dutch colonial experience would hold true during the transition to independence. The Dutch would leave Suriname relatively well prepared for economic self-sufficiency through a series of well-planned fiscal initiatives, but

completely unprepared for the business of foreign diplomacy, which the Netherlands had been administering exclusively.

The actual transition to independence became a fast and jarring experience for the Surinamese. The independence movement set into motion in 1972, when both Suriname and the Netherlands changed governments. A coalition government including the Social Democrats and the Labour Party (advocates of independence for the colonies) gained control of the Dutch States-General in May 1973 under its leader Joop den Uyl. Suriname's new government, a coalition of African and Javanese political parties led by Henck Arron elected in December of the same year, took advantage of the change in Dutch political climate and announced in 1974 its intention to lead Suriname to independence.[11] By New Year's Eve in 1975, Arron's government made good on its pledge with the support of a Dutch government more than willing to unload its Surinamese economic burden.

## LEFT HOLDING THE BAG

The discomfiting speed at which Suriname received its freedom was reflected in the populace's reactions in 1975. Though many Surinamese citizens possessed optimism about a future independent of the Netherlands, most Indian and Javanese groups adamantly opposed the plan—the strongest supporters of the independence agreement were the members of the National Party of Suriname (NPS, then later NPK), a predominately Creole party that had garnered the support of smaller Indian and Javanese parties within a coalition.[12] Furthermore, the Surinamese parliamentary vote for independence was quite close, and the public's reaction afterwards appeared mixed at best. Many expressed their displeasure at being so quickly thrust into self-sustainability by leaving the country *en masse*.[13] Fearing a mass exodus of economically burdensome Surinamese back to the Netherlands, Dutch Prime Minister Joop den Uyl offered the country a solution named the "Golden Handshake." The Golden Handshake was a set of primarily economic agreements, with serious limitations on the Netherlands' cultural responsibilities for its former colony. Several limitations became rather notorious in Suriname. In particular, limits on Surinamese emigration to the Netherlands were well-publicized; a popular ballad in Paramaribo in 1975 was "There Is No Room for Surinamese in Holland Anymore."[14] The way foreign policy would be handled in an independent Suriname received definition in these early years of exodus. Those who had the closest relationship with the Netherlands and its government generally left the country; Suriname's government was left holding a collection of disparate and divergent ethnic groups with no common ally to which to turn, and no diplomats trained to keep European ties intact.

In the opening years of independence, Suriname's markets favored an isolationist, inward-looking trade system, making the country's integration into its neighbors' trade systems difficult at best. Partially, this was due to the long-time economic relationship to the Netherlands—Dutch governors did not invest in making Suriname a global player during Suriname's years as a colony, so the country's only real economic ties were with its mother country. Furthermore, the Dutch "Golden Handshake" agreement with the new country front-loaded a great deal of funding into fortifying Suriname's economic sovereignty and reducing the appearance that it was still tied to The Hague's purse-strings.[15] Focusing on this rather than building economic ties with Suriname's new neighbors created a country that had no real potential trade partners once the divorce from the Netherlands was complete and the funding ran out.

The sudden loss of the Netherlands as a diplomatic mentor, proxy, sponsor, and partner forced the Surinamese to seek out a place in the international realm beyond their colonial associations; they would find this place in CARICOM and in the Organization of American States (OAS). These regional bodies of the Western Hemisphere provided Suriname its diplomatic contacts, in contrast to Guyana (which cultivated diplomatic relationships through the British Commonwealth) and French Guiana (whose foreign diplomacy was handled by Paris). Paramaribo had chosen to seek its place in organizations of geographical, not cultural, proximity. The Dutch colonial administration's unwillingness to invest in cultural assimilation dictated Suriname's foreign policy choices.

Searching for widened trade opportunities on its side of the world, Suriname joined CARICOM in 1995, becoming a full member in 1996. The country's trade policy has since been much more closely tied to CARICOM than to the Netherlands or any other foreign entity. Suriname's tariff laws and schedule have been based on CARICOM's common external tariff since 1995, and the state grants duty-free access to all CARICOM imports.[16] Suriname has maintained a very active participation in the Caribbean Community since 1995, and possesses much stronger trade ties with the Caribbean than with the Netherlands or Europe. Competition policy, anti-dumping, and consumer protection laws recently passed in the Surinamese parliament all relate directly to CARICOM membership, as did Suriname's continued active support during negotiations of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, despite its eventual failure.[17] In foreign trade relations, Suriname's interests clearly lay in the Caribbean, and not in the Dutch sphere of influence.

