

# WORKER

## NORTH SOUTH and ELECTIONS

**The Accord  
One Year After**

**Colvin R. de Silva**

**Central Bank  
Report 1987**

**H.N.S. Karunatilake**

**The Crisis  
in Education**

**Osmund Jayaratne**

**Re-Thinking  
Socialism**

**Reggie Siriwardena**





**In today's  
rapidly  
changing  
business  
environment  
flexibility is  
a powerful  
asset.**

When your corporate objectives need a solid financial foundation, come to Lanka Orient Leasing Company Ltd. We can build a really constructive package that is best tailored to your business needs. You can draw on our expertise gained from a network covering nineteen (19) countries, with the security of an asset base in excess of US\$ 10 billion.

So why not test the strength and flexibility of Lanka Orient Leasing Company.

We are sure that a chat with us could make a big difference to your profits.



**Flexibility and innovation  
-key factors in our continued  
success.**

**LOLC** Lanka Orient Leasing Company Limited.  
Lakshman's Building, 321, Galle Road, Colombo 3. Tel: 574401-7 (7 lines)

## STOP PRESS

While this Journal was being printed came news of the death on September 4th of a young lawyer Wijedasa Liyanarachchi who was in police custody. The Deputy Judicial Medical Officer's post-mortem report stated that the deceased had died of shock and haemorrhage as a result of over hundred internal injuries caused by blows with a blunt weapon.

The open display of protest and indignation over this death which also involved strong condemnation of the conduct of the police was both justified and heartening in the circumstances. The attempt of the authorities to counter the strong protest that this death evoked, by alleging that the deceased was on his own admission to the Police, a member of the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) and of a "Kangaroo Court" which decided on and ordered the killings of N.I.B. Police Chief Terrence Perera, UNP Chairman Harsba Abeywardena and Left leader Vijaya Kumaranatunga, was both misleading and beside the point. For, any person in this land, whether he or she be JVP, LTTE or even common criminal charged with murder, is surely entitled to the protection of the fundamental rights guaranteed

by the Constitution to our people! The Christian Worker Fellowship must therefore add its own protest to those already made on this matter by organizations concerned with safeguarding such basic rights. In fact the present issue of *Christian Worker* draws attention to the importance of this very question which is now highlighted by Mr. Liyanarachchi's death through inflicted violence.

We are however in this situation somewhat relieved to learn of the Government's decision on September 6th not to proceed with the proposed Indemnity Bill in Parliament — a piece of legislation that has been roundly condemned by all groups who value the preservation of human rights in our country. (See inside for details).

We are gratified to hear also that the Government has decided against presenting a Bill to amend the Land Reform Act to increase the land ceiling from 50 acres to 100 acres in the prevailing political climate.

— 7 September 1988 —

While this Journal was being printed came news of the death on September 4th of a young lawyer, Wilhelm Ljuzanacich which was in police custody. The Deputy Judicial Medical Officer's post-mortem report stated that the deceased had died of shock and asphyxiation as a result of over-handcuffing internal injuries caused by blows with a blunt weapon.

The open display of protest and indignation over this death which also involved strong condemnation of the conduct of the police was both justified and merited in the circumstances. The attempt of the authorities to counter the strong protest that this death evoked by alleging that the deceased was on his own admission to the Police, a member of the Janina / Janina Parnous (JVP) and of a "Kangaroo Court" which decided on and overruled the findings of P.E.B. Police Chief Justice Parnous JVP Chairman Parnous Abo-warden and JVP leader / JVP Commissioner was both misleading and beside the point. For my own part, whether he or she be JVP, JVP or even common criminal charged with murder is solely entitled to the protection of the fundamental rights guaranteed

by the Constitution to our people. The Christian Worker Fellowship must therefore add its own protest to those already made on this matter by organisations concerned with safeguarding such basic rights. In fact the present issue of Christian Worker draws attention to the important issue of this very question which is now highlighted by the Ljuzanacich's death through inflicted violence.

We are however in this situation somewhat relieved to learn of the Government's decision on September 6th not to proceed with the proposed Indemnity Bill in Parliament - a piece of legislation that has been formally condemned by all groups who value the preservation of human rights in our country. (See inside for details).

We are gratified to hear also that the Government has decided against presenting a Bill to amend the Land Reform Act to increase the land ceiling from 50 acres to 100 acres in the prevailing political climate.

# Contents

SECOND QUARTER 1988

Annual Sub: Rs. 30 (Local)

Asian : U. S. \$ 6.00

Others : U. S. \$ 12.00

Cheques in favour of  
CHRISTIAN WORKERS FELLOWSHIP  
39, BRISTOL STREET,  
COLOMBO 1 - SRI LANKA.  
TELEPHONE: 277 08

Quarterly of the Christian Workers Fellowship  
**CHRISTIAN  
WORKER**

## To Our Readers

We regret that this issue of *Christian Worker* has been delayed due to circumstances beyond our control.

We have however endeavoured to cover events up to Mid-August this year in the present issue.

Our next issue is expected to be out in October. We trust our readers will bear with us.

Thank you,  
Editorial Board.

### COMMENT

- 3 North, South & Election
- 11 The proposed Indemnity Act

- 14 The Accord One Year After
- 19 Central Bank Report 1987
- 23 Who Benefits by this crime

### WORKERS STRUGGLES

- 25 A Heroic Panditha

### WORLD AFFAIRS

- 27 Re-Thinking Socialism
- 30 A Call to Moscow

### RELIGION & POLITICS

- 34 Fundamentalisms Must be Exposed
- 36 Ronald Reagan's Religion

### WOMEN IN SOCIETY

- 38 Wife Beating Becomes a Major Issue

### HUMAN RIGHTS

- 47 FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

## From our readers

### Knowledge without wisdom

The Editor,

Your journal, as I have often mentioned to you, is sincerely dedicated to the promotion and safeguarding of democracy in its true form. It is not everybody who agrees with you. Some very good people, who may be described as good Christians, reacted to the two articles in your last issue on Mahaweli & Ronnie's ten budgets very unfavourably. They felt that the two articles were very 'leftist'! I had to remind them that both the writers were definitely not 'left' inclined. The term 'leftist' is used by many normally intelligent people to describe anyone who is a critical student of what is generally termed, rather loosely, the "established order."

Your quotation of Bishop Sergie Mendez Arceo of Mexico, in the article "Being Christian and Marxist" is very relevant to this question: "Besides AIDS, world's most pervasive epidemic is rampant anti-communism".

Now, why is this? Different people will have different answers to this. One answer is that when Religion grows old or is not properly understood, faith turns into dogma, experience is replaced by book knowledge, virtue by adherence to rules, devotion by ritualism, meditation by metaphysical speculation and wisdom by scholasticism. The time is then ripe for another "existential leap" for a rediscovery of truth and a fresh attempt to give it expression in life.

Reason is believed to be the highest property of the intellect and is what guides our purposive thought. Purposes, however, are limited, and therefore reason can operate only in what is limited. Wisdom alone can accept and intuitively realize the unlimited, the timeless and the infinite, by renouncing explanations and by recognizing the mystery, which can only be felt, experienced and finally realised in life-and which can never be defined.

Wisdom has its roots in experience, in the realization of our innermost being. Reason has its roots in thought. Yet, wisdom will not despise either thought or reason, but will use them where they

belong, namely in the realm of purposeful action, as well as for the pursuit of science and for coordinating our sense impressions, perceptions, sensations, feelings and emotions into a meaningful whole.

The human species has yet a long way to go to overcome our ignorance and reach what we hope to achieve ultimately — perfection. Until then, the world will have good and bad, sometimes, bad appearing to be in power.

Edmund Burke, the 19th century British parliamentarian has said "all that is necessary for evil to prevail, is for enough good men to do nothing." And I am not sure whether the same man said this: "Gradualism in theory, is perpetually in practice" And finally, it is said that "knowledge without Wisdom is like a beautiful dead lady"! Do you agree?

With all good wishes for your steady growth.

Fraternally,  
G. J. R. Samarasingha

24 A, Shady Grove Avenue,  
Colombo 8.  
22.07.88





**Kusala Abhayawardhana**

The Left Movement lost a very warm and lively personality with the death of Kusala Abhayawardhana on July 21st this year.

Born in 1920 into a wealthy family known for its support of social and Buddhist activities, Kusala along with her mother, engaged herself at an early age in social service. She had a genuine interest in people and in the down-trodden especially. She was therefore instrumental in utilising a Trust Fund set up in memory of her mother for the propagation of Buddhism to help also in alleviating the lot of the poor. She was the leading spirit in the Service Civil International from its early days and many a good cause like the Prithipura Home received her fullest support. She had a special interest in the care of mothers and orphaned children and worked tirelessly also for the betterment of the City's shanty dwellers. In fact shramadanas and work camps became a regular part of Kusala's life. She joined the LSSP and was elected Member of Parliament for Borella in 1970.

Illness could not break Kusala's indomitable spirit and she continued to work even from her sick bed in the service of others. Here was a life given fully to service.

Kusala was also a regular reader of *Christian Worker* and appreciated the work done by the Christian Workers Fellowship. We will, certainly miss her lively spirit and the warmth of her friendship.



## Shri Bhagwati's Special

We need a Shri Bhagwati to Transform the local scene, Not merely in the field of law But other spheres unclean.

In public life corruption, Indiscipline and dice, Sex, liquor, drug addiction, Sweeps, violence and vice.

The bloated bureaucrat wields power Of Emergency Laws, The battered public bear the blows Of computers and flaws.

The doctors battle for their rights While hapless patients pine, And nurses press their grievances, Lives lost are yours and mine.

The daily toll of death doth rise, Bombs blast and gunmen shoot, Subversive outrages increase With arson, murder, loot.

Judicial activism helps In public interest law, And social action mitigates Disparities we saw.

No Judge can over-ride the law For Parliament's supreme, To interpret and not amend Remains his role, his theme.

Mervyn Casie Chetty.



## My Dear Human Race

In the Race,  
Of the Human Race  
One Individual  
From one race  
Got an idea  
About another race.  
Collected similar Individuals  
From the same race,  
Attacked the other race,  
Damaged both races  
And insulted  
My dear Human Race.

— Pontian Fernando  
Moratuwa



## Vijaya - A-Life Right

A life merry  
A life jolly  
A life perfect  
the life right.

A life of valour;  
A life ne'er tired;  
A life of succour;  
A life inspired.

A life so precious;  
A life rare;  
A life much loved —  
by all every where

A life unfeigned  
home or abroad;  
A life that the death  
could not afford.

— Mahinda Palitharatne



# NORTH SOUTH and ELECTIONS

## One Year After the Peace Accord

The first anniversary of the Indo-Lankan Peace Accord was marked by sporadic violence in different parts of the country following the call for a two day protest action (July 29 and 30) by the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP). Most shops and business places that were ordered to close, complied through fear of reprisals and public transport was effected with private vans keeping off the roads on these days. The Government responded by enforced security measures and the declaration of a curfew in the Galle and Matara districts in the South. Several deaths were also reported.

Admittedly, the Peace Accord has not worked out smoothly in the way it was intended and for this blame must also attach to both the Sri Lankan and Indian Governments. It is easy to be critical of the Accord and the presence of Indian troops on our soil but it should not be forgotten that such a step became almost inevitable, when in the context of the conflictive, racist politics indulged in by our petty capitalist politicians, problems were created which also invited intervention on the part of India. And to date, no viable alternative has been put forward as a solution to our vexed "ethnic" question by those who oppose both Provincial Councils and the Accord. In fact the Indo-Lankan Peace Accord was signed by Premier Rajiv Gandhi and President J. R. Jayewardene in Colombo on July 29th last year with a view to putting an end to the protracted war between the Sri Lankan troops and Tamil militants.

Prime Minister Gandhi came to Sri Lanka on that occasion not simply as a mediator in our ethnic conflict but as an intervenient and a party ready to enter into an agreement to guarantee the implementation of its terms by the Tamil militants as well. An Indian Peace

Keeping Force was accordingly deployed in the Northern and Eastern Provinces under this Agreement. (See *Christian Worker* 2nd and 3rd Quarter 1987 for details of the Accord).

It was however known that this Agreement did not find much acceptance with the major Tamil militant group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and its displeasure at first hidden for the most part soon turned into open hostility and bitter criticism of India and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) stationed in the North and East. This hostility of the Tigers can well be understood in the context of their being deprived of the degree of armed power they previously enjoyed and with the surfacing again of rival militant groups whom they had earlier liquidated physically in numbers. However, with the death of 23 years old Thileepan after a 12-day protest fast on five demands put forward by the Tigers, another agreement was reached on September 28th, 1987 between the Indian Government and the LTTE which provided for a clear dominance of the latter in an interim administration to be set up immediately in the North and agreed to also by President J. R. Jayewardene. At the insistence of the LTTE, India had persuaded President Jayewardene to "delegate his executive powers" to the Administrator in Council during the interim period, that is until Provincial Council elections were held, and in accordance with this Agreement President Jayewardene had picked V. Sivagnanam, a former Municipal Councillor out of a panel of names submitted by the LTTE for Chief Administrator. However there was a strong opposition and a reaction by the LTTE Batticaloa cadres in the East to their being ignored by the North and being unrepresented on this Council. The LTTE thereupon wanted changes in the composition of the Interim Administrative Council and above all in the choice of the Chief Administrator. Although President Jayewardene accepted the two

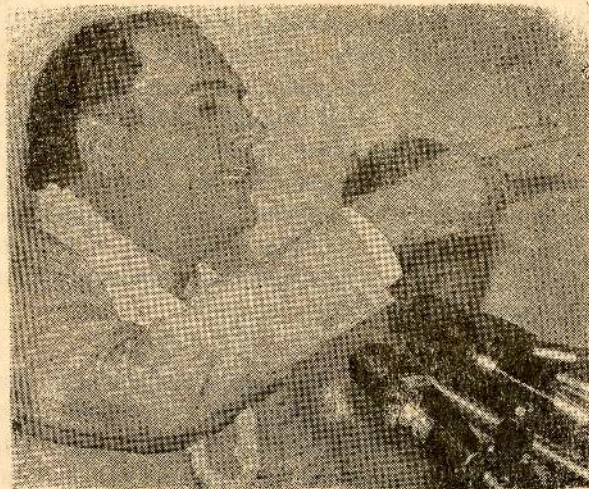
changes asked for in the composition of the Council, he firmly refused to consider the LTTE's demand for Namasivayam Pathmanathan as Chief Administrator. Pathmanathan had been earlier detained on a charge of helping the militants and was considered relatively junior in the post. Efforts to end this deadlock failed.

Meanwhile the Indian authorities alleged that the LTTE had in the interval replenished its stock of arms through clandestine shipments from Singapore (having surrendered some 20 per cent of its arms at Palaly in August) and was preparing for a showdown. Allegations were made by the other militant groups too that the LTTE in fact feared to face a future election in which it could not possibly secure the hegemony it had been earlier able to establish by force of arms. The intransigence of the LTTE on this small matter of the interim administration when it had already wrested so many advantages would otherwise seem inexplicable. While the situation was thus stalemated, tensions among the Sinhalese and Tamil, and the IPKF in Trincomalee began to escalate. Also 17 Tigers including Pulendran the Trincomalee commander and Kumarappa the Jaffna and former Batticaloa commander were arrested by the Navy off Point Pedro. After a few days, when they were about to be brought to Colombo these LTTE men took cyanide. The Tigers were furious about the perceived Indian inability to get their men released and prevent them from being taken to Colombo especially when Article 2:11 of the Peace Accord specified plainly that "the President of Sri Lanka will grant a general amnesty to political and other prisoners now held in custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and other Emergency laws, and to combatants, as well as to those persons accused, charged and/or convicted under these laws." (It was alleged that some of these Tiger leaders had committed offences in the South but there is nothing in the Accord which limits the amnesty to offences committed in the North and East). The Tigers apparently now felt that the whole amnesty was a fake. All the positive gains achieved by Thileepan's death were apparently undone by the suicide of Pulendran, Kumarappa and others. In a burst of frenzy Sinhala civilians in the North and East were massacred. The eight Sri Lankan soldiers in Tiger custody were also killed. As a result the amnesty was revoked. The Indians inactivated two newspapers in Jaffna and took equipment away from the Tiger T.V. station "Nitharsanam" when they moved to take control of Jaffna. The Tigers struck back and so the IPKF-LTTE confrontation began. (In contrast to the North, the role of the IPKF in the East and in Trincomalee especially, adversely affected the Sinhalese and Muslim residents at that stage. See *Christian Worker* 4th Quarter 1987 for details).

### Tiger Strength and Limitations

The LTTE's military acumen and knowledge of the terrain enabled it through guerilla tactics to inflict heavy casualties on the Indian Army, the fourth largest in the world. In fact the antagonism of the Jaffna population to the behaviour of the IPKF in the early stages of "Operation Pawn" even created a good climate for continued militancy on the part of the Tigers. However with the "saturation" of the Northern and Eastern Provinces by the IPKF (said to number 70,000 but some put the number at 100,000,) the Tigers (whose forces in combat cannot be more than 2500) obviously are faced with a serious problem. It would also become increasingly difficult for them to engage in a fight on many fronts for they now have to simultaneously take on the IPKF, the Sri Lankan Forces, rival militant groups and even the Sinhala and Muslim population in Tamil areas that it has antagonised by its more recent butchery of defenceless villagers in the East and North-East.

It was perhaps a recognition of these difficulties it faced in the long run of continuing its armed combat, that induced the Tigers to seek to get back the position they lost when they rejected the Agreement of September 28th last year which guaranteed them the pride of place in the Interim Administration. Their repeated appeals to India for a restoration of the *status quo ante* and for discussions could be seen to point in this direction, though these were generally dismissed by the Indian Government as a mere "propaganda ploy" to gain time and an insistence by the Indians that the LTTE firmly accepts the Peace Accord, unconditionally surrenders its arms and enters the democratic peace process.

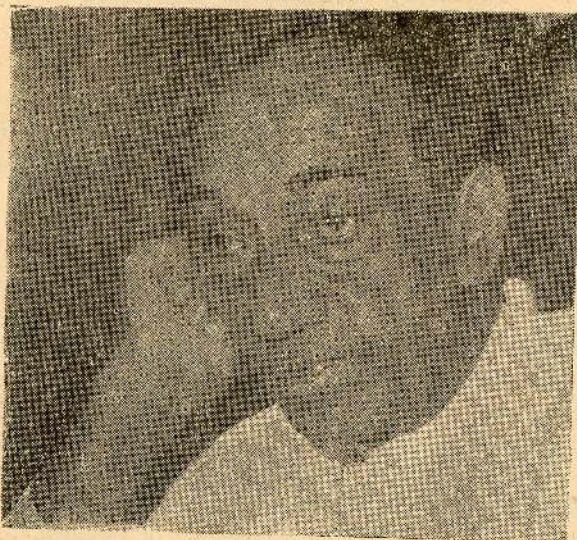


Premier Rajiv Gandhi



## "Unofficial" Talks Begin

However resumption of talks with the LTTE did begin in January this year, though not at the official Government of India's level but through the Indian espionage agency the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). (It was known that the RAW was against a military confrontation with the LTTE as against the External Affairs Ministry and Indian High Commissioner J. N. Dixit) It was RAW that flew "Johnny" and "Rahim" on March 5th to Vavuniya for talks with Prabakaran after which "Johnny" was reported to have been killed on his return from that meeting in the course of an IPKF operation. This resulted in allegations by the LTTE of a "breach of faith" on the part of the Indian Government and a delay in resuming negotiations.



President J. R. Jayawardene

Inter-departmental rivalry among the Indian Army, RAW and the External Affairs Ministry apparently results in situations where each seeks to out do the others in the interests of pursuing Indian policy. And this was seen too in RAW's negotiations with the LTTE in Madras where the former LTTE Jaffna Commander "Kittu" has resided after the Accord. India though at war with the LTTE has permitted a Tiger outpost in Madras partly because of the prestige that the Tigers have always enjoyed there, but more for the purpose of retaining a pipeline to the LTTE for purposes of negotiation. So after a long drawn series of "informal" talks, "Kittu" of the LTTE and "Anand Varma" of the RAW arrived at a broad settlement to be submitted for official ratification by their superiors. The agreement is said to have provided for 700 weapons to be

surrendered by the Tigers on an area by area basis. (The LTTE had put the number of weapons with it between 300 and 500 while the IPKF said that the LTTE had over 1000 weapons, so this was the compromise). A ceasefire was to be set in motion sectorally dependent, on the arms surrender. India was to commit itself to a Rs. 150-crore scheme for rehabilitation of the population in the North and East: 50 crores allocated for a rehabilitation committee with the Tigers in it and another 100 crores for the other groups. The LTTE however wanted some specific changes in the package including a permanent merger of the North and East, arrangements regarding colonisation and enhanced devolution of powers to the Provincial Councils to be elected in order to meet Tamil aspirations. When this Madras agreement came to Dejihi, it was found that the RAW officials in their enthusiasm to achieve results had given assurances on matters that were not easy to resolve. For example the Tigers were made to understand that they need not take the Oath under the Sixth Amendment when contesting Provincial Council elections and issues like the merger and enhanced devolution too presented problems. Furthermore the Indian Defence establishment is said to have resented the arrangements regarding ceasefire and surrender of arms by the LTTE. However it was still felt that the agreement was something which could be worked on. Indian High Commissioner J. N. Dixit who participated in high level discussions presided over by Premier Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi on June 27th returned to the island for discussions with President Jayawardene.

On June 30th, a communique from the Secretariat of Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayawardene said that if the LTTE agreed to surrender all its arms and ammunition, the Government would call for elections to the North-Eastern Provincial Council. And this Provincial Council to be formed with one Governor, was to have one elected Chief Minister and four elected Ministers. The communique also indicated that steps would be taken to appoint a High Court in the North-Eastern Province and to make Tamil along with Sinhala the official language of Sri Lanka. Other assurances given by the Sri Lankan Government (if the militants laid down arms and accepted the Indo-Lankan Agreement) were release of all Tamil detainees, grant of a general amnesty to militant groups and the application of the 1982 electoral register for the North-Eastern Provincial Council elections. In fact the brief visit to Colombo of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leaders towards the end of June seemed to be linked to the possibility of provincial polls in the immediate future. TULF Secretary-General A. Amirthalingam stated in Madras after his return that President Jayawardene's

announcement about the North-East merger was a "hopeful statement" and a re-affirmation of the Indo-Lankan Agreement, but the implementation, depended on the settlement between the LTTE and the Government of India. A Press Conference held by "Kittu" in Madras on July 1st, signalled an interim agreement but he indicated that final settlement was possible only after Tiger Leader Velupillai Prabhakaran endorsed it. A RAW official despatched to Vavuniya however did not meet with a proper response.

