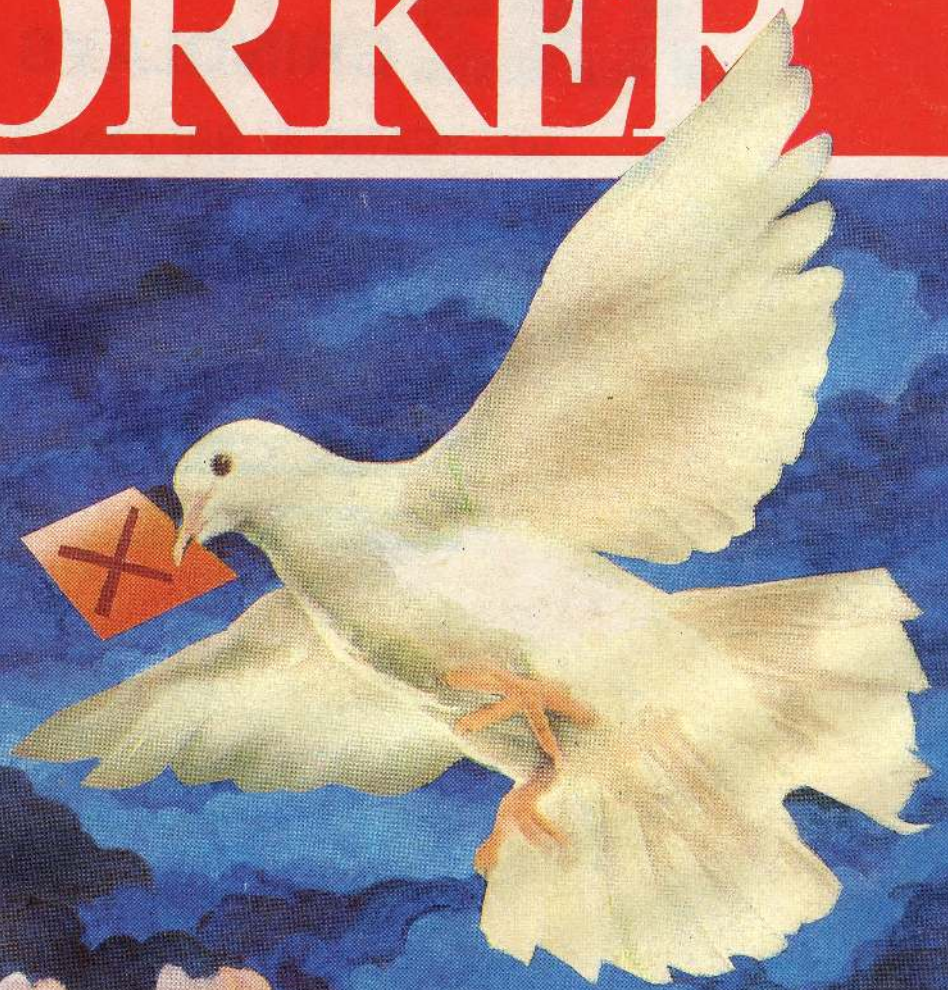


CHRISTIAN

Quarterly of the Christian Workers Fellowship

WORKER



BALLOT AND BULLET

“Open Market” and our Social Crisis

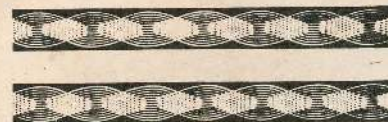
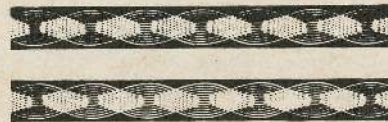
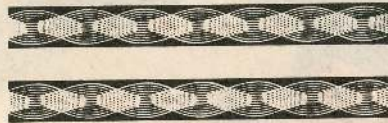
Professor W.D. Lakshman,

Why the Vote on Account ?

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**SPECIAL
SUPPLEMENT**

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

*Since difficulties in communications and transport prevented the effective distribution of this quarter's **Christian Worker** which was got ready in the press, we have decided to include a comment too on the Presidential Election that has been concluded.*

*The background to the Presidential Election and the events that preceded it have been amply covered in this issue of **Christian Worker**, thus enabling our readers to obtain a fuller understanding of the political situation and the climate in which that election was conducted.*

EDITORIAL BOARD.

Presidential Election and the Aftermath

The Presidential Election conducted on December 19, resulted in a total country-wide voter turn-out of 55.32% (5,186,223 out of a total 9,375,742 registered voters).

UNP Candidate **R. Premadasa** received 50.43% of the votes cast (2,569,199 votes) which is 27.4% of the total registered votes.

SLFP Candidate **Sirima Bandaranaike** who came second polled 44.97% of the votes cast (2,289,860 votes) which is 24.42% of the total registered votes.

SLMP Candidates **Oswin Abeygoonsekera** received 4.5% of the votes cast (235,719 votes) while the rejected votes totalled 91,445.

This was in marked contrast to the 1982 Presidential Election where the total voter turn-out (6,552,147) was 80.44% of the total registered voters (8,145,015). On that occasion UNP Candidate **J. R. Jayewardene** received (3,450,811 votes) 42.37% of the total registered votes, while SLFP candidate **Hector Kobbekaduwa** polled (2,548,438 votes) 31.29% of the total registered votes.

The Difference

The reason for the low poll in the recent Presidential election was of course the boycott call and terror unleashed by the DJV/JVP in the South and the LTTE in the North. (See Comment inside).

In fact the more recent SLFP-led boycott of the Provincial Council Elections accompanied by terror though not of such magnitude, was a "dress-rehearsal" as it were by the DJV/JVP for the present Election. This Provincial Council Elections boycott with its attendant terror now boomeranged on the SLFP (which led that boycott) in the present Presidential Elections!

In the election violence on December 19, more than 20 polling stations and several Security Force patrols came under attack. Police sources reported that more than 10 persons lost their lives and 18 others were injured in subversive attacks during the polling. Three public servants on election duty were shot dead. Certain polling stations could not function at all: 49 polling stations in the Monaragala District and at least two in the North Central Province. In some places army personnel in civilian attire had to single-handedly conduct the poll in the absence of staff. Despite the lack of public transport facilities generally throughout the island and in the teeth of terror that was clearly evident in several areas, people showed their determination to vote in walking long distances to the polls. In one place in the Anuradhapura district where the polling staff of a station was fired upon and had to take refuge in the next nearest polling station some miles away, people from the affected village trekked some miles to cast their votes at the station to which the staff had fled! Several polling stations started late for security reasons. But whatever the difficulties, the people by and large responded positively wherever polling facilities could be made available. It was abundantly clear that the accustomed power of the ballot had to prevail over that of the bullet!

How the Polling Went

The notably low polling districts have been: the Vanni with a total voter turn-out of 13.79% (the Vavuniya electorate in that district having only a 3.61% voter turn-out), the Monaragala District with a 17.01% voter turn-out (the Monaragala electorate having a 6.51% voter turn-out and the Wellawaya electorate 12.66%); the Jaffna district with a voter turn-out of 21.72%; the Matara district with a voter-turn-out of 23.84% (the Hakmana electorate of that district having

Contents

THIRD QUARTER 1988

Subscription Rates
Annual Rs. 30 (Local)
Asian US \$ 6.00
Others : US \$ 12.00

Cheques in favour of
CHRISTIAN WORKERS FELLOWSHIP
39, BRISTOL STREET,
COLOMBO 1 - SRI LANKA,
TELEPHONE: 27708

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

To Our Readers

This issue has been delayed due to the prevailing unrest. Our next issue will be published in January 1989. We take this opportunity to wish you a peaceful Christmas & New Year.

FROM OUR READERS

1 Elections—End of an Era or more gimmicks?

COMMENT

- 4 Ballot and Bullet: LSSP Statement
- 17 Ossie Abeygunesekera Speaks Out
- 19 A Cry from the North
- 21 "Open Market" and our Social Crisis
- 26 Why the Vote on Account?

WORLD AFFAIRS

- 29 China's Socialists Modernization; A New Book on China
- 33 Castro Gorbachev's 'perestroika' not for Cuba
- 34 The Singapore Elections
- 35 'No' to a Dictator

- 36 Brazil Creates a Controversial Constitution
- 39 India The Rajahs Return
- 37 Philippines
 - (a) Busted Graftbusters
 - (b) Aid and U.S. Bases in Philippines

HUMAN RIGHTS

- 46 CWF Wins Fundamental Rights Case
- 48 CRM on New Emergency Regulations
- 49 Sarana Devasarana Fundamental Rights Upheld
- 50 Human Rights Violations in the Philippines

RELIGION AND POLITICS

- 54 New Soviet Policy and Religion
- 56 The Church in China
- 57 The Singapore Grip
- 59 Will the Church of Silence please Stand and Speak up
- 59 Anglican Bishops Work on World Issues
- 60 The Pope and South Africa
- 61 Bishop Tells of Vatican Grilling

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

From our readers

The Editor,
CHRISTIAN WORKER,
Bristol Street,
Colombo.

Dear Sir,

I shall be grateful if the following letter is published in the CHRISTIAN WORKER. I am a regular reader of the C.W.

Thanking you,

Sinhala Buddhist Supremacy

At a time when our country and people are suffering from the worst crisis we can remember, an English daily in the Island often espouses national unity. Mostly, it urges and beseeches the divided Sinhala race to get together to face the threat of Tamil Tiger terrorism and Indian invasion.

This newspaper takes pains to remind us of the traditional role of the Maha Sangha in providing guidance to the ruling monarch. Attention was focussed on this tradition

when the venerable Maha Nayaka Theras of the four nikayas wrote to the President proposing dissolution of Parliament as a first step to diffuse tension and create the climate for conducting clean elections. Unfortunately for most of us, but perhaps fortunately for a few, the President kicked the ball into the Prime Minister's half and the P.M. kicked it out. Some days later, this national daily was elated when Mrs. Bandaranaike agreed to and did meet the President at the request of the Nayaka Theras. Again, unfortunately for some and fortunately for others the meeting flattered but failed. First there was agreement, then retraction and finally a correction. Back to square one, the status quo remains except for platform polemics. The newspapers' elation is deflated.

Editorial reference to patriotic people and patriotic forces are galore but patriotic newspapers are unheard of. Unity of the Sinhalese with the Tamils, Muslims and others who inhabit this land is seldom spoken of. No attempt is made to ascertain why there is no unity amongst the Sinhalese on the one hand and why certain Tamil groups side with the Indian security forces against their own brothers, on the other.

Several of this same newspaper's recent editorials have been ended with '... if you love this land ...'. The emphasis is clearly on the land, the territory. The greed for land has been one of the main reasons for disunity, not only between states but also within states, races, communities,

families and even individuals. It must follow then that love for land will mean further disunity and division. Instead what seems to be needed is love for people, for other human beings, an understanding of their problems, grievances, desires and needs. And from such understanding, acceptance that the land, sea, air and all else that makes this country beautiful must be shared fairly.

This is no time to sponsor Sinhala unity with the Maha Sangha in the forefront to reign supreme. Racial riots should not be followed by religious rage. No race can claim superiority over another *per se*. In fact we are one race living in one land.

Sri Lankan soil is soaked with the blood of its sons and daughters. Do we want to saturate it? Strife stricken, suffering Sri Lanka needs sanity. Let us hope that all newspapers in the island act sanely.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) Nissanka de Silva

39, Gunasekera Gardens,
Rajagiriya.
28th November, 1988.

Elections

End of an Era or Mere Gimmicks?

Behind much of the discussion — often very confused — is the question an end Or just a continuation? End of what? Certainly, the end of Dharmista Era. Does Dharmista Era mean the President or the Parliament or both. The consensus seems to be that it means, the two third majority in the Parliament. Giving that was a mistake that the people have made and one that people seem to be very eager to correct, as soon as possible. If they succeed, this would be a mistake they would never make again.

What does such a majority mean? It means among other things, the possibility of a continuous Emergency, and the possibility of arbitrary Referendums etc. Essentially, it means the divorcing of people from decision-making, by making it easy to pass acts in Parliament and by making the opposition meaningless.

On this corner stone — towards Majority — rests the entire edifice of the Sri Lankan society, in the most unhappiest hour of its history.

Quite openly, the responsibility for recent violence is now placed on the Referendum of 1982. There is no doubt that such analysis is correct. However, that Referendum would not have been possible if not for the massive majority that the Government had in Parliament. The argument that armed opposition is the only possible alternative was also built on the experience of absolute power, which was a result of the absolute majority.

According to the preamble to our Constitution, it is people who give their power to the Parliament. The historic lesson we have learned from our most recent experience is that, when giving it such power, we must keep a hold on it. And the only way to do this is to make sure that no party has a massive majority. In fact, under a proportional representation system there would be no such majority. Therefore the demand for dissolution of the present Parliament which has won common consensus, needs to be supported by everyone who wants to return to a democratic way of life.

The history of Sri Lanka in the last two decades is a man-made catastrophe. This catastrophe was constructed on the basis of an idea that a weak opposition is essential to the development of a country, such as ours. Of course, these same words were not used. Instead it was said, a strong government, capable of carrying through necessary legislation was necessary for stability. And stability in turn was said to be very essential to development. As a result of putting this idea into effect we created the most chaotic and unstable period in our history — namely the seventies and the eighties.

The period in our history in which the parliamentary opposition was strongest was the 40's, 50's and 60's. This also happened to be a more stable period than the period thereafter.

In the sixties, the slow pace of development began to be blamed on the opposition. It was said, that we should have a government that cannot be disrupted by the actions of the opposition. Thus, subtly the public opinion was made to accept the view that parliamentary opposition was a hindrance to development. This view propounded by right-wing "think tanks" was gulped down on the middle class who took it to the people. The people acted on this and created two governments, one in 1970 and another in 1977. Thus there was an experiment for 18 years and the experience proved the immense dangers of this theory. There is much agreement now that the experiment has proved the hypothesis wrong.

Minister Atulathmudali stated in parliament on 24th November that the burning issue of today is violence and not dissolution! This shows that the government is not in a mood to dissolve the parliament on its own. Every pretext would be used not to dissolve. However, whether before Presidential election or thereafter the crucial question of Sri Lankan politics is the dissolution and holding the next parliamentary election. Presidential election is a secondary affair.

Colombo,
27.11.88.

M. Lalith

WHAT OF THE ANGELS' MESSAGE?

Another Christmas is approaching,
Yet unlike in former years,
Harried people are all broaching
Doubts well-founded, valid fears.

Will there be a dissolution,
Will this reign of terror end,
Can we hope a just solution
For the past will make amends?

Can we hope for fair Elections,
Free of rigging, force or fraud,
And the voter free selection
Make sans fear of man or God?

From the ashes of destruction,
Brutal massacres, despair,
Can law, order, reconstruction,
Justice, social ills repair?

Youth frustrated die in action,
Shattered faith must be restored,
Intransigence and reaction
Must no longer block the road.

Peace, good-will, the joyful tidings
Will they ever here prevail,
Force and terror over-riding
Make that welcome message fail.

— Mervyn Casie Chetty

Racial Discrimination

I read with deep concern and disillusion an article written by a Tamil who alleged victimisation on grounds of his race. The article appeared in an English daily a few months ago. The victim states in the article that during an interview for a job it became clear to him by the attitude of his interviewers that his race was going to hinder his selection for the job, for which he claims, he had the necessary qualifications and experience. This is only one experience highlighted by an unfortunate individual but there are many more occasions — (though in different circumstances) where the minority has been victimised for similar reasons, which have gone unnoticed. Recent utterances of many politicians, sections of the Sangha, other individuals and so-called guardians of the Sinhala race have set in motion an open and a hidden wave of anti-Tamil feelings. Many will refuse to swallow this bitter pill, saying Tamils are living freely in many parts of this country and so on. But the bitter truth is, that Tamils are discriminated against, specially in middle/lower sections of society and it is no secret that they are looked down and frowned at even.

I belong to the majority community and deeply regret how the people have been misled and divided by their races, by politicians, who in turn have exploited this hatred to safeguard the interests of a few and the corrupt system.

Adding weight to this vicious campaign are sections of the Sangha and organisations calling themselves the guardians of the Sinhala race, who blindly abet the capitalists in their campaign to deceive the masses. The vicious propaganda has poisoned the minds of the majority to such an extent that they do not realise how seriously they damage the bonds binding all communities so vital for their own liberation, equality and lasting peace.

It is for their own betterment if the people realise soon the root causes of the present crisis and cast aside petty camouflaging communalistic issues which have been created by interested sections for their benefit.

Social and Economic liberation of the people depends mainly on how soon this is realised and it is the uppermost duty of the conscious to enlighten the masses on this, which undoubtedly und ermines their struggle for liberation.

As for the case of victimisation, I wish to suggest through your Journal that we initiate a campaign to always call ourselves 'Sri Lankans' rather than by the individual's race.

Kottawa., — SRI LANKA — 27-08-1988.

Verse and Worse!

VERSE AND WORSE
(For the Edification of Readers)

U. N. P. Resolution

"Need to remove impediments before the law-enforcers."

News Item

Wisemen met
To put violence a net
Resolved brilliantly
Proving world-class statesmanship
"Make way, for Police
Army, STF and the rest
To deal with the situation
As they wished."
Ever since the Indemnity Bill
Was lost,
Poor 'law-enforcers'
Are suffering Ansabage
It seemed.

"Both Candidates for Presidency want fair elections."

News Item

As fair now
As the familiar pair
Our voting system
We are told
Has been repaired
The re-conditioned system
Requires the Identity Card
Perhaps, each Citizen needs
A Security Guard
To safeguard the Identity Card
It must be declared an offence
For any one to die
Without first posting to the
Commissioner
His Identity Card.

OPERATION CODE NAMED HOME-GUARD

"Male Mercenaries Captured"

News Item

Immediately after the capture
An invitation reached for a new venture
A Telegram from a highly powerful person
From the Island known as Sri Lanka
Text: Employment available
Salary negotiable — Fringe benefits plenty —
Prospects Brightest.
Contact Operation Code named Home-Guard.

BRAIN AND HEART

"Both Heart and Brain must be cultivated and developed equally and simultaneously."

— Dr. Walpola Rahula at an international Conference.

A Tart develops the brain
Not the heart and makes money.
There is another matter so sinister
And not all funny.
What of those who don't cultivate
Either Brain or Heart?
Perhaps its more relevant
To consider this matter first.

INVITATION FOR DINNER

"JVP Leader invited to join Interim Cabinet."

News Item

Darling dear
Dinner is ready
And we keep awaiting
Come
We'll keep all night
All day too
Everyday till you arrive
DRINK — DINE
Join the Party!

— Lokurala

o

A New Venture ISET

Indian School of Ecumenical Theology

Ecumenical Institutes have been started in several parts of the world. In our own country, our theological seminaries/colleges have been offering a course or two on ecumenism. However, I am afraid that Christian theology in India still seems to be by and large transported from the West and not fully incarnated. So much so there is need for a new creative common venture in our theological orientation.

The Ecumenical Christian Centre (ECC) stands for the promotion of the unity of the Churches and the unity of humankind. Established in 1963, the Centre has tried to keep this vision alive through its involvement in the life of the church and the Nation. The ECC is an all-India Institution which has on its council 21 Church Bodies — Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant — and Christian Organisations.

In 1976 the ECC considered a proposal to start an Indian School of Ecumenical Theology (ISET) at the ECC and resolved to run a three-month intensive course on ecumenical theology for teachers in theological seminaries/colleges. However, the proposal is getting materialised only now. One might add that ECC, with its modern accommodation facilities spread over its 30 acre campus and a good library, provides a quiet atmosphere for serious study and worship.

The ISET is run by a National Advisory Board whose members are drawn from different Christian Churches in India. The ISET has also an International Panel of Consultants consisting of eminent theologians from different Churches. It is however, the Ecumenical Christian Centre which is sponsoring this new venture, this natural blossoming of India's ecumenical experience.

Every year the Indian School of Ecumenical Theology will offer:

- (i) a three-month course for Teachers in Theological Seminaries/Colleges. **THIS WILL BE THE MAIN THRUST OF THE ISET.** The three-month Course is also open to a limited number of persons from abroad.
- (ii) three courses each of one-month duration meant for
 - (a) pastors and theologically educated persons,
 - (b) youth leaders, and
 - (c) persons engaged in regular education.

The ISET aims at following a participatory learning process through sharing of experience, exposure programmes, discussions, seminars and writing assignments.

FACULTY

A team of theologians drawn from different churches constitute the faculty with REV. DR. SAMUEL RAYAN, S.J. as the Principal. With the wholehearted participation and encouragement of the Heads of Churches, teachers of theology and Christians of our country and friends abroad, the Indian School of Ecumenical Theology hopes to contribute towards the safeguarding of the integrity and well-being of God's creation, the liberation of human history, and the building of a wholesome world of freedom, justice and peace for all.

For further information, please write to:
Indian School of Ecumenical Theology,
P.B. 11, Whitefield, Bangalore — 560 066,
India.

— REV. DR. PAUL C. JESURAJA, S.J.

BALLOT AND BULLET

Notwithstanding the prevailing unsettled and at times even un-nerving conditions, three candidates are expected to contest the Presidential Election on December 19th this year.

Prelude to the Presidential Poll

It was in fact in an atmosphere heavily charged with uncertainty and tension that the three Presidential candidates—Premier R. Premadasa of the United National Party (UNP), Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and Ossie Abeygoonesekera of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP) submitted their nomination papers to the Elections Commissioner at the Colombo Town Hall amid tight security arrangements following the protest Hartal call that week by the Desapremi Janata Viyaparaya/Janata Vimukti Peramuna (DJV/JVP) and a day that was marked in consequence by an absence of public transport, deserted streets and a general closure of shops and workplaces carried out by owners and employees through fear of reprisals in the event of non-compliance. It was a day too on which according to official Joint Operations Command (JOC) statistics, 16 persons were killed and 26 others injured in clashes between demonstrators and the security forces in Tangalle and Tissamaharama in the South and at Badalkumbura in the Moneragala district of the Uva Province where one person was also reported killed in Bandarawela and at least three persons injured on the Badulla-Passara Road when the forces fired to disperse a large crowd. Many of the demonstrators seemed to have disregarded the repeated warnings over the State radio service that demonstrators would be shot at sight, as an idle threat.

Early that very morning of nomination day, 25 prisoners escaped from the Anuradhapura prison in a daring break-out taking along with them guns and ammunition. Some days earlier, 121 subversive suspects detained at Pelawatte camp in the Matugama area were said to have made their escape by mean of a tunnel dug by them. There was an attempted jail-break too at Negombo and a riot at Colombo's Welikada jail on November 7th when 12 inmates were reported killed and 30 injured when army commandos moved in to

prevent an escape by prisoners and to quell the disturbance. A similar riot was also reported in Kandy's Bogambara prison. These incidents and the jail breaks prompted the resignation of Justice Minister Nissanka Wijeratne and his Deputy Shelton Ranaraja* from their posts. (However as Mrs. Bandaranaike has pointed out, Minister Wijeratne should really have resigned in July 1983 when 58 Tamil prisoners including Kuttimani were killed at Welikada.)

But the most shocking incident was undoubtedly the DJV arms grab from Pannala Training Camp of the National Auxiliary Force on November 1st in which a large haul of sophisticated weapons including T-56 automatic assault rifles much favoured by the DJV/JVP and loads of ammunition were taken, the manner of the raid also raising strong suspicions of complicity within and an apparent knowledge of weaponry as shown by the raiders in their abandoning the obsolete weapons. A statement said to have been put out by the DJV/JVP after the raid stated that it had been done to avenge the killing of JVP Politbureau member and North Western Province Commander Sumith Atukorale. The statement also expressed regret at having had to kill an officer and some soldiers in this operation. This too was important since one of the avowed aims of the JVP has been to win over "patriotic elements" within the armed forces to strengthen its militia. (Orders for protest actions, ban on organisations, newspapers and the like are put out now in the name of the "Joint Commanding Headquarters of the Patriotic People's Armed Troops" and signed by "Kirthi Vijebahu" as Chief Commanding Officer). It is therefore not without significance apparently that the Pannala camp raid was carried out at a time when attempts were also being made by a Grand Alliance of certain Opposition parties to bring the JVP into the mainstream of the political

* Acting Minister Ranaraja has since explained that he resigned because he did not want to present in Parliament a Bill for the repeal of the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry which the Government wanted to scrap, adding that he was in complete agreement with the demand for Parliament's dissolution (*The Sunday Times*, November 20).

process with an offer to dissolve Parliament. Was the Pannala raid not an indication that while the JVP was attending meetings of this Alliance, it was also preparing for a major showdown with the Government ?

The seven Opposition parties other than the JVP that constituted that Alliance led by the SLFP had on October 17 put forward 10 points for implementation to President Jayewardene after which they said "they had every reason to believe that there will be a marked de-escalation of violence if not a complete cessation." In a letter to the President setting out this position the parties added : "It must be evident to anybody that the statement was made on the basis of some clear understanding. We have staked our credibility and the future of our parties with this statement." Referring to President Jayewardene's requiring the JVP itself to agree to this arrangement, the seven parties said : "Your laying down conditions is tantamount to your rejecting our *bona fides* and making things more difficult for the people of this country." (We will be adverting to these negotiations between the parties and the Government later on).

Dissolve Parliament !

On November 9th the day before the Presidential nominations, Members of Parliament belonging to the SLFP and Maharagama M.P., Dinesh Gunawardena of the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) staged a walk-out calling for the dissolution of Parliament and the holding of free and fair elections. They said they would keep away from sittings until Parliament was dissolved. Making a statement before the walk-out, the Opposition Leader Anura Bandaranaike told Parliament that the 10 points made by the 7 parties served as "an extension" of the demands made by the Sangha and the Bishops. Several meetings were held with the President and although he had agreed to an immediate dissolution of Parliament and the setting up of an interim council to monitor free and fair elections, this had not been fulfilled and as time passed each day the situation aggravated. He concluded saying : "Therefore, Sir, I would request this of the Government on behalf of the two parties (SLFP and MEP) and on behalf of all others who have been asking to make these demands, including the Alliance which is called the United Socialist Alliance (USA) which comprises the Mahajana Pakshaya, the LSSP, CP and the NSSP." The USA had in fact months ago wanted a body consisting of representatives of all political parties to conduct the elections and had staged a public campaign on September 22nd in support of its demand for an immediate dissolution of the present unrepresentative Parliament and the holding of a free and democratic election.

In response as it were to the disturbed conditions in the country, on October 20th the Mahanayake Theras of the Malwatte and Asgiriya Chapters of the Siam Nikaya, the Presiding Mahanayake of Amarapura Maha Sangha and the Mahanayake Thera of Ramanna Nikaya had sent a Memorandum to the President Jayewardene requesting him to take the following steps to bring about peace in the country : " 1. Government should notify immediately the dates for the Presidential

and Parliamentary elections. 2. Parliament should be dissolved and the Presidential and Parliamentary elections should be conducted under a Caretaker Government. 3. Meaningful steps which in general are acceptable to all citizens of Sri Lanka should be taken after discussions with party leaders for conducting fair elections in a manner that will win the confidence of the people, and 4. Party Leaders and the general public should conduct their affairs with restraint and patience, considering the present dangerous and volatile situation in the country."

The President stated that leaders of seven parties had met him and discussed these matters but "that the Janata Vimukti Peramuna, a recognised political party did not participate in the discussion. It is only if the JVP agrees to this course of action and shows a proper response that it will succeed." The President ended his reply by saying : "I anticipate your counsel and the active support of political parties to persuade the JVP to join in the course of action. I wish to extend my sincere thanks to you again for your advice."

The Grand Alliance

Seven opposition parties had put forward 10 points to the President to which reference has been made already. Earlier this alliance was said to consist of eight parties, *i.e.*, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP), the Eksath Lanka Janata Party (ELJP) of Rukman Senanayake, the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) of Kumar Ponnambalam, the Democratic Workers Congress (DWC) led by Abdul Aziz, the Liberal Party (LP) led by Chanaka Amaratunga, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) led by M. H. M. Ashraff and the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) backed by the JVP led Inter-University Students Federation (IUSF). The idea was to move towards a "People's Democratic Alliance" of these parties on the basis of a common programme, contesting under a common symbol



Leader of the SLFP Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranayake

(the dove was suggested) and putting forward a common Presidential candidate. There were a series of talks and at least at the talks held on August 7th and September 17th the JVP along with the other parties participated with its Inter-University Students Federation. By means of its association with the SLFP and its allies, the JVP was able to gain considerable public credibility and acceptance in the country. In fact, the attempt of the SLFP leadership to form a bloc with the JVP and Anura Bandaranaike's offer of three portfolios to it in an SLFP Coalition Government could not have failed to give it added prestige and leave it more than enough scope to even penetrate the SLFP organizationally especially at the local level. But while it was not averse to advancing its position through this alliance for a time, the JVP was certainly not prepared to bind itself down to becoming yet another junior member of a SLFP led Coalition. It is said to have sought to impose its political demands on the SLFP and allied parties and asked for several of the districts in the Southern, Uva and North Western Provinces in the event of a general election involving around 40 per cent of the seats available. While the SLFP was able to go along with many of the JVP's political demands like the abrogation of the Indo-Lankan Accord and the removal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), demands like the winding up of the Provincial Councils caused difficulties since other allies like the Muslim Congress and Liberal Party could not agree and even as regards the Accord, the SLFP's position was one of "re-negotiating" it rather than its abrogation. This became all the more evident after the SLFP leader's talks with Indian High Commissioner J. N. Dixit. However as a member of this projected Grand Alliance the JVP was able to advance itself effectively and cashing in cleverly on the widespread anti-government sentiment in the country, sought to project its image as that of the most resolute liberation fighter for the down-trodden Sinhala masses. After the announcement of Premier Premadasa as the UNP's Presidential Candidate and the nearing of Nomination day, the JVP began to distance itself from the SLFP and the Alliance. The JVP also took umbrage at the SLFP organizing meetings and projecting Mrs. Bandaranaike as the common presidential candidate of the 8 parties. Very soon SLFP meetings in the Uva Province had to be cancelled due to DJV/JVP threats and SLFP activists in many places began to feel DJV/JVP hostility towards them. After having first banned the UNP, the DJV proceeded to also ban the SLFP making it impossible for both these parties to hold meetings in the South. The Grand Alliance was thus reduced to seven parties but later the ELJP also decided to draw out when Mrs. Bandaranaike was to contest under the SLFP's 'hand' symbol and party colour. The Muslim Congress too began to raise the question of seats to be contested by them at the Parliamentary election. The Tamil Congress for its part made it clear that it was in the Alliance only on the basis of obtaining an improved devolution of power package for the Tamil areas which would find acceptance with even the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Negotiating with the President

The "Alliance of Seven" had however, as mentioned earlier, put forward their 10 point plan for peace to President Jayewardene. These were the release of all political prisoners and students in custody, the end to all military operations including those of the IPKF, the dissolution of Parliament and the ending of the State of Emergency, the announcement of dates for both Presidential and Parliamentary elections, the appointment of an interim council representative of recognised political parties to govern the country until the conclusion of the elections, the suspension of the North-East Provincial Council election, disbanding of all para-military organisations, suspension of all powers of Provincial Councils until after the elections and the dissolution of local bodies whose terms had been arbitrarily extended.



H. E. President J. R. Jayawardene

Since the seven parties after three rounds of talks with the President wished to have some result, they wrote to the President stating that the following 4 points should be met as a pre-condition to further talks with him : (1) All Ministers outside the Cabinet including Deputy and District Ministers should resign before the dissolution of Parliament. (2) A Caretaker Government be formed which included Ministers and members of political parties with representation in Parliament. (3) Parliament should be dissolved soon after the constitution of the Caretaker Cabinet, and (4) All matters concerning national security and the conduct of elections to be in charge of a Cabinet Committee to be appointed forthwith.

The Mahanayakes are then said to have again intervened in securing another meeting on Saturday 5th November between President Jayewardene and Mrs. Bandaranaike. At the meeting the President apparently promised to dissolve Parliament immediately, appoint an interim Cabinet consisting of equal numbers of government and opposition members and to constitute a

committee of that Cabinet consisting of leaders or representatives of all recognised political parties who would be responsible for seeing that the elections were free and fair and also for security matters until a new government was elected. However the SLFP maintains that within 90 minutes the President had changed his position and promised to consider dissolution if the SLFP could bring Rohana Wijeweera into an interim Cabinet. At their meeting however Mrs. Bandaranaike had made it clear that she was not speaking for the JVP but that the implementation of the proposals put forward could result in the JVP coming round. Quadri Ismail in *The Sunday Times* of November 13th quotes an SLFPer as saying: "We know what happened. JR got Cabinet permission and he was sincere in what he said. Then I think someone in the alliance—and we know who it is—leaked the news to Premadasa that



Presidential Candidate Ranasinghe Premadasa

the JVP had pulled out. They would have then decided that since the JVP will start attacking both of us and we were no longer 'protected' by the JVP, they have nothing to gain from having a general election which Premadasa has been opposed to from the beginning." It is said that Prime Minister Premadasa insisted that he needed the support of M.P.s for his election and that Parliament should not be dissolved before that. (If Parliament was dissolved who would listen to the M.P.s anymore? was his point). The Premier had however said he would agree to an earlier dissolution of Parliament if the JVP was willing to join the Interim Cabinet.