## THE OAS AND UNASUR

The OAS, as the regional international organization for the entire Western Hemisphere, has supplemented CARICOM membership by providing Suriname with a diplomatic forum. Suriname's unique relationship with the OAS reached a new height in 1990, when a special meeting of the organization convened to condemn the 1990 *coup d'etat* of Dési Bouterse. For perhaps the first time, situations on the ground in Suriname had been noticed by an outside party and considered seriously. The OAS monitored elections the following year, and used its experiences in Suriname as a basis for the crafting of Resolution 1080, the principal apparatus for emergency mediation activities in the organization and, by extension, in the Western Hemisphere.[18] Many Surinamese within the government welcomed the active participation of the OAS in Surinamese affairs, and interpreted it as a positive show of international interest in the country's well-being.

As a result, Suriname has actively taken part in the organization since 1992; currently, the Assistant Secretary General of the organization is Albert Ramdin, a Surinamese diplomat. Suriname was a highly engaged participant in OAS proceedings during the crafting of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in 2001. In its most active international role to date, Surinamese government agents met with the Independent Election Board, the University of Suriname, various labor and human rights organizations, and the Suriname Chamber of Commerce to provide detailed suggestions and comments regarding the charter. Bringing its new foreign and domestic policy into cohesion, Suriname even suggested adding sections to the charter on education, stating that "education is a vehicle for arriving and effective and meaningful participation in the decision-making process. . . . "[19] The focus on new educational and diplomatic opportunities was unprecedented for Suriname's government, but designed to right years of neglect by the Dutch States-General. In the absence of Dutch interest, Suriname has turned to its neighbors, rather than its cultural relatives, resulting in a foreign policy quite different than that of the other two Guianas.

In May of 2008, Suriname took another significant step toward integration with the rest of South America as an equal partner by actively supporting and signing the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) Consultative Treaty. UNASUR was formed originally as a coalition between the Mercosur trade bloc (focusing on the Southern Cone region including Argentina) and the Andean Community (which included Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, and others). Rather than simply the combination of two existing trade blocs, UNASUR served as a South American regional organization dealing with energy, education, health, infrastructure, security, and the protection of democracy.[20] In many ways, UNASUR has been established as a South American reaction to the more United States-controlled OAS. In August

2013, Suriname took over the chairmanship of the organization, furthering the country's integration into the continent.

Suriname's participation in groups like the OAS and UNASUR highlights the country's slow but steady departure from the shelter of its Dutch connections to the European market, in favor of closer associations within the Americas. Further association within the Caribbean and South America as followed. Suriname was a founding member of the Association of Caribbean States in 1994, and has been an active member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). For most of Suriname's politicians, this is clearly the way forward for the young country—the "Golden Handshake" was a clear signal from the Netherlands and, by extension, the European Union, that Suriname no longer shared a similar status with French Guiana. The quick and complete divorce from the Dutch, which had been neither truly wanted nor requested by the local population, caused turbulence during Suriname's infancy as an independent entity. Since that period of turbulence, though, it has also given the country the motivation to stand with its neighbors and develop through cooperation and the sharing of interests across South American borders.

## LANGUAGE BARRIERS

The Dutch legacy of fractured multi-ethnicity also pervades the non-political culture of modern Suriname, and this is reflected most obviously in its language. Unlike Guyana and French Guiana, which have well-established official languages, the *de facto* and *de jure* languages of Suriname are not the same. The official language of Suriname is Dutch, but most sources explain that English is a widely-spoken alternative in diplomatic and government offices. Accordingly, the websites of Suriname's embassies and the Surinamese government are in both languages. The reality outside the walls of the offices of state, though, is markedly different. On a walk down the street in Paramaribo, the average traveler can hear fifteen commonly spoken languages.[21] Of the traditional languages, Dutch or English take third and fourth place behind a Guianese dialect of Hindi (known as Caribbean Hindustani) and Javanese, which together dominate the everyday culture. As a way of negotiating business and communicating within such a linguistically diverse area, a Creole language known as Sranang Tongo (sometimes known locally as "Taki-Taki") has formed as the *lingua franca* of the younger population. Sranan Tongo is spoken as the primary language of over 100,000 of Suriname's residents today; it features a small vocabulary based on a mixture of Asian, African, and European common words.[22] Lacking rules on inflection or declension, the language is easy to learn and has become the Surinamese people's preferred linguistic compromise.

