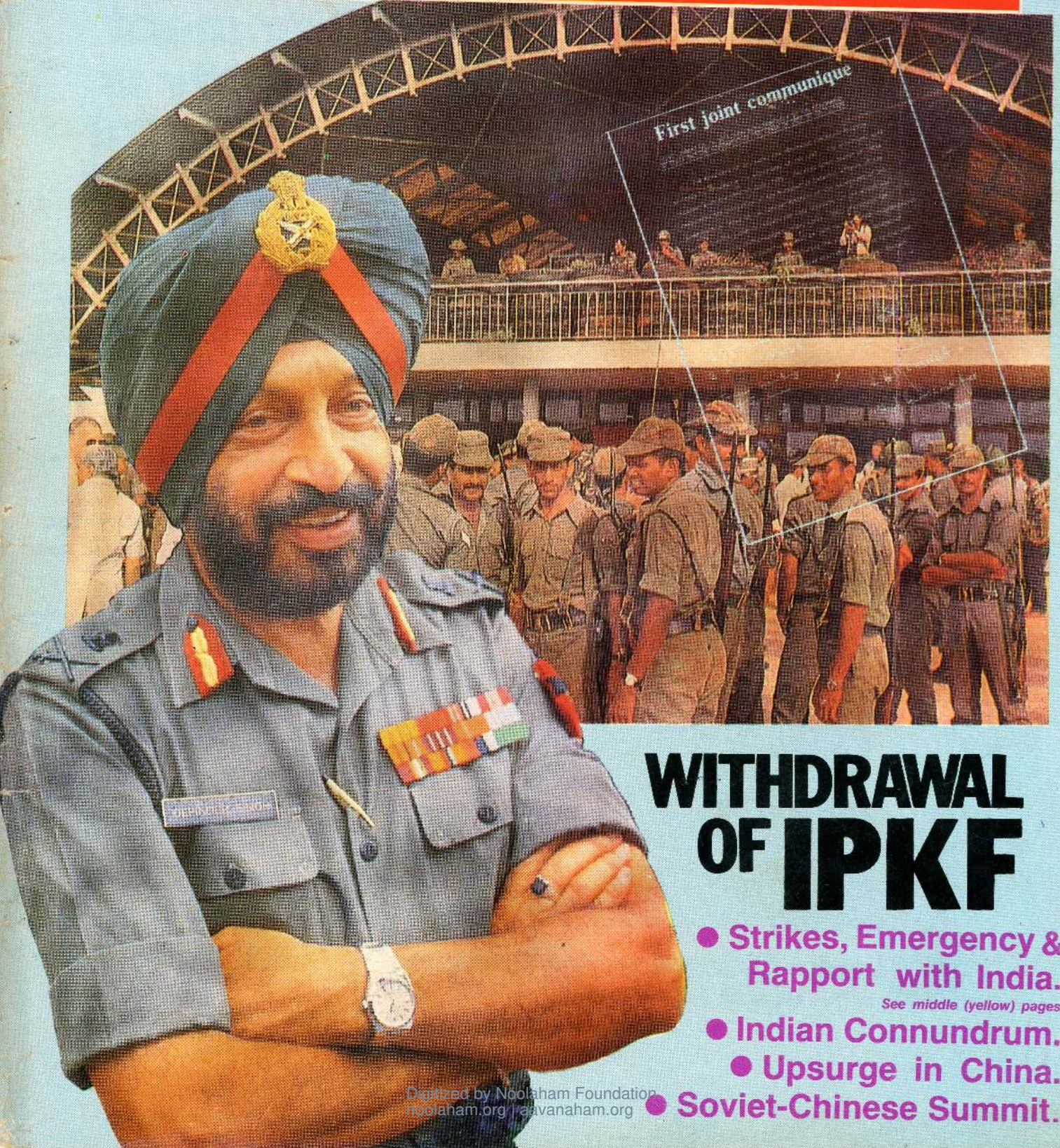


CHRISTIAN

Quarterly of the Christian Workers Fellowship

WORKER

First joint communique



WITHDRAWAL OF IPKF

● Strikes, Emergency & Rapport with India.

See middle (yellow) pages

● Indian Connundrum.

● Upsurge in China.

● Soviet-Chinese Summit.



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

To our Readers

The delay in producing this issue is due to unsettled Conditions completely beyond our Control. We have however covered events up to August in our Comment.

Cover: Photograph IPKF on arrival in Sri Lanka, courtesy Frontline.

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From our readers

JVP Leader's Bro-in-Law Explains

The Editor

The News appearing in your issue of **Christian Worker** (1989 1st quarter) regarding my interview with the President is distortion of facts.

H. E. the President Hon. R. Premadasa pledged to accomplish all the demands of Rohana Wijeweera and JVP. Nothing concerning legitimate demands were discussed. I met him on his invitation and initiation. I'm a sympathiser of the JVP. I'm not a Member or a leader. I went as a Marxist Revolutionary, Patriot, Human Rights Activist and a Citizen of Sri Lanka on my own. No relationship to JVP with regard to this discussion.

The JVP has put forward all the demands repeatedly to Past and Present President. JVP is a legitimate Political Party and therefore the question of giving them legitimate demands does not arise. There is neither Democracy nor Peace in the country. These were destroyed by the JR-Thondaman UNP of 1977 to 1988.

When there is no Democracy or Peace how can JVP enter the Bourgeois Democratic Process?

Many thanks.
Sincerely
Sgd. S. C. Fernando

Dr. S. C. Fernando, MBBS (Cey.)
Gampaha Nursing Home,
99, Colombo Road, Gampaha.
19.4.1989.

Pre Election Killings

Dear Sir,

I should be grateful if you could clarify a statement made in your special supplement 1989 General Election (CW 4th qr. 1988/ 1st qr. 1989, page 2, para. 2), to the effect that 7 of the 14 Parliamentary candidates killed were SLFP and 1 was UNP.

My own attempt to monitor events in this period indicates that 8 SLFP candidates were killed, but not a single UNP candidate. I wonder how you arrived at your breakdown.

Perhaps you, too, were led astray by an apparent red herring. In the **Daily News** of 30/1, T. Sabaratnam reported

that the Police had said one of the 10 candidates killed to date was from the UNP. A similar report was carried by the **Sunday Times** of 29/1.

I have been unable to discover the identity of this UNP parliamentary candidate, or the date and place of the alleged killing. (The only comparable incident was the reported killing of a defeated UNP Provincial Council candidate towards the end of December 1988.) When asked about it just before polling day, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne stated that no UNP parliamentary candidate had been killed.

As our analysis and understanding of the process of the recent elections depends to a great extent on accurate data, and the fact that not a single UNP candidate was killed may be of considerable significance, I suggest you verify this particular point and correct your account if necessary. My own breakdown of parliamentary candidates killed and injured is given below. I would welcome any corrections; my own concern is to help provide as accurate a record as possible as an aid to anyone wishing to understand what happened during this time.

Sgd. S.C.A. Pieris

92A, Rajagiriya Road,
Rajagiriya,
20.4.89.

Number of Parliamentary Candidates Killed or Injured before Polling Day

According to English Language Press

	UNP	SLFP	USA	ACTC	Total
Killed ..	—	8	4	1	13
Injured ..	2	4	1	—	7

Candidates Killed

Party Date Name, District* and List No.
SLFP 10/1 Indrapala Abeyweera (Kalutara-5)

10/1 Wijayalal Mendis (Kalutara-12)

21/1 Abubakar Mohamed Hussain (Matara-1)

22/1 Sarath Sepala Ratnayake (Matara-10)

24/1 Ranjith Gamini Jayasena (Polonnaruwa-4)

27/1 Punchibanda Ratnayake (Badulla-9)

3/2 Hector Jayasinghe (Kegalle-12); Killed near residence in Ratnapura.

12/2 Somapala Amarakeerthi (Galle-12)

USA 11/1 A. K. Annamalai (National List-9) Killed in Jaffna

25/1 Nissanka Karunatileke (Kandy-11)

3/2 R. A. Jayaweera (Kurunegala-3)

5/2 Somadasa Gankanda (Kalutara-14)

ACTC 25/1 N. Sivagnanam (Jaffna-7)

Candidates Injured

UNP 20/1 T.H. Dunuwila (Kandy-9)

30/1 Ariya Bandara Rekawa (Kurunegala-3)

SLFP 13/1 H. K. Mervyn Silva (Hambantota-10)

14/1 Bandula Basnayake (Kurunegala-10)

24/1 B. Francis Siyambalapitiya (Kegalle-7)

5/2 Sirima Bandaranaike (Gampaha 19) in attack on meeting at Anuradhapura.

USA 30/1 Piyasena Jayakodi (Galle-10)

* (Unless otherwise stated, attacks took place in this district)

Editorial Note: We were going on the press reports referred to and must express our thanks to the writer for this correction. □

Fear and Insecurity in the Rural South

On March 31 about 25 villagers, mostly women, were clearing and weeding a newly planted land about 15 miles from Matara. Around 3 p.m. loud noises similar to explosions were heard from the direction of the village junction about 200 metres away. Within minutes some of the women started running towards the junction. When questioned they said the army (HAMUDAVA) had arrived and were smashing (PODIKARANAWA) their houses and shooting the people. They were advised that if it was so it would be best to stay away. But, as their children were at home there was no alternative. The noises continued while we spoke. With each 'explosion' the women identified the particular house that was smashed. And so they ran. After 10 or 15 minutes they returned somewhat shamed but relieved and happy. The 'army' had turned out to be employees of the Ceylon Electricity Board and the 'explosions' were RCC posts being unloaded from a truck!

Subsequent inquiry revealed the sense of fear and insecurity prevalent in these villages. Cordon and search operations are frequent. Gandara, the village where burning of houses and assaulting of people followed the deaths of two police officers in a landmine explosion is only a few miles away. Every young person particularly males, are subversive or terrorist suspects. One can imagine the tenseness in the minds of parents. The agony from fear for their children is very apparent. Many prefer not to send them to school especially if the school is some distance from the home. On the other hand continuous absence or irregular attendance could itself lead to suspicion.

After the happenings of the last several months these poor, rural folk fear the security forces, police, para-military and private armed thugs far more than the subversives. Perhaps the fact that the subversives are themselves village youth gives them a common identity. In addition, they have acquired a reputation for a kind of discipline that is spoken well of. The security forces, particularly the para-military and armed thugs are considered aliens and disliked.

Town and city dwellers are prone to grumble and curse when shops are closed and transport curtailed occasionally. There is little realisation of the continuous suffering of village people. Apart from the fear and anxiety caused by security operations, the lack of basic amenities such as electricity and pipe borne water make their lives a drudgery in this modern age. Even transport is uncertain. Private buses or vans do not ply on these routes. SLTB buses are notable for their scarcity and noted for frequent break-downs. People are compelled to walk many miles with their heavy loads. Pairs of young girls (young men are a rarity) carrying sack loads of garden produce to the fair is not an uncommon sight.

Many believed that with the recent election of Provincial Councillors, a new President and Members of Parliament the

situation would improve. But in fact it has got worse. It seems that no Councillor or Parliamentarian has visited these villages since their election. Why should this be so? After all, they sought the votes of these villagers to be of service. What better time can there be to serve one's people than in times such as these when the constant fear of death or injury of loved ones or destruction or damage of property is uppermost in their minds? Who can ease their fears than their own elected representatives? And if they are abandoned in times of dire need how much longer will these people believe in the present systems of government?

Nissanka de Silva

39, Gunasekera Gardens
Rajagiriya
14 April 1989. □

Strategy for harmony

A Proposal to bring peace to Sri Lanka through General Elections under New Proportional Representative Voting System treating entire Island as one constituency Electorate—with no 'cut-off' point:

At this critical juncture in our country to attempt to solve its long festering problems, some solution acceptable to most or all political parties, communities, religious bodies, trade unions and the people has to be offered—so that the correct atmosphere can be created for holding of General Elections.

Elections held under the Regulations of either Constitution 1978 or 1972 will I am certain not be accepted by a large section of the people, specially the Youth—as they are aware that by elections held under the said regulations, the newer and smaller parties have no chance of forming a Government even influencing same, at least in the near future—as the number of M.P.'s elected will not reflect the true voting strength of each party in the country. "Cut off" points, Bonus seats to parties obtaining the larger number of seats and method of proportional representations and other factors favouring the ruling and richer parties govern the election of M.P.'s. As such a General Election held under prevailing laws, will only bring us back to the situation we are in today.

Therefore I suggest the next General Elections be held under the New Plan set out below:

1(a) Treat entire Island as one constituency (Electorate) with one set of ballot papers listing the names in alphabetical order of contesting parties with their symbols.

1(b) The total number of registered voters in the country (say 10,000,000) divided by the number of M.P.'s in the next parliament (say 200) will be 50,000 on a 100% poll. If the poll is (say 90%) the qualifying unit for one seat will be 45,000 votes. Thus a party obtaining 450,000 votes will qualify for 10 seats and so on.

1(c) If after the allocation of seats (on the basis of the qualifying unit) all seats are not filled, the balance vacancies could be distributed to the party or parties obtaining the closest number of votes to the qualifying unit. It may happen that some party or parties which have already qualified for some seats would be allocated an extra seat on the basis of extra votes polled and not accounted for. A seat gained in this way may be termed a 'bonus' (incentive) seat. There will be no 'cut-off' point under this method. 'Cut-off' points lead to frustration and anger driving the disappointed to the bullet.

2(a) Every M.P. may be designated M.P. (Sri Lanka). This may eliminate the need for future Delimitation Commissions too. This designation of M.P.'s may help to bring about a feeling of oneness and unity in the country.

2(b) Every M.P. will represent an equal number of voters, except for the 'Bonus' seat holders who will represent smaller numbers.

2(c) The plan may help to reduce (1) tensions in country at election times and (2) to a large extent local rivalries too leading to murder, arson, fights, damage and destruction of property, impersonation, and bribery of voters.

2(d) The cancer of communal/caste politics which has been the bane of our country for years and years will also be reduced.

2(e) The cost of running a General Election under the new plan will be minimum both to the country and the contesting parties.

3(a) The support each party has in the country will be truly reflected by elections held under the new plan.

3(b) Parties could announce their list of candidates either before or after the elections.

I am of opinion the new plan of electing M.P.'s will be widely accepted as fair and truly democratic. Even at this late stage I urge the country's leaders to call an immediate conference of representatives of all registered political parties and others considered necessary, obtain their views and consensus (if possible) and push through the necessary legislation to implement the proposed plan in time for the next general elections. Perhaps a referendum will not be necessary.

After such an election the representatives so elected—by forming a National Coalition or one party government—could work on the future plans for our impoverished and suffering motherland.

I plead that members of all political parties, religious bodies, Trade Unions and others interested in bringing peace and unity to our country, give the plan their consideration and if they agree, urge their leaders to accept and implement the new plan without any delay. An announcement to this effect by the government would quickly bring about a cooling of tempers (young and old) and probably bring a halt to the killings, burning and maimings and other losses.

Forgiveness, for past errors of all parties may also follow the spirit of the offer.

The offer to be effective must be accompanied by an announcement of a general amnesty and pardon to all (including the JVP) of every community.

Finally, in this context I do not think I could do better than ending by quoting the late President Kennedy: "Those who make peaceful evolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable".

—F. A. Goonewardene

17, Charles Place, Moratuwa
6th February, 1989.

Protest Over Nirvana

The Editor

Dear Sir,

I was compelled to write this letter to you after having read the article published in your March issue under the caption, "Buddhist Reflection on Christianity" by one Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa who is said to have been a scholar attached to an American university.

His attempt has paved the way to create a misconception in the yet unsophisticated minds of the Ceylonese Buddhists and non-Buddhists as well. In other words it is quite obvious that he has made a very poor attempt to preach "Sivaraksism" under the guise of Buddhism.

We shall thank him for having clarified the Vatican Policy towards Buddhism thus: "There is an implication that now Christians should learn more about Buddhism and show outward sign of respect to Buddhist ceremony in order to understand Buddhist teaching and culture, which will perhaps be easier to convert Buddhists to Christianity or to Christianise Buddhism as St. Aquinas has Christianized Aristotle".

Mr. Sivaraksa seems to be one of the victims of the said Vatican Policy. That is why he says, "In Buddhism we could not explain or define NIRVANA either". But this is all con. He may perhaps not know that Buddha himself attained NIRVANA and millions of his disciples too have followed suit and thereby they have proved that it is an "Ehipassika Dhamma" (Enlighten yourself and see).

No one should give a negative indication about NIRVANA, as it is not this, not that and so on. A small "Abittaya" (A servant boy) in a rural Ceylonese temple will be able to give a clear out positive indication of NIRVANA. "It is Alobha, Adosa and Amoha in one's mind." Thus it cannot be compared to the God or anything in existence elsewhere.

Mr. Sivaraksa also says, "If the Buddhists look at the word God Unsympathetically they will automatically deny his Existence." No it is not. Buddhist

are not denying the existence of Gods. Buddha is the one who identified the six divine worlds to the human beings namely, Chaturmaharajika, Tawatingsa, Tama, Tusita, Nirmanarati and Paramirmitavasavarti. Buddha himself had visited some of these places, according to the Dhamma. He said that there are million of gods in these worlds. Even the Mother of Prince Siddhartha is still it Tusitha according to Buddhism.

Not only the Gods, Buddha said that there are some beings called "Brahmas" and there are sixteen "Brahma Lokas". These Brahmas are superior to gods in certain respects.

Whatever it is, one point is clear, unless one realises the four noble truths he will be in the circle of existence irrespective of his godness or Brahmaness or whatever the state may be. If something is in existence it is subject to Anitya, Dukka and Anatma. (Non-external, misery, soulless).

This definition of the Buddha about the existence is quite scientific. No one can deny that.

Hemasiri Cumararatunga

157/11, Tewatte Road,
Ragama.
16 May—1989.

Editor's reply:

The reader Cumararatunga is taking Sivaraksa to task for saying what every recognized authority on Buddhism has said, namely that Nirvana cannot be explained or defined but be referred to with negative or positive indications. In fact Cumararatunga tries to substantiate his critique by proffering a "definition" which happens to be the best proof of what Sivaraksa calls "negative indication". To show that Nirvana can be defined positively, Cumararatunga cites the very common formula: alobha, adosa, amoha. Cumararatunga does not seem to know the meaning of these Pali words, namely "non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion". If even a temple boy knows this definition, as Cumararatunga claims, then it is all the more surprising that he (Cumararatunga) does not know it to be the most accepted negative indication of Nirvana given in the Scriptures!

We also like to draw Cumararatunga's attention to the acariya parampara (generations of Teachers) of our own theravada tradition which has maintained that this formula (ragakkhya, dosakkhya, mohakkhya) is not the semantic equivalent for Nirvana but an approximate indication (tad-upacarena) — See Visudhimagga, PTS edition, p. 508. No one can define the undefinable without limiting conceptually what transcends the limits of conceptualization. If the Buddha preferred to speak of Nirvana through oblique indications, it is rather presumptuous on the part of Cumararatunga to attempt at positive definitions! Sivaraksa has spoken as an orthodox Buddhist.

WITHDRAWAL OF IPKF

What today has become a central issue in Sri Lankan politics was given unexpected emphasis in a surprise announcement made by President Premadasa in the course of a speech delivered by him at a Buddhist religious ceremony on June 1st at Battaramulla, namely the anticipated withdrawal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) by the end of July this year. (See excerpts reproduced inside)

That this announcement took even the Indian Government by surprise is seen in a June 2 (AFP) news report which quoted an Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman as saying that New Delhi was "really puzzled by the proposed request that is said to be in the process of being made". Noting that the question of withdrawal was part of a "continuous process" India had been engaged in, the Indian spokesman added: "These things can't be decided by looking at calendars. They have to be decided through consultations with the Sri Lankan Government and by taking into view the situation on the ground and various other parameters", such as devolution of substantial powers to the Provincial Council and the ability of that Council controlled by the Tamils "to rule". Noting that the issue affected almost 50,000 troops, the Indian spokesman said: "The question of complying with the request will have to be decided by a large number of people".

An earlier New Delhi datelined Reuter report said that Sri Lanka's demand for a swift withdrawal of troops threatens to become a major foreign policy setback for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Janata Dal Party leader V. P. Singh has sharply criticised Gandhi's policy on relations with India's neighbours: "One day we support the LTTE the next day we support the Sri Lankan government. Mr. Gandhi's foreign policy changes from day to day", Singh said.

It is not without significance that President Premadasa's request for the complete withdrawal of the IPKF came in the context of preliminary discussions his government had with representatives of the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the announcement of an anti-Indian campaign to be launched by the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) on June 14 calling for a boycott of Indian goods and institutions and for a departure by that day of all Indian interests in the island including those businessmen who have obtained distinguished Sri Lanka Citizenship.

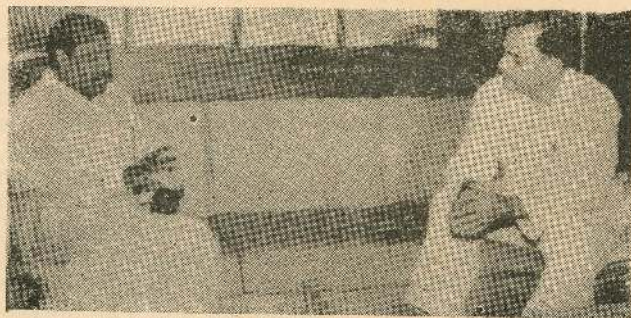
Preceding Events

Any comment on President Premadasa's call for a total IPKF withdrawal must be viewed in the context also of the other events that have unfolded since his assumption of office as President and the installation of the Government after the General Election of February 15 this year.