Meanwhile the Indian Army was engaged in another military operation "Checkmate" the purpose of which was to increase pressure on the Tiger leader holed up in the Vanni jungles and reduce LTTE ranks as much as possible to lower the strength of its bargaining power in negotiations. So when India attempted also to bring the 'Tiger' Leader in the Vanni jungle too into the talks, the LTTE was not willing as long as the fighting was on. The Tigers for their part had reason to be cautious. The case of "Johnny" flown into Vavuniya by RAW was still fresh in their memory as were the arrests of several other LTTE leaders in Batticaloa after talks with the Indians. They apparently interpreted "Operation Checkmate" to be trapping the 'King' ie. Prabhakaran as in a game of chess, even though the Indian said it was "just a name given to the checking of movements and materials in the Vavuniya sector". The LTTE therefore insisted upon a five day ceasefire in order to facilitate talks with Prabhakaran. They also wanted a 5-month period to hand over arms. The specifying of the numerical "five" seemed to indicate that Prabhakaran (who has trust in the number five) had been consulted. The Tigers insisted even on July 8th that only a ceasefire would facilitate a meeting with Prabhakaran.

#### LTTE Outburst

On July 9th, however the LTTE issued a hardhitting press statement. It referred to the "9 month war of attrition waged unjustly by the Indian Army". Enormous sacrifices and martyrdom were "not effect a temporary merger" and elections for "powerless Provincial Councils". It warned against the holding of elections with "quislings" to install a "puppet administration". The crowning shot was the following: "India is wrong if it believes it could implement the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, a charter of servility for the Tamils, by destroying the LTTE and its leaders. If India continues to engage in its effort to eliminate Tigers and kill Tamils, it would become inevitable that the Tigers would withdraw from the farcial peace talks and prepare the Tamil nation for a long and protracted struggle against foreign domination". On July 10th the Tigers issued another statement detailing casualties



**Sathasivam Krishnakumar alias Kittu**

suffered by India in the "Operation Checkmate" Indian diplomats while contesting the figures given by the Tigers have admitted that in terms of casualties the Indians had suffered more. However it was also clear that the Operation had restricted the scope and mobility of the Tigers. Mr. Dixit's statement in response to the LTTE: "they are not responding to political contacts so military efforts will continue" showed that India had virtually abandoned the political option. The earlier LTTE statements were therefore followed by one on July 11th stating that the Tamil people were demanding a ceasefire and unconditional talks, that attacks on Tigers and civilians should cease, arrested Tigers and civilians be released and colonization should be stopped. Another LTTE statement on July 13th stated that the attitude of the Indian Government suggested that it was "an accomplice of the chauvinist policies of the Sri Lanka Government." It attributed the failure of peace moves to the "false pride of the Government of India" which had "swept away the sentiments of our people". It deplored India's "uncivilised behaviour" which escalated its military operations while "engaged in negotiations".

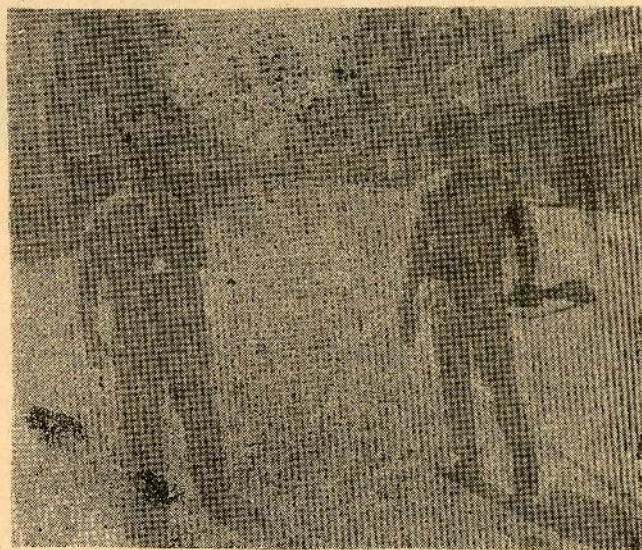
#### Why the Change?

The question that arises is why the Tigers decided to change their minds during the last stages of negotiations. The hardening of their position apparently seems to be connected with the IPKF operations in the Vanni. The full-scale military operation that was "Checkmate" being directed against the LTTE leadership when the unofficial talks had reached almost final stages was hardly conducive to lowering Tiger intransigence but seemed to have the opposite effect. From the Tiger viewpoint it was as if India had sought to lull the LTTE by the talks and then smash them militarily through the "Checkmate" operation. It is not clear still whether

India wants to decimate the LTTE since the effect of it especially if the leadership is killed, could still create problems in Tamil Nadu, besides depriving India of a lever in Sri Lanka. The refusal to give the Tigers the 5-day ceasefire was because India felt it would help the Tigers to re-group and consolidate themselves militarily. But that was a risk that had to be taken if Prabakaran was to be brought into negotiations and not "liquidated". In any case the prolonged conflict is now causing great damage to the Tamil people and not bringing in the desired results. And obviously negotiations with the LTTE could best be done officially through the Indian Government officials themselves and not through a clandestine espionage agency which is RAW.

That the LTTE is also convinced of this is to be seen in Quadri Ismail's report in *The Sunday Times* of July 24th in which the LTTE is reported to want to continue negotiations with the Indian Government but not with its intelligence agency RAW. This could of course be another ploy by the LTTE in playing for time but to what purpose? is the question. The report quotes Thilager of the LTTE from London as saying "Nothing constructive has emerged in the discussions with intelligence agencies. We are interested in true negotiations at the true political level." Thilager is also reported to have said that the LTTE calling the Accord "a charter of servility" did not amount to its rejection. "The 13th Amendment to the Constitution and the Provincial Councils Act was a dilution and a withdrawal from commitments by both governments. We are always ready to hand over weapons and cooperate in the implementation of the Accord, but we need certain promises from the two governments first." These are a proclamation merging the two Tamil-majority provinces, greater devolution as outlined in the LTTE memorandum to India, a ceasefire to be followed by negotiations and a halt to colonisation in the East. (Fresh settlement of Sinhalese in such places as Welioya in the East after the Accord has been resented. Welioya is also where the latest Tiger massacre took place.) Obviously the Tigers want to drive a hard bargain before they come to a settlement. This is all the more so since the LTTE leadership can be accused of a sell-out by its own cadres if it does not obtain new concessions which can justify its intransigence and the loss of so many Tiger lives. And of course it has to be also recognised that if it did not have mass backing, an organization that had only around 2500 fighters could not have waged a war for so long and with such intensity in Tamil areas. However in view of the constraints faced by the Sri Lankan Government too in the present political climate, grant of further concessions would not be so easy. An early settlement would not therefore be possible unless there is more

understanding on both sides and a more realistic, appraisal of the situation on the part of the Tigers even if the Indian and Sri Lankan Governments would be keen to effect a settlement in view of the elections to be held both in Tamil Nadu and in Sri Lanka. (Presidential elections have to be held by January in Sri Lanka and the period of Presidential rule in Tamil Nadu ends in December) The LTTE simply has no chance of winning against the Indian army. At most both sides would suffer casualties and go down together with no real victory to either side and no benefit at all to the Tamil people.



Indian Army

### The Southern Front

If the prospect of a settlement in the North-East Sector has suffered a set-back despite the IPKF assurances that the situation "on the ground" would clear enough to permit the holding of Provincial Council elections by July-August this year, the situation in the rest of the country especially in the deep South is far from encouraging.

Here again, in the midst of the assassinations and assassination threats of the Southern insurgency identified with the outlawed Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) and functioning generally under the name of the "Desapremi Janata Viyaparaya" (DJV) a far-reaching pact between the Government and JVP said to have been secretly negotiated since the previous month was dramatically announced by National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali on March 10th morning. The Minister named Fr. Tissa Balasuriya and a person said to be a young JVP'er K. C. Senanayake as having been in the forefront of these peace negotiations which began on April 8th together with himself. The pact purported



At a press conference after the purported pact: Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, General Sepala Attygalle, Minister Athulathmudali and K. C. Senanayaka

to bear the signatures of Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayake, leader and general secretary respectively of the JVP. Both Wijeweera and Gamanayake however immediately denied their signatures and denounced the pact as a plain fraud. The Government had earlier insisted on a surrender of arms by the JVP as a pre-condition to lifting the proscription on it. Now on Minister Athulathmudali's signing the Pact, the Government forthwith withdrew the proscription of the JVP and its ancillary organizations, returning to them also the property belonging to them which had been confiscated. The Government has not however withdrawn these orders despite the discovery of the fraud. The JVP in consequence, has won the removal of its proscription without any commitment on its side or the surrender of its arms. And far from surrendering arms, the post-"Pact" period saw a stepping up of violence and murder in the context especially of seeking to prevent the announced Provincial Councils elections being held. The killings included that of Nandalal Fernando, General Secretary of the ruling United National Party and several candidates to the Provincial Council elections.

Both Wijeweera and Gamanayake have however also put forward to the Government their own demands while denying the alleged "Pact". Despite the President's having announced that Wijeweera now had the freedom to hold a round table discussion with him and later even challenging Wijeweera to a face-to-face duel with him "instead of killing innocent civilians", no efforts have been made so far to initiate any discussions. It would appear therefore that the Government is pursuing a "military option" in this regard while also not withdrawing its lifting of the proscription of the JVP.

As against JVP/DJV terror, the Government has continued to unleash counter-terror in the form of 'Green Tigers', home guards and the like in addition to the heavy deployment of the Security Forces. Latterly however the Special Task Force (STF) was reported to be in the process of being withdrawn from the South in stages and this certainly would be an improvement since the activities of this group are reported to have aroused strong feelings among the population there. In fact allegations of "disappearances" (which included that of a University lecturer and several youth), arrests, detentions and torture have been common in this part of the country for sometime now. And despite the phased withdrawal of the STF, State repression goes on with youthful elements being the chief sufferers. The human rights abuses complained of by organizations apparently go unheeded and Amnesty International's Report of June 4th was scoffed at by Minister Athulathmudali.

In a stirring speech at Homagama on Sunday, President J. R. Jayewardene invited JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera to a face-to-face duel with him at Galle Face, instead of killing innocent civilians.

The President drew rounds of applause from the massive crowd, when he threw this challenge to Wijeweera at a provincial council election meeting.

He said: "I invite him to fix a date. I will come to Galle Face. I'll come alone. I'll come walking."

Crowds cheered as he offered to send Wijeweera his horseshoe.

He said they should all be prepared to die one day, whether Wijeweera was there or not.

Concluding, he said: "If I retreat, destroy me; if I am killed, avenge me; if I advance, follow me."

Daily News, May 24, 1988

## New Indemnity Law

To make matters worse the Government recently gazetted a Bill to indemnify all enforcers of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) for 7½ years, that is from the introduction of the PTA in July 1979 to December 1987! The Bill covers almost all actions of persons whether they acted lawfully or unlawfully who were "involved in the detection, prevention or prosecution of any person indulging in unlawful activities specified in the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Security personnel and all others acting under the P.T.A. will then be above the normal law and totally protected from being charged for human rights violations, thus rendering ineffective the Fundamental Rights of Citizens enshrined in the Constitution. This has met with the opposition of organizations concerned with human rights, including trade unions, political parties, social and religious bodies who have urged the Government to drop the Bill.

### Underground Torture Chambers

S. D. Bandaranaike (SLFP - Gampaha) asked the National Security Minister:

(1) Will the Minister inform this House as to how many political detenus are detained today in Military Camps and Detention Camps (give names of Camps).

(2) Will he also inform this House as to what action he has taken to safe guard their lives from any attack what-so-ever.

In point of fact 63 Tamil youths including Kuttimani were killed in Colombo whilst in detention in prisons as political prisoners by the state apparatus.

I understand that underground dungeons equipped with acid baths are said to be found, such as were built by Hitler in his concentration Camps.

Private houses are also said to be used for this purpose.

I do not think the Minister is aware of these special anti-national, inhuman torture chambers set up Gestapo style to exterminate our youth. These youths are our own children. I appeal to the Hon. Minister to go into this side of the matter personally.

(The question was not answered)

— *The Island* 10th August 1988.

## The Provincial Council Elections

It was in an atmosphere of violence and terror created by the JVP/DJV which threatened voters and candidates and with a boycott call too made by Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), that the Provincial Council elections were held between April 28th and June 9th. Despite security precautions at least 22 candidates were shot dead before election day. Voters were also warned to stay at home on election day and the JVP/DJV is said to have threatened the first five people who voted at any polling stations with death.

Despite these, people took the risk of voting (61.05% of the total number turned out in voting for the first round of elections which comprised the Uva, Sabaragamuwa, North Central and North Western Provinces, while 53.90% voted in the Western Province, 61.5% in the Central and 23.90% in the Southern Province — the last named having a negligible poll in some parts due to threatened terror.)

Although the UNP won all seven provinces, the margin of victory was far less than in the last Presidential and General Elections. The unexpectedly strong showing by the United Socialist Alliance (USA) formed but a few weeks earlier and with its charismatic leader shot dead, was a reflection of the UNP's fall in popularity. The USA had to battle against a party which had been in power for 10 years and which had the backing of the government machinery and a powerful party apparatus also apparently armed. (It is true of course that the four parties which formed the alliance — the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party and Nava Samasamaja Party — were relatively well known but the Alliance itself was new). The Alliance had also to contend with JVP/DJV armed terror against both its candidates and voters — it was in fact the only major unarmed force in the elections — and the boycott call to voters on the part of the SLFP which however did not have the desired effect on the country as a whole. The Alliance fared particularly well in the Western Province (the most populous that elects one-third of the Members of Parliament) and Sabaragamuwa as can be seen from the Table reproduced below. It received some 30 per cent of the votes polled, far higher than the Left has ever received in an election. Properly organized the Alliance can therefore become a force to reckon with at least at the provincial level.

### Provincial Council Elections, 1988

Province	Number of seats, partywise				
	UNP	USA	SLMP	Liberals	Independents
Western	52	42	6	2	—
Central	35	18	3	—	—
Southern	36	15	—	—	2
Uva	18	13	1	—	—
Sabaragamuwa	22	20	—	—	—
North Central	19	12	—	—	—
North Western	29	19	2	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

Note: Elections yet to be held in the East and the North

A major factor in the UNP's victory in areas like the Central Province and Uva was the vote of the Plantation Tamils whose main organization the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) is in alliance with the UNP and some of whose members were returned in these elections on the UNP ticket. Three CWC members including its General Secretary M. S. Sellasamy (who contested from Colombo) have been made Ministers in the Western, Central and Uva Provincial Councils thus strengthening the CWC's power within the Government. Another party that has emerged is the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) formed 3 months before the elections, thus reflecting a stronger Muslim consciousness of its identity as a separate community in the prevailing political climate.

As pointed out by us earlier in these columns, with the crushing blow inflicted on the working class movement in the 1980 General Strike, the absence today of a proper political alternative and a class force strong enough to show a way out of the present morass, has tended to complicate the situation and make youthful sections especially an easy prey to "communal" and chauvinist cries. It would to a significant extent, explain also the phenomenon of the Tamil militant groups in the North and the JVP in the South, coming as they do from the same social layers in their respective areas of the country and in a society that is subject to strong petit-bourgeois pressures.

#### Bye-Election Lessons

The UNP Government's victory in three out of four Parliamentary by elections in electorates chosen by it out of several that were declared vacant, shows again the wane in its popularity. Its majorities were slender, the one at Kekirawa in the North Central Province being a mere 361 votes. It only confirmed what was shown already at the Provincial Council elections (despite the disincentives to voting in the latter elections) that the popular support the UNP had earlier, was seriously eroded.

Ironically, the SLFP which had denounced the present parliament as an illegal and unconstitutional body that had overstayed its period, decided to contest these elections while the Socialist Alliance stayed out. The SLFP was confident that its racist line in which the repudiation of the Peace Accord and the cancellation of the Provincial Councils figured prominently, would be massively endorsed by these predominantly Sinhalese rural electorates. But this is precisely what did not happen. In fact curiously enough, the only seat that the SLFP managed to win namely Ratnapura, was one with a number of Tamil voters of recent Indian origin. In this seat, the SLFP so to speak, only completed the process begun already by the United Socialist Alliance (USA) which lost the entire district very narrowly to the UNP. However the SLFP had the distinct

advantage (as against the USA in the Provincial Council elections) of not having in all four contests to face a disruptive boycott campaign bolstered by widespread terror and murder of both candidates and voters by the JVP which was the SLFP's ally at these bye-elections. Indeed it could even be said that the SLFP's hostility to the Socialist Alliance and its link-up with the JVP only served to adversely affect its campaign and repel many voters who would otherwise have voted against the UNP. It also appears to have given the UNP an opportunity to take SLFP supporters into custody in some places as "terrorists" or violators of the peace. Furthermore, it is exceedingly doubtful notwithstanding the clear majority at Ratnapura, that the SLFP would have won even that seat if the Socialist Alliance had decided to field a candidate. The SLFP therefore for its part cannot be satisfied with the election results although it can certainly point to the fact that the SLFP's total vote in all four election was 506 more than that of the UNP. That of course is significant. However Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike in this situation would do well to remember also that she will not be able to deceive voters into believing any more that she can as promised, amend the Constitution or do anything that would require, a two-third majority in Parliament, let alone abolish the Provincial Councils and cancel the Peace Accord if she became President.

Conditions today demand constructive thinking on the part of political parties and all concerned. Provincial Council elections have to be held in the North-East and the Presidential and General Elections are also to come. It is important that such elections be conducted fairly and in conditions that would ensure the safety of both candidates and voters and for this the co-operation of political forces in the country will become necessary. And whatever political differences there may be, the need to have a General Election at which the people can once again properly exercise the democratic right to elect their representatives and form a Government after 11 years of UNP rule, cannot in this situation be disputed.

31 July 1988

#### Postscript

A bomb explosion in the heart of Trincomalee town on August 16 killing ten and severely wounding twenty others, was apparently a Tiger response to the efforts now being made to restore civil administration in the area. Since there are bound to be intransigent rebel elements now accustomed to the gun who will always be opposed to any political settlement, we would perhaps have to accustom ourselves to sporadic violence as a continuing irritant in our political life, at least for a time.

17 August 1988

# Letter to the President

## The Proposed Indemnity Act

His Excellency President J. R. Jayewardene  
President's House  
Janadhipathi Mawatha  
Colombo 1.

Your Excellency,

The Christian Workers Fellowship strongly urges Your Excellency and the Government not to proceed with the proposed Indemnity Act for several good reasons as set out below.

We are of the view that the proposed Act by closing the doors of law and justice to those who have genuine grievances concerning acts done in suppression of "unlawful activity" under the Prevention of Terrorism Act or in "the interests of public security" or "maintenance of essential supplies and services", during the period July 24th, 1979 to December 31st, 1987, could pose a very real threat to peace by engendering violence as the only available alternative and thus worsen the already serious security situation in our country. It could also make more difficult the putting an end to violence on the part of those who are now engaged in such activity and a peaceful resolution of our political problems.

The proposed Act would also tend to create a greater sense of insecurity and fear among citizens, besides also providing a psychological boost to those agents of the State who are already being blamed for bringing down the law and order situation in the country through their acts of commission and omission. It will furthermore encourage torture, illegal arrests, detentions "disappearances" and rape, besides grossly violating the Fundamental Rights of our People and negating the basic provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Act will also undermine the position of the Judiciary and bring our country into greater disrepute in international circles. For it will provide indemnity to any person for any unlawful activity engaged in for a period of seven and a half years in the areas specified and thus have the effect of covering up extreme crimes and indeed of protecting them and thus bring down the esteem for law and order which admittedly is faced already with a deep-going crisis.

It is our considered view that the Constitution has more than provided for the security of the State and all its organs. We strongly affirm our belief that Judicial Review is an essential cornerstone of democracy and are therefore seriously disturbed by the attack that the proposed Act makes on that essential principle. We do not think that the State and its organs or any one acting on its behalf will be placed in a disadvantageous position in having its activities reviewed by our Courts of Law.

We may point out also that the right enshrined in Article 11 of our Constitution against torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment is an absolute right, subject to no limitation whatsoever. In the words of Justice Atukorale (with Chief Justice Sharvananda and Justice L. H. de Alwis agreeing) "It is an absolute fundamental right subject to no restrictions or limitations whatsoever." The same judge went on further to hope that "this right which is declared and intended to be fundamental is always kept fundamental and that the executive by its actions does not reduce it to a mere illusion" (S. C. Application No. 186.86). It is unfortunate that this proposed Act if adopted will make that right an illusion to those who have had this right violated during the period for which the Act applies in regard to the actions covered

by it. No government surely would be justified in absolving from responsibility any violators of this "absolute fundamental right." Depriving the Courts of power and jurisdiction to entertain or inquire into or hear and determine a complaint of such a violation in terms of the proposed Indemnity Act can only make this right a farce. It will besides, also blatantly violate the Nation's solemn obligation to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which this country is a party and also violate the UN Declaration against torture adopted by the General Assembly in 1975.

The indemnity proposed for criminal acts is most disturbing, in that alleged criminals will find protection under this Act. Persons alleged to have committed crimes such as that in the well-known Manamperi (Kataragama Beauty Queen's) case will find protection if they could come within the provisions of this proposed Act. Such a situation is quite reprehensible and revolting to human conscience. In the context especially of the more recent increase in allegations of rape and other inhuman acts said to be done by those who are supposed to enforce the law, it is surely the victims of such acts and not violators of fundamental rights who most need protection. And this protection from criminal liability violates also Article 6 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights.

The protection from civil liability as proposed by the intended Act, violates the Constitution of Sri Lanka as well as Article 2(3), Article 7 and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Furthermore the proposed Act is of retrospective effect in the worst sense, in that it treats a special class of persons in a special way for crimes which existed in the country for the seven and a half year period to which it applies. So while the Penal Code and other laws would apply to most people who have committed crimes during the relevant period those who fall within the provisions of the proposed Act, if it becomes law, will have no Courts to try them. This is a worse position than merely creating offences with retrospective effect which was enough for the Privy Council to set aside the judgement given against the suspects in the 1962 attempted coup.

What disturbs us most however is the psychological effect that the proposed Act would have. Persons with genuine grievances will be demoralised without a legal remedy and that would result in the public losing faith in the democratic process. On the other hand, to use the words of the Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka, "persons prone to abuse their powers will see in it a clear indication that they can continue to flout the law unafraid, secure in the expectation that there will be subsequent extensions of the period." This dual effect, we take this opportunity to warn, will result in making the possibility of peace within our country distant. The manipulators will find it easier to disturb the democratic process, making this unhappy nation suffer further and worsening the already existing chaos.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge Your Excellency and the Government of Sri Lanka not to proceed with this proposed legislation and so enable our people to re-affirm their faith in our judiciary and in the democratic process.

Yours faithfully  
Christian Workers Fellowship  
Secretary.

15 August 1988

# The Elusive Quest for Peace

— Rajan Hoole —

With the forces of the Sri Lankan state — rendered so odious by their conduct — out of the reckoning, it was once thought that peace in the Tamil areas was within grasp. That was a piece of naive optimism, pardonable if only for the reason that human existence would otherwise become nigh impossible. Scenes of grief seem to possess a relentless inevitability.