The failure of Dutch to move from *de jure* language to *de facto* acceptance rests upon its treatment by the Netherlands' colonial administration. As imperial overseers, the Dutch possessed little desire to teach their language to immigrants, resulting in schools and communities becoming segregated along ethnic/linguistic lines. By independence in 1975, few citizens truly spoke Dutch at home—they would instead prefer their language of origin (Javanese, Hindustani, Arabic, and so on). Faced with the daunting task of uniting these groups into a single nation, Suriname recognized the need for a unifying linguistic education; however, the foundations upon which the language curriculum could be built did not exist. Dutch, nevertheless, has become the language of modern Surinamese public schools. By trying to unify the country at least in language, the government has created a program that, in effect, makes a "language migrant out of every inhabitant of Suriname."[23] Dutch is, for most Surinamese, a second language to which one is first exposed at school, not at home.

A lack of linguistic cohesion continues to be a concern within Suriname's intellectual community, led by one of Suriname's most respected novelists, Albert Helman, who remained vocal about the fundamental need for a single language up until his death in 1996. He posited in his writings that one's sense of nation rested firmly upon language and that a people without a language, "the highest, profoundest, most intensive means of communication," cannot exist as a nation. He further suggested that groups of people lacking a national language and are instead divided into smaller groups speaking minority languages (the case of Suriname), the people remain divided against themselves.[24] The concerns of Helman have been echoed in the government, as it continues to seek a policy of language acculturation through education.

The struggle for balance within a polyglot society has been the cornerstone for Helman's novels, which are still popular in Suriname. His first novel, *Zuid-Zuid-West* (South by Southwest), published in 1926, extolled the beauty of Suriname and its inhabitants in chapters entitled "The City," "Vacation," "The Family," and "The Interior." At the same time, though, Helman laid the plight of Suriname at the feet of the Netherlands; he reproached colonial authorities for being more interested in dividends than the lives of its people.[25] Helman served as his country's anti-imperialist voice in much the way Walter Rodney would in Guyana several decades later. Calling the Dutch "thieves" and lamenting the fractured state of his "poor, poor country," Helman mourned the cause of Suriname's cultural fragmentation—not exploitation, but neglect.

## SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Suriname's multi-cultural legacy can be found in other aspects of its culture, as well. Paramaribo's architecture, for instance, is a unique collection of Dutch clapboard construction, detailed, native-inspired decorative woodcarvings, geometrically ornate Indian and Javanese architecture, and the bright colors of African and Caribbean style.[26] The fusion of architectural styles and techniques with traditional Dutch construction makes Suriname and Paramaribo a unique cultural asset to the world, so much so that the United Nations designated Paramaribo as a UNESCO world heritage site in 2002.[27] In particular, the Historic Inner City is an architectural treasure, featuring white wooden buildings built on dark brick basements, in a plain and symmetrical way but reflecting Creole styles of craftsmanship. The architectural styles of Suriname reflect the varied ethnicity of the country alongside the Dutch traditions, and this combination cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

This fusion can also be found in Suriname's leisure activities—sports in Suriname are a myriad collection of different athletic traditions. First of all, the country shares two sports obsessions with the Netherlands—association football (or, in the United States, soccer) and swimming. Football is the most popular sport in Suriname, another carryover from Dutch colonial rule particularly in the first half of the twentieth century. To that end, the country has produced a long list of talented players; many play professionally in Europe. But the stigma of colonialism has affected even football in Suriname. A rule that the Netherlands passed through FIFA, football's international governing body, bars all Surinamese players who move to the Netherlands to pursue professional careers from representing their country in international competition. Instead, players participating in the Dutch leagues must play for the Netherlands. Consequently, all Surinamese players good enough to play in the higher-level European leagues, where they would have much more opportunity to earn money, status, and awards, make the jump to the Netherlands rather than staying in the lower-quality Surinamese leagues, As a result, Suriname's prowess in developing football talent does not bear fruit for the nation. The country's national team plays in CONCACAF, the North American and Caribbean league, rather than in the more competitive South American field, because it simply lacks the talent to compete in the stronger South American group.[28] It is generally believed that if Suriname could retain its players, it would be a formidable opponent in either group.