While it cannot be disputed that the activities of the IPKF in the North were responsible for driving out the main LTTE forces from the peninsula and confining them to the jungles north east of Vavuniya, (in fact it is said that during 'Operation Checkmate', the IPKF almost caught the top LTTE leadership but they were allowed to escape on the orders of New Delhi), the continuing presence and conduct of IPKF troops in populated areas as against quick and effective military actions by them directed at the jungle hideouts, has given rise to strong public discontent and resentment in the North. (See 'Violence in the North' in our last issue) The lack of an effective civil administration there despite the setting up of the North-East Provincial Council and the need to place security forces under such a restored civil administration in the interests of citizens, became also a matter of increasing importance.

However the urgent need in such a situation to strengthen the Provincial Council with adequate powers had stalled with the tardiness of the Sri Lankan Government in devolving powers to the provinces. This situation led to a 12 day visit to India on March 11 by North-Eastern Provincial

Council Chief Minister Varadaraja Perumal with a three member delegation of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) which included its Secretary General K. Padmanabha, Member of Parliament K. Premachandran and Central Committee member K. Santhan.



Perumal - Talks with Gandhi

This delegation had discussions with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and other Indian Ministers and the main topic of this discussion was the need to strengthen the Provincial Council with adequate powers, the other issues being the reconstruction and rehabilitation work in the North-Eastern Province and the security of the Tamil people through the establishment of a provincial police force. According to Chief Minister Perumal 300,000 people had been rendered homeless and 70,000 houses destroyed completely and all the roads damaged leading to the collapse of the telecommunications and transport system. The total money available already for the work was \$665 million but Perumal said the Sri Lankan Government was not releasing the funds to the Provincial Council fearing perhaps that it might be misused for other purposes. The Indian Government in response had counselled patience and advised that these matters be got done through the Sri Lankan Government. Chief Minister Varadaraja Perumal also had talks with Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi on the unity of the Sri Lankan Tamil groups and the need to involve the LTTE in the process of a negotiated settlement. The EPRLF delegation's view was that the LTTE and other groups should be invited for talks and a peaceful solution found, which Karunanidhi also had firmly endorsed. (In fact a M.P. from Karunanidhi's own party V. Gopalaswamy left Tamil Nadu in early February for nearly a month's stay in Sri Lanka without so much as a visa, in order to meet LTTE leader Prabhakaran and find "a permanent and peaceful solution" to the problems of the Sri Lankan Tamils!)

Chief Minister Varadaraja Perumal came in for some sharp criticism locally for the visit to India but he claimed that he had to do this as he did not get a proper response from the Sri Lankan Government on the matters raised by him. Said Perumal at the end of his visit addressing a press conference on March 24 in Delhi: "The unity and integrity of Sri Lanka depended on the extent of the devolution of powers to the Provincial Council. We want peace. We do not want a bloody war."

President's Peace Offensive

It was in this situation that President Premadasa at the Yovunpura Youth Festival on April 1st at Girandurukotte decided to once again renew his appeal to the JVP and LTTE to join the democratic process saying that he intended also "to allocate certain seats from the national list of the United National Party (UNP) to these rebel groups" and urge opposition parties as well to similarly allocate a few seats to them. He further stated that if these groups gave up violence and came forward for discussions after laying down arms, he would open 200 reception Centres throughout the island and conduct negotiations with them. However troops and police were put on the alert throughout the country as normal and commercial life came to a standstill following a JVP call to commemorate its 1971 insurrection on April 5th with work stoppages. A week later followed the Government's unilateral declaration of a week's cease-fire during the Sinhala and Tamil New Year period beginning on April 12. Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne announced an Island-wide truce starting at 6 a.m. on April 12 and said that over 1200 Centres would be set up in different parts of the island where militants could go and give themselves up. Political violence however continued island-wide despite this unilateral truce and an estimated 160 people perished during 'the week of peace'. They included for the first time a Christian Workers Fellowship organizer Sarath Malika de Silva (36) of Kantale who was also a prominent and dynamic workers' leader in the area and a well-known Left activist of the Trincomalee district, whose only crime was that of having created a 'peace zone' in a racially sensitive area where Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims lived together in appreciable numbers and whose effort to secure Provincial Council

assistance too for the neglected people of Kantale was resented by certain chauvinist elements including the local DJV/JVP. (See under 'Fellowship in Action' inside). This killing on April 12 was followed on April 13 by a car bomb explosion in Trincomalee where 45 persons were killed and 21 Sri Lankan soldiers were ambushed at Weli Oya by suspected Tamil militants. Southern subversives also set off landmine explosives during this period in which five Sri Lankan soldiers were killed. The Government however took comfort from the fact that around 244 had surrendered at 145 reception centres that had been established though so far only one of them - the suspected killer of former Minister of Rehabilitation Lionel Jayatileke - was identified as an important catch.

A Surprise & A Disappointment

There was however an unexpected reversal of position on the part of the LTTE which on April 11th had rejected President Premadasa's peace offer. A message issued through the LTTE's London office had hit out at the Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Government for their "oppression of the Tamils," ending with an open declaration of the LTTE's avowed aim: "Until the oppressive Indian Army leaves our land there will be no such thing as a ceasefire, and after they leave you will come to recognise that in the island of Ceylon there are two nations. And after that we will need neither war nor ceasefire". Despite this rebuff, the Sri Lankan Government responded with a formal appeal to the LTTE to begin negotiations. This invitation which significantly was unconditional and contained no reference to surrender also stated: "I hope that the LTTE will realise that the desire of the Government of India and the Government of Sri Lanka is for the withdrawal of the IPKF from Sri Lanka. When a nation is wracked by internal conflicts, only outsiders will reap the benefits". These words seemed to find a ready response in the LTTE leadership for suddenly, on April 15, there was sent out a statement in the name of the LTTE's political committee accepting the offer of talks, which added: "You have made comments that external forces have been able to secure their own interests because of internal conflict between us. You will appreciate that we have been consistently opposed to the policy of bringing external forces into the country". This message sent by Anton Balasingham head of the LTTE's London office was responded to promptly by President Premadasa who in a telex message welcomed the Tigers' response and asked them to "nominate an accredited representative to discuss necessary arrangements to facilitate a dialogue anywhere in Sri Lanka". The LTTE named Balasingham and so began the preliminary talks on April 26 between him and the Government officials leading on to the first stage of the LTTE-Government dialogue. The climate created appeared to have been somewhat fouled by the brutal

murder of Jaffna's Government Agent Panchalingam, but the process of dialogue continued notwithstanding.

The Government had also issued an invitation to the JVP on similar lines through the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne which ended: "His Excellency the President is prepared to meet the JVP leaders or its accredited representative at any place indicated by them. The lesson of history is clear. When a nation is wracked by internal conflict, only outsiders gain". Unlike the LTTE's response to the olive branch, the JVP which was in fact the main target of the Government's peace exercise, remained obdurate and in a statement issued on April 18 set out 6 demands that the Government had to meet if it wanted to end the armed struggle. The demands included the scrapping of the Indo-Lankan Accord, the removal of foreign troops and holding of fresh Presidential and Parliamentary elections under an interim administration. Despite this, a fresh invitation was sent to the JVP again by the Government on April 19 to enter into preliminary informal discussions with an accredited representative or representatives in order to be assured of the Government's genuine desire to bring about peace without recourse to violence, but without any result. Nor did the JVP respond when the President on April 22 was reported to have offered to visit the subversives in their hide-outs even blind-folded if need be to hold discussions with them to bring about a peaceful settlement of the existing violence. There was however a flutter when the BBC correspondent in Colombo contacted the Foreign Ministry saying that the JVP leader Wijeweera wanted to go abroad for treatment and President Premadasa was reported

"Unlike the LTTE's response to the olive branch, the JVP which was in fact the main target of the Government's peace exercise, remained obdurate"

to have agreed to render assistance without any conditions. However the JVP in a press release of May 15 signed by its General Secretary Upatissa Gamanayake dismissed the BBC report as an attempt to confuse the people and called on the public not to believe such misleading news in the future. The DJV/JVP on May 15 also claimed responsibility for a landmine in Trincomalee which killed 12 Indian soldiers including a major, describing it as "a new heroic step to liberate the fatherland from the Indian invaders who have occupied one-third (of it)". The DJV said it would carry out its campaign until "the last Indian soldier is driven away".

Tigers in Colombo Town

Meanwhile on May 3 evening, two helicopters of the Sri Lankan Air Force brought the LTTE delegation from the jungle near Nedunkerni north-east of Vavuniya. Fortunately, to quote Minister Ranjan Wijeratne, "the IPKF decided to lower their sights" during this operation. On reaching Colombo, there was an amazing spectacle of LTTE cadres in commando uniform leaping out of the helicopters and surrounding them with raised AK 47 rifles on the army grounds where the aircraft landed. The world media was there to witness this event, though the authorities had only permitted 4 local pressmen to travel with Balasingham to the Nedunkerni jungle to bring in the other LTTE delegates. The LTTE had insisted on bringing its own bodyguards which was agreed to, apparently after some haggling, a clear indication too that the Tigers did not trust the Government despite the offer of safe conduct. For a Government to have permitted weapons, battle outfits and even, it is said, a high frequency transmitter (for Balasingham to keep contact with Prabhakaran) to be brought into the negotiation process with a guerilla organization, is perhaps unheard of elsewhere, but it shows the lengths to which the Government was prepared to go in order to reach a settlement. Two floors of the five star luxury hotel, Hilton International in Colombo were even reserved for the exclusive use of the LTTE by the Government. At the same time the Tigers showed that they did not want President Premadasa to come to them blindfolded but that they were themselves prepared to come to Colombo for peace at the risk of their lives.

As Balasingham who led the LTTE delegation remarked, it was the first time in 17 years that they had decided to talk directly to what they used to call the "Sinhala" Government. Several theories have been trotted out on what promoted the LTTE to suddenly agree to talk to the Government just four days after it had rejected the ceasefire appeal. One theory of course was that the Tigers were under heavy military pressure (from the IPKF) and needed the negotiations as a means to buy time in order to regroup their forces as they had done in the past. Another theory which is also not incompatible with the first, is that the LTTE felt the only way to get the IPKF out of the North and East and reduce Indian influence was to strike a deal with the Sri Lankan Government. It perhaps felt that it was also less difficult to do this now, considering President Premadasa's known antagonism towards India during his tenure as Prime Minister and his present avowed twin objectives—a speedy withdrawal of the IPKF and



Tigers after air lift

a proposed Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the two countries to replace the present Indo-Lanka Accord. Once the IPKF was withdrawn, the LTTE felt it would regain the dominant position it once enjoyed in these areas. For while the LTTE was being militarily confronted by the IPKF, its rival the EPRLF could entrench itself in the provincial council administration of the North-East with the possible consequence that the LTTE's hold on the Tamil population both emotional and political could progressively weaken. Presently in the provincial arena, the EPRLF is the main player. In the parliamentary arena the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS) now calling itself the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) has enhanced its political standing by winning 13 seats in the last general election (even if its MPs are not attending parliament yet.) Even Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leader A. Amirthalingam is seen playing a visible role in Parliament. This is not a situation that the LTTE could exactly relish laying claim as it does to be the sole representative of the Tamil speaking people.

Despite the fact that President Premadasa's move has put the Indian Government into a diplomatic and military dilemma, India has welcomed the talks. The visit of Indian Foreign Secretary S. K. Singh on the eve of the LTTE-Government talks clearly showed India's concern on the matter. The Indian High Commission news release after Mr. Singh's two hour discussion with President Premadasa on May 3 stated *inter alia* that "the Foreign Secretary of India welcomed the initiative taken recently in the evolving political situation in the framework of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement". This was considered a reference to the new Provincial Council legislation and the steps now taken also in setting up the Civil Volunteer Force (CVF) under the North-East Provincial Council. But it also seemed



The LTTE delegation in Colombo for the second round of talks, seen with President Premadasa whose son Sujith (extreme) right is also in the picture

to contain a veiled indication of India's thinking that the negotiations with the LTTE should be within the framework of the Indo-Lankan Accord. Minister Ranjan Wijeratna responded to this viewpoint by stating to the press that "no one is going to tell us about the framework within which we will have to talk to our countrymen". President Premadasa too in a May Day speech defending his overtures to both the JVP and LTTE had stated: "It is my people who live in the North, East, West, South and Central regions. I can talk to them. Nobody can stop my talking to them", adding however that whatever action he took would be within the framework of the Constitution. However despite these public pronouncements it is clear that India too was being regularly kept informed of the progress of the talks.

The LTTE delegation to the talks which comprised Anton Balasingham and his wife, Yogaratnam Yogi, Paramu Moorthy and P. Lawrence, called on President Premadasa after their arrival and had a series of talks with a government delegation to identify issues. In the **joint communiques** issued after each round of talks the LTTE took it upon themselves to have a dig at the Indians and the IPKF on the ground that they were articulating "Tamil grievances". The result was that the High Commission of India and the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry ended up exchanging strong statements, accusing each other while the LTTE looked on from a side !. In fact it was the position of some political observances that the LTTE representatives were coming into these negotiations

to drive a wedge between Colombo and Delhi and so move themselves from their present position of weakness to one of strength.

Although both the government and the LTTE have not given any indication of the details that came up for discussion between them (except criticism of the role played by the IPKF and its alleged atrocities to justify the LTTE's contention that the former did not function as a peace keeping force), reports circulating indicate that the LTTE has listed 15 issues for discussion which include the withdrawal of the IPKF, freeze on the State-aided Sinhala colonization in Tamil areas, abandonment of the North-East Provincial Council, granting of a Quebec-model autonomy for Tamil areas and the setting up of an interim administration as provided in the Dixit-LTTE agreement of September 1987. The bottom line for any settlement with the LTTE is of course that President Premadasa should offer something more substantial than that offered under the Indo-Lankan Accord which the LTTE had denounced as "a charter for servility".

Consequences

If one of the first demands of the LTTE would be the dissolving of the North-East Provincial Council what would be the reaction of the EPRLF to such a demand ? It has been reported that the LTTE's longtime ally EROS does not support the immediate dissolution of the North-East Provin-

East Provincial Council but would work instead on obtaining more meaningful devolution of powers to the Provincial Council. "If and when we go into another Provincial Council election we would have negotiated more power for the Provincial Council" said an EROS leader and one time military commander R. Shanker in an interview with the **Daily News**.

Although all the Tamil groups have publicly acknowledged the need for coming together to forge a consensus on Tamil demands, the bitter rivalry and in fact bloody feuding between them have made this almost an impossible dream. In fact the other Tamil militant groups with the exception perhaps of EROS, appear to be seized with the fear of a closed future for them should the LTTE arrive at an understanding with the Sri Lankan Government. They fear the beginning of a murderous campaign against them by the LTTE. The bloody battle between the Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamileelam (PLOT) and the LTTE on May 21 in the Mannar district where some 50 PLOT cadres and 15 LTTE men had been killed, only goes to underline the danger. The periodic communal clashes in the East too, where allegations have been made of provocation or instigation for such clashes on the part of one or other of the militant groups as late as April and May (Trincomalee Kalmunai and Sammanthurai are the most recent examples) go to show the havoc that can result from such actions. In fact the EPRLF which now controls the North-East Provincial Council has openly stated that it will announce a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) should the Sri Lankan Government strike a deal with the LTTE that does not meet with its approval. And as things stand, it is obvious that militant groups like the EPRLF, TELO (Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization) and ENDLF (Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front) who now operate in the North and East under the IPKF, will have to fight for their survival if the Indians pull out. The EPRLF has even objected strongly to Sri Lankan troops being deployed in the East. The Army Commander Lt. Gen. Hamilton Wanasinghe has said that he is ready to send a contingent of Sri Lankan troops to the Eastern Province but he himself acknowledges that the army strength is far less than the required number for complete security work and battle on two fronts. (It has to be remembered that the Sri Lankan Army has but 32,000 regulars and less than 10,000 volunteers). Furthermore in the context of an IPKF withdrawal can there be an assurance from the LTTE that it will enter the mainstream of democratic politics in the existing Provincial Council set-up? These are difficult questions but their resolution is of the utmost importance if the IPKF is to quit and peace is to be restored.

However as EROS spokesman Shankar has correctly pointed out in the interview referred to earlier, with the entry of the LTTE into negotiations, all the Tamil groups who at one time took up arms, have now a forum in which they can talk. That,

he pointed out is perhaps an important first step in bringing about a negotiated settlement to the ethnic crisis. And indeed nothing short of a consensus among these Tamil groups can avoid a future bloody confrontation and continuing chaos in the already troubled areas of the North and East. Meanwhile it is obvious that the referendum on the North-East merger fixed for July will have to be postponed or a consensus reached by some other method in the context of the on-going negotiations.

The concluding session of the LTTE-Government talks was held on Sunday May 28 after which the LTTE delegates left for their jungle hideouts to return later for further discussions. The joint communique issued said that the talks "had opened the doors to greater understanding and appreciation of the issues involved and had laid a firm basis for future negotiations. The two delegations were unanimous that the main problem was ethnic in character and therefore had to be resolved by the communities concerned through direct negotiations in a spirit of tolerance, understanding and respect for each other's rights bearing in mind the larger interests of the country. The LTTE delegation expressed the hope that the Government would take early steps to bring peace and normalcy to the North and East".

President's Announcement

It is perhaps as a part of the steps needed to bring peace and normalcy to the troubled North and East that President Premadasa has called for the withdrawal of the IPKF in terms of the Indo-Lankan Accord under which military assistance was given by India to the Sri Lankan Government at the latter's request for implementing the proposals set out in the Accord. The suddenness of the President's pronouncement obviously without even prior discussion with India, could have been prompted by the deadline given for the IPKF by the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) which has been fixed for June 14 with a call to the public to also boycott all Indian goods. This is also obviously why the Government recently decided to change the names of foodstuffs called "Mysore Dhal" and "Bombay Onions" ! Indian business interests have also taken the JVP threat seriously and asked the Defence Ministry to provide them with adequate security. All reports indicate that the JVP is bent on crippling public life on June 14 with a steadily built up campaign which is bound to continue even after the IPKF leaves to judge from the six pre-conditions that the JVP have stipulated for the cessation of hostilities. The killings of C.I.D. Superintendent Bennet Perera and Provincial Councillor Leslie Ranagala are also believed to be a part of this campaign. The ground swell of Sinhala opinion against the presence of Indian troops (representing as it does foreign intervention and in the eyes of the Sinhala chauvinist sections, an ally of the Tamil separatists) has meanwhile

been skillfully exploited by the JVP for its own ends in the same manner as it did the widespread anti-government sentiment which the Left had not been able to effectively mobilise earlier.

However as regards the withdrawal of the IPKF, there would appear to be no difference of opinion at all among the national parties, all of whom are in support of the President's request to India for a withdrawal of the Indian troops. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL) and the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) have already issued statements welcoming this step since they had always been opposed to the presence of any foreign troops in the country. The LSSP has pointed out that the IPKF came here at the Government's request specifically charged with two main tasks: "to enable the disarming of northern terrorists as well as the successful completion of the devolution of power through the provincial councils. It rests with the Government to have these objectives realised as soon as possible and send the IPKF away".

The fact of the matter is that intervention on the part of India in her own interest was promoted by the divisive racist politics pursued by our major capitalist parties of the UNP and SLFP and their hangers on, which has resulted in so much destruction of life and property in our own country and has also had its impact on the people of India especially in the South with the arrival there of Sri Lankan refugees. We have in these columns over the years, repeatedly warned of the disastrous consequences that could result from the cynical games that were being played by our petty racist and capitalist politicians and how dangerously close we were to becoming "a client state of our great neighbour" India. It is therefore certainly time that we learnt to put our own house in order and desisted from playing around with communal passions and stoking racist fires, mindful also of the geo-politics of our region and the need to maintain friendly relations with the major South Asian power which is India, in the interests of our own sovereignty and national integrity.

A negotiated settlement accepted by all Tamil militant groups will not only bring peace to the North-East but influence the South as well.

Despite assertions and misgivings to the contrary, reliable information would seem to indi-

cate that India herself would like an end to the role of the IPKF in Sri Lanka sooner than later. Already India has pulled out several of its battalions comprising several thousand troops and Rajiv Gandhi has already given expression to this view in the Indian Parliament. He has also a political reason for doing so before the IPKF's presence in our land with its continuing high casualty rate becomes a major political issue in India. (There is already considerable criticism in the Indian press and among Indian opposition parties on the issue). India has spent over 12 billion Indian rupees (US\$ 800 million) on maintaining the IPKF and the current rate of spending would appear to be Rs. 20 million a day. The total casualty figure (as at April 25) is in the region of 3950—857 killed and 3093 injured. Rajiv Gandhi has to face a general election within the next 12 to 15 months and he should therefore be as keen to have the IPKF return to India well before that date, as President Premadasa is to have them out of the island before he hosts the SAARC Summit in Sri Lanka this year. The fact that the fourth largest army in the world has been unable ultimately to subjugate a Sri Lankan guerilla group which however it had dislodged from its entrenched position in the North and driven into the Vanni jungles, should be no reason for the continued presence here of the IPKF given the protracted nature of guerilla warfare and the fact that since October 1987 the Indian army has not been single minded in capturing the LTTE leadership for reasons best known to India. In fact the present LTTE-Sri Lankan Government negotiations would itself be sufficient reason for an IPKF withdrawal with the responsibility now being cast on the Sri Lankan Government to help maintain security in the North-East Province. This process can surely be helped if the internecine armed conflicts especially between the EPRLF and LTTE come to an end and Tamil militant groups themselves move towards discussions that will bring to an end their fratricidal strife and blood-letting.