Dissension in Cabinet

At the Cabinet meeting of Wednesday (November 9th) there was apparently a discussion about the dissolution of Parliament towards the end but the Premier was not in favour of a decision being taken and left early to present the Estate Tamils' Citizenship Bill. There was said to be a heated exchange of opinion with Shelton Ranaraja wanting an immediate dissolution on the

ground that while the Ministers may have security guards, their supporters do not and therefore the only real way to grant this security was to dissolve Parliament. Some, it is said at this discussion, did not want Parliament dissolved even next year! This division in the UNP on the question of dissolution has apparently left one section rather panic-stricken. A Deputy Minister H. B. Abeyratne has already resigned and left the country, while Justice Minister Nissanka Wijeratne who was out of the country made parliamentary history perhaps by his *resignation through telex* on the ground of the Anuradhapura and Pelawatte prison escapes! The other section of the UNP is of course ready to fight back seeking obviously to rely on the sweeping powers that have recently been given under the Emergency Laws to the Security Forces, which provides the death penalty for any death threats made and powers to the Security Forces to dispose of dead bodies without inquest proceedings.

Premier Premadasa's position is to say the least ambiguous, seeking to avoid anything that might possibly have an adverse effect on his election campaign. He has been most conciliatory in his approach to the JVP and was even reported to have vowed to combat the T-56 through loving kindness. Mr. Premadasa has also stated that while his policies and those of the JVP differed, their objectives were the same and he has personally guaranteed the JVP's safety if it was ready to come into the open and take part in the elections. He has further refused to hold the JVP guilty of killings and violence unless it was first established in a Court of Law.

The JVP's Position

The position of the JVP has been made clear in its statement appearing in the Sinhala daily *Divaina* of November 7th to which attention was also drawn in Parliament by SLFP's Gampaha M.P., S. D. Bandaranayake on November 9th.

The JVP has demanded that six conditions must immediately be fulfilled if it is to accept the elections to be conducted as genuine: (1) President Jayewardene has to resign and a Senior Judge of the Supreme Court appointed to act in his place. Parliament too has to be dissolved and a Caretaker body set up to conduct the elections. All Provincial Council and local bodies must be dissolved. (2) Conditions must be created for the JVP to participate in election activity without any hindrance whatever. (3) All para-military organizations like the STF, Home Guards, Green Tigers, etc., must be disbanded and not combined with the armed services. (4) All officers without seniority or merit who were promoted because of their massacre of patriots must be expelled from the security forces. (5) All Indian troops and RAW must be asked to go back. (6) The Indo-Lankan Accord must be abrogated. The statement says that "any election held without granting these demands will not be accepted by the JVP which calls upon the people to reject whatever be the result of such an election."

Although Opposition Leader Anura Bandaranaike of the SLFP was reported to have declared in October

that "he was proud to say that the JVP had promised them that once Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike was President of Sri Lanka they were prepared to lay down their arms" (*Daily News*, October 5th), the JVP has taken up the position that it is not responsible for the spate of violence engulfing the country. In this context, the "reply to questions" given by the JVP leader and appearing in the *Lankadipa* and *The Sunday Times* of November 13th makes interesting reading. Here Wijeweera seeks to draw a distinction between the JVP and the DJV in which organization he says there are members of the JVP as well as non-members. "A wide section of people belong to it (DJV). We believe that some members of the UNP, the SLFP and other groups..... are also in the DJV." He goes on to explain: "The reason such an organization was born was the cruel repression of the Government with its Indian patrons. It is to face State terrorism and Indian imperialism that such a wide people's organization came into being..... Desapremi Janata Viyaparaya was born on a solid foundation. It cancelled the monopoly that Mr. Jayewardene and the Indian fifth columnists held on the use of violence. It is an important progressive act. It is correct that patriotic people get organized to protect themselves and their country. We will help them, support them. We respect them."

That the DJV is a broader group than the JVP embracing certain members of the UNP and SLFP among others can well be accepted in the context of the links and contacts that some UNP and SLFP sections would appear to have with this armed organization. But can it be denied that the JVP does in fact have a controlling interest at least in this wider organization that now operates as the DJV? The objectives and political alignment of the DJV as is also evidenced in Wijeweera's fulsome praise and support for it, would in fact make it for all practical purposes the *alter ego* of the JVP even accepting the distinction that Wijeweera make between the two organizations.

It was the eminent sociologist Newton Gunasinghe who died recently that once described the JVP and LTTE as twins. As we have pointed out in these columns, the social base of the Sinhala JVP group in the South is similar to the social base of what constituted the backbone of the Tamil militant movement in Jaffna, namely sections of petit-bourgeois youth with their own fears and frustrations. In fact it could well be said that the JVP politics in their own way reflect the deep-going nature of the crisis in our society today. In any crisis, it is but natural that the less stable social layers should be the first to erupt. The underlying economic and social causes therefore that contribute to the attraction that the JVP has for certain sections of our petit-bourgeois youth must first be understood as part of our social reality if any worthwhile remedial measures are to be taken to dispel the fears and frustrations of such youthful sections or win them over to a different political course.

Furthermore as we have already stated in these Columns

"the brutalisation of our society following repeated waves of violence and the unhealthy totalitarian trends that have manifested themselves especially since 1977 have also had their effect. The flagrant violation of election laws, the

reliance on force whether of the State apparatus or of hired musclemen, the destruction of human values and the enthronement in their place of money-values, the growing self-aggrandisement and blatant corruption of those in high places and above all the devaluation of human life have only served to push such youthful sections into losing completely their confidence in the Government and in constitutional processes. To wean such youth away from the politics of despair and consequent recourse to the gun will by no means be an easy task in the present conditions. Furthermore the absence of a proper political alternative and a class force strong enough to show them a way out of the present morass, make that task doubly difficult. Hence the ready response of such youth to Sinhala chauvinist cries in a fashion similar to the Tamil Eelamist cries of corresponding youthful sections in the North. The displacement of Sinhala people from the East following the Peace Accord many of whom have their roots in the Southern parts of the island has tended to strengthen such tendencies. Furthermore the uncertainty of people as to whether there will be another General Election—a demand made by all opposition parties today—complicates the situation further."

(*Christian Worker* 4th Quarter 1987.) In the same editorial comment we went on to say

"We have in our last issue sought to highlight the danger involved in having recourse to the gun in conflictive situations. For the gun tends to evolve a logic of its own, turning its user into an extension of itself. Rational thought and human communication are subsumed in the 'final solution' offered by the gun. Have we now really reached a stage when account of the political bankruptcy of our leading Government and Opposition parties and the apparent absence of a political alternative, we have to go through a situation found in certain other countries when everybody is shooting at everybody else? It looks as if timely political action alone can avert such a tragedy."

More recent events make depressing reading and show nothing to relieve the situation described above. While both Tamil and Sinhala youthful sections have turned on the UNP Government in open revolt, there is also a difference between them. The Tamil youth in the context of their particular situation set out arms in hand towards a separate Tamil dominated state of Eelam which they thought would be an answer to their problems—a fight that the LTTE still carries on today taking on even the Indian Army in the process. In the case of the Sinhala youth, there appears to be more confusion than clarity of purpose infused through they generally

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are with a raw Sinhala chauvinist sentiment that has been further fed with anti-Indian feeling especially after the Indo-Lanka Accord. The strategy and tactics of the DJV/JVP to which they are attracted, are today directed essentially at unsettling and paralysing the Government and its machinery by means of threats and killings.—(The more recent killings have included those of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Minister Lionel Jayatileke and of United Socialist Alliance Provincial Councillor T. B. Wijesuriya and three others all from the North Western Province, in September and early October respectively). What is to replace the Government thereafter is not so clear. The call by the JVP is to “join the patriotic people’s movement today, then your problems will be solved” to use Rohana Wijeweera’s own words in his correspondence with *The Sunday Times*. It is however one thing to attempt a bid for power and quite another thing to be able to keep it.

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From the short-term point of view the tactics of the JVP/DJV have certainly brought results. Cleverly making use of the discontent and widespread anti-government sentiment, it has been able in the context of a vacuum created by the absence of a strong political alternative in the country to make a big impact, helped no doubt also by the attempt of both the major parties of the SLFP and UNP to use it for their own ends.

More recently, protest days have followed in quick succession and as a result of unofficial “curfews” declared in the name of the DJV in various areas, households have had to stay at home and even sit in the dark at night without watching television or listening to the radio under threat of reprisals. The DJV has also been successful especially in the South and increasingly elsewhere to move masses of people even if “through the barrel of a gun.” Households have been asked to supply a fixed number of persons to join the protest processions on the public highways. Such people are inva-

riably the sufferers whenever the security forces baton charge, tear gas or open fire to disperse the demonstrators. In Ratmalana recently even the workers had to come out of some factories to join in a protest procession before the police tear-gassed and dispersed them. Even in Colombo City there was some picketing outside a few workplaces for a day or two said to have been organized in the same way. Some of those made to picket in Colombo or to go in procession in the provinces have been highly placed officials in the Government Service and in State Corporations. But prior to even that, the JVP-led Inter-University Student Federation was successful in calling out school children in protest actions that have resulted finally in the closure of schools for nearly two months. Considering therefore the diverse sections of society that the DJV/JVP has been able by different means to move or mobilise, this political tendency could rightly be considered a remarkable phenomenon and one that is perhaps uniquely Sri Lankan!

Public transport both bus and railway has been badly affected from time to time by these protest actions, having a consequent effect too on the attendance of employees in workplaces and government offices. In fact latterly, the economic life of the country was ground to a halt with disruption caused by the closure of banks, the interruption of exports and imports in the Port, the breakdown in the distribution of petroleum products and of electricity in certain areas and even stoppage of activity on the plantations mainly in the South. In order to check subversive activity, the Government has had to declare a general curfew at night and sometimes to extend it during the day in affected areas. The normal life of the people has naturally been disrupted and they have been badly hit too by the increase in prices wherever a protest hartal was on. The deep South in particular has been badly affected by shortages in food with the crippling of transport. When hartals are declared, few shopkeepers or businessmen would want to risk trouble so such protests are invariably successful. In fact, fearful of reprisals, the people today prefer to generally obey the orders of the DJV rather than of the Government during hartals and protests and so avoid trouble.

Such tactics of terror and disruption carried out in the name of patriotism and of the oppressed people, however successful at present, are bound to prove counter-productive in the long run. (There are even indications now of an adverse public reaction to these protest actions in view of the hardships caused through the disruption of normal life as was evidenced recently). It was Karl Marx who rightly stressed that the liberation of the masses was a task for the masses themselves. Self-appointed “liberators” acting on behalf of or in the name of the masses, can only distort and undermine a genuine struggle of the masses for their own emancipation. We would do well to remember that the adventurist uprising of youth in 1971, however heroic, resulted in a tragic set-back to the mass movement and in the strengthening of the repressive organs of the capitalist State. Continued senseless violence, terror and disruption, can alienate the public and give the Government too an excuse to strengthen and widen its own system of terror in the name of fighting the terrorists.

Government's Counter Measures

In the face of the failure to draw the DJV/JVP away from violent protest and into the electoral process and the apparent lack of response to the Government's declaration of a seven day suspension of operations against it extended by another three days which the JVP has denounced as being fraudulent, the Government has sought to use its powers under the Emergency to keep going the essential services through the deployment of the security forces to afford protection to the workers engaged in such services by serving them with detention orders where necessary in order to ensure an uninterrupted output of work, and also to step up its military operations with the deployment of Army Commandos in the South.

New powers under the Emergency permit any police officer of the rank of Assistant Superintendent or above to authorise the cremation or burial of a dead body without the normal requirements of an inquest. (Earlier such authorisation could only be given by the Inspector General of Police). Under these new regulations, if anyone was caught giving out a notice threatening another with death or having such notices in his possession, he would be liable to a death sentence after conviction. Two retired Army Officers of perhaps Brigadier rank are expected to be appointed High Court Judges for this purpose since it is said that regular civilian Judges would have to face threats if they imposed death sentences on members or sympathisers of the DJV/JVP. That all this enhancing of powers of the police or security forces could lead to gross abuse and a further estrangement of the civilian population from the Government is only to state the obvious.

In this respect the events of September and October should already serve to underline these dangers. In early September we had the case of the young lawyer Wijedasa Liyanaarachchi who died while in police custody which resulted in an unprecedented agitation by the lawyers, including a boycott by them of the ceremonial opening of the new Supreme Court Complex by President Jayewardene and the adoption of a resolution by the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) that lawyers would not appear for police officers in Court cases until all officers connected with the arrest and detention of Liyanaarachchi were interdicted and criminal proceedings instituted against all persons responsible for his death. This resolution, admittedly far-reaching in its effects, evoked protests from the police officers' Associations and from President's Counsel H. W. Jayewardene (also brother of President Jayewardene) who resigned from the Bar Association on the ground that the Bar Resolution violated the Constitution and the fundamental rights of the individual. The President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (President's Counsel H. L. de Silva) has in this situation effectively replied to the complaints of the police officers and to Mr. Jayewardene.

Agitation over lawyer Liyanaarachchi's death was followed by a period of unrest in schools. The death in

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police shooting, in order to disperse demonstrators, of a student in Badulla served to aggravate the situation. This was followed by further casualties in Kandy and elsewhere. The University Campuses of Ruhuna, Kelaniya and Moratuwa were declared closed till the end of the year while a closure rap for 108 schools that were said to have failed to maintain discipline became counter-productive and only provided a ground for further student unrest that finally resulted in an island-wide closure of schools except in the North. (In this situation President Jayewardene called upon Sinhala students to follow the example of their Tamil counterparts who attended classes and lectures at schools and Universities during the height of the insurgency in the Northern and Eastern Provinces).

Student unrest seems to go back to late March this year when two Tangalle schoolboys in the South were abducted by men in uniform allegedly of the STF and later found killed with burn marks on their bodies. When students in the country demonstrated, the police reacted in several instances by shooting at the student demonstrators. One could surely expect the authorities to have more humane methods of riot control when it comes to dealing with students and school children !

Many cases of arbitrary arrest, torture and "disappearances" have been documented. The case of the missing Ruhunu Campus lecturer Sathyapala Wannigama and now Wijedasa Liyanaarachchi are only the better known names. Public attention was again focussed on this question recently when we learnt of an abduction followed by the gruesome murder in late October of three young people in Ratnapura whose bodies were later discovered in a jungle on the Wellawaya-Koslanda Road, partly burnt and with nails driven into the skulls and the soles of the feet slit. The youth had also been shot. The son of the UNP's Chief Minister for the Sabaragamuwa Province and himself the UNP's candidate at the last Ratnapura bye-election was taken into custody together with some others as suspects in these murders. One of the murdered youth was a medical student, another has studied accountancy and the third was an ex-

employee of the Steel Corporation. The body of the medical student was taken in a long funeral procession that wended its way through the streets of Colombo from the Medical Faculty where it lay in state to the Kanatte cemetery for cremation.

As in the case of Liyanaarachchi, Government sources have stated that these persons were in fact involved in JVP/DJV activity. But the abduction of these youth was done in broad daylight and at a time when the Government had declared a suspension of counter-subversive action. Such incidents hardly help to establish the credibility of the Government even though the District Minister of Sabaragamuwa has since resigned and the Government has promised to bring the offenders to book.

JVP Leader Rohana Wijeweera has recently acknowledged in *The Sunday Times* that Sathyapala Wannigama was indeed the JVP organizer for Tangalle and Liyanaarachchi the JVP organizer for Tissamaharama. But as pointed out in our last issue, *any person* in this land, be he or she 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!

We do not for a moment however justify the killings perpetrated by the DJV. Some of these murders have been as ghastly as those in Ratnapura as was seen in the recent deaths (November 9th) of G. Nandasena de Silva a victimised 1980 striker who had set up a farm at Uva Karandagolla on the Ella-Wellawaya Road and of four other persons, one of whom was an Engineering student at the Moratuwa Campus and three others engaged in farming in the area. They were reported to have been shot after torture. Nandasena's head had thereafter been cut off and displayed by being strung up on a tree by the roadside with a severed hand from the dead body of the student inserted into its mouth. A poster exhibited nearby announced that it was the handiwork of the Armed Force of the Moneragala DJV. All this apparently because Nandasena did not go with the politics of the JVP!

Nandasena's head had thereafter been cut off and displayed by being strung up on a tree by the roadside with a severed hand the dead body of the student inserted into its mouth.

While not therefore justifying this wanton taking of human life (and in our view socialism is for man, not man for socialism) we have sought to draw attention to the need for the Government to act wisely and responsibly especially in what is admittedly a difficult and even dangerous situation. Any Government has the right, nay a duty by its citizens to maintain peace in the country with the powers that it has at its disposal, but merely to expand the existing powers of the police and security forces is certainly not the answer. It could in fact be even dangerous in the light of the human rights violations that we have already experienced. It would be more correct to think that a good deal of the existing tension would disappear if an immediate General Election was announced and a Caretaker Government with the Opposition too in it was appointed. This would also give more confidence to the people running the essential services and to the Security forces too, while it would also help to preserve the ordinary citizen's faith in the democratic processes.

We are disappointed therefore to find that at a meeting the President and Ministers had with the Miw-bima Surakeeme Vijapuraya ("Safeguarding of the Motherland Movement") represented by Ven. Muduluwawe Sobitha Thera, Ven. Maruttettuwa Ananda Thera and former M.P., Prins Gunasekera in a bid to arrive at a settlement, Prime Minister Premadasa is reported to have said that "Parliament could continue till next July in terms of the Constitution and that it could be dissolved any time after the Presidential Elections" (*The Island*, 16th November). For the problem today is also one of credibility on the part of the Government and a widespread fear that Parliamentary elections which people have not had for over 11 years, may not in fact be held at all.

However at the meeting already referred to, that the President and Ministers had with the delegation led by the Ven. Sobitha on November 15th, the latter had stated that at a meeting held in consequence of an appeal made by them to discuss ways of achieving peace, the JVP had made the following demands which it said would have that result: (1) Immediate dissolution of Parliament; (2) Immediate setting up of an Interim Administration; (3) Immediate release of all persons including Bhikkus and University students who are held in custody for political reasons; (4) Repeal of certain Emergency Regulations. According to available reports, the President had been in favour of an immediate dissolution of Parliament and an interim Government of all democratic parties but the Prime Minister had apparently held a contrary view on the ground that it would be futile to do so if the JVP did not serve in such an interim administration. As decided at the meeting between the President and the delegation, the President on November 16th, addressed a letter to the Ven. Sobitha to the effect that he, the Prime Minister and Ministers Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake who also participated in the talks, were prepared to meet the JVP leaders or their representatives and discuss matters direct.

The official communique issued by the Secretary to the President covering also the Prime Minister's remark referred to earlier, stated further that "He (the Prime Minister) added that the dissolution of Parliament can

be considered if the leadership of the JVP will stop violence, enter the mainstream of politics and consent to serve in the Interim Administration." (Mrs. Bandaranaike was quick to point out that the Prime Minister who had earlier refused to accept that the JVP was responsible for violence, had now taken a different position !).P

It is important to remember that between denial of popular participation in the affairs of a country and the emergence of violence, there is a distinct connection. Which raises at once the important question of the Presidential rule or executive form of Government which was introduced into this country by the present Constitution of 1978. For it was but one week after the last Presidential Election of October 20th, 1982, when President Jayewardene was returned under the new Constitution to this office, that he decided not to have a General Election but to have a Referendum instead.

Presidential Rule

The Constitution of 1978 introduced the Executive Presidential form of Government under which Constitution President Jayewardene himself contested and was returned as President in 1982. The existing Parliament however had been elected under the earlier Republican Constitution of 1972 on a system of voting that differed radically from the new system of proportional representation under President Jayewardene's own Constitution of 1978. (It was under the earlier 1972 Constitution that the UNP received the present massive majority it had, a situation that would have been quite impossible under the proportionate representation system of the 1978 Constitution). It was notwithstanding this important difference in representation, that President Jayewardene decided one week after his election victory not to hold a General Election but have a Referendum instead, seeking an extension of the life of the existing parliament (elected under the earlier Republican Constitution of 1972) by another 6 years, *i.e.*, until 1989. He did so on the ground that SLFP leadership had revealed itself at the 1982 Presidential Election to be "anti-democratic, violent and Naxalite," stating further that he had information that there were attempts to assassinate him, a few Ministers together with the Armed Service chiefs and others including Anura Bandaranaike. The Referendum as announced by the Government was conducted in such a manner and with such brazen misuse of State power in defiance of election laws that even the Elections Commissioner was compelled to comment adversely on it in a subsequent report made by him. (See *Christian Worker* of 4th Quarter 1986 and 1st Quarter 1983).

Under the 1978 Constitution, *the sovereign power vested in and exercised under the 1972 Republican Constitution by the people through the National State Assembly was undermined by the executive powers vested in a President not answerable to Parliament and at least on a par*

— The President's Secretary has since corrected his statement and said that he had erred in stating that the Prime Minister attributed violence to the JVP. (*The Island* of November 19).

with Parliament if not above it. Under the new rules, the President could select and dismiss Cabinet Ministers at will and was able to address Parliament whenever he desired it but was not in any way answerable to that body since he was not a Member of Parliament. *Parliament was thus devalued and insulated from mass pressures through the abolition of bye-elections and the nomination of new M.P's by party officials whenever a seat was vacated either through the death or resignation of an M.P. Any Government Members of Parliament who crossed over to the Opposition now forfeited their seats and could be replaced by the Government Party thus ensuring a permanent majority for the Government during its tenure of office. The recent case of Ronnie de Mel only serves to pin-point the issue.*

We are paying the price today for the unhealthy and authoritarian trends that became manifest under President Jayewardene's Government

It would appear that this Executive Presidential form of Government and Constitution was expressly designed to fit Mr. J. R. Jayewardene with his interest in ancient history and his especial affection for monarchs and rulers, for he proudly counts himself today as the first elected Head of State and the 204th in an unbroken line of succession from Vijaya in 544 B.C. *A genuine revival of parliamentary democracy however will necessarily entail an abrogation of the Presidential system inaugurated by him and a restoration of the power of the people to an elected Parliament.*

We are paying the price today for the unhealthy and authoritarian trends that became manifest under President Jayewardene's government, quite apart from the "open economy" that has created such a yawning gap today between the affluent and the needy. This was seen in the Government's early interest to curb the power of the trade unions. Soon picketing by workers in defence of their rights was repeatedly met with attacks by armed pro-government hoodlums, one such attack resulting also in the death of union militant Somapala. The wave of strikes in the public sector in 1980 demanding higher wages in consequence of the sharp rise in the Cost of Living was ruthlessly suppressed by what was in effect a massive lock-out of workers, from which defeat the workers' movement has not yet been able to fully recover. This was coupled with the building up of "loyal" UNP stooze unions openly favoured and patronised to debilitate the workers' movement further and frustrate concerted mass action. It must in fairness be said that

the open patronage of Government sponsored Unions was started first by the SLFP when it sought to build up its own trade unions while in the Seat of Government power. But the process was completed by the UNP in a most shameless manner.

Victimisation and punitive transfers of political opponents, recruitment of workers through MP's job cards, commissions and hand-outs on State contracts and the like with the promotion of the private sector became the order of the day. Then came also reprisals against intellectuals and critics of the Government through severe beating up by thugs and the disruption of meetings including a cowardly physical attack on Professor Ediriweera Saratchandra, a highly respected and leading literary figure in our country, who had dared to write a book on the nature of our "dharmista society" which soon became a best-seller. Supreme Court rulings on violation of fundamental rights were contemptuously treated, by the promotion and preferment of Police Officers found by Court to be violating such rights. After their decision in the Vivienne Goonewardene Fundamental Rights case, the Supreme Court Judges involved had themselves to experience hoodlums who were transported in State buses, demonstrating outside their residences. Need we go on? It is this self-same Government that today cries out about the need for safeguarding democracy.....

He has offered a "New Deal" for the country, announcing that all those whose monthly income is less than Rs. 700 will receive an income of Rs. 2,500.

The Presidential Contest

One would have thought that Mrs. Bandaranaike who had sought hard for the last few months to advance herself as the "common" candidate would have made the scrapping of the Executive Presidential system as her main plank on which to mobilise support. Political observers have noted that although this issue was earlier voiced by her and included too by the JVP in the policies that such a "common" candidate must accept, it has been discreetly dropped in the broad statement of generalised principles announced by Mrs. Bandaranaike. If so, it would appear that Mrs. Bandaranaike is now contesting to continue the Executive system and not to do away with it. Otherwise a genuine attempt could well have been made by her to reach general acceptance with all opposition forces on the basis of a firm undertaking given by her that if selected, the present parliament would immediately be dissolved and a free and fair elec-

tion held for a new parliament which will function also as a Constituent Assembly to frame a new Constitution to restore the power of the people to an elected Parliament and so revive genuine parliamentary democracy.

Mrs. Bandaranaike has instead sought to make out that she was contesting the Presidential election to restore peace in the country. How she is going to do that is not clear but it is apparently to be on the basis of direct negotiations with the LTTE and with India too to 're-negotiate' the Indo-Lankan Accord and also send the IPKF back to India. As far as her economic policies go, these do not radically differ now from the UNP with her acceptance too of the "open economy," a trend that would be further strengthened with Mrs. Bandaranaike presently having in her ranks former Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel who was responsible for the last 10 Budgets of the UNP Government.

The position of the UNP candidate Prime Minister R. Premadasa is much more intriguing. He speaks today as if he were an entirely new person and not the Prime Minister of the UNP Government who has also introduced legislation on behalf of President Jayewardene for over— 10 years.

Proudly announcing in Kandy that he would be taking his Oaths as President before the Chief Justice at the historic Octagon of the Dalada Maligawa the most hallowed place in the Buddhist world, he answered the questions raised by his opponents as to why he could not so far find solutions to the problems with India, sending back the IPKF and solve the student problems of the country, by stating as follows: "I wish to tell them that I am not the President of this country at the moment. I am only the Prime Minister with less executive powers. According to the Constitution the Prime Minister has no executive powers. It is the President who has them. This position was accepted even by the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament who insulted me by saying that the Prime Minister is just a peon. I did not reply at that time because there was a certain amount of truth in what he said. That is the reason why I am seeking the presidency of this country so that I will have the necessary powers to act and to instruct my Ministers to act in keeping with my policies." President Jayewardene cannot exactly relish his Prime Minister putting all the sins of the UNP Government on him and that too in his very presence at public meetings!

Returning to the island in early October after a visit to China and thereafter London to receive the International Housing Award, Mr. Premadasa has projected the image of a person who can show results and implement his policies. He has offered a "New Deal" for the country, announcing that all those whose monthly income is less than Rs. 700 will receive an income of Rs. 2,500. "I envisage that they will spend Rs. 1,452 on food and make a saving of Rs. 1,042 each month out of that income. The saving will be Rs. 25,000 in 2 years. This will be their capital for doing a trade or starting a small industry of their own." We leave it to our readers to evaluate the effects of this proposal, but we are disappointed to find that

Mr. Premadasa has not said a word about reinstating the poor victimised strikers of 1980, many of whom belong to his own Ministry of Local Government. He too, like Mrs. Bandaranaike, is for sending the IPKF back and for negotiating a "Friendship Treaty" to replace the Indo-Lankan Accord.

Although the main tussle in this Presidential contest will be between Prime Minister Premadasa and Mrs. Bandaranaike of the SLFP, there is a growing body of opinion in the country especially among the more politically advanced sections that there is little to be gained by voting for either of these major parties whose racist and capitalist policies have resulted in the present ruinous state of the country. These people will naturally opt to vote for the SLMP candidate Oswin Abeygunasekera who though young and a comparative new-comer to politics has at least the "Glamour" of having accompanied Vijaya Kumaratunga on his peace missions to India and Jaffna and who soon after Nomination Day was also responsible in helping to defuse a tense situation in Anuradhapura and Vavuniya which could well have again sparked off racist eruptions.



**Presidential Candidate
Oswin Abeygunasekera**

Although a difference of opinion among the parties in the United Socialist Alliance over the tactical advisability of putting forward a candidate for the Presidential Election when conditions for a free and democratic election did not exist, prevented the selection of a candidate contesting in the name of the Alliance, the SLMP nominee's candidature has been endorsed first by the Nava Samaja Party (NSLP) and later by the Lanka Sama Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) as support of a fraternal party standing for the common programme adopted by the Alliance. (See LSSP Statement in box on this page). The other constituent party in this Alliance, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL) has since decided to call on voters to vote for the SLMP candidate and give their second preferential vote to Mrs. Bandaranaike.

LSSP STATEMENT

In regard to the present Presidential Elections in Sri Lanka, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, having no confidence in the UNP and the SLFP, declares that it does not believe that either of these parties can solve any of the problems that threaten to bring about a calamitous future for Sri Lanka.

Government had refused to dissolve the illegal parliament and give the people the opportunity again of electing a Government of their choice.

Today the country is almost on the verge of anarchy. This state of things has been brought about by the JVP and its associates through threats, sabotage and a campaign of fear intensified by continuing slaughter. They are working towards bringing forth out of the situation a fascistic dictatorship. The alternative to this appears to be the counter drive towards the establishment of military rule.

The LSSP which condemns both official and unofficial terror declares that both these parties that have shamelessly paraded their links with the JVP and are still seeking its support in this election, also share the responsibility for the present disastrous developments. The LSSP has consistently endeavoured to mobilise progressive forces in the country to prevent these developing dangers, considering this to be the principal task.

It is a fact that now the conditions for a free and democratic election do not exist. The LSSP decided to try to persuade the United Socialist Alliance to refrain from nominating a candidate for the Presidency. This endeavour did not succeed.

The present situation is one in which the LSMP has nominated Oswin Abeygunasekera as its candidate for the post of President. Since the SLMP is a fraternal party within the Alliance and stands for the common programme adopted by the four parties at the commencement of the Alliance, the LSSP calls upon all progressive forces to vote for Oswin Abeygunasekera, the SLMP nominee for the post of President.

(November 16)

Although late in the field in this Presidential Contest, the SLMP candidate has already attracted the fury of political gangsters as seen in the dastardly attack made on his very first election rally in Colombo on November 17th in which three persons were killed and several injured, including the party's General Secretary Y. P. Silva.

The question that arises therefore is how far the Presidential Election will in this situation reflect a full and free verdict of the people as things stand right now. The JVP has said it would call for a boycott of this election and if one is to judge from the results of the Provincial Council election, (when a similar boycott was called by both the JVP and SLFP), voting in the deep South especially is then bound to be negligible. The same could be said from the voting in the Horowapata bye-election on September 29th where the JVP called for a boycott (a poll of 5,913 out of a total 42,773 voters) though allowance must be made here also for differences regarding the UNP's choice of a candidate and the fact that the others contesting were Independents and not much enthusiasm was therefore shown in this election. The keeping off of voters through intimidation can however only assist the ruling UNP since with its governmental power it could afford some protection to its own voters and organise the impersonation of others as in fact it did from all reports in the recent Provincial Council elections in the South. Which is an added reason why the recent changes to

the elections law to allow for staggered Presidential elections can be so dangerous.

Meanwhile a boycott call accompanied by threats on the part of the LTTE had helped to prevent the submission of nominations for the North-East Provincial Council on the part of the TULF, leaving the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) uncontested with 23 seats in the North (19 in Jaffna and 4 in Vavuniya) and the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF) with 13 seats in the Mannar, Kilinochchi and Mulaitivu districts, also uncontested.

Elections have been fixed for the remaining 35 seats in the East on November 19th and polling staff have been airlifted to man the polling booths in the context of a 3 day hartal declared in the Northern and Eastern Provinces by the LTTE and a call to boycott this election with dire consequences to those who defy the call both polling staff and voters!

All the while confrontations between the IPKF and LTTE have continued in the North and East. And in some villages, mostly Sinhalese, continue to be massacred as on October 13 at Mahakongaskade in Vavuniya and at Gomarankaduwa in the Horowapota electorate on October 14. (The LTTE have denied that they were responsible for these massacres).

So whether in the North, East, South or West it is now a case of both ballot and bullet. No wonder there have been repeated rumours of martial law being imposed in what is now a dangerous situation which if unresolved through the revival of the democratic process (i.e. immediate dissolution of Parliament and an interim Caretaker Government to hold a General election), can only lead to disaster, the final outcome of which will be anybody's guess.