Suriname also boasts an excellent swimming tradition, culminating in swimmer Anthony Nesty's two gold medals at the 1988 and 1992 Summer Olympic Games.[29] Part of the country's success in swimming, besides the inheritance of Dutch swimming tradition, is the wide access across the country to freshwater swimming venues. Other sports add to the "Dutch emul-

sion" that had been created a century before—badminton, tennis, judo, and even cricket enjoy a national following. Suriname's men's and women's badminton teams have qualified for and competed in a string of Olympic Games, as well as hosting a significant annual international badminton tournament. The badminton tradition is a contribution from the Indian and Javanese ethnic groups. Judo also experiences significant popularity due in large part to the Asian population. Cricket is a "carry-over" sport from neighboring Guyana, brought both by Guyanese and by the Indian laborers who moved to Dutch Guiana during its period of indentured labor use. All the sports are testaments to the varied interests of a varied culture.

## MUSICAL UNITY

If Suriname has been able to integrate its varied cultures successfully in any area, it has been through Surinamese music. Like the local music of interior French Guiana, Surinamese music is a hybridization of indigenous and immigrant musical styles, developed over decades of cultural interaction. As a result, Suriname's music scene is quite rich, and local bands have started to be recognized outside of the country. Though the entire country's population is little more than half a million, and less than two hundred thousand reside in Paramaribo, the amount of grassroots musical activity and exchange is described by one musical historian as "extraordinary."[30] The culture of Paramaribo, built upon the transient and fluctuating nature of its demography, provides a friendly space for musical experimentation and fusion as ethnic groups with their own distinct music attempt to live and work together. Paramaribo now acts as the Mecca of Surinamese popular music based on the integration of different ethnic components into the existing Afro-Caribbean music style.

The resulting music is a unique collection of world-music styles. An important part of the Surinamese musical culture is Kaseko, a melange of European, African, and American styles with complex rhythms. Kaseko has served as the basis for Surinamese popular music, as it has collected Creole folk music, jazz, calypso, and local dance styles into a foundational Surinamese sound. A "steady output of polished, technologically sophisticated recordings" now emanates from the country.[31] But the music rarely travels beyond the borders. Despite its heavily globalized sound and its "world music" feel, the hybridized music here is produced for local consumption, rarely heard anywhere but on the Creole radio stations dominating the music scene in Paramaribo and New Nickerie (Suriname's second city). Suriname's music provides, instead, a glimpse of what a successful Surinamese culture could look like—a cooperative society weaving its different strands of identity into a uniquely Surinamese product.

## THE FUTURE OF SURINAME

This dream has not yet become reality, though Suriname shows great potential in developing its past into a usable future. The demographic, political, and cultural state of affairs in the country are the result of over a century of Dutch colonial administration, and it will take at least that long to change Suriname into something else. Questions on how to move forward abound. The uncertainty of the populace was clearly manifest in 2011, when former president Dési Bouterse was reelected to office after a hiatus of over a decade. He had been wanted by Interpol for the alleged murder of fifteen of his top political opponents during his presidential tenure in the 1980s. Additionally, the president has been accused and, by some, convicted of drug trafficking and brutal war crimes, not to mention his two *coups d'etat* in the 1980s and 1990s.

However, since his first departure, the country has wrestled with how best to unify and remain a viable multi-ethnic state. Bouterse's success could be attributed to the Surinamese political tool of coalition governing. Not likely to be elected purely on his own, Bouterse forged a partnership with former political adversary Ronnie Brunswijk and ran on a coalition ticket. Surinamese voters, anxious to see some unification of the ethnically-based factions, willingly supported the return of the ex-fugitive enough to bring him back to power. Now the country is asking its former military ruler to fix some of the issues caused by his military junta's rule in the 1980s. Disruptions in the peace due to military insurgents, badly managed budgets too heavily weighed toward defense, and the loss of foreign aid due to the accusations of war crimes left Suriname in a very difficult economic position in the 1990s and beyond.