Effects on the South

In fact a consensus arrived through such discussions and a negotiated settlement with the Government (which has already commenced talks with the LTTE) can itself not only result in settled conditions after a IPKF withdrawal, but will undoubtedly have an effect also on the presently troubled South and the position of the JVP as well. For if the LTTE agrees to enter the mainstream of politics and peace returns to the North-East through a negotiated settlement acceptable to the Tamil militant groups, the JVP will not be able for long to enjoy the position it does today, even if it seeks to denounce such a North-East settlement as a "sell-out" by the Government. Boycotting of elections and terror will then be shown up as meaningless exercises in the context of a revival of the democratic process and the exercise

of democratic rights by the people. Ironically, although the youthful militants of both the LTTE and JVP come from a similar social base and share a common hostility to the IPKF, they are incapable of reaching a common political perspective by reason of chauvinist thinking (Tamil and Sinhala respectively) that dominates their actions.

Already the Government has sought to improve its image by settling at long last the issue of the 1980 strikers, by promoting Janasaviya and by granting certain demands of the university students and staff with the result that there is strong pressure among these students to resume their campus studies of which they have been deprived for a period of well over 2 years. A Special Committee is to investigate arrests, deaths and disappearances of students. The present heightened tension and mounting campaign against all things Indian may nonetheless have its effect for a time but it is difficult to see how it could be sustained for any length of time, given these changes and an improvement of the position in the North and East with the withdrawal of the IPKF. This may appear to be

an unduly optimistic view to hold in the present depressing political climate, but it is not incapable of fulfilment if the available opportunities are seized by the political actors involved. The alternative could be further chaos and bloodshed that would be too horrible to contemplate.

Meanwhile as reported in our last issue, the senseless and wasteful killings go on, terror being met with counter-terror. Among those murdered in the latter part of May was Government Printing Press trade union leader P. D. Wimalasena who was also the General Secretary of the Government Workers Trade Union Federation, a man popular in both his workplace and locality as was amply evident from the large crowds that came to pay their respects at his funeral. Unfortunately such killings are bound to continue until a sufficiently strong public opinion and mass pressure can arise which will cry halt to the sickening terror and carnage presently engaged in by armed bands whether of youthful militants or of the State and its allied bodies.

7 June 1989

(FOR LATER DEVELOPMENTS - SEE MIDDLE PAGES)

Relief for the July 1980 Strikers

On May 8 the Cabinet of Ministers at a special meeting decided to grant relief to those strikers who have remained victimised after the strike of public servants of July 1980.

These strikers were faced with a lock-out when Government used emergency powers to break the strike and deemed all strikers to have vacated their posts.

When the Government appeared to be unrelenting in this attitude to the strikers, the Christian Workers Fellowship (CWF) held an open air Workers Mass on 8th September, 1980, with the special intention of "Justice to the strikers and an end to the lock-out!" which was presided over by the late Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe. The Bishop's memorable sermon on that occasion together with two articles written by him on the strike was brought out by the CWF in a pamphlet entitled "The Truth about the Strike" and sold by the strikers in support of strike funds. This action of the CWF had the desired impact and several religious and social organizations began to express their concern over the plight of the strikers. As a result of the agitation on this issue, the Government reinstated many workers, but there still remained several thousands who were deprived of their employment until now. These workers had organized themselves and have had regular meetings

to keep alive the issue of their unjust dismissal with the support of several workers organizations including the CWF.

In terms of the new Cabinet decision all public sector employees including local government and corporation employees who were deemed to have vacated their posts by reason of their having struck work and were not reinstated, retired or given other relief to date, will be deemed now to have remained in employment without a break until the date of this Cabinet decision, i.e. May 8, 1989, and given retirement benefits as from that date. The pensions and other retirement benefits of these workers will be computed on the hypothetical basis that all increments due have been paid and all salary increases since July 1980 have accrued in their favour up to the date of the Cabinet decision. Spouses and dependants of those who have died will also benefit under this decision and all disabilities imposed on those reinstated since July 1980 will be withdrawn. The dismissed workers could also be re-employed depending on their years of service and other factors.

Although it has taken nine long years for these victimised workers to have been given this relief, we are gratified that the continuous campaign for justice carried on by them has at last borne results, even if it has not resulted in the complete reinstatement of the dismissed workers.



Courtesy:- Sunday Times June 4, 1989

Poson Thoughts

Excerpts from President Premadasa's June 1st Speech:

"Today is the first day of the month of June or the month of Poson. Today is a very important day for all of us who are Sri Lankans. It was in the month of Poson that Sri Lankans became a civilized nation. We were able to learn and practise the Buddha Dhamma because of Arahant Mahinda who arrived in Sri Lanka with the concurrence of King Dharmasoka. On the Poson Day we not only came to know about Buddhism but we also gave up weapons we had in our hands. King Devanampiyatissa on his way to the jungle for hunting deer, met Arahant Mahinda, listened to his sermon and came to know the noble doctrine of Lord Buddha after which the King dedicated himself to the principles of Avihimsa (non-violence) giving up Himsa (violence) on a Poya Day.

"The Buddha Dhamma teaches us that we cannot achieve peace by resorting to arms.

"Lord Buddha has taught us to achieve peace not through arms but by understanding that comes through kindness, compassion, forbearance, consultation and compromise.

"When we ourselves do not have the strength to solve our problems, when we harm ourselves by injuring and killing each other with arms, outside forces could easily override us. We are a nation which had been under colonial rule for four hundred and fifty years. We were able to regain independence shedding colonial rule because all sections of the people were united, irrespective of race and religion.

"If we divide ourselves, fight among ourselves, armed with weapons, and kill our people, our freedom will disappear and we will again become a subject nation. We must remember this.

"These days many people ask me when the Indian Peace Keeping Force will leave our country. We must reflect on the reasons that made the Indian Peace Keeping Force to come here. One reason was that we took up arms to fight among ourselves to solve our problems. I like to state at this moment that the Indian Peace Keeping Force has started moving out. This commenced when I became the President.

"What made the Indian Peace Keeping Force to come to this land? Every one of us should ask this question ourselves. What made our soldiers and members of the public to pay with their lives? It is our own conscience only that can answer this question. We did not think of solving our internal problems peacefully and with mutual understanding. Failure to do so on our part has brought us to this plight.

"Therefore, we should ask ourselves whether we should allow ethnic, racial and parochial conflicts to continue further paving the path for external forces to intervene in the sovereignty of our motherland. Everyone of us should pay our attention to this aspect of the problem.

"Why can't we come to a settlement through mutual discussions and negotiations? On a day like today it is quite appropriate to make such a firm resolution. Today marks the dawn of Poson month. It is the month in which this country received the noble gift of the doctrine of non-violence. On this great day we are gathered here to participate in this supreme religious ceremony.

"We are bringing disrepute to ourselves and our independence if we continue to keep a foreign army within our country because of conflicts among ourselves. It will also be an act of treachery perpetrated on our Country.

"Therefore, I intend, as I stated earlier, to expedite the withdrawal of the IPKF. I hope to make such a request soon to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and to the Indian Government. The Indian Government and the Indian Prime Minister are awaiting a request from me and the Government to carry out such a troop withdrawal. We are thankful to the Indian Government for starting the withdrawal of the IPKF troops even before we had requested them to do so. What I would be requesting now would be to expedite the withdrawal of the IPKF.

"The end of July 1989 will mark two years since the IPKF came to Sri Lanka. Therefore, I will request the Indian Government to try as far as possible to complete the withdrawal of the entirety of the IPKF troops by the end of July. I would like to see the last of the IPKF troops leave Sri Lanka by the end of July. Today there are about 45,000 IPKF troops in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is not possible to withdraw them in a day or two.

"They have to leave by ship. Therefore, I believe that if the troops withdrawal is expedited it would be possible to complete the withdrawal by the end of July. We will never forget the assistance and help given by the Indian Government to Sri Lanka. Even the Buddha Dhamma was a gift from India. It was Emperor Dharmasoka who took steps to establish Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

"While it was a great help to have sent the Peace Keeping Force to this country at the request of our former President, recalling the Peace Keeping Force back to India will also help us greatly at this moment. India's action to call back the Peace Force during the next two months will be considered as a favour. I have no doubt that India will do so. I hope to make a friendly request to that effect shortly.

"There is another reason as to why the Peace Keeping Force should be taken out of this country. Last year's

SAARC Conference — was scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka. However, as you are already aware it could not be held here owing to the uncertainties that prevailed in this country at the time. Hence the conference was held in Pakistan.

"This year's conference has to be held in Sri Lanka. It is our duty to do so and we have assumed this responsibility and we must fulfil it.

"However, how can Sri Lanka host such a Summit with self-respect when a foreign army is operating in the country? This time it is also not possible to do away with it. We must hold this conference as an independent and sovereign country.

"It is also because of this reason that I thought that it is extremely essential that the entirety of the IPKF be withdrawn by the end of the July. We as an independent country must have the self-confidence to play our role as equal partners and work unitedly with other brother nations. You will admit that it is difficult for us to host and participate in such a Summit conference while keeping a foreign army in our country.

"At a time when we are working to send back the IPKF troops to India I would appeal to all not to say anything or act in a manner which will obstruct this move. Everyone who wishes to safeguard the sovereignty of the country should assist to make this programme a success by desisting from violence and provocative action.

"You will realise the type of confusion that will prevail if we escalate violence and disturbances. I am confident that everyone who honestly wishes to see that the IPKF troops are withdrawn will see to it that they do not indulge in violence or provocative actions.

"I would appeal to all to make a firm resolution to act with patience and desist from violence during these two months. Let us be determined to send back the IPKF troops, maintain our self-respect and host the forthcoming SAARC Summit with self-respect and dignity as a free and sovereign state."

Fears and Doubts Dispelled

"The fears and doubts that the Indian Army will never leave Sri Lanka were in the minds of many people from the very beginning. We all must be happy that the opportunity has arisen to dispel such fears and doubts.

"People of our country worked with great dedication to bring about this situation. Many parties and groups and religious sections assisted greatly.

"The people including our media and the media of India and other countries gave us great encouragement. I offer them all gratitude of the country, the people and myself.

"Let us resolve by ourselves amicably the problems confronting different sections of our people. Let us not forget that otherwise we will be subjugated by outside forces.

"With the resolution of the problem of the Indian Peace Keeping Force, we should endeavour to promote a massive peace effort to achieve unity, discipline and prosperity amongst all communities that live in our motherland.

"My government and myself are determined to do our utmost to achieve this objective.

"The protest staged against the continuance of the IPKF in our country can now cease. By resorting to strikes and disruptive activities based on such protests we are causing damage and harm to ourselves.

"It is our own people who get killed. It is our own people who suffer as a result. It is our country's economy that suffers. This will cause the cost of living to go-up further. Trade and industry will come to a halt and sources of income will be closed.

"Instead of increasing jobs the available jobs too will be lost. I would therefore kindly appeal to every one of you to work from now on to bring the country and the society back to normalcy and to restore peace and order.

"May the blessings of the Triple Gem be with you all."

—From President Premadasa's Speech to the Nation on 27 July (Excerpt)

The following reflection by an University don in Jaffna should be of Considerable interest to Our readers at this time

The Indian Conundrum

Rajan Hoole

*"The wrong is mix'd. In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:
We are betray'd by what is false within."*

Meredith - From Modern Love

The Indian presence in Ceylon is a subject fraught with contrary emotions. The events of the past two years have eroded much of the meeting ground it once had. In the South, where anti-Indian sentiment accompanied by a depiction of India as the traditional enemy had loomed large in the development of modern Sinhalese nationalism, patriotic cries against the foreign army on 'our soil' were gaining ground. In the face of a sudden realisation that the Tamil problem had been grossly and violently mishandled, the humiliating necessity of the Indian presence was accepted mutely enough two years ago. But with the spur provided by the anti-Indian line of the JVP and the misconduct of the embattled Indian army, there arose for Sinhalese nationalism the feasibility of finding a common anti-Indian cause with Tamil nationalism, without substantively addressing the unresolved Tamil problem.

For the Tamils, feelings of betrayal and of being let down by the IPKF's conduct were accompanied by anxious foreboding about what might take the IPKF's place, should it go.

In India, where alarm over Indian army casualties had overshadowed the suffering inflicted on Tamil civilians, there was anger and recrimination, for alleged ingratitude on the part of Tamils and for their 'treacherous politics' that had mired the IPKF in an unfavourable role.

Thus do all parties find themselves trapped in a drama, playing roles they hardly envisaged, often against their better judgement. There appears to be some institutional fixity, where each move renders the tangle more inextricable.

In trying to understand how this came about, at least one purpose is served: Each one can question the values and assumptions that have led to this impasse—particularly those that have gilded his own side.

A striking feature of this whole drama is what one may call ambivalence. This ambivalence can be seen not merely in individuals, but also in institutions. Its manifestation as 'schism in the soul' has

been the subject of much agonising as well as religious endeavour. Even in day to day life, a thin line separates benevolence from vindictiveness. The benevolent village squire may resort to uncharacteristic brutality when the religious and institutional roots of his social dominance are questioned. The same Ceylon Police which checked crime in Tamil areas and taught school children road safety, unleashed its repressive potential when the assumptions of a racist state were challenged. Throughout this tragedy, despite courage and a willingness to sacrifice, wrong assumptions have enabled wrong decisions to be taken very casually, thinking that unfavourable consequences could be managed. When the latter get out of control, the ambivalence reveals itself. Benignity disappears, to be replaced by intolerance and evil.

Talk of India becoming the liberator of Tamils gained momentum with the birth of Bangladesh in 1971. About this time an ambivalence in the politics of the TULF which had been avowedly Gandhian began to reveal itself. It acquired violent undertones. From political platforms its rivals were branded as traitors. One such speech made by Kasianathan, adding that such persons were worthy of hideous punishment, was quoted editorially in a paper owned by the TULF leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam—the *Suthanthiran*. Whenever the TULF called for a 'hartal' (stoppage), the threat was implicit. It was a logical step in such a development that the pro-government Tamil politician Alfred Duraiyappah should be assassinated by the incipient Tamil militancy, rather than be challenged politically. The TULF remained silent. By the late 80's daily internecine killings had become routine, and revenge killings had spread to persons not directly concerned.

The ambivalence of the TULF's direction in the early 70's was not lost on the Sinhalese. D.B. Ellapola, a prominent Kandyan Sinhalese and former public servant, told TULF leaders at a seminar in Jaffna, "You talk non-violence. But you are doing violence to the minds of the Sinhalese." Some Sinhalese did of course try to go beyond the TULF and unders-

tand the root of the problem. But to many Sinhalese steeped in the chauvinism of mainstream politics and had regarded Tamils and their aspirations with contempt, the instinctive reaction was to advocate indiscriminate violence against Tamils. They had to be taught that they were no more than barely tolerated guests. The result was the pogroms against Tamils of 1977, 1981 and 1983. Little did they understand the eventual cost to the Sinhalese themselves.

India's Entry

India's entry into this island's affairs has come to be depicted as a grand conspiracy by ideological factions in the North as well as in the South. Evidence for such a conspiracy is lacking from any reading of events surrounding the anti-Tamil violence of July 1983. There is mostly evidence of benevolence. An Indian military intervention at that time would have been greeted with relief by the Tamils, and at the same time acceptable to world opinion. It has been maintained that the only thing that prevented this was President Jayawardene's veiled threat that in the event of such an intervention, the government would be unable to protect the Tamils. Minister Gamini Dissanayake was even more explicit. He said publicly at a meeting of the trade union LJEWU that should India intervene, the Tamils will be dead within 24 hours. Little was done to conceal the complicity of the government and an influential section of the cabinet in the violence against a minority.

“A desire on India's part to intervene in Sri Lanka was created by Sri Lanka's abandonment of neutrality and a pursuit of militarisation with western help. The U. S. A. played a major, if covert Role”

There is also little doubt that India's attempts at hammering out a political solution through its special envoy Mr. G. Parthasarathy were genuine. Nor was any attempt made at this time to compromise the island's sovereignty. In addition, open generosity was shown towards Tamil refugees fleeing to India. Having agreed to resolve the matter, the Sri Lankan government placed the final stamp on its duplicity by creating a well funded Ministry for National Security under Lalith Athulathmudali. It would be more true to say on the basis of public evidence that a desire on India's part to intervene in Sri Lanka was created by Sri Lanka's abandonment of neutrality

and a pursuit of militarisation with Western help. The USA played a major, if covert, role. The Tamil problem, which was already on India's hands, became a means. With India pouring in resources, there was massive recruitment into the already fractured Tamil militant movement. It is from here on that the ambivalence on India's part began to reveal itself. A political decision was certainly taken to help the Tamils and to use leverage on the Sri Lankan state to make certain concessions to Indian interests.

Those who advise and then implement policies are, as in all corridors of power in national states, men with scholarly attainments who are bound to become cynical with time. Their career advancement has little to do with morals, but much more in proving to their bosses that they could carry out their bidding with success. To this end they are bound to regard human beings, their aspirations, and even their ambivalence, as tools. They have to be everything to everyone that is useful. Their goals had to be achieved by working through a conglomeration of disparate forces whose own motivations and priorities may have had little in common with the ends intended.

There were the Tamil expatriates who flocked to Madras and Delhi, chatting up militant leaders, politicians, RAW officials and even Indira Gandhi. They were well to do professionals who longed for a national home, were angry and largely felt that the Sinhalese and their government should be taught a lesson. Many of them felt that violence was bad, but They nor their children would dabble directly in the dirty work that was afoot.

Besides politicians who took an interest in the matter for different reasons, there were erudite men with undoubted humanitarian concern and immense stature such as Justice Krishna Iyer. Their voice would lend moral weight to the policy from the point of giving Tamils their rights. The nuts and bolts of the policy would hardly have been their concern and would most likely have shocked them.

The latter were made of the Indian security establishment with its labyrinthine world and the Tamil militant groups. Many key militant leaders came from backgrounds where they were possessed of immense clan as well as personal pride. Any denigration of these was unlikely to be forgiven or forgotten. Satisfaction was likely to be sought however much it cost others, as well as themselves in the long run. They were unlikely to take kindly to being junior partners – the 'boys'. The explosive potential here was largely unappreciated.

The sufferings of the Tamil people in the North and East came to serve well, as propaganda material. The Sri Lankan state was perhaps the most predictable actor in the whole scheme.

In trying to mould all these elements into a single policy framework, the most ingenious forecasts

could easily go awry – hence the need for alternative options. It would be hardly surprising if things began to fall apart. In the ensuing loss of nerve, the crudity of remedies tried would be likely to muddy the water even further. When this happened it would lay bare the institutional weakness of Indian politics and its state apparatus, its complacency and its false values. The policy had to contend with a large number of disappointed expectations, many of them with tragic results.

To many young and sensitive militant recruits, coming with ideals of freedom, the training and brutalisation to which they were subject in India, came as a cultural and moral trauma. A group of young men who dropped out from the PLOTE, published their experiences in 'A New Kind of World'. Drop outs from militant groups spoke of torture and even murder of those who were reluctant to conform. Many even received training in methods of torture—certainly not to torture Sri Lankan soldiers. The culture of a professional army came as a shock to them. It was a world far removed from the Krishna Iyers and the Tamil elite in general. Those who dropped out lived hunted lives with their minds scarred. The different militant factions were encouraged in their grand expectations as their enmities grew. In the resulting disillusionment and fratricide, the drop out rate became high and recruits of university and high school age virtually dried up.

If the Indian agency RAW had been behind instigating the LTTE to carry out the Anuradhapura massacre of 143 Sinhalese civilians on 14th May 1985 as averred in the *Time* of 3rd April 1989, it had not miscalculated the mood amongst the Tamil elite. It is also notable that a few days earlier the Sri Lankan army had massacred 70 civilians in Valvettithurai, which had produced several top ranking LTTE leaders. Up to that time the LTTE had been sensitive on the issue of killing Sinhalese civilians and had avoided purely revenge killings.