An elderly relative of a disappeared person dropped his voice and uttered these words with deep emotion: "India will burn for this!" He continued, "what are we to do? Those who believe in a god can worship a stone (image). Those who do not believe can break their heads against a stone."

Another young man from a rural area was mentally and physically broken by torture. Not by the Sri Lankan forces, but by others fighting for an ostensibly fraternal cause. He had received the helicopter treatment practised by the STF, which had learnt it from its peers in Britain and Israel, and had in turn taught it to the adversary. The young man had been battered, had once been tied up on a jungle track and bitten by huge ants. One of his more sympathetic captors had told him in disgust of how others had gang raped a female prisoner, who did not survive to tell the tale. The young man said finally, "I was once a freedom fighter. But I am now a bruised cobra. Do not hold me responsible for what I do."

A man past the first flush of youth returned to Jaffna recently with other refugees from India. He had joined the nationalist cause early, and went over to Tamil Nadu. He became involved in the narcotics trade. He later became disillusioned and hired himself out to the booming criminal underworld in Tamil Nadu. He had a trained photographic memory. He was mainly involved in the transportation of stolen goods. The Police, he said, were not a problem. Whenever apprehended, a deal would be made. He spoke with an intimate knowledge of the seamy side of leading figures in Tamil Nadu. The problem of drug addiction put an end to his active life. Like the

rural youth of renaissance Spain who roamed the seven seas with the conquistadores, many Tamil youth in the last ten years discovered the wide world, which gave them more than was good for their sanity.

In Alaveddy last month, a young ex-militant from a depressed community was killed by an assassin. His elderly father died of grief a few days later. Only two relatives dared to help with the last rites. The family is now destitute with no bread-winners, with little hope that any relief would ever reach them.

Two young students who were members of a major militant group said, "we only wish to know whether we have passed or failed so that we could leave this country. We become very hurt when some treat us as though we are unintelligent because we should have finished our degrees two years ago. We were offered Engineering. But we chose to do science in Jaffna, so that we could work for the cause. Now we are being sought by a militant group enjoying a favoured position. It is dangerous for us to stay here."

A newspaper reported pithily that on 18th July, a 30 year old man was shot dead opposite a private tutoring in Nallur. The unnamed man was in fact a respected student leader who made headlines less than two years ago. He was married, awaiting his results and leading a quiet life teaching at tutorials for a living. The result was that more students went into hiding. The students who had twice successfully confronted the IPKF on its mistreatment of university persons were once more ridden by fear and anxiety. All that they could do was to silently mark the occasion by boycotting lectures.

During the early hours of the morning of 22nd July a bomb blast near the Jaffna Kachcheri killed an Indian policeman. Shortly afterwards local residents who were in general not ill-disposed to the IPKF, were threatened with dire consequences should a similar incident be repeated. No question of how residents inside their houses could spot the bomber who had evaded sentries on duty. As if to underline the message



a statement by Brigadier Kahlon was published in the 'Murasoli' the following day. It said that if such an incident should be repeated, he would be unable to prevent his men from opening fire. The issue was obviously not one of opening fire in self-defence at identified hostile party. No one has ever argued against that. What an average person could gather from the message was a veiled threat to open fire in a manner reminiscent of the tragic months of October and November 1987. Recent civilian casualties at Paranthan and Chullipuram are a disturbing pointer. Brigadier Kahlon is after all the man with the job of selling the IPKF's image to the public. Kahlon is an extremely courteous man except when confronted with the stark illogic of his situation. There are things like missing persons and bereaved families that cannot be sold. India finds itself in another cul-de-sac resulting from smart Alocs in Delhi trying to play too many people against each other. Similarities to Punjab are not lost on Punjabi officers. But they find themselves in a web of fate, as it were, repeating the same blunders and reaping the same harvest.

The foregoing gives some picture of the situation in which the Tamil community at present finds itself — weak, confused, caught in a deadly game played by would-be-protectors and unable to protest because selective protest flies in the face of credibility.

The disappearance of Mr. K. Kauthasamy, a man of sterling honesty and dedication raises deep questions about rehabilitation. Will persons of quality come forward when faced with the prospect of going away unremembered and unhonoured? His disappearance comes in the context of intrigue and of different parties jockeying for future power and influence.

### Problems of Peace

A fundamental requirement for peace is respect for truth, a respect for life and basic honesty in one's dealings. In the absence of these, constitutional arrangements are secondary and largely irrelevant. If these values had been there and people had asserted their independence as individuals the problems of the North and the deep South would not have been there. There would have been a natural evolution towards Federalism as a felt need. We do not possess the ingredients of peace.

There is in this country no constitutional role for India. But we created one, and they used it. In all walks of life in this country, we create roles for outsiders by choosing to do things by intrigue and through a desire to avoid accountability. When an institutional head wants to punish someone for the wrong reasons,

he goes for outside help. The institutional decline is there from the courts of law to the many committees where minutes are doctored and manipulation is resorted to. Even Church institutions can hardly be commended in this respect. The important thing is that many who complain privately failed to speak out even when no gun was pointed at them. Their reasons for remaining silent are simply to be in good favour, in order that their perks, travel claims and promotions will move faster. The end result is corruption, simmering discontent and a very violent society. Only violence is seen to work.

But the elite goes on much as before, not serious about anything in particular. We have lost the kind of value system where leading persons were even little ashamed of being caught lying or involved in dishonesty. While they condemn the young men with the guns as fit for being shot as being intransigent, they blithely fraternise with, fete and flatter men in power who in any objective sense should be judged guilty of serious misconduct and be held to answer for the loss of thousands of lives. The latter are even honoured guest at Church functions.

### The Democratic Process

The oft repeated slogan these days is to call upon all young armed men to lay down arms and return to the democratic process. But what process do we have? In a recent interview in BBC's South Asia survey, Minister Gamini Dissanayake commented on Tamil feelings about an IPKF withdrawal. He said that any army faced with a terrorist problem acts in a similar manner, thus explaining what the Tamils suffered from the Sri Lankan Forces and the IPKF in turn. The first thing a man in his position should have known is that the armed forces act under the direction of parliament, that parliament is answerable and not some freelancing group of uniformed men. Thus even leading parliamentarians have lost sight of the functions of parliamentary government. No doubt, the bull in the China-shop activities of the armed forces in the deep South are palmed off in similar terms. We have a parliament that has voluntarily surrendered its functions and especially after the 1982 referendum, is looking like something from the taxidermists.

What became of the democratic process in this country? Came the PTA, the general strike of 1980, sacking of 40,000 workers, the 1982 referendum — no meaningful opposition. The government went through with an ingenious plan to forcibly settle sinhalese in the East, put some academics on the job and present, the non-existence of a Tamil Homeland as a **fait accompli**.

It could even find model Tamils to serve in legal, judicial and police services and deliver model speeches and model judgements. Nothing was impossible. The judiciary was dependable, the parliament came readily forth with the required legislation even when it was an exercise in contradictions. Who cared about bribery-dictions when real power lay in bludgeon, contra fear, complicity and the barrel of the gun; and hey presto, it was all legal. Everything was nicely taped. Many applauded. Few complained. But many went on as if nothing happened, even when hundreds were being killed. Only thing that went wrong was the young men with the guns who were prepared to be even more incorrigible than the government itself. In a country where silence and complicity were bought by corruption, only the Tamil and Sinhalese militants and odd figures like K. C. Senanayake were a match for the government. Ironically, one of the JVP's principal demands seems to be the holding of general elections in a democratic country.

#### Towards peace

Many older men who had fought for honesty in public life and had suffered victimisation in consequence are angry with their own generation. In consequence they sympathise with the young militants even when they can clearly see the disastrous course of the latter. One of them said, "I am comfortable with the value system and the game. Only, I am uncomfortable with the new weapons inducted into it." The old weapons were, bribery, false charges, disappearing files doctored minutes and law courts. The new weapons are AK-47's, T-56's and M-16's.

Peace is not near at hand because the values of honesty, truth and respect for life cannot be created overnight. In the absence of these values there can be no liberation either. The young militants were themselves prisoners of the same value system and the early part of this article describes what happened to many young Tamils. Having rebelled against autocracy, corruption and patronage, they in turn sought to become autocrats and patrons.

Perhaps the only way forward lies in individuals trusting God and trying to set an example in a more edifying and just value system in their small spheres of influence. In place of the present wishy-washiness towards wrong, those who do anything wrong should be made to feel ashamed and isolated. When one talks about respect for life, one cannot ignore animals and the cruelties they suffer. If not peace will remain a distant dream.



## The Accord- One year After

— Colvin R. De Silva

The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord will soon be one year old. It admittedly has not worked out in the manner that was expected when it was signed. It is a suitable stage at which to assess the position regarding this Accord.

It will be recalled that the Accord came in the setting of a directly intimidatory intrusion of the Indian Airforce into the air-space over Sri Lanka. That intrusion was undoubtedly directed towards the protection of the LTTE from the consequences of major military defeat which it had just suffered at the hands of the Sri Lanka Army. The Sri Lanka Army was substantially confined to barracks in designated parts especially in the Jaffna peninsula.

The aim of the Accord, which gave an official and legal status to an Indian army contingent which was to operate in the Northern and Eastern provinces, was broadly two-fold. Firstly, measures were outlined with a view to bringing peace and opening the way to normal civil functioning of the Government of Sri Lanka in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Secondly certain matters which had strained the relations of Sri Lanka and India were resolved and arrangements made for closer and continuous consultation on such matters between the governments of the two countries.

Certain terms were conditional to the operation of the Agreement as a whole. The principal of these was that the Armed Organisations which were engaged in a separatist struggle in the North and East should hand in their arms and agree to function in terms of the Accord.

Looking back, it is clear that especially in the case of the most powerful of the separatist organisations, namely the LTTE, these two conditions have not been fulfilled up to date and that, as at present, do not look like being fulfilled. There is fighting in the North and East and the rather reserved original acceptance of the Accord by the LTTE has been clearly repudiated.

The Sri Lanka Government's insistence in October 1987 on the 17 LTTE militants taken into custody by the IPKF being sent to Colombo, and their consequent suicide gave to the LTTE the necessary opportunity and excuse to go back on its own undertaking in respect of the Accord. The consequent situation was made more acute by the contradictory positions within the Government itself in respect of its undertakings in the Accord. The Government's failure to carry out its part of the exercise in the re-settlement of refugees has remained a matter in issue.

---

**“The Indian Army has come to the Center and forefront of the political picture in Sri Lanka in a manner which was neither intended nor anticipated, Interest is general on the question of when the Indian Army is likely to be withdrawn....”**

---

Amidst these developments, the Indian Army has had to settle down to a brutal war in the North and East in conditions which virtually gave it some of the character of an Army of occupation. Certainly, to the extent that the insurgents have been effectively suppressed, it is the Indian Army that is in real control of the North and East. The ability of the Government of Sri Lanka to function to any extent in those provinces is entirely determined by the extent to which the Indian Army has control.

Thus, the Indian Army has come to the centre and forefront of the political picture in Sri Lanka in a manner which was neither intended nor anticipated. Interest is general on the question of when the Indian Army is likely to be withdrawn. There are also those who now claim that it will never be withdrawn.

In this connection, it must be said that the Indian Government itself has contributed to the uncertainty to some extent. It has done so by leaving the impression that the intensity and aims of its military effort are closely conditioned on the one side by the needs of bringing to some sort of co-operative attitude a particularly recalcitrant LTTE and, on the other, the needs of the political situation in India.

In the meantime much has happened in terms of the Accord itself which has helped to ease the tenseness of the situation. Of these, the principal development is the election of Provincial Councils in seven provinces. The impact of the process on the general situation would of course have been far stronger and wide-ranging if the Provincial Councils for the combined administration of the North and East provinces had also been elected. But even as it is we now have the meaning or the devolution of power from the centre gaining reality; and that too without any disruption of the unity of the country.

Secondly, although there is in the Northern and Eastern Provinces sporadic guerilla activities, there can be no doubt that Peace is real and substantial in those parts of the country. Peace, of course is the pre-condition to the processes of restoring the fractured relations between the communities in the setting of a single Sri Lankan state.

Thirdly, the processes of rehabilitation in those parts of the country both in respect of persons and of the environment, have got going and will undoubtedly help towards more settled conditions. What is being done is of course only an earnest of the more intensive and extensive efforts that will be needed in the future.

It is necessary to add a fourth and fundamental fact of the highest importance. Indo-Sri Lanka relations have distinctly improved despite the cavilling and the criticism that prevails. It is relevant that India herself is contributing considerably to the costs of rehabilitation

There can be no doubt that the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement continues to be a very relevant factor in bringing the internal situation in Sri Lanka to a point of reasonable stability. Perhaps it is necessary to state here that this fact has tended to be obscured by the disruptive events in the South; but that is another question and not necessarily connected with the Northern and Eastern situation and the place of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. The pact has not yet worked itself out.

— 27 July, 1988



*Many articles have appeared in the press recently on the subject of youth unrest and violence. Dr. Osmund Jayaratne, Professor of Physics in the University of Colombo examines here the Educational system that has led to so much disillusionment and frustration on the part of our country's youth.*

# The Crisis in Education

— Osmund Jayaratne

## The Background

The introduction of the universal franchise and the growth of the Left movement in Sri Lanka led to the exercise of mass pressures in and through the State Council and its system of Executive Committees which granted a reasonable degree of executive powers and responsibilities to the elected representatives of the people. These powers were whittled down with the setting up of a Westminster style parliamentary government where executive authority was limited to a Cabinet of Ministers. Today, such executive powers have been basically reposed in a single individual the President of Sri Lanka. The process is clear.

The State Council era witnessed the introduction of several social welfare measures, unprecedented in a poor colonial country. Among these measures was the system of free education, which was the direct consequence of agitation by the Left (vide N. M. Perera: "The Case for Free Education"), although the actual Bill was introduced by the late C. W. W. Kannangara.

Until then, education had been largely limited to the children of the brown elite, compradores of the British imperial power, whose aim was to create a "native" class, capable of taking over most of the administrative functions in the country. To fulfil these aims a handful of "prestigious" schools were set up in major towns such as Colombo and Kandy, in addition to the system of missionary schools which had grown up in the Northern Peninsula. Education in these schools was entirely through the English medium, with a pronounced stress on the liberal arts of the Western world. Only lip service was paid to the national languages and to national culture and values. Even the sciences occupied a secondary status. The majority of children studied in so-called "vernacular" schools, partly the off-shoot of traditional educational practices in the island's past. These were almost totally neglected and deprived of most of the facilities enjoyed by the new English medium schools.

Free education inevitably led to some changes in this system. Through State intervention, a system of Maha Vidyalayas and Central schools was set up

in the country. However, English still remained the medium of education in most of these schools. Furthermore, despite the institution of free education and the distribution of a nominal free mid-day meal to school children, the majority of the country's poor could ill afford the physical necessities of life to obtain a decent education for their children. Education still remained the preserve of the English-educated elite.

It was after 1956, consequent to the language policies of the then government, that significant changes occurred in the scope and quality of education. The introduction of the swabasha media resulted in large numbers entering the educational stream, although economic circumstances still withheld these facilities from the very poor layers of society. The large influx of children also resulted in an inevitable expansion in numbers of primary and secondary schools throughout the country.

## Unplanned Expansion and its Consequences

Reforms in any sphere cannot be isolated from the social framework in which they occur. This is evident from the experience of the Coalition Government of 1970. While many praiseworthy reforms were carried out, their consequences were largely contrary to the expectations of their initiators. Among these reforms were those in the financial and economic sphere, land reform, University reform etc. Conservative elements within the Government, ably assisted by a fossilised bureaucracy, negated the proper implementation of these measures. This is something the Left has to learn from.

Free education and the introduction of swabasha into the schools did make a qualitative change in the social structure. For instance, educational opportunities for the first time were brought within the reach of the majority of our people. Sri Lanka's literacy rate rose to the high level of 85 per cent, even though the criterion of "literacy" was the ability of a person to sign his name and read basic material. This was one of the highest rates in the entire Third World. Incidentally, and understandably, this rate of literacy

has tended to drop within the last seven or eight years. The drop-out rate after the primary level and in the early stages of secondary schooling has reached alarming proportions.

The contradictions of the social framework and the state structure have taken their toll of this progressive legislation.

### Swing of the Pendulum : Role of English

Sinhala is a language, rich in expression and in idiom, which has developed fast in the last three decades. Tamil, at least, with its equivalent in South India, has a developed tradition. However, both languages — Sinhala in particular — are limited to the few millions who use them. In this modern age, national isolationism is a tragedy. Our young people need access to the achievements of mankind — whether it be in the sciences, the arts, literature or knowledge in general. We, of course, have our own literary products, be they in Sinhala or Tamil. But how many of our youth can reach out to the rich developments internationally? Be it the sciences (we live in an age of science), or the world's literature, or yet the rich ideas of political philosophers — the translations available are minimal.

When our graduates or others appear before Selection Boards, their job prospects are determined by a knowledge of English, however well they may have performed in their degree examinations. For those who do not enter the Universities, there are a multitude of institutions today which provide courses leading to Commerce, Banking, Accountancy, Auditing, Computer Programming etc. These are all in English. How many of our University graduates or A/L qualified students are competent to follow these courses? Is it strange that our numbers of unemployed, yet educated, graduates are phenomenal? Are we surprised that so many are today disillusioned, frustrated with their lot, and tend to hit out at the "establishment" that brought them to this pass? While condemning the rise of individual violence, we must also look into ourselves. Why and how did we fail them? All effects have certain causes. What is happening today is due mainly to our own failures as a generation.

The pendulum of language swung to an extreme amplitude in 1956. No thought was given to the necessity of providing our youth with the knowledge of an international language — at least English in our context. The excuse trotted out today is that we have an inadequate number of qualified teachers of English. Why were no arrangements made since 1956 to organize crash courses at least for such English

teachers, with adequate emoluments? We of our generation owe a lot to the youth, and we have failed!

With the training of adequate English teachers, English **must** be adequately and competently taught as a **second language** at least from Grade I onwards, if not earlier at Kindergarten level. Young people have a singular capacity for learning languages.

### The Educational Bureaucracy

Today, the forms of education, the content and even syllabus of education at secondary level are almost entirely determined by bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education, from the Minister himself (presently a lawyer) down to the smallest bureaucrat in the Curriculum Development Centre. Some of them are graduates and former teachers, but their contact with students and teachers, their knowledge of the current needs and psychology of education are mainly limited to the four walls of their offices. Who writes the text books recommended for the various grades? In this connection it is worthwhile quoting Rajan Hoole, Lecturer in Mathematics, University of Jaffna (Lanka Guardian, June, 15 1968) : "A chapter in the Social Science text book for grade 9 has a chapter on the Aryan colonisation of Ceylon. The G.C.E.(O/L) question paper of December, 1986 gives a map of the island and the candidates are required to indicate the areas of Aryan settlement. On the other hand nearly all professional social scientists of eminence in this country maintain that migration to the island was mainly from South India, and the presence of so-called Aryans even in India is subject to much questioning.....

"Reggie Siriwardene has pointed out instances where the notions underlying Sinhala racism have been promoted through state-sponsored school text books".

Permit me a word about my own discipline — Physics. The current G.C.E.(A/L) syllabus misses the wood for the trees. It is rife with details which only technicians in specialised fields need know. Unlike the London G.C.E.(A/L) syllabus, it sacrifices **physical principles** for technical details. Physics may have ended in 1900! Hardly anything is included of 20th century Physics, and this in an age when the development of science has been so accelerated. Is there a word about electronics, computers, space travel, atomic structure, atomic energy? The recent industrial and technological revolution has not occurred as far as our educational bureaucrats are concerned. And Physics is forging fast ahead with the Super-conductivity

Revolution and its fantastic implications! Elementary concepts like circular motion, simple harmonic motion, the Doppler Effect and the velocity of light etc. are ignored. Once upon a time, these were in the A/L syllabus. Our bureaucrats have thought otherwise. I do not know the situation in other disciplines, but my view is they cannot be very different. Bureaucrats cannot go beyond the knowledge they acquired years ago, and they impose this limited knowledge upon new generations in a totally different era.

The result is that when new entrants come into the University, we are compelled to spend at least three months teaching them the basics of their subject.

Apart from setting A/L question papers and supervising their marking, even University personnel, though willing, are seldom used in the preparation of syllabi and courses of study. This is the exclusive preserve of the education bureaucracy! One wonders what their horizons are!

#### Practical Classes

Today, unlike the London (A/L), we have no practical examination for our local (A/L) students. The result is that the students passing out of the (A/L) examination have only a theoretical knowledge, which hardly includes any recent developments. They cannot handle a single instrument. But Science is a practically oriented discipline. I can well understand the difficulties of a practical examination in a situation where numbers have increased so sharply. But what about compulsory practical classes in the schools and a system of continuous assessment, over-seen periodically by qualified Inspectors of Schools? This was the idea when the practical examinations were abolished in the time of the last government. But it never came to pass. I have the personal experience of visiting a school in Bandarawela, where the teacher was describing a certain physical instrument. He drew elaborate diagrams on the board. I simply asked him: "Do you not have this instrument in the school?" He replied: "Of course we do — in that cupboard?" I asked him: "Why don't you show that instrument to your students and show them how it work? That is more valuable than all your diagrams!"

However, I do not blame the teachers, ill-paid as they are. The Government and its bureaucracy must share the blame for this sorry plight of our students.

Consultation is vital — consultation with committees of teachers and with University personnel.

As in most other areas of our social and economic structure, the process of decision-making must be taken away from the bureaucracy and vested in properly constituted bodies of teachers in communication with the University community.

#### Privatisation of Education

In keeping with the so-called "Open Economy" and the privileges granted to the private sector, the present Government is engaging in an insidious campaign to infringe the policy of free education and introduce the private sector into this arena. Not all its protestations can hide the truth. Our students, through their slogans, are correct.

The question of the North Colombo Medical College (NCMC) has reached national proportions, with the boycott of classes by students of the Faculty of Medicine for nearly one year. Why is the Government so adamant? The issues are clear: (1) The students of the NCMC are not registered University students, as required by the Act; (2) the reports of various University Heads in the Medical Faculty reveal that the NCMC has not fulfilled certain basic requirements for clinical training; (3) the NCMC by agitating for the MBBS (Colombo) is seeking privileges through the back door — namely, recognition by the British Medical Council, which even students of the State Universities of Ruhuna and Jaffna do not enjoy

The same privatisation procedure is being insidiously followed even in the field of secondary education. So-called "International Schools" are proliferating in the country. Once upon a time such schools catered for members of the International Community who could not obtain a fair education for their children in view of the swabasha policy in state schools.

Today, irrespective of nationality, anyone can enter these schools, provided they are ready to pay a terminal fee of Rs. 8000 - 11,000 per term. The courses are geared to London examinations. In other words, these are institutions catering to the rich and privileged elite. It is interesting to note that one of these institutions, at least, is today government-owned. The principle of free education is being slowly eroded by the State itself in the interests of the privileged classes.