Suriname's future possesses great potential, with natural resources in good supply and an improving degree of internal security. However, Suriname's success as state is far from guaranteed as it contends with its fractured demography, marked levels of inflation, and a weak currency. Whatever its future, Suriname's present is certainly unique. Its uniqueness is confirmed on an early morning walk in Paramaribo. As one turns up Keizer Street in the central part of the city, he or she can see two iron gates, opening a few hundred feet apart onto the same sidewalk. One gate leads to the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Mosque; the other opens into the courtyard of the Neveh Shalom Synagogue. There, in a remote corner of South America thousands of miles from Mecca and Jerusalem, Muslims and Jews worship side-by-side. In fact, the mosque and synagogue even share a parking facility. This is daily life in a country that hosts every identity—and yet possesses no single unifying identity of its own. These unlikely neighbors provide a tangible illustration of both the challenges and the possibilities that Suriname's exceptional cultural inheritance has provided.

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*Chapter Eleven*

# Conclusion

Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname are products of three different administrations and interpretations of empire. Though the historical forces acting on the three territories' inhabitants were quite similar, their responses to these challenges and opportunities have set them on diverging paths. A review of the history and present of this "laboratory of colonialism" reveals five distinct historical periods—following the trajectory of each country's history through these periods casts light on the true power of imperialism and of history itself in shaping the identities of nations.

The first period, which can be called the "Homogenous Period," should include not only the pre-contact period of indigenous control, but also the early colonization efforts made before 1667. During this initial phase, the three Guianas were populated by groups of indigenous people exhibiting a relatively uniform pan-Guianese culture. This group came into contact with Anglo-Dutch explorers during the waning years of the sixteenth century, and the Guianas themselves became the site for small-scale colonization efforts for the next five decades. The three deviated little from one another during this phase primarily because the colonial enterprises of the British, French, and Dutch were too insignificant to overcome uniform external pressures of climate, environment, agricultural challenges, and indigenous presence. In essence, the Guianas moved forward through history as a single, "monocultural" unit until the Treaty of Breda in 1667.

Beginning with Breda, European powers made their first real attempts to delineate the Guianas, ushering in the second phase, the "Demarcation Period." During this period, culminating in the Convention of London (a.k.a. the Anglo-Dutch Treaty) of 1814, the first signs of divergence appeared in conjunction with struggles among the three empires for territory and influence. The French portion of the Guianas became the first to distinguish itself from

the others. The British and Dutch colonized both Guyana and Suriname early on, with English settlers in what would become Dutch Guiana and *vice versa*. Thus, by the signing of the Convention in 1814, British Guiana and Dutch Guiana were relatively difficult to distinguish from one another (swapping affiliations, in fact, with the treaty). The French, however, did not shift from their territory, and their influence remained steady, though more slight. French attitudes toward Guiana stayed negative, based on a number of failed experiments at colonization. During the fifteen decades of the Demarcation Period, the French developed a wholly different view of the Guianas than their two counterparts, setting up the process of transitioning French Guiana's purpose away from that of an agricultural colony. The successes (or in the French case, the failures) of colonization during the Demarcation Period permanently affected the way the three colonies were administered during the next two phases.

The third phase of a pan-Guianese history runs from the 1814 Convention of London, which set up the division as it is now known, until the outbreak of World War I in 1914. This period, which can be termed the "Active Administration Period," involved three colonial administrations—British, French, and Dutch—implementing their own policies to respond to different social and economic changes in the region and the world. Each of the three administrations had to create ways to make their colonies conform to their definition of "profitable," and each had to respond to the social changes brought about by emancipation. The result was three quite distinct methods of colonial administration based on differing goals and values.