The October 1987 Watershed

The Indo-Lanka Accord was signed shortly after the Sri Lankan army's capture of Vadamaratchi and the arrival of Indian troops was almost universally popular. Indian policy makers had evidently been too complacent about seeds of trouble already sown. The LTTE took a dim view of its rival militant groups, now being deployed under Indian protection. In addition, the treatment the LTTE leader received in Delhi just before the signing of the Accord was not easily to be forgotten. Matters came to a head when 12 LTTE men detained by the Sri Lankan forces committed suicide on 5th October 1987 just before being flown to Colombo. They had earlier been visited by the LTTE's deputy leader and its political chief. Immediately afterwards a large number of unsuspecting Sinhalese were killed. The episode was reflective of a strong and even excessive sense of offended dignity. By the 10th October the IPKF

(Indian army) and the LTTE were embattled. How the IPKF handled this, set the tone for its deteriorating relations with the civilian population. India had been unprepared for the sequel. Its policy makers and military officials would privately refer to each other in strongly unflattering terms. Some insight into the performance of the Indian army can be gained by taking a look at the person of Krishnasawamy Sunderji, the army's then Chief of Staff, widely acclaimed a genius. In an assessment of Sunderji's career by Inderjit Badhwar and Dilip Bobb in the *India Today* of May, 15, 1988, it turns out that he was obsessed with technological modernisation of the army, new concepts, a more aggressive defence posture in respect of Pakistan and China, together with the charisma, intelligence and showmanship to sell himself and his ideas to those who counted. His 'highly advanced strategic thinking' came across in phrases such as "the higher direction of war", "penetrating capacity" and "aiming ahead". His Operation Brass Tacks in late 1986 was described as a piece of brinkmanship which could have led to war with Pakistan.

“Many young and sensitive militant recruits coming with ideals of freedom, the training and brutalisation to which they were subject in India, came as a cultural and moral trauma... The different militant factions were encouraged in their grand expectations...”

Asked in an interview, whether Pakistan had real cause for concern, Sunderji replied by posing the question why should India seek a confrontation now at a time of relative military parity, while it did not exploit the solid ground and air superiority India had over Pakistan between 1972 and 1979. His reply to the next question why this was not exploited is revealing: "Something deep down bothers me. We seem to equate weakness with virtue and immorality with strength. We went to swallow everything non violently. We seem to be convinced that it is immoral to be strong and virtuous to be weak."

Sunderji's eminence had to do with more than himself. He captured the mood of the younger generation of India's elite, and what he promised was attractive to them.

While preoccupied with grand concepts and schemes, the Indian army's performance in challenges on a smaller scale requiring both political alertness and an attention to detail, were not encouraging. The report quoted refers to Operation Blue Star against Sikh militants besieged in the Golden Temple, Amritsar, in mid 1984 and Operation Pawan against Tamil Tigers, Jaffna, October 1987. The report says of the former: "Militarily and politically, Blue Star was badly handled and carried Sunderji's unmistakable stamp: the excessive use of heavy armour, little concern for logistical detail and intelligence and the element of overconfidence (he had told Mrs. Gandhi that the operation would be completed in a day)". Operation Pawan is referred to in a similar vein: "..... gave Sunderji an opportunity to test out many of his concepts on the ground - the special forces, para-commandos and the air-assault division - the original estimates that it would be a quick, surgical operation went hopelessly awry."

"The Indian elite has a vision of India, modern, strong and wielding great influence. But they are not clear on the Principles underpinning such a vision and tend to be irritated by events such as in Punjab and Ceylon which question their assumptions."

The result for the Indian army in Ceylon was a benumbing loss of direction as its self image of confidence and benevolence waned. In time it acquired a posture of contempt and often of vindictiveness towards the civilian population. Beside reprisal killings and beatings it would become entangled in selective assassinations. In the name of restoring a democratic process it would indulge in subterfuge, beginning with media manipulation. With the help of its allies and its adversary, it would reduce the general population to a point of utter torpor where even school principals and leading members of the community could only watch silently as school boys are killed, or are dragooned or cajoled away to carry arms for one side or the other and as ordinary persons become victims of both sides. The grand

army of Sunderji's conception and the pride of India was being reduced to a role that every sensible Indian would be ashamed of.

It is not that there is no self-criticism or re-evaluation within the Indian system. The report quoted above refers to much criticism of Sunderji within the military establishment. Journalism is relatively free and there is much spirited reporting of the mishandling of the Sikh issue in the Punjab. Punjab - A long winter, *Frontline*, March-17, 1989, refers to police atrocities in Batala, and in particular to the beating up of the entire male population of Dabanwal village on 22.12.88. But there is of course a general indifference to the use of similar methods in Ceylon.

For those who have heard the IPKF and the Indian establishment browbeat the Tamil civilian population and in particular its leading sections for their supineness, the strictures against the Akali leadership in the same *Frontline* feature by I. K. Gujral have a familiar ring: "It is a cruel irony that Akali leaders of all hues have to seek official protection even while criticising the Government's ineptness. But they refuse to stand up and say from the ramparts of the gurdwaras that the terrorists are indeed doing immense harm to the faith. Turning a deaf ear to reality, they continue to talk of agitations and morchas when their power base has been unmistakably eroded. Such glib threats and hollow slogans only breed alienation and intensify divisiveness". This seems to reflect the dominant view.

The Indian elite has a vision of India, modern, strong and wielding great influence. But they are not clear on the principles underpinning such a vision and tend to be irritated by events such as in Punjab and Ceylon which question their assumptions. The result is to tolerate the use of blunt force without attention to political commitments and other pledges. The consequences are ugly and destabilising for India itself. The present state of the Akali leadership little different from that of the Tamils. Criticism within India touches mainly on technicalities and little is said on principles or direction. One may disagree with Sunderji, but it is imperative to maintain that he is a genius. Ceylon is a bad dream, the truth about which the less they knew the better.

Dublin Easter 1916

Events which have touched us in which, try as we may, we had become emotionally involved tend to blur our vision. All parties to our own conflict have something to gain in looking at the abortive Irish rebellion of 1916. At that time Redmond's Irish Parliamentary party wanting Home Rule within the British Empire was firmly in the saddle and there was little enthusiasm for the Republican cause. The Republican leadership concluded that only something so sensational as a blood sacrifice could gain public sympathy for their cause. Duly, a small band of rebels occupied the Dublin post office on Easter

“A Solution to the problems of the South together with the question of accommodating the aspirations of the minorities must be found by the people of the South independently of the Indian presence.”

Monday, 24th April 1916, and proclaimed their republic. Britain, then in the middle of the First World War, which was to cost millions of lives, felt that any unrest within its Imperial domain ought to be put down with the utmost severity, as were the Sinhala-Muslim riots in Ceylon the year before. Seeing the event through the framework of an Imperial mind, costly cavalry charges were launched against the well entrenched defenders in the post office, resulting in mangled men and horses. In four days the rebellion was over. It was then that someone realised that had calm reflection prevailed, the British forces could have ended the matter painlessly by shutting off the water supply to the post office and sitting it out.

The republican leaders who had surrendered now feared that if they were simply let off, the matter may end in confusion as it had begun. Britain obliged by executing 14 of the leaders, including Patrick Pearse and Tom Clarke by firing squad twelve days late. This act turned the tide of public opinion despite the fact that thousands of Irishmen died in Europe in the cause of Empire. The bloody history of the land renowned for its charming folk songs and Leprachauns since then is well known.

W. B. Yeats was a poet who had little sympathy for the Republican cause. Some of the leaders of the uprising whom he had known had struck him as little more than ordinary louts. As time went by he saw then in a different light as expressed in his poem 'Easter 1916', written in September that year:

I write it out in a verse,
Mac Donagh and Mac Bride,
And Connolly and Pearse,
Now and in time to be
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

Green was of course the republican colour. The expression 'terrible beauty' describes enigmatically the appeal of causes such as those represented by Bhindrawale in Punjab and the Liberation Tigers here, backed up by a cult of martyrdom. Wherever a people is out adrift with their leaders and their

values discredited, this terrible beauty ensnares them to their destruction; as the sirens of Greek mythology did sea men of old, on treacherous unseen rocks.

The South

Talking to persons in the South, even to those in academic circles, one soon discovers that sensitivity to the collective responsibility they share in the Sri Lankan state's mishandling of the Tamil problem, and the need to find urgent remedies, does not run deep. There is rather a tendency to treat the Indian presence as an isolated manifestation in which they could find common cause with Tamil opinion. Beyond that there is little seriousness even about making provincial councils work—regarding them as a prelude to separation. To most of them it goes without saying that when the Indian forces leave, the Sri Lankan forces will be redeployed. Forced to think about it, the generality of the Tamils will shrink at the thought of having back the Sri Lankan forces whose performance in the South is itself a subject of notoriety. For the Eastern Tamils, the prospect is unthinkable — given their former experience and the latent racism of the Sri Lankan forces.

To make the Indian presence an issue and create anarchy in the South could only perpetuate the presence. This campaign of anarchy has made it plain that the prejudices of the destructive aspect of Sinhala nationalism are very much alive and are not merely centred around the JVP. A solution to the problems of the South together with the question of accommodating the aspirations of the minorities must be found by the people of the South independently of the Indian presence. If not the tragedy and turmoil that will accompany the birth of a separate Tamil state may become expedient in comparison with the current state of limbo characterised by closed schools and universities, strikes and undirected violence all round.

Then the kindest prospect that will face the South may be the emergence of a military strong man taking after Mustafa Kemal of post First World War Turkey. With its defeat in 1918, Turkey was shorn of its empire and large chunks of territory inhabited by its mainly Christian minorities. Anarchy followed the disillusionment of Turks brought up on visions of past grandeur. Mustafa Kemal who emerged as leader out of this turmoil realised early that if a new Turkey looking to the future is to be built on the ruins of the old, the emerging generation, then in schools, must be prevented from looking back. Amongst his early acts, besides abolishing titles, was to romanise the Turkish script. The young were now insulated from the tomes in the libraries written in the classical script, that spoke of the glorious past.

25th June 1989





Minister S. Thondaman

Minister Thondaman on the IPKF With- drawal and the Indian Boycott

Of especial interest are the views of Minister S. Thondaman, Leader of the Ceylon Workers Congress which is a partner in the Government and representative of the up-country Tamils of recent Indian origin, on the matter of the IPKF Pull-out and the Boycott

Q. Do you support the President's call for the total withdrawal of the IPKF?

A. That is a matter to be decided by the governments of India and Sri Lanka. Both the governments must have discussions and find out a way of how this can be done. There is no doubt that Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi wants the IPKF to be withdrawn. President Premadasa too wants this done very soon. The question is how best can it be done.

You must remember that there are over forty thousand Indian troops in the North and East. Is it practical for all these troops to be withdrawn in two months? There could be transport problems and other issues involved. What would be the position of the EPRLF once the IPKF withdraws? Their fear is that without Indian protection they may not survive more than a week.

The LTTE has already attacked the PLOT in the North. In the East they have attacked the EPRLF. Won't the groups under Indian patronage be massacred by the LTTE once the IPKF leaves? These are questions that have to be sorted out. That is why I say that it is best for both governments to enter into consultations on the phased withdrawal of the IPKF.

Q. The LTTE has returned for the second round of talks with the Sri Lankan government. President Premadasa is of the view that problems among communities in the same country should be resolved internally through negotiations. Do you agree?

A. There is nothing wrong with the government talking to the LTTE. The Tigers are also our countrymen. I have always believed that problems between communities should be resolved through negotiations. If at the All Party Conference the Sinhala Parties had agreed to let President Jayawardena implement Annexure C much of the subsequent violence could have been averted.

With regard to the devolution of power the Annexure C envisaged the setting up of Regional Councils within a province. The powers to be given were not even as half as much as that given to the present Provincial Councils. However after July 1983 it became necessary to involve India also in the negotiating process.

The violent attacks on the Tamils resulted in thousands of them seeking refuge in Tamil Nadu. The TULF refused to talk to the Sri Lankan government except through Indian mediation. That is why President Jayawardena had to get Parthasarathy down and also go to New Delhi. With the signing of the Indo-Lanka peace accord and the arrival of the IPKF both governments have accepted the Indian role in Sri Lanka.

We must regard the government's talks with the Tigers in this context. Would they have come to the negotiating table if not for the blows they received from the IPKF? Are the Tigers trustworthy? Once the IPKF withdraws what is there to prevent the LTTE from renewing the struggle for Eelam through armed violence?

Q. The JVP has called on all Sri Lankans to boycott Indian goods. In a statement they have warned that those engaging in trade with India would be dealt with. What do you think of the idea of boycotting things Indian in order to get the IPKF out? Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian patriots adopted such tactics against the British?

A. Are the Sri Lankans prepared to forego Masoor Dhal and Bombay Onions? What are we going to do with all the Bajaj scooters and trishaws around? Are we to burn all the Tata buses belonging to the CTB? Can all the women forego the Indian saree and switch to Kandyan?

Buddhism came from India. Are we to send Buddhism and the Pali language back to India? Don't forget that Gautama Buddha was an Indian. So was Arahah Mahinda. Are the Tamils going to stop eating Indian foods like Thosai and Chapati? Can the Sinhalese give up hoppers which came from Kerala? Isn't this boycott call absurd?

The Quit India call made by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress to the British was different. They did not force the Indian population into giving up British goods. It was a voluntary effort. British citizens were not attacked. Indians who traded with the British were not threatened with death.

I am not certain whether it was the JVP that issued the boycott call. Whoever did it is playing with fire. If Indian citizens are attacked the IPKF will surely come to Colombo. The Indians will be forced to do what the Americans did in Grenada. These are the serious consequences that can result if Indian citizens are attacked here.

Courtesy : The Island, 18 June 1989.



Facing up to the present Violence

Statement of the Civil Rights Movement

"Over 2 000 killings in four months", reports the press, of which the police have identified 605 as politically motivated. The true figure may indeed be much higher. Newspaper reports also indicate that in the course of such killings a number of children have lost their lives. Recent killings include the murder of Sinhala villagers ascribed of Tamil militant groups, the assassination of Government officials, political opponents and others ascribed to "Southern subversives, and slayings such as evidenced by the seventeen dead bodies found at Eppawela, Anuradhapura (some of whom had reportedly been in police custody shortly before) ascribed to the "Black Cats" and popularly believed to be perpetrated or condoned by agents of the State. The dead include Stanley Wijesundera, a former Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo shot dead in his office, M. Panchalingam, Government Agent of Jaffna, gunned down in his brother's home in Jaffna, J. M. D. Bandara, a leading lawyer killed in Embilipitiya, and A. Panchalingam, President of the Citizen's committee of Kilinochchi. These are just a few of the names that reached the newspaper headlines. The deaths by violence at the hands of their fellow human beings include countless others, unnamed and unknown except among their own families and friends, in towns and villages throughout Sri Lanka. Reports of arbitrary arrests by the security forces and abductions and gruesome killings ascribed to various armed groups and to agents of the State, continued to appear in the press and to be received by human rights organisations.

"A few days ago I saw 28 dead bodies by the wayside from Matara to Mulatiyana. I saw 30-40 dogs quarrelling over dead bodies, about two days old".... Though the Government has declared that the Emergency was lifted, the number of incidents in which people are disturbed in their sleep and taken away has increased after the Presidential Election. Eye-witnesses have told me

that they saw dogs, monitors devouring charred bodies of persons who have been killed by setting fire to tyres hung around their necks"... "Students, youth and parents live in fear throughout Harispattu"... "..... was taken away by Security Forces while he was having tea in kiosk. Up to date there is no information about him"... "Parents, wives, brothers, and sisters of suspects who could not be arrested were being kept hostage. The houses of some suspects have been burnt"... "One person was shot dead and his body was tied to a lamp post at Sandaramala junction, Baddegama. When the deceased persons relatives took the body home an armed group had attacked and burnt his home..."

We have quoted from just some of the reports received by our organisation. The WEEK END of 7 May 1989 carries two particularly telling photographs of dead bodies on public display at Bala-pitiya, with villagers passing by, no longer perturbed. These reports indicate not just the fact of killings taking place, but a totally new level of barbarism, as well as attempts by the perpetrators to terrorise others by making a horrifying public spectacle of their victims.

The country continues to be engulfed in violence. The Presidential Elections of December 1988 and the Parliamentary General Election of February 1989 have not brought the return to normalcy that many had hoped for. Arms are carried by increasing numbers and groups of persons, some officially sanctioned, some not. There is widespread disruption of normal life; in many areas the usual services provided by the State such as transport, postal services, hospitals are severely affected.

Dealing with Problems of Law and Order

There is no doubt that the government is faced with the most serious law and order problems in the history of our country. It is the responsibility of the government to protect not only its own officers properly and installations, but also the opposition politicians and the many ordinary citizens now threatened by the violence of extremist forces. It is equally the responsibility of the government, if it is to claim the moral authority to act according to certain basic standards itself, and not allow its forces to indulge in acts of lawlessness and brutality.

Civil Rights Movement (CRM) recognises that this is by no means an easy task; it has no doubt that at the same time this grave and arduous responsibility that lies on the government should not be shirked if it is to earn the confidence of the people.

It is not for CRM to advise any government how to solve law and order problems, or how to succeed in the search for political solutions. CRM would not presume to offer advice on matters outside its sphere. The responsibility of CRM is to point to certain principles which must be followed by any government at any place, at any time, in dealing with such a situation. These principles are now part and parcel of international law, reflected in solemn treaties such as the Geneva Conventions and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Sri Lanka is a party, and to which we are legally bound. It is necessary in this context to point out that the Geneva Conventions though mainly concerned with international war situations, also govern internal armed conflict. Furthermore, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which is the organisation charged with implementing the Geneva Conventions also concerns itself in dealing with "serious internal disturbances and tensions" which fall short of armed conflict.

CRM welcomes certain measures taken by the government in the wake of protests about arbitrary arrests, "disappearances", and deaths in custody. Special procedures have been proclaimed regarding the arrest of lawyers, of members of the clergy, and of students, to ensure that every such arrest is promptly notified to a responsible person or body, and that the release of such a person also has to be in a specified manner, so that he or she remains accounted for. These should be strictly enforced.

"...to meet grave situations special measures may be required. This is recognised by international law itself. But international law ...specifically addresses the question of what may not be done in dealing with such a situation."

It is also essential to now take further this step and devise rules providing similar protection including prompt notification to the family to any person arrested and detained in any part of the country, whether the detaining authority be the police, the armed forces or the IPKF, and whatever the calling or occupation of the person detained. These rules should be given the force of law, a central and readily accessible register of arrests should be maintained, and an independent non-partisan body should be created to monitor their operation.

In this connection CRM also draws the attention of the government to the most recent initiative of the United Nations on the rights of detained persons. We refer to the BODY OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL PERSONS UNDER ANY FORM OF DETENTION OR IMPRISONMENT adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1988. The text of this important document is available separately from CRM.

CRM also deplores the passage last year of the Indemnity Act, in the face of many protests. Accountability of the State for illegal acts of its agencies is an essential component of democracy; it is necessary if the rule of law is to have meaning and to be respected. CRM is similarly perturbed at recent accounts of proposed legislation to amend the Prevention of Terrorism Act which if the press reports are correct, would further erode such accountability by incorporating into the permanent law of the land the earlier emergency regulation empowering the police to dispose of dead bodies without formalities, and by creating zones which are out of bounds for civilians in which once again the normal law would not operate, and a civilian would have no right to legal remedy for any injury suffered, whatever the circumstances. Such legislation can encourage law enforcement officers to act irresponsibly, causing harm both to the government and to the people.

CRM certainly accepts that to meet grave situations special measures may be required. This is recognised by international law itself. But international law including the Geneva Conventions and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights specifically addresses the question of what may and may not be done in dealing with such a situation. These are rules adopted by consensus, after long debate, and based on the experience of many countries which have faced situations similar to ours.

In this context, CRM urges that the following measures be taken :

- (a) that a special committee of independent, non-partisan experts be created to keep under review the law and practice relating to detention, custody and interrogation in emergency situations to ensure that basic human rights are not negated in the name of the needs of national security;
- (b) that the specialist services of the International Committee of the Red Cross in operating in situations of internal armed conflict and/or "serious internal disturbances and tensions" be sought by the government immediately.

Restoration of Faith in the Democratic Process

CRM also stresses the need for the government to give serious attention to the need to restore faith in the democratic process among those who have lost it, and to create it in the minds of those members of the younger generation who have, through no fault of theirs, grown up without ever having gained it. Both the Presidential Election of December 1988 and the General Election of 1989 were gravely affected by violence in the country; they were also marred by blatant instances of misuse of power by the ruling party. This is no way to encourage use of the ballot instead of the bullet, and must be now a serious drawback in seeking the co-operation of the parliamentary opposition, on matters of common concern. The government also needs to redefine its attitude towards the media, towards the public's right of information, towards criticism and dissent, and towards non-governmental organisations. The one-sided news and views expressed in the state-controlled press, radio and television, the paucity of genuine news, and the pitiful absence of any real, lively debate on the issues of the day, is surely self-defeating. What attraction does this manifestation of the "democratic process" offer to those who are constantly being exhorted to join it? Then again, at times suggestions, criticisms, or even legitimate queries by law-abiding non-governmental organisations are either ignored, or treated with hostility, instead of simply being dealt with on their merits. This does not mesh with the concept of the democratic process, in which all are free peacefully to question authority, and which those wielding the gun are now so earnestly being invited to join.

Sgd. Suriya Wickremasinghe
Secretary

CRM,
16/1, Don Carolis Road, Colombo 5.
12 May 1989.

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Copies of the above available from CRM, by mail request only, on payment of the photocopy charges quoted.

Religion and Peace

Venerable Dr. K. Anuruddha Thera

This is the text of a talk very relevant today, which the Author, as the Vice-Chancellor of the Pali Buddhis University of Sri Lanka, delivered at the 4th conference of the World Council of Religion and Peace held in August 1984 in Nairobi where 500 participants from different faiths and nationalities discussed world peace and racial harmony and passed a resolution against nuclear armaments.