There is much to say about the successive changes in syllabi - the NCGE experiment, New Mathematics and the present O/L and A/L syllabi. We shall reserve these comments for a subsequent article.

*The Annual Report of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka for 1987 appeared in May this year. Dr. Neville Karunatilake a former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank discusses here the nature of the information made available in this Report.*

# Central Bank Report for 1987

— Neville Karunatilake

The Central Bank Annual Report is perhaps the only reasonably reliable document that is available which gives a detailed and systematic summary of the economic trends and events in the preceding year. The Report has to be issued before the end of April each year. The writers of the Report have to assemble a considerable amount of statistical and other economic and financial information relating to the previous year for incorporation in the Report within a relatively short time. Since the Report was first issued in 1950, its scope and coverage has expanded considerably, although there has been a deterioration in quality in the last few years.

In recent years the Report has assumed special significance because timely and vital economic information is not readily available, and this is partly because the government has not undertaken special socio-economic surveys which give details on various sectors of the economy and the economic plight of the people. In particular, socio-economic surveys which give details of income, employment and living standards of the population in the urban, rural and estate sectors have not been undertaken by the government since 1982. The result of subsequent surveys carried out by the Department of Census and Statistics have not been released to the public.

## The Growth Rate

Since this government came into power in 1977 the Central Bank Reports have indicated, every year, very high real rates of growth, which have been in excess of 5 per cent. The average rate of growth of the real GNP during 1976 to 1986 was 5.5 per cent. In 1987, for the first time, the growth rate of the economy

has fallen drastically to 1.5 per cent, which was the lowest rate recorded for a very long time. It is indeed strange that even after continuing unrest in the Island since 1983, and a sharp down turn in overall economic activity in every sector, the economy was able to maintain growth rates in excess of 5 per cent, particularly after 1983. In most of these years the output in key sectors of the economy, particularly in plantations and industry, had not shown an increase. In this context, the question may be asked how is it that the growth rate has sharply dipped to 1.5 per cent only last year?

It is not very difficult to come to the conclusion that many of the key financial and economic indicators and the growth rates of the preceding four years period have been deliberately inflated in order to show that the economy has fared well. The performance of the economy had been judged by the Central Bank only in terms of concepts that do not concern the common man, such as the growth rate, the level of investment, quite apart from the colossal waste associated with it and the amount of foreign aid received. In these terms, the level of per capita income, the distribution of income, the cost of living and the new employment opportunities created have been ignored. The previous Finance Minister was always keen to show a high growth rate and Central Bank seems to have willingly followed his dictates. For the donor countries a high growth rate was the principal indicator of progress. It is equally significant that these high growth rates have fallen to a more realistic level of 1.5 per cent soon after the departure of former Minister of Finance Ronnie de Mel. People undoubtedly will ask the question whether the high growth rates of the last four years have any thing to do with influence that the Minister has exerted over the Central Bank?

## Per Capita Income

Although the government boasts of high growth rates, one of the most critical indicators of general welfare is the growth rate of per capita income. In 1987, per capita income was at the relatively low level of US \$ 360, and in that year the increase was only 0.1 per cent. Every Annual Report of the Central Bank has revealed a set back to agricultural production each year. Sometimes, the Report says adverse weather conditions or drought has been responsible for the fall in output of one crop, while in the same Report, the fall in output of another crop has been attributed to excessive rainfall. This kind of analysis is found in the 1987 Report. The Reports have never been able to identify the real and the more precise reasons for the fall in output of crops, other than drought. For instance, the 1987 Report says, the output of rubber fell by 11 per cent due to adverse weather. But at the same time it indicates that the output of tea rose by 1 per cent despite adverse conditions. Tea and rubber in Sri Lanka grow in the same or adjacent areas and if weather was favourable for tea to what extent is it likely to be less favourable for rubber?

---

**Is the Annual Report prepared only to boost the ego of the Finance Minister and paint a picture of good economic performance to the donor countries or to show the true state of the economy?**

---

Much of the decline in food crops, particularly paddy, has been attributed to the prevailing unsettled state and violence in the north and the east. However, fish production despite these unsettled conditions, is reported to have increased by 4 per cent in 1987. All Annual Reports have indicated that the momentum in the industrial sector has increased mainly due to the large number of approvals of new projects by the Local Investment Advisory Committee and the Foreign Investment Advisory Committee. However, the conclusion in the Report with respect to progress in industry is based on approvals, the Reports have never given information on the industries that have got off the ground and those that have been non starters. No information is given on the increase in production and the volume of employment generated by these projects. At least the Ministry of Industries, if not the

Central Bank, should keep a tab on these approvals and monitor their progress. It has been found that eventually less than 50 per cent of the industries that are approved every year actually get off the ground. According to the Report the industrial sector has done well and the growth rate has been 8 per cent in 1987, while recording an even higher growth rate of 12 per cent in 1986. However, the Report states that in the public sector industries there was a decline in output of 1 per cent.

## Cost of Living & Unemployment

An important issue in the Report is the annual increase in the cost of living. The Central Bank has not been able to give a single figure which indicated the correct extent of price increase, Conflicting and varying rates of inflation have been given in different Central Bank documents. One Central Bank document The Economic Indicators says that inflation in 1987 was 13 per cent according to the Colombo Consumers Price Index, while the Annual Report says the annual average rates of increases of the Colombo Consumers Price Index was 7.7 per cent in 1987, as compared to 8 per cent in 1985. "However, on a point to point basis (ie. December 1987 over December 1986) the Index increased by 10.2 per cent, reflecting the sharp climb in prices during the closing months of the year." However the Report says "the Wholesale Price Index which recorded successive decreases of 15.2 per cent in 1983 and 2.9 per cent in 1986 respectively, rose by 13.4 per cent in 1987. On a point to point basis ie. (December 1987 over 1986) the Index increased by 13 per cent. However, the Economic Indicators published by the Central Bank gives an increase in the Wholesale Price Index on a point to point basis of 21 per cent.

In regard to employment all Annual Reports in recent years have carried very vague and imprecise information on employment and unemployment. No Annual Report has given accurate employment figures. For instance, the 1987 Report makes the statement that employment in the private sector and that of the public sector decreased marginally in 1987. It does not say how large these increases and decreases have been. Why cannot some comprehensive estimates be given, particularly with regard to the decreasing employment in the private sector? The Report does not give any indication of the magnitude of overall unemployment which is the most critical economic problem in the country and the major cause of all the unrest, and political instability. Why cannot estimates be made on the basis of the unemployment figures from the last Consumer Finance and Socio-Economic Survey



in 1982, taking into account the new entrants to the labour force annually, and by estimating the labour absorptive capacity, annually, of each sector? If an adequate and balanced analysis of employment and unemployment is not made and a realistic cost of living is not published, what is the use of the Annual Report? The question has to be asked is the Annual Report prepared only to boost the ego of the Finance Minister and to paint a picture of good economic performance to the donor countries, or is the object to set out a true and accurate picture of the state of the economy?

#### Exports & Debt Service Ratio

A favourable feature indicated in the 1987 Report has been an increase of the value of exports by 4 per cent in SDR terms, while expenditure on imports has dropped by 4 per cent. As a result, it says, the deficit on the trade account had decreased by 18 per cent in 1987. The better performance of the export sector was mainly due to higher earnings from industrial exports whose share in total exports rose to 49 per cent. Within this sector the export categories that rose were, garments by 34 per cent, from Rs. 9.6 billion to Rs. 12.9 billion and gems which rose from Rs. 755 million to Rs. 1447 million. Total imports were Rs. 60.5 billion compared with Rs. 54.5 billion in 1986. In 1987, private remittances amounted to Rs. 12.2 billion.

Total debt service on the external debt, which includes medium and long term loans, increased in 1987. The debt service ratio, that is the total debt service payments as a ratio of exports of goods and services rose from 26.4 per cent in 1986 to 28.5 per cent in 1987. Including IMF transactions the debt service ratio was 20 per cent in 1987.

#### 1982 as the Base Year

After 1982 the Central Bank has tended to publish in the Annual National Reports national income figures only from the year 1982 onwards. The entire basis of computing national income figures have been revised by making 1982 the base year. This makes the series non comparable with the earlier years. This had been done in order not to give the impression that the GNP has largely increased in money terms and that if the earlier 1970 base year was used and deflated accordingly, it would indeed show that the increase, in real output has been very small. The use of this methodology has tended to make the real growth rates much higher than they should have been. The use of 1982 as the base year has incorporated the impact on the GNP series of unprecedented inflation in the economy. The GNP at current factor cost and at constant prices at Rs. 92.7 billion is the same for the year 1982.

**The pattern of income distribution has got more and more adverse since 1977. If per capita income has fallen or not increased appreciably, there is clear evidence that despite economic growth, the poor have got poorer.**

Between 1982 and 1987, the GNP implicit deflator has shown an increase of 62 points, which is therefore, an increase in prices in a 5 year period of over 62 per cent. The question may be asked why is the Central Bank not publishing figures of GNP at least for the preceding 20 years from 1968 in the issues of the Annual Report after 1982? It is obviously to conceal the colossal inflation that has taken place in the economy because if the GNP is deflated by using 1970 as the base year then total GNP values would be much less. Therefore, the constant per capita increase in the GNP would be much less than it has been shown in the Central Bank Report. If this procedure, which is the correct one, was adopted then the increases in per capita income in real terms after 1982 would show negative values. Although the UNP government, boasts of high rates of growth, the growth rate of GNP per capita at constant prices under the new formula even in 1987 has been unimpressive. In 1983, growth of per capita income was only 2.5 per cent, in 1984 3.9 per cent, in 1985 3.7 per cent, in 1986 2.7 per cent and in 1987 only 0.1 per cent.

The increase in per capita income is indeed a more appropriate measure of the people's welfare. Data has shown that the pattern of income distribution has got more and more adverse since 1977, and in addition to that, if per capita income has fallen, or not increased appreciably then there is clear evidence that despite high rates of economic growth the poor have got poorer. The major factors responsible for the high rate of increase in the Gross National Product in money terms, as compared to the levels in the period before 1977, has been the enormous depreciation of the rupee which has contributed to increase the entire cost structure in the country and the inflationary methods of raising resources for the government budget.

Not only with regard to GNP but the Central Bank, in its publications has been reluctant to publish the past figures in respect of a large number of tables

in the Annual Report particularly for the years before 1978. Even in the table dealing with agricultural crops, tea, rubber, coconut and paddy, production figures for the preceding years have not been included because apparently the former Minister De Mel, who has to impress the aid giving countries and the Bank did not want to show the reader that after 1977 production of all agricultural crops, other than paddy had fallen sharply. The Annual Reports published before 1977 used to carry the figures with respect to all the tables from the fifties and sixties. There is no doubt that this has been done presumably on the direction of the former Minister and the officials of the Ministry of Finance who have joined hand with the Central Bank to conceal data.

A major omission in the Report for 1987 is the real wage rate index of the different categories of employees in the private and the government sectors. Since real wages have fallen the Bank has not thought it fit to publish these figures. The only table in the whole Reports that goes back to the early years is the

table on external assets, where the series begins with the year 1940. These assets have been expressed in rupee terms, but although they have increased in recent years, in constant SDR terms, they have actually declined. The high level of these assets has been due to the heavy depreciation of the rupee by more than 400 per cent in the last 10 year period.

The Central Bank Report should not be made a political document which leaves out a considerable amount of economic and statistical information that is not favourable to the government in power. It should always be objective and carry correct information and data on aspects of the economic situation that vitally affects the people. The Minister in charge should not interfere in the affairs of the Central Bank, but allow the qualified and technically competent men in the Bank to undertake their tasks objectively in the national interest and not in the interests of a power hungry and vain political group that is in power.



## Ronnie's Revelations after Resignation

*Question:* You were the longest serving Finance Minister in Sri Lanka. Did you have any difficulties in keeping the economy moving forward under the UNP's economic policy or was it smooth sailing?

*Answer:* I had great difficulties in controlling the deficit in the budget and the deficit in the current account in the balance of payments.

In short, it was always a struggle; a struggle to control over-expenditure, waste and corruption in some of the high spending ministries. At times, there was also a mixing up of priorities. All the money that was wasted on new buildings and tamashas for example could have been diverted to development and quick employment. There was a preponderance of low gestation projects which did not produce results fast enough. We should have quick gestation employment oriented, export oriented projects in future. We could have done without many of the expensive buildings which we have put up in the last 10 years for example.

*Q:* How long do you think the open economy can be kept going by this Government taking into consideration, the present state of our Reserves?

*A:* Our own reserves are at a very low ebb now due to the continuing high defence expenditure etc., They represent only a few weeks of imports as against the eight months of imports to which I had built them up by 1983. If I had not successfully negotiated the rupees 10,000 million structural adjustment facility and the Compensatory financing facility just before I resigned last year, today the country would have been facing shortages, scarcities and queues even worse than those in the 1970-1977 period because our own reserves cannot finance our essential imports.

The money which I have obtained will be sufficient till the middle of 1989. After the middle of 1989, there is every likelihood that the Government will face scarcities, shortages and queues. If the next instalment of the IMF loans is not available by March next year, with the present trends in the budget and the balance of payments and the present excessive spending by the Government, the IMF may very well withhold the second instalment. If this happens, the entire open economy collapses. I hope it doesn't.

*Q:* What do you think of the 600 million dollars aid obtained at the last aid group meeting in Paris in June by your successor?

*A:* I am very happy that my able Deputy Minister for 10 years obtained 600 million

dollars at the last aid group meeting. But the figures are entirely deceptive.

Only 150 million dollars is new aid while 450 million dollars represents the second instalment on Samanalawewa, Rantambe and various other schemes for which I had already negotiated and obtained aid to cover the scheme as a whole. So this year's aid group really gave Sri Lanka only about 150 million dollars of new aid which is a mere pittance in our present difficulties. In some years in the past, I was able to obtain as much as 1,200 million US Dollars of aid for development work in Sri Lanka. By this time, we should have got well over 1,000 million dollars of new aid if we were to carry on a programme of development which would ensure adequate employment for the youth of this land.

Our growth rate has slumped from over 6% to 1.6% per annum. Inflation has gone up from Zero to over 20%, unemployment which was brought down to 12% has gone up well over 20%. In some districts like Matara, Galle and Kalutara it is 30 percent; even 35 percent. The entire economy will collapse by the middle of next year, if a new Government under a new leadership is not formed by that time.

(Mr. Ronnie de Mel, M.P. in an interview after his recent resignation from the Government Party, in *The Island* of 14th, August).

# Who benefits by this Crime

## Murder of Fr. Chandra Fernando

— Fr. V. Yogeswaren S. J.

The history of Batticaloa, in the years to come, will not forget the eve of the 6th of June 1988, the day Fr. Chandra was brutally gunned down. As he lay dead, covered in his own blood, the body broken and lifeless, one could but remember the words of his Master who at the eve of His death said, 'this is My body broken for you and this is My blood poured out for you for forgiveness and reconciliation; for peace and justice!'

Fr. Chandra as His priest and representative, repeated these very words of his Master at the altar of sacrifice and lived them in his life.

History has the unique character of repeating itself. Looking at the situation and the events that surround Fr. Chandra's death, one cannot but remember the events of Calvary and the God-man Jesus. He lived for the upliftment of his people. He programmed his mission in the words of Isaiah :

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
He has chosen me to bring good news to the poor,  
He has sent me to preach liberty to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to set free the oppressed and  
to announce the salvation of my people."

This God-man Jesus was let down by his own people to whom he preached salvation; he was betrayed by his kith and kin; he was done away with in collusion with the Romans who came to rule and oppress.

The power hungry politicians for whom the event of Calvary was an achievement, went home with the satisfaction of burying the truth. Who is there now to speak of justice, to voice the grievances of the poor, to expose the atrocities done to humanity? We have buried him, never to see him come back.

Again history has the answer. Truth cannot be buried in a tomb. Truth is alive and it speaks more powerfully and loudly than ever. This part of history will repeat in Fr. Chandra's death too. As we wait, the answers will unfold in the events to come.

### Those Wanting Fr. Chandra's Death

In the last few months, the moderate leaders of the Batticaloa district have been eliminated by the interested sections. Mr. Velmurugu, Mr. Ahamed Lebbe and now Fr. Chandra. It is important to note that these three persons stood for reconciliation, dialogue, normalization of the administration before any elections and above all stood for truth and spoke openly of certain incidents that disturbed the community. Recently when the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) soldiers moved into the temple premises in Batticaloa town, it was Fr. Chandra along with the Citizen Committee who insisted that the soldiers be kept out and stated that this may eventually lead to another Golden Temple incident.

Fr. Chandra faced strong opposition in the last few months of his life, the important one being that of asking him to resign his post as President of the Citizen Committee or face death in the event of non-compliance. This threat came from the militant groups who after the Peace Accord surrendered arms and wanted to enter the democratic process. The members of these groups still carry arms, are found in the IPKF camps and sentry posts, and are responsible for many disappearances of arrested persons. These groups are bent on carrying out personal vengeance for the earlier incidents and now cause more disruption and confusion and hindrance to the democratic process.

Another allegation that was hurled against Fr. Chandra was that he was an LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) supporter. One cannot hide certain

facts. During the time when LTTE dominated the Eastern Region, looting the CTB, the Banks, the Municipality, the University etc. and continually harassing the security personnel, it was Fr. Chandra who time and again negotiated, spoke and pleaded to safeguard these institutions. Thanks to his efforts, today all these institutions are capable of functioning. If one were to interpret his yeomen service as pro-LTTE then one has missed an important aspect of the issue, viz. Fr. Chandra's service to the Batticaloa community.

When the Sri Lanka Security forces were in control of Batticaloa, it was Fr. Chandra who spoke on behalf of any person who was arrested irrespective of whatever groups they were suspected of belonging to.

### The Election Factor

The Provincial Council elections are over except for the North and East. The President can confidently tell the world that inspite of the JVP threat in the South he had held elections in the Provinces. The IPKF came into the scene a year ago with the Peace Accord telling the world that they will implement all the clauses of the Accord within three months and form an interim council or hold elections before December 1987. Now, after almost an year, nothing seems to have moved towards elections.

Will there be an election or will there be an interim council or will there be a merger of the North and East? These are vital questions in the mind of every concerned citizen. Everyone knows that without the co-operation of the LTTE nothing can be done or achieved satisfactorily. How the IPKF will tackle the LTTE is anybody's guess. But one thing was firm in the mind of Fr. Chandra and he had expressed it several times. Before anything is realised or achieved there should be normalization and democratization. Normalization for him meant much more than the mere functioning of the hospital, the transport, the kachcheri or the schools. It is the feeling of every citizen in the district that he or she lives and moves about without fear of being abducted, killed, harassed or arrested. This is the assurance that every mother or father expects: that their children who go to school or to work will return safe in the evening. The Batticaloa district does not have this freedom and Fr. Chandra spoke for it and insisted that this should be the top priority. The actions of the IPKF did not contribute to this normalization but enhanced more the terror, fear and suspicion. As long as this situation prevailed, Fr. Chandra questioned how we could have elections or have any councils function. Sure enough some interested factions did not like this thinking or this conscientization process.

### Death and Aftermath

Fr. Chandra's death is a severe blow to the Citizen Committees. They are paralysed by the death of this one man. Their enthusiasm is deflated; morale broken and their members frightened. The ordinary persons with family and dependents will not come forward to stand for truth and speak openly.

Now the people have no one to turn to in time of troubles. Eliminating the Citizen Committees from the scene, it is the groups that work hand in hand with the IPKF that stand to gain. It is they who wanted Fr. Chandra to resign and as an alternative, accommodate them also in the Committee. Fr. Chandra did not comply with either of their demands. Having no one to turn to, people may turn to these groups for favour which, in turn, will become a bargaining point in the event of elections or an interim council being set up.

The IPKF failed to understand that allowing these groups to move freely with arms and ammunition hindered the peace process and any negotiations. The IPKF insisted that the LTTE should lay down arms before any talks. Fr. Chandra expressed his views that allowing the other groups who are bent on taking vengeance, to carry weapons will not help any negotiations. For anyone with a narrow and selfish vision, Fr. Chandra would be a hindrance to his selfish gain.

### The Role of the Church

This is the third Catholic Priest who was shot dead in the recent past. Fr. Bastian of Vankalai, Mannar; Fr. Michael Rodrigo of Buttala, Uva-Vellassa; Fr. Chandra Fernando of Puliyanthivu, Batticaloa. Three isolated voices crying in the wilderness for justice and peace. The loners left alone without any support by the Church to which they belonged while alive and abandoned even in death. The hierarchy is looking on silently at its men being gunned down.

If the Church had backed them, had given them whole-hearted support to their work and mission, today the situation would have been different. The division, the inefficiency, the fear, the minority complex have led to our having to face these deaths. At a time when the Church should be giving leadership and guiding the nation with patriotism, the Church is silent like a spent force with no voice.

This death is again a call from God for the Church to reflect on its role and mission today. Especially the Church in the Eastern Region should take this opportunity to reflect and seek to fill the vacuum created by Fr. Chandra's death before selfishness and power politics take over.

*On June 26th, Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions (CFTU) leader L. W. Panditha was brutally murdered by an unknown killer believed to be linked with insurgent activity in the South. In this article Batty Weerakoon, General Secretary of the Ceylon Federation of Labour (CFL) comments on the dead Union leader's struggle to bring about trade union unity.*

## A Heroic Panditha

and those who did not reach up

— Batty Weerakoon.

The dastardly assassination of L. W. Panditha removes from our midst a heroic protagonist for trade union unity. I say heroic because his more recent efforts at unity and united action were in the face of all odds.

### The Odds Against

The odds were many. Panditha tried to bring together Unions that were divided on live political issues. How, for instance, bring together the SLFP Unions and the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU) on issues as the lifting of the Emergency and the scrapping of the Prevention of Terrorism Act when the SLFP in Parliament was supporting both these measures and the CMU was regularly passing resolutions against them?

The only question — the wages question that could have united them all was taboo. This was so because the CMU within Panditha's 21 Union Committee was secretly

in negotiation on its wages issues with the Employers Federation. The Employers Federation had inherited from its White Masters at least the divide and rule method. When the Committee took up the wages matter with a touch of seriousness, it shrank in numbers from 21 to 19. The CMU dropped out. The other was a JVP organization which was excluded when the JVP turned the National Conference of Delegates (summoned by the Committee) into its own demonstration against the rest of the Committee. The JVP's complaint was that the Committee was no more than a humbugging talk-shop.

The reduced Committee of 19 masqueraded as that of the 21. Of these 3 pairs belonged to three of the political parties in the United Socialist Alliance (USA), and the SLFP had a pair. Of the remainder, barring 3, the rest were mere name boards. This turned out to be Panditha's cross. The 19 could not agree on any issue that bordered

on politics because the USA parties differed radically from the SLFP and the MEP. Panditha and others of the Socialist Alliance had to leave the 19 member fold and come together with other organizations such as the LSSP's Ceylon Federation of Labour (CFL) and the Government Workers Trade Union Federation (GWTUF) and the Government Clerical Service Union (GCSU) on agitation for the restoration of democratic rights, the campaign against terrorism as a political means, and support for the Left in the Provincial Councils election.