In this context, President Jayewardene's statement of November 6th to the members of his UNP trade unions that if there was an attempt to topple the legally-elected Government of Sri Lanka, neighbouring India would come to our assistance as she did in the Maldives, (The Island of November 7) has only helped to create further scares of yet another Indian intervention or occupation. The disintegration of Sri Lanka could not be more complete!

18th November, 1988.

EDITORIAL

Postscript

Provincial Council Elections in the East held on November 19th resulted in the EPRLF and SLMC obtaining 17 seats each and the UNP 1 seat (in the Ampara district). Certified statistics of the Elections Department show that despite the LTTE boycott call 62.8% of the total registered voters polled at this election (399,066 out of 635,516). The EPRLF obtained 215,230, the SLMC 168,138 and the UNP 8,056 with 7,742 votes being rejected. District-wise the highest polling was at Batticaloa (79.41%), Ampara coming second with 54.9% and Trincomalee last with 52.8% of the

total registered voters polling. While polling was highest among Muslim voters and then among Tamils, the predominantly Sinhala Ampara electorate with 94,064 voters polled only 6% and the other Sinhalese majority electorate Seruwila (Trincomalee district) polled only 19%. This low turn-out among the Sinhalese was attributed to a JVP hartal call against voting. This was in sharp contrast to the Tamil and Muslim areas where voters were apparently prepared to defy a similar boycott call by the LTTE.

The present breakdown in administration and communications and the law and order situation with political killings and other forms of violence has severely hampered the Presidential campaigns of the opposition candidates, though not that of the UNP candidate with his access to the State machinery including Police and Services communication systems, State-owned vehicles not affected by the fuel shortage and the support of the Government controlled news media too as pointed out by Mrs. Bandaranaike. The latter has now formed the "Democratic People's Alliance" with the six parties that are Left of her earlier grouping, i.e. SLFP, MEP, TC, SLMC, DWC and LP.

We are happy to note that the Manifesto of this new Democratic People's Alliance calls for an end to the present Executive Presidency and the restoration of parliamentary sovereignty through devising a new Constitution — an issue ignored so far by Mrs. Bandaranaike in her election campaign. Interestingly enough, although the Manifesto advocates the abolition of the existing Provincial Councils, a similar if not greater devolution of power is envisaged through new "Regional" Units with legislatures "encompassing the whole island" with a provision for two such Units — a majority Tamil and a majority Muslim Unit respectively — to replace the existing North-East Provincial Council. Also noteworthy in this Manifesto are the inclusion of Sinhala and Tamil together as the official languages of the country and the safeguarding of Citizenship rights given recently to plantation workers of recent Indian origin — two "sensitive" issues which the SLFP and UNP have often misused in their attacks on the Left especially during elections. Circumstances have now compelled both capitalist parties to accept the Left's positions on these issues!

Meanwhile the SLMP Presidential Candidate, through his anti-capitalist campaign and resolute stand against the politics of racism and terror, has become the rallying point for Left-wing forces in the country in both North and South. The violent but yet unsuccessful attempt to break up the very first SLMP election rally seems to have even galvanized support as the impressive Red Funeral procession of two of these killed at that meeting showed. The very next public meeting in Colombo was a resounding success.

There appears to be no change yet in the position of the JVP DJV, but the JVP-led labour organization called Jatika Kamkaru Satan Madhyastanaya (National Workers Action Centre) has conveyed seven "non-political" **minimum** demands to the Government through the Maubima Surakeema Viyaparaya (Safeguarding the Motherland Movement) which if granted, will it says result in an end to the disrupting of civil administration and paralysing of normal life. These demands patently designed to win over the working people, include doubling the wages of all employees, permanency in employment to casual workers, a monthly wage for plantation workers, re-instatement of dismissed strikers, a festival advance of Rs. 1,000/- in December, release of all workers and trade unionists in custody and restoration of powers to civil administrators with a suspension of action by security forces against strikers. These are in addition to the political demands already made by the JVP through the same source, to end violence. However any attraction that the JVP/DJV politics had during a period of lull in mass activity could well wear out now in the context of the electoral process in which people are involved. DJV/JVP attempts at disruption in such a situation would most probably invite a hostile reaction on the part of the masses.

Significantly, in the very first chapter of his book on **Guerilla Warfare**, Che Guevara has stated: "When a government has come into power through some form of popular vote, fraudulent or not, and maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, the guerilla outbreak cannot be promoted, since the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted." It is difficult to see how the DJV/JVP tactics could prove to be an exception even if they are not exactly those of guerilla warfare

but rather that of being able to move wide sections of people and control certain areas through "power that flows from the barrel of a gun," however novel may be the techniques employed! Events in the North should also be sufficient warning that guns can be used by others too, as can be seen even now in the arming by certain other groups in the South, ostensibly for self-defence. In this same context, we also think it is most unwise for leading military officers, even though un-named, to be asked to address the public through broadcasts made over the State radio network.

However, in this depressing situation, if President Jayewardene decides even now to bow to popular pressure by dissolving Parliament (notwithstanding the opposition of the UNP's presidential candidate) it will greatly help to relieve the prevailing climate of fear and suspicion and strengthen the normal parliamentary electoral processes to which the people are accustomed. Such an action could, of course, quite ironically, even earn President Jayewardene an important place in Sri Lankan history as the restorer of democratic processes in the island! Whether he will have the courage to take such a resolute step in the face of the opposition to it in his own party ranks, is of course the question.

28 November, 1988.

Addendum

The Dissolution of Parliament and a General Election

President Jayawardene on December 3rd night announced to the Nation that Parliament would be dissolved on December 20th and a Parliamentary General Election held on February 15th 1989 with March 9th as the date of convening the newly elected Parliament. He stated also that nominations for the General Election will be called for between December 30th and January 6th next year and that the cut off point for parties contesting the election would be reduced from 12 per cent to 5 per cent with the zonal system too being scrapped under a further Constitutional amendment to be passed by Parliament in December.

While this new Constitutional amendment is certainly a move in the right direction and one urged much earlier by the working class parties, the President's announcement of the dissolution of Parliament has been deprived of its full effect owing to its belatedness even though it has helped to re-assure the public that a General Election is now to be held. If the dissolution of Parliament had been announced earlier and took place before the Presidential Election accompanied also by the setting up of a Caretaker Government to conduct both Elections, it would have had the desired impact and relieved the prevailing tension to a great extent besides strengthening also the democratic process.

It is unfortunate too that in the course of its present anti-subversive drive the Government has thought it fit to re-introduce an Indemnity Bill withheld earlier in the face of widespread protests. (See last issue of CHRISTIAN WORKER). In this situation the

Democratic People's Alliance (DPA) of 5 parties led by Mrs. Bandaranaike has called for the implementation of the following on or before December 10th "if an atmosphere conducive to a free and fair Presidential Election" is to be achieved: 1. The dissolution of parliament; 2. The appointment of an interim government to ensure a free and fair election; 3. The withdrawal of the Indemnity Bill; and 4. A ceasefire and immediate halt of mass arrests and a release of political prisoners.

THE SUNDAY TIMES of December 4th reported negotiations between representatives of the SLFP and JVP to bring the latter into the DPA. The JVP was reported to have called upon all members of this Alliance to engage in a protest campaign until the dissolution of Parliament and asked the SLFP leader to withdraw her candidacy for the presidency as the JVP felt a free and fair election was not possible until Parliament was dissolved. In fact a statement said to have been issued by Upatissa Gamanayake of the JVP (SUN of December 6th) has disowned the peace talks between the Maubima Surekeema Viyaparaya and the Government and reiterated the need to implement all its original demands for peace to be restored.—(See story i side).

The DPA's new call for action by December 10th does not state what would be its position if the Government does not respond favourably. Although Mrs. Bandaranaike will seek to act constitutionally there would no doubt be elements both within and outside her ranks who will be tempted to resort to extra-parliamentary action in such an event. Such a development could well throw the whole election process into jeopardy. In that play of ballot and bullet it is left to be seen whether the customary power of the ballot will ultimately prevail over that of the bullet.

6th December, 1988.

Nominations for the General Election will be called for between December 30th and January 6th next year and the cut off point for parties contesting the election will be reduced from 12 per cent to 5 per cent with the zonal system too being scrapped under a further constitutional amendment to be passed by Parliament in December.



At the December 1st SLMP Election Rally in Kadawata, Devabandara Senarathne speaking minutes before he was gunned down. On the extreme right is Presidential Candidate Ossie Abeygoonasekera.

Ossie Abeygoonasekera Speaks Out Special Interview with Christian Worker

- Q:** With two of the most prominent national figures from the two major political parties contesting the Presidential Elections, how can you possibly hope to win?
- A:** The two other contestants and the parties that they represent have come to be very well known for the sorry state that their politics and policies have led our people into. I believe that by contesting this presidential election I am offering the people of Sri Lanka an opportunity to break with these Capitalist parties and their bankrupt politics and help forge an alternative together.
- Q:** But the parties in question have remained as effective forces on the island's political scenario for more than three decades and time and again the people have reposed their trust in them, while the party that you represent has only just emerged. Why do you feel that the people are sufficiently disenchanted with them so as to attempt the considerable challenge of forging a political alternative?
- A:** Political Parties have to be judged by their results, not simply by the number of times they have been in power. It is these two parties of the UNP and SLFP who must take the blame for the present mess we are in. Through their opportunist,

racist and right wing politics they have played about with human lives.

No one can possibly fail to see how the country has been plunged deeper and deeper into poverty and indebtedness through the 'open economy' policies that they both basically accept.

Both these parties have consistently pursued racist politics that have resulted in alienating the island's minorities and antagonizing India and this has now led to the presence of Indian troops in the North and East.

It is the refusal of these parties to devise the necessary political structures that would accommodate the aspirations of the island's minorities—the Tamil, minority in particular—that has led to this crisis.

- Q:** But you are widely accused of being the only candidate who openly supports the Indo Sri Lanka Accord!
- A:** The President declared war on the Tamil minority and as a result ended up having to enter into this Accord with India. The Prime Minister himself introduced the ratification of this Accord in Parliament.

Mrs. Bandaranaike has gone on record to say she wishes only to negotiate the Accord in order to make it more acceptable. The Prime Minister has declared that he would like to get much closer to India through the signing of an Indo - Sri Lanka Friendship Treaty. None of them have rejected the accord.

We have always stood by the plain truth that it was precisely the petty racist politics of both the UNP and SLFP that created a problem that India could not ignore and that led to the Indo - Sri Lanka Accord. We have maintained that both parties to the pact, India as well as Sri Lanka, must rigorously implement the agreement that they have entered into so that the Indian troops can leave our shores as quickly as possible.

Q: How do you explain your relations with the EPRLF which is known to have been part of the Tamil separatist movement?

A: The EPRLF as well as the other Tamil groups represent the aspirations of the Tamil minority who had been so alienated by the racist policies of the other two parties contesting this election, that they had come to the painful conclusion that they were no longer a part of our nation and so decided to build their own state of Eelam. These people saw in the peace mission that Vijaya Kumaratunga led to India and to Jaffna — of which I was a member — a gesture from the ordinary Sinhalese people of the island indicating that they wanted nothing more than to live in unity with their Tamil brethren. Our party for its part decided that it would be inhuman to reject the hand of friendship held out by the Tamil people of the North and East to the Sinhalese through these militant groups.

It is precisely the goodwill generated by our contact with the North and East that enabled me, soon after submitting my Nomination for the Presidential Election, to proceed to Vavuniya and Anuradhapura and successfully help defuse racist tensions that were building up in these areas and that could have led to serious trouble.

Q: It has been claimed that your candidacy will only serve the interest of the UNP by splitting the Anti-UNP vote, would you comment?

A: I do not see things in terms of an Anti-UNP vote and a Pro-UNP vote because our people are politically far too sophisticated to operate within such a narrow frame-work-of choice.

There is no magic in simply saying you are Anti - UNP if you have nothing to offer as an alternative to the UNP's bankrupt capitalist policies. People have to break out of the sort of politics where the green and blue alternate when it comes to forming governments without any change in the exploitative structures of the capitalist system. This is where a socialist alternative has to be sharply counter - posed to these capitalist policies.

My contesting the election is explicitly in order to give those who believe that an alternative to the two dominant parties is essential, the needed opportunity to rally round and take up the challenge to forge such an alternative, in the course of the forthcoming General Election as well.

Q: What kind of alternative does the political tendency you represent stand for?

A: The advancement towards a socialist Sri Lanka as spelt out in the programme of the United Socialist Alliance,

Q: What do you believe to be the central issue in this Election

A: I believe that the issue most central to this election is the restoration of democracy and of democratic rights and being able to live without fear of violence and intimidation.

The steady erosion of democratic rights has been very evident after the victory of the UNP in 1977 and more so after the introduction of the 1978 constitution with its executive presidential form of Government which debased Parliament and deprived it of the sovereignty it enjoyed.

It was precisely the petty racist politics of both the UNP and SLFP that created a problem that India could not ignore and that led to the Indo Sri Lanka Accord.

We know also how under this Government, violence was increasingly used by pro-government thugs against Tamils, against the workers, against students, against critics of the government including clergy and academics. Even Supreme Court Judges were not spared. Then we had the racist holocaust of July 1983. Ever since we have had violence, terror and counter-terror.

We have to now restore sanity, peace and security. We have to end authoritarian government and restore power to the people and to Parliament by scrapping the system of executive presidential rule.

Q: The United Socialist Alliance seems to have been singled out amongst the opposition, by the JVP/DJV and you have personally faced many of their violent attacks. Why have you been singled out in this manner?

A: This is because we have refused to be intimidated by these sinister fascistic forces who are bent on destroying our democratic rights and freedoms through sabotage, slaughter and terror. The SLFP and UNP have only been pandering to these elements, both parties seeking to use the JVP/DJV for their own ends. It is only the JVP that has benefited by this tussle which it has skillfully used to advance itself. It is the public today who are suffering because of these games that the SLFP and UNP or sections of their membership are playing with the JVP even now. In this situation how can either of these two capitalist parties claim to be safeguarding democracy?

Q: Do you think that in this situation you could expect a free and fair election?

A: How can we, when everything is weighted against it? Apart from normal disadvantages suffered by an opposition candidate and the difficulties faced by our supporters in this campaign as a result of curfews, lack of transport and the like, our very lives are now threatened by fascistic gunmen. Armed attacks have been made on two of our election rallies in the course of which our Party Vice - President Devabandara Senarathne and six others have been killed. But there will be no retreat and no surrender by us. We will never give in. As Devabandara said minutes before he was mowed down while speaking at our Kadawata rally, bullets and bombs cannot stop us,

Q: Is there anything in particular that you would like to say to our readers?

A: Yes. I am aware that your magazine reaches into the heart of our island's intelligentsia and to them I say that the time has come for us to draw our lines and take our stand. Where ever there are men and women struggling to end the racism and violence that has seeped into our lives and is threatening to draw us in a sea of blood, and wherever our island's people gather together to move towards a socialist Sri Lanka, there we will be together in a common struggle for a better future for our children.

A Cry From The North

University of Jaffna,
October End, 1988.

Laying Aside Illusions

On 17 September, the Indian High Commissioner J. N. Dixit held meetings with various sectors of the Jaffna public, at the Jaffna Kacheheri.

The gist of his message was: The only sane and pragmatic option for the Tamils is to participate in the forthcoming Provincial Council elections for the provisionally merged North-Eastern Province. This would help to fill the political vacuum and sort out thorny issues like land settlement. An elected Provincial Council would make devolution a reality and peace a possibility.

On the surface, his thesis sounds cogent. But does it correspond to the ground realities?

Is people's participation in the so-called electoral process a possibility today?

Free and fair elections presuppose an atmosphere where people can make up their minds without being pressurised at gunpoint—whichever holds the gun.

What is the reality today?

We know that neither individuals nor community organisations can effectively raise their voices against the many human rights violations that continuously take place today. People live in fear. They live unsure of their destiny, in terrorised silence—thanks to the acts of omission and commission by the IPKF and the various armed militant groups. The run-up to the nominations made the situation worse. Almost daily, revenge killings are taking place; innocent, middle-aged civilians—both men and women—have been amongst the victims. In many instances the Indian Peace Keeping Force's complicity is well known. No one has the means or the courage to protest—mostly in fear of the IPKF and the dominant militant groups. In view of such a situation, for India to exhort full participation in what is portrayed as free and fair elections is a parody; especially because India itself is

partly responsible for creating such political conditions in the community over the past five years.

Indian involvement as an instrument in marginalising the people could be traced back to 1983, when India armed the militant groups. Criminal acts by some of them, which included a large number of murders on Indian soil, went calculatedly unchecked. Though India was the common patron of all the groups, divisions and antagonisms between the various groups grew at a rapid pace culminating in annihilations.

Thus it seems not incorrect to presume that India's own interests were being served by maintaining these divisions. The militant groups became large military organisations, accountable to different interests, including clandestine state agencies in India. The people had virtually no check over the activities of the groups. The rate and scale of killings in the community and the atmosphere created by these made people live in terror, and left them with little choice but to become passive on-lookers. Thus this past as well as the present calls into question India's own claims about its intentions to produce a viable democratic political process.

However, even if elections could be technically held, whom can Tamils elect as their representatives? Given the present state of divisions and volatility, it is hard to think of anyone who could function as representatives of the people—rather than as rulers. The future of elections will be decided by the manner in which India and the different groups perceive their own interests. The outcome of elections cannot resolve problems arising from habits that have been exacerbated by the prevalence of murder and assassination. Until these latter emotions have been curbed and people are able to speak out freely, elections will not be welcomed with any degree of enthusiasm.

It must be mentioned that the generality of Tamils held India in very high regard. There were the links of religion and culture. The leaders of the Indian independence struggle had a devoted following here. Furthermore, in recent times, Tamils owed much gratitude to India for the succour and refuge it provided for Tamils fleeing the state-sponsored violence in Sri Lanka. India also did a great deal to expose the Sri Lankan state's racism internationally. But things changed rapidly from October 1987.

The erosion of confidence in India amongst the Tamils is the result of hundreds of civilians — men, women and children — being killed by the Indian army during the closing months of 1987; and the mounting toll of disappeared, victims of torture and deaths in custody continuing unabated to the present day. When such brutal realities are brushed aside and India is able to speak in paternalistic and threatening tones, the community should realize its own position of weakness. The Tamils should be aware of the problems of relying on India to guarantee peace. It is fairly clear that the present elections as a key for a better future for the community is in serious doubt. What is the alternative? It would be irresponsible as well as fatalistic just to make pronouncements of powerlessness of the people and lay all the blame on Indian involvement. Such a position would not allow the community to extricate itself from the morass and would amount to empty India bashing. This would still leave the initiative and the controlling influence in the hands of external forces.

We have to examine not only our relations with the Indian and Sri Lankan states, but also ourselves. Our obeisance to terror within the community, our opportunism and lack of principles in the face of many internal killings has made it easy for external forces to use the same weapons to control us. In the face of our acquiescence with anti-democratic tendencies within the community, our plea for democracy becomes a meaningless exercise. Many individuals and youth who voiced criticism of the political forces have been victimised, driven away, or killed while we looked on.

Thus if the people are to regain their lost self-will and dignity, they will have to move towards a principled collective response. We have to assert universal values to which we are both emotionally and intellectually committed.

It is the lack of such commitment that enabled us to come to terms with murder when it concerned others' sons, and then watch helplessly in panic when the cancer, allowed to grow, threatened our own sons. We are now paying for past indifference.

When we look back, there are two aspects to our failing to stand up collectively — as people, as professionals, as institutions or as ordinary workers belonging to unions. One was that we were confused about fundamental principles and failed to reach any working agreement. The other was the fear that if one stood up, the person next may let him down, thus placing him in danger. Consequently, a few isolated threats, real or imagined, or the hint of a gun have sufficed to close down institutions. We have further dehumanised ourselves by losing a sense of pride in work and service by allowing these to become secondary.

How do we assert ourselves as people when no one dare take a stand on the many pressing issues? As individuals or small groups in our neighbourhoods, places of work, unions or associations, we must question our past, understand where we went wrong and re-discover our principles. We must be conscious of the

message of past experience, that in standing up for others we are also standing up for ourselves. This course requires courage; but no other is open to us. We have tried to play safe in the past. The result was mass murder from several sources. Non-combatant civilians too became unarmed frontline troops facing the wrath of advancing armies.

The future looks even more bleak with the rapid growth and consolidation in southern Sri Lanka of forces of narrow political vision. This opens the door for further involvement by external forces. Let us not remain forever unprepared and continue trapped in the logic of passivity — hoping against hope that someone else will bring us deliverance.

This statement was signed by a large number of academics from the University of Jaffna. Given below are those who had signed it up to 31st October 1988.

01. V. Arumugam (Education)
02. K. K. Aruvel
03. Miss S. Arulanantham
04. Balachandran (Geography)
05. P. Balasundarampillai (Professor of Geography)
06. A. J. Canagaratne (English)
07. V. K. Ganeshalingam (Professor of Zoology)
08. P. Gopalakrishnan
09. M. R. R. Hoole (Mathematics)
10. Miss S. Indradevi
11. S. Kandiah (Botany)
12. Mrs. P. Kanthasamy (linguistics)
13. K. Kugabalan
14. A. Kanapathypillai (Geography)
15. Miss K. Kandasamy
16. P. Kailainathan
17. P. Makinan (Mathematics)
18. M. A. Nuhman (Linguistics)
19. P. Pushparatnam
20. S. V. Parameswaran (Professor of Physiology)
21. N. Perinpanathan (Economics)
22. Rev. G. F. Rajendran (Zoology)
23. R. Rajmohan (Philosophy)
24. K. Rupamoorthy (Geography)
25. S. T. B. Rajeswaran
26. N. Sivapalan (Chemistry)
27. A. M. T. Saverimuttu (Botany)
28. R. V. S. Sundaresan (Botany)
29. K. Sriitharan (Mathematics)
30. Mrs. N. Selvarajah (Zoology)
31. S. K. Sitrapalam (History)
32. Miss C. Sinnarajah (Hindu Civilization)
33. V. Sivasamy (Sanskrit)
34. A. Sanmugas (Tamil/Linguistics, Assoc. Professor)
35. S. G. Sivagurunathan (English)
36. J. Sathiadass (Statistics)
37. G. M. Sebastiampillai (Sociology)
38. S. Sathiaselan
39. Miss S. Subathirai
40. M. Shanmugalingam
41. R. Sivachandran (Geography)
42. Miss A. Saverimuttu (English)
43. A. Thurairajah (Professor of Civil Engineering)
44. Mrs. R. Thiranagama (Anatomy)
45. W. Venkatesh (Zoology)
46. P. Vinobaba (Zoology)
47. Mrs. C. Vamadeva (Hindu Civilization)
48. M. Vedanathan
49. Miss V. Veeragathy (English)
50. Miss S. Vasuki (Philosophy)

In this article specially written for Christian Worker, Professor W. D. Lakshman of the Department of Economics of the Colombo University discusses how the post 1977s "Free Market" economic policies have contributed to the present deep-going crisis in Sri Lankan Society.

Open Market and our Social Crisis

Professor W. D. Lakshman

Introduction

The social and political fabric and the economic structure in Sri Lanka today and the totality of the underlying value system which provides the society its cohesion and sense of purpose are in a deep crisis of unprecedented proportion and magnitude. Every concerned citizen who is capable of some articulation is asking the questions of why we have got ourselves into this morass and how we could get out of it bringing back some order and sanity into our society. Even if it amounts as yet perhaps to nothing more than a groping in the dark, an inquiry into those questions is required from all intelligent members of the society. One may here find oneself completely at a loss even to comprehend, let alone evolving feasible and effective solutions to the enormity of the problems facing us. The situation is rapidly worsening and one cannot over-emphasise the urgency of action for a solution however imperfect the knowledge is about the whys and hows. This article, however inadequate it is to meet the challenges facing an analyst of the current situation in Sri Lanka, is an attempt to understand, with the hope that whatever little it provides by way of that understanding, will also help in guiding policy action in future.

I have decided to write about the economic policy in the last decade and the current crisis, perfectly aware of the fact that the latter, very clearly, extends beyond "economic policy" as understood traditionally. The "economic policy" and matters related to it might not even be the predominant element among the underlying sources of the wide ranging social crisis. It is also disputable whether one can divide a complex situation of the type we, as a society, are faced with today into separate economic, social, cultural, political and any other dimensions. The underlying casual factors must be located in the entire social fabric but given the limitations of print space I shall restrict myself to what I consider to be some of the economic factors responsible for the present quagmire. I have anyway no qualms at all about the fact that the matters I am discussing here

played a significant role in giving rise to what we are witnessing today in the Sri Lankan polity, although I do not claim for them the dominant role in that respect.

Post 1977 Policy Regime : An Overview

From the time the Sri Lankan society achieved political independence from the British raj in 1948, there has been a process of experimentation with different types of socio-economic policies and strategies to achieve a degree of "development" as demanded by the growing aspirations of the people. The most recent stage or as some may call it, the most recent "episode" in this long process of experimentation has been the policy variously described as the regime of "free economy," "liberalised economy," "open economy," "market-oriented economy" and so on, which operated since 1977. This can be described as a policy experiment which has been desired by certain sections of the Sri Lankan bourgeoisie and promoted and guided through its eleven year implementation by international capital, through the institutional mechanisms of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The influence these institutions wielded in respect of the country's post 1977 regime has been through the well known conditionality provisions attached to foreign loans, which this type of policy package generally makes indispensable. The system so instituted is called a system of guidance of the economy through market forces and the price mechanism. The difference between the post 1977 policy regime and what preceded it in Sri Lanka, much talked about in various quarters, however, is a matter of degree. The post 1977 policy regime, with its greater market orientation, also maintained a large state sector within the economy, in the context of a highly repressive framework and an extensive intervention scheme dictated predominantly by "political party" considerations. Whatever one thinks therefore about the justification of treating the year 1977 as a watershed, it is mainly because of the elimination or the substantial reduction of direct controls in respect of imports, exchange transactions and domestic prices, that the post-1977 regime gets its "market economy" title.

What Sri Lanka had even prior to 1977 was a market economy, and therefore, let me distinguish the post 1977 economy by calling it a "free market economy" although the latter fell far short of a free market economy in the textbook sense.

The elements of this "free market economy" after 1977 are too well known to require detailed description here :

(a) By way of trying to "free" the markets and prices, (i) domestic price controls have been largely eliminated ; (ii) price-subsidies on food, mainly rice, have been removed ; (iii) a strong rhetoric of privatization and denationalization was maintained in order to woo international capital, while taking some isolated action in that direction in several selected areas, including some direct production activities as well as social services; (iv) a strong boost has been provided to private enterprise, including direct foreign investments, through opening up certain areas so far reserved for the public sector, on the one hand, and providing numerous fiscal and other incentives to private capital on the other ; (v) there was a restraint in granting wage demands in general and those within the public sector in particular backed up by repressive measures on the trade union movement, in order "to keep wages and salaries at levels which were considered to be justified by the surplus labour situation in the country" ; and (vi) most important of all, an extensive programme of liberalization of imports and foreign exchange payments was carried out.

(b) As a corollary to the above set of measures, a significant reform in the management of the foreign exchange regime was carried out, by introducing a uniform rate of exchange for the rupee under a floating system, in which, the float has been consistently on a downward path up to date.

(c) A strong set of direct measures to promote economic activities earning foreign exchange were taken, claiming that these measures and those on the exchange rate front would launch the country into a process of export-led growth.

(d) In the monetary and fiscal policy areas the regimes tried to build up an appearance of being restrictive, perhaps to please the IMF and the World Bank, but in reality the monetary and fiscal management has been rather expansive as one would see from an analysis of the behaviour of interest rates, the pattern of credit expansion, and the continuously high rates of deficit financing.

(e) There was a strong drive to attract foreign capital—direct foreign capital as well as official foreign capital or "foreign aid." The response from foreign capital to these moves has been positive to an unprecedented extent. Policy measures in group (a) above naturally created a continually increasing demand for foreign exchange, while those in groups (b) and (c) failed to produce a sufficiently dynamic growth of autonomous foreign exchange earnings. The consequent balance

of payments deficits, which continued to plague the policy makers, had to be managed through recourse to a growing dependence on foreign capital.

I have gone into details of these policies and the various different aspects of their socio-economic impact elsewhere.¹ As I argued in this earlier work, there was an element of "beginner's" luck attached to the outcome of these policies till the early years of the 1980's, particularly in respect of two of their most important objectives—economic growth and employment creation. But this limited early success got gradually submerged in growing difficulties for which the free market economy could not provide adequate solutions. The government's argument has been that their policies would have continued to produce good results on the economic front had it not been for the worsened ethnic problem of the country. My position, however, is that the seeds of the post 1982 crisis were clearly evident in the working of this policy package from its very inception, although there was the misleading appearance of everything moving smoothly for some time. In certain respects the post 1982 nationality crisis itself had part of its origins in the market oriented economic policies of the post 1977 era.

Distribution of Incomes and Opportunities

The proposition I wish to develop in this brief article is that any package of market oriented policies, in the absence of deliberate and intelligent intervention towards an alternate result, will unavoidably lead to a worsening of social and regional inequality. No doubt, there has been extensive intervention on the part of the Sri Lankan state during the period under consideration, but the intervention that was practiced amounted to an exacerbation, rather than a weakening of, the anti-egalitarian tendencies of the market. The official data themselves from various surveys of the Central Bank and the Department of Census and Statistics eloquently speak of the worsening of relative income inequalities under the post 1977 strategy. In addition, there is evidence collected officially to show a growing incidence of malnutrition among certain vulnerable groups of the society like the children and also of worsening levels of educational attainment. This pattern of development is what one expects from the impersonal operation of market forces. The relatively unbridled market mechanism has made the rich relatively richer. Historically the capitalist mode of production has been, and I think continues even today to be, a dynamic force capable of producing an advancement in the forces of production. This, as historical evidence shows, normally will improve, in an absolute sense, the living conditions of the working masses too. Although the evidence on this count is not quite clear, this probably happened in the case of some social groups at lower levels of the income ladder in the Sri Lankan society also under market oriented policies. Yet in relative terms, capitalism and market forces, have produced greater inequality as the required purposeful intervention of the state was lacking.

1. See Social Science Review Vol. I:1, 1979; Upanathi Vol. I:1 1986 Social Scientist February, 1985 among others.

There was in Sri Lanka an extensive social welfare scheme which acted like a buffer against the market's unequalizing impact on the poor and the vulnerable, a scheme brought into place in the State Council days in the colonial era itself, and gradually expanded by post independence regimes to the extent limited resource availabilities permitted. Although the market oriented economy of the post 1977 era did not totally dismantle this buffer, it effectively reduced its potency in the pretext of eliminating market "distortions." The effects of the withdrawal of the rice ration on the living conditions of the poor were not at all offset by the food stamp scheme which was put in its place as an alternative, as the value of the food stamps continued to be eroded due to accelerated inflation.

There was in Sri Lanka an extensive social welfare scheme which acted like a buffer against the market's unequalizing impact on the poor

Furthermore, the resources spent on education and health by the state were reduced, not in absolute current price terms, but in relative and real terms. This substantially added to the adverse distributive impact of measures like the withdrawal of food subsidies. To make matters worse, these services, which, for quite a long time, have been supplied almost exclusively by the state, generally free of charge,² were opened up for private sector involvement in a big way during this period. This understandably created an animosity of an unprecedented intensity in the minds of the lower middle and poor classes. The private medical college established under the new university legislation, for example, has become an unresolved bone of contention which, along with other student grievances, have kept universities in the country closed for the longest period in the entire history of these institutions. Poor salaries and service conditions of the teachers, which in turn was caused by inadequate allocation of funds for education, made a rapid expansion of the practice of private tuition. Parents, particularly among the lower middle and poor classes for whom education has traditionally been the primary avenue of social advancement, have been bitterly complaining about the expansion of educational practices which gradually eroded the free education system of the country. The free market economy aggravated the problems here in yet another way. It effectively reversed the relative social status as between the educated on the one hand, and the rich and the wealthy on the other. This clearly reduced the opportunities the lower social strata had for social upliftment through education. Developments in the health sector were not much different. Patients have been complaining of having to go through channelled consultation, often, as a prerequisite to receive treatment in the state medical institutions. The number of private medical practitioners and private

medical institutions increased substantially. The so-called attempt to eliminate "price distortions" has had another serious distributive impact as far as the health sector was concerned. Prices of pharmaceutical products were allowed to be determined in the market and they in fact, increased phenomenally making health care enormously more expensive than it used to be. The list of things in the free market strategy has done in the field of education and health to exacerbate the existing unequalizing tendencies can be extended *ad infinitum*. What all this says is that the policy framework after 1977, knowingly or unknowingly, added to the inegalitarian tendencies built normally into the working of market forces.