I consider it a great privilege and an honour to have been invited to speak a few words at this August assembly. This conference presents a unique opportunity for people professing diverse faiths to meet on a common platform and discuss topics of mutual interest.

The theme of this discussion being Religion and Peace, it is essential that we should first have a clear idea of what these terms signify. Religion does not confine itself to the mere observance of rites and rituals guided by a set of beliefs. It means much more because it refers to a way of life that stimulates and guides a person to a good life. The practice of a good life consists of **Samacariya** which means harmonious, peaceful living with one's fellow beings. The word peace means not the mere absence of strife but a positive state of harmony among people. It is therefore clear that both religion and peace are inseparably connected with the welfare of human beings.

Human Life

The Buddha, has always shown equal compassion and kindness towards all living beings whatever species they belong to. Yet he has acknowledged that human beings occupy the most important place among all living beings. He has declared that being born a human is one of the most difficult achievements; **Kiccho manussapathilabho (Dhammapada)** and that birth as a human being is one of the rarest events (**Dullabham manussattam**). The human life is of tremendous worth as it is only man who has the capacity and the possibility of gaining the highest state of perfection. This is why human life is considered the highest in the teachings of the Buddha.

I wish to cite here a Buddhist story which illustrates the inestimable value of human life. The two clans, the Sakyas and the Koliyas who were both relatives of the Buddha had their kingdom on either side of river Rohini in India. The normal practice of the two clans was to divide the water in the river amicably for agricultural purposes. During a particular year a severe drought brought down the level of water in the river and each clan decided to use the available water without allowing the other's normal share. This resulted in a confrontation between the two clans. The Buddha seeing the warriors of the two clans assembled on each side of the river came there and enquired what they were preparing for. Each party said that they were compelled to wage war as no compromise was possible. The Buddha asked the leaders of each clan how much they wished to gain by getting the water themselves, and each of them gave an estimate of what they would gain. When the Buddha asked them what they considered to be the value of a human being killed in war, the leaders of both clans said that the worth of a human being is inestimable. The Buddha then asked them what they considered to be of greater worth, water or human life. When they answered in unison that the human life is of greater worth the Buddha made them realise how foolish it is to destroy a thing of inestimable value for the sake of something that is of estimable value.

Buddhism does not speak of man's **supremacy** over any other species of living beings. Yet it stresses man's **superiority** over all others. Therefore it devolves on him to live in harmony not only with his own species, but also with all other living things.

Our Oneness

Buddhism also recognized the oneness of the human species. Buddha says that unlike in the case of different species of plants and different species of animals, there are no biological differences of genus among human beings: *Lingam jatimayam tesam, annamannahi Jatiya (Sutta Nipata)*. From the biological point of view all men belong to one species. Whether they live in the West or in the East, whether they live in the Arctic or in the Antarctic, the differences are only in colour, hair form, the shape of the head or the shape of the nose. Buddhism thus emphasizes the oneness of mankind and urges all men to be treated as members of one family irrespective of caste, creed or colour.

War begins in the minds of men. According to Buddhism lust (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*) are the primary causes of all evil actions including war. The only achievement of

war, if it can be called an achievement, is the destruction of life and property. Those who survive in war will rise up again to destroy and to be destroyed. This shows that man can never be subjugated. Buddha says that the aggressor begets aggression: *hanta labhati hantaram (Samyutta Nikaya)*. Every man has his own dignity which should be recognised and respected.

The necessary environment for the realisation of this ideal could be created through a re-orientation of the content and method of education. It is, of course, true that the general and technical education has taken vast strides towards secular progress. But we notice with regret that the same is not true of religious and moral education.

Whatever doctrinal differences there may be among the various forms of religion, they all attempt to lead men away from evil and direct them in the path of righteousness. May I suggest therefore, that we use this assembly as a forum for making a concerted effort at evolving a common programme of action to ensure peace and happiness among all men.

While thanking you for the patient hearing given me, I should also sincerely thank the organisers for affording me this opportunity of speaking a few words today. Let me conclude my speech with a saying of the Buddha:

"Victory breeds hatred; the vanquished live in sorrow.

The peaceful live in harmony giving up both victory and defeat".

Thank you.

"Human life is of tremendous worth as it is only man who has the capacity and the possibility of gaining the highest state of perfection. That is why human life is considered the highest in the teachings of the Buddha . . ."

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Janasaviya or the Poverty Alleviation Programme became the major thrust in President Premadasa's election campaign of his New Deal for the country and the poor in particular, in his projected role of a People's President. In the present article, Susil Sirivardena spells out the anticipated implementation of Janasaviya as a genuine people-oriented programme.

This article is followed by comments from Bernard Soysa and Mervyn de Silva M.P.

The Child, Janasaviya & Restructuring

Susil Sirivardena



The writer who is General Manager of the National Housing Development Authority is also the leading Exponent of the Janasaviya concept. This Article has been written by him specially for Christian Worker.

1.0. My Thesis:

Janasaviya is a nationwide Process. A Process to enable the poor to realise their human capacities and build their asset-bases. The poor family is prime decider and doer, and therefore at the centre of their own self-improvement Process. The Child is a key subject and actor in the Family which is realizing its capacities and building up its asset-bases. True, the child depends primarily on conditions **within** the Family and **within** its immediate living environment. But the Janasaviya Process **begins locally and overflows to the supra-local** — that is the local supports, and is in turn supported by, levels above the local. Therefore **linkages** are vital; they strengthen or weaken the Janasaviya Process. The Janasaviya Process is therefore part and parcel of a wider Restructuring Process **outside** it. The Child in the Janasaviya cycle is inevitably an actor in a wider Restructuring cycle. Therefore, Strategy Options = concrete articulations of methods of Restructuring.

2.0. THE GOAL

- is Poverty Alleviation
- that is (a) helping poor families to realize their human capacities.
(b) helping poor families to build up their asset-bases.
- ∴ crux of JS is access to permanent and sustainable employment.

3.0. THE METHOD & PARADIGM

3.1. Is what we have conceptualized as People-based Development (P-BD). It has been defined as: "People-based Development refers to a particular conceptual framework. It is fundamentally different in form and content from conventional development. In essence, it:

- puts people first, especially the poor and the poorest of the poor;
- considers human beings as the primary resource
- is self-reliant and bottom-up
- is culturally harmonious
- can realize truly islandwide scale and stability

So, People-based Development invests primarily in human beings and mobilizes their wisdom and skill to the full".

(Report by the High Level Committee of Officials on Poverty Alleviation through People-based Development, Sessional Paper No. XII—1988)

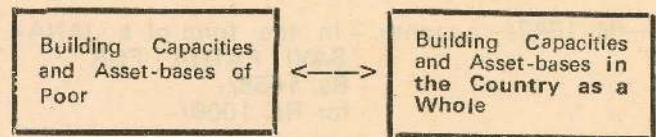
3.2. The task is to make P-BD the **mainstream method** : today it is not.

- all basic needs work
- all infrastructure provision has to be done using P-BD as the basis.
- Mainstream means systemwide; not only in JS.
- ∴ **Restructuring is implicit & explicit**.
- Means thinking, perceptions, attitudes, relations, and procedures change
- means, hegemony for
 - scale
 - small/micro
 - informal
 - support
 - simple
 - internal is primary
 - autonomy & freedom
- involves —a **NEW TRUSTING** of people
—a **NEW DISCIPLINE**: far more than in the conventional approach

—a **NEW ACCOUNTABILITY** ; again, far more than in the old method.

4.0. RESTRUCTURING

- Crux of JS—building up human capacities/asset-bases: that is generation of employment.
- but JS per se, JS alone, **cannot** do this
- that is, JS is **dependent** on what happens **outside** JS: therefore, there is this vital interdependence/nexus between JS and the non-JS: that is,



- This is clearly reflected in the Government's Manifesto under Economic Policy and Industries : See :

Economic Policy

Primary growth will take place countrywide in every household, through the strategies of investing in our human base, with people being the prime engine of economic improvement. Primary growth will make men and women into producers, creators and owners of assets. Simultaneously we will harness entrepreneurship and manufacturing skills to support the base, and be in turn supported by it, through setting up, again countrywide, a wide spectrum of secondary and tertiary industries.

Industries

Sri Lankan industry must develop at several levels. In the past, the smaller and levels closer to the base, were neglected. They did not have the support they needed. We will encourage committed private sector industrialists to play a key catalysing and generative role in the rapid development of thousands of very small and small industries. Such a development will strengthen the base, increase production, satisfy demand, provide employment and generate other multipliers. Large and successful industrialists have a specific duty and a role to play in this process—they must be teacher, guide and friend to smaller groups and consortia.

5.0. JS PROCESS—04 MAIN ELEMENTS

5.1. TWO INTERNAL ELEMENTS :

(1) THE POOR FAMILY, GROUPS OF POOR FAMILIES & POOR COMMUNITIES

(2) RESOURCE POOL WORTH RS. 2500/- A MONTH

COMPULSORY SAVINGS COMPONENT

CONSUMPTION COMPONENT

—Rs. 1042/- a month. — In the form of a JANA-SAVI PATHA FOR
 — Rs. 1458/- for Rs. 1000/-

* Part I of J' patha

—In a National Savings - Food, Clothing, School Bank A/c. in the needs, Agricultural/Production name of both wife and husband.

—Not withdrawable - Food Basket=rice, flour, milk until 24th month, except where development project is ready. foods, sugar, dry fish, local coarse grains & local pulses

*Part II of J' patha

— Rs. 458/- with two options

—However, may take credit against savings accrued. **OPTION ONE**—either, more of above consumption basket, with whole or part of Rs. 458/-.

— **OPTION TWO**— or have additional Savings interest with whole or part of Rs. 458/-: Banks will offer special interest incentive.

* **TOPPING UP PRINCIPLE**

—Accumulates interest - on first Rs. 1000/- & effective for poor with incomes above Rs. 300/- a month: those below Rs. 300/- will get full Rs. 1000/-

5.2. TWO EXTERNAL (3) 24 MONTH FIXED TIME PERIOD OF ASSISTANCE ELEMENTS

(4) SUPPORTING SERVICES & CONDITIONS PROVIDED BY

* **04 ACTORS :** GOVERNMENT
 NGOS & CBOs
 PRIVATE SECTOR
 CONCERNED INDIVIDUALS

* THEREFORE CLEAR ROLE FOR NON-POOR : WORKING ON BASIS OF A CONSENSUS APPROACH CUTTING ACROSS ALL SECTARIAN INTERESTS AND CONCERNS: A NATIONAL UNITED FRONT TO OVERCOME POVERTY.

6.0. IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES: PHASE 1: January to June 1989

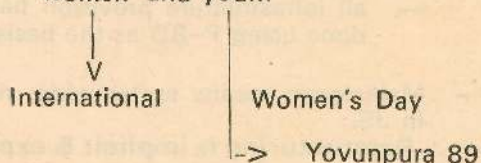
6.1. OBJECTIVE — learning by doing
 — doing it right
 — winning credibility

∴ NOT A NUMBERS GAME : emphasis is on laying a sound foundation in terms of perceptions and organization; with that on the ground, can expand numbers towards end of 1989.

6.2. SPECIFIC INITIATIVES TAKEN SO FAR

6.2.1 COMMUNICATION :—

- Strategy Drawn Up & being implemented
- Concept, Method, Worksteps being communicated
- to 04 main target groups
- intended families
- implementors at all 4 levels of administration
- policy makers & decision makers
- general public, especially children, women and youth



6.2.2 DEVOLUTION TO HOUSEHOLD LEVEL

6.2.2.1 Hamlet Level Restructuring

—Hamlet=new Implementation Frame: small enough for personalised interactions: on average 100-130 families.

—Hamletwise SUPPORT TEAMS OF 05: 04 from community, selected by community, on trust and acceptability: at least 01, a woman: 05th=village level official.

—Polling of village level staff & reallocating areas of duty.

Example ; OF HOW HAMLET LEVEL RESTRUCTURING WAS DONE IN THIAHAGODA AGA DIVISION

OLD

NEW

44 Village Level Officers (VLO)
Generalists +
Subjectwise

G. S. Divisions
(33)

Hamlets
(53)



44 VLOs: Span Reduced; Accountability Increased: All as Generalists (Supplemented by 53X4 = 212 S. Team members from Communities).

6.3 FAMILY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

- Open & Transparent
- all poor families eligible : Foodstamp receivers & non-receivers: totally community process of poor & non-poor families
- S. TEAM acts as FACILITATORS
- not one shot event but a process
- once identified, families given Entitlement Letter
- Phase I identification has no form filling: pure qualitative, visually checkable indicators: e.g: women-headed households and deprivations of mothers.
- Income cut-off point is Rs. 700/- monthly family income.

6.4. DIALOGUE WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS

- Successful meeting held on 21 March 89 with all Parliamentarians from Government and Opposition
- Consensus issue : keep it above party politics

6.5. IMPLEMENTATION ORGANIZATION

- GAs responsible : supported by AGAs and NGOs & CBOs.
- NGOs & CBOs – integral partners (specific mention in Manifesto)

6.6. ORIENTATION & TRAINING (O&T)

- Redefining of Roles, attitudes, tasks
- First round of—75 Master Trainers—at Dis-O & T is now trict Level (01 must be a on-going: will woman be over by mid-April
- 1350 Trainers—at Divisional Level (5 for each : 02 from NGOs ; 01 must be a woman)
- 150,000 S.T. members in 30,000 hamlets.

6.7. WORK FOR PAY PRINCIPLE

- Compulsory minimum number of labour days per month to be put in by members of poor family, for the money they get.
- Either on one's own work or on communal task in one's own hamlet.
- Clearly not a dole

6.8. ALL ACCOUNTS, ENTITLEMENT LETTERS ARE JOINT

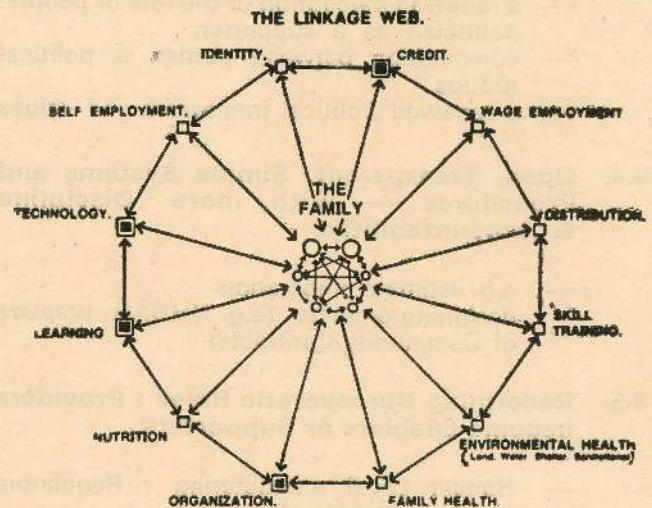
- in names of wife & husband

6.9. PREPARING PRODUCERS

- Alerting producers of huge new demand being built up
- Restructuring and reorienting extension and support services—agriculture, co-operatives, youth programmes etc.

7.0. THE OBJECT OF MEANINGFUL RESTRUCTURING

A Graphic Presentation of the Vital Role of Linkages in the JS Process. If Real Poverty Alleviation is to Take Place. Dark squares indicate strategic linkages.



8.0. DRAFT STRATEGY OPTIONS

- Please note —these are in the form of Issues derived out of a P-BD perspective.
- the whole focus is on **METHOD** or the **HOW?**, because that is what is **strategic** today.
- they signify a return to first principles and fundamentals.
- issues connected with Adjustment Policies are **not** addressed: the concern is with **internal** issues.

—the sequence of the Options has no significance.

—the invisible Child is clearly and explicitly embedded in every single issue raised below.

8.1. People First, especially the Weakest and Poor – Antyodaya Trusting People implicitly – Starting with the field

- Credit without collateral
- Visually checkable qualitative indicators, for identifying poor
- people-based PHC – e.g. Family Health Workers as change agents.

8.2. Decentralization and Devolution (D&D)

- to household level : so that, families decide & do
- primacy to internal & local factors
- opening up systems offering access to decision making, increasing space for demanding and acting
- a totally redefined role for Local Government as a means of operationalising D&D.

8.3. Cosensual Politics

- a renewed perception of the role of people: politician as a supporter.
- consultation between parties & political groups
- a renewed political framework and values

8.4. Open, Transparent, Simple Systems and Procedures — with more Discipline & Accountability.

- e.g. estimate preparation designing projects (e.g. NHDA's practice of Community Contracts)

8.5. Redefining Bureaucratic Roles : Providers become Enablers or Supporters

- Hamlet Level restructuring : Regulators become Change Agents

8.6. Secondary Support Roles for NGOs in Strengthening Local Level Development

- e.g. Uvagram in Bandarawela ; role of intermediary between poor farmers and Bank of Ceylon, where all dealings with Bank are done by NGO.

8.7. Stronger Role for Community-generated Information and Communication

- e.g. Data Collection, Mapping Communication methods used by guerilla fighters

SLRC Breakfast Show as a case of successful innovation.

8.8. Changed Perceptions & Role for Local Knowledge-Fields and Systems

- drawn from people's perception of practice
- interactive relationship between people and intellectual workers
- action – research
- learning horizontally : people learning directly from other people : success stories
- learning from hamlets of excellence
- a thrusting up, pushing up of knowledge, instead of a trickle down

8.9. Changed Approach to Resource Use

- community managed systems
- optimise land, water etc.
- linkage with servicing & processing sectors (land-based)
- linkage with non land-based sectors

8.10 Technology Choice

- local technology : what is cost effective, popular : e. g. local fishing boats, housing etc.
- need for innovation
- must be ecologically positive : if it were not, it will not be cost effective & popular.

8.11 Incremental Locally — & Regionally— Derived Standards

- today, all Standards are drawn either from outside the country or from urban capitals

8.12 Regional Development Frameworks

- plan on the basis of AGA Divisions : have PQLI data for each of the 270 AGA divisions
- in Plantations : the enclave concept has to get eroded : plantations must link with the villages : then only the plantation child will inherit the mainstream

9.0. We said at the outset that Strategy Options are concrete articulations of methods of Restructuring. Three brief points may be noted as we conclude:

- first; many of these have already been attempted in micro situations, and awaiting extended application.
- second: the UNP Manifesto provides a major resource frame-work for developing them.
- third since the leadership has already initiated the process, the rest of the country has to respond by critically re-examining all methods and procedures.

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Due to difficulties in production and distribution arising from the present troubled conditions, we have thought it best to combine the 2nd and 3rd Quarters in a Double Issue of our Journal.

Editorial Board
Christian Worker.

Comment

POSTSCRIPT

Strikes, the Emergency and After

When things start moving in Sri Lanka, they often do with a rapidity that is startling and sometimes bewildering. And so was the unfolding of events more recently when the present issue of *Christian Worker* was already in the press.

Student Demonstrations

The Indian boycott call of the JVP (already dealt with in our editorial comment and scheduled to take effect on June 14) was reflected first in an agitation conducted in schools starting with the Kandy district in the course of which a student in the Wattegama area was arrested on the ground of being involved in subversive activity. Rumours were afloat of students in other areas too being taken into custody and this became a favourable climate for the clandestine "National Students Council" claiming to represent 4 million students to launch a wave of agitation beginning on June 7 in many parts of the island. The police used tear gas to disperse student demonstrators in many places that day and a 15 year old student, Bandara of Teldeniya was killed when the police opened fire on students who had turned violent. The Government was quick to announce a closure of all schools for 2 days to avoid more trouble from students enraged over this killing, and extended this closure of schools further until the 19th in the face of a general stoppage of work by bus workers which suddenly began on June 12.

Meanwhile the JVP's "boycott India" call had been followed up with a mammoth meeting on June 9th organized by the Inter-University Students Federation, Bhikku Federation and Employees Federation in association with the Eksath Lanka Janatha Party (ELJP) and Sri Lanka Progressive

Front (SLPF)— a combination that had also contested the last General Election claiming to be backed by the JVP. This meeting which also had a SLFP M.P. from the Kalutara district on its platform, and called upon people to join the "Desapremi Eksath Podu Peramuna" ("Patriotic United Common Front") to save the country from Indian agents and burnt an effigy of Rajiv Gandhi, was given wide publicity in the State-owned newspapers. Indian nationals seeking safety from threats took refuge in the Indian-run Taj Samudra Hotel. They included members of the Indian High Commission staff. They were joined by Major General A. S. Kalkat, General Officer Commanding the IPKF on June 13 during his visit to meet Sri Lanka's Army Commander Lt. Gen. Hamilton Wanasinghe and other Army top brass obviously to discuss the security of Indian nationals at the Army Headquarters close by. Despite the absence of a hartal or closure of shops call by the JVP/DJV and only an issue of DJV letters to shops not to sell Indian goods from 14th June, several businessmen closed shop and traffic was minimal on the streets, while many city folk stocked up food items fearing a curfew that day.

The Bus Strike

Even if June 14 passed by uneventfully, the stoppage of buses from June 12 by the State-owned Sri Lanka Transport Board (SLTB) workers, led to private bus operators too being compelled to stop their services, thus adversely affecting the announced opening of schools on June 19th, especially in Colombo. The Colombo port too showed signs of being disturbed when workers on June 14 refused to unload 'Indian' goods in the form of "Bombay Onions" from a ship and sent it back to Talaimannar for unloading.