The British focused on cultural assimilation first and foremost. This first developed through their slave schools and furthered by their assimilative education system for later immigrant laborers. As the British administration dealt with emancipation by importing laborers from other parts of its empire, the assimilative system continued, in the hope that British Guiana would become, culturally speaking, a "Britain in South America." Guyana's multiethnic demography is a direct result of the labor importation system, while its embrace of English language and culture is a product of the assimilation efforts began during the nineteenth century.

For the French, the Active Administration Period meant a relentless search for profitability. Due to a series of colonization and agricultural failures, France abandoned the settlement and assimilation model in favor of an exploitative one. French Guiana was not settlement-friendly, so the French government utilized the land as a storage facility, eventually as a penal settlement. Minor economic changes brought about by the discovery of gold during this period made some of the few remaining settlers wealthy, leading to a push by the more privileged class for increased autonomy that was rejected by the French government. Shifts in France between a republic that favored expanded democracy and a monarchy that favored centralized con-

trol resulted in a century of instability for the colony. Further, regime changes meant occasional influxes of political prisoners into the colony and a lack of administrative continuity required to build a viable civilian settlement.

For Dutch Guiana, the Active Administration Period consisted of essentially the same challenges the British faced, but with more emphasis on economic concerns and less on cultural exportation. This focus caused its colonial administrators to seek legislation that would improve the economic output of the colony, sometimes at the expense of its social stability. Dutch Guiana produced a profit during the time of slavery; because of this, the concept of emancipation was resisted by both the Dutch government and the Guianese settlers alike. Programs designed to ease economic transition from plantation society to free labor society characterized this period in Dutch Guianese development. The government pursued similar immigration programs to those of the British, resulting in a similarly diverse demography, but failed to invest in assimilative programs and education, instead focusing on the strengthening of corporations in the colony. By the outbreak of World War I, the demographics of British and Dutch Guiana were similar (because of similar government responses to emancipation), but their cultures (one moving toward uniformity, the other mired in fragmentation) were growing distant.

The fourth phase, which can be referred to as the "Abandonment Period," was the result of external pressures (world wars, African colonial development) causing each colony to be given reduced priority in the policies of its administrators. Two world wars and a depression distracted all three imperial powers from active administration of the Guianas, while potentialities in Africa were leading them to explore other options entirely. In essence, this period of diminished European control over the area allowed the cultural aspects of each colony, both progressive and regressive, to develop unfettered. In British Guiana, cultural assimilation continued, but political parties formed along ethnic lines, as full integration had not taken place before economic depression placed it in jeopardy. For French Guiana, the penal system lost favor and little infrastructural development occurred. Dutch Guiana experienced a similar fracturing of the political system and a growing desire in the government to do away with the colony completely. The Abandonment Period fueled internal instability, benefiting the independence designs of Jagan and Burnham in British Guiana and nationalist leader Henck Arron in Dutch Guiana, while causing the French to split the colony into two sections until its reorganization in 1946 (the coast, over which it retained minimal control, and Inini, in which it had no interest culturally or otherwise).

The final, fifth phase of pan-Guianese development starts after the close of World War II, and can be loosely termed the "Decolonization Period,"

even though the decolonization is far from complete in the French section of the Guianas. In this phase, the three colonial powers redefined their roles in the Guianas, while the colonies redefined themselves and their place in the world. Britain sought continued cultural influence, but almost apologetically detached itself from its label as an empire, as illustrated by Harold Macmillan's "Wind of Change" speech in 1960, which effectively conceded the empire to progress. Guyana achieved independence in this atmosphere, first distancing itself politically from the West, but then paying heed to its trained culture by returning to a close affiliation to the United Kingdom through the Commonwealth. In effect, cricket and the Beatles, along with the rest of British popular culture, saved the relationship between the UK and Guyana.

France decolonized in a different way. Its losses in the world wars caused a crisis of identity in the country, as it sought to return to its previous position of world importance. President de Gaulle suggested that the solution to such a crisis was a financial *and* ideological reinvestment in the empire. While other colonies were becoming independent, France invested money and bureaucratic talent in French Guiana for the first time, in the hope of integrating it more fully into the French sphere. A lack of national identity in French Guiana, coupled with this increase in French attention and investment (culminating in the construction of the Guiana Space Centre), moved French Guiana from colony to *département*. Literally, Guyane was decolonized by becoming annexed into continental France.