### Enter the Doctors

The Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA) led trade union action of medical personnel was a god-send for the stranded 19. Of the medical demands the North Colombo Medical College (NCMC) issue touched the Government's policy of privatisation and the salary issue was a fillip to all

But the 19 refused to decide the question that stared in their faces. Was their own action one in support of the health workers' demands, or were they to act jointly with them on these demands which quite justifiably were also theirs — that is, the privatisation issue and wages?

The 19, together with Unions that supported the medical demands, gave a first day start-off to the health workers' action and slunk back into silence. What was to be the show-piece act of the year disintegrated. The GMOA jettisoned the NCMC issue, forgot their obligations to the Unions in their front, and settled down to negotiating with Ministers on their own salary demand and the privilege of private practice!

The issue of private practice was not earlier divulged to other Unions. When on the eve of the Health Workers' trade union action the CFL wrote to the GMOA seeking clarification of the news-reports that private practice was an issue, it received no reply.

The 19 Union Committee cannot of course complain against the GMOA. They attempted to pass off the GMOA-led action as their own handiwork and baptised its first day as the long awaited National Day of Protest. Here was a ready-made action. Pass it off as their own — that was the thinking. But from this action, the 19 had no result to show to its members'

### The Results

This was the final misalliance regarding joint action in Panditha's life-time. This was all the return to a man who in the interest of joint-action decided to forego the fan-fare normally attendant on Collective Agreement negotiations. When the CMU announced its completed Collective Agreement and CMU activists went behind Panditha's lines trying to attract his membership to the gains of that Collective Agreement, Panditha

too was forced to come to the Employers Federation of Ceylon (EFC) negotiating table. This he knew would embarrass him amongst the 19 and therefore what was done was done in low-key. He had to satisfy his members who were impatient at waiting for the promised Joint-action for wages by the 19, and at the same time he had to keep the 19 going on the promise of Joint action.

This is the price Panditha paid for what the CMU leadership did when whilst in the Committee of 21 it broke ranks to negotiate a Collective Agreement with the EFC on the sly. It is true that the CMU leadership never told the Committee of 21 that the CMU was with it for a wage demand. Then, what the hell were they in it for? one may ask. Political hot-air-a platform for that, would be the answer, for even politically the 21 achieved nothing. These are men who betrayed Panditha and his hopes. They really stabbed him in the back months before the assassin got him. □

### July 1980 Victims

Nearly 5,000 State employees still await re-instatement in their jobs. They are among the 40,000 employees victimised for participating in the General Strike of July 1980. Trade Union pressure both local and international resulted in the great majority being re-employed. There are yet nearly 5,000 who still languish in penury due to loss of employment.

The 8th anniversary of this Strike was observed by Trade Unions recently. Picket-campaigns and meetings were held in principal towns to highlight the capriciousness of the Government and underline the plight of strikers who remain to be re-instated.

### Bata (Cey.) Ltd. and ABMLtd.

A long strike of 2 months and twenty days at Bata (Cey.) Ltd. at Ratmalana resulted in a pay rise of 40% for workers and 60% increase in piece rates for those working on a piece rate basis. The interdiction of 10 workers by the Company

was also lifted unconditionally. It was a great victory for the workers and the militancy displayed by them in a prolonged struggle.

However, the strike at ABM Ltd. also at Ratmalana, which is now over 3 months, remains unsettled. While the Management seems disposed to agree to wage increase it has refused to take back some Union leaders it had dismissed which is also a major demand of the strike.

### Victimisation Sparks Strike Samuel Sons & Co. Corrugated Paper Industries

Workers in these two establishments had to resort to strike action over victimisation of Union members. Both at Samuel Sons and Corrugated Industries the employees were interdicted on alleged grounds of misconduct.

After nearly 3 months of procrastination, the management of Samuels settled the issue at a conference at the Labour Department. In the meanwhile the strike at Corrugated continues. The strike was precipitated by employers' action in interdicting some employees over the issue of transferring workers who work the machines after their day's work had commenced. The Management takes up the position that employees have no legal right to strike on a issue involving employers' prerogative. The Union maintains as the action of the employers is one of victimisation of Union activists the strike action is quite legitimate.

The several interventions of the Labour Department have failed to produce any results and the gates of the Factory remain closed.

### Keppetigala Estate

A strike on the Malabe division of the Keppetigala Estate (Janatha Estates Development Board) at Dodangaslande from June 10th over the treatment accorded to workers by a new Manager resulted ultimately in negotiations arranged by the Labour Department at which the Management agreed to make payment of wages and advances on the due date and without delay during working hours, in in the proper way. Workers who had earlier protested at these delay in payment had their pay packets thrown at them, which they then refused to accept, sparking off the strike on a question of human dignity. They also insisted that they be paid as hitherto on an 8 hour day and on a "piece-rate" basis.

# Re-Thinking Socialism

— Reggie Siriwardena

The 19th Party Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, held in June this year, was preceded by several months of intense debate and controversy in Soviet public life and in the Soviet press. Not inappropriately, Mikhail Gorbachev told a body of foreign correspondents during this period that the whole country had turned into a permanent debating society. The controversial questions erupted into the sessions of the Party Conference itself, which was marked by vigorous confrontation between neo-Stalinist conservatives and reforming radicals. Though it is clear that the latter won out at the conference, it is equally clear that the extent of the ideological differences revealed on the floor of the conference hall as well as outside it means that the struggle between contending camps will go on for some time.

Although I am confident that there is no other road for the Soviet Union to take than that of continuing de-Stalinisation, democratisation and political as well as economic liberalisation, my purpose in this article is not to make out a case for this prognosis. What I wish to do here is to elicit from the Soviet debate two issues that I regard as fundamentally important

not only for the Soviet people but also for socialists everywhere. One of these issues is political — that of the role of the party in a society striving to build socialism. The other is economic — that of the structures appropriate to a socialist economy. (I categorise them, for purposes of exposition, as two issues, though I am conscious that in practice they are inseparable.)

### Role of the Party

The Soviet state began its history with a party in power that had been built on the basis of the Bolshevik doctrine that a single vanguard party was indispensable both to carry through the revolution as well as to guarantee the maintenance of proletarian power after it. It can be argued that the Leninist party was a necessary condition for the victory of the revolution under conditions of Tsarist autocracy. However, the prestige of the Russian revolution, as well as the influence of the victorious Bolshevik party on Communist parties elsewhere, led to the Leninist model being imposed on countries whose political circumstances and traditions were very different from those of Russia. If it is claimed that without a Leninist-style party the Russian and Chinese revolutions would not have triumphed, we

should take note of the several revolutions since 1949 that were not led by a single vanguard party, as well as those that have been aborted by parties claiming for themselves a vanguard role.

However, even in the Soviet Union the dangers of the assumption that a single party was the necessary vehicle of historical progress manifested themselves after the revolution. It would be possible to quote dozens of passages from Stalin on the sacrosanct character attributed to the vanguard party, but it will be more revealing to quote Trotsky. This is what Trotsky said at the 13th Party Congress 1924, when asked (on this occasion by Zinoviev) to recant his criticisms since he was in a minority:

Comrades, none of us wishes to be or can be right against the party. In the last instance the party is always right, because it is **the only historic instrument which the working class possesses for the solution of its fundamental tasks**. I know that one ought not to be right against the party. One can be right only with the party and through the party because history has not created any other way for the realization of one's rightness. The English have the saying 'My country, right or wrong'. With much greater justification we can say 'My party, right or wrong — on certain partial, specific issues or at certain moments.' (Quoted from Isaac Deutscher, **The Prophet Armed**, p. 139; emphasis in original.)

It is significant that even Trotsky, the future heretic, could concede only the possibility of the party being wrong on specific issues or at certain moments, while clinging

with steadfast faith to the fundamental rightness of the party as the sole bearer of historical destiny. The perils of this doctrine were to be demonstrated with manifest and tragic force during the Stalin era, and among its victims were to be the two protagonists in the exchange to which I have just referred — Trotsky and Zinoviev themselves.

It was an easy passage from the infallibility of the party to the infallibility of the party majority (for if the party is the necessary instrument of history, the majority within that party must also have a similar status). But from this in turn it is easy to proceed to the infallibility of the leadership set up by that majority, and then to the infallibility of 'the great and beloved leader and teacher' who incarnates the will of the party. Thus the stage is set for the creation of the monolithic party, the suppression of dissent, and the use of terror to stamp out any and every opposition.

Many Western liberals have, argued that from the time the Bolsheviks banned other parties, a dictatorial development was inevitable in the Soviet Union. But I would say that it was not simply the monopoly of power by a single party that led to the Stalin dictatorship, but the wielding of that monopoly by a leadership convinced with absolute certainty of its correctness, its exclusive possession of the truth, and its legitimacy as the sole bearers of the revolutionary historical mission. It is these convictions that made possible such cataclysms as Stalin's forced collectivisation, or elsewhere, the depopulation of the Kampuchean cities under Pol Pot, where a course decided on as historically necessary and right was carried through, regardless of the enormous human cost.

I have often thought that Marxist leaderships in power should have

at their side somebody who would repeat from time to time the equivalent of Cromwell's appeal to the Presbyterian elders: "I, beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible that you may be mistaken." The analogy is appropriate for the Presbyterian elders were as certain that they were the elect chosen by God as Communist leaders have been that they were the instruments of history.

Stalin and Pol Pot exemplify the tragic and horrific consequences of the faith in the infallibility of the single vanguard party. At other points in the Marxist political spectrum we have its comic counterpart, which we know so well from Sri Lankan experience. That is the phenomenon of miniscule Trotskyist or Maoist sects, each of which can probably count its members on the fingers of a person's hands, but each convinced of its monopoly of political correctness, and turning out on worn-out typewriters and creaking duplicating machines the programme or theoretical declaration that is believed to be the sole repository of Marxist truth.

Whether in its tragic or its comic forms, the belief in the monopoly of the correct doctrine by a single party has made for blinkered minds, for the stagnation of thought, for the supersession of original and innovative thinking by mechanical and slavish orthodoxy.

The founding fathers of Marxism prided themselves on their scientific approach to socialism (hence Engel's classic, *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*). But as Marxism became not merely an intellectual theory but a mass movement, it took on aspects which brought it closer to the condition of a religious dogma than that of a science. These tendencies were present even before Stalin, but they were, not unnaturally, consummated under Stalin, the ex-seminarian. However,

they were not confined to Stalinism or to the mainstream Communist parties. Just as religious orthodoxies tend to stamp something of their character even on heresies which break away from them so not only Stalinism but also dissident ideologies like Trotskyism and Maoism became closed and exclusive orthodoxies, inimical to fresh thinking and innovation. The characteristics common to all these Marxist parties during the last few decades have been seen in the sacred character attached to texts of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the scriptural bases of polemics and controversy, the fervour with which heresies were denounced and persecuted, and most clearly, in the branding of 'revisionism' as a mortal sin. For what can be more alien to the scientific temper than the exclusion of that constant testing of theory against empirical reality and the readiness to discard what will no longer stand up — in short, that perpetual revisionism, that science requires? No physicist would have rejected Einstein simply on the ground that he had revised Newton. The untrammelled critical spirit, the constant re-examination of theory, is all the more vital in a scientific examination of society, where the object we are trying to deal with is constantly changing. It is time to recognise that Marxism cannot be a body of dogmas but must be treated as a set of tools for social analysis, and that if one of them has become blunt or rusted, it must be thrown away and replaced by another.

One great importance of the current Soviet debate is that it has undermined the assumptions of the infallibility of the party. The revelations regarding the crimes committed under Stalin, as well as the corruptions and abuses of the Brezhnev era, make it simply impossible to believe any longer that the party must always be right. With the shattering of that belief,



the dogma of the monolithic party too has gone. For if the party and the party leadership can be wrong, then clearly the only insurance against error is open and free debate. What is replacing the doctrine of the monolithic party in current Soviet political discourse is the concept of 'socialist pluralism'. This implies the recognition of the right to, and indeed the need for, a diversity of contending views, but within the framework of socialism. But who decides what views are compatible with socialism and what are not, and by what criteria? Of course, present-day authority may have its own formulas for this purpose. But we have seen in the eight months between the 70th anniversary and the 19th Party Conference that the boundaries have been steadily shifting: what was thought impermissible to be said or printed then can be said or printed now. Ultimately, the limits of socialist pluralism will be determined not by any authority but by the evolving dynamics of Soviet society.

One issue that will become central in this process is that of the relative roles of the party and of people outside it. Because Gorbachev himself as a reformer faces the problem of resistance from entrenched interests in the party bureaucracy, he has initiated changes which will reduce the dominating roles of the party — giving, for instance, increased weight to the Soviets as representative of people's interests. But quite apart from these initiatives at the top, there has been pressure from below, in the form of the numerous citizens' groups of various kinds — political, cultural, ecological etc. — which are outside the party but which have become articulate in the Soviet press and public life, even staging public demonstrations that would have been unthinkable some time ago. One example of the way in which they have been able to get

results is the proposal to build a memorial to Stalin's victims. It was first mooted by people's groups who began circulating a petition and even collecting money for the memorial. 30,000 people ultimately signed the petition. Then Gorbachev supported the idea at the Party Conference, and ultimately the Politbureau approved it.

The question naturally arises: How is socialist pluralism reconcilable with a single-party system? One has to recognise that even the differences that exist at present between conservatives and radicals could form the basis for the emergence of more than one party. However, it is unlikely that such a development will take place in the near future. What will happen for the present is growing diversity of opinion within the party and increasing freedom for the expression of that diversity, as well as the steadily more active participation of non-party opinion in public life and affairs.

### Economic Structures

I turn now to the great economic changes that are accompanying the political reforms in the Soviet Union.

The economic theory and practice of the Soviet Union for the last six decades in effect equated socialism with statification. In the light of these sixty years of experience, there are two crucial issues that arise:

1. Is total centralised State control of the economy compatible with political freedom?
2. Does total centralised State control of the economy make for productivity and efficiency?

I have chosen my terms advisedly. For what I am raising is not the Western liberal contention that political freedom or efficiency requires a proportion of capitalist private enterprise. The issue for socialists

is whether non-capitalist ownership requires that property must necessarily be State-owned, and even where it is, should it be centrally regulated? For the Soviet Union these have become vital questions. I would say that these issues can be illuminated by two familiar, Marxist concepts. One is the concept of an economic base and a political (as well as ideological) superstructure. The experience of the Soviet Union shows that on the basis of a total central State regulation of the economy, you cannot have a pluralist political superstructure. The other Marxist concept which is relevant is that of the contradiction which can arise between the forces of production and the relations of production. I would say that such a contradiction had arisen in the Soviet Union, because bureaucratised State control had become a fetter on the growth of the forces of production. By the beginning of the 1980s at least, the Soviet economy had begun to stagnate.

The present economic reforms are designed to meet both sets of problems. At present the Soviet economy is passing through a transitional stage between the old forms and the new. So what I am going to describe is not the Soviet economy as it exists at present, but the structure that will come into being some time early in the 1990s, when, hopefully, the economic reforms will have been completed. There will then be four sectors in the economy:

1. **State enterprises.** Of these, certain strategic industries (e.g., those vital for defence, certain heavy industries) will be centrally planned and regulated. But all other State-owned enterprises (70% of them, according to estimates) will be autonomously run by managements elected by their workers. They will determine what they are to produce, they will buy their own raw materials from other

enterprises; they will fix their own prices, using the mechanisms of the market; and they will be financially self-sufficient.

**2. Co-operative enterprises.** These will be co-operatively run by groups of producers, managing their own affairs, marketing their products and sharing the profits. At present there is a strong emphasis on re-generating co-operatives and giving them autonomous life. There is a new law on co-operatives designed to give them greater freedom of activity, and co-operatives are being encouraged to enter into production contracts which will enable them even to compete with state enterprises.

**3. Small family enterprises.** These for a long time existed on the margin of legality and have now been legalised. This means that a family can run a small enterprise, whether agricultural or artisan, where the producers are all family members, again sharing the profits.

**4. Self-employing individuals.** These are mainly people offering services, e.g. repairing TV or radio sets.

In none of these four sectors, it will be noted, will capital-wage labour relationships obtain. They will be non-capitalist forms of economic activity but, as far as possible, non-statified. Present-day Soviet thinking, not only within the leadership but also among economists and among wide sections of ordinary citizens, regards these changes as making for both greater productivity and greater social freedom than the old bureaucratic models of a centrally controlled economy. In Sri Lanka, too, most socialists have tended to assume unthinkingly that socialism means necessarily the State ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange. It will be useful for us in this sphere too to study the Soviet experience and assimilate its lessons.

**Leon Trosky, co-leader with Lenin of the October Revolution and founder of the Red Army, who fought Stalin, was exiled from Russia and later murdered in Mexico.**



# A Call to Moscow

— Estaban Volkov Bronstein

The original idea of socialism in its empirical form and later in its most articulate and scientific form, that is to say, Marxism, arose in response to the social conditions of exploitation, injustice and alienation of the human being. These conditions, which have prevailed in all societies accounted for by history and have taken their most sophisticated and extended forms in capitalist society, still persist unfortunately in post-capitalist and pre-socialist societies with their satisfied economies under bureaucratic dominion.

The first triumphant Marxist revolution took place on this planet approximately 70 years ago. This triumph, based on the uprising of the Russian workers and peasants, was directed successfully by the Bolshevik Party, which was headed by men of great talent, boldness and indomitable faith in the socialist cause: Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev,

The monopoly and the centralization of power in the hands of the Bolshevik leadership, which previously had been a key element in the victory of the revolution, later opened the door for Stalin to establish and consolidate his dictatorship. In addition, there was the isolation of the revolution, the depoliticization and exhaustion of the masses, the weakening of the revolutionary leadership as a result of Lenin's death together with the fact that Trotsky was surrounded by the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy.

## The Stalin Era

Stalin created the most implacable dictatorship and tyranny known in modern history, betraying the foundations and principles of Marxism. Instead of using the truth as a battering ram and revolutionary weapon, he imposed lies and falsification of history as his "modus operandi."

*In the nineteen thirties by means of a monstrous legal frame-up known as the Moscow Trials, Stalin had the most prominent leaders of the Party and Soviet State — Lenin's closest comrades-in-arms sentenced to death and executed.*

*The de-Stalinization policy followed by the Russian Government under Gorbachev has now resulted in the declaration that the following leaders were innocent of the charges on which they were convicted and executed; Bukharin, Rykov and Rakovsky (1938 Trial), Radek and Piyatakov (1937 Trial) and Zinoviev and Kamanev (1936 Trial). The chief accused at these frame-up trials Leon Trotsky who was charged in absentia has not yet been rehabilitated.*

*We reproduce below the speech made by Esteban Volkov Bronstein a grandson of Trotsky at a meeting in March that called for the restoration of the accused to their rightful place in history as Lenin's collaborators in the October Revolution and the founding of the Soviet State.*

Instead of abolishing the exploitation of man by man, he sent from 10 to 15 million Soviet citizens to work as slaves in Siberian work camps.

Instead of a respectful and comradely treatment of Lenin's Bolshevik companions, he set up a monstrous parody of justice with his Moscow Trials frame-ups, as a result of which most of them were executed in the basement of Lubyanka or exiled to Siberia. Two years later, Leon Trotsky, the organizer of the Red Army and close collaborator of Lenin, was also murdered in Mexico City by a GPU agent. For "the dictatorship of the proletariat" he substituted "the dictatorship over the proletariat," penetrating and invading every area of Soviet life with an absurd and asphyxiating bureaucratic control. So that now, 70 years after the October Revolution, the Soviet Union is still trailing behind the rest of the industrial world in many scientific and technical fields as well as in housing and the general standard of living of its citizens.

And as a grand finale, he committed high treason against his own country, the land of Lenin, when in his paranoia, he decapitated the Red Army by executing its most experienced and brilliant generals and officers only a short

time before the Nazi invasion, putting the survival of the Soviet Union in peril. The list of Stalin's crimes is too long and varied to waste more time on.

It is shameful for humankind, that in our time, we have had to witness political regimes such as Stalin's. They have to be openly denounced and wiped out of any future page of history.

If Gorbachev and his leadership really want to succeed in achieving **perestroika** (restructure) and **glasnost** (openness) and return to the road of authentic socialism, it is a **sine qua non** that light should be cast on all of the crimes of the Stalinist era. All the names of the innocent victims have to be made known and must be cleared. The historical truth must be re-established. Among this long list of victims, we have to emphasize once more the indomitable Russian revolutionary and Marxist theorist Leon Trotsky. He was a key protagonist in the triumph of the Russian Revolution and afterwards he became its fiercest defender in a deadly fight against the Stalinist counter-revolution. Leon Trotsky became the most calumniated and persecuted revolutionary of the planet. Until now, **glasnost** has not succeeded to free him from all these calumnies and neither has it allowed the publication of his writings and

free discussion of them inside the Soviet Union.

Leon Trotsky will show us how far **glasnost** will advance. The avalanche of lies, falsifications and calumnies that have covered the Soviet Union and the other Communist countries for more than half a century have to be exposed and eliminated forever! Free and open discussion has to be re-established as it was at the beginning of the Bolshevik Party.

In history there is little place for experimentation. Most of the events have to be solved as they occur. That's when one understands the extraordinary force and richness of the open, direct and violent polemics that took place within the ranks of the Bolsheviks during Lenin's time, when ideas emerged as incandescent iron ingots which were impetuously hammered out by the blacksmiths of the revolution, forging the tools for its victory. This was the great secret of the Bolsheviks' strength and success. The mediocrity of Stalin's court of adulation came later.

#### **No Magic Formula**

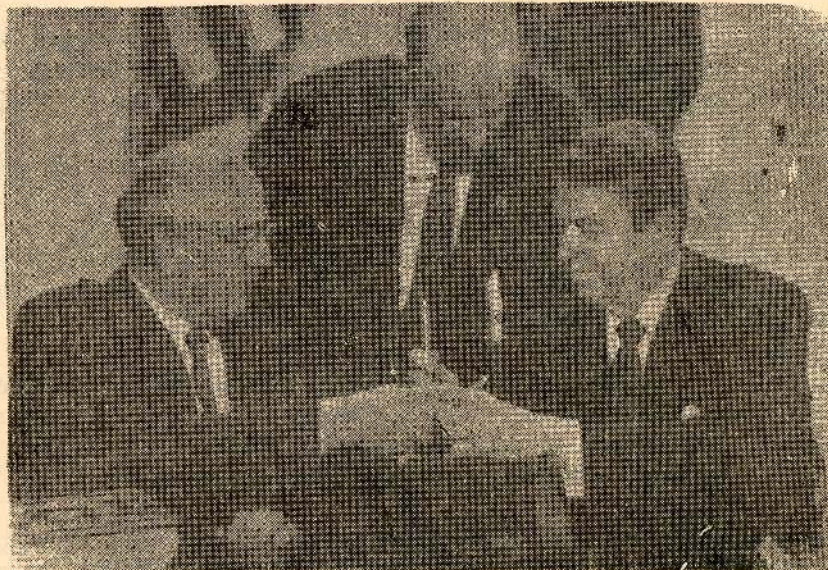
The last pages of history have shown us that the abolishment of private property over the means of

production is not a magic formula that will automatically take humanity into an earthly paradise. A second element of great importance to reach socialism is the solution of the equation of power. The same as property, it has to be shared by all the working sector of society. If the power is only in the hands of one social group, chances are that this group will sooner or later keep the best and the most of what society offers and will not have very much concern about what is left over for the remaining groups. The third important factor is to establish an adequate level of abundance, which will permit the fulfilment of all human needs. Scarcity will always generate satisfaction of society with inequalities on a national and international scale. The fourth factor will be the prevailing of internationalism. Socialism behind national borders will always be a potential source of conflicts and wars.