On June 16 night Passenger Transport was declared an "Essential Service" by the Government but workers did not heed that order and kept away from work. The same day (June 16) the Government resumed peace talks with the LTTE, and President Premadasa made a call to the nation to "sink all differences, face together and unitedly the challenge of reaching the objective of sending back the IPKF". He said; "If at this crucial moment we organize strikes and disrupt normal life, create violence and confusion, we will never be able to send back the IPKF. Why? Because we will be preoccupied with tackling them and nothing else".

Significantly this work stoppage in the Transport Board was of a strikingly peculiar nature as no demands were said to have been put forward by any of the recognized unions and no prior intimation of a 'strike' had been given by any of them either. In fact Transport and Highways Minister Wijeyapala Mendis complained that "there does not seem to be any trade union connections with this strike" and that there was information that the SLTB employees were being threatened to keep away by "unknown elements", rather reminiscent perhaps of the situation last year when employees (including at times high state officers and corporation officials) were found carrying picket boards or joining in "protest" marches—moved through the "power that grows from the barrel of a gun"! (See *Christian Worker* of 3rd Quarter December 1989). However, the State Minister of Transport S. Sellasamy (himself a trade union leader of Minister Thondaman's Ceylon Workers Congress) invited all trade unions in the SLTB for a discussion on June 19 and it was there that the Government learnt of a hitherto unknown Sri Langama Ekabaddha Satan Peramuna (SLTB United Action Front) reported at first to be based in Badulla. It was accordingly agreed that a meeting should be held with the representatives of this Front as well. The Front readily accepted the invitation to negotiate, understandably so, since this would give it Government recognition as an authoritative union speaking on behalf of the bus employees. (The Front had even arranged a press conference at a secret location which turned out to be the Katubedde Depot near Colombo as a preparation for such negotiations.)

Re-imposition of the Emergency

At this stage, bus transport was almost paralysed throughout the country except for the North-East Province where bus services were reported normal. In most parts of the country, private buses too kept off the road. On June 20 there was a token strike in the port to express solidarity with the bus strike. Train services too had ground to a halt virtually owing to reported threats and sabotage to tracks and other vital equipment. Other services too showed signs of being disturbed. It was in such a situation that President Premadasa was prevailed upon to declare a State of Emergency on June 20, conferring wide powers on the security forces and police to curb the escalating violence and

immediately restore the working of strike-bound essential services particularly transport. It will be remembered that the Emergency was withdrawn only on January 11 this year after a 5 year period as a part of implementing President Premadasa's election pledges to the country.

As late as June 19, President Premadasa re-asserted that he had no faith in arms and would not depart from the path of dhamma, whatever the circumstances. (*Daily News*, June 21). He said: "The fact that some resort to killing is no excuse for us also to commit murder. What we should aim at is a change of heart among these miscreants, not their elimination". In this same speech made significantly at Mahiyangana at the opening of a replica of the Sri Maha Bodhi Seya at Buddha Gaya in India, President Premadasa made reference to the reported visit of the Buddha to Mahiyangana and to a pre-historic local population then (prior to the Aryan invasion from India led by the legendary Prince Vijaya as recorded in our ancient Mahavamsa chronicle) of the "Siwu Helayas" said to be comprised of Yakshas, Rakshas, Nagas and Asuras—whose descendants he said are the Sinhelayas. In an apparent departure from the Mahavamsa story, he said that the Buddha repaired to Mahiyangana "to settle an ethnic conflict between the Nagas and the Yakshas - quite similar to the conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamils now troubling the country". "The Nagas have come to talk peace with the Yakshas. Peace can only be achieved through discussion and dialogue, and that is the path shown us by the Buddha" the President said. (*Daily News* June 21). The President's words calculated to unite all local forces through "consultation, compromise and consensus" do not however appear to have had the desired effect on the Sinhala rebels of the DJV/JVP.

As if to counter-balance President Premadasa's conciliatory approach was the ultimatum given by the State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne to his security forces commanders who were said to be clamouring for an Emergency Rule. The Minister was said to have removed top security officers in Uva and threatened to move out others too if they did not show results. In any case, events such as the abduction and subsequent killing of the security officers of State Minister of Agriculture Wijeratne Banda who were travelling in his Pajero van without a licensed number plate through the Peradeniya Campus, and the other continued DJV killings that had been going on which latterly had included those of Provincial Councillors Leslie Ranagala (Western Province) and Jalaldeen Nassar (North Central Province) both of the UNP and Leslie Yatanwela (Sabaragamuwa) of the USA, would undoubtedly have also prompted the unanimous decision of the Government Group to re-introduce a State of Emergency. The Chief Ministers of the Provincial Councils were also said to have expressed their difficulties in getting the Provincial Councils to function in the present circumstances. Foreign Minister and State Minister for Defence Ranjan

Wijeratne in a meeting with Western correspondents stated on June 22 (AFP): "After a lot of consideration and opportunity given to the terrorists (to talk to the Government) we have decided to meet them head on. We have to deal with the terrorists in the most severe manner. Our people cannot live in fear forever. They must have peace if they are to survive. We have taken the hard line, there is no question about that. But if they (the JVP) want to they can still come and talk to the President". The security forces and the police have been given "full powers" including indemnity against prosecution for their acts against the anti Government rebels, he added. It is left to be seen however, to what extent the forces will be prepared to go all out to crush the subversives under the Emergency that now operates. In fact the law and order situation has so badly deteriorated that people today tend to more readily comply with the orders of the subversives now nicknamed the "small government" as is evident whenever a JVP order goes out or a "curfew" is declared. And in their efforts to win popular support in such a situation, the DJV/JVP have begun to take action against criminal elements too in many more areas. The Sun reported that on June 23, nine men accused as dangerous criminals were forced to stand on a public road in the Colombo outskirts of Moratuwa for several hours as punishment with boards hung around their necks listing the crimes they had committed, with the warning also that they would be punished with death if they continued in their activities. Ironically, a police party was reported to have taken two of them away as wanted suspects, leaving the others to stand as they were! Such a spectacle can hardly inspire public confidence in the Government or its law enforcement officers who sometimes appear reluctant to act, perhaps through fear of reprisals.

Despite the re-imposition of the Emergency, reported violence shows that DJV/JVP activity has continued, unabated. To give a few more recent examples: on June 23, two army men were killed and 4 others injured when an army guard room was attacked by subversives who got away with some 10T-56 assault rifles. On June 25 a UNP Member of Parliament for the Kandy District Anura Daniel was shot dead in his office at Hewaheta. On June 28 there was a powerful explosion from a bomb planted in a vehicle near the Galle Town Hall where a meeting of the Southern Provincial Council was in progress, killing 4 and injuring over 20 who were drivers, security personnel or passers by. On July 1st midnight towards the end of the 11th Anniversary celebrations of Gam Udava (Village Awakening) held amid much fanfare for 11 days at Mahiyangana under the leadership of President Premadasa himself, two grenades exploded killing 4 and injuring over 20. Among the several other selective killings effected have been those of Colombo Municipal Councillor Lakshman Silva on July 1st, of Provincial Councillor M.T.I. Ismail (NCP) in Polonnaruwa on July 5th and of two police officers attached to the National Intelligence Bureau

in Colombo (NIB). The Island of July 6 reported that this killing for the first time of officers attached to the NIB was the latest in the series of attacks on Security Forces and police in the process where at least 11 personnel were killed and 6 wounded in separate incidents during the 48 hours ending at noon on July 5th.

As a result of complaints made by Government MPs that some newspapers were encouraging disruption, President Premadasa on July 5th promulgated a press censorship. State schools were closed indefinitely with effect from July 6 and all volunteers of the Sri Lanka army, navy and airforce have been mobilised and asked to report for duty, underlining as it were Government's determination to bring the present chaotic and dangerous situation under control through the use of state power. Under the Emergency all public meetings including trade union meetings have been banned until further notice and the armed forces and police have been ordered to shoot-on-sight all those who attempt to provoke or incite violence said State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne. "Enough is enough. The armed forces and police are under orders to take action against such persons": these would cover any person attempting to put up anti-government posters, campaigning against the government, attempting to provoke violence or carrying placards he said. "The Government will not allow any person to disrupt democracy in Sri Lanka". (Sun of 7 July).

The Prolonged Bus Stoppage

The inconclusive talks referred to earlier between the Transport Board's trade unions and the Government was followed on June 21 by the awaited talks with the Langama Ekabadda Satan Peramuna (SLTB United Action Front) too and the Government delegation led by Transport Minister Wijayapala Mendis. Despite a 3 hour discussion on the 11 demands made, the Government rejected the major demand of a minimum monthly wage of Rs. 2500 on the ground that the Corporation simply could not afford it. (This Rs. 2500 demand appears to have been inspired by the Janasaviya monthly award of Rs. 2500 for 2 years to poor families of which Rs. 1458 was for consumption with Rs. 1042 as compulsory savings. The demand was first made by the University minor staff who went on strike but it was not conceded although a substantial increase in allowances up to Rs. 500 was granted instead). However, that very day (June 21) Parliament Speaker M.H. Mohamed also invited the JVP for peace talks at a place of their choice.

On the failure of the negotiations and the reported intransigence of the 'Action Front' over the demands made, the Government issued an ultimatum to the workers to resume work by Monday 26 June or lose their jobs. Meanwhile steps were also taken to recruit new drivers through the volunteer services of the Armed Forces. However the DJV/JVP dec-

lared an island-wide "curfew" on June 26—the day the Government ultimatum to the striking SLTB workers was to end. Everything virtually came to a standstill with few people daring to violate the "curfew" order, not unnaturally since the public were warned by the DJV that they could encounter land mines and bullets should they venture out that day. Accordingly the Government's deadline for the workers to return back was extended to Tuesday June 27 but without much results.

The Cabinet which met the next day (Wednesday 28) decided that the Government would examine the transport workers' grievances only if they returned to work. In view of the claims made by the Unions that there were arrears of allowances payable of Rs. 180 and Rs. 45 which the Government had approved in 1982 but not implemented, a 10 member Cabinet Committee headed by Prime Minister D. B. Wijetunge was appointed to go into the workers' grievances, the President making it plain that he would grant any approved payment not already made. In this context the Government called for a suspension of the strike and for discussions to be had with this Committee. It was on the same day too that ELJP leader Rukman Senanayake arranged a meeting at 'Woodlands' between the Government represented by the President's delegate State Minister of Information A. J. Ranasinghe and a delegation representing the JVP backed SLTB United Action Front and the Jatika Kamkaru Satan Madhiyastana (National Workers Action Centre) its parent body, which was reported to have come under a very strong security escort of their own and with no disclosure of the names of those in the delegation. From the newspaper reports it would appear that the demands were pruned down from 11 to 6 and the main issue—a minimum monthly wage of Rs. 2500—was reduced to a salary increase of Rs. 500 and said to be reduced further to Rs. 250 in the course of the discussions though this has been disputed now by the Action Front. The President who was contacted over the phone at Mahiyangana was said to have agreed to consider the demand for Rs. 250 but the workers had first to resume work and put forward their demands in writing within one week to him (the President) who was even willing thereafter to meet the unions personally. According to Minister Ranasinghe, the delegation had agreed to convey this offer to their leaders and report back with their answer on whether they were ready to call off the strike or not, that same night or the next day. No reply however had been forthcoming. The Action Front's position was that their six demands including a wage increase of Rs. 500 have to be conceded and that they would be willing to hold further talks but only with a "responsible Cabinet Minister" who would be "genuinely concerned" with settling the strike. (Sun of July 1): According to the same report threats of strikes in other sectors were also held out in the event of the present demands not being met. Work at the port too had by then been badly affected by the poor attendance of dock workers due to transport difficulties and lorry drivers were reported reluctant to enter the port to clear cargo because of death threats.

According to a *Sunday Times* (July 2) interview had with the Action Front and its parent body regarding the strike and its impact on the public, it has been claimed by this Front that "the people are ready to suffer hand-in-hand with us. They have told us not to call off the strike before our just demands have been met. . . . " When questioned about the number of persons killed in the operation and private buses burnt, there was a refusal to connect these with the bus strike, such acts being put instead on "a public which has come to the end of its fether and has no alternative but to thread a violent path". The "Jatika Satan Madhiyastana" or parent body has in the same interview claimed to be "the vanguard of the working class movement". The *Island* of 1st July reported Transport and Highways Minister Wijayapala Mendis as saying that a total of 110 SLTB employees had been killed from the day the on-going bus stoppage began. According to the information he had, many wanted to report for work but were unable to do so due to death threats. The Minister said he had doubts about the bona fides of the persons claiming to be the United Action Front. He did not really know who they were and it was the first time he met a set of "trade unionists" said to be connected to the SLTB who were not Board Employees.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that there has been a stalemate and a toughening of the Government's position on this issue, although Minister of State for Transport S. Sellasamy was said to have suggested to the Government Parliamentary Group that an interim payment be made to bus employees and that their wage issue be referred to the Salaries Review Committee as a means of ending the work stoppage, appealing to the President too for his direct intervention in bringing about a settlement. (Sun of 7 July).

More on the IPKF Pull-out and Tiger Talks

On his 65th birthday, President Premadasa speaking at the opening of the 11th Anniversary celebrations of the Gam Udava (village Awakening) at Mahiyangana on June 23 declared that if there were logistical difficulties in withdrawing the IPKF by the end of July they should be confined to barracks. The President stated that the LTTE had admitted that it was India that had funded and trained them to wage war in Sri Lanka. He would therefore politely call upon India to withdraw the IPKF as soon as possible. "I am confident that as soon as the IPKF is withdrawn peace could be re-established throughout the country" he said. If India does not withdraw the IPKF her reputation in international circles would be tarnished, he warned. On an earlier occasion the President had stated that "We all know that India has repeatedly assured us that anytime the President of Sri Lanka makes the request, they will take the forces back".

The LTTE which resumed talks with the Government on June 16 welcomed the steps taken by President Premadasa to expedite the withdrawal of the IPKF in the North and East, agreeing completely with the President's position on this issue. On the question of the mass demonstrations staged in support of the IPKF in the East backed by the EPRLF and its allies and signatures being collected in mass petitions in support of the IPKF, the LTTE delegation was of the view that these were forced and did not reflect the true sentiments of the people in the North and East. After the LTTE-Government talks on June 22 and in the context of a declaration of a ceasefire by the LTTE, the joint communique stated that "every cease-fire had failed because cease-fires were negotiated without the direct participation of parties to the conflict... Therefore with the present cease-fire, the President of Sri Lanka has been able to achieve overnight what could not be achieved during the last 2 years militarily" On June 24, the LTTE delegation stated that it was "prepared to extend its cease-fire to the IPKF provided there was a definite time-frame for a withdrawal of the IPKF and provided the IPKF halts all military operations against them". The LTTE delegation also alerted the Government to the dangers of forced conscription now taking place in the North and East where young school boys were being taken to IPKF military camps for training, which if unchecked would lead to the birth of another armed force and pave the way for further conflict. Earlier the LTTE had again through the State media warned of a "conspiracy" to attack Sinhala villages in the North and East by the ENDLF, and TELO with the support of the IPKF. **The Sunday Times** of June 25 reported however that senior security officials had requested the Government "to reconsider its decision to permit the LTTE to use the official media to publicise anti-Indian statements". (Since the Sri Lankan Government began talks with the Tiger delegation the official media has carried statements made by the LTTE). The report said that "Senior Services personnel feel that the prevailing strong anti-IPKF stance taken by the various groups could seriously hamper rapport between the two armies. At present about 60 army officers and about 300 soldiers are trained free of charge in India". Co-operation between the two armies in the past couple of years in particular was reported to be very high.

North-East Chief Minister Varadaraja Perumal for his part was reported to have emphasised the need for large-scale recruitment to the Citizens Volunteer Force (CVF) to resist the LTTE and to fight the Sri Lankan forces in the event of the withdrawal of the IPKF. **The Sunday Times** of July 2 reported that the EPRLF and ENDLF were even to declare a Unilateral State of Independence on 15 July.

On 29 June the Government decided to cease hostilities against the LTTE in view also of the LTTE's decision to transform its cease-fire into an immediate cessation of hostilities against the Sri Lankan Government—an outcome it was said of the LTTE's confidence that "all outstanding issues could be resolved

through negotiation and discussion". President Premadasa was reported to have sent a telex message to Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi informing him of the position and requesting him to ensure that the IPKF does not take any offensive action against the LTTE which will tend to prejudice the negotiations currently in progress. Premier Gandhi's reply sent within 24 hours is said to have basically ruled out cessation of IPKF operations against the LTTE "unless the latter was able to give a commitment that it had renounced its Eelam demand, was prepared to lay down arms, renounce violence against other Tamil groups and adhere to the democratic process. Gandhi said it was incumbent on the Sri Lankan Government to get these assurances from the LTTE before India could ask the IPKF to halt its operations. 'Otherwise our efforts to disarm the LTTE will continue under the terms of the accord, remarked an official. "Officials have reiterated that the IPKF will be pulled out in due course as promised by Gandhi". (From Tarun Basu in Delhi, **The Sunday Times** July 2). *

An otherwise grim situation of virtual confrontation that had developed between Sri Lanka and India resulting in even a boycott of the SAARC Foreign Ministers' meeting which had consequently to be put off, was perhaps relieved only by the comedy of an EPRLF invitation to the JVP for peace talks! (**The Island** June 20) The Indian Premier's reactions to the latest letter received from President Premadasa however appeared to indicate that there were already signs of a "thaw", for Premier Gandhi had stated in Delhi on July 4 that this letter was "much more positive" than the earlier one and was being studied before a reply was sent. Moreover, Industrial Development Minister, Saumiamoorthy Thondaman, who has taken a sober and realistic view of the situation (see inside for his views) and was now in New Delhi on Trade Union business, said that he was hopeful of discussing Indo-Lanka relations "in their entirety" with Premier Gandhi and other Indian Leaders "so that the existing problem could be resolved in a spirit of understanding and goodwill and on a firm basis" (**Daily News** of July 7). According to the same report, Minister Thondaman had also stated that it was the military pressure on the LTTE that had in fact brought the Tigers to the negotiating table in Colombo, for survival. We can have reason therefore to be hopeful that the more pragmatic approach of a seasoned and successful politician like Minister Thondaman could help break the present deadlock, even if ordinarily politicians may tend to take risks in their eagerness to capitalise on popular issues (however sensitive) with dangerous consequences, or adopt hard positions for reasons of prestige.

Obviously a confrontation between India and Sri Lanka would be detrimental to the larger interests of both countries and their peoples, besides having disastrous effects too on our national unity and

*This position is also evidenced by the correspondence between the two leaders which was tabled in parliament since and reproduced by the press.

territorial integrity. However laudable the efforts of our Government in negotiating a settlement with the LTTE, it is vital that such a settlement should not lead to a further blood-bath in the North-East which would become inevitable if the Tigers vent their fury on the EPRLF and other rival militant groups with the departure of the IPKF, leading also to counter attacks on the LTTE with possible Indian support. Our Government has therefore the duty to ensure the security of the people in the North-East including those politically not in agreement with the LTTE as a necessary part of any workable settlement. (We have already dwelt with these matters adequately

in our main editorial comment). And it would only entail the extension of President Premadasa's own policy of "consultation, compromise and consensus" to take in these other militant groups as well to reach a workable settlement based on a proper devolution of power, and a process of mutual consultation and negotiation with India for the resolution of any bi-lateral problems. That this is now the only realistic and practical way out of the present impasse should become obvious to anyone.

7 July 1989.

ADDENDUM

LATER DEVELOPMENTS

More recent developments include the postponement by the Government of the Referendum on the North-East Province until January 29 next year and the decision of EROS now functioning politically as the Eelaver Democratic Front (EDF) to let their 13 elected representatives take their oaths in Parliament as MPs on July 21, making them the largest group representing the Tamil community in the House. Shanker Raji who made this announcement on behalf of the EDF stated that this decision had been conveyed to the LTTE. The EDF he said were satisfied that the general conditions have been created for them to enter Parliament but they would continue to press for the removal of the 6th Amendment disavowing separatism and favoured an indefinite postponement of the Referendum on the North-East Province.

Bus Stoppage and Settlement

As regards the prolonged bus stoppage, Transport Minister Wijayapala Mendis stated that the Government had not resorted to the drastic action of issuing detention orders on bus and train crews under the Emergency since "they had started their trek back". He said also that two of the three main demands made by the "faceless" United Action Front for Rs. 45 and Rs. 180 had already been given earlier (*Daily News* of July 11). It was reported however that the General Secretary of the Jatika Kamkaru Satan Madhiyastana (the parent body of the United Action Front) had submitted a written request for President Premadasa's intervention and that a representative of this organization met the President on July 11 accompanied by Minister A. J. Ranasinghe and ELJP Leader

Rukman Senanayake. As a result of these representations President Premadasa appointed a new Committee consisting of two Cabinet Sub Committee Secretaries and a retired Court of Appeal Judge to go into the claims made for the Rs. 45 and Rs. 180 wage increases said to be due but still unpaid. The organization representative had assured the President that they would abide by the decision of this Committee on this matter. (*Daily News* July 12).