The lower priority rating assigned to education in the allocation of government funds has had particularly adverse results on the distribution of opportunities among the lower middle, working and peasant classes. Considerable freedom has been given to individual schools to raise money for the improvement of the available facilities. This has given an undue advantage to larger schools in metropolitan areas attended by children of relatively well-to-do parents, while smaller schools and schools in remote areas have been largely neglected. As the facilities in schools have become rather unequal, those who depended particularly strongly on education for their social upliftment suffered, as by the very nature of their family backgrounds, they would have been attending the neglected schools. The decline of the institution of the "central college" which played a key role in the educational sphere in non metropolitan areas in the past is quite illustrative of the post 1977 tendencies I have been talking about.

The tendency to make free market allocation dominant in the society has naturally made the rich, the well-to-do and the elite classes a privileged section of the population. The market helps, to the greatest extent, those who can help themselves, *i.e.*, the rich and the elite classes. A poor person becoming rich and wealthy through the market forces is not, in Sri Lanka also, a totally unheard of phenomenon but this has always been the exception rather than the rule. The free market strategy obviously strengthened further the already better off position of the privileged groups. At the same time, it closed avenues like education which were previously open to the not-so-fortunate groups for upward social mobility. A case in point is the emergence of factors like the fluency in spoken English,³ the type of school one has attended, one's family background, etc., as

2. In the field of education the norm has been free education even at the time of independence although a fair proportion of large and better equipped schools in the first decade and a half after independence remained in the private sector. After the nationalization of most of these schools in the 1960's however, the situation changed substantially even in the case of these large and better equipped schools. There were all along, a few private nursing homes and quite a large number of private medical practitioners in the health sector. Paying wards were maintained in almost any major government hospital. The government sector medical specialists had the facility for channelled practice during their free time. What happened after 1977 was a substantial expansion of private sector involvement and fee levying practice in the health sector.

crucial factors determining one's suitability to do a job, particularly in the private sector and, also in the state sector to a greater extent than before. Obviously these need not be part of a free market strategy. But in real life, they become more important in a free market situation than in a consciously guided system.

It is noteworthy that while the relative position of the underprivileged classes was deteriorating, the state was providing extensive benefits to the rich and the privileged by way of production subsidies, tax incentives, cheap credit and so on, in the pretext of promoting investment. Quite striking in this respect have been the very attractive tax incentives, subsidies and price support made available to foreign investors, sometimes of real multinational size. The elimination of price controls enabled producers and traders to charge maximum profit prices. But a restrictive wages policy was implemented to keep labour costs "at levels justified by the surplus labour situation" in the country, thereby significantly weakening the real income position of the working classes.

The natural tendency of freely operating market forces to lead to concentration and inequality, operated even more strongly within the dependent under-developed capitalist formation in Sri Lanka. The free market strategy dismally failed, as already noted, to produce a sustainable balance of payments, as a result of the sluggishness in export growth. The dependence on foreign aid, instead of being a temporary phenomenon, has become an indispensable and a built-in feature of the "open" economy. In addition to problems like the growing external debt, increasing debt service ratio, deepening external dependence and so on, the continuing availability of "foreign aid" in unprecedented magnitudes appears to have worked towards exacerbating the inegalitarian tendencies of the free market strategy. Foreign funds made available to the regime by international capital, particularly in the form of "foreign aid," appeared to the recipients as a costless transfer or resources, available for spending with impunity, provided the tasks or which these funds were earmarked were also carried out to a reasonable extent. Almost invariably the costs of foreign aided projects were over, estimated and the tasks carried out with those funds probably performed at below specifications. The "saving" achieved thus could go into the hands of those in influential positions, politically and/or administratively and their friends and supporters who were chosen to carry out the tasks related to the projects concerned. Politics and the pattern to political affiliations have thus become a non market mechanism within the so called free market strategy which aggravated the already strong tendency towards greater inequality.⁴

This section of the article may be concluded by focussing on a factor, sharpened by the free market strategy as adopted in Sri Lanka, which strengthened all the normal unequalizing forces of such a strategy. The post 1977 economic strategy has eliminated most price controls. The floating exchange rate system in the meantime stepped up the rate of inflation in the country to heights never experienced before. The dif-

ferential impact of inflation on different income groups does not require detailed elaboration. The strong inflationary impact of the incessant currency depreciation is quite obvious given the highly import dependent nature of the economy. The relative income position of fixed income earners were, in fact caught up in a scissors crisis in the context of the continual increase in the general price level and the slow increase in their money wages. The variable income groups, particularly the traders and the businessmen, in the meantime, gained in terms of their relative income position.

Regional Inequality

Market forces have a natural tendency to lead to a locational concentration of economic activities around metropolitan areas or regional growth centres. Generally these tendencies operate with positively adverse results on outlying areas, as human and material resources are pushed out of them into the growth centres. These are what economists call the backwash effects of the operation of market forces. No doubt, the development of the centres could, depending on the quality of that development, also help the peripheral areas through what are known as the spread effects of the expansion of these growth centre. Often total results of the operation of these two types of effects is likely to be to the disadvantage of the outlying areas in net terms, in the absence of meaningful intervention.

It is noteworthy that while the relative position of the underprivileged classes was deteriorating the state was providing extensive benefits to the rich and the privileged

The "open" economy in Sri Lanka since 1977 had certain characteristics which sharpened the backwash effects on outlying regions and weakened the spread effects. The strategy placed a heavy emphasis on trade and other services, including construction. It has been a highly import intensive pattern of development, failing to produce any strong growth impulses within domestic production sectors. One of the most dynamic production sectors during this period has been the production of garments, mostly for export, but this sector has been dependent predominantly on imported materials. The paddy sector, another dynamic area of production, also depended, though not to the same extent as garments production, quite significantly on imports for production inputs and capital equipment. The rapid development

3. It is ironical that this should become the case in a country where English is a foreign language and after twenty years of Swabasha education even at the university level.
4. There were of course other ways in which politics have come to worsen inequality although there is no space here for a systematic analysis of all these.

of trading activities was city centred, particularly Colombo centred. Given the pattern of population distribution the boost the free market strategy has given to the development of passenger and goods transport again helped city development considerably more than rural development. Construction activity also was largely concentrated in cities, again mainly in Colombo, and in certain selected regions like the Mahaweli zones. Road development work, largely restricted to cities and the main trunk routes in the country, failed to channel as much development impulses into outlying rural areas as into urban centres. The integrated rural development schemes and various credit and other schemes targeted to benefit the rural population could not sufficiently counteract the backwash effects of the urban centred development on rural masses, particularly because of low capitalisation problems in rural centred economic activities. The rural production base—agriculture, handicrafts, small industries and so on—remained underdeveloped. This continuing underdevelopment was more strongly felt in some districts and provinces than the others.

This development pattern can explain, to a great extent, why protest movements were initiated in the Northern, Eastern and Southern Provinces of the country. These were the regions which the "development" which the government used to flatter itself about, has left largely unaffected. The major social groups involved in agitation today are rural, reflecting a natural reaction to city centred development. Conscious regional planning for development was almost absent in the "open economy" package. Only lip service was paid to it. It was as if in the misguided attempt to emulate Singapore, the authorities equated Sri Lanka to Colombo and its environs. Infrastructural development schemes like the Accelerated Mahaweli Scheme are essentially long gestation projects. They will, no doubt, help improving the living conditions of the rural masses living in the regions covered by them in the time to come, but they failed to produce tangible results soon enough.

Some Lessons for Future

The Sri Lankan domestic conditions, characterised as they are by a mature political opinion, a long record of widespread trade union and other social movements, and a long experience of activities of political agitation, do not provide condition for unrestrained capitalist exploitation of labour to the same extent as in the nineteenth century in Britain and other countries. Exploitation of labour for capital accumulation in these contexts ought to proceed within the limits set out by the above conditions. This does not necessarily mean that the capitalist mode of production cannot work in Sri Lanka as a progressive force promoting growth and accumulation. Properly guided according to people's aspirations it may given the popular will, be able to develop production forces in the country even in this last two decades of the twentieth century. How the people of this country will emerge from the present crisis and whether they will choose capitalism or socialism for their future is obviously something not yet clear at all. If the political processes in the near future do not

lead to a radical and revolutionary transformation of the society and the country remains within a basically capitalistic structure the post 1977 experience has quite a lot to offer by way of lessons.

Pragmatism and ad-hoc policy making were in many instances the hallmarks of the last eleven years. Any regime coming to power in the future must give up this practice and operate with a serious commitment to a vision about the future it is aiming at. This requires conscious planning and more important, effective, and co-ordinated implementation of the plans so made.

The experience of the last decade suggests a clearly defined role for the State to fill in the gaps left by private capital (investment of state capital and productivity improvement of existing state enterprises) support for private capital (selective protection with clearly defined time frames for the operation of such schemes of protection, credit support etc.) and to guide and monitor activities of private capital (particularly direct foreign capital) to achieve the desirable structural change in the economy. This is not to achieve socialism but to promote sustainable self-reliant capitalist development itself.

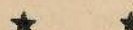
The point worth emphasis on the basis of the analysis above is that policies for growth and accumulation must be combined with a commitment to equity in distribution and social justice and to regional development through active government intervention.

Any future government will have to do these and many others to take the Sri Lankan society out of its present crisis. A number of problem areas can be visualised: (i) How can a new regime take the nation into its confidence to achieve a sensible revamping of economic and social policy? (ii) How would international aid community view such a new package of policy subjecting the markets and prices to the organised will of the people as much as possible? Aid flows will clearly diminish but if a committed regime cuts the wastage to the minimum it is unlikely that there will be much of a reduction in the volume of foreign aid resources *effectively available for productive use.* (iii) Can we have a committed honest and effective government?

The last question is by far the most important. Good politicians are, like many other resources, also a very scarce resource indeed, particularly in a country like ours. If so most of what is stated in this last section of the article could be seen as mere wishful thinking and an academic's pipedream. I am quite aware of the difficulties ahead but if everyone in our society who can have visions and ideals does engage in stating those visions and ideals, we might be able at some stage to ensure that they reach where they should—i.e. to the top political level.

University of Colombo

21 November 1988



In October this year, the new Finance Minister presented a 'Vote on Account' in place of the customary Budget for 1989 in Parliament.

Kalawana's Communist M.P., Dew Gunasekera in this article, shows up the real reasons for this move by the Minister, summarising also the points made by him on October 26th during the Debate on the 'Vote on Account' in Parliament.

Why the Vote on Account?

—D. E. W. GUNASEKERA M.P.—

The new Minister of Finance, M. H. M. Naina Marikar at the last moment changed his mind and decided to introduce a 'Vote on Account' rather than a Budget for 1989. In fact dates had been already fixed in consultation with the Party leaders for the Budget Debates in Parliament (both the Second Reading and Committee Stage) to be completed by the end of October, well in time for the Presidential nominations. However, everything started changing and moving in keeping with the election strategy, programme, agenda, and time-table of the UNP Presidential Candidate, Premier R. Premadasa. So, Naina Marikar had to fall in line.

Though the Minister of Finance explained that the impending Presidential Election and inadequacy of time were the reasons for his decision, the compelling and real reasons were hidden. The need to do so was in fact dictated by the UNP Presidential Candidate's election strategy and not by election itself.

After all, *Deception and Hypocrisy* are the hallmarks of Election campaigns in this country.

The Real Reason Why

In November 1986, the Government had announced a three-year "Stabilization Programme" as it had become evident that the Government could not sustain its spending levels any longer.



D. E. W. Gunasekera M.P.

The "tea boom" was over. The GNP growth rate had slowed down to 1.5%. Unemployment had risen to 17% (now, it is 24-30%). The External Current Account deficit had reached 9% of the GDP. Official reserves had declined to less than the value of two months' imports.

The 'Stabilization Programme' was essentially one of reducing expenditure from 33% of the GDP to about 29% by 1989. Fiscal revenues were to be contained at 20% of the GDP and a "more realistic" exchange rate—(i.e., further devaluation) brought into existence.

The Government had appointed three high-level committees, namely (1) Administrative Reforms Committee, (2) The Presidential Tariff Committee, and (3) The Industrial Advisory Committee. The recommendations of these Committees had in fact been approved by the Cabinet and an agreement had been reached with the I.M.F. for future policy changes. All these changes were to be incorporated in the Budget for 1989. Had the Minister of Finance formulated the Budget for

1989, his budgetary proposals involving these policy changes would have run counter to the extravagant election promises given by the UNP under the guise of a 'new vision' and a 'new deal.'

The 'Stabilization Programme' would involve even greater unemployment which was already running at 24% of the workforce and as much as 30% in certain districts.

The proposals of the Committee on Administrative Reforms envisaged the reduction of the public service by one-fourth. How could this be done, when the Prime Minister had promised to give 115,000 jobs in a matter of two or three months before the Presidential Elections and when he had also ordered all casual and temporary government employees should be made permanent?

There is a proposal to revise the present pension in the light of wage increases to the Public Service. The grant of 85% of the last drawn salary as pension has been referred to by the World Bank as a *costly benefit*, in its latest Report. It says: "*This costly benefit may be no longer necessary with realistic salary levels.*" Equally, the extravagant election promises to "abolish poverty" and give relief to the poorest strata of the population cannot gain credibility if the large deficit in the balance of payments and in physical accounts are retained or increased.

If the Government had as originally intended, produced a Budget for twelve months, this disparity would have become glaring. On top of this, changes in fiscal and monetary policy would perhaps have had to be announced, upsetting the capitalist class. The changes in social policy would have estranged the UNP even further from the mass of the people, aggravating frustration and discontentment.

There were other recommendations of the High-Level Committees. Amongst them, was that all those public sector enterprises that were not showing profits should be privatized. There were moves to privatize even profit-showing services like the Telecommunications. The Bill to repeal the Business Acquisition Act has already been tabled in Parliament. The moves for privatizations have

now been brought to a halt until the Elections are over.

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If a Budget had been presented, the Government would have been compelled to go ahead with the next steps in its accepted policy of reducing tariffs from 100% to 50%, thus making it even more difficult for local industries. The 'Vote on Account' puts this off until the Elections are over.

Other Compelling Reasons

Apart from the desire to hide its real intentions until the impending elections are over, the UNP Government has other compelling reasons for its decision.

One of these was the continuing and deepening of the debt crisis. Our foreign debt is already in the region of twelve billion rupees. The sharp fluctuation in exchange rates results in addition of over one billion to the total amount of foreign debt through the self-adjustment process. All this was happening in a decade, despite a deep-going crisis, free of major upheavals in world economy unlike in the case of the previous Government which had to face a structural crisis of the world economy in 1973/74.

The External Resources Gap in 1987 amounted to Rs. 32,227 million (*i.e.*, Foreign Payments Rs. 94,089 million *less* Foreign Earnings Rs. 61,862 million). It is true that there has been a sharp shift in the increase of foreign earnings from

exports of manufactures from 14% (1977) to 40% (1985). However, the net exports to gross exports share (*i.e.*, foreign exchange share) had been declining from 78% in 1977 to 63% in 1985.

Though the gross exports of primary or traditional exports have come down from 86% (1977) to 59% (1985), they still account for 80% of the net foreign exchange earnings from total exports. If at all, there had been only a marginal decline. On the other hand, though the exports of manufactures (industrial exports) have substantially increased from 14% (1977) to 40% (1985), the net foreign exchange earnings from this source has increased only from 5% (1977) to 19% (1985). This only shows that despite increase of exports, in the final analysis, the net increase in the exchange earnings has substantially dropped from 78% (1977) to 63% (1985), the reason being the significant jump in the import content of the export of manufactures. So, the predominant position of the traditional exports still remains. As far as the net foreign exchange earnings are concerned, the change in the pattern of exports from agricultural to industrial exports is yet imaginary and not real.

Borrowing to Repay

Another disturbing feature is our level of annual borrowings from foreign sources and repayment thereof. The borrowings and repayments for the years 1983—1987 were as follows:—

Borrowings	Repayments
1983—27,157 million	—17,812 million
1984—18,206 million	—17,455 million
1985—22,911 million	—13,503 million
1986—26,211 million	—15,811 million
1987—24,193 million	—16,387 million

It is clearly seen that we have been, in effect, borrowing in order to repay what we borrowed earlier. This would mean that roughly 70% of what we borrowed was in respect of repayment of that we borrowed earlier. In other words, when the Minister of Finance borrows Rs. 100 million from the Aid Club, he in actual terms receives Rs. 30 million only

Our Exports for the years 1985-1987 have been as follows:-

1985—Rs. 36,207 million
 1986—Rs. 34,072 million
 1987—Rs. 41,133 million

It will be observed that nearly 40%—45% of our foreign exchange earnings from exports go for repayment of Capital borrowed from abroad. In fact, all the country earns from its exports of primary products such as tea, rubber and coconut goes to repay what the government borrows.

The Government relied more on monetary policy which is generally applied to highly developed economies, to regulate the economic activity, thereby placing all the burdens of the crisis of the economy and the effects of the Government's economic policies on the working people.

No Growth in Capital Formation

Despite all the concessions given to the capitalist class by way of abo-

lition of taxes, reliefs, rebates, tax holidays, bringing down tax rates etc., there had not been a corresponding increase in the capital formation in the private sector.

Gross Domestic Fixed Capital Formation—(Approximate)

1977	1982	1986
Government Sector		
30%	16%	23%
Corporation Sector		
17%	36%	77%
Private Sector		
53%	48%	(Private Sector roughly 41%)

The Central Bank, for reasons officially not known, has begun as from 1983 in its statistics to combine the Corporation Sector and the Private Sector into one Sector, obviously to conceal the minus growth in capital formation in the Private Sector. Where is the money generated by the Private Sector for the last 11 years under the 'Open Economy' policies? They are either consumed, drained out or in the black market economy.

The economic policies of the Government have only brought about frightening social consequences such as unemployment, malnutrition, inequality of income distribution, pauperization, school drop-outs, breakdown in health services, which in turn have resulted in social tensions culminating in violence.

To go ahead with the same policies along the same path would bring disastrous social consequences. The Government would have had to bring in more burdens on the people if a Budget had been presented. This is why a 'Vote on Account' was presented instead. The Government did not wish to disclose its real commitments to the I.M.F. and the extent of its proposed cut-backs and retrenchment until the elections are over lest all its tall talk of "new vision" and "new deal" are shown up already to be false and empty.

Socio-economic problems cannot be solved by therapeutic methods. Each may propose his own recipe, formulate his own prescription, but it's not so easy to find a way out of the labyrinth of socio-economic problems confronting us.

Free Market Economic Model aggravates region's poverty

Technical experts from 18 Latin American nations prepared a document that called for drastic changes in socio-economic structures. The experts concluded that the free-market, neo-liberal model now embraced by many Latin American nations is directly responsible for generating even more poverty.

Unpaid Social Debt

In order to meet its \$410 billion foreign debt, Latin America has aggravated its social debt the experts said. They calculated the region's social debt at \$280 billion.

The region's social debt - if paid - would amount to 40 percent of its total Gross National Product (GNP), the experts found. Under existing social structures, the region would need a five-fold increase in GNP to cover basic human needs.

At current growth rates, that would take 76 years.

Yet continued efforts to meet this impossible debt burden are impoverishing Latin America. Between 1980 and 1986, the average real income of Latin Americans fell 14 percent, according to the U. N. Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Among the poorest sectors, the fall in real incomes was even worse.

Neo-liberal Model

The Government experts noted that many Latin American countries have tried to meet debt obligations by adopting a monetarist, neo-liberal model of development. Such a strategy, they said, rejects internal growth by doing away with protective tariffs and embracing the free market.

While such orthodox economic policies have had some success in defeating inflation (Bolivia and Chile are notable examples), they have aggravated unemployment and increased poverty, the experts said.

In fact if present trends continue, nearly half of Latin America's 411 million people will live in poverty by 1990, they said.

"The optimum strategy for overcoming poverty," the experts said, "ought to be concerted (government) intervention over production prices, consumption and state services" Such intervention, they continued, ought to seek economic growth by increasing jobs and wages, by better distributing income and by providing direct state services to the poor.

China's Socialist Modernisation

Not many people are aware of the many similarities that are identifiable in the motivation, objectives and methods of the Communist Party Soviet Union's (CPSU) perestroika and the Chinese Communist Party's (CPC) socialist modernisation—more particularly in the economic programmes of these two parallel socio-political processes. There are also some similarities in the destalinisation in the USSR and the demaoisation in China.

New Orientation

The two most obvious features of China's new thrust that have attracted global attention are (i) official encouragement to private enterprise in certain spheres and (ii) invitation to foreign investments and technological collaborations. That this perception is not entirely unfounded is evident from the following.

First; in the recent period, as a result of the new policy orientations, privately owned and run and mixed rural industrial enterprises have prospered tremendously. According to an account, about four million of these rural enterprises now contribute about one half of the total industrial output of the country. During the past ten years, the output of the rural industrial enterprises has increased 25 times compared with the 12 per cent a year increase in the total industrial production. As a result, there are now said to be innumerable millionaires in the Chinese countryside today.



Ajit Roy

Secondly, in the five years 1978-83, foreign investments totalling US \$1,900 million in value have flowed into China, besides technological collaborations numbering 212. In the subsequent period, foreign collaborations have increased further while its industrial coverage has expanded from the originally decided sophisticated technology to 'Kentucky fried chicken'!

It would however be mistaken to think that the new orientation of the Chinese economic policy is confined to these two perceived areas only. In reality, however, it extends to a much wider area—extending over agriculture, industry, standard of living, economic autonomy and

decentralisation of decision-making processes and so on. It also extends to a certain re-orientation in the educational policies as well.

Superficially viewed, many of the new currents of development, singly and in combination, have been characterised as contradictory to accepted Marxist conceptions. This we discuss below. There is, however, no doubt that the thrust of these new orientations amounts to a departure from the ideal of egalitarianism, so consistently upheld by Mao Zedong!

The change of direction had taken place in 1976, soon after the death of Mao. Its first official declaration was made in December 1978 in the third plenum of the 11th Central Committee.

"The Third Plenary Session first grasped," says the report to the 12th Congress of the CPC, made by Hu Yaobang "the link of agriculture, laying emphasis on overcoming the long-standing 'Left' mistakes in the guidelines in this sphere. This involved restoring and expanding the power of decision of rural people's communes and their production brigades and teams; restoring the private plots, family and collective side-line production and village fairs; and gradually introducing, in various forms, the system of responsibility for production in which payment is linked to output. . . . As a result, marked change have taken place in agriculture, in which vigorous growth has replaced stagnation."

Although the 12th Congress announced the decision to pursue the programme of socialist modernisation, it did not discuss and lay

down any operational plan. This was done in the third plenum of the 12th Central Committee held on October 20, 1984.

"Proceeding from the principle of integrating the basic tenets of Marxism," said, the communique of the third plenum of the 12th CC, "with China's actual conditions, the decision expounds the necessity and urgency of speeding up reform of structure of the entire national economy with the focus on urban economy, charts the orientation of the reform, defines its nature and tasks and lays down the basic principles and policies. This decision is a programmatic document guiding the reform of China's economic structure."

Operational Guidelines for Restructure

The Third Plenum of the Twelfth Central Committee for the first time worked out some of the operational guidelines for the reform of the economic structure, such as:

(i) Relaxation of the Central Control

It said, "since social demand is very complex and in a state of constant flux, since the conditions in enterprises differ in a thousand and one ways and since the economic links between enterprises are complicated, no state institution can know the whole situation fully and cope with everything in good time. If the state institutions were directly to administer and manage various kinds of enterprises owned by the whole people, it would be very hard to avoid serious subjectivism and bureaucratism...the enterprises should be truly made a relatively independent economic entity and should become a producer and operator of socialist commodity production that is independent and responsible for its own profit and loss and capable of developing itself..."

(ii) Socialist Commodity Production

"Ours is on the whole a planned economy that is, a planned commodity economy, not a market economy that is entirely subject to market regulation. Second production and exchange completely subject to market regulation are confined mainly to certain farm and sideline products, small articles of daily use and labour services in the service and repair trades... Third, our planned economy does not necessarily mean the predominance of mandatory planning, both mandatory and guidance being its specific forms. Fourth, plans are fulfilled mainly by use of economic levers, mandatory plans have to be implemented, but even then the law of value must be observed."

(iii) A Rational Pricing System

"As the decision-making power of enterprises grows, pricing will be increasingly

important in regulating their production and operation. It is, therefore, all the more urgent to establish a rational system of pricing. The various aspects of the reform in economic structure, including planning and wage systems, depend to a large extent on reform of the price system."

(iv) Separation of Government from Enterprise Functions

"There is a pressing need to conduct reform in line with the principle of separating the functions of government and enterprises, stream-lining administration and instituting decentralisation in order to invigorate the enterprises and the national economy as a whole."

(v) Forms of Economic Responsibility and Distribution according to Work

It is necessary to "raise the sense of responsibility of the workers and staff members and bring into full play their initiative, enthusiasm and creativeness."

"There has long been a misunderstanding about the distribution of consumer goods under socialism, as if it meant equalitarianism. If some members of society got higher wages through their labour, resulting in wide gaps in income, it was considered polarisation and deviation from socialism. This equalitarian thinking is utterly incompatible with scientific, Marxist views on socialism. History has shown that equalitarian thinking is a serious obstacle to implementing the principle of distribution according to work and that if it is unchecked, the forces of production will inevitably be undermined... common prosperity cannot and will never mean that all members of society become better off simultaneously at the same speed."

(vi) Expansion of Foreign Economic Relations

"We will work to expand economic and technological exchanges and co-operation with other countries, strive for the success of the special economic zones and open coastal cities more fully. Using foreign funds and attracting foreign business for joint ventures, co-operative management or exclusive investment in enterprises are a beneficial complement to China's socialist economy. We must make the best use of both domestic and foreign resources and both the domestic and foreign markets, and learn both to organise domestic construction and develop foreign economic relations."

Perspective Plan

On the basis of three years' experience of the work on the lines formulated by the Third Plenum of the Twelfth Central Committee, held in October 1984, the Thirteenth Congress of the Communist Party of China held in October 1987, made some theoretical generalisations. In his report to the Congress, Zhao Ziang said:

"the primary stage of socialism in China... is, in a particular sense, the specific stage China must necessarily go through while building socialism under conditions of backward productive forces and an underdeveloped commodity economy. It will be at least 100 years from the 1950s, when the socialist transformation of private ownership of the means of production was basically completed, to the time when socialist modernisation will have been in the main accomplished, and all these years belong to the primary stage of socialism. This stage is different from both the transitional period, in which the socialist economic basis was not yet laid, and the stage in which socialist modernisation will have been achieved. The principal contradiction we face during the present stage is the contradiction between the growing material and cultural needs of the people and backward production. Class struggle will continue to exist within certain limits for a long time to come, but it is no longer the principal contradiction."

The century-long perspective plan for China's socialist modernisation envisages the following stages of development according to Zhao Ziang:

"The first step is to double the GNP of 1980 and solve the problem of food and clothing for our people. This task has largely been finished. The second step is to double it again by the end of this century... The third step is by the middle of the next century to reach the per capita GNP level of moderately developed countries."

Introduction of Responsibility System"

The most important economic innovation in China, subsequently copied in the Soviet Union, is known as the 'responsibility system.' This

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is based on the separation of the public ownership of land from the private use of land — by individuals, family, co-operative or a collective. "The family contract," according to an account, "now practised by 190 million households, or 98 per cent of all households, made it possible to eliminate levelling in distribution and provide peasants with an incentive to develop production. Under this system the family pays taxes to the state (first in kind and then increasingly in cash) and then disposes as it sees fit of the remainder of the harvest: sells surplus to the state procurement agencies under contract in exchange for fertiliser and seeds (at fixed prices) or sells it in the domestic market at prices determined by demand and supply. Initially, the family contract spanned a period of three years; but this was not enough because it did not generate the required confidence and interest of peasants. So it was extended to ten or even 30 - 50 years."

In addition to self or family labour and in addition to co-operative farming, according to the above account, "Large specialised farm households employing hired labour and often performing the initial processing of farm produce are developing with state encouragement on the basis of the family contract."

"Along with the spread of family contract labour, local industry in the countryside is rapidly growing: in the countries, districts and settlements small plants for manufacturing building materials (bricks, ferroconcrete elements) are appearing, as well as plants for processing and storing farm produce, for manufacturing implements, spares, mechanisms and consumer goods, for providing transport and other services. Since 1978 some 76 million people in the countryside have found jobs in this sphere, that is, about 20 per cent of the entire rural labour force. The product created by them now equals the product of the other 350 - 370 million peasants (volume of sales — about 400 billion yuan). The (procurement of) raw materials for such enterprises and the sale of their output is effected through the free market at market prices."

Results of the Reforms

As a result of the spread of reforms to the urban areas, following the decisions of the Third Plenum of the Twelfth Central Committee,

"the share of the state ownership of means of production has dropped from 80 to 70 per cent, while co-operative ownership has grown from 20 to 28 per cent and the individual and other forms of ownership 0.2 per cent to 2.0 per cent. In the retail trade the individual sector accounts for 24 percent"

Between 1978 and 1986, China permitted investment of foreign capital valued at US \$ 20 billion in the forms of loans and equity and sanctioned the creation of about 7,800 enterprises with foreign participation within the country. Mostly

According to one account, about 20 percent of the Chinese population live below the officially defined poverty line and the daily intake food of about 100 million is less than 1,500 calories.

small and medium in size, 3,210 of them are joint stock companies, 4,390 are contract based and 138, purely foreign. Besides, China has set up 277 joint enterprises abroad and purchased 14,000 advanced technologies.

As a result of the incentives given under the reforms, in 1979 - 1986, the annual growth rates of industrial and agricultural output in terms of value reached 10.1 per cent compared with 8.2 per cent in 1953 - 1978 period. The growth of the income of the peasants and blue collar and white collar workers grew 15.5 per cent and 12.8 per cent respectively.

According to accounts by foreign tourists, the large numbers of trucks and vans in the farm sector and also of motor cycles and mopeds, fridges and washing machines, radios and TVs, well stocked shops and peddlers in both towns and countryside bear witness to the new-found prosperity of an appreciable segment of the Chinese people. Needless to say, this prosperity is not uniformly distributed; it has on the contrary led to a polarisation. "After the adoption of the responsibility system, disparity in income between different families did arise. Some families earned six times more than others. The gap resulted mainly from differences in work force, technical level and management capacity."

According to one account, about 20 per cent of the Chinese population live below the officially defined poverty line and the daily intake food of about 100 million is less than 1,500 calories.

Thus social differentiations apart, the new orientations are also seen to be eroding some of the commonly accepted socialist values. As a study in a *Beijing Review Publication* says, "Moreover, the influence of capitalist ideas is spreading in the wake of exchanges with foreign countries; the philosophy that 'money is everything' still has quite a following among the populace. While some people dredged up shop-worn concepts like 'money is everything' and 'man dies for money as a bird dies for food,' others chose to tarnish personal and national dignity and became servile to foreigners. Some committed crimes such as speculation, embezzlement and theft. Certain areas experienced unchecked tendency towards bourgeois liberalization in which capitalism was extolled to the skies while socialism was belittled."

The working out of the economic reorientations apart, the new education policy formulated by the state is also contributing to a certain degree of social differentiation. Exactly on the pattern of the so-called 'Navodaya' schools set up by the Rajiv Gandhi government in India, China also is opening a number of elite institutions for the education of selected students.

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All this cannot but create problems for the development and deepening of socialist culture and values. Naturally, this has become the object of the criticisms by sections of Marxists in China as well as abroad.

While it is true that many of the innovations introduced in China during the last ten years are in apparent contradiction with the commonly recognised imperatives of socialist construction, in truth, however, there are few imperatives for this process. There is no supra-historical master-key, as Marx has said, either for understanding the past or for constructing the future.

Unavoidable Steps

The Chinese, and the Soviet, communist party is right when it says that a very high level of material and cultural production is a necessary precondition for the socialist transformation of society. "Until," says Zhou Ziang in his report to the Thirteenth Congress of the CPC, "the productive forces are developed, there can be no socialist society, and socialism cannot advance from one stage to another until the realization of communism." Both the Chinese and the Soviet communist parties, as also some others, are right in saying that the historical experience so far has shown ideological-political inspiration alone has not been found to be adequate for motivating the vast majority

of the working people to contribute their best efforts for the social production; ideological inspiration has to be accompanied by a measure of individual incentive in the form of private material gain. The right mixture of inspiration and incentive, however, has to be ascertained for each particular historical conjuncture.

The experience of planned economy in the Soviet Union and China has also shown that it is simply impossible to guide and control the complex, modern, economy of a large country from a single centre at the top; it is necessary to decentralise the decision-making processes and managerial functions to a considerable extent.

Further, if the central, direct, control of the economy is loosened and decision-making decentralised, then the economy has to be subject to some basic laws, like the law of value with its corollaries, if it is to avoid anarchy and to operate efficiently.