Man came out of the cave semi-naked. He has reached the moon, has freed the energy of the atom, developed the supercomputer and has created the new science of genetic engineering. Is he then unable to create a more just and harmonic social organization on this earth? Or has human history reached its last page?

Until the present, the train of history has not reached its final destination: authentic socialism. It has to make a previous stop in an inhospitable desert. Fortunately, little by little, the train is resuming its forward motion.

Courtesy: **Workers Vanguard**  
(U.S.A.) 22 April.



## Reagan - Gorbachev Peace Talks

The unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing adopted by the Soviet Union followed by meetings in Geneva Reykjavik, Washington and now most recently in Moscow between US and Soviet leaders in efforts to scale down nuclear armaments can be said to be a result of the widespread anti-nuclear and anti-war people's movement that has been gathering momentum and wide acceptability in many parts of the world including the United States. It also reflected a radical change in Soviet Policy on the role of Nuclear armaments and war.

While we can therefore welcome this "de-escalation" of conflict in the interests of the peoples of the world who have been faced with the threat of a nuclear holocaust, it would be naive for us to have illusions that the treaties entered into can guarantee permanent peace between the USA and the USSR representing as they do fundamentally counterposed social systems.

We would do well to remember the aggressive nature of US im-

perialism and the fact that Reagan himself came to power committed to reinvigorating the self-same imperialism in the wake of its humiliating defeat in Vietnam by "rolling back Communism" through a series of interventions around the globe. But apart from taking little Grenada militarily, it has fortunately been a flop.

However the ill-advised Soviet adventure in Afghanistan was able to provide US imperialism with an excellent opportunity to divert the attention of the masses from its own aggressive policies and the crisis of the capitalist world. There is no doubt of course that the Afghan people needed to achieve liberation from their age-long domination by most reactionary and obscurantist forces. But this liberation was a task for the Afghan masses themselves through their own struggles. Genuine liberation could hardly be introduced by "armed missionaries" from outside and exported in Soviet tanks and armoured cars. That this can only complicate and confuse matters further, besides also giving the Sov-

fet Union a bad name, is a bitter lesson that can be learnt from the Afghan adventure.

Meanwhile the Democratic Presidential contender in the United States Michael Dukakis has blurted out the long-standing US policy for an atomic first strike when he proclaimed he was "prepared to use nuclear force" first against Soviet armies in Europe. The only guarantee of permanent peace on our planet therefore is the overthrow of imperialism and the socialist transformation of soc-

iety by the working people. Nuclear weapons in the hands of Reagan and his class only lend more urgency to the need for such a social transformation before they blow up the world.

This is not to decry the need for pacts and treaties to scale down the conflict but these would appear to be helpful only in obtaining a respite, given the fundamental nature of the contradiction between the two social systems represented by the USA and the USSR. However praise worthy the policy of

"peaceful co-existence" sought to be pursued by the Soviet Union might therefore be, would this policy in the long run be feasible in the light of the dismal record of US imperialism and other capitalist powers in history? practically of course it must be accepted as the only course open to a nation committed to would peace and nuclear disarmament since the alternative would be mutual confrontation and a return to the "cold war".

## Reagan's Star Wars

Is this the Age of Aquarius after all? Reagan's Jupiter may align with Mars if the moon's in the seventh house, but it sure isn't love that's steering the stars in the White House these days. Salvos of devastating revelations have already been fired by ex-courtiers, scribbling their memoirs while scrambling to avoid indictments. Now embittered ex-chamberlain Donald T. Regan's *For the Record* has dropped the latest bombshell on the White House:

*"Virtually every major move or decision the Reagans made during my time as White House chief of staff was cleared in advance with a woman in San Francisco who drew up horoscopes to make certain that the planets were in a favourable alignment for the enterprise."*

The astrologer's influence included casting star charts to determine when Reagan should sign agreements with Gorbachev. She even set the timing of the upcoming Moscow summit! According to Don Regan, her warnings of "bad days" for public activity were what made the president clam up for months after the first Iran/Contra revelations hit the news.

"At least this astrologer isn't as kooky as the last one," Deaver explained to Regan when he took over trying to schedule presidential activities in line with the planets. But it wasn't easy for the poor astrologer, either. Nancy Reagan testily complained to Don Regan about

revisions in the president's schedule, "I wish you'd make up your mind. It's costing me a lot of money, calling up my Friend with all these changes." As somebody wrote the *New York Times*, the whole thing is giving astrology a bad name. The day after the "zodiac factor" hit the news, Reagan made a speech in Chicago mentioning space invaders, saying "I've often wondered, what if all of us in the world discovered that we were threatened by a power from outer space, from another planet?"

The latest tidbits from rats deserting the White House bunker have a familiar ring; indeed many have made the obvious analogy to that other imperial couple, the weak Tsar of All the Russias and his scheming, strong-willed Tsarina, who ran the court through "Our Friend," the mad monk Rasputin. Trotsky's portrait of the Romanovs in *The History of the Russian Revolution* evokes eerie parallels to Reagan hob-nobbing with Ollie North and the terrorist *contras*.

A similar atmosphere of lunacy, emanated from Hitler's bunker in the last days of his empire, as William Shirer pointed out in *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. As bombs were falling and the Red Army was advancing to liberate Berlin, Goebbels "sent for two horoscopes, which were kept in the files of one of Himmler's multitudinous 'research' offices." Results of both Hitler's horoscope and that of the Weimar Republic amazingly buoyed the mad Fuhrer, revealing that Germany would have a hard time in April 1945, but "starting in 1948 she would rise again". Too late for Hitler, it was under NATO that German imperialism revived!

Knowing they're stuck wit Reagan for another eight months, the more "responsible" media and politicians are hastening to pooh-pooh all the scandal, dismissing astrology as merely a "charming" eccentricity. Why, they do it in Russia, too, the *New York Times* (14 May) wrote in a front-page story, no doubt with the Moscow summit in mind. The more far-sighted guardians of the American bourgeoisie are not at all amused by the "kiss and tell" books; after Iran/Contra, "damage control" was messy enough, and more leaks about how they've got a total idiot as their commander in chief isn't going to help restore confidence in the declining American empire.

Maybe millions of Americans do look at their horoscope after reading the comics in the daily paper, secretaries visit fortune tellers for lunch-hour fun, New Age Colorado entrepreneurs try to bend forks with mental power. But most people get pretty worried when they see the most powerful leader of the Western World, who's got his finger on the nuclear button, staring off at the stars.

The real danger of this regime is not so much that a couple of lunatics in the White House think the stars guide their destiny, but that the imperialists are prepared to plunge the world into nuclear holocaust against the USSR in order to defend the profound irrationality of the capitalist profit system.

And this loony's got the bomb. His real "Star Wars" plans, all the ridiculous bombast about an "impenetrable protective shield" aside, are geared toward a nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union. Reagan believes in the Biblical prophecy of "Armageddon" in our time.

Courtesy: *Workers Vanguard* (USA)  
May 20 (excerpts)



□

# Fundamentalism must be exposed

## God Still Speaks !

— Canon Edward Charles

More than 30 centuries ago, at the foot of a raging volcano, there gathered a people ablaze with an electrifying new confidence, based on their astonishing escape from Egypt, the world's greatest empire.

Over and over again, in good times and ill, they were to turn back in memory to that time, when God decisively worked on their behalf. Their prophets also told them that he would still support them in the future, if they were faithful to the covenant he made with them at the Holy Mount.

### Four forward - looking faiths of humanity

This belief in an active, saving God was bequeathed by Judaism to Christianity, with its belief in God's coming Kingdom; to Islam whose compassionate God will vindicate the prophets and accomplish 'what he has in hand'; also, disguised as historical materialism, to Marxism, with its envisaged classless society, when true human history will begin.

These are four great, forward-looking faiths of humanity, which still provide a basic long-range hope in the face of immediate defeats and disappointments.

### Four backward - looking distortions of faith

But, alas, there are some who tell us that God has now ceased speaking as he once spoke in the Bible, Koran or even Capital; for every word in these holy books must now be taken quite literally as determining the fixed course of history and there is nothing anyone can do to alter it. This is fundamentalism and it defaces all these faiths in different ways

#### Jewish fundamentalism

Jewish fundamentalists are better known as Zionists. They quote the letter of their scriptures to the effect that God now allows them the exclusive control and even ownership of all their ancient land, so they need show little regard for Arabs, whose ancestors have lived there for centuries.

#### Christian fundamentalism

Christian fundamentalists also concentrate on the Holy Land, notably the ancient hill site of Megiddo, the place of Armageddon, where the forces of a war-like Jesus will destroy those of Gog and Magog (the Soviet Union and allies). This will involve the destruction of humanity and indeed of the planet, as foretold in Ezekiel 38/39 and Revelation 18 and 19,

which they readily accept. For born-again Christians will be 'raptured', caught up out of the chaos to be ever with the Lord, who will then return to rule the earth (or what there is left of it, we might add!).

In the homes of the United States, fundamentalist programmes are watched regularly, funded liberally and no doubt believed by an estimated 40 percent of the people (Nielsen Survey, 1985, quoted by Grace Halsell in *Prophecy and Politics*). Devotees include powerful figures right up to the President himself, who often proclaims that 'this could be the generation that sees Armageddon'. This belief clearly influences his policies, for Armageddon cannot take place in a world disarmed and the Russians are the God-given, unalterable enemy. Also, why worry about balancing the budget, still less conservation - preserving things for future generations when everything is going to come to a fiery end with this one?

Thus we see that the man to whom the western world is entrusting the awful responsibility of a finger on the button might well believe that it is God's will that he should press it and thereby hasten Christ's Second Coming. Truly we need to pray for his advisers, but not less for ourselves, for allowing any fallible human being to wield such inhuman power.

Fortunately, however, there are other influences such as the worldwide peace movement, which may yet prevail.

#### Moslem fundamentalism

Moslem fundamentalists offer paradise to those who die in Holy War. They are well-known everywhere, due to the heroic fanaticism

of young Iranians. They provide religious sanction to feudal structures and the continued subjugation of women. In Morocco also, while alcohol is forbidden as instructed by the Koran, there is a flourishing drug traffic, not forbidden by the prophet, for it didn't then exist!

### Marxist fundamentalism

Marxist fundamentalism has had less time to develop, but can already be found in countries with communist governments. These all, except Albania, have constitutions which forbid discrimination because of either religious belief or non-belief. But there are some zealots who reason that, since, Marx said that 'religion is the opium of the people', they have a duty to bend the law to prevent the people being exposed to it, for example in the teaching of the young.

Such fundamentalists are likely to recede in influence as the Gorbachev reforms spread more widely. They do not prevent the great majority of church people from worshipping openly and at peace. But they have caused anguish to a number of conscientious Jews and Christians.

### Fellowship of those who build the earth

The common factor of all these fundamentalisms is TINA, 'There is no Alternative', no overcoming of the oppressions and confrontations of the present, the unresolved hostility of different races and creeds or the mad rush to the nuclear, precipice. They deflect attention from the real tasks of the age, the overcoming of global poverty and starvation and the blind injustice of the established market forces. They must therefore be exposed

by all who believe in the liberating power of true faith, by those who experience what Teilhard de Chardin called 'the fellowship of those who build the earth'.

These are to be found in all the great religions and philosophies. Among them Christians have a particular duty to combat the, tyranny of the past, for Jesus insisted that we must adapt old truths to present needs: 'It was said by them of old time...but I tell you... "The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth".' The tense is future, as is the goal and purpose of all creation, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, for which his followers are to pray and work.

Courtesy: **Christian Socialist (UK)**  
Winter 1987/88



## Definitions of "Fundamentalism"

Generally, "fundamentalists", refers to people who live according to a literal interpretation of the Bible and accept Jesus as their personal saviour.

In the early 1900's the word "fundamentalism" was born among Protestants to describe the reaction of some Protestants against a growing "liberalism", within the ranks. That "liberalism" was closely connected to the onset of modern biblical criticism that is, biblical scholarship based on historical, contextual understandings.

That reaction grew during the 1920s, said Dr. Howard Ervin an American Baptist minister and professor of Old Testament at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Self-described fundamentalists then broke away from the parent denominations — Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, Northern Baptists, Episcopalians, and others —

to practice a strict, literal interpretation of the Bible in independent churches.

"Today they feel that the liberals are those that have strayed from a traditional, evangelical orthodoxy," Ervin said.

Nowadays, Fundamentalism is not unique to Protestant spin-off sects, but can reflect almost any "doctrinal or ideological orthodoxy" including political militancy.

Robert McAfee Brown, theologian and writer, describes fundamentalists as "conservative, right-wing, individualistically oriented, and deathly opposed to "liberalism" particularly where those fundamentalists are active in the political arena. He further points out that for fundamentalists "sins" are personal — evil hearts and wicked imaginations — and rarely include the evils of social structures.

Richard Yao, the co-founder of Fundamentalists Anonymous,

a U. S. organization designed to help ex-fundamentalists readjust to society, describes fundamentalism in terms of a mind-set. "Everything is black and white, control-oriented, us-against-them, all-or-nothing. Fundamentalism is authoritarian, intolerant, compulsive about controlling every aspect about one's life."

Mark Mathews, writing in the *National Christian Reporter* (U.S.A.) points out, however, that "people should recognize the presence of a strong movement of 'fundamentalist liberalism' within the church. It is difficult for Christians who consider themselves as enlightened, progressive, and inclusive, to admit to themselves that they may be just as unloving and judgemental as those fundamentalists on the 'right' wing."

"Liberal fundamentalism", Mathews goes on to say, "is a reality in many of the structures of mainline churches. In either case, we need to use the label with care and avoid stereotyping. Fundamentalism is an attitude that claims an absolute truth, fails to accept dissent from that truth, and fails to look at issues in depth" □

# Ronald Reagan's Religion

## The Background

Clyde Ingerson Scofield was born in Michigan in 1843. Scofield had an innate end-of-the-world bent which was reinforced by an Anglo-Irish divine named John Helson Darby, who "taught that God had two plans and two groups of people with whom to work. Israel was God's kingdom here on earth and the Church (Christianity) was God's heavenly kingdom".

Eager to shed light, Mr. Scofield then sat down and rewrote the Bible so that we could all share in the bad news. In 1909, he published the first Scofield Reference Bible. Since then many millions of copies have been (and are being) sold of his mock-Bible.

Essentially, the Scofield exegesis is both Manichean (material world evil, spirit good; therefore, man cannot live at peace, is flawed, doomed) and Zoroastrian (Anura Mazda, the wise Lord, defeats the evil Ahriman at the end of "the time of long dominion"). During the last but one dispensation, Christ will defeat the anti-Christ at Armageddon, 55 miles north of Tel Aviv.

Just before the battle, the Church will be wafted to heaven and all the good folks will experience "rapture" as Scofield calls it. The wicked will suffer horribly. Then after seven years of "burying the dead" (presumably there will be survivors) God returns, bringing peace and joy, and the raptured ones.

The gospel according to Scofield is preached daily by such American television divines as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Jimmy Swaggart, Jim Bakker, et al; and according to a Yankelovich poll (1984), 39 per cent of the American people believe in the death of earth by nuclear fire; and rapture. Among the 39 per cent is Ronald Reagan.

In 1985, Grace Halsell went on a Falwell old time gospel hour tour of the Holy land. If any of the good Christians on this tour expected to gaze upon Bethlehem and Nazareth, where their God's son was born and lived, they were doomed to disappointment.

These trips have only one purpose: to raise money for Falwell and Israel, under the guise of preparing the pilgrims for the approaching Armageddon. At Halsell's request, her group finally met one nervous, taciturn local Christian. Muslims were ignored. On the other hand, there were constant briefings by Israelis on their military might.

The Falwell indoctrination is, relentlessly, the imminent end of the world, the ambiguity of the role of the Jews (why won't they convert?), and the importance of the state of Israel whose invention in 1948 and victories in 1967 were all foretold, most excitingly, by Scofield: exciting because dispensationalists can never be sure which dispensation they happen to be living in. Is this the one that will end in Armageddon? If so, when will the seven years be up and the fireworks start?

As Halsell and group gaze upon Armageddon, an innocent rural countryside, one of her companions fills her in on the meaning of it all. Reverently, he quotes St. John: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

When she inquires what this neutral sentence has to do with a final battle between Christ and anti-Christ, she gets a barrage of bronze age quotes: "The cities of the nation fell...and every island fled away and the mountains were not found." Ezekiel. Apparently, the Euphrates then dries up and the anti-Christ himself (your gussed it, Gorbachev) crosses into Israel to do battle with the Lord, who comes down from heaven, with a "great shout" (played by Charlton Heston-*once again* Ronald Reagan is, in Jack Warner's phrase, the star's "best friends").

The Lord and the Americans win hands down, thanks to SDI and the B-1 bomber and the 14th regiment calvary from Des Moines, Iowa, and a number of Republican elephants who happen to have strayed onto the field, trumpeting free enterprise, as the Lord requires.

Dispensationalists delight in the horror of this crucial (pun intended) battle, as

predicted so gloatingly by Ezekiel: "Torrential rains and hailstone, fire and brimstone a great shaking in the land...every kind of terror". But it is sly, prescient old Zechariah, eye glued to that bronze age crystal ball, who foretells atomic weapons: "Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet (Hiroshima, mon assassin), and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume in their mouth."

What about the Jews? asked Halsell. Since they won't be with Gorbachev (a.k.a. Gog and Magog), what happens to them? The answer is stern: "Two-thirds of all the Jews living here will be killed..." she asks, why, if the Jews are His chosen people, as the dispensationalists believe? The answer glows with charity: "He's doing it mainly for his ancient people, the Jews...He devised a seven-year tribulation period mainly to purge the Jews, to get them to see the light and recognise Christ as their saviour was... Don't you see? God wants them to bow down before His only son, who is our Lord Jesus Christ." Anyway, forget the Jews because many, many other people will also be exterminated so that Christ may come again, in peace.

## In Rapture with Reagan

On September 20, 1970, an evangelical Christian, George Otis, and several like minded folk visited Reagan when he was Governor of California. They spoke rapturously of rapture. Then, according to Otis, they all joined hands in prayer and Otis prophesied Reagan's coming election to the presidency. According to Otis ("Visit with a King") Reagan's arms "shook and pulsated" during this prophecy. The next summer (June 29, 1971) Reagan asked Billy Graham to address the California legislature; afterwards, at a lunch, Reagan asked Graham, "Well, do you believe that Jesus Christ is coming soon, and what are the signs of his coming if that is the case?" Graham did not beat about the burning bush. "The indication", he said, "is that Jesus Christ is at the very door."

Later, in 1971, Governor Reagan attended a dinner where he sat next to James Mills, the president of the California state senate. Mills was so impressed by the dinner conversation that he wrote it all down immediately afterwards, but published it much later (*San Diego Magazine*, August 1985), *pro bono publico*, if a bit late.



After the main course the lights dimmed, and flaming bowls of cherries jubilee were served. No doubt inspired by the darkness and the flames, Reagan suddenly asked, out of right field, if Mills had read "the fierce Old Testament prophet Ezekiel". Mills allowed that he had (after all, you don't get in the California state senate if you say no); as it turned out, he did know Ezekiel. Then, "with firelit intensity" Reagan began to talk about how Libya had now gone communist, just as Ezekiel had foretold, and "that's a sign that the day of Armageddon isn't far off."

When Mills reminded him that Ethiopia was also due to go over to Satan and he could'nt, somehow, see the Emperor Haile Selassie turning pinko or allowing the Reds to take over his country in order to make war "on God's chosen people," Reagan agreed "that everything hasn't fallen into place yet. But there is only that one thing left to happen. The Reds have to take over Ethiopia."

Mills thought this unlikely, Reagan thought it inevitable. "It's necessary to fulfill the prophecy that Ethiopia will be one of the ungodly nations that go against Israel." As it turned out, Reagan was right on target. Three years later Ethiopia went communist, or something very like it.

Mills was particularly impressed by Reagan's manner which is usually amiable to the point of goofiness: now he was "like a preacher (talking) to a sceptical college student". Reagan then told Mills: "All of the other prophecies that had to be fulfilled before Armageddon have come to pass. In the 38th chapter of Ezekiel it says God will take the children of Israel from among the heathen when they'd been scattered and will gather them again in the Promised Land. That has finally come about after 2,000 years. For the first time ever, everything is in place for the battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ."

Mill's conversation took place 15 years ago. Nine years later, the namesis of Gog was elected President. If he survives, Constitutionally or unconstitutionally, he now has just over a year to see us on our way to, if not actually into, glory.

During the presidential race of 1980, Reagan told Jim Bakker of the Praise the Lord network: "We may be the generation that sees Armageddon", while a writer for *The New York Times* reported that Reagan (1980) told a Jewish group that "Israel is the only stable democracy

we can rely on as a spot where Armageddon could come".

Although most American right-wingers are anti-Semites, the Armageddonists need a strong Israel in order to fulfil prophecy. So TV-evangelicals, the Pentagon ("Those are the real anti-Semites, former Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky muttered in my ear last October at Frankfurt) and right-wing politicians like Richard Nixon are all dedicated supporters of Israel. Sensibly and cynically, the Israelis exploit this religious madness.

#### What Gorbachev is up against

Sunday, February 15, 1987, proved to be bright sunny day in hell, where I had come with 900 worthies from several dozen countries, to listen to Satan himself, Gorbachev, who spoke thoughtfully of the absolute necessity of abolishing all nuclear weapons on the ground that the fact of their existence endangers the human race. Plainly, the Lord of the Flies has not read the Good Book.

---

### "For the first time ever every thing is in place for the battle of Armageddon and the second coming of Christ"

---

If He had, he would know that this planet is just a staging-area for that glorious place in the sky where free of abortion and contraception and communism, the chosen will swirl about in the cosmic dust, praising the Lord for all eternity.

In fact, not only did Gorbachev not seem to know the truth that Reagan, adheres to (so unlike mere irksome truth-tilling), he even suggested to us that this planet may be the only one that could support a human race. It would be, he said, a pity to lose everything through war or, more likely, accident.