The bus stoppage lasting 31 days ended on July 13 with the SLTB United Action Front issuing a communique broadcast over the State-run Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation calling off the strike after discussions held with the Government and a Statement made by Transport and Highways Minister Wijeyapala Mendis that "the Government had decided to grant salary increase to the SLTB employees notwithstanding the financial constraints because the stoppage of work was causing untold hardship to the people". The employees will now receive the Rs. 45 and Rs. 180 monthly increases with arrears effective from January 1982 and January 1989 respectively. Those who did not report for work during the period of the bus stoppage would be paid their wages and there would be no victimization. The Prime Minister had also assured the Transport Minister that the Government would take steps in due course to grant a wage increase to non-staff grades in the Government, Local Government and Corporation sectors.

It is indeed a pity that Government's insensitivity to the original demands of the workers (ie. for Rs. 45 and Rs. 180) advanced for sometime by their legitimate unions, had to result in these being granted only after an unprecedented and prolonged work

stoppage effected by a hitherto unknown "Action Front". (The work force in the SLTB is 55,000 strong). It is to be hoped that the Government will even now recognise the importance and role of genuine trade unions and not continue to try dominate workplaces through its own party sponsored Unions and their strong men whose weakness has been shown up in this crisis. It sounded strange but significant however that the Sinhala broadcast of the Statements made by both the Transport Minister and the Action Front after the settlement ended with a call to safeguard 'the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country'.

JVP & EPRLF

"A lot of ground has been cleared for those endeavouring to bring about a dialogue between the Government and JVP since the conclusion of the recent transport strike" according to ELJP Leader Rukman Senanayake in his interview with *The Sunday Times* (July 16). The ELJP leader who was the mediator in this negotiated settlement said he was unable to comment on whether the JVP had agreed to a dialogue but that "the President's gesture will go a long way towards creating conditions conducive for discussions".

In the meantime a crackdown on subversive activity was said to be proceeding. On July 12, the Defence Ministry ordered the closure of the Universities with immediate effect as a temporary measure in the present crisis as a part of the attempts to curb subversive activities. It was claimed that these places were misused by subversives and that large quantities of explosives, weaponry, subversive literature and posters were found by security forces in a preliminary search of the campuses. On July 10, a Government communique had stated that University students had forcibly removed from the undertakers, the dead body of Charitha Lankapura, a lawyer said to have filed several Habeas Corpus applications in Court and killed recently by an unidentified gunman. After the University authorities had informed the police that no dead body could be permitted in the University premises, the security forces had handed the body to the next of kin for cremation, the communique added (*Daily News* July 11)

The Island of July 13 reported the North-East Chief Minister Varadaraja Perumal as saying that: "South Sri Lanka is in a very unstable condition... because of the anti-Indian policy followed by the present Government..... Today, people in the South are living in fear..... The JVP is now functioning under conditions created alternatively by the UNP and SLFP .

On July 15, the EPRLF denied that it had planned to announce a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in the North and East on that day as reported earlier in the press. "Speculation about EPRLF declaring UDI today is far from the real thinking among the leadership and rank and file of the EPRLF" a press statement issued on the occasion said. To defuse the prevailing tension in the country the North-East Provincial Council's Chief Minister Varadaraja Perumal was reported to have called a meeting of all Opposition parties in Trincomalee on July 25. Chief Minister Perumal has said: "Our entering into the democratic process should not be simplified and our dropping of the Eelam demand is not just taking off a garment but tearing off of our skin with our own hands....

Therefore giving up (Eelam) must mean definitely, peace, democracy, dignity, self-government, co-operation" (*Neekend*, July 16).

The LTTE which has been non-committal yet on its Eelam demand though conducting negotiations with the Government, apparently takes the position outlined by its spokesman Anton Balasingham as regards other militant groups: "What we are saying to other groups is 'renounce violence' and prepare for a general election process and let the people decide the destiny of all (rebel) groups". (*Daily News* of July 12).

Meanwhile reports from Jaffna said that the EPRLF with Indian support was setting up an Additional Citizen Volunteer Force (ACVF) in addition to the CVF that was being raised for several months. This was said to be done through forced conscription of Tamil youth being trained under the supervision of the IPKF and RAW. (*Daily News* of July 12). EPRLF sources were reported to have stated that the LTTE too had resorted to such conscription of Tamil youth for their own forces. (*Daily News* report of July 10 by S. Thakur). Speaking however on behalf of the North-East Provincial Council at a press conference on July 15, the Council's Minister of Planning and Youth Affairs George Seneviratne said: "The Provincial Council has nothing to do with these conscriptions". Refusing to comment on reports that the EPRLF had been involved in this, the Minister said they had called on all militant groups to stop the abduction and conscription of Tamil youths and promote a voluntary joining of their ranks instead. (*The Island*, July 16). Since many youth were reported to have fled from the North-East to avoid conscription and were found in numbers in Colombo, the Government announced it had opened a refugee centre for such youth in the city.

Indo-Lanka Talks

On July 11, New Delhi announced that Premier Rajiv Gandhi was sending his Principal Secretary as a special envoy with a message to President Premadasa following the exchange of letters between them.

Prime Minister Gandhi's envoy had two rounds of talks with Sri Lankan officials on matters connected with the IPKF withdrawal before he left for Delhi on July 14. He handed over to President Premadasa On July 13 a letter from Premier Gandhi which said: "Your colleague, the Hon. Mr. Thondaman who met me here, would have conveyed to you our desire for friendly relations and our willingness to resolve any misunderstanding through mutual consultations. If however discussions for this purpose are not acceptable to you, we will have to decide the details of the PK withdrawal unilaterally, consistent with our responsibilities and obligations under the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement. Mr. Gandhi in his letter pointed out there is an Agreement between the two countries which is meant "to preserve the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka and to ensure the safety, security and legitimate interests of the Tamils". Nearly a thousand Indian soldiers he said had died "in fulfilment of India's obligations as a guarantor of this Agreement". Since its signing, Provincial Council elections, Presidential and Parliamentary elections had all been held. **"The situation in the North-Eastern Province is far more settled and peaceful than elsewhere in Sri Lanka"** he said (our emphasis). "Despite all this, the devolution package promised to the Tamils has not been implemented. These are incontrovertible facts".

Prime Minister Gandhi also pointed out to President Premadasa that: Both of us agree that the IPKF should be withdrawn. "Both of us agree that we had commenced the withdrawal even before you asked for it. A broad time-frame for the IPKF's withdrawal had in fact been discussed. Discussions on finalising, the details were proposed by your Foreign Minister at Harare only a few days prior to your unilateral announcement of 1st June." However while Mr. Gandhi reiterated again his willingness to co-operate and "resolve pending issues", his letter went on to say that "India has traditionally been mindful of the sanctity of the Agreements it signs with other countries and of commitments solemnly undertaken under such Agreements. India will under no circumstances deviate from this policy affecting our concerns."

President Premadasa while agreeing that talks could be held between the officials of the two countries, has set out four premises in his reply to premier

Gandhi. Firstly, that the IPKF came at the request of the Sri Lankan President (and were under his command), "to promote and enforce the cessation of hostilities if so required." Secondly, the Agreement was between the Governments of Sri Lanka and India alone, there being no other parties to the Agreement. Thirdly, that the presence of the IPKF and the devolution of powers to the Provincial Council are totally unconnected, the latter being purely an internal matter. Fourthly, the Indian Government undertook "not to permit Indian territory to be used for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka", but certain Sri Lankans had not only been permitted to publicly express their intention of making a Unilateral Declaration of Eelam while being on Indian soil, but also the right to publicise it on the Indian National Television.

At the opening of the last sessions of the Lok Sabha on July 18, Premier Rajiv Gandhi once again stated that India would not withdraw her troops just yet. He told a press conference on July 21 in Islamabad that it was India which was holding Sri Lanka together and not letting it disintegrate. Gandhi's position is that his country had given the Tamils a commitment by which she will stand. Meanwhile an Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman was quoted as saying that since Colombo had yet to respond to India's proposal for talks on drawing up a time-table for pulling out the IPKF, New Delhi would have to proceed on its own.

Addressing the Government Parliamentary Group on July 20 President Premadasa stressed once again what he had kept on saying that the devolution process and the withdrawal of the IPKF had no connection. But the President also said that he had taken much trouble to ensure the speeding up of the devolution process.

In a letter dated July 19 to Premier Gandhi, President Premadasa made the same points: "Sri Lanka for her part has discharged all her obligations under the Agreement and in particular taken all effective and meaningful steps towards the devolution of power". In the same letter President Premadasa said: "The rendering of military assistance is governed by Article 2.16(c) which clearly stipulates that the affording of military assistance is 'as and when' requested by the Government of Sri Lanka. This Article makes it clear beyond argument, that the basic provision of international law regarding the necessity of the concurrence of the Government of the domestic State in the entry of foreign armed forces into its territory, has been recognized and observed. President Premadasa also stated: "However if it is your view that the Agreement should be construed as creating an obligation for the Indian Armed Force to remain in Sri Lankan territory without the concurrence and against the express wishes of the Sri Lanka Government, I as the President of an independent, sovereign Republic would have no option but to treat the Agreement as being inimical to Sri Lanka's sovereignty and national interests".

Minister Ranjan Wijeratna has already said bluntly that the IPKF would be considered as an "occupying force" if it stays on in the North and East, after July 29, and that Sri Lankan troops would be deployed in the North and East. Perhaps not to be outdone "Minister of State for Information, A. J. Ranasingh, in a patriotic and dramatic outburst worthy of his Tower Hall background said for the second time that he would "fight to the last" to protect his wife and daughter despite his "by-pass operation". The Minister making this comment to Foreign Correspondents said that he did not believe that there would be a showdown but he warned that otherwise we would have no other option but this. He is further reported to have said that the IPKF promised to go when President J. R. Jayewardene wanted them to go. So when President Premadasa asks them to go, why are they not going? "Is it because he does not have a Western name like Junius?" he asked. It is significant however that a more sober and realistic approach has been taken by Ministers Gamini Dissanayake, Lalith Athulathmudali and Thondaman. In fact Minister Dissanayake's statement on July 17 in Jaffna at the Funeral of the TULF leaders that the time had come to avoid the "mistakes of the past" and reject "populist politics," needs to be commended. So also President Premadasa's more recent statement that in addition to his dialogue with the LTTE, he would also broaden understanding with other groups such as EPRLF, TULF, EROS, TELO and PLOT which have already opted to take the democratic path and bring in all registered political parties to join this process of dialogue and consultation (Daily News July 24). On July 24 on the instructions of the President, Ministers Ranjan Wijeratne, Gamini Dissanayake and Thondaman flew to Trincomalee for discussions with leaders of the EPRLF and Ministers of the North-East Provincial Council. The Ministers had impressed on Chief Minister Varadaraja Perumal the need for a phased IPKF withdrawal by speaking to Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi. Discussions were also held on the process of the devolution of powers to the Provincial Councils. Chief Minister Perumal had told the Ministers that he had tried to get the Centre to devolve the agreed powers but had failed. He said that the thirteenth Constitutional Amendment which was not implemented in full, was itself inadequate to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people. "The Tamil militant groups had agreed to lay down their arms and enter the political mainstream because India had persuaded them to do so saying that the Sri Lankan government had agreed to grant them the autonomy the Indian States enjoy. The thirteenth amendment which was enacted without consulting either India, the guarantor, or the Tamil militant groups, had failed to reflect that promise" said Chief Minister Perumal. The Ministers had asked the Chief Minister to give them a draft that would reflect their requirements and Mr. Perumal had promised to do so, a Provincial Council spokesman said. The Chief Minister was also asked to submit his proposals for the government's consideration of four more matters raised by him that needed to be settled, i.e. state-aided colonisation,

the basic needs of the up-country Tamils, the Provincial Council administration and enrolling Tamils and Muslims into the armed services so that they may reflect ethnic proportions. The Ministers also promised to look into the matter of adequate security for EPRLF and TELO MPs on Mr. Perumal's request. Chief Minister Perumal also told the Ministers that he would not agree to the withdrawal of the IPKF till proper devolution of powers had been effected. "IPKF withdrawal and the devolution of powers are interconnected" he is reported to have said. (Daily News July 25)

It is significant that the first parliamentary speech of the EDF in Parliament (12 members having taken their Oaths as MPs on July 21 with the remaining member to do so later), took the position that the problem of the IPKF withdrawal under the Peace Agreement should be settled by tri-partite talks between the Sri Lankan Government, Indian Government and the militant Tamil groups. The EDF (formerly EROS) it will be remembered, has been a long time ally of the LTTE.

Whatever may be the position as regards the rights of parties and their infringement, both Premier Rajiv Gandhi and President Premadasa have agreed that there is an existing Agreement between the two countries, entered into with certain objectives in view, which need to be respected. Any problems arising therefrom should surely then have become a matter for discussion and resolution between the parties themselves as indeed appears to have been the case, until the unilateral announcement of June 1 which has obviously caused misgivings on the part of India. Since our President's avowed policy is one of "consultation, compromise and consensus", the resolution of such problems should not be difficult, more so, since as he avers in his reply to Mr. Gandhi, this policy "has already borne fruit" in that "the LTTE, once the most intractable of the militant groups has ceased hostilities and have agreed to join the democratic process and are now committed to settling problems by negotiation".

However, in asking for a complete withdrawal of the IPKF, in such a context, it behoves our President and Government to ensure even more than India (who underwrote the Agreement arrived at to make it acceptable to the Tamil groups) that peace and security along with the promised rights based on the devolution of powers would be guaranteed to the people of the North and East. It is not enough to simply dismiss the latter concern (even if not directly connected with the IPKF presence) as a purely "Internal matter" when India herself had guaranteed such rights to the Tamil people in entering into this Agreement with Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the recent killing of Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) Leader and Member of Parliament A. Amirthalingam

and of former M.P. for Jaffna V. Yogeswaran and the wounding of yet another former M. P., the TULF's President M. Sivasithamparam, on July 13 night at Mr. Amirthalingam's residence in Colombo, is a grim warning of what would be in store for residents of the North-Eastern Province, given the intolerant attitude of the militant groups and the present internecine conflict between them, in the context especially of the withdrawal of the IPKF, without adequate safeguards for the peace and security of the people in these areas belonging to all communities and political persuasions. The subsequent gunning down of PLOT Leader Uma Maheswaran on a Colombo road on Sunday 16 night would serve to further underline this warning.

Murder of TULF Leader & Continuing Violence

Christian Worker which has always stood uncompromisingly against killing as a political weapon, unreservedly denounces the cowardly and brutal murder of TULF leader A. Amirthalingam and his colleague by political gangsters. It is said that the identities of the Tamil militant gunmen (who came to the house by prior appointment for a political discussion and were even to be treated to refreshments as friends), were established beyond doubt as LTTE, although the Government delayed to disclose them. (They were killed in the shoot-out that followed later with the security guards in the house).

In demanding a full and impartial investigation into this attack, the Parliamentary Opposition Group Statement signed by the Leader of the Opposition Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike on behalf of the SLFP, Athauda Seneviratne (USA), V. K. Yogeshangary (EPRLF) and Dinesh Gunawardene (MEP) has stated that Mr. Amirthalingam particularly in recent years... has publicly opposed attempts by certain Tamil groups to espouse violence as a means of political and social change. He has spoken often of the imperative need for the various communities who live in our multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nation to resolve their internal problems peacefully through mutual dialogue and live together as a united people. At this time of national crisis, the death of a leader of his stature is a loss to the country.

We must record our revulsion too at the murder of PLOT Leader Uma Maheswaran who was able to attract Sinhala support too for his cause by reason of his non-racist and professed socialist stance, although his political vision appeared to have clouded in the latter years, leading to a virtual disintegration of his organization. Dissident members of his group are suspected of being responsible for his murder. There were reports too that LTTE Leader

Prabakaran had been killed but this was denied by the LTTE and Government sources too though North-Eastern Chief Minister Vardaraja Perumal was reported in the **Sunday Times** of being convinced of his killing at Anandakula Palima in Vavuniya.

Among the later killings was that of the Director General and Chairman of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Chief of ITN and News Censor Thevis Guruge on July 23. On July 24 the censorship of news imposed by the Government was lifted, leaving the editors and journalists to act with restraint and do their own 'self-censorship' in the future. Minister Ranjan Wijeratne who made the announcement, said that the Government had reconsidered the matter of censorship, referring also to Minister Athulathmudali's statement in Parliament on July 21 that censorship had become "counter-productive"

The **Sun** of July 25 has detailed the violence that has taken place more recently. Most of the attacks—hitherto unreported in view of the press censorship in force—have been on police and armed services personnel. Subversives have exploded a series of landmines and booby trapped explosive devices in several parts of the country including a claymore mine hidden inside a municipal rubbish trolley in Colombo 5. What was most dastardly however, was the grenade attack on the final night's Kataragama Esala Perahera on July 18 participated in by thousands of devotees, resulting in 13 deaths including 4 children and over 60 others seriously injured. It is reported that Chinese built MIL 36 grenades were used in this attack.

Apart from violence, grave inconvenience has now been caused to residents in many parts of the country by the collection of their official identity cards from homes allegedly by groups of subversives. (The official identity card is invariably required as proof of identity in transactions with State offices and banks and its loss can therefore result in hardship until another is obtained.)

The Bar Association President Desmond Fernando has said that the Association was "gravely perturbed that lawyers are severely impeded in carrying out their professional duties by the use of violence and threats of violence against them". He said that Superintendent of Police Dharmadasa who stands indicted in the High Court had complained that he was unable to retain Counsel for his defence; the earlier Counsel failed to appear in Court after a member of his household was shot dead. Two lawyers who appeared for petitioners in several habeas corpus applications had been threatened with death if they appeared any more in applications for a certain group. The consequences are very serious he said for if an accused is not represented at his

trial it will not be a fair trial and if lawyers are prevented from appearing in habeas corpus applications, persons complaining of wrongful or illegal arrest or detention will be deprived of a remedy.

TELO Hartal and JVP Protest Action

Normal life and commercial activity came to a standstill on July 25 in the North-East Province following a hartal called by TELO to commemorate the death of two of its leaders during the jail riot of July 1983.

The next two days, ie. July 26 and 27, work at almost all public institutions including essential Corporations ground to a standstill in Colombo and most other parts of the country following the receipt of unsigned letters purported to have been sent out by "Action Fronts" in various places as part of a DJV/JVP sponsored campaign to have a 5 day protest action over the Indo-Lankan Peace Accord and the presence of Indian troops in the country. The public transport system and hospitals which were excluded from the protest campaign according to a rebel leaflet operated as usual (except at Badulla where the hospital staff struck in protest against the accidental wounding by Army gunfire of a doctor returning home after duty). The institutions crippled by this work-stoppage included banks both in the private and State sector, post offices, the Colombo port, Customs, Courts, prisons and several vital Corporations deemed earlier to be essential services. Kandy district was reported to be one of the worst affected districts and some of the plantation areas too were affected.

The Government's response was to clamp down an island-wide curfew from Thursday 27th July midnight till Sunday 30th July morning. The Radio and Television services were placed under the control of the Security forces and so was Lake House which published the State-owned newspapers.

Despite the curfew imposed by the Government, demonstrations and attacks on the police and armed forces were reported on July 28 in the districts of Anuradhapura, Badulla, Moneragala, Kandy, Kurunegala, Matale, and the South.

The Island of July 31 quoted the Joint Operations Command (JOC) as stating that 92 civilians, 34 subversives and 2 security forces personnel were killed on Friday 28 and Saturday 29 July in a number of incidents. (**The Sunday Times** of July 30 put the curfew violators killed at 140, the majority being from the Central Province. A Government communique stated that members of the public had been made to walk at the head of demonstrations organized by the subversives and so became the sufferers when the police and armed forces attempted to disperse the demonstrators. (This was not a new technique but the practice reported last year too in such "protest actions". See **Christian Worker**, 3rd Quarter, December 1988).

Rapport with India

On July 27 night, the State Broadcasting Service reported Minister Ranjan Wijeratne as saying at a press conference that the differences between the Indian and Sri Lankan Governments had been narrowed down and that if India was prepared to accept President Premadasa as the Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces on Sri Lanka soil including the IPKF and also agree to a ceasefire in the North, a time-frame for the withdrawal of the IPKF could be drawn up after discussions between the two governments. On July 28 however there was a change in the situation said to have been occasioned by Minister Thondaman's intervention and subsequent discussions with the Indian High Commissioner. President Premadasa made a broadcast to the Nation and the Government announced that according to a joint Indian-Sri Lankan communique, (see text on cover), the Indian Government had agreed to re-commence a withdrawal of the IPKF on July 29 (the deadline for the withdrawal given by President Premadasa), and a Sri Lankan delegation led by Minister Ranjan Wijeratne (and including Minister A. C. S. Hameed, the President's new Advisor on International Relations Bradman Weerakoon and the Attorney General among others) was to leave for India (the same day) to discuss there a time-schedule for the withdrawal of the IPKF's remaining contingent as well as review the implementation of the Indo-Lankan Accord including the proposed cessation of hostilities by the IPKF, and the ensuring of the safety and security of all communities in the North and East. (The devolution of powers to the Provincial Councils too would no doubt figure prominently in the talks though not mentioned in the communique).