At the same time, there is no doubt that many of the measures now in operation in China as well as in some other socialist countries would be a carry-over of laws and principles of a capitalist economy into the socialist milieu. Theoretically it presents no problem, for socialism as a whole is a period of transition from capitalism to communism when elements of both capitalism and communism would co-exist and confront one another.

From another angle, both the Chinese and the Soviet innovations can be faulted precisely on this score, that is, these parties do not clearly admit that under compulsions from objective circumstances they are re-introducing certain elements of capitalism and that these elements have to be superseded as soon as possible through conscious social practice. Both the Chinese and the Soviet parties often cite Lenin's NEP as a precedent and guide for their present innovations. They are surely right in doing so. But they miss in this context Lenin's repeated warning during the NEP period that an unavoidable by-product of NEP will be a certain strengthening of the

capitalist elements which has to be tackled by a certain intensification of the class struggle by the working class. The issue, Lenin repeatedly said, was: "Who beats whom?"

Instead of ramming home this vital warning of Lenin's, Zhou Ziang as quoted above, stresses the diminished role of class struggle in the present phase. In the long term perspective and compared with the earlier phase of the Chinese development after liberation, this is certainly correct. But viewed against the complexities of the present period, this is an over-simplification and, therefore, misleading!

— Courtesy: **The Marxist Review.**
Occasional Letters (India)
September 1988.

**A New Book
on China**

Development in China

Change and Continuity by Jack Clancey

By means of a small and eminently readable book, the author has sought to provide answers to questions raised about China's post-1978 development policies and to describe some of their results.

For an extremely poor and under-developed country whose condition only 50 years ago was considered "hopeless" by most foreign experts, Socialist China has made startling progress that has earned the admiration of many. But it has by no means been an easy road, for China has had to face severe periods of crisis aggravated by bureaucratic distortions and corruption, political shifts and mass discontent.

The announcement of new development policies in 1978 raised questions for many in other Asian countries. Was China now abandoning the Socialist road and was a restoration of capitalism really in the offing? This book therefore serves to meet a real need by helping to explain China's problems and to answer some of the questions that have been raised in the wake of the Chinese Government's more recent policies.

The book is published by the Centre for the Progress of Peoples, 48, Princess Margaret Road G/E, Homantin, Kowloon Hong Kong.

Castro: Gorbachev's Perestroika Does Not Apply to Cuban Revolution

The Cuban government has close ties to the Soviet Union, but it has not embraced perestroika, the political and economic opening initiated by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

In a July 26 address celebrating the 35th anniversary of the historic attack on the Moncada barracks, President Fidel Castro emphasised the originality and autonomy of the Cuban revolution. He offered several strategic reasons for not following Gorbachev's lead.

"Our revolution has maintained a great ideological strength, because who else will defend us if imperialism attacks?" Castro said. "No one from abroad will come to defend our island. We will have to defend it."

"We can't ever forget where we are," the Cuban leader continued. "This is not the Black Sea but the Caribbean. We're not 90 miles from Odessa; we're 90 miles from Miami."

Revolution not a Copy

Cubans can learn about the Soviet reforms in the Spanish edition of the Soviet magazine, *NEW TIMES*. But it is clear that perestroika is not on the Cuban agenda.

"Our revolution is not a copy of any other revolution. It's our own creation," Castro said. "There are no two identical revolutionary processes, no two identical countries with the same histories or characteristics. So our development cannot and ought not to be the same."

Since 1986, the Cuban government has pushed a "rectification" process designed to correct incompetence, clean up corruption and

return the revolution to a more pure form of state-controlled socialism.

In defending "rectification," Castro repeatedly invokes the memory of the late Ernest "Che" Guevara, the revolutionary hero who argued that moral incentives ought to take precedence over material incentives.

"What would Che have said?" Castro asks, objecting to various kinds of capitalist behaviour that have sprung up in Cuban society.

The "rectification" campaign has put family doctors in neighbourhoods, increased the number of state-run markets, decentralized the state bureaucracy, mobilized volunteer workers to build much needed housing and set up joint venture tourist facilities with foreign capital principally European.

The volunteer "microbrigades" are made up of professionals, technicians and workers who leave their usual jobs for two years. They construct 20,000 housing units annually as well as health clinics, day care centres, hospitals and roads. At the end of the two-year work commitment, volunteers receive their own housing. In the meantime, most of them live with parents or relatives.

Cuba's life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy rates are comparable to those in the most developed countries. Housing, however, is at a premium. Havana's two million residents will face the year 2000 with a housing deficit estimated at 250,000 units.

The microbrigades also serve to employ workers from operations with excess personnel and insufficient work.

Markets Closed

"We want to employ all surplus labour in a rational and useful manner and not create trauma," Castro said in his July address. "When a man is sent home because there is no work for him—even though he still earns his salary—he is traumatized. We don't want to solve problems in that way."

In April 1986, the Castro government shut down the free markets where farmers had been allowed to sell excess produce after meeting their state quotas. Authorities said the markets had created "intermediary parasites" who made exorbitant profits by gathering and selling fruits and vegetables that state-run markets lacked. Such capitalist activity created a *nouveau riche* who also moved into privately buying and selling real estate. Even the government magazine *Opina* began a page of classified ads.

"Rectification" put an end to these capitalist intermediaries and put production back in state hands. At the same time, the government discouraged self-employment. Castro repeatedly complained that self-employment gave rise to the creation of capitalist enterprises and kept workers away from their jobs in hopes of making money on the side.

The activities of the country's 10,000 independent truck drivers, a legacy of the pre-revolutionary years, were also curbed. Private truckers had preferred to serve independent intermediaries or the self-employed who paid higher wages.

Rectification has also resulted in refurbishing the basic social unit of the revolution: the Revolutionary Defence Committees (CDR). Cuban authorities said the CDR's, the neighbourhood organizations charged with activities ranging from clean-up campaigns to residents' political formation, had atrophied.

"Our task is to strengthen social discipline and improve health and education," said Vincente Pineda Vasallo, CDR vice-co-ordinator.

Efficiency Rules

To attack the chaos that has reigned in the Cuban economy, a rigorous accounting and cost system has been put in place. Efficiency and careful planning are now the watchwords in workplaces throughout this country of 10 million.

"Perhaps one of the tragedies of Third World countries is that they long for the lifestyle of the developed capitalist societies," Castro said. "They'd love to work only seven, six or five hours a day. This is an illusion. If wealth is what we want, it is necessary to work and work and to use all human and material resources rationally. There is no other way."

Western observers here say the call to hard work goes beyond economic considerations and represents Castro's deep concern over the future of Cuba's revolution. "There's feeling in the government that the system is beginning to fray around the edges," says a foreign diplomat. "Rectification is an attempt to whip up revolutionary zeal at the grass-roots level."

The past two years have been particularly tough for Cuba. Hard

currency earnings dropped from £1.2 billion in 1986 to £600 million in 1987. A drought, which began in 1981, and falling export prices account for most of the lost income. The drought has effected thousands of acres of land, planted principally in citrus and sugar cane. Cuba thus had to import a million tons of sugar this year to meet its international obligations.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union has reduced the preferential price it pays for Cuban sugar. Under a new economic co-operation agreement signed in May, the USSR will pay 7 percent less for sugar received from 1986 to 1990. Nonetheless, the Soviets will continue to pay more than the current world price for sugar.

Many believe that the Soviet openness to experimenting with forms of Western-style capitalism and democracy will lead Nicaragua and Cuba to do likewise. Cuban officials deny such allegations.

"Our rectification is neither the antithesis nor the reflection of the Soviet process," said Ricardo Alarcon, Cuba's vice minister of foreign relations. "We are not Rus-

sians. We are Cubans. We demand the right to do what we believe is worthwhile, and we respect the right of others to do what best pleases them."

According to Alarcon and other Cuban officials, relations with Moscow under Gorbachev "are clearer, fresher and more dynamic."

Indeed, smooth relations with Moscow continue to be vital to the island's economy. The Soviet Union delivers 13.5 million tons of oil annually to Cuba, which refines and re-exports seven million tons. Re-exporting Soviet oil earns Cuba 42 percent of its export income and helps it make payments on an estimated foreign debt of £7.3 billion.

"Soviet aid cannot be measured in capitalist terms," explained Alfred Jam, head of the Central Planning Committee, Cuba's most powerful economic agency. "They don't treat us like Indians and they don't exploit our under-development. Perestroika has not changed our terms of trade."—LATINAMERICA PRESS—1 September, 1988.

The Singapore Elections

The Singapore Government of Lee Kuan Yew has been quick to use the September 3rd election result for political ends, referring to the result as a clear mandate for its "New Guard" and the People's Action Party's (PAP) leadership style. It was far from that even if only one opposition candidate was elected.

How the Results were obtained

In terms of the election results, two factors emerge which contradict the government's claim of a mandate and explain the opposition's poor showing.

The first factor was the introduction of 13 Group Representation Constituencies (GRCs) where, in each case, three seats were combined and voters were required to vote for a slate of three party candidates rather than an individual. Clearly the GRCs were designed to diffuse the opposition vote in targeted marginals. Eight out of ten most marginal government seats from 1984 were placed in the ten contested GRCs along with safe PAP seats.

The government's excuse for introducing the GRC's was that the change would guarantee minority

representation. If this was their concern, it would seem more appropriate to ensure this through their candidate selection process. The reality is that exactly the same number of minority candidates was elected this year as in 1984.

The second factor which renders hollow any claim of a clear mandate is a consequence of the electoral system: the broad support enjoyed by the opposition was not translated into formal representation. First-past-the-post or plurality systems as used in Singapore, distort the relationship between voter preferences and formal representation. The Singapore government has long practised the art of exaggerating this distortion to its advantage.

The following statistics, drawn from the 1988 results as published in *The Straits Times*, clearly illustrates the level of distortion:—

- * The PAP secured 98.76% of the seats on the basis of 61.8% of the votes, while the opposition secured 1.23% of the seats on the basis of 36% of the vote.
- * In the 70 contested seats, it took an average of 12,290 votes to elect a PAP candidate while it took an average of 494,406 votes to elect an opposition candidate.
- * If an electoral system based on proportional representation had been in use, there would now be 29 opposition members in parliament.

There are important strategic lessons for the opposition parties to learn from their 1988 experience. Given an electoral system which does not reflect their broad support, it may be more advantageous to "play the system" and systematically target constituencies thus concentrating their resources. The PAP was quick to seize on the fact that, with 70 seats being contested, the opposition could theoretically oust the government. The PAP was able to focus its campaign on discrediting opposition claims to government, diverting attention from the fundamental issue of the appropriateness of overwhelming one-party domination in parliament. If the opposition had contested a minority of constituencies the government would not have been able to divert attention in the manner it did.

Perhaps, given the political culture and history of Singapore under Lee Kuan Yew, the lesson to be learnt for the opposition is that their energies should be focussed totally on developing the most appropriate strategy for establishing themselves as a substantial and credible opposition. Then, and only then, will the structural fortress that the PAP has built around its power base begin to quiver.

Non-Constituency Seats Accepted

Francis Seow and Dr. Lee Siew Choh of the Workers' Party have accepted the two seats for non-constituency MP's and have been declared MP's. (The two highest-scoring, but losing opposition candidates have the right to take the seats which do not give the right to vote on important bills such as finance).

The PAP has delayed the opening of parliament until January, ostensibly due to renovations in parliament buildings. However, observers note that this comes after Francis Seow's court case in December on government charges of tax evasion. If convicted he will probably be disqualified as an MP. The PAP cannot be wanting such a competent, fearless debator in the House even as a non-constituency MP! Ben Jeyaretnam, Secretary-General of the Workers' Party, who was an elected MP earlier, was expelled from Parliament because of his outspoken utterances on the floor of the House. (See CHRISTIAN WORKER—4th Qr 1987).

Meanwhile seven young community leaders remain in prison without trial. They were in their cells during the October 1st elections without a voice, without a vote, hostages to Singapore's "democracy."

Boycott Singapore Airlines!

In response to these detentions, and also to the closing down of its office in Singapore in December

1987, the Christian Conference of Asia passed the following resolution at its Executive Committee meeting in Manila in September:—

It is now therefore resolved that CCA should henceforth:—

- instruct its staff not to travel on Singapore Airlines
- inform all participants coming for CCA Seminars, Workshops, Consultations, Exposure Programmes, visitations and meetings that CCA will not pay for travel on Singapore Airlines
- urge its member Churches, National Councils, fraternal organisations, related agencies and partner Churches to initiate similar action against Singapore Airlines
- that such symbolic action should continue till the Singapore government withdraws its uncalled for and unwarranted allegations against CCA
- releases the seven persons presently detained under the Internal Security Act.

Chile: 'No' to a Dictator

September 11 this year marked the 15th anniversary of the military coup that brought Gen. Augusto Pinochet to power in Chile. Despite the repression meted out by the dictatorship the struggles of the Chilean people to end military rule and return to democracy have resulted in a decisive 'No' in the October 5 plebiscite called to give another 8 years of power for the dictator.

In salute to that people's courage and tenacity the following homage by Cuban song-writer Pablo Milanés is reproduced from LATINAMERICA PRESS.

The Books, the songs will return

I will again walk the streets of Santiago,
once stained with blood,
and in a lovely liberated plaza
I will pause to weep for those who are absent.

The books will return, as will the songs
that were burned
by murderous hands,
my people will rise
from their ruins
and the traitors will pay
for their guilt.

I will come from the baking desert
and emerge from forests and lakes
and from the hill
overlooking Santiago
I will evoke
my brothers and sisters
who have died
before this moment.

A child will play
on a tree-lined boulevard
and sing with her new friends,
and that song
will be the earth's song
to a life cut down in La Moneda.

One with those
who did much or little
with those who wanted to see their
homeland free
I will fire the first salutes,
early rather than later,
without resting.

I will again walk the streets
of Santiago,
once stained with blood,
and in a lovely liberated plaza
I will pause to weep for those who
are absent.

BRASIL CREATES A CONTROVERSIAL CONSTITUTION

By Jose Pedro S. Martins

After 19 months of work, Congress has approved a new constitution for Brazil.

The document — the country's eighth and the first since the military imposed its own Magna Carta in 1967—contains 246 articles treating topics ranging from censorship to voting rights to maternity leave. A study in contrasts, the new constitution contains unprecedented language to protect the rights of workers and indigenous peoples, yet eliminates the country's meagre effort toward agrarian reform.

"Brazil is now a new country," said Ulysses Guimaraes, the congressional deputy who presided over the Constituent Assembly. (Congress constituted itself as an Assembly for the purposes of writing the document). "This constitution will protect the weak and punish the arrogant."

New Measures

Among the constitutional provisions are measures that:—

- * Set the work week at 44 hours.
- * Give equal labour rights to rural and urban workers
- * Grant a 120-day maternity leave to women
- * Provide for job stability and overtime pay of 150 percent
- * Allow an unrestricted right to strike even for those working in essential public services
- * Nationalise the mining industry. (Foreign companies have four years in which to sell their holdings to Brazilian firms)
- * Place environmental restrictions on much of the country including the Amazon river basin, the Mato Grosso swamps and the Atlantic forest region.

In social and criminal areas, the new constitution:

- * Outlaws the death penalty
- * Considers racism a crime
- * Makes torture an offence for which there can be no amnesty
- * Reduces the voting age from 18 to 16
- * Abolishes the vestiges of film, book and television censorship remaining from the days of the military regime.

A particularly innovative provision gives citizens access to all personal information about themselves that might be in public or government files. The provision covers even the National Information Service, the army's intelligence branch.

Fallout in Economic Sphere

At least 80 percent of the constitutional articles will need enabling legislation to put them into effect. Nonetheless, they are already being felt, particularly in the economic sphere.

For example, one constitutional measure limits bank interest to 12 percent. Although it lacks supporting legislation, the provision has already pushed some capital into gold, dollars and other securities.

The Assembly, installed on January 31, 1987, spent much of August on a second round of voting on the various articles. It was a bitter and conflictive month.

Inflation had hit a record 24 percent in July. Meanwhile, Guimaraes, the Assembly president, and President Jose Sarney quarrelled sharply over the shaping of the final constitutional document.

The issue of workers' rights was particularly acrimonious. The Sarney government is trying to internationalize the economy and needs a docile, malleable workforce. Guimaraes and the majority of the 559 Assembly members, on the other favour nationalization and protection of workers' rights.

Foreign Capital

Proponents of economic internationalization aired television commercials lauding the presence of foreign capital. They also spread rumours that the military would stage a coup if the Assembly adopted strong workers' measures. Finally, after a meeting with top military leaders, Sarney himself said he was against the decisions made by the Assembly.

In a July 26 address, Sarney contended that some of constitutional measures proposed by the Assembly would aggravate the public deficit, the principal cause of Brazil's galloping inflation. He added that the Assembly had approved measures that would make the country ungovernable.

The next day, Guimaraes gave an important speech defending the work of the law-makers. He argued that the new constitution was precisely what Brazil needed to be governable. Later that day, the Assembly approved by an absolute majority the first complete draft of the proposed constitution.

Role of the Church

The churches, both Catholic and Protestant, have been an important influence in shaping the constitution.

The Brazilian Catholic bishops' conference mounted an effective lobbying campaign on behalf of agrarian reform, labour rights and protecting the indigenous as well as pushing traditional positions for private education and against divorce.

trade union leaders. The bishops also co-ordinated the collection of voters signatures of support on key constitutional amendments.

The bishops set up a Constituent Assembly Monitoring Commission made up of persons who had access to Congress. A daily bulletin on Assembly actions went out to bishops, religious superiors, politicians and trade union leaders. The bishops also co-ordinated the collection of voters' signatures of support on key constitutional amendments.

Bishop Luciano Mendes de Almeida, the conference president, wrote a much-publicized letter that led to the creation of a congressional investigation commission to look into government corruption. More than a few Congress members have been accused of accepting government favours in exchange for voting the "right way" on the constitution.

Catholic efforts to shape the constitution were not always progressive

however, Cardinal Eugenio de Araujo Sales of Rio de Janeiro and other conservative clerics helped create an Assembly voting bloc of right-wing Catholics as a way of counteracting the social reforms pushed by the leadership of the bishops' conference.

Evangelical "Stewardship"

Though far fewer, the relative unanimity of evangelical Assembly members was crucial on some constitutional issues. *Twenty-six of the 33 evangelicals in the Assembly consistently voted for conservative interests.*

An agrarian reform measure that would have expropriated land not fulfilling a socially-benefitted use was defeated by 12 votes. In this case, evangelical law-makers followed the dictates of large landowners belonging to the right-wing Rural Democratic Union.

The evangelical bloc also played a key role in helping pass an amendment setting the president's term of five years. Though public opinion favours a four-year presidential term, incumbent Sarney sought five years. The amendment was written by *Deputy Matheus Iensen, a member of the Assembly of God Church from the state of Parana.*

The week following the vote on this amendment, Iensen received a government concession for a radio station in Parana. *Deputy Fusto Rocha, an evangelical Baptist, received a concession for a television channel. Still other evangelical Assembly members were elevated to top federal posts, including the job of director of development for the state-run fishing industry.*

—LATINAMERICA PRESS, 15 September, 1988.

AID AND US BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Despite the upbeat statements of both Philippine and US government functionaries, the US-initiated £10 billion "mini-Marshall Plan" is emerging as one of the important cards the US can use to ensure continued Philippine hospitality to the US bases.

US statements on the matter have been ambiguous, swinging from denials of any link between the bases and the Plan, to coy hints of linkage. The US seems to think there is as yet no need to shove because a little pushing can still do. Undisguised arm-twisting, besides, could be ammunition for Filipino nationalists, to mix metaphors.

US Ambassador Nicholas Platt's recent TV statement could sum up the "soft linkage" line: "It's gonna be very hard to get the (US) Congress

and others to provide the funding for (such a plan) if our bilateral relationship is deteriorating."

Another US Embassy official has also said that the dismantling of the US bases could mean withdrawal of economic and military assistance.

President Aquino insists, however, that the US should be given the benefit of the doubt. Unfortunately, America's past behaviour over aid and its record in its "bilateral relationships" with the Philippines and other countries do not lend support to giving it that benefit.

Businessmen and political economist Alejandro Lichauco, for example, points out in his Lichauco Paper that US and IMF aid has been used several times to enforce US-IMF conditions.

Right after the Second World War, US required the ratification of the Bell Trade Act—including the infamous Parity Amendment which gave the US the same economic rights as Filipinos over natural resources and public utilities in the Philippines—as a condition for paying war damage claims above £500 and turning over war surplus property.

Aside from Parity, the US also got freetrade for eight years and monetary powers over the Philippines for the US President. In 1962 and 1970, IMF loans were given only when the Philippines agreed to undertake decontrol, devaluation, free trade and incentives for foreign investors.

However, Filipinos can find miserable company among other Third World countries since the US has not been singularly harsh on the Philippines alone. Felix Greene's *The Enemy* tells of the following cases of US aid as, in Greene's own words, "a weapon for blackmail":

* In 1952, a revolution overthrew the military government in Bolivia. The revolutionary government

then nationalised the major tin mines. The US blocked Bolivian tin exports, on which Bolivia depended for foreign exchange, and suspended aid.

Exports and aid were resumed only when Bolivia agreed to US demands, including compensation for the expropriated mines, a mining code favourable to private investors, and favourable terms for US tin importers.

In 1963, W. Averell Harriman, * speaking for the US government, warned Argentina that cancelling contracts with US oil companies

would "impair (Argentina's) prospects for future American help."

* In 1966, wheat relief for Algeria was frozen until the Algerians finished negotiating with US oil companies to the latter's satisfaction.

In the same year, food shipments to relieve famine in India were likewise help up until India agreed to allow US oil companies to engage in the distribution and sale of fertilizers in India, in spite to India's original opposition to the idea.

Giving US the benefit of the doubt sounds diplomatic and really statesmanlike, but realpolitik requires nations to either learn from history or be condemned to repeat it.

—ERNESTO VALENCIA

Courtesy: PHILIPPINE INSIGHT, Ecumenical Partnership for International Concern—(EPIC).

Busted Graftbusters!

Aquino Administration tangles with Pandora's box of corruption

Crisis is a word that has become synonymous with the Aquino government. In the past two years, the sirens of alarm had been blown on rightist plots and military coups that threatened to abbreviate Cory Aquino's stay in Malacanang. Plodding to its third year in power, however, the regime seemed to gain a modicum of stability. But just as it did so, the sirens were again sounded, at deafening decibels yet. This time, high-level graft—in an agency tasked with busting Marcos, the biggest grafter in Philippine history—tripped the alarm.

That the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) was the target of graft exposes these past two months made the whole scandal more grotesque and potentially destabilizing. The PCGG stood as a symbol of Aquino's pledge to be "different" from the past regime. Short on such important areas as economic development, social justice

and participatory democracy, Aquino nevertheless has been holding out against rising criticisms with her avowals against graft and corruption. Now, on this account too, she has meagre to show to sustain public trust in her administration.

The consequences were immediate and staggering. Opinion polls conducted by Ateneo's Social Weather Station in July showed confidence in Aquino's crusade against corruption plunging from 75 percent to 44 percent. As the extent of graft in government slowly unfolded in the past weeks, rumours of another coup flew thick. Rightist forces bannered anti-communism and anti-corruption tried to stoke the embers of disenchantment by assailing the Aquino regime's apparent lack of "moral order."

Climatic Unrevelling

The graft exposes had the quality of a fast-action detective flick where each sequence unravelled at the same time thickened the plot.

In early July, the nation was treated to the spectacle of Solicitor General Francisco Chavez and then PCGG Chairman Ramon Diaz hurling corruption charges at one another. Chavez accused the PCGG of "corruption, ineptness and incompetence." With the help of former law firm colleague, PCGG Commissioner Jose Laureta, the sol-gen compiled evidence against some 15-20 fiscal agents in about 14 sequestered firms. The agents were allegedly involved in graft practices ranging from receiving double compensation on huge salaries to unauthorized withdrawal of sequestered funds. As a result, Chavez and Laureta charged, aircrafts of six sequestered firms disappeared as did thousands of heads of cattle in crony-owned ranches and precious relics in the Sto. Nino Shrine in Tacloban City, among others.

Diaz, on the other hand, impugned the motives of Chavez in petitioning the Supreme Court to lift the sequestration orders against the Campa-Panganiban garment companies, viz, American Inter-Fashion, Inc., and Solsil Apparel which allegedly belonged to Congressman Jose Rono and Imee Marcos, respectively.

The well-covered word war between the two prompted Aquino to force both into 30-day leaves of absence. She also ordered Special Prosecutor Raul Gonzalez and Ombudsman Conrado Vasquez to investigate the graft charges against the PCGG, as well as the Commission on Audit to thoroughly audit the sequestered firms.

At the start of the investigations, Laureta told newsmen that only fiscal agents were involved in the mess. But no sooner had the investigations begun when the web of culpability abruptly widened.

Gonzalez had PCGG Commissioner Quintin Doromal arrested after establishing a *prima facie* case on a complaint by "anonymous letter writers." Gonzalez charged that Doromal personally intervened on behalf of his family-owned corporation in a public bidding for the supply of educational equipment when he was already PCGG Commissioner.

Then, it was Laureta's turn to roast. Laureta, who was head of the PCGG's legal department, was charged with not inhibiting himself from handling the sequestration case against the Enriquez and Panlilio group of companies of which he was a lawyer for eight years. More damaging was Laureta's failure to reveal to the government that he served as corporate secretary of Power Contractors, Inc., a firm organized by big-time Marcos crony Harminio Disini to obtain a civil works contract for the construction of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. Disini's firms have been sequestered by the PCGG.

There's no Business like Graft

More seriously, however, the scandal brought into the spotlight the dark truth that there are countless men and women bound by financial and political patronage relationships with the deposed regime who have been appointed to key government posts under the Aquino administration. It played up the fact that where appointments were concerned, Aquino was no different from Marcos in that patronage and political debt were the prime criteria for government job-seekers.

As the inquiries continued, bigger names were dragged into the scandal. Aquino's behaviour, in the light of the exposures, appeared erratic to many.

At the same time, Aquino directed the Ombudsmen to prepare a list of grafters in the higher echelons of gov-

ernment and the military. This opened up a Pandora's box of allegations, as yet unsubstantiated, against Cabinet members, military officers and presidential kin among others.

At month's end, the government seemed to teeter to self-destruction.

The UP School of Economics calculated that under the profligate Marcos regime, graft cost the government P20 billion a year. This year, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry calculated that P50 billion or 30 percent of the 1988 budget will be lost due to corruption and inefficiency. Clearly, graft means big money and big business.

An Insidious Subplot

The PCGG scandal is perhaps the most unnerving since by the very nature of the agency, it is at least expected to show more responsibility. But as observers have pointed out, the PCGG is the most likely place to breed wholesale graft since it is the agency's task to sequester and manage millions of pesos worth of ill-gotten firms. Furthermore, most of the PCGG's fiscal agents volunteered for their jobs in 1986 when proper screening of personnel was almost unheard of.

Still, the timing of the expose cannot be more inopportune, if we are still to believe some sectors in the PCGG. For one, it comes in the wake of breakthroughs in the courts in Switzerland and the US., where the cases of Marcos' hidden wealth in those countries are to be litigated.

Then too, some quarters have suggested that the scandal was brought to light just as there is a realignment of political forces ostensibly in preparation for the 1992 presidential elections.

What is clear though is that everyone is trying to grab some of the spotlight for himself by accusing this or that of graft, and waving sheaves of alleged evidence to nail this or that government official. Never to be outdone, politicians in the Right including Laurel have used the corruption issue to buttress their call for Aquino to resign.

A Cameo Role for the Left

As the political biggies try to outdo each other in playing their own subplots, the non-response of the Filipino Left stands out like an empty screen.

The silence of the country's national democratic forces today over the issue of graft and moral bankruptcy is reminiscent of their behaviour when the issue of Marcos' hidden wealth came into full public knowledge in 1985. Refusing to address the issue and treating it as peripheral to the more substantial and fundamental issues confronting the nation, they lost an opportunity to put out a radical perspective to the graft issue and to use it to point out the limitations of bourgeois democracy.

At that time, liberal democrats took the momentum in their hands, forming the ACRONYM or Anti-Cronyism Movement as their campaign co-ordinating centre to tap the potentials of the radicalized middle class. ACRONYM's activities among the middle class, along with other organizations, helped push the dictatorship's crisis to its well-recorded ending.

Today, though conditions are far from similar to that of 1985 and though the Aquino government still stops short of being a dictatorial regime, providing the radical perspective to the graft issue is still as important as then. In fact, today, there is added urgency because of the actions of rightist forces who are trying to appropriate the issue for their own nefarious ends.

As the people grow more disenchanted and frustrated with the Aquino regime, there is growing urgency to provide them with ideas of genuine alternatives to elite-based democracy.

(Excerpts from an article by Belinda U. Calaguas)

Courtesy: CONJUNCTURE (Philippine Institute for Popular Democracy) September, 1988. □

Vishwanath Prataph Singh

The Rajahs Return

— Nirmalan Dhas —

Amongst other things, Sri Lanka is also home to a perception of India, widely held by every ethnic group and socio economic class, according to which our closest neighbour is an under-developed country riddled with poverty, scientifically backward and culturally barren, struggling pitifully in a hopeless attempt to survive in the modern world ; a concept that would be laughable were it not accompanied by the subtle implication that Sri Lanka, miniscule as she is in comparison with her giant neighbour, is somehow 'Greater' than India in every possible way. Nothing, of course, could be further removed from the reality of neighbouring India as the foremost Capitalist power amidst the nations that have fought for and won their freedom from Colonial Domination following the Second World War ; the fact of the matter being that in terms of Industrial output, and Scientific Research and Development, India does not lag far behind the most powerful industrialised nations and in fact shows every sign of rapidly improving her performance.

Within the context of international political relations India's ruling Congress (I) party has won wide recognition as heir to the leadership of the greatest Democratic National Liberation Struggle that the modern world has seen, through which India won her freedom from colonial rule. Her economic might and hitherto unwavering Anti Imperialist stance have led to her being recognised as the leading source of power within the Non Aligned Movement. Her firm stand in support of the National Liberation Movement, the Newly Free Nations and the World Socialist Movement, deepens the humanity of her teeming millions of citizens and makes them conscious of their responsibilities towards other people



"Rajah Sahib" V. P. Singh

Despite her heroic heritage and fighting spirit, India finds herself under attack both from anti national elements within and from Imperialist Regimes and their puppets from without. On her northern frontiers her borders are penetrated by separatists trained and funded by the U.S. military puppet—Pakistan. She has been plagued by her repeated failures to demarcate mutually acceptable boundaries along her frontier with China. Funded and trained by Imperialist Agencies' separatists operating from Nepal, Bangladesh and Burma cause her people great anguish. Anti national Elements funded by religious organisations have stirred up separatist trends in both Jarkhand and Megha-

laya. Religious Fundamentalists and Communalists whose activities are funded by aid giving agencies—who are accountable to and work in close co-ordination with Imperialist Regimes—create divisions amidst the peoples of India and foster communal conflicts both on the basis of caste and religion. And on her southernmost extremity racist tendencies in Sri Lanka funded by Imperialist agencies and egged on by pro imperialist elements have stirred up long dormant winds of militant Tamil Nationalism and threaten to fan the flames of separatism to life again.

India's ruling Congress (I) party has long been criticised by her wor-

king class parties who were once its allies in the struggle of the peoples of India against Colonial Domination. This criticism has taken the form of repeated warnings as to the inevitable consequences of the failure of the Congress (I) to take into account the interests of the majority of the people of India and to be ever vigilant against Imperialist designs. The sharp analytical vision of the Communists was often valued and rarely ignored by the leaders of newly free India, most of whom saw these leaders of the workers and peasants as their comrades and allies in the victorious struggle against Colonial Domination :

Testimony of an Indian Communist

.....I belong to that generation of freedom fighters who matured into politics in the 1930's when the Indian National Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru was rapidly developing into the United Anti Imperialist Front in which the Communists, the Socialists and other leftists were active partners. Vivid in my memory are the various sessions of the Congress in which resolutions against war, Fascism, Colonialism, Etc., were adopted. It was in that period that the Indian National Congress sent a medical mission to China whose leaders were then fighting Militarist Japan. Nehru personally went to Spain where the Anti Fascist Democrats were defending their elected government with arms in hand. India and her freedom movement were in other words, rapidly becoming a source of inspiration for freedom fighters in all Colonial Countries.....