Then, to everyone's amazement, Gorbachev mentioned Chernobyl by name, breaking the first law of the TV politician—never acknowledge failure. Since Hitler's invasion, nothing has alarmed the Russians more than Chernobyl's fall-out, which is everywhere, including the village where I live in southern Italy: there is Cesium 137 at the bottom of my garden. Gorbachev owned up to the whole mess, something our acting President would never do.....

The only direct reference that Lucifer made to the Archangel from Warner Brothers concerned something that Reagan had said to him in Geneva: if the earth were ever to be invaded by Martians, the United States and the Soviet Union would, of course, be joint allies in a common cause. Gorbachev sighed: "I told the President that it was, perhaps, premature to prepare for such an invasion but as we had a common enemy right now, nuclear weapons, why couldn't we unite to get rid of them?"

But the planter of mighty oaks was not to be seduced. How could he be? Nearly every major politician in the United States is paid for by what is known as "the defence industry". That is why over 60 per cent of the government's income is wasted on "defence".

I wondered, as I listened to Gorbachev, if he had any notion of the forces arrayed against him in the United States. Obviously he is aware of the Israeli lobby, but that is something that he can come to terms with: neither the Israelis nor the Russians are interested in suicide. But the dispensationalists are quite another matter.

By accident, the producers of that one-time hit show the United States of America, picked for the part of President a star with primitive religious longings. We cannot blame them. How could they have known? They thought that he was giving all that money to defence simply to reward them for giving him the lead, which he was doing, in part; but he was also responding to Ezekiel and the glory of the coming end.

Courtesy: *The Times of India*  
Article by Gora Vidal  
22.11.1987 (Excerpts)



# Chile's Generals Push an Army God

A fierce battle over religion is raging within the armed forces, according to a newly-released study by Chilean sociologists Humberto Lagos and Arturo Chacon.

**La Religion en las Fuerzas Armadas**, published by the Evangelical Program of Socio-religious Studies (PRESOR), is a result of the author's four-year research into the religious beliefs and tensions in the Chilean military.

The study documents the phenomenal rise of Pentecostalism within the military and the consequent weakening of the Catholic church. It also shows how the Catholicism espoused by the military is buttressed by a theology that practically excludes mention of Christ and concentrates instead on God as "Super Warrior".

"The religious situation within the military is filled with contradictions" say the authors. Catholicism continues to be the armed forces official religion and there is no separation between church and state. But the brand of Catholicism practised is pre-Vatican II and anti-ecumenical; it preaches a God who loves order and discipline and promotes respect for hierarchical authority. The omnipotent Triune God and the Virgin of Carmen (the armed forces' patron) are emphasized rather than the Gospel message of Christ "who spoke of loving one's neighbour and one's enemy, of returning good for evil, of not killing — a message that doesn't fit into the Doctrine of National Security", say Lagos and Chacon.

This understanding of Catholicism varies dramatically from that preached by most Chilean bishops, who promote human rights and the return to democratic rule.

"Moreover", says the study, "as a punishment for these postures taken by the civilian bishops — which deeply offend the dignity of the regime's followers — the military leadership has allowed evangelical churches, especially the Pentecostal ones, to proselytize, within the armed forces, a move that worries the Catholic church".

Evangelicals within the armed forces are grouped together under the Mission Evangelica Uniformada (MEU). These converts are known for their anti-Catholic, anti-ecumenical and anti-Marxist positions. Some 15 percent of the armed forces are now listed as evangelicals; they are served by seven military chaplains.

The hegemony of the Catholic church among the military has been broken, the authors conclude. But they also point to a "parallel Catholic church, under the military vicariate, which has its own bishop, its own priests and the possibility of setting up its own seminary as a way of avoiding ideological interference." (Last year, Pope John Paul II raised the military vicariate to the rank of "episcopal see.")

In analyzing the regime's theology the authors conclude that the armed forces see themselves engaged in a symbolic battle between good and evil, life and death, God and Satan. For the Pinochet regime, the 1973 military coup was an act of God. Wherein the general was chosen to mediate God's wishes for the Chilean

people. Therefore, any movement that sets itself up in opposition to the regime is considered immoral, even perverse and demonic.

— Analisis (Jan. 3 issue)  
Santiago, Chile.

*Latinamerica Press*, 21 April 1988

## God's Empty People

God's Empty people  
Go to Church  
To fill their souls  
With self-satisfaction  
Fold their hands  
Close their eyes.

God's empty people  
Don't organize for justice  
Nor thrust for truth  
They extend their empty hands  
To the world  
That cries out for salvation

God's empty people  
Talk gossip to each other  
Confuse themselves on everything  
offer only their empty brains  
To the world  
That cries out for liberation

God's empty people  
Are afraid to love  
Avoid every commitment  
Offer only their empty hearts  
To the world  
That cries out for liberation.

— Loku Rala

# The Pope and Liberation

Pope John Paul II spent a mere 39 hours in Peru last May, but three of his six talks warned of the errors of some theologies of liberation.

The pontiff delivered his most pointed address before a closed-door meeting of Peru's 53 bishops. He enjoined the prelates to adhere closely to the two instructions on liberation theology issued by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Many understood the pontiff's comments as a scarcely veiled reference to the work of Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian priest who is Latin America's most prominent liberation theologian. The pope made it clear that for him there is only one true liberation theology: the Vatican's.

Some of the conference's progressive bishops reportedly feared that their conservative peers would view the pope's comments as a licence to hound theologians, clergy and pastoral agents who follow a liberation line. At least five conference members belong to Opus Dei, a secretive, right-wing organization that sees itself as a defender of orthodoxy.

The Vatican version of liberation theology starts with traditional church teaching and emphasizes personal liberation from sin. In its most recent instruction, the Vatican acknowledges that unjust social structures are also sinful and ought to be reformed.

Gutierrez and other liberation theologians start from the viewpoint of the poor, reflecting on the

message of the Gospel. They frequently use the social sciences—some have drawn on aspects of Marxist analysis — in explaining the situation of poor and working people and interpreting their struggles for a society that more closely resembles the hoped-for reign of God.

Liberation theology is vitally important to both Latin America and the Vatican. It has fed the growth of base Christian communities and the "preferential option for the poor" the Latin America church endorsed 20 years ago at Medellin. It represents a significant movement for church reform in a continent that, by the year 2000, will contain half the world's Catholics.

— Latinamerica Press, (May 26)



## Women in society

# Wife Beating Becomes a major Issue

Carlos Monzon, Argentina's idolized former champion boxer, killed his spouse in January when he pushed her off a balcony during a quarrel. The incident attracted massive media coverage here and opened an intense debate about domestic violence and **machismo**.

Every month, 18 to 20 women die in Buenos Aires as a result of so-called "crimes of passion." Yet

the public and the media usually pay scant attention, says the Argentine branch of the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Human Rights Network.

"The way the mass media commonly treats domestic violence illustrates the **machista** ideology, which sustains a number of myths that have been accepted by the society at large," says the feminist group.

Nowhere was that **machismo** more evident than in the handling of the Munzon case, the group said. A former world middleweight boxing champion, Munzon killed his former spouse, model Alicia Muniz, during a day of dining and partying at their summer home Jan. 18. Police reports said he beat her viciously, causing her to fall from a second-floor balcony. She died of her injuries.

### Minimizing blame

Nonetheless, much of the early reporting sought alibis for Munzon and played up the former champ's image and personality. A thorough police investigation soon undermined such efforts and, in the process, exposed the machista attitudes that would excuse a wife-murderer.

Studies have found that women are beaten by their spouses regardless of country or social class. For instance, in Barcelona, Spain last year, 89 women died at the hands of their husbands.

In Chile, a study by sociologist Doris Cooper found that family violence is associated with a specific configuration of socio-economic and cultural variables. The existence of a **machista** subculture implies an acceptance of punishment on the woman's part, Cooper said. She discovered many women seek outside help only after 10 to 15 years of beatings.

Aside from **machismo**, a worsening economic situation can contribute to wife beating. Many men who find themselves unemployed vent their frustration and loss of esteem by attacking their wives. According to Cooper, the violence tends to increase when the woman's income maintains the home, because her role further diminishes the man's authority.

### Exploding myths

Maria Cristina Gerlic, Argentine Minister of Health and Social Action, called for an end to the myth that only alcoholic or poor men are wife beaters. Domestic violence does not make class distinctions or differentiate between sobriety or drunkenness, she said.

**Lugar de Mujer** ("Woman's Place") a feminist center in the heart of Buenos Aires, has become Argentina's first shelter for battered women. Women of all ages, social classes and occupations come to the centre and form self-help groups.

"The Monzon case made battered women a public issue," said Isable Miranda, a committee member at Lugar de Mujer.

Health Minister Gerlic noted that many younger men who abuse their spouses are beginning to ask for help. A self-help group for men who have been violent toward their partners now functions in one of the city's 'public hospitals.

Women's rights groups took a major leap forward when Argentina returned to civilian rule in 1983. The government of President Raul Alfonsin created a national women's office in the Ministry of Health and Social Action. Many provincial governments followed suit, creating offices and councils on woman's issues.

"In Argentina," says Miranda, "rape is the only crime in which the victim has to prove she's the victim."

In hopes of improving the situation, the Buenos Aires state police have asked Lugar de Mujer to organize workshops in the Juan Vucetich Police School. The workshops are designed to help young police men and women give adequate attention to complaints made by women.

Under Alfonsin, Congress has approved a number of important laws that consider women's rights.

The new law of shared parental authority gives equal rights to father and mother and makes children, born in or out of wedlock, equal before the law. A new pension law awards compensation to the surviving spouse based on the stability rather than legality of the relationship.

New civil marriage and divorce laws affirm that husband and wife share equal rights and responsibilities. A wife is no longer obliged to use her husband's last name, and a couple can now divorce for reasons as simple as incompatibility.

Family planning services, banned under the military regime, are now legally available. And finally, Congress has approved the United Nations resolution prohibiting discrimination against women.

— **Latinamerica Press**, 2 June (excerpts)

---

## Public Pressure Moves Supreme Court in Sexual Torture Case South Korea

Mun Kwi-dong, a former police investigator who sexually tortured a women worker activist, Kwon In Suk while under custody in the Inchon Police Station was finally brought to trial in May 1988. The decision was issued by the Supreme Court of South Korea which accepted the appeal of 166 defence lawyers.

In the earlier judicial decision by the Inchon District Court in Nov. 1986, Kwon In suk was sentenced to 18 months jail for falsifying identity documents while Mun Kwi-dong was freed from indictment from his sexual torture act. An attempt of the defence lawyers to appeal to Seoul Appeals Court had also been turned down.

However, the case had led to a great uproar among the women, workers, students, religious and human rights campaigners. They held numerous protests, marches, public meetings to denounce the government for covering up the scandal and demand for justice be upheld. It is upon such public pressure that the Supreme Court finally over-ruled the decision of the state prosecutor and had Mun indicted.

(*Asian Women Workers News Letter* (Hong Kong) June.



## C. W. F. Fundamental Rights Case

"A discussion of Supreme Court Cases on Fundamental Rights is neither, explosive nor subversive", said Mr. Govin Dayasiri, Counsel for the Petitioners when the Fundamental Rights application filed against the stopping of the Adult Education Seminar on Supreme Court cases on human rights, by Reginald Perera, the Chairman of the Wattala-Mabola Urban Council, with the assistance of a police party led by Sub-Inspector A. D. S. Peiris was taken up for argument before a Supreme Court bench consisting of Justices Athukorale, G. P. S. De Silva and Jameel on 21st July 1988.

Govin Dayasiri, Attorney-at-law, appearing for petitioners, Jayantha Wanigasuriya, Basil Fernando and Rev. Bro. Edwin Ambrose, all members of Christian Workers Fellowship, Wattala Branch, stated that the petitioners had sought and obtained permission to use the Wattala-Mabola Urban Council hall for 04th of November 1987, for an Adult Education Seminar or a Class. The date was later changed to 25th November 1987, due to rains. This Seminar was widely advertised through posters, advertisements exhibited in Cinema Halls of the area, hand-bills, newspaper notices and through invitations. The letter of invitation read as follows :—

"Dear Sir/Madam,

### The Decisions of the Supreme Court on Human Rights

In recent times the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka has made many valuable judgements on Human Rights. These are on arrests, detentions, assaults, torture, and unequal treatment before law and

on other important questions regarding human rights. It is very essential that there should be a wide education on these matters.

As a first step towards this an education Seminar will be held by our organization at Wattala-Mabola Urban Council hall on 25th November 1987 at 4.30 p.m.

The main talk on this Seminar will be a summary of decisions of these cases and it will be delivered by Basil Fernando Attorney-at-law. Rev. Bro. Edwin Ambrose will chair the meeting.

You are invited for this meeting and kindly requested to get your friends too to attend it.

Jayantha Wanigasuriya,  
Organizer."

An hour before the commencement of the meeting one Mr. Ranaweera, who posed as an officer of the Urban Council, had questioned one of the petitioners, as to the purpose of the Seminar, to which he replied, saying it was for the purpose of explaining to public the Constitutional provisions relating to the human rights as interpreted by the Supreme Court, to which said Ranaweera had replied by saying, "that's a dangerous thing."

Just before the Seminar, the Chairman Reginald Perera had arrived at the premises, and a little later, he had called 1st petitioner, who went accompanied by 2nd petitioner to the office of the Chairman. Then Reginald Perera had shown the letter of invitation (referred to above) to them saying the original application had been for the purpose of an adult education Seminar or Class, but now it was going to be one on adult reduction seminar on Supreme Court cases on human rights.

Mr. Govin Dayasiri referred to the affidavit of Reginald Perera, where he has stated "On reading P4 (Poster) and P9 (letter of invitation), I saw references to the Supreme Court and felt alarmed that the meeting was not an ordinary educational meeting, but a protest meeting."

The counsel stated that it was on that basis, that the Sub Inspector A. D. S. Peiris, who arrived with a police party wanted the meeting to be stopped, on the alleged ground that Adult Education Seminar on Supreme Court cases on human rights, did not come within the original permission granted for a seminar on human rights. He had given no chance to organisers of the Seminar. to explain matters. As the organizers refused to stop the meeting, the police officer himself had gone inside and stopped the meeting. A copy of the photograph of S. I. Peiris announcing the termination of the meeting has been produced to Court.

Answering Court, the counsel stated that no evidence at all had been produced to show, that there was any unruly behaviour or any act, which amounted to a breach of peace or an imminent breach of peace. There was no basis for the police officer to intervene.

The counsel further submitted that the reason given to stop the meeting makes it clearly a violation of rights of freedom of speech and assembly. He quoted Encyclopaedia Britannica (1977) regarding adult education, stating that it includes —

"Education for civic, political and community competence. Such education includes all

kinds of education relating to government, community, development, public and international affairs, voting and political parties position and so forth." (page 94).

The counsel stated that education on Supreme Court cases is clearly within the scope of adult education as it is education on law, and such education is neither explosive nor subversive.

The counsel further said, if the respondent originally refused the application on the ground, that they were unable to give the hall for a discussion on Supreme Court cases on human rights, the petitioners would have had a cause to complain of the violation of their rights.

The case was postponed at this stage for August when Mr. Dayasiri will continue his submissions.

### **D.M.O. to Issue Copies of Medical Reports**

The District Medical Officer of Gampaha was requested to submit Medical Reports of his examination of the petitioners, when the fundamental rights applications filed by Ananda Randunu and Sanath Priya Ratnayake, came up before a bench of the Supreme Court consisting of Justices Athukorale, Mohamed Jameel and Mark Fernando on 18th of July. Inspector Whatmore of Ganemulla Police and three others are the respondents in this case.

The petitioners alleged that they had been illegally arrested, and illegally detained and severely tortured and cruelly and inhumanly treated, in violation of their fundamental rights.

Mr. E. D. Wikremanayake appearing for petitioners stated that petitioners had doubts about the true copies certified and produced by 1st respondent and requested the court to call for the originals of the documents from District Medical Officer. The Court ordered the Doctor to issue certified copies of the same within a week of the application.

## **Handcuffed to Detention Cell — Special Correspondent**

In the Judgement of Justice T. Bandaranayake with Chief Justice P. Ranasinghe and Justice H. D. Tambiah agreeing, in S. W. R. D. Wijewardena Vs T. R. Zain and others (S.C. 143/97), the Supreme Court came to the following finding among other things :

"Again, there is the submission made on his (the petitioner's) behalf that being handcuffed to the detention cell in the Police Station amounted to degrading treatment. If the Police were detaining this suspect for the purpose of investigating his conduct relative to the state of Emergency in the country and the possibility of his having been concerned in offences under Emergency Regulations, the fact of the prisoner being secured in the way complained of may not be considered to be unreasonable having regard to accommodation available at Police Stations and the need for security to either prevent escape or prevent rescue. Therefore, one cannot say that the Police acted arbitrarily or unreasonably or capriciously in the circumstances. This is the test that should be adopted and not whether particular treatment is considered to be degrading to one person and not to another. The petitioner has therefore failed to make out a case of infringement of his fundamental rights guaranteed by Article 11."

This aspect of the judgement would however seem to be in conflict with the finding of the Supreme Court in Amal Sudath Silva Vs I. P. Civil Kodituwakku and others 9 (S. C. 186/86), in which Justice

Athukorale, with Chief Justice Shrawananda and Justice L. H. de Alwis agreeing, the following interpretation was given to Article 11 of the Constitution of Sri Lanka.

"Article 11 of our Constitution mandates that no person shall be subjected to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It prohibits every person from inflicting torturesome, cruel or inhuman treatment on another. It is an absolute fundamental right subject to no restrictions or limitations whatsoever. Every person in this country, be he a criminal or not, is entitled to this right to the fullest content of its guarantee. Constitutional safeguards are generally directed against the State and its organs. The police force, being an organ of the State, is enjoined by the Constitution to secure and advance this right and not to deny, abridge or restrict the same in any manner and under any circumstances."

In view of this judgement of Justice Athukorale, which has held that the right guaranteed under Article 11 is an absolute fundamental right, the following considerations may be had in relation to Wijewardane's case.

If the fundamental right against torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is an absolute one, there is no basis on which to distinguish between a detainee held under the normal laws of the country, and a detainee held under Emergency Regulations or even under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The question to be resolved therefore is whether any person in this country, be he a criminal or

not, be he a suspect under Emergency Regulations or not, is entitled as of right not to be handcuffed to the detention cell for a considerable period of time, as was alleged in the Wijewardena's case. Is such handcuffing not a violation of the right guaranteed under Article 11 of the Constitution? If it constitutes a violation of the rights of any person detained under the normal laws then it would surely be a violation of the rights of a detained person suspected of violating the Emergency Regulations as well. If it is not a violation of such a fundamental right, any police officer, or even prison officer, would be entitled to keep a person under detention, handcuffed to the cell where he or she is detained.

The possibility of escape or rescue is present in every case of detention and it is equally the duty of the State to provide for the security of the detainees, as also to take steps to prevent the escape of such detainees or rescue operations sought to be effected on their behalf. That is an obligation on the part of the State.

In ancient times, a slave in detention was kept in chains, for example during the days of the Roman empire. But then a slave was considered to be a mere chattel or thing, and not a person. Article 11 of our Constitution is based on the Charter of the United Nations which not only considers all human beings as persons, but as **equal persons**. When a slave who as a legal entity was only a thing was used to row ships, particularly battleships, not only his hands but even his legs were chained to the ship (one can see some of these old practices in modern films like Ben Hur.) When we see such things we immediately react against them as they are repulsive to our democratic understanding of human dignity.

Keeping people chained to some object in the place of detention is also a primitive concept, when a suspect was already considered guilty or was treated as an animal or a thing. But the concept contained in Article 11 came into being in total opposition to such thinking. In those early times the means available to the State to protect persons or detainees were also limited. With the modernization of society, prison systems, as well as ethics relating to them have undergone a complete transformation.

In the emergency regulations there is provision to detain persons, in police stations authorized for such purpose. However, the emergency regulations, did not provide for treatment of detainees, in any way different to other detainees.

When an extraordinary law provides for other places to detentions than places normally authorized for that purposes, it implies that these 'other' places will maintain the same standards as the 'normal' places of detention. There is no basis to think otherwise, as to **think** otherwise would mean the **nature** of detention would be different in one case as against the other. Only the **place** is different, but the nature of the detention is not different.

In fact it is arguable that a police cell used as a place of detention authorized under emergency regulations, is no longer just a police cell, but a place authorized for detention which may extend for 90 days, just as the chambers of a judge when used by him to hear a case, is no longer a chamber, but a court house.

Given the practices that the police in Sri Lanka are accused of engaging in, it is not impossible that they may keep a person hand-

cuffed to his detention cell for the entire 90 days, to prevent his escape for rescue.

The only restrictions to fundamental rights are those laid down in the Constitution. The Constitution has not laid down any restrictions to the Article 11. Considerations relating to public security are not relevant when determining whether a particular treatment is torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The next consideration is whether by express law, such a treatment is legalized; for example hanging a person by his neck, which in itself is torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, is allowed when a person is found guilty of certain offences by a court of law. Other than such express laws, there are no limitations to Article 11.

Torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, cannot in any case be used for the purpose of criminal investigations, even if the offences suspected of are those relating to emergency regulations. Justice O. S. M. Seneviratne in a very recent judgement, (Judgement in S.C. 144/86 and 145/86 dated 01.07.1988) points to the fact, that detentions under section 18 of, Emergency Regulations are for purpose of investigation. "The Police must realize that an arrest under Section 18 of of the Emergency Regulation is solely for the purpose of search and investigation" Justice Athukorale in the judgement earlier cited, further stated: "It is therefore the duty of this court to protect and defend this right jealously to its fullest measure with a view to ensuring that this right which is declared and intended to be fundamental is always kept fundamental and that the executive by its action does not reduce it to a mere illusion." (S.C. 186/86)

□

## MALAYSIA

### ● White Paper in place of Open Trial

### ● Attack on Judiciary

### ● More Repressive Laws

*Christian Worker* (1987 Fourth Quarter) has already commented on the crackdown on dissidents in Malaysia beginning in October last year following on as it were the example set by Singapore in May the same year.

On 23rd March this year, the Malaysian Government released a 24-page document, entitled "Towards Preserving National Security", to "explain" the government's recent mass arrests of more than 100 of the country's citizens. This document or White Paper is the product of two months of intensive interrogations of the detainees by the security police (the Special Branch). In some cases, the methods of interrogation involved both physical and psychological torture. Without giving the detainees their rightful due process of the law, i.e. trial in an open court, the government had to come out with an explanation for the continued detention of more than 40 of the country's main opposition politicians, community leaders, church workers and social activities. So also its attempts to cursorily justify in the same document the banning of four major newspapers with allegations against them of "deliberately projecting sensitive issues" and "built up racial feelings" in just four paragraphs.