The Dutch, wanting to get out of the expensive and troublesome business of imperial administration, effectively bribed Suriname into leaving. Issuing a generous aid package, the "Golden Handshake," the Dutch government extracted itself from Surinamese affairs almost overnight. A lack of cultural assimilation and a sudden independence combined to make Suriname's early years as an independent nation difficult. Existing as a newly formed confederation of distinct ethnic groups with no common culture or even language, Suriname abandoned traditional colonial ties in favor of geographical ones, becoming active in both the Caribbean Community (CARICUM) and the Organization of American States. Additionally, in response to its fractured nature, Suriname and its leaders embarked on a new program of assimilation designed to redefine Surinamese nationalism and unite everyone under its cause. This path continues to be a shaky one, as the residents of the country continue to experiment with cobbling together a single polity out of such fractured pieces.

So with the story of three Guianas in hand, this history must return full circle to its original statement. History is not an easy subject. But it is by no means an irrelevant study of the distant past when it comes to the Guianas; it is, instead, a powerful force with which each polity must contend daily. With the same leadership and the same administrative emphasis applied to all three, the Guianas could have easily remained the way they were discovered

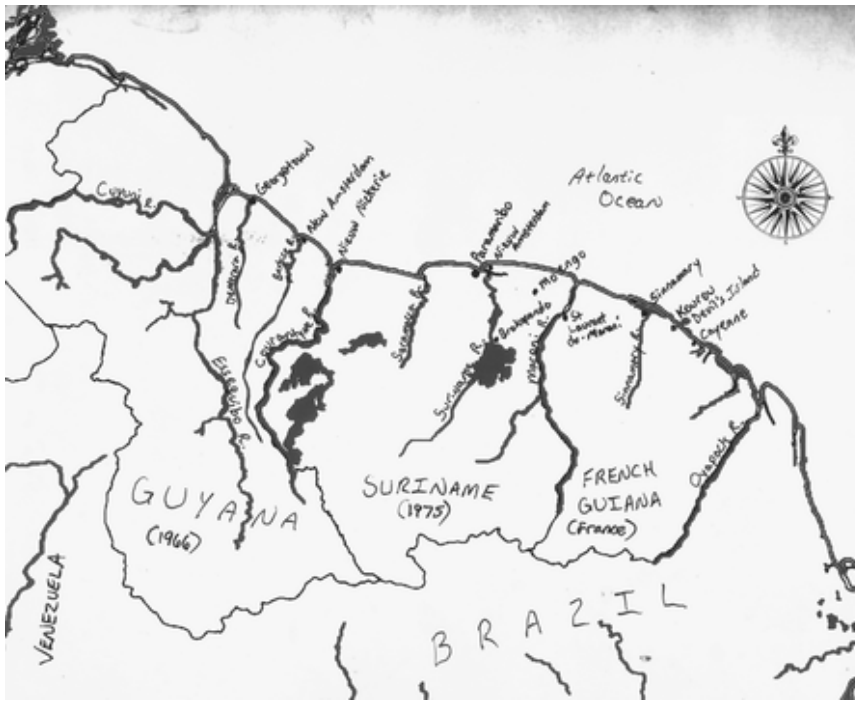


**Figure 11.1. The Modern Guianas**

in 1498—a verdant stretch of South America in which the residents react to their environment in essentially the same way. But in the stretch of land from the Essequibo to the Oyapock, from the gentle shore inland to the deepest jungle, there is not one Guiana, but three. This seemingly homogenous land of rivers and jungles perched on a rocky promontory has been permanently altered—Guiana exists now as the rock upon which the images of three distinct European cultures and values have been indelibly etched.

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# Index

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Joshua Hyles holds a master of arts in history and bachelor of arts degrees in archaeology and in history from Baylor University. Mr. Hyles has presented papers and has co-published articles on many aspects of Latin American politics, culture, and archaeology, as well as works on the colonial period across the Americas and popular culture's effects on political agendas. Mr. Hyles is a nationally accredited tutor and has served as a history lecturer. Beginning in 2010, he has served as the head coordinator for the Eugene Scassa Mock Organization of American States, an annual, collegiate-level international conference and competition in which students from the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America simulate the proceedings of the Organization of American States.