.....Nehru as Prime Minister redefined his government's foreign policy in the mid-50's in the spirit of the thirties. That made India, along with China and several other non-Socialist Asian countries like Burma, Indonesia and Ceylon, one of the initiators of the present Non-Aligned Movement. Ever since then we Communists have supported the foreign policy of

the government—(E. M. S. Namboodiripad : 'On the programme of Opposition Unity' Peoples Democracy., Vol. XII No. 33—Page 3)

but before long the rising power of the Indian Capitalist Class was deployed in the defence of its own economical interests within the context of the inherent contradiction between Capitalists and the working class that grew progressively sharper as India moved forward along the road to developed-Capitalism, so that the Communists were soon not merely ignored but openly persecuted and brutally repressed as well.

Under the sway of the Indian Capitalist Class, successive Congress governments have been forced to make greater and greater concessions to Imperialist Interests so that today India's external debt stands out as a direct threat to her sovereignty and to her progressive Non Aligned foreign policy. Internally the failure of successive Congress governments to take into account the interests of the majority of the peoples of India has led to the inability of the Congress (I) to mobilise the masses to struggle against imperialist funded separatists and other Anti-National elements within and has also led to its being forced again and again to compromise its secular and democratic principles in order to reach compromise with these forces of destabilisation.

The only consistently stabilising factors have remained the massive basic Indian industrial infrastructure that has been built up with Soviet assistance over the years since India gained her independence, and the heroic and unyielding struggle through which the working class has ensured that this basic economic infrastructure remains vested in the state despite repeated attempts by the Capitalist Class to secure ownership of the same through a programme of 'Privatisation.' The administrative apparatus and defence mechanism of the Indian National State, resting largely upon the revenue of this state owned basic economic infrastructure, have for so long been able to defend their integrity despite the many challenges faced.

In recent times there has emerged from deep within the Indian heartland a strong challenge to the ruling Congress (I) party, aimed not at the replacing of the policies of the Congress government with those closer to the interests of the peoples of India, but it would seem, merely at seeing the Congress (I) out of office. The ruling party has lost several of its strongholds in the course of various by elections, and the recent victory in Allahabad of Vishwanath Prataph Singh who has emerged as a political personality capable of posing as an alternative to the present Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi is a clear indication that all is not well with the ruling party.



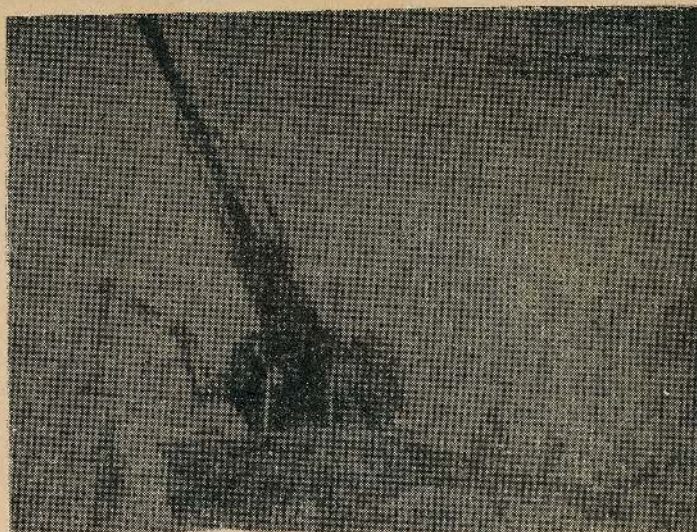
Late Prime Minister Pandit Nehru

Precisely what ails the Congress (I) whose claims to the leadership of the National Liberation struggle of the peoples of India that set the stage for the liberation of much of the colonised regions of the world stands undisputed, becomes apparent only under close analysis of the Indian political context. The same question could be posed as an inquiry as to why the Congress (I) backed by the major section of the modern Capitalist Class in India has failed so miserably to consolidate its position.

One must of necessity raise the question of whether a social force, other than the working class, has emerged and grown in strength to the point of its being able to challenge the powerful ruling Capitalist Class or whether the present challenge to the Congress (I) is one more attempt by Imperialism to unseat the leadership of India's Anti Imperialist tendency that seeks to safeguard the hard won gains of her National Liberation Struggle. This query takes on more importance when one takes note of the fact that the dismal performance of the Congress (I) at Allahabad is not an isolated instance but only one more in a chain of serious setbacks that may lead to a situation where a party from outside the traditions of her Anti Imperialist National Liberation Struggle may come to power in India bringing with it fundamental changes in geopolitical relations prevailing in South Asia.

Observers seem to agree that Vishwanath Prataph Singh's victory is a clear indication that the Congress (I) governments credibility has suffered a grave setback in the face of the questions that have been raised in connection with the BOFORS gun deal. Indeed the very emergence of Singh as a potential Prime Ministerial candidate is closely linked with his articulation of the now popular demand for impartial inquiry into this and other related transactions.

The BOFORS gun deal and the purchase of submarines from West Germany are two transactions that have attracted charges of corruption within the government. It is also



BOFORS GUN — Moving Westward

apparent that these two transactions are amongst those that mark an important recent development in India's international relations, for there are many who see in them a conscious attempt on the part of the Congress (I) government to distance itself from India's time tested policy of relying on the Soviet Union for its defence needs and Military Technology.

The Bare Facts

Negotiation for the acquisition of four class 209 Type 1500 Diesel-Electric submarines of a submerged displacement of 1,800 tonnes each was a prolonged one. Initial discussions began almost ten years before the deal was finally signed in December 1981. Talks between India and the state owned Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (HDW) accelerated in early 1980 when the Indira Gandhi administration started evaluating seriously four different types of submarines, two from the FRG and one each from Italy and Sweden. The deal was finalised soon after Sanjay Gandhi's tragic death in June that year. Some old timers recall that the deal was pushed through 'in difference' to his wishes. Information coming to light now suggests that a non-resident Indian

business house based in Geneva and London skimmed off as commission 7% of the possibly Rs. 430/- Crore deal.

The enormous modernisation and replacement drive by the armed forces had also marked for the first time in nearly two decades a significant departure from reliance on the Soviet Union as a supplier of weapons.—AFTER ALL EACH AND EVERY ITEM WAS AVAILABLE IN THE USSR FOR PRICES THAT WERE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY MANUFACTURER OR GOVERNMENT TO BEAT.—(Courtesy the FRONTLINE : April 18—May 1 1987. P : 11)—Emphasis mine.

It is also not entirely inconceivable that the Indian Administration in its eagerness to effect the change of policy described above—perhaps to reach compromise with pressures emanating from Imperialist quarters in concert with those emerging from pro imperialist elements within the country—failed to take into account the incompatibility of the image of incorruptibility it was attempting to project, and the commissions and kickbacks which are an integral part of the capitalist economies within which the companies contracted with operate.

Whatever may have been the actual facts of the matter, these transactions provided the necessary grounds for questions to be raised regarding the alleged incorruptibility of the Congress (I) Government. While it is the issue of whether the Congress (I) government is or is not corrupt that seizes ones attention, what is of importance is the source of the growing popularity and economic support that V. P. Singh and the forces gradually beginning to converge around his 'Jan Morcha' have been able to tap.

Historical Perspective

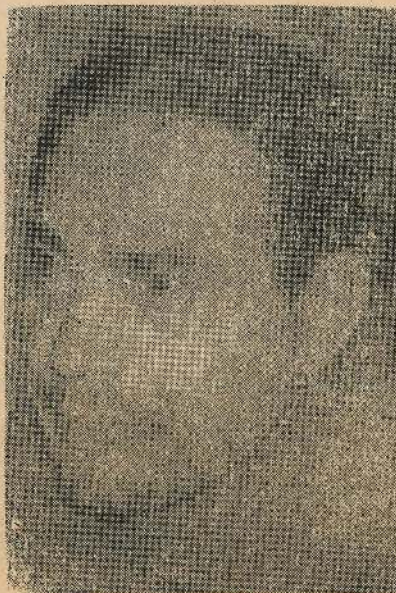
The National Liberation Struggle launched against British Colonial Rule in India, and led by the Indian National Congress, arose directly out of the contradictory interests of the emerging Indian Capitalist Class and British Imperialism. The Indian Capitalists, who at the time were mainly textile manufacturers, wished to have the Indian market to themselves, and the dominant role played by the interests of these large textile manufacturers in the struggle for national liberation becomes overtly evident in the prominence given to the shunning of imported textiles in favour of local products that became a key symbol of resistance to British Imperialism.

The emerging Indian Capitalist Class was joined in this struggle by the well organised working class under the leadership of the Communist Party of India. Much of India was then owned by Petty Kings and landlords—the remnants of Indias Feudal Past from which she was just emerging—who feared for their dominant position in a modern Capitalist-Dominated Independent India and who therefore threw in their lot with her Colonial Rulers who had been content to leave their privileges and position largely undisturbed. This decision of the Feudal Elements in turn helped the Communists to break through the religious and caste traditions that held the peasantry ideologically captive to the Feudal Mode of Production and win the support of the rural masses who readily identified these Feudal Elements as traitors to the great anti imperialist struggle.

Through its alliance with the emerging Capitalist Class, the Communist Party was able to wrest the concession of widespread and radical land reform that further eroded the power of the Feudal Landlords and strengthened the position of the Capitalists and their working class allies. The land reform was followed by the abolition of Privy Purses granted to the remnants of the Feudal Aristocracy, and set the stage for the emergence of deeply antagonistic relations between the Feudal Remnants now rapidly losing their dominant position, and the growing Capitalist Class: the Anti Imperialist outlook of the emerging Capitalist Class within the context of Indias National Liberation Struggle standing in direct contradiction to the Pro Imperialist Stance of the Feudal Remnants.

Class Aspirations in Independent India

While the Capitalist Class in Independent India began to foster blissful dreams of competing with existing Imperial Powers and of emerging as the dominant power in the South Asian Region, and the working class organised under their Communist leadership aspired to the creation of a workers and peasants government, the Feudal Elements in Independent India favoured neither of these goals and opposing both sought, through the generation of a



Ramakrishna Hegde

religious revival to exert once again, in alliance with the religious leaders, their hegemony over the Rural Masses and achieve a return to the past in the form of a restitution of Feudal Relations of Production within an economy dominated by agricultural production.

As is easily evident this aspiration of the Feudal Elements unlike those of the Capitalist and Working Classes falls easily in line with Imperialist Policy aimed at keeping the Non aligned and Newly Free Nations tied to Semi Feudal Modes of Production and entirely dependent on Imperialist Regimes for Industrial Produce, Energy Resources and the wherewithal with which to defend their hard won sovereignty. Not Surprisingly then these Feudal, Elements have found Imperialist support in the form of vast funds channelled into religious and caste based organisations readily forthcoming. While the alliance of the Feudal Elements and the Religious Leadership helped keep the Peasantry and the Rural Masses polarised around them thus breaking down the influence of the Communists that had been painstakingly built up in the course of the struggle for national liberation, the rise of the Capitalist Class shattered the hopes of the Urban Middle Classes who found themselves being rapidly impoverished instead of being wafted into the Capitalist Class as they had hoped would happen once India gained her independence from Colonial Domination. Unable to identify with the working class and its Communist Leadership these Urban Middle Classes readily rally to the support of the Feudal Elements and to communal and divisive forces of any sort.

The current political context

The rise to power of Ramakrishna Hegde of Karnataka, N. T. Rama Rao of Andhra Pradesh, M. Karunainithy of Tamil Nadu and now V. P. Singh—Rajah of Manda and scion of a powerful feudal family—point to the power of the Feudal Elements when they are able to link together the Rural-Masses, the Urban Classes, Religious factions and Separatist Tendencies in opposition to the ruling Capitalist Class.

Anti Capitalist but not Pro Socialist

The rapid rise to prominence and the remarkable success in winning the support of the major part of the Feudal Remnants, The Rural Masses and Urban Middle Classes enjoyed by Rajah Vishwanath Prataph Singh—or Rajah Sahib as he is popularly known—is no accident or kind gift of fate but the logical outcome of his considered consistent and deadly attacks aimed at the Indian Capitalist Class and its Indian National State, and the consummate skill with which he has isolated his onslaughts against this Class and its state apparatus from the democratic demands, clear class consciousness and class based struggle of the working classes and their Communist leadership.

From the very beginning of his term as finance minister Rajah Sahib embarked upon a deadly crusade aimed at undermining the Indian Capitalist Class.

His first fell blows that rained down upon the Industrial Giants who had fed and funded the struggle for national liberation and built the Indian National State, were clear enough for all to see. But the soothing seductive croonings about the alleged inefficiency of the state owned industrial infrastructure and for the consequent need for its privatisation, that emerged during his tenure as Finance Minister, filtered into the nations consciousness its subversive content hardly recognised.

This smooth talk about solving the nations economic woes through the privatisation of the state owned economic infrastructure, easily seduced the more compradore elements within the Capitalist Class and lulled them into complaisance. Slowly but surely the Rajah of Manda continued to undermine and destroy the credibility of the Congress (I) government

amidst its Capitalist base until drunk with his own success he overreached himself in hiring an American Investigative agency to assist him in his insidious task.

Waking up to the threat too late, the Congress (I) government for reasons still not made clear, transferred this subversive element to the Ministry of Defence where far from chastened he delivered his most devastating blow by portraying as Corruption-in-high-places the flow of commissions and kickbacks that have come to become an essential part of defence and other major transactions within the Capitalist system.

Despite the best intentions of the Congress (I) government in having placed stringent restrictions on procedures to be followed in the course of the negotiation of defence deals in particular, the inexorable dynamics of the corruptibility that is inherent to the Capitalist System had taken its toll and provided the Rajah of Manda an opportunity to advance the interests of his Class.

The present circumstances that have enabled representatives of the old Feudal order to win sufficient economic and popular support to stage a comeback, point to the support of sections of the Indian Capitalist Class who believe that collaboration with Imperialism will lead

**His first fell blows
rained down upon the
Industrial Giants who had
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Indian National State.**

to greater profits than the continued maintenance of an uncompromising anti imperialist stance.

Within the present political context wherein the Congress (I) is being severely criticised by the Communist leadership of the working class for its tendency to compromise more and more with Imperialist interests, the Feudal elements have welcomed this increased accommodation of Imperialist interests and have emerged as the champions of those sections of the Indian Capitalist Class that have begun to take a compradore and pro imperialist outlook.

The Communist Parties of India, with their uncompromising stand against Imperialism and their principled refusal to enter into alliance with any parties other than those that are not only Democratic but are Secular as well, therefore find it quite unlikely that co-operation between themselves and the several forces gathering around V. P. Singh and his 'Jan Morcha' will be possible.

The Rajah of Manda Rides On

Breaking free of the Anti Imperialist Tendency represented by the Congress (I) as the representative of the interests of the Indian National Capitalist Class and the Communist Parties as representative of the interests of the Working Classes, Vishwanath Pratap Singh set about the task of forging an organisation capable of rallying together the Feudal remnants, the Communal and Religious Tendencies and all other forces opposed to the Secular and Democratic and Anti Imperialist aspects of the policies of the Congress (I) and to the class consciousness and revolutionary perspective of the Communist Parties.

His success in damaging the interests of the Capitalist Class made him the rallying point for the Feudal Remnants and his careful avoidance of any commitment to Secularism and Anti Imperialism won him the support of pro imperialist elements and communal organisations so that the initial unity

achieved under his 'Jan Morcha' soon widened in scope to permit the emergence of the Samajawati Janata Dal and began to show signs of achieving greater organisational cohesion and political coherence

While the Samajawati Janata Dal brought together the Lok Dal, The Janata, The Congress (S) and V. P. Singhs Jan Morcha it failed to forge links with the regional parties almost all of which harbour or have at one time or other harboured separatist tendencies. The regional parties at present seem to favour the formation of a National Peoples Front

Scenario for the future

This description of the current Indian political context could well be read as a prophetic indication of Indias imminent likelihood of turning into an Imperialist puppet in the not too distant future. This however would be too facile a conclusion, for such a radical change in the very political character of the peoples of India would first necessitate the privatisation of the massive material base of Indias enlightened and progressive foreign policy.

It is very unlikely that any government will be able to effect such a course of privatisation without risking a serious clash with the working class that zealously guards the independence of this massive state owned economic infrastructure, that gives rise to Indias Humane and Progressive foreign policy.

Unable to expropriate the state owned sector for fear of a destabilising clash with the working class, the Feudal Elements in alliance with the Compradore sections of the Capitalist Class will probably develop the tendency to open the nations economy to imperialists penetration through increased indebtedness and the setting up of joint ventures with multi-national corporations that have emerged from within the Imperialist System. Such joint ventures will essentially be confined to the sphere of manufacturing consumer goods and will also as a consequence lead to the strengthening of the working class in the most organised urban industrial sector.

Indias imminent likelihood of turning into an Imperialist puppet in the not too distant future.

The promotion of consumerism as an ethos will necessarily follow the resulting increase in the production of consumer items and this will lead to a crisis amidst the religious leaders who will then be faced with the increasingly difficult task of justifying the philosophy of their patrons to the impoverished masses thereby opening a path through which the alliance between the organised proletariat and the rural masses can be built up once more.

The growing might of the neighbouring Socialist Bloc and the increasingly sophisticated modes of struggle being adopted by the Communist leadership of the working class, if faced with the seizure of power of the Indian State by Feudal Elements and Compradore sections of the Capitalist Class as in most neighbouring South Asian countries, may lead to the rapid linking up of the workers and peasants of the countries of south asia so that the transition towards peoples democracy may take place in the south asian region through a largely Democratic Process in keeping with the tradition of Indias Democratic National Liberation Struggle.

Influence on Sri Lanka

The emergence of this tendency towards an anti capitalist and pro imperialist polarisation in India is bound to exert an attraction on similar tendencies in Sri Lanka and other neighbouring countries. This will be particularly so in Sri Lanka since here the assistance of the Indian National State has been sought to protect the integrity of the island's own weak and disintegrating state. Already several hitherto anti Indian factions amidst the broad anti Indian tendency in Sri Lanka have articulated a growing trend towards polarisation around the pro-

imperialist tendency in India. This tendency towards such a polarisation will be immensely strengthened in the event of the regional parties and in particular the DMK of Tamil Nadu forming a common front with the Samajawati Janata Dal.

Any such polarisation of the pro imperialist tendency in Sri Lanka around its Indian counterpart within a context where the latter is able to seize power on the sub-continent will lead to the brutal destruction of the weak and largely ineffective anti imperialist tendency within the island, so that the question of mere survival will have to take precedence over the task of advancing towards socialism inasmuch as the progressive forces within the island are concerned.

Keeping in mind the dominant tendencies described herein the progressive forces in Sri Lanka who alone are capable of responding analytically to the future from the present, will be well advised to concentrate as large a proportion of their resources as is possible on the task of forging a principled unity with all secular and Democratic tendencies within the island and building material links with the Communist Parties of India and other South Asian countries. Only such a decisive and courageous course of action can give the people of the island the militant power necessary to defend their democratic gains and advance their interests within the difficult times that lie ahead.

Those who now vociferously advance the view that a progressive outcome can be expected from the ousting of the Congress (I) government by Vishwanath Prataph Singh and his allies must be patiently educated to the fact that their hopes are no more than a forelorn exercise in futility.

Authors Note

The term 'Feudal' as used in this article is to be understood in its general sense as indicating that socio economic formation wherein relations of production were determined predominantly by ownership of Land, and which immediately preceded the emergence of the capitalist one; and not in its particular meaning as indicative of the form that this immediate pre capitalist formation took in the European Context alone.

CWF Wins Fundamental Rights Case

*The Supreme Court delivered judgment on 22nd September in the CWF Fundamental Rights Case (S.C. Application No. 199/87) reported in the last issue of **Christian Worker**. The Court held in favour of the petitioners who were members of the Wattala Branch of the Christian Workers Fellowship.*

The Fundamental Rights Application was heard on 21st July and again on 30th and 31st August before a Supreme Court Bench of three Judges comprising Atukorale, J., G. P. S. de Silva, J. and Jameel, J. The Judgement was delivered by G. P. S. de Silva J., the other two judges concurring.

The following is the text of the Judgement

G. P. S. DE SILVA, J:

The three petitioners, who are members of the Wattala branch of the organization known as the Christian Workers Fellowship, complain in this application under Article 126 of the Constitution that the first respondent (Sub-Inspector of Police, Wattala) and the 2nd respondent (Chairman, Wattala-Mabole Urban Council) have prevented them from holding a seminar on Human Rights at the Urban Council hall on 25th November 1987. They accordingly allege that both respondents have jointly and/or severally violated their fundamental rights of freedom of speech and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association (Article 14(1)(a),(b) and (c) of the Constitution.) It is common ground that the first petitioner who was the organizer of the seminar paid the stipulated fee to the Urban Council and obtained written permission from the 2nd respondent for the use of the Urban Council hall on 25th November 1987, in order to hold an *Adult Education* seminar. The formal application made by the first petitioner to the Urban Council is marked 2R2 and the written per-

mission granted by the second respondent is marked 2R3. Wide publicity appears to have been given to the seminar as is evidenced by a copy of the poster P4 and a copy of the letter of invitation P9. Both P4 and P9 figure prominently in these proceedings, as the ground of objection to the holding of the seminar was based on the contents of these two documents.

The meeting was scheduled to commence at 4-30 p.m. According to the petitioners, a few minutes before 4-30 p.m., the 2nd respondent arrived at the Urban Council premises and without making any inquiry ordered the first petitioner "to go down and stop the meeting" which the first petitioner refused to do. The petitioners aver that the 2nd respondent made reference to the letter of invitation (P9) not being worded in the same way as the formal application made to the Urban Council for the use of the hall (2R2) but they were denied an opportunity to explain matters. Despite the order given by the 2nd respondent to stop the meeting, the petitioners commenced the meeting. The 3rd petitioner who was the Chairman made a brief introductory speech and

invited the 2nd petitioner to speak on Human Rights. Shortly after the 2nd petitioner commenced his speech, the 1st respondent appeared at the door of the hall in police uniform, had a brief discussion with the 1st and 2nd petitioners and thereafter requested the members of the audience to disperse. The meeting was thus abruptly brought to an end.

It is not disputed that the arrival of the 1st respondent on the scene was by reason of a telephone call given by the 2nd respondent to the Officer-in-Charge, Wattala Police Station. The telephone message has been produced marked 1R1 and it establishes the fact that the 2nd respondent had informed the police that there is a possibility of a breach of the peace for the reason that a group of persons are holding a meeting "on a subject contrary to the permission granted." The 2nd respondent had specifically requested the police to intervene and stop the meeting. Hence the petitioners aver in their petition that the respondent terminated the meeting "on the instructions, directions and instigation of the 2nd respondent."

What then, is the 2nd respondent's answer to the petitioner's case that it was he who was actually responsible for the abrupt termination of the meeting for which permission had already been granted by him? Mr. R. K. W. Gunasekera, Counsel for the 2nd respondent, strenuously contended before us that his client had every right to eject the petitioners from the hall, as they were in breach of the conditions upon which permission had been granted to hold the meeting. Mr. Gunasekera referred us to the application made by the 1st petitioner for the use of the hall (2R2). This document specifically states that the hall is required for an "Adult Education Class." Again, Counsel pointed out that in the licence granted by the 2nd respondent (2R3) the purpose for which the hall was hired was set out as "Adult Education Class." It is right to state here that Mr. Gunasekera very properly conceded that

whether the meeting is called a "class" or a "seminar" was not material to his case and he does not rely on such verbal distinction.

Mr. Gunasekera urged that the emphasis was on the words "Adult Education" in both 2R2 and 2R3. Permission was granted by the 2nd respondent to hold an Adult Education Class or seminar and nothing else. On the other hand, Mr. Gunasekera pointed out that in neither the poster P4 nor in the letter of invitation P9 was there any reference to "Adult Education" and that the topic for discussion was given as "Supreme Court decisions on Human Rights." At this point it is relevant to set out the contents of P4 and P9 (as translated) for it is on these two documents that the 2nd respondent strongly relied

P4 reads thus :—

"Decisions of the Supreme Court on Human Rights.

Chairman: Rev. Bro. Edwin Ambrose.
At Wattala Town Hall.

Speakers: Basil Fernando, Attorney-at-Law,
Vijaya Vidyasagara, Attorney-at-Law,
Siri Nanayakkara, Attorney-at-Law and other speakers.

1987, November 25, Wednesday
4.30 p.m.

Organized by: Christian Workers Fellowship, Wattala Branch."

P9 reads as follows :—

"Christian Workers Fellowship, Wattala branch.

Sir/Madam,

Supreme Court Decisions on Human Rights

In recent times the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka has made a number of very important decisions on Human Rights. These are very important in relation to arrests, detentions, assaults and torture and unequal treatment before the law and other questions relating to human rights. It is essential today to impart a wide education on these.

As one of the first steps towards this, our organization will hold a seminar on 25th of November, 1987 at 4.30 p.m. at Wattala Town Hall.

The main lecture will be a summary of these decisions of the Supreme Court, and Mr. Basil Fernando, Attorney-at-Law, will deliver that lecture.

Rev. Bro. Edwin Ambrose will chair the meeting.

We invite you to attend this meeting and kindly request you to bring your friends too."

It was the contention of Mr. Gunasekera that "Adult Education" was a well known concept which has certain specific connotations but that a discussion of the Supreme Court judgments would not fall within the usual meaning associated with "Adult Education." Mr. Gunasekera drew our attention to paragraph 8 of the 2nd respondent's affidavit where he averred :—

"..... On reading P4 and P9 I saw reference to the Supreme Court decisions and felt alarmed that the meeting was not an ordinary educational meeting but a protest meeting..... I confronted the 1st petitioner and told him that permission had not been granted for the use of the hall for the purposes described in P4 and P9 and that therefore I appealed to him and the 2nd and 3rd petitioners whom I know, not to proceed with the meeting."

In short, Mr. Gunasekera's submission was that the apprehension entertained by the 2nd respondent was reasonable in the circumstances and that his conduct in seeking the assistance of the police to stop the meeting must be viewed in the light of the specific purpose for which the petitioners had obtained permission to use the hall. Discussion of the Supreme Court decisions in relation to Human Rights, Counsel maintained, was not the kind of subject appropriate for discussion in an Adult Education class or seminar.

On a consideration of the submissions of Counsel and the material placed before us, it seems to me that the question for decision is whether the petitioners had violated the condition upon which the 2nd respondent had granted permission for the use of the hall by the petitioners. The petitioners contend that a discussion of the Supreme Court decisions in relation to Human Rights is by no means alien to the subject of Adult Education. On the contrary, it is their case that it falls well within the accepted meaning of "Adult Education." As rightly submitted by Mr. Govin Dayasiri, Counsel for the petitioners, the specific question which arises for our consideration is whether it could reasonably be said that a review of

the decisions of the Supreme Court in relation to Human Rights falls within the subject of Adult Education. In this connection Mr. Dayasiri referred us to a helpful discussion on "Adult Education" contained in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.—I, (1977) Edn., page 97. There is here a classification of Adult Education and one of the categories given is

"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 participation and so forth)."

It would appear that "Adult Education" is a concept covering a wide field and is not basically different from the concept of "education." In my opinion, there is little doubt that a discussion of the Supreme Court decisions on Human Rights falls well within the area of "adult education." The position of the respondents that the topic set down for discussion as evidenced by P4 and P9 is not in accordance with the purpose for which the hall was hired is not tenable. I accordingly hold that the petitioners were not in breach of the conditions of the licence granted to them by the 2nd respondent in organizing a seminar on the subject of "Decisions of the Supreme Court on Human Rights."

Freedom of speech and expression necessarily includes the freedom to impart knowledge, to disseminate knowledge to propagate ideas. "Knowledge" is not confined to any particular branch of learning. It seems to me that a meaningful discussion on Human Rights would not be complete without reference to the relevant Supreme Court decisions. The Supreme Court is, as observed by Sharvananda, J. (as he was then) in *Paliyawadana vs. A.G. and others*—(F.R. decisions, Vol. I, p. 3) "the protector and guarantor of fundamental rights." Therefore I am of the opinion that a discussion of the Supreme Court decisions on Human Rights would be a perfectly legitimate exercise of the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by the Constitution.

"Freedom of speech and expression consists primarily not only in the liberty of the citizen to speak and write what he chooses, but in the liberty of the public to hear and read, what it needs The basic assumption in a democratic polity is that government shall be based on the consent of the governed. The consent of the governed implies not only that consent shall be free but also that it shall be grounded on adequate information and discussion aided by the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources The right of people to hear is within the concept of the freedom of speech. Freedom of discussion must embrace all issues about which information is needed to enable the members of a society to cope with the exigencies of their period "per Sharvananda, C.J. in **M. Joseph Perera & others vs. A.G.** (S.C. 107-109/86, S.C. Minutes of 25.5.87).

The conduct of both respondents in terminating the meeting was clearly an infringement of the petitioners' freedom of speech and expression and the freedom of peaceful assembly

I must refer to another aspect of the respondents' case. In the telephone message given to the police, the 2nd respondent speaks of the possibility of a breach of the peace. The 1st respondent in his affidavit makes a bare assertion that he noticed "that the crowd was

unruly." On the other hand, the petitioners have produced several photographs of the audience present in the hall. One of the photographs shows the 1st respondent addressing those present in the hall. These photographs completely belie the story of an unruly or boisterous crowd. It was a peaceful and disciplined group of persons who had come to participate in the seminar. Therefore no issue relating to the restriction of fundamental rights in the interests of "public order" arises for our consideration in these proceedings.

In the result, I hold that the petitioners are entitled to a declaration that both the 1st and 2nd respondents have infringed two fundamental rights of the petitioners namely, the freedom of speech and expression (Article 14(1) (a)) and the freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 14 (1) (b)).

The petitioners have also prayed for damages and compensation. While the 1st petitioner has claimed a sum of Rs. 25,000/- as damages, the 2nd and 3rd petitioners each claims a sum of Rs. 15,000/-. As regards the 1st respondent, Senior

State Counsel, Mr. Asoka de Silva rightly submitted that the material on record shows that he acted throughout *bona fide*, upon the complaint and the request made by the 2nd respondent. In these circumstances, we make no award of damages or compensation as against the 1st respondent. The case against the 2nd respondent, however, stands on a somewhat different footing. There can be no doubt that the decision to terminate the meeting was his decision. Although he too has acted *bona fide*, yet through a mistaken view of the nature of the meeting he had wrongfully terminated it, in violation of the fundamental rights of the petitioners. We accordingly direct the 2nd respondent to pay a sum of Rs. 1500/- (Rupees One Thousand Five Hundred) as compensation to the 1st petitioner, who was the organizer of the meeting. The 1st petitioner is also entitled to a sum of Rs. 250/- as costs of proceedings payable by the 2nd respondent.

ATUKORALE, J., : I agree.

JAMEEL, J., : I agree.

CRM on New Emergency Regulations

The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) is deeply conscious of the serious problems of law and order faced by the government, compounded by the fact that political killings have reached unprecedented levels, and grave hardship is caused to the public by the disruption of supplies and services caused by violence and intimidation. CRM nevertheless feels constrained to warn the government against over reacting thereby keeping in motion a vicious spiral of violence which we may never be able to unwind.

In this context CRM expresses its concern at two new emergency regulations.

Disposal of dead bodies is now permitted by a police officer not below the rank of ASP or any person authorised by him, without complying with any written law. This applies to all deaths throughout the country, including deaths in custody. There can be no justification

for this. (The regulation hitherto in force at least provided for a Magistrate to order a post mortem, which could be by-passed only by order of the Inspector General of Police or a Deputy Inspector General).

The **Prevention of Threat of Death Regulations** (November 9, 1988) are attempts to deal with a serious and ugly problem. CRM is all too aware of the need for protection against intimidation. Fellow human rights organisations, and individuals, some of whom are members of CRM, have received death threats. One dedicated CRM member, the lawyer K. Kanthasamy, who was engaged in relief work on a non-partisan basis, and who refused to be intimidated, has probably paid with his life. He was abducted on 19th June, 1988 in Jaffna and has not been heard of since. CRM nevertheless points to unacceptable features of this new regulation which include:

- mandatory death sentence

- the provision that mere possession of a document is prima facie proof of attempt to commit an offence;
- confessions are made admissible "to whomsoever and under whatsoever circumstances made." Proof of duress (e.g. torture) may "reduce or minimise the weight" of the confession but will not exclude it. Moreover, the burden of proving such circumstances is shifted to the accused;
- the jurisdiction of superior courts to suspend or prevent a trial (for instance the trial court might act illegally or with bias) is sought to be removed.

The Civil Rights Movement is greatly perturbed that emergency regulations having far-reaching effects are being promulgated without their texts being simultaneously made available to the public. It is clearly unjust to penalise persons for breach of laws the contents of which they cannot know.

CRM urges that the full text of emergency regulations and orders thereunder be published in all three language newspapers. No regulation should take effect prior to such publication. They should also be made available for inspection, for the duration of the period they remain in force, at some place to which the public has convenient access.