#### Groups Singled Out

The White Paper focused on the "threat to national security" purportedly brought about by four groups of people. The first group consisted of the leaders from the two main opposition parties (the Democratic Action Party, DAP and the Parti Islam Malaysia, PAS); the second group which incurred the government's displeasure was the educationists from the Chinese education movement; the third was those Christian evangelists who attracted the wrath of the government in attempting to proselytise the Muslim community; and the fourth, which was tagged collectively by the Government as "marxists", came from a variety of backgrounds including church leaders, university lecturers, former student leaders, dramatists, environmentalists, social

workers and activists from the women's movement.

#### Substitute for Open Trial

This White Paper becomes the government's substitute for open trial to the opposition and community leaders it has imprisoned, and for an independent inquiry to its banning of the four major newspapers. Allegations contained in the White Paper cannot be challenged in Court, for detentions under the Internal Security Act (ISA) do not provide or allow for open trial in a court of law. The government's words are final, even if it means the loss of civil and basic human rights for those gravely affected by those words.

#### Archbishop Denounces White Paper

On 24th March, a day after the release of the White Paper on the mass arrests, the Most Reverend Archbishop Anthony Soter Fernandez, Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur issued a press statement which objected strongly to the allegations made by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the White Paper.

One of the grounds cited by the Ministry of Home Affairs (as contained in the detention order) for detaining Brother Anthony Rogers, the deputy director of NDHD and Secretary to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC), was that the "Lord's Prayer" he wrote in 1984 was "inciteful and subversive in nature" and that the document was "to be used by communist elements to expand and spread their understanding".

That document, entitled "Reflections on Our Father," said Archbishop Fernandez, was not at all connected with Marxist ideological infiltration, but a document that "has been considered by the Bishops of Peninsular Malaysia as a challenging and inspiring reflection based on the values of the Gospel in line with the social teachings of the Church".

In face of the various outrageous allegations made against the Church and the detention of a large number of community leaders and social activists, the March 24th press statement by the Archbishop represents one of the most respected voices in Malaysia speaking out against the immorality of the ISA. It also lends a great moral force to the campaign for the release of the detainees and the revocation of the ISA.

#### Human Rights Lawyer Re-arrested After Being Freed by High Court

Mr. Karpal Singh, human rights lawyer, elected Member of Parliament and the Deputy Chairperson of the main opposition party (the Democratic Action Party, DAP) in Malaysia was released from detention by a High Court ruling on 9th March. Mr. Singh was among the 119 detainees arrested by the Malaysian government during the recent mass arrests.

After he was served with a two-year detention order, Mr. Singh filed for a writ of habeas corpus and conducted his own case at the hearing. In his 27-page ruling, Justice Peh Swee Chin said that the two-year detention order served on Mr. Karpal Singh was "made without care, caution and a proper sense of responsibility".

Applause broke out in the packed courtroom after the judgement. Family, relatives, friends and well-wishers rushed up to the respected human rights lawyer to offer their congratulations. However, freedom for the 47-year old lawyer was rather short-lived. As he was returning home to Penang with members of his family after their thanksgiving prayers at a Sikh Temple in Ipoh, Mr. Singh was re-arrested at a roadblock by Special Branch Police before he could reach home. And so he was once again detained under the ISA, only a few hours after being granted his freedom by the Malaysian court.

It is no surprise that people in the opposition parties, trade unions and social action groups are still detained as they have, in one way or another, raised concerns about government corruption, workers' rights, environmental and other social issues which have challenged Mahathir's credibility.

#### UMNO in New Clothes

The court challenge by 11 UMNO (ruling party) dissidents to annual the April 1987 UMNO elections which the



PM narrowly won, produced startling results. On 4th February, Harun Hashim J ruled UMNO "illegal." The judge said that the existence of unapproved branches within UMNO rendered it illegal. He was relying on the Societies Act which states that if a registered society establishes a branch without prior approval from the Registrar of Societies, then both the society and its branch is deemed "unlawful"

In a bid to outmanoeuvre Mahathir, two former PMs — Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Hussein Onn, together with Mahathir's arch rival Tengku Razaleigh then applied to register a new party, "UMNO Malaysia". The Registrar rejected their application but subsequently approved that of Mahathir's "New UMNO". It was later revealed that UMNO Malaysia had been rejected on the technicality that the original UMNO had not yet been deregistered administratively by the Registrar; a fact which was not made public until after Mahathir had applied to form his new party. The Registrar also acted hastily when she deregistered UMNO (in order to approve New UMNO) without waiting for the statutory 30 days during which an appeal against the court ruling can be filed.

New UMNO now faces the mammoth task of wooing and registering members. Despite what the PM claims, his new party has yet to gain the acceptance he anticipated as most Malays are sitting on the sidelines, waiting to see the outcome of the mass of court challenges to the new party's formation.

#### Constitution Amended

In saying that the Judiciary "meddled" in the Executive's affairs and that laws passed by Parliament were open to mis-interpretation by judges, Mahathir was setting the stage for a Constitutional amendment that would weaken the independence of the Judiciary.

The Constitutional Amendments since adopted give the Attorney-General the power to determine the courts in which to institute or transfer proceedings. Effectively, this means that he can decide which judge should preside over a particular case.

Article 121 of the Constitution has been amended to delete the provision vesting judicial powers of the Federation in the High Court. The Judiciary and its powers are now subject to the federal laws that are enacted from time to time

by Parliament. The independence of the Judiciary will be severely limited, in effect, come under the control of the Legislature.

Other Amendments to the Constitution make it possible for non-citizens to be detained for up to 14 days before being produced before a magistrate, for offences triable under civil or Syariah (Muslim) law. Previously, a detainee had to be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours or be released (except under the ISA). The Federal government is now empowered to dispose of land to whoever it wants. Previously, it could not dispose of such land except for Federal purposes. Doubtless, this will facilitate land transfers to private hands.

Prime Minister Mahathir did at least fulfil part of his election pledge of "Honesty Efficiency and Integrity" when with the amazing efficiency the Constitutional amendments tabled in Parliament on Tuesday (15th March 1988) became law on Friday.

#### Move to Oust Head of Judiciary

In culminating his vendetta against those same people of "high competence and integrity" that he so lavishly praised less than 3 years ago, Prime Minister Mahathir has now moved to oust the Head of the Judiciary, **Tun Mohamed Salleh Abas** who is the **sixth Lord President**.

In a press statement issued on 30th May, Tun Salleh said that he was called to the PM's office on 27th May for an interview which left him "shocked and stunned". The PM had informed him that a tribunal would be set up to remove him from office on grounds of "misbehaviour" which consisted of his writing to the King in defence of the Judiciary against the PM's constant attacks. He also said that he had been accused of expressing partiality in the UMNO cases. Tun Salleh did not deny that he had written to the King but felt there was nothing improper in it. Furthermore, he said that the letter was written after a meeting of all the Kuala Lumpur Judges held on the 25th March. However, he categorically denied the allegation of partiality in the UMNO cases as completely untrue. It is noted here that Tun Salleh has yet to hear or comment publicly on any of the UMNO related cases currently working their way through the Malaysian courts.

On the 28th May, the Lord President wrote to the PM, applying to take all available leave with a view towards early retirement. However, after some consul-

tation with colleagues, the next day he wrote again to withdraw his resignation, saying that "it would be detrimental to the standing of the Judiciary and quite adverse to the interest of the nation, if I were to go on early retirement as this could be construed as some form of admission." The PM announced on 31st May that Tun Salleh had been suspended.

Under the Constitution, the PM can recommend to the King that a Supreme Court judge, including the Lord President ought to be removed on grounds of misbehaviour or inability to discharge one's duties. The King will then set up a tribunal of at least 5 retired or present Supreme or High Court judges (Malaysian or Commonwealth) and may, on the tribunal's recommendation, remove him from office.

#### Tribunal Named

A 6-member tribunal has been formed comprising the acting Lord President who will also chair the tribunal, the Chief Justice of Sri Lanka, the controversial Senior Judge Sinnathamby of Singapore, and other senior Malaysian judges, present and retired. The tribunal is expected to start proceedings in mid-June. Critics fear that the appointment of serving judges would give rise to a conflict of interest.

This is the first time that any judge has been referred to a tribunal. Many view this move with alarm as the Judiciary is regarded as the last stronghold against Mahathir. Apart from changing the Constitution to curb the judges, the PM who has been riled by the threat of increased public interest litigation, has now shown his willingness to go one step further in his reprimand of the Judiciary.

As a matter of interest, Tun Salleh was scheduled to preside over a session of the full 9-member Supreme Court to hear an appeal by the 11 UMNO dissidents against the decision of Harun Hashim J who ruled UMNO "illegal." This appeal would be crucial in that should the Supreme Court allow the appeal, old UMNO would have to be resurrected. This begs the question of what happens then to Mahathir's New UMNO?

#### Societies Act Amended

The old UMNO presided over a business empire of at least 10 publicly listed companies, thousands of private companies and owned at least 150 buildings throughout the country including the Pan Pacific Hotel and the luxurious 27-storey

UMNO Headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. In a move to legitimise New UMNO's claim over these considerable assets, the Societies Act was amended as speedily as the Constitution in March. (In Malaysia, political parties come under the Societies Act.) To kill two birds with one stone, a few other restrictions were thrown in as well to make things more difficult for Mahathir's opponents.

#### More Repressive Labour Laws & a Controlled Press

Following the detention of trade union leaders, the government now plans to push through more repressive amendments to labour law.

The labour law changes are obviously calculated also to lure foreign investors, the bait being a cheap and docile workforce which can be easily retrenched if not required.

The government-controlled newspapers have steered clear of the UMNO troubles and court cases, concentrating only on focussing support for Mahathir. In trying to erase the whole affair, the papers revert back to using the name UMNO when reporting on New UMNO.

The government-controlled *New Strait Times*, circulation plunged and even lost some advertisers when *The Star* renewed publication in late March. All 4 banned papers (*The Star*, *Sunday Star*, *Sin Chew Jit Poh* and *Watan*) have since been re-issued permits together with stern warnings to be more "mature" in their reporting.

The public has not been blinkered by the government-controlled media. Circulation for the alternative newspapers have jumped.

It remains to be seen if the papers continue to live up to the public's expectation, after being smacked on the hand and now with the axe of the amended Printing Presses Act over their heads.

## SINGAPORE

# Repression and Election Diversion

As reported by us in *Christian Worker* of 2nd 3rd Quarter 1987, 22 persons were arrested in May and June last year under the Singapore Internal Security Act (ISA) which allows detention without trial. The detainees were accused of being involved in an alleged "Marxist conspiracy plot" and made to appear on State-controlled television to "confess" their role. Subsequently all the detainees except one (Vincent Cheng) were released under Suspension Directives and/or Restriction Orders.

#### "Confessions" Repudiated

On April 18 this year nine of these ex-detainees issued a statement clarifying that they have never been involved in any "Marxist conspiracy" and that during their detention, they were subjected to physical and mental harassment and compelled to appear on television to make "confessions". The statement detailed "harsh and intensive interrogation, deprived of sleep and rest, some of us for as long as 70 hours inside freezing cold rooms...Most of us were hit hard in the face, some of us for not less than 50 times...We were threatened with arrests, assault and battery of our spouses, loved ones and friends. We were threatened with indefinite detention without trial. We were compelled to appear on television and warned that our release would depend on our performances...We were coerced to make statements such as 'I am Marxist inclined', 'My ideal society is a classless society...'"

#### Re-arrest as the Answer

The following day, i.e. April 19, eight of the detainees were re-arrested (the ninth was out of the country) together with a lawyer who helped them, under the Internal Security Act. This act of the Singapore Government in seeking by means of these re-arrests to compel retraction of the statement made by the nineteen would in itself confirm suspicions that the earlier "confessions" were in fact extracted from them under duress. It however took 10 days of secret police interrogation of the re-arrested detainees and their lawyer, before the Singapore Government was able to announce that the detainees had "changed their story."

Although the Government had announced on April 21 that it would appoint a Commission to determine whether the "Marxist conspiracy" was a government fabrication and whether the detainees were assaulted and tortured as alleged, it now announced that it would no longer hold such a commission of inquiry into the detainees' allegations because they had been withdrawn.

It is however obvious to the whole world with the exception of the Singapore Government that the claimed retractions are merely further proof of its ability to coerce innocent people held incommunicado without trial to make self-incriminating statements. Such a "skill" has always been the hallmark of totalitarian states.

#### From Marxist Plot to CIA Plot

Since the "Marxist Plot" fabrication was already the subject of international disbelief and derision, the Singapore Government claims that there is now a new US-CIA plot which is also linked with the so-called Marxist plot and that the link was the joint statement of the 9 ex-detainees proclaiming their innocence! Deputy Prime Minister P. M. Goh Chok Tong and Brig. General Lee Hsien Loong (Lee Kuan Yew's son) have alleged that the 9 detainees were used by foreign forces to put pressure on the Government by making the statement and influencing the forthcoming elections in favour of the opposition lawyers being promoted by these outsiders. This is of course to create a colourful diversion from the damning statement of the ex-detainees and their subsequent arrest. Alleging foreign interference also has the advantage of diverting attention from the Government's own record and provide a populist if unbelievable issue on which to go to the polls!

Meanwhile coerced Statutory Declarations (SDs) have been extracted from at least two defence lawyers so as to make them ineffective as possible parliamentary candidates. To contradict an SD after signing it is a criminal offence for which they could be disbarred as lawyers and imprisoned. Also as an ex-detainee, a lawyer cannot be engaged by other ex-detainees as their Counsel!

# Fellowship in Action

## May Day Workers Mass

A large crowd, bigger than in previous years, participated in the CWF May Day Mass this year and in the procession that preceded it.

The Mass was held on April 30th evening at St. Michael's Church, Polwatta after a procession that went through the streets of the area led by drummers and dancers from the different Centres of the CWF and singing the Workers' Litany to the chant used by pilgrims climbing the Sri Pada Mount to venerate the Buddha. Workers bearing the Red Flag and implements of work went before the clergy and people in this procession. The May Day Mass of the CWF is usually held the previous evening or early on May Day morning to make it clear that it is a preparation and not a substitute for the workers' demonstrations and rallies on May Day that are normally held in the afternoon.

As in previous years, clergy from all the mainline Churches, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant participated. The concelebration of the Workers Mass by clergy belonging to these different Churches was led by Bishop Andrew Kumarage of Kurunegala. The bearers of the offerings which included the Red Flag and implements of work stood behind the clergy during the Eucharistic Prayer which was sung by clergy and people responsively to the Sinhala drama musical setting of the CWF Workers Mass. At the Epiclesis (invocation of the Holy Spirit) the workers standing behind the clergy raised their hands upwards to support those of the clergy that were extended over the oblations, thus making it clear that the Mass was the common action of God's People and not something done by the clergy alone. Significantly the Workers Mass has been drawn up and arranged by lay folk in a local cultural context and "non-Christians" too have helped in putting the Mass into verse and in giving the Mass its present musical setting.

The first part of the Mass (Ministry of the Word) was conducted by the workers themselves with a playlet replacing the traditional sermon after the Gospel. This year's play was acted by the youth belonging to St. Luke's Church, Borella. The

playlet was followed by the Intercessions sung in Tamil and a colourful offertory procession after the 'Peace' which commenced the Ministry of the Sacrament. The Service was climaxed in the Communion and ended with the workers receiving back the Red Flag and implements and marching out to the singing of the Sri Lankan equivalent of the Internationale.

The CWF Mass in Colombo was followed by a special celebration of a May Day Mass for plantation workers in the hill country held at Drayton Estate, Kotagala on May 7th morning. This too was a colourful Mass preceded by a procession through the plantation in which 'Urmī' dancing and other cultural forms popular in plantation areas were used. Here too as is usual in CWF Services, clergy of different Churches participated with Fr. Paul Caspersz SJ leading the concelebration of the Mass.

## Expansion of Activity

There has been a significant expansion in CWF activity this year with demands being made for CWF study groups to be organized in different parts of the country. Our Sinhala journal *Sarvada* which was revived in June after an interval given for re-organization, has had a good response from the public. In fact the last issue's copies have all sold out through newsstands and sales organized by our branches.

The Jaffna CWF despite difficulties were able to meet in early July for a study session of 3 days. This study session was also helpful in planning out CWF work for the North in the coming period. A study session was also held for CWF leaders in the Kantale and Tirncomalee areas and a work programme for the Eastern province especially the Trincomalee district was discussed which is to be implemented through the newly opened CWF Centre at Kantale.

## Kantale

On June 29th morning the CWF Centre which is to serve as a base for our work in the Trincomalee district was opened at Kantale in the presence of a representative gathering of residents, including the Additional Government Agent of the District and Assistant Government Agent of the area. Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian clergy who were present took part together in a religious ceremony to bless the building after its opening by the CWF Secretary and the lighting of the traditional oil lamp.

The Additional Government Agent who spoke at the meeting that followed, expressed his appreciation of the work already done by the CWF in the area and wished the Fellowship well in its effort to serve the people. Kingsley Perera and Sarath Mallika de Silva, the local CWF organizer also addressed the gathering.



At the blessing of the CWF centre in Kantale

As reported earlier in these columns, the Kantale Branch has been instrumental in having over 400 cases filled by residents claiming compensation from the State authorities for the damage suffered by them consequent on the breach of the Kantale reservoir dam. It has also commenced a scheme of rehabilitation for the fifty poorest families of the area drawn from the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities. The people of this area have suffered doubly: first on account of the breach of the dam, and later through troubles arising from the 'ethnic conflict'.

Members of the CWF Trincomalee group are already in contact with the Kantale Centre and it is proposed to assist the CWF work at Kallar too through this Centre.

---

#### Wattala

The Revd. Bro. Edwin Ambrose, a reputed educationalist, has assisted the branch to draw up a programme of forty lessons for the training of Nursery teachers to work in the poor areas of the locality. The girls recruited for this course are from the unemployed youth, some of them are working with children of the poorest. Some of these children do not even have proper clothes to attend other schools. There had been complaints from parents at Palliyawatte and Dickowita areas that the schools in the area do not maintain proper standards. The branch has attempted to initiate a discussion among the adults to exert their influence to bring about a change in the situation. Meanwhile some teachers have volunteered to teach Grade 9 and 10 children after school hours, so that they could overcome the limitations of their schools. These classes are conducted in the afternoon on school days. Bro. Edwin himself conducts an English class which is very much appreciated.

The Wattala Branch also has started some preliminary documentation as reference work for persons involved in social action.

The fishermen in the area will soon face **Vaaracan** (rough weather) so that they cannot go out to sea. The CWF group among them are seeking in co-operation with the others to initiate a discussion on alternative employment, during this period. The branch continues its action on Muthurajawela for distribution of land to the poor.

---

#### Galaha (Gami Seva Sevana-Rural Service Centre)

The Gami Seva Sevana has commenced a programme of Bio-gas extension in keeping with its aims and objectives of promoting Alternate Technology. The first phase of this programme is to build ten demonstration tanks at three locations viz. Nillambe, Dunhinna and Palugaswewa. While building bio-gas tanks we hope also to train masons. We have recruited Mr. C. Rajapakse a technician trained by Mr. G. K. Upawansa.

The Readers' Club of the Gami Seva Sevana Library held its first Seminar titled 'The Proper Use of Sinhala' at Gami Seva Sevana on Sunday the 17th July.

Presently a Pre-school Teachers Training Programme is being conducted at Gami Seva Sevana for the benefit of pre-schools in and around our Centre. The Teaching Staff has been provided by the Girl Guide Headquarters.

The Cultural Section of the Gami Seva Sevana has now been strengthened with the introduction of Kandyan Dancing conducted by Mr. P. D. Ratnapala.

A monthly lecture is now being held on 'Organic Farming' by Mr. G. K. Upawansa for the benefit of the Trainees and the Organic Farmers as a follow-up to the Organic Farming Workshop.

A Poson Bakthi Geetha Programme was held at Masgolla.

---

#### Hatton

A series of Drama Workshops is being held at the CWF Hatton Centre. Three persons each from 10 estates in the area are now being trained in Drama. The Hatton Centre is now being converted into a place for training and with the little equipment we have, we are making it available also to other groups in the plantation areas to conduct their own Workshops and Seminars. We are charging a small fee to defray water and electricity expenses etc. The programmes at the Centre are being conducted by a working team comprising M. Nesamany, S. Jebamalay, P. Mohan and D. Muniyande while Ranjith de Silva acts as a Co-ordinator. M. Nesamany has been elected Secretary of the Plantation Service Committee and P. Mohan elected Treasurer. S. Yogalechchmi was appointed Officer Secretary after Shanthi Arulraj left our services.

---

#### Ratmalana (Kamkaru Sevana)

Kamkaru Sevana, Ratmalana, has undergone very many changes in recent times. The Revd. Bro. Philip who has agreed to help as a Consultant has brought new life into the place. The Workers Council which has begun to function has provided the workers a forum for discussion, and added to efficiency and comradesly feeling.

At the moment, an attempt is being made to re-study the syllabus of the education programme with particular emphasis on the social education aspect of the studies.

Arrangements are now being made also to re-start the education programme which had to be stopped due to some inadequacies and a time needed for the re-organization of the programme. The interviews for the next batch of students is due to take place shortly.

The workshop has shown greater productivity in the months of June and July. Kamkaru Sevana has also participated in work of the Association of Mould Makers in Sri Lanka. In fact Kamkaru Sevana is one of the few institutions which trains workers for this type of work which has been felt as a very urgent need in the field of technical education.

Our Workshop foreman, Ranjith Ruwansiri, obtained no-pay leave for two years and left abroad for temporary employment. At a farewell party given to him before he left, several speakers expressed their appreciation of the services rendered by him to the workshop.

---

#### Study Programmes

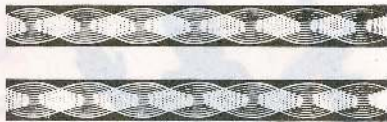
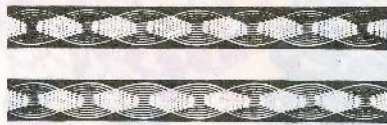
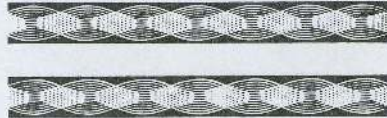
Several branches of the CWF besides Jaffna and Kantale referred to earlier have had study sessions in their areas during the week-ends.

In addition to these studies at the local level, a special one week's intensive study programme was conducted for the CWF by Fr. Aloy Pieris S.J. on "The Bible, Buddhism and Liberation". This Programme was attended by several CWF members from the provinces. It was followed by a study on 'Reading Marx' led by Nalin Swaris on July 30 and 31.



# **ANZ** GRINDLAYS BANK

107 YEARS IN SRI LANKA



THE BEST BANK IS THE BANK THAT SERVES YOU BEST.

**ANZ** Grindlays Bank

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND BANKING GROUP LTD.

“The magazine  
that opens your eyes  
to the meaning of events.”



Why not become  
a subscriber?

SUBSCRIPTION RATES AND REPLY FORM INSIDE