Sarana-Devasarana Fundamental Rights Upheld

The Supreme Court in two Fundamental Rights Applications taken up together and decided on 30th September, 1988, held:

“... the facts and circumstances of these two cases show that in making the arrests the 1st respondent acted in total disregard of the provisions of law under which he purported to act, resulting in the infringement of certain fundamental rights of the petitioners. Hence the petitioners are entitled to relief from this Court. I am of the view that an award of Rs. 3,000/- as compensation and a further sum of Rs. 500/- as costs to each of the petitioners in the two cases is just and equitable. Accordingly I direct the State to pay each of the two petitioners a sum of Rs. 3,500/-.”

Judgment was delivered by Justice Atukorale, Justice G. P. S. de Silva and Justice T. D. Bandaranayake agreeing.

W. G. Chandradasa, Assistant Manager Sarana Press and Publications and G. Kularatne, Secretary, Devasarana Development Centre, Ibbagamuwa, were the petitioners in the two applications referred to. The applications were filed against Lal Fernando, Officer-in-Charge of the Kohuwela Police Station, P. M. B. Ekanayake, Deputy Inspector General of Police and the Attorney General.

The judgment stated that the petitioners had alleged that “on 25th October, 1987 at about 1 p.m., when they were at the premises of the Sarana Press, a police party led by the 1st respondent (the officer-in-charge of the Kohuwela Police Station) entered the premises inquiring for a particular poster. When informed that there was no such poster they searched the premises but found none. The 1st respondent then took the petitioners into custody together with a copy of the Sinhala Magazine *Sajeewa Sanvadaya*—(P1), a copy of the English Magazine (P2) *Christian Worker* which contained an English article on the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord and the Sinhala translation (P 2a) of this English article intended to be published in the Sinhala Magazine. The petitioners state that they were arrested by the 1st res-

pondent and taken to the Kohuwela Police Station where they were detained for 10 days until 4th November, 1987 when they were produced before the Magistrate Gangodawila, who released them. They maintain that their arrests were unlawful, that no reason was given for their arrests and that their detention at the Police Station was illegal. They seek redress primarily for the alleged infringement of Articles 13(1) and 13(2). They also maintain that their prolonged detention for a period of 10 days was unwarranted and constitutes an infringement of Article 13(4). They further maintain that, consequentially, Articles 14(1) (c) (freedom of association), 14(1) (g) (freedom to engage in lawful occupation) and 14(1) (h) (freedom of movement) have been violated. They also state that the Sarana Press was sealed by the 1st respondent on 26th October, 1987 from 2 p.m., to 7 p.m., thereby infringing Article 14(1) (a), the freedom of speech and expression including publication, and causing them tremendous loss and damage.”

The learned Judge commented:“..... the failure of the 1st respondent to produce before this Court the posters and magazines which he states he seized on the day in question from the Sarana Press belies the truth of the information which he alleges he received before the raid on the Press premises..... It is therefore reasonable to infer that what the 1st respondent removed were copies of documents P1, P2 and P2(a), as testified to by the petitioners. Learned Senior State Counsel, with characteristic fairness, conceded that there is nothing objectionable or subversive in these documents so as to bring them within the ambit of regulations 30(a) or 33. The position that emerges from the above matters is that the 1st respondent and his Police party, having received information that literature belonging to the proscribed Janata Vimukti Peramuna and subversive posters were being printed at the Sarana Press, entered and searched the Press premises but found neither such literature nor such posters.

“Another very unsatisfactory feature in this case is that the 1st respondent has not chosen to disclose to this Court the contents of the information which he alleges he received prior to the raid. Nor is there anything to show that he made a record of this information in any book maintained for that purpose. Nowhere has he stated that the information he received was of a credible nature. To justify an arrest without warrant under regulation 18(1) it is incumbent on the 1st respondent to establish to the satisfaction of this Court that the petitioners were, at least, persons whom he had reasonable grounds for suspecting to be concerned in committing an offence under regulation 30(a) or 33. On an objective assessment of all the facts and circumstances set out above, I am of opinion that there was, at the time of the petitioner's arrests, no material or ground to found a reasonable suspicion that they were concerned in the commission of an offence under either regulation. I therefore hold that the arrests of the petitioners by the 1st respondent were not authorised in terms of regulation 18(1) and are thus unlawful. The detention of the petitioners by the 1st respondent at the Kohuwela Police Station until 4th November, 1987 was therefore also illegal. Their illegal detention during the period of 10 days has consequentially resulted in infringement of Articles 14(1) (c), 14(1) (g) and 14(1) (h). The petitioners also contended that the Sarana Press was kept sealed by the 1st respondent from about 2 p.m., to about 7 p.m., on the day after the arrests were made. This has been denied by the 1st respondent. To substantiate this contention learned Counsel for the petitioners relied on the averments to this effect contained in their respective affidavits. The petitioners were, however, being held in police custody at the time that the Press was alleged to have been sealed. They would thus have had no personal knowledge of this fact. Their statement in the affidavits are thus based on hearsay and cannot be acted upon. Hence I hold that the petitioners have failed to establish an infringement of Article 14(1) (a). In view of the fact that the 1st respondent has failed to place before this Court material facts of which he was in possession, I think it is unsafe to act on his statement that the petitioners were informed of the reasons for their arrests. I hold that the petitioners have established infringements of Articles 13(1) and 13(2) as well as 13(4) of the Constitution.”

Mr. D. W. Abeykoon with Messrs. Nimal Punchihewa, Piyasena Dissanayake and Miss M. K. S. Subashini appeared for the Petitioners. Mr. Moses Fernando Senior State Counsel appeared for the Respondents.

Human Rights Violations in the Philippines

Many organizations throughout Asia have had to address letters of protest to the Philippine Government over the continuing violations of human rights in that country.

Lawyers Murdered

The Christian Workers Fellowship writing to President Corazon Aquino of the Philippines in August expressed concern over these violations "notwithstanding your assumption of office as President a few years ago after the mass solidarity and display of 'People Power' which ensured your victory. It is all the more unfortunate that the victims of the present time should include those who have stood up for the rights and liberties of the Filipino people." The letter referred to the recent brutal murders of three human rights lawyers in the Philippines two of whom were members of the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG)—an organization that actively takes up issues related to human rights. The three lawyers concerned were Ramon Cura, Alfonso Surigao Jr. and Emmanuel 'Noel' Mendoza.

Noel Villalba

The same letter also expressed concern over the treatment meted out to a good friend of the CWF Noel Villalba who is presently based in Hong Kong with the Christian Conference of Asia—Urban Rural Mission, during a visit to the Philippines in June. Noel was arrested on his way to a meeting with some people in the National Council of Churches on June 27, not July 2 as the military claims. Noel Villalba states: 'I was tortured with what is known as 'water cure' from about 9 p.m. June 27 to 4 a.m. June 28 at a toilet at the Capital Region Command, Regional Intelligence Operations Unit. I was stripped naked, blindfolded, handcuffed and tied to a bench. A wet cloth was placed over my nose and mouth and water was poured incessantly into my nose and mouth to force me to answer questions. This form of torture gives you the sensation of suffocating. My torturers punched my stomach, or knelt on it suddenly when it was full of water, forcing me to vomit and urinate and scream

in pain. In this way, I was forced to falsely incriminate myself and several others. I was forced to write a dictated "confession" after this torture. Other forms of torture included, blows to the stomach, threats on my life and constant harassment by accusing questions during interrogation and detention."

"The military wrote press releases and accused me in the media as a fund raiser for the Communist party, as an organizer of Migrant Filipinos in Asia, as the owner of a .32 cal. pistol and ammunition among other crimes. Military officers charged me and pronounced me guilty of being a self-confessed communist in front of press reporters and manipulated reports to show me in a bad light, while I was defenceless and under their custody."

Noel was released on bail on July 15, but not allowed to leave the country for sometime because of trumped-up charges against him. These are based on his forced confession and include such blatant falsehoods as the National Council of Church in the Philippines (NCCP) being a conduit of funds coming from foreign sources to either the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) or its supposed military arm the New Peoples Army (NPA). "An Open Letter to Churches" by Noel Villalba and a poem by him entitled "Symphony of Water" are also reproduced here.

Open Letter to Churches

By Noel Villalba

"See to it, then, that no one enslaves you by means of the worthless deceit of human wisdom, which comes from the ruling spirits of the universe and not from Christ. For the full content of divine nature lives in Christ, in his humanity, and you have been given full life in union with him. He is supreme over every spiritual ruler and authority."—COLOSSIANS 2 : 6—10—(TEV)

During the darkest hours of my interrogation as I was naked and tied down tightly to a bench, my eyes blindfolded, my mouth and nose covered by a damp and thick piece of cloth, struggling not to take in any more water and gasping for air at the same time, I realized how much misunderstanding there is about Christ and what he preached.

My interrogators would not take my explanation that organizing the poor, for full humanity, was a central duty of a Christian. They said that only communists agitate people and organize them and any organizing for people's power is basically anti-government, anti-Christian and communist.

One of them went on to say, "You communist, don't you know that Christianity and Communism do not mix—you are Satanical you are anti-Christ!" And then hysterically, he poured more water into my nose and mouth, until I choked and wished there was a gentler way of dying.

How can a man professing to be a Filipino Christian do something as

cruel as this to another Filipino, even presuming, for the sake of argument, that the latter was a communist?

I realized how misleading it was to say that the Philippines is the only Christian country in Asia, as I had often done during my trips to various Asian countries.

Christianity is practice

For me it is clear now, no one can really "profess" to be Christian, even if one had at one time been baptized, gone to church, confessed his sins and accepted Christ as Son of God and Saviour of man.

One can only be Christian by deeds not by words—by deeds that are motivated and informed by faith.

Christ was a man of action. He was God's instrument to preach the Good News and He was to preach this not in theoretical terms, primarily, but, by *living* and *dying*—even for our sins. Christianity's validated in practice from day to day, in believing in and, more importantly in following the ways of Christ—loving the most unlovable people on earth.

Christ's divinity is in his humanity

God so loved the world that He gave His Son. What pure love God showed through Christ. Christ was born in the lowliest possible place—in a cowshed. Christ lived with the poor, though he could have made a profession being a priest, living in a palace, sharing power with the governors of Palestine and the religious authorities. He could have worn majestic gowns and sat in places of honour. He could have made himself a wizard of the Law and shown earthly wisdom, like David and Solomon.

But he chose otherwise. He went among the outcasts, the poor, the sick, the demon-possessed, the prostitutes—all violaters of the Jewish Law.

How can God preach from the position of the Lawless? The answer is simple—that is where humanity is! He liberates those who in bondage most. For indeed a healthy man does not need a doctor more than a sick

person does. And God loves the poor, the deprived and oppressed.

But about the rich and powerful, he has some scathing words. Not because they are rich *per se*, but because they cannot be rich and righteous at the same time, at least not while humanity—(His children) are poor, oppressed and deprived of their state as God's children. That is why he tells the rich man if he wants to enter the Kingdom of God, he must give up his wealth.

How wonderful therefore is the Good News, especially to the poor. They are no longer slaves, nor sinners but God's children. Truly, God is Love.

Full union in Christ

There are rulers and authorities in the world today, who have some kind of earthly wisdom—some plan for the countries, some political experience and expertise in managing large numbers of people. They have their own logic and wisdom—national security, economic growth, development, etc.,

But let us not forget that they cannot be more supreme than God. Because earthly wisdom is selfish and elitist. But God's wisdom is grassroots oriented and oriented towards their salvation. His says—love the most disadvantaged and start from them. If we start from the poor, not from the academic, not from the vantage point of government power, not from the position of preserving ourselves even from preserving the church and its own wealth and power—we have a new kind of wisdom. God's wisdom. Wisdom that derives from our love of the poor.

Full union in Christ therefore, primarily, means full-union with the poor. The practical expression of being a Christian is one's solidarity with the poor. To preach Christ is to love the poor.

When we are united with the poor, we clearly discover what God asks us to do. And this of course takes us into conflict with religious leaders and those in power. Because what we seek to do is to make man and woman human and they cannot be human unless they liberate themselves from different forms of bondage, which have dehumanized them in the past.

And because humanization entails empowerment of the oppressed and powerless, we must expect reaction from those who have a monopoly of power. Just as economic goods and services are monopolized and appropriated by a few, power is also monopolized by a few.

God did not create power only for a few. Always governments were reminded that they are to serve and derive their power from the wishes of the majority, as in the popular phrase "People's Power."

The real Christian church has to be an activist e.g. persecuted church. It cannot help being otherwise. Because to be a Christian is to be on the side of the poor, the deprived and oppressed and to be a witness to what Christ did.

If a church has become fat and comfortable in society, it only means either of two things: it has forgotten the poor and forgotten Christ; or there are no more poor and oppressed people. So far, there is not one country, not one continent, where some form of poverty and oppression does not exist.

Therefore, we cannot be enslaved by worthless and deceitful human wisdom, which comes from the rulers. We have been given a full-life in union with Christ (and the poor) and there is no higher authority than that. We take our commands, our mission, our tasks from no one else but CHRIST.



Villalba charged with illegal possession of firearms — "Cured" with water.

The water cure involved Mr. Villalba being stripped of his clothing and made to lie on a wooden bench to which his hands and feet were securely tied. A wet piece of cloth was placed over his mouth and nose. When water had been poured into his nose until his stomach was swollen, his stomach was punched and knelt on until he vomitted, urinated and screamed in pain.

"SYMPHONY OF WATER"

They only need a narrow place
nondescript as a toilet
and locked for the night
They only need three players
to wage the secret war
and pick the flesh of another.

The blindfold grips like vice,
cold steel, locks the hands together
the victim is stripped naked
and bound to a bench.

The questions spring precisely,
like a well-rehearsed song
the water falls as counterpoint
leaving time only
for snatches of life-giving air
stolen quickly.

"It's a game," I say.
The body tilts and strains
to spill the water away
from the lungs and brain —
in the beginning.

But time is the enemy.
The body succumbs. You realize
they aim to kill
as the water keeps on pouring,
without mercy, without mercy
till the belly fills.

The questions beat like drums
from the savage age.
The answers must speedily come
before the music of the water fells
the brain
even as the lips betray
the loved ones.

The mind recoils in terror!
It is no game! Death laughs at the door.
The mind withdraws in disbelief
but the body forces a despairing scream
which no one hears.

The belly fills, but partially,
with more fear than water,
when the beast suddenly kneels
forcing the bitter water out
of the body's crevices.

The howling is now of a wounded beast,
the pleas, of a child,
the sobs are those of a woman raped,
as the water pours, unceasing,
as the ritual repeats,
as if by a heartless machine,
till the pounding
questions are satisfied.

"You are hiding!
You are lying!"
The bowel protests, "No more, no more!"
yet the water pours
unhearing, unreasoning,
for an eternity.

At dawn, the body surrenders
to the ugly rhythm of lies,
a blissful numbness sets
as you urinate,
the mind escapes its prison
the soul hovers, overhead,
when the beasts say,
"let's go home."

The secret opera is over
till next time, when comes another victim.
This has been the symphony
played to "Godly anti-communism,"
in the gallery of a toilet that stinks
of "democracy."

— Noel Villalba.
23 July 1988.

Filipino Reality

The communist scare tactics are rampant; so many people are being fooled into believing that communism is a threat. I felt annoyed and indignant that I was labelled a "Russian Communist."

Community leaders and organizers, members of the Base Christian Communities (BCCs), priests, religious and lay workers are being killed. Whole villages are threatened. As people struggle to improve their lives and take control over their destiny they are met with violence and hostility. Co-operative organizations empower the peasants by giving them some control over their lives, enabling basic needs to be met. The managers are gunned down. Idle lands are planted by farmers to grow food for their sustenance. The rich landowners hire armies to hunt down and "salvage" the farmers or members of their families. Genuine land reform is being ignored by the Aquino government. Foreign governments and multinationals continue to escalate the oppressive conditions of the poor. Cause-oriented groups, and professional "help" centres are being harassed and intimidated by the "authorities." Peaceful demonstrations and marches are being dispersed. Communities are being infiltrated by informers. The families we visited came under suspicion of being communist subversives.

I felt very concerned that we had put their lives in danger. My concern was valid. The people knew the risk. They were prepared to pay the price, even of death, in the hopeful expectation that the truth would be made known. All of this reality hit me with such a force one evening that I started to think that to head for "the hills" was not such a bad idea.

I asked questions about the NPA, even though I felt hesitant to do so. The inquiry seemed to put people on the spot. I didn't want to do that, but I really needed some answers, or, at least, a better understanding of their role. What I learned the most was that I must not judge those who opt for the armed struggle. My reality is not the same as the Filipino reality.

— Bonnie Thurber (Philippine Insight EPIC July-August, 1988).

To the Memory of Lean Alejandro

September 19th this year marked the first anniversary of the brutal murder of Lean Alejandro, the 27 year old Secretary-General of BAYAN in the Philippines. Lean was a passionate advocate for human rights and a fighter in the cause of the working people and oppressed. We reproduce as a tribute to Lean a poem by a Com-patriot appearing in Conjunction (Philippines) of September this year.

Sacred Ground

A Poem for Lean Alejandro

Clouds cloak the barren sky
a yellow screen
spangled with laces
of lead and fire,
A towering fist
damns the heavenly charade
and like a rod
absorbed a lightning ire
pantomiming
a downpour of grief,
tears water
a parched expanse —
a-pitter-patter
of hymns and chants.

The ground swells
on a morning storm
as a defiant dirge
thunders
from the concrete sod,
sanctified by a martyr's
blood-flood.

— Argee Guevarra

Where are they?

My tongue sticks to the roof
of my mouth
from repeating your name
to the wind.

My hands have grown worn
from knocking on insensitive doors
that offer only silence in response.

Where are you?
Light of my life,
what have they done
with your smile?
Who has done this deed
of punishing me with your
absence?

Like the wave that comes
again and again
to wash the shore; like the
undertow,

my stubborn hope searches for you
in each face,
in each nook and cranny.

There is no official who has not
witnessed my sorrow.

I wander the plazas
remembering you.

I have worn out the stones
in my determination to find you.

I have mixed my tears
with the tears of strangers
and now they have the same taste
as mine.

Wounded joined to wounded,
we ask:

What desire is greater
than that of wanting to know
where our very blood is?
Who appropriated the power
to devour the souls of these
bodies?

Who dares

Who has been so insolent
to deprive us of their dear hands?
Who has left us orphaned
of our loved ones?

Who, vilifying their own humanity,
has gone insane,
insisting on separating us?
Where are you?
Where are they?

— National Co-ordinating
Committee of Human Rights,
Lima, Peru.

New Soviet Policy and Religion

Effects on religion of current Soviet policies of perestrojka ('restructuring') and glasnost (transparency) were high on the agenda during a visit (5-9 September 1988) by Konstantin Kharchev, Chairman of the State Council of Religious Affairs in the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

Kharchev met at the Ecumenical Centre here with the general secretaries and other staff members of the World Council of Churches, Conference of European Churches, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and Lutheran World Federation. With him were two other state council officers—Nikolaj Mukhin, director of its international department, and Nikolaj Pominov, a department section chief.

Five Soviet church leaders also participated: Metropolitan Alexey of Leningrad and Novgorod and Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk (Russian (Eastern) Orthodox), General Secretary Alexey Bichkov (Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists), Archbishop Nerses Bozabalian (Armenian Apostolic (Oriental Orthodox)), and Archbishop Kuno Pajula (Estonian Lutheran).

Kharchev said a guiding principle for new legislation on freedom of conscience and religion now being prepared is 'what is not forbidden is allowed.' It is to deal with such questions as 'juridical status' for the church, the 1929 ban on charitable activities by religious organizations, and more freedom for religious education and teaching.

He said there are to be no more secret directives or decrees governing Soviet religious policy, and that with regard to every article in the draft, 'we consulted our religious activists.'

Kharchev pointed to re-opened churches and monasteries, newly built places for worship, and strengthened theological education as other fruits of the new Soviet policies. In the first eight months of this year, he reported, 400 religious communities were able to begin functioning.

He said the number of students studying theology has doubled in recent years, that the circulations of religious publications are increasing, and that 1.2 million copies of the Bible—'We lack Bibles'—are being imported. In answer to a question, he said the 'church will have still wider access' to media, and in general more possibilities to spread its message.

Reviewing The Past

In a review of policy since the Soviet revolution of 1917, Kharchev described current reforms as a return to principles in effect right after the revolution (even though there were 'very strained relations' in those early post-revolutionary years with many church leaders actively resisting Soviet power).

He singled out the period of the 'cult of personality' (a reference to many of the Stalin years, when he said, non-believers also suffered repression), a period of 'new repression in religion' (1959-64), and the 'period of stagnation' (a reference to the Brezhnev years) as particularly problematic.



Russian Church: What is not forbidden is allowed

The new legislation being prepared, he said, will undo ill effects of Stalin's 1929 legislation, which 'we . . . reject.' He said that while it would take some time to officially eliminate various aspects of the 1929 bans and limits, in practice they have been eliminated 'in many cases.'

As an example of a 'wild' practice that has been reformed, Kharchev mentioned the ending of the requirement that those who seek church sacraments such as baptism be required to present their identity documents.

In efforts to reform Soviet religious policy and practice, he said, 'we are receiving blows from the right and from the left.' He said 'rough copies' of the new legislation are being used by those seeking to torpedo reforms. Such texts are 'inadmissible,' not to be taken as final. It is misleading, he said, to taste the bread before it is baked.

'The main thing for us,' he said, 'is that religious organizations and believers should obey the law . . . But these laws must be really just.' These reforms, he added, are part of the 'construction of a just socialist state.'

Kharchev described the council he chairs as an instrument to 'safeguard the life and freedoms of believers and religious organizations,' and to do everything possible to facilitate their work. He emphasized that it has openly admitted and rejected past errors in church-state relations.

He also referred to other principles of Soviet religious policy, such as freedom of worship, church-state separation, non-interference by the state in church affairs, non-interference by the church in state affairs, and possibilities for the church to express itself on issues of church and society.

Not an Atheist State

The Soviet Union, Kharchev said, is 'not an atheist state,' but, rather, 'extra religious' (religiously neutral). He called it 'terrible' that at certain stages of Soviet history, this principle was 'distorted.'

The Soviet Communist Party, he said, regards religion as unscientific. Communism is to compete with it using 'ideological means,' as, he said, various religions may struggle on behalf of their versions of truth.

Noting that according to official teaching, the arrival of 'full communism' would mean an end to religion, he said such a day is a long way off. For now and the foreseeable future, communists and religious believers need to live in mutual respect and 'build a good life for people together' on earth.

He said that while he disagrees with the belief that God exists, 'I respect and must respect the other point of view.' Kharchev quoted Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to the effect that 'no one knows ultimate truth.'

As for believers being allowed to join the Soviet Communist Party, as is possible in some countries, Kharchev said they are now ineligible because they lack the required 'materialistic world outlook.' He said such an exclusion is no more discriminatory than the fact that as an atheist he cannot be a bishop.

He estimated that non-party members account for half of the Supreme Soviet (the national parliament),

including, he suggested, a fair number of believers. He noted that before the revolution, the party did include believers.

— EPS. (Geneva.)

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Millenium of Russias' Christianization Celebrated

This year from June 3rd to 16th, celebrations of the Millenium of the Christianization of Russia were held in the Soviet Union.

The importance attached to this event and the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Soviet society was shown by the assistance given by the Government on this occasion and a reception in the Kremlin too hosted by the Soviet Government. Several buildings and a host of Church objects which had until recently served other purposes were also returned to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Participants in the Millenium celebrations included representatives of the World Council of Churches, ecumenical and confessional bodies and ten cardinals from the Roman Catholic Church as well as representatives of different world religions Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam and secular bodies. In the celebrations, the historical role of the Orthodox Church in the formation of Russian culture and statehood and in defending the independence of Russia in history and in the recent past was evaluated, as was the spiritual and moral contributions of the church to the nation and to the cause of world peace.

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The Church in China

The political and economic changes introduced by Deng Xiaoping in China which are discussed elsewhere in these columns of *Christian Worker*, have also led to a thaw in the attitude of the Government to religious bodies and in a consequent expansion of religious activities. Churches have been re-opened for public worship and Church properties taken over have been given back.

During the Cultural Revolution, Christians were able to continue their worship only in small groups in houses, sometimes afraid of their very lives. Now the non-Roman Catholic Christians have grown to over 4 million members and to around 3 million in the Roman Catholic Church. Significantly in 1958-59, the denominational barrier between the non-Roman Catholic Churches broke down and Christians of these Churches moved into a "post-denominational" period, seeking to grow together into a united Church. As a start the different ministries and liturgies of the various denominations continued, and mutual respect was maintained. The "Three-Self Movement" among these Churches affirmed "self-government, self-support of the Church and self-propagation of the Gospel." The "post-denominational Church" that has emerged in China today therefore includes several denominational traditions including

Seventh Day Adventists, with the China Christian Council as its national body. It is said that the Government finds relationships with this "post-denominational" body easier than with the Roman Catholics. This is primarily due to the completely independent nature of this body. Despite its separation from Rome, the Roman Catholic Church in China has been more

Roman in its ethos and liturgical practices than elsewhere, not having felt the impact of the changes associated with the Second Vatican Council, and therefore essentially more conservative in its approach and outlook. This position is bound to change with the outside contacts now being made. However the Vatican's diplomatic relations with Taiwan could be a continuing embarrassment to the Roman Catholic Church in its relations with the Chinese Government.

On June 26 this year, the China Christian Council arranged for the consecration of two Bishops to the "post-denominational Church" in the Shanghai Mu En Church building presided over by Bishop Wan Shenyin. The la consecration of a non-Catholic bishop took place in 1955 when the well-known Chinese Christian leader, Bishop K. H. Ting was consecrated a Bishop in the Anglican Church along with two others. There are still six Anglican Bishops in China, four of whom took part in the consecration of the two new Bishops. Three senior pastors from the Methodist, presbyterian and Baptist traditions joined the four Anglican Bishops in the consecration ceremony. The newly consecrated Bishops belonged to two different Church traditions: while Bishop Shen Ifan was an ordained Anglican priest, Bishop Sun Yanli was a pastor from the Methodist Church. According to a report in the Xinhua News Agency, the Church in the eastern provinces of China were also considering electing new bishops for their localities.

Speaking at the consecration of the two new Bishops in June this year, Bishop K. H. Ting explained that they would be different from Bishops elsewhere since they would not have administrative power but give lea-

dership in matters related to theology, spirituality and Christian living. But according to observers this event is of some political significance too since it is a demonstration of self-government within the Church "We now have our own Bishops and our own independent Church," one Church leader is reported as saying.

Although functioning on a post-denominational basis, the participating churches are not yet fully unified as one Church. The greatest task of the China Christian Council according to Bishop Ting, is to build further unity and to emerge as a church of China in God's good time. The consecration of the two Bishops will further strengthen this process. At an interview given in Hong Kong while attending the International Confucian-Christian Conference in June before he was consecrated, Bishop Shen Ifan said that he felt that "re-establishing the episcopal order in Shanghai is a very important step in the building up of the Church in China that is, in the better government of our Church." Bishop Shen explained: "The constituting of the episcopate is in the hope of running the Church better, exploring together with the ministers, working hard at the spiritual needs of the faithful and bringing pastoral effectiveness into play." At the same interview the Bishop also remarked that "Theology must now be indigenized and contextualized. There is a need to absorb the essentials of tradition. I feel that it is very important to express the Gospel in our own culture, language and thinking." (*Yi China Message*, Hong Kong: August, 1988).

Bishop Shen Ifan is a reader of *Christian Worker* as is also Bishop K. N. Ting—(See text of Bishop Shen Ifan's letter to the CWF Secretary on this page).

Letter from a Bishop in China

The following is the text of a letter received by the Secretary of the Christian Workers Fellowship from Bishop Shen Ifan of Shanghai.

Community Church,
53, Hengshan Road,
Shanghai,
October 2, 1988.

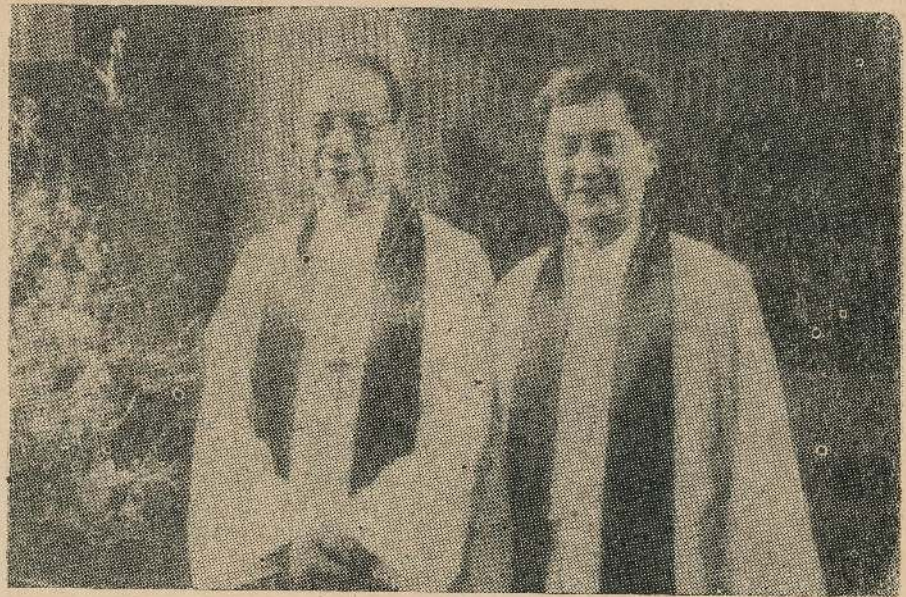
Thank you very much for your congratulations and good wishes on my being consecrated as a bishop. I know how much I am unworthy of that high calling and how much I will need your prayers and encouragement.

How time flies that it has been more than 30 years since we last met in Shanghai. I can still remember you and your visit. It is also a privilege for me to receive regularly your publication **Christian Worker**, which I read with great interest and am able to follow the development and struggles in your effort to apply the social implications of the Christian gospel in your own situation.

It is my sincere hope that the relations between the Christians of our two countries will develop and one day we will be able to meet again either in Sri Lanka or in China.

May His rich blessings be upon you and your work.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) **Shan Ifan**



The Rt. Revd. Sun Yanli and Shan Ifan

The Singapore Grip

The Right-wing Sect in the Anglican Church

Lee Kuan Yew's ruthless dictatorship in Singapore appears to be paralleled by a sectarian and equally monstrous manifestation within the Anglican Church there led by a "Charismatic" Bishop who though Chinese in name has already distinguished himself in vandalism by defacing Chinese works of art including the Chinese dragon which he regards as being especially sinful.

*The following are excerpts from an article appearing in the **Church Times** (Church of England) of July 1, 1988. The writer is **Canon John Edge** who was Warden of the Diocesan Theological College in Kuching, Sarawak from 1979 until last year.*

"Singaporeanism"

.....the phenomenon of "Singaporeanism"—the growth within the Anglican Communion of a sect very persuasive to chance visitors, who are quite determined to take over the whole Anglican Church in South-East Asia. They have even sent their missionaries to East Asia and Australia; and they hope to come to Britain with their mixture of a strange kind of fundamentalism and an unusual doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

British papers have written of the destruction of a valuable antique table in Singapore Cathedral. Few may know of what caused this; a publicly stated belief that the Holy Spirit could not get into the cathedral while the table was there!

On another occasion a bishop was surprised when visiting to read in Singapore that the Holy Spirit could not enter his diocese as a barrier was keeping Him out. He felt that he was probably the barrier! "Singaporeanism" owes very little to

Canterbury and a great deal to the Right-wing views of visiting American evangelists at whose academies some of its leaders have studied.

I deliberately call this movement "Singaporeanism" rather than "The Diocese of Singapore." It is not true, in spite of what is sometimes thought, that the Diocese of Singapore is monochrome and enthusiastically behind its leaders. Priests of Chinese-speaking congregations in Kuching and others who have worked among the Chinese in West Malaysia have assured me that their counterparts in Singapore are dismayed by what is happening. They are far too aware of their own Christian history to want to associate with some of the practices like "screaming in tongues" in which the extremists indulge, or to mix with such groups as "The Church of Singapore," which has been disowned for its unorthodox beliefs by mainstream Pentecostalism.

Claims Belied

.....But is "Singaporeanism" as successful as it claims to be evangelistically? Even a sympathetic writer says that one third of Singaporeans who join a Christian Charismatic church do not persevere—and that in some churches fifty percent

of those who attend are drifters who move from one group to another and never put down roots. There are great missions with hundreds flocking forwards but some ninety percent of them have flocked forwards six months before and will do so again in six months' time.

It is no wonder that some extreme groups are adopting the methods of the Moonies and demanding total obedience from their converts. In some cases where I have been forced to check on claims I have found that numbers have been exaggerated three fold and that people whose conversion has been claimed are still Muslims.

One might compare the Singapore situation with that in Kuching where the Anglican Church grows at seven percent and more a year through the personal witness and prayers of Christians without any great missions and where some village congregations will have one hundred percent attendance of the confirmed at Mass.

The problem which faces the "Singaporeans" is a belief that "if you have the Spirit" you must be successful—and success is counted in numbers. You dare not admit in these circumstances that you are growing.

"Prosperity Theology"

"Prosperity theology" is another trap for the "Singaporean" Christians. One of the speakers at a recent Pentecostalist mission in Kuala Lumpur gave as his message *that those who become Christians would be rich in his world's goods.* He little realized that he is repeating words to be found on collecting boxes in front of the statues of Chinese gods in a Buddhist temple in Penang. "If you pray to this god you will become rich"—though the box reminds you that the god expects payment in advance.

So the rich man will be honoured as a man of God however dubious his business methods may be. There is a genuine fear among many priests in South-East Asia of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Association and wish among some that the Diocese of Singapore would distance itself

from this organization. *Indeed what we are witnessing in "Singaporean" Anglicanism is Christianity tailored to suit the interests of the rich.*

"Spirit Possessed"

One historian of the Church in China mused in passing about whether Christianity would suffer the fates of Buddhism and Taoism and be transformed by Chinese folk religion into something quite irrational. Undiluted "Singaporeanism" shows that this can happen. While it outwardly rejects with absolute conviction all the other trappings of folk religion, inwardly paganism has triumphed.

We need to pray for that small group of "Singaporeans" who have caused so much damage and may cause far more.

Traditional religion believes in many spirits. "Singaporeanism" sees them everywhere. The spirits under your host's dining table must be exorcised before you can sit down to dinner; the spirit of caffeine must be exorcised from a cup of coffee; all objects of jade must be destroyed; all sickness is the result of demonic possession; and exorcism is the only answer to the common cold or to cancer.

The Bible is the Christian "Little Red Book," but it is a strange Bible. New translations disagree with one another, so the King James version alone may be used and is likely to be read and understood.

Conservative Evangelical biblical scholars disagree with one another so, as a "Singaporean" told me, they may be ignored. *The inspired American evangelist or the Spirit-filled local pastor is the sole interpreter of Scripture, and we go no further.*

Let not the objector point out that the Psalmist calls upon the dragon to praise God, or that Paul says that the gift of tongues is given to some but not to others. What the Christian guru says must be followed even if his teaching disagrees with that of the Bible for he is possessed by the Spirit.

For the extremists the Christian Church went wrong when the last apostle died; and truth has now been revealed in Singapore.....

..... We need to pray for that small group of "Singaporeans" who have caused so much damage and may cause far more. We need to pray that they may either return to Anglicanism (which embraces gladly the Catholic, the Evangelical and the Charismatic) or leave the Anglican Church to be itself and set up what they really are—a new Pentecostalist sect.

If they do, we may pray that they may be richly blessed and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.

Religion

I was hungry
... and they hold me to live by faith.
I needed shelter
... and they met in a posh hotel to debate.
I had no clothing
... and they held prayer meetings on my fate.
Such was their love;
Such was their faith.

I was sick
... and they told me to trust and wait.
I lost my job
... and they built a squash court to give me a break.
I was lonely
I and they told me tongue-speaking to seek.
Such was their love;
Such was their faith.

I fought for justice
... and they argued about the church and state.
I was detained
... and they urged me to submit and be meek.
I refused to confess
... and they called me an apostate.
Such was their love;
Such was their faith.

—Thomas Lee Seng-Hock

Will the Church of silence please stand and speak up?

*For the edification of our Church leaders and members especially, we reproduce below in full the Editorial appearing in **Philippine Episcopalian** (2nd Quarter 1988) the official organ of the Philippine Episcopal Church (Anglican) in the Philippines.*

The housewife-turned-president does not seem to realize that crushing the insurgency is a much more complicated process than crushing garlic cloves. A kitchen knife is definitely not a sword of war and there is a difference between the tears caused by chopping an onion head and the tears that swell when the sword of war falls on somebody's head. Onion tears are temporary while the latter usually transform into organized resistance especially when the sword of war drops too often on innocent necks.

Insurgency thrives where there is oppression and exploitation. You try to hold it back by force and it comes back at you with equal if not greater fury. It is not caused by red-faced agitators for these do not manufacture poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth and power which are the usual roots of insurgency. There were insurgents long before there was any Marx, Lenin, or Mao. Moses was an insurgent, David the Shepherd was an insurgent, the prophets in the Bible were insurgents in their time, and even meek and

mellow Mary sang of a God who puts down the mighty from their thrones. Christ himself was branded an insurgent for teaching his disciples to disobey unjust laws. These are neither leftist platitudes nor liberation theology trash. Or is there another Christian theology that is not liberational?

We are often people of too little faith. We are not sure if the God who delivered the Israelites from the Land of Bondage and sent Jesus Christ to liberate mankind will see us through as we participate in our people's struggle to be truly free. We want to be in the Land of Promise without going through the Red Sea and the trials of the wilderness. We fear men; we doubt God. In our trembling and in our doubt, we are silenced. The Church must not be suspected by the state, we say. We often refuse to call a foul a foul because like spineless umpires we think that opposing teams must have equal violations. Meanwhile, we wait and watch while the game goes on and finally when the winners are announced, we scramble for seats around the victory table.

With the resurgence of McCarthyist witchhunts and the attendant blacklisting, imprisonment, and deaths of many of our brothers and sisters, it is really a wonder if we do not hear even as much as a whisper from the Philippine Episcopal Church of silence?

Anglican Bishops work on several issues

Canterbury: The world's Anglican bishops, gathered here for their once-a-decade conference (16 July —7 August), have approved resolutions on several trouble spots and world issues.

The conference backed 'self determination' for Latin American countries, and asked 'the industrial

countries of the world' to end 'all military aid to combatants in Latin American countries.' It also called for the lifting of US sanctions against Nicaragua, Cuba and Panama.

The bishops called apartheid in South Africa 'evil and especially repugnant because of the cruel way a tyrannical racist system is being upheld in the name of the Christian

faith.' They urged 'maximum pressure.....on the South African regime.....to promote a genuine process of change,' and 'forms of sanction calculated to have the maximum effect in bringing an end to the evil dispensation.'

They backed, direct aid to anti-apartheid organizations within South Africa, particularly with a view to assisting the unemployed and persecuted,' and 'direct moral and humanitarian support to such organizations in the pursuit of a just order which reflects gospel values.'

They also called for the release of black leader Nelson Mandela and 'all other political prisoners and detainees in South Africa, and the

unbanning of organizations like the African National Congress, and Pan Africa Congress, which represent the majority of citizens.'

On Namibia, they expressed 'support for the people in their struggle for independence' from South Africa.

On Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon, the bishops condemned the use, sale, and supply of chemical weapons; recognized the grief and suffering of hostages, families, and all victims of war in those three countries; and asked all nations to work towards the release of all hostages in Lebanon.

The bishops affirmed Israel's

right to exist with 'recognized and secure borders' and the 'right of Palestinians to self-determination, including choice of their own representatives, and the establishment of their own state.' They also call for a UN-sponsored international conference on Palestine to which 'all parties to the conflict' would be invited.

The bishops welcomed 'recent new directions in Soviet policy,' and appealed for an end to the production of nuclear weapons, and a plan for an international programme to dismantle them.

They also identified with concerns in the South Pacific about such things as self-determination, oppo-

sition to nuclear testing, and 'resistance to all those powerful states and multi-national corporations who . . . rape and destroy the forests, fisheries, and mineral deposits in the region.'

In a resolution on 'environment, militarism, justice, and peace, the bishops urged programmes of 'study, reflection, and action' in world Anglicanism to consider 'four interrelated areas in which the misuse of people or resources pose a threat to the life system of the planet'—'unjust distribution of the world's wealth, social injustice within nations, the rise of militarism, (and) irreversible damage to the environment.'—ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE—(EPS) □

The Pope & South Africa

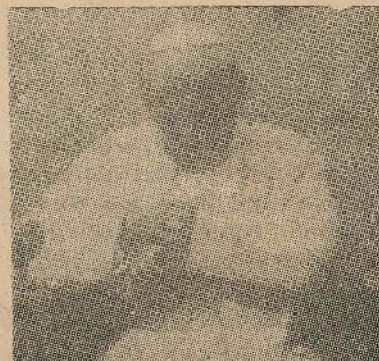
Pope John Paul's tour of southern Africa ended with a measure of ecumenical disagreement, with leaders of the South African Council of Churches expressing disappointment at his failure to more explicitly condemn apartheid, or to single out the Pretoria government as the main author of violence in the region.

Their carefully measured criticism came on the last full day (18 September) of the pope's first visit to the area. During it, he repeatedly voiced an urgent desire for Christian unity. He spoke frequently against apartheid, calling on all parties to renounce the use of force in connection with South Africa's system of white-minority rule.

When questioned by journalists, South African theologian Allan Boesak, president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, stressed his agreement with the pope's opposition to violence, but also his wish for 'a clearer (papal) understanding of what drives people to violence' in South Africa.

'I would have liked to see some understanding, in terms of the long, hard struggle of the South African liberation movements for 50 years in a non-violent way before they found themselves pushed into a situation where they have no other choice,' Boesak said.

He called it not particularly helpful for the church to tell people not to use violence 'if either we do not lead them along the very risky, difficult road of non-violence, or do not understand the very difficult, risky situation in which they live.'



Pope John Paul II

SACC president and Lutheran bishop Manes Buthelezi emphasised the SACC view that destabilization efforts by Pretoria are also the main cause of violence and human suffering in Mozambique and other neighbouring countries.

While refusing to criticize the pope's declaration that he hopes to formally visit South Africa, the ecumenical leaders expressed distress at the handling of his unscheduled landing in South Africa on a tour designed to skip that country as he visited its five black-led neighbours.

SACC General Secretary Franck Chikane said the stop in South Africa 'puts us in an invidious position where the very people who oppose us and cause us pain are the same people who welcome him, where the security measures are taken by the very people who torture us.'

Boesak speculated that the diversion of the pope's plane from London to South Africa, officially blamed on bad weather, could have resulted from collusion between the two governments.—ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE—(Geneva) □

Bishop Tells of Vatican Grilling

DOM PEDRO CASALDALIGA, bishop of Sao Felix de Araguaia in Mato Grosso, Brazil has been under pressure from the Vatican. Casaldaliga has questioned Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's views on liberation theology and supported the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Late last month, he denied widespread press reports that the Holy See had moved to silence him following his June meeting with Vatican authorities in Rome. He acknowledged that the papal nunciature in Brasilia had sent him an unsigned document on unsealed paper, but he refused to accept its authenticity.

The Vatican Press Office responded to publicity surrounding the case by announcing that Casaldaliga had merely been asked to be faithful to his tasks as a bishop and to avoid interfering in the affairs of other dioceses.

In a telephone conversation with Latin America Press Casaldaliga said his main concern was to be faithful to himself and to his convictions as a Christian, as a bishop and as a Latin American. He expressed the view that after the Vatican Press Office announcement, the unsigned document he received has become a dead letter.

The following are excerpts from Casaldaliga's written account describing highlights of His June visit to the Vatican.



Bishop Casaldaliga

Until now, I had never been on the "ad limina" visit to Rome we bishops are obliged to make every

five years. And I've been a bishop now for 17 years. I'd received two rather severe letters from the Congregation for Bishops. . . . I decided to appeal to the pope—from the bishop of Sao Felix to the bishop of Rome—and on Feb. 22, 1986 I wrote him a long letter (requesting a date on which to visit him personally).

On June 16, wearing a jacket, I was received in a waiting room by Monsignor Re (Cardinal Gantin's secretary). . . . He said that. . . . for the joint interview with Cardinals Gantin (prefect of the Congregation of Bishops) and Ratzinger (prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) I should come appropriately dressed. (For the interview I wore a Claretian habit and cincture

kindly lent me by old Father Garde, an Indian collar and a Franciscan cross).

We met Saturday, June 18 for an hour and a half in the office of the Congregation for Bishops. Present were Cardinal (Bernardin) Gantin, his secretary Re and an under-secretary ; and Cardinal (Joseph) Ratzinger, his secretary, Monsignor Bovone and Monsignor Americo, a Portuguese from the Secretariat of State. The monsignors wrote down everything and had photocopies of writings of mine.

Suspense, earnestness, caution. No aggression. Personally, I believe I spoke with freedom. Ratzinger smiled often.

First question by Ratzinger : Do you accept the Holy See's documents on liberation theology ?

My reply : Both of them, along with the letter the pope sent to the Brazilian bishops, in which he said the liberation theology "is not only opportune, but also useful and necessary." In substance I accept them all in their totality. I differ regarding. . . . some affirmations the first document makes about our theologians. In any case, these are "instructions." The pope himself, I reminded them, had demanded that the first instruction, which was so negative, be amended with five introductory paragraphs. And the pope never acknowledged this document as his own. "It's Cardinal Ratzinger's," he said ("These are jokes," replied the cardinal).

Second question : You have written that the "option for the poor" should be understood in "classist" terms. We prefer to speak of preferential love for the poor, "Classist" is a highly charged word.

My reply : Yes, the word is highly charged—with valid meaning, as I see it. If you don't want to speak of "class struggle," then say "class conflict," as the instruction does. But the conflict is there. In Latin America, we want to avoid understanding the poor as somehow spontaneously poor, marginal, outside the structures that exploit and marginalize them. For this measure, we speak of the "impoverished." The

pope himself said several times, precisely when he was in Latin America, that "the rich are getting richer at the expense of the poor, who are getting poorer." This "at the expense" is structural and, if you'll permit me a scandalous expression, "dialectical."

Third question : You and others speak of social sin. What about personal sin ?

My reply : It's my practice to always remember both dimensions of sin. During the Pilgrimage of Martyrs in Ribeirao Bonito, we have a penitential bonfire in which we burn both social and personal sins, naming them explicitly. The New Testament denounces the "sin of this world." There is something of social structure in this sin : the synagogue, the empire, slavery.....

Fourth question : You celebrate the Eucharist as a social rite.

My reply : I seriously doubt whether you can accuse me of reductionism in this case. It is precisely my custom to explain that the mass is "the Passover of Jesus, our Passover and the world's Passover." Death and life, passion and resurrection for each of us and for the people.....

Fifth question : You and others readily call Archbishop Romero, Camilo Torres and others martyrs. Its good to remember some people who are devoted to the poor, but to call them martyrs.....!

My reply : We distinguish between "canonical" martyrs, who are officially recognized by the church and the many other martyrs whom we call martyrs for the Kingdom, who gave their lives for justice, for liberation : most of them Christians who also died explicitly for the cause of the Gospel. Yes, I wrote a poem to "Saint Romero of America....."

Sixth question : You speak of "revolutionizing" the church.

My reply : I first used the phrase during the Nicaraguan "Gospel insurrection." "It's important to carry out a constant revolution in one's own personal life, through *metanoia* or conversion ; in society, under any system or regime ; and

in the church itself, so it can constantly become more evangelical." I was speaking for less "ecclesiastical" people. I could have said that the church is *semper renovanda*.....

Cardinal Gantin spoke with concern about my visits to Nicaragua... "To leave your own diocese and go to another country and interfere in the territory of another episcopate....." I tried to explain, but I could see in all these Vatican meetings that Nicaragua is the hardest thing to explain there.

I said I went to Nicaragua during the (1985) fast against aggression, with the backing of 23 colleagues in the (Brazilian) bishops' conference. I referred to my longtime friendship with Nicaragua, to my letters to the bishops of that country and my visits to other Central American countries and to the warm welcome I received from fellow bishops there. I spoke of solidarity, of what Nicaragua means for the rest of Latin America.....

Since the beginning of the interview they'd been hinting at the possibility that I'd be asked to sign a statement containing certain propositions..... I answered that I wouldn't sign anything without having enough time to think and consult. I said I myself could never ask anyone for such a signature.

"This isn't a trial," they assured me. "You'll have time to think about it....."

As I was going down the stairs, the two monsignors came up to me and asked that I avoid telling journalists anything about our conversation. I answered that I'd talk with the press after my audience with the pope, and said if we don't tell journalists the truth they'll feel obliged to invent things, perhaps falsehoods. I added that communication is a right and obligation. I learned later that Vatican Radio had received high-level orders to say nothing about my presence in Rome.....

Audience with Pope

The private audience with John Paul II was on June 21 and lasted about 15 minutes.....

(Towards the end of the interview) I told him about the cardinals' proposal that I sign a statement..... and confessed that to me it seemed to betray a lack of trust.

"It could also be a sign of trust," he said. "When Cardinal (Paulo Evaristo) Arns (of Sao Paulo) comes here, he wants everything in writing."

Then he sat back, spread his arms and said, "Just so you can see that I'm no beast!"

At first I was taken aback, then I found the gesture pleasing. "I never thought that," I replied smiling.

(But in truth, more than once in those days I felt more acutely than ever that the Vatican is a lot like a cage, albeit a gilded one).....

On the 27th, my last day in Rome, I had another meeting with Cardinal Gantin and his secretary, Monsignor Re.....

(Gantin) chided me severely for the fact that fragments of my letter to John Paul—II had been published in Spain. Everyone, he added, will see your discrepancies with the Holy Father.....

I replied that the letter seemed to me very respectful and very ecclesial. I reflected on it, prayed over it and consulted others about it. It does express the concerns and even dissent that many Catholics feel and have the right to feel and express, since we are the church. The letter didn't deal with private matters.

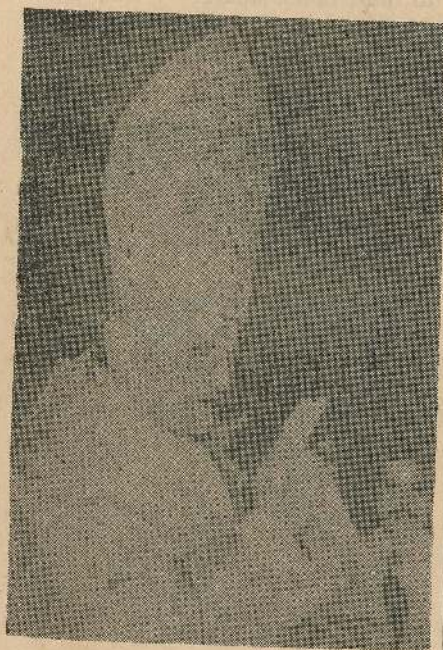
Then, very forcefully and in the name of the Congregation for Bishops, the cardinal reproved me for my trips to Nicaragua. "I'll pray, I'll reflect and I'll consult my colleagues," I replied.

Then he asked again that I examine my conscience about my way of dealing with public opinion.

"I'm a bishop also," I said, "and I feel a sense of co-responsible duty. The pope himself insists on communication. I believe that to seek dialogue, pluralism and the greater good of the church is an obligation for all of us."

Latinafrica Press
20 October, 1988.

Letter to the Pope



Dear Pope John Paul II,

In these past 18 years, I have lived and worked in the northeast part of the state of Mato Grosso . . . For 15 years, I have been the bishop of the prelatore which covers 150,000 square kilometers of the Amazon basin. There's not a foot of paved highway. Only recently has telephone service been installed. Frequently, the region is cut off from the rest of Brazil by rains or floods.

It is an area of big landowners, national and international, whose employees often live in conditions of violence and semi-slavery. I work with the indigenous, with those without title to their lands and those with no land at all. In general, the population of the prelatore is forced to live precariously, without adequate education, health, transportation, housing and legal services . . .

As a bishop of the Catholic church I can and I must make this contribution to our church: give voice to my faith and exercise — as within a family — a certain colle-

gial candour. To be silent, to let things go along with a certain fatalism, would surely be the most comfortable. But I don't think that would be the most Christian, nor the most human . . .

We cannot truthfully say that we have really made an option for the poor. Firstly, because we don't experience real poverty in our lives and institutions. Secondly, because we do not confront the evils caused by wealth with the freedom and firmness used by our Lord.

The option for the poor, which will never exclude the person of the rich — in as much as salvation is offered to all and the church ministers to all — excludes the life-style of the rich as an insult to the misery of the poor. Their wealth is based on a system of accumulation and privilege that robs and marginates the vast majority of the human family . . .

For many of us, the structure of the Curia often runs counter to the evangelical simplicity and fraternal communion that our Lord and the world demand of us. Often, such Gospel traits are not expressed in its activities, which are sometimes centralized and opposed to a really universal catholicity. At times, the Curia does not respect even basic human rights. There are often prejudices in sectors of the Roman Curia — more or less unconscious — of a European cultural ethnocentrism in the face of Latin America, Africa or Asia.

No one can objectively deny that women continue to be marginated in the church. They are discriminated against in canon law, liturgy, ministry and church authority. For a faith and a community whose Gospel does not discriminate between "Jew and Greek, free and slave, man and woman," this discrimination against women in the church cannot be justified . . .

Another delicate point, very close to your heart, brother John Paul, is celibacy. I personally never doubted its evangelical

value and its necessity for the fullness of church life . . . Nevertheless, I think that we are not being understanding or just with those thousands of priests, many of them in moving situations, who accepted compulsory celibacy because it was required for priestly ministry in the Latin Church. Later, because of this requirement, many had to leave the ministry and are now unable to normalize their life within the church and, at times, within society . . .

I have personally had a sad experience with nunciatures. You know better than I of the persistent complaints of bishops' conferences, of particular bishops, of priests of large sectors of the church confronted with an institution that acts so legalistically and often acts without consultation with the bishops.

John Paul, brother, allow me a word of fraternal criticism. Your traditional titles such as "Holiest Father," "Your Holiness," as well as other church titles such as "Your Eminence" or "Your Excellency" don't reflect Gospel values and, humanly speaking, are rather extravagant. "Let no one call you father or teacher (because you have but one Father, who is in heaven)," says our Lord . . .

With your apostolic blessing.

— Pedro Casaldaliga,
Bishop of Sao Felix de Araguaia.



Vatican Moves in Brazil

Arns' Archdiocese reduced in size

Notwithstanding opposition from politicians, intellectuals, human-rights workers, clergy, and others, the Vatican has decided to go ahead with a plan to reduce the size of the world's largest Roman Catholic archdiocese, based here. Its head, Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns, is widely known for his ecumenical and human-rights involvements. Opponents say the reduction will undermine activist, grassroots work the archdiocese carries out in poor areas which surround the wealthier central city (which will remain as the reduced archdiocese). New dioceses are to be formed in the peripheral areas of Osasco, Itapeverica de Serra, Santo Amaro, and Sao Miguel Paulista.

— Ecumenical Press Service 09.10.88



With a callous for a ring
the bishop cut rice.
Bishop "hammer and sickle"?

They call me a subversive.
And I will answer: that I am.
I live for my struggling people.
I join my people's march.

I have the faith of a warrior
and love for the revolution.
And between Gospel and song
I suffer and say what I want.
If I scandalize, first
I burnt my own heart
in the fire of this Passion,
cross of His own Wood.

I incite subversion
against power and money
I want to subvert the law
that turns the People into a flock
and the government into a butcher.
(My Pastor became a Lamb.
The servant became my King).
The servant became my King).

Song of the Sickle and Axe

I believe in the international
of raised faces,
in the voice of equal to equal
and in hands entwined
And I call order evil,
and progress a lie.
I am more angry than peaceful.
I have more love than peace.

. . . I believe in taking sickle and axe
to these fallen stalks:
one Death and so many lives!
I believe in this sickle,
which moves ahead
which moves ahead
—beneath this unshielded sun
and in the shared hope—
so bent and yet so tenacious!

—Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga,
Sao Felix de Araguaia, Brazil

Carta a las Iglesias
Sept. 16 - 30, 1988
San Salvador

Fellowship in Action

The Sri Lanka Preparatory Committee for the **13th World Festival of Youth and Students** to be held next year in Pyongyang, has entrusted the organization of the national art competition and exhibition to be held in this connection, to the Christian Workers Fellowship. Already there has been a good response and several paintings and drawings by youth and students have reached the CWF office in Colombo Fort. The theme of the World Festival as of the exhibition of art is "Anti-Imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Friendship."

This 13th World Festival of Youth and Students is to be attended by the represent-

atives of many youth organizations in the Country including those of all the major political parties.

Study Camp

A very successful Study Camp for CWF leaders was held from October 21st evening to October 24th at Kamkaru Sevana Ratmalana.

Participants who came from different parts of the island took turns in leading the morning worship each day and the Workers' Mass was celebrated on the last day of the study sessions.

Regular Programmes

The regular activity of the CWF both at the level of the Branches and at the Centre has continued but no extension work has been possible in the prevailing climate of widespread fear and insecurity. We have also not been able to get proper reports from our branches on account of the breakdown in communications, and have had to postpone the 30 Anniversary celebration of the CWF in November. We are nonetheless aware that our members everywhere are doing what they could to bring about sanity and keep alive the spirit of hope among people in this situation.

a voter turn-out of 4.45%, the Kamburupitiya electorate 7.45%, the Akuressa electorate 14.07 and the Devīnuwara electorate having a voter turn-out of 15.64%); the Hambantota district with a voter turn-out of 29.45 (the Mulkirigala electorate having a turn-out of 19.1%); the Polonnaruwa district with a voter turn-out of 29.73% (the Minneriya electorate of that district having a 9.4% turn-out); the Matale district with a voter turn-out of 30.28% (the Dambulla electorate of that district having a poll of 10.6%). Places like Badulla district although they show an average poll of 41.8% also had electorates like Uva-Parānagama which had a voter turn-out of only 11.4%. The Badulla town electorate itself had only a total voter turn-out of 27.49% in marked contrast to all the other major towns, but such was the effect of the prevailing terror there.

In the other districts, although the polling did not reach the customary levels, considering the prevailing climate, it could be said that the polling has been satisfactory. Of course in places like the North Central Province where the SLFP has been traditionally strong, the polling was adversely affected due to terror unleashed by the DJV/JVP which had earlier joined the SLFP in boycotting and seeking to disrupt the Provincial Council Elections. (In Anuradhapura district nonetheless the SLFP won 6 out of the 7 electorates, losing Mihintale by just 9 votes where the vote turn-out was 25%).

In the areas comparatively unaffected by DJV/JVP terror, especially the Nuwara Eliya district, polling was extremely high reaching an 80% voter turn-out. The massive vote of the plantation workers mainly of recent Indian origin for UNP Candidate Premadasa (results of the grant of citizenship rights and the backing of the Ceylon Workers Congress as a partner in the Government) enabled him to win all 4 electorates here comfortably. Similarly the Muslim votes in the Batticaloa district have apparently helped the UNP to win all the seats barring one. In Jaffna the voting has been very poor in contrast to the previous Presidential Election. Mrs. Bandaranaike polled the largest number of votes in the peninsula (44,197) followed by SLMP candidate Ossie Abeygoonesekera (39,578) and Mr. Premadasa who received 33,650 votes.

The Mahanuware district reputedly the bastion of Kandyan aristocrat Sirima Ratwatte Dias Bandaranaike, voted massively for low-country candidate R. Premadasa coming from a much less privileged social stratum (10 electorates out of the 11 in that district registering comfortable margins for him). The same holds for the Kegalla district (8 out of 9 electorates) and even for the Ratnapura district (6 out of the 8 electorates including Kalawana which until Parliament's

dissolution on the 20th was held by the CPSL). This result may perhaps be due to the populist image projected by Mr. Premadasa and his claim to be a man of action capable of fulfilling his promises. In this context his programme for ameliorating the conditions of the poor (a monthly income of Rs. 2,500 for all whose monthly income is less than Rs. 700) would no doubt have appeared attractive to simple village folk who were also in the main socially under-privileged.

Mrs. Bandaranaike clearly had a very good opportunity of pulling off a victory in the context of the widespread anti-Government sentiments in the country on many issues, but she failed to do so mainly on account of her unprincipled positions and lack of political foresight. In fact, Mrs. Bandaranaike undermined the democratic basis of the SLFP by her repeated attempts to get the JVP into her fold in place of entering into some principled understanding with the Left parties, a course which had been mainly responsible for her coming into power in the past. Her overtures to the LTTE too created fear and suspicion among the Sinhala masses whom she had imbued with chauvinism. In fact her opportunistic shift of positions during her election campaign only served to undermine her credibility as the potential Leader of the country. Ironically all her efforts ended by her being ditched by both the JVP and LTTE and in the success with which these two groups were able apparently to scare away her voters from the polls, thus helping to ensure a UNP victory.

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Though divided by their respective Sinhala and Tamil chauvinist loyalties, the J. V. P. and L. T. T. E. share a common hostility to the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord and both groups have ostensibly refused to distinguish between the three Presidential Candidates, the J. V. P. characterising all three of them as "Indian Stooges".

Although the performance of the SLMP Candidate Ossie Abeygoonsekera could not be considered impressive, it is by no means an indication of the relative strength of the Left in the country. In fact apart from the hard core Left supporters, the general tendency in our Elections has been for these voters to ultimately vote for the candidate who has the best chance of defeating the die-hard Right represented by the UNP. This could be seen in the number of votes that Mrs Bandaranaike was able to secure over SLMP Candidate Oswin Abeygoonsekera even in Jaffna despite the backing of the latter by the Tamil United Liberation Front and several other Tamil militant groups. The trend in the traditionally Left areas like the Kegalle, Sabaragamuwa and Kalutara districts was no different, with the failure to select a common candidate to contest officially in the name of the United Socialist Alliance also perhaps contributing to a weakening of the election campaign in these areas. It must also be remembered of course that the SLMP candidate was severely handicapped by the late start of a campaign on his behalf, having to content himself with a limited number of election rallies and hampered too by the constant threat of physical attacks by DJV/JVP elements whom the other two candidates were wary of confronting.

In fact it could even be said that the unwillingness of the major political parties of the U. N. P. and S. L. F. P. to mobilise mass opinion against the terror politics of the D. J. V./J. V. P. and their efforts instead to win the support of the latter group for their own ends, contributed greatly to the success of this disruptive terror. It was not surprising therefore that the efforts of the United Socialist Alliance to obtain the co-operation of the S. L. F. P. in presenting a common front of opposition parties against this terror during the Presidential Election, failed.

Post election Developments

On December 20, after his declaration as winner in the Presidential contest by the Elections Commissioner, Mr. Premadasa was more direct in his language to "those who have still to join the democratic process." He asked them to make up their minds soon. "The ballots of the people" he said "have triumphed over the bullets of brutality. . . The politics of terror has no place in the temple of democracy." This is almost tantamount to an ultimatum. The very next day Mr. Premadasa was reported as saying: "I have given the people 10 days time. They can think over the problems we are facing and come to terms..." It is left to be seen how the JVP/DJV will respond.

Mrs. Bandaranaike has in the meantime declared that the SLFP and the Democratic People's Alliance "do not accept the results of the presidential election" and that she will file action in Court challenging the election. Although in an interview with Reuter before the election, Mrs. Bandaranaike claimed that a Manila-style insurrection could result if she was deprived of victory, she has now said her party's Central Committee will consider the option of taking to the streets but that it would be a peaceful demonstration, adding that President Jayewardene had himself set an example referring to the satyakriya campaign in 1977.

No specific instances of election malpractice have been set out by Mrs. Bandaranaike such as mass impersonation, though some bundles of un-used ballot papers were shown by her and declared to have been found in a police station she refused to name. Her main ground for complaint is that some 40,000 voters were deprived of their right to vote in the 49 polling stations that did not function in the Monaragala district, though it is difficult to see how this could have seriously affected the ultimate results of the polls. She has said that the Commissioner of Elections could have had staggered polls, a device which as we have pointed out in the pages inside, could in fact have given much more scope for impersonation and other malpractices, not easily possible in a general election held throughout the country on a single day.

The Present Need

Whatever the difficulties and shortcomings, it was nonetheless imperative that the Presidential Election should have been held, not for constitutional reasons alone, but as the only way in which to counter the politics of terror and destruction and enable the people to assert themselves through the exercise of the ballot and so revive the democratic process. The first stage of that process is now over and the stage set for a parliamentary general election. The next stage could well be the revival of genuine parliamentary democracy by ending the executive presidential system itself as we have pointed out in the pages inside. But that would entail general agreement among the opposition parties and the devising of a new constitution, a course not perhaps so practicable given the present alignment of forces and the position of Mrs. Bandaranaike.

In any event the parliamentary general election in the offing would make it incumbent for the forces of the Left to rally together for a common struggle as a single force or alliance. For over 11 long years, the voice of the Left has not been heard in its accustomed strength within Parliament. In the interests of the working people and their on-going struggle, it is vital that this deficiency should be remedied. It is also the way in which a **genuine alternative** to the bankrupt policies of the two capitalist parties of UNP and SLFP can be effectively presented to the country and advanced.

22nd December, 1988.



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