The President in his broadcast to the Nation, expressed his gratitude to the Indian Government for its willingness to re-commence the IPKF's withdrawal and stated that demonstrations and protests could now cease since there was no doubt about India's intentions about the withdrawal of the IPKF. On Minister Wijeratne's landing in New Delhi, an Indian vessel entered Trincomalee harbour's Prima Jetty on July 29 to carry back some 600 IPKF troops in a token withdrawal.

Talks began in New Delhi and reports indicated that Sri Lanka appreciated the compulsions of the Indian Government but stated that she did not wish any section within the country to exploit the issue of the IPKF's continued stay in Sri Lanka. Colombo was also ready to utilise the CVF (Civilian Volunteer Force) as the North-Eastern Police to be deployed on the basis of a minimum 100 men manning each police station with military back-up where necessary to ensure the safety and security of all communities living in the North-Eastern Province.

While we are certainly happy that better judgement has now prevailed, it does seem a pity that so much time should have been wasted over merely asserting legal positions (valid as they no doubt

were) instead of following President Premadasa's own prescription of "consultation, compromise and consensus" on this issue. But much worse than the hot air generated, has been the effect of the agitation arising therefrom leading to work-stoppages, demonstrations and violence on the part of interested parties here, all of which have further adversely affected an economy already badly damaged by losses suffered from the consequences of the recent one-month stoppage of the bus transport. It is no secret that the implementation of the Janasaviya programme itself has had to be postponed until September mainly on account of the lack of finances occasioned by the breakdown of the economy. To think that the forces of chaos given free rein in all this turmoil could now be easily halted or tamed is to be unduly naive. In fact it could well be that the present backing down in the peremptory "quit or be confined to barracks" deadline could itself become a ground for further agitation on this issue. But even assuming that this issue is accepted as settled for good along with whatever is agreed on after discussions in Delhi, there are enough other demands advanced by the JVP/DJV on which agitation, unrest and "protest actions" could continue, prompted and backed again no doubt if need be, by the "power that grows from the barrel of a gun". Significantly many shops in Colombo City and elsewhere remained closed after the lifting of the curfew on July 30 morning in deference to a "JVP curfew" said to operate thereafter. (The anti-Indian JVP/DJV "protest action" of 5 days in any case covered Sunday too).

Prospects

It is difficult to see how such a situation of acute confusion could be allowed to continue indefinitely if normal civil life is to properly function at all. While the Government appears to be ineffective in uninterruptedly maintaining normal, economic and commercial life in most areas, the rebels themselves are not in any position now to assume control and run the country either. This position if unchanged can only result in the continued disintegration of our country and our ultimate annihilation as a people. To be spared such a terrible fate should be the hope and endeavour now of every thinking Sri Lankan.

In this connection, the process of negotiation and consultation set in motion now, does offer an opportunity to ease an otherwise grim situation. For as pointed out by us already in the first editorial comment inside, a settlement acceptable to all the Tamil groups together with the restoration of civil administration in the North-East Province, can go a long way towards helping in the restoration of normalcy elsewhere in the island. But this will depend on how wisely the opportunity so given is made use of by all concerned.

This has obviously been an unhappy period for the country, more so since in the midst of all the turmoil, rains with accompanying floods and

landslides, both in early June and then again in July have also taken their toll, killing over 300, injuring several hundreds and leaving several thousands homeless, especially in the Kegalle and Ratnapura districts.

31 July 1989

STILL LATER EVENTS

Indo - Lankan Parleys

Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne told Parliament on August 8 that the Indo-Lanka talks held in New Delhi from 29 July to 4 August had resulted in disagreement on three of the four points discussed. Making his statement Minister Wijeratne invited members of parliament, in accordance also with a Cabinet decision, to express their views to enable President Premadasa to ultimately make his decision.

The four points discussed were: 1. The time schedule for withdrawal of the remaining IPKF contingent; 2. The cessation of the military offensive by the IPKF; 3. Review of the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement; and 4. Safety and security of all communities in the Northern and Eastern provinces.

Minister Wijeratne stated there was agreement on the third issue—implementation of the Indo-Lanka Agreement. Sri Lanka's position that implementation of the agreement was not linked to the IPKF withdrawal was said to have been acknowledged by India after Sri Lanka had clarified the implementation already effected and the steps it intends taking to set up the Provincial Police Force and for the effective functioning of Provincial Councils.

As regards the withdrawal of the IPKF, although Sri Lanka wanted the remaining contingent to be withdrawn by the middle of September and troops not so withdrawn owing to logistical constraints to be confined to barracks, India offered a phased withdrawal at the rate of 1500 to 1600 personnel plus equipment a week. That would take up to February for India to complete the withdrawal. But India also linked this issue to that of providing safety and security to all communities in the North-Eastern Province.

On the matter of safety and security, although Sri Lanka had maintained that it was a matter for her government, she had agreed to the appointment of a committee to review and co-ordinate security arrangements during the withdrawal of the IPKF. India had wanted the Committee to review and advise on measures for the safety and security of all communities in the North-Eastern Province and co-ordinate arrangements as the phased withdrawal of the IPKF proceeds. There was disagreement also about the composition of the Committee. Sri Lanka proposed that the Governor of the North-Eastern Province, the Commander of the Sri Lankan Army, the I.G.P. of Sri Lanka and the General Officer commanding the IPKF should be members, while India wanted the Chief Minister of the North-Eastern Province to be in the Committee in place of the Governor.

Regarding the cessation of the IPKF military offensive, there were serious differences. India could only agree to a unilateral suspension of offensive operations—subject to specific operational conditions to be announced separately—for a 15 day period to be extended once the LTTE joins and participates in the North-East Peace Committee to be set up.

In response to the Government's call for an expression of views, the Opposition and the SLFP in particular has stated that the Government had not made a full disclosure on what transpired at the New Delhi discussions to enable a proper discussion of the position. There appears to be some difference of views among Ministers on the subject with the more senior ones (excepting the Transport Minister) taking the position that the problem should be handled with tact and diplomacy, while the newer Ministers were disposed to take a harder line.

Meanwhile the IPKF action against the LTTE in the North has continued and reports were received very late in Colombo of IPKF forces having killed some 70 civilians in Valvettiturai on August 2 after an LTTE ambush had resulted in 6 IPKF soldiers being killed. The LTTE is reported to have complained to the United Nation over the alleged violation of Human Right in this connections

Former President J. R. Jayewardene has recently revealed in an interview with **India Today** that when the Sri Lankan Government undertook the Vadamaratchi campaign, the then Indian High Commissioner J. N. Dixit had told Minister Lalith Athulathmudali that India would never permit Sri Lankan forces to take Jaffna and put pressure on our Government to ease the campaign against the Tamil militants in the North. Mr. Jayewardene admitted that the idea of an Accord came at a time when the Sri Lankan Government was having difficulties in sustaining the campaign and so he gladly accepted it. "If the

Accord had not happened, the Government would have lost, it would have collapsed. Moreover, India promised to bring peace to make the militants lay down their arms. They went back on their word", Mr. Jayewardene charged. He defended the Accord saying that it "was the best thing that could have happened in the circumstances". He saw nothing wrong with the Accord, because by signing the Treaty, India undertook "responsibility to help solve the problem they themselves had created". Mr. Jayewardene however supported President Premadasa on the issue of the withdrawal of the IPKF and said; "The IPKF must return if Premadasa says so. The withdrawal is not linked to devolution".

On August 15, President Premadasa declared in a statement that he was in the process of revising the New Delhi proposals to ensure there was no undermining of Sri Lanka's Sovereignty in the slightest way and "taking appropriate action there after." The President has since sent in his proposed modifications to Premier Gandhi.

Writing in **The Sunday Times** soon after the return of the Sri Lankan delegation from Delhi on August 5, the generally well-informed correspondent "Suranimala" observed that "the main factor that had loomed at the background of the talks was the lack of trust between the two governments". This was perhaps inevitable in the context of the situation, discussed in this Comment by us already, in which Sri Lanka narrowly avoided a direct confrontation with India. In this connection, of especial interest is the advice said to have been proffered on August 4 to President Premadasa by two prominent Indians who according to the same report called on him with Janasaviya Director Susil Sirivardana, namely Professor Muni of the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute and Mr. Bhabasin Sen Gupta who first announced the "Indira Doctrine" (which enunciated India's right to intervene in the affairs of countries within her sphere of influence). Both these Indians are reported to have impressed on the President that the way to overcome the present crisis with India was not to talk of morality or legality but to build a personal relationship with the Indian leadership. This advice should make sense to Sri Lankans since we cannot ourselves be unmindful of the way in which the "personal factor" has influenced our own political affairs.

"Suranimala's report referred to, states that although Minister Ranjan Wijeratne had made it clear during the New Delhi talks that Sri Lanka was prepared to grant greater devolution provided the time table for the IPKF's phased withdrawal was work out, India was insistent that this time table would only be submitted after Sri Lanka gave details of the

legislation to be introduced for the full implementation of the 13th Amendment and the granting of such greater devolution. However, after a second round of talks with Premier Gandhi, a tentative time table was given for a complete withdrawal of the IPKF within 8 months at the rate of 1500 to 1600 troops per week. India had also pointed out that long before Sri Lanka's call for the IPKF pull-out, she had asked the SAARC Secretariat for a postponement of the Summit till after March 1990 in view of the general elections and Sri Lanka could therefore host the SAARC Summit next year without being embarrassed by the IPKF. (India has since announced a withdrawal of 875 soldiers with a further withdrawal of 600 reported to follow). Suranimala's account referred to also states that in the New Delhi discussions, India also wanted the CVF strength doubled from the present 7500 in the interests of security of the North-East province residents and had stated that the LTTE should surrender its arms (in terms of the Indo-Lankan Accord) if India was to stop offensive operations against it and declare a 15 day truce in the course of which the LTTE itself could join a Committee of all Tamil militant groups and the Government to monitor the truce and ensure follow-up action.

The Land Problem

The same report also stated that India had urged that the 'colonisation process be stopped and existing colonies' such as Welis Oya be dismantled. Even if this was so, it was obviously a domestic matter for Sri Lanka to resolve as is evident too from the fact that it does not figure in the summary tabled by Minister Wijeratne in Parliament of position papers prepared by the parties after the New Delhi discussions. However it cannot be gainsaid that any settlement of the North-East' issue with the Tamil groups would necessarily entail a resolution of the land problem presently brought into sharp focus by Welis Oya. It was the LTTE's bone of contention too that the Government had colonised Sinhalese, in this area and that it amounted to a 'military strategy', this matter being also the sore point at the Thimpu talks. Welis Oya lies on the outer periphery of the old Padaviya settlements started by D. S. Senanayake in one of the most under-developed areas of the country. But the location of Welis Oya is such that it effectively divides the North and the East, a part of it lying in the Anuradhapura area, another part in the Trincomalee district and yet another in the Mullativu district. The second third and fourth generation Padaviya people are said to have moved into Welis Oya. It was in this area too that the Dollar and Kent farms were which saw repeated attacks on them by Tamil militants. A settlement acceptable to all parties on this land issue would therefore have to be reached

if the North-East problem is to be finally resolved and peace ensured. It is unfortunate that the Government's discussions with the LTTE did not take into account the North-Eastern Provincial Council which has to administer this area so that some understanding on this matter too could have been reached. In fact it would appear that the Governments pre-occupation with bringing the LTTE and JVP into negotiations, however well-intentioned, has served also to alienate groups like the EPRLF which have already opted to enter the democratic process.

No End to Troubles

While the Government even after two sessions of deliberations with the LTTE has not arrived at any clear settlement with it, the JVP has remained intransigent in its position. On July 29 a recorded message by JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera is said to have reiterated the JVP's stand that it was not merely the withdrawal of the IPKF that was at issue but that the Accord itself had to be abrogated and the Provincial Councils dissolved. After effecting a daring attack on the Police Field Headquarters at Thimbirigasyaya in the very centre of Colombo on August 2 evening and an arms grab effected in the process, with almost simultaneous bomb blasts in the Borella Kirilapone and Thimbirigasyaya areas of Colombo City, the JVP/DJV were able to stage a successful one-day hartal/curfew on August 4, not surprisingly, since if the police were unable to protect their own Field Headquarters, what chance had the public of receiving State security and protection if they set about their normal avocations that day? And this, notwithstanding the Government's Emergency and official curfew in force at nightfall.

The same situation prevailed when the JVP/DJV, through a few posters and other means called for a "token strike" on August 15 (India's Independence Day).

A work-stoppage from August 11 in Colombo Hospitals said to have been occasioned by the arrest of two minor employees for putting up anti-Government posters which called upon the hospital staff to refuse medical treatment to security forces, resulted in thousands of patients being deprived of medical treatment. The work stoppage spread to most of the hospitals in the Western Province on its fifth day. The arrested workers were granted bail by Colombo's Additional Magistrate on August 18 and released thereafter but it was only by August 21 that the premier hospitals began limping back to normal, but with the operation of a "work-to rule" in some places.

The entire train service too ground to a halt similarly on August 19 after 8 railway employees were taken into custody by the security forces. Four of these were later released on bail but only

a skeleton train service could be operated even on the fifth day of the work-stoppage.

When the JVP/DJV Satan Madhiyastana or Action Committee called for a 5 day general "Protest" work - stoppage from August 28, the Armed Services were able to have some shops in centres like Colombo opened and to keep a limited bus service going, but the reluctance of the public to travel in such buses or attend their places of work, especially on the 28th, was marked. After a Government announcement that wages would not be paid to those not reporting for work there was some attendance at State work places and institutions the second day but hampered still by the lack of adequate transport. However, little or no work was transacted in workplaces and offices and key institutions like the banks remained closed. It became clear therefore that the Government was still unable to instil confidence into the public that it was in control of the situation and so the JVP/DJV on this occasion too was able to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the Government to maintain normal life and conditions in the country.

The DJV was reported to have given August 20 (extended to 27) as the deadline for members of the security forces and police to resign from service or face extermination of their families. Families of security personnel have been reported killed in different parts of the country and the forces were said to have begun moving their families to safe-houses in response to this latest DJV threat.

A counter threat has also been directed against the families of JVP people and posters said to be put up by the Armed Forces have appeared in many places threatening the subversives with dire consequences should they carry out their threat. The results can be ghastly.

On August 20 Prime Minister Wijetunge reacting to this DJV directive, made a 'special appeal' to the militants to effect a ceasefire which could be reciprocated by the security forces and police and so lead to a process of consultation and dialogue.

Earlier President Premadasa had called upon a delegation who visited him from the Sri Lanka Progressive Front (SLPF) headed by its leader S. D. Bandaranayake to intervene (since they had contacts with the rebels) in bringing about a one week or longer cease-fire or truce in order to open a dialogue to restore peace. Responding to the proposals put forward by the SLPF which were not dissimilar to those advanced earlier by the JVP, the President pointed out that if the Constitution was to be amended, the Government alone could not do it as it did not have a 2/3 majority. Nor could he dissolve Parliament, as a new President could not do so until a year had

passed. He suggested therefore that all parties gettogether and decide how the Constitution could be amended and whether elections could be held and how. Meanwhile, until a response was forthcoming from the rebels, cordon and search operations continue as a part of the Government's anti-subversion drive. Mass arrests have been made and according to the TV English news on August 28 night, "books on socialism" too have been seized by the security forces.

Violence was also reported to have erupted in the Ampara district on August 11, in which several government offices including at least 5 post offices were torched by unidentified persons: who according to the police had arrived on bicycles. Torching of some state buildings was also reported subsequently in areas such as Nawalapitiya and Kalutara.

Security & Intelligence

It is said that the Government is now considering the linking of the Intelligence services to field operations to make security work more effective, since the NIB was not providing necessary information to enable those in the field to carry out their operations effectively. It is obviously the woeful lack of intelligence information also that leads to the detention and arrest of so many innocent youths today, resulting in the further alienation of people from the Government. The security situation therefore leaves much to be desired and senseless killings on both sides go on with sickening regularity with corpses of youth lying by the roadside and floating down rivers, becoming an increasingly common sight in some areas.

At a security meeting, Minister Gamini Dissanayake is reported to have said that immediate steps should be taken to re-vamp the security set-up. The same minister was also reported earlier to have made references at a seminar to 'Pol Pot killings', burning bodies and the need today for a "new leadership", of the country. This is said to have led to some bandying of words in Cabinet and a clamp on statements of Cabinet Ministers on security matters without the permission of the Defence Minister.

Victims of more recent killings have included at least two well-known Buddhist monks: on July 25 of the Ven. Raddagoda Sarankara Thera of Korossa Temple well known for his espousal of mass issues and on August 4 of the Ven. Kotikawatta Saddhatissa Nayake Thera (72) of Kolonnawa, prominent in 'establishment' circles. The *Divaina* also reported that two young Bhikkhus and a boy of 8 years were killed at the Veyangoda Dhanvilana Sri Jinaraja Vihara on August 12 and their bodies burnt in front of the Bo-Tree in the Temple premises. Popular

Sinhala Broadcaster and TV announcer Premakirthi de Alwis was shot dead on July 31 night at Homagama. The Chief TV news editor Kulasiri Amaratunga too was shot dead on August 13 at Ratmalana. A DJV call to all employees in the state media to resign, prompted the Government to place the TV and radio stations under the control of the security forces, the Government refusing also to accept resignations from the employees. Service personnel appear to be now deployed for the most part in broadcasting work in Sinhala as a result.

On August 19 subversives were reported to have gunned down Independent students Union (ISU) President K. L. Dharmasiri a final year student of the Law Faculty on a Colombo road. Dharmasiri succeeded ISU founder President Daya Pathirana who himself was foully done to death in December 1986 (see **Christian Worker** 4th Qr. 1986)

Among the latest killings have been those of a young human rights lawyer Kanchana Abeypala in Colombo on August 28 night and of former UNP M.P Mrs. Sepali Senadheera who was shot dead along with 4 of her security men on August 29 in the Galle District.

It was reported in **The Sunday Times** that when the security situation came up for discussion by the Government, Minister Gamini Dissanayake had stressed the importance of working together

with the SLFP MPs in each district to bring the situation under control. Several other Ministers however were said to have disagreed stating that the SLFP politicians in certain areas like Uva were allegedly involved in JVP activities.

We have already commented on the tragic fate that awaits our country and ourselves as a people if the present situation is allowed to continue. It is certainly time therefore that politicians, specially those of the leading parties of the UNP and SLFP become aware of their responsibilities in this situation and stopped playing the cynical and dangerous political games to which they have become accustomed at the expense of the common people of our country who are invariably the sufferers. In this connection we would endorse the sentiments expressed by ELJP leader Rukman Senanayake and Dr. Gamini Wijesekera in a recent appeal made by them for a halt to the current wave of killings. Noting that "in fact the entire country has now become a killing field", the statement which called for "dialogue and discussions" to solve problems said: "This senseless massacre must end. If not, Sri Lanka herself will soon bleed to death. We plead for tolerance from all concerned." And this indeed is the day for which the common people of Sri Lanka yearn.

31st August 1989

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For Peace and a Provisional Government !

On August 26, five opposition parties in Parliament ie. SLFP, USA, EPRLF, SLMC, and MEP have together appealed for peace and called upon "all groups to reject violence as a method of conflict resolution" and proposed the formation of "a Provisional Government by Parliament to run the country."

The statement said: "As the Presidential form of Government has totally failed, we propose that a Provisional Government be formed by Parliament to run the country. Constitutional reforms should be implemented. The Executive Presidency should be replaced with a Prime Minister responsible to Parliament. Free and fair elections will follow.

"The forces not represented in Parliament must be included in this process by means of consultation.

This coming together of opposition parties is important and Significant.

President Premadasa has now convened an all party Conference on September 13 to discuss ways of overcoming the present crisis.

But peace must first be established in our villages and our towns must begin to bustle. Our children must breathe the air of freedom and our schools and universities must once more become the seats of learning.

"We urge all persons engaged in violence to give it up and to contribute towards making these proposals workable. We urge our security forces to act using maximum restraint, mindful of their national obligations.

"In this most crucial phase in our history, let us not forget that we are all sons and daughters of one nation and work tirelessly for the restoration of peace and democracy".

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Janasaviya and its Perspectives

Bernard Soysa

General Secretary of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party

Janasaviya as announced is a package of several measures; but it is primarily a welfare proposal. Many descriptions of what is proposed have been given both in Parliament and through the media. However the best of these is what has been put forward by Susil Sirivardana. It seeks to set out the proposal analytically and schematically, its various sections being devoted to the various aspects of what is to be done. The statement though analytical in a way is full of emotive language which, of course, expresses the author's own total identification with the proposal and his enthusiastic advocacy of what he sees as the means for the alleviation of poverty.

There are two important matters that are not referred to in Mr. Sirivardana's statement. These are : how is it proposed to finance the proposal and what will be its impact upon the economy of the country. Before these matters are considered, it is necessary to look at what has been given. Here it is useful to say that while the schematic outline of the proposal and the means of implementation is set out in emotive terms, the statement is specific in regard to four matters: the summary of measures in para 5.1, (called here the Two Internal Elements) in which the components of the promised grant of Rs. 2,500/- per poor family are set out :

The framework of time, that is to say the statement that there would be a 24 month fixed time period of assistance, (para 5.2);

The announcement of the "work for pay" position which is further emphasised as being "no dole", (para 6.7) and the external actors are mentioned;

The reference to some of the forms of investment that may be made with the proposed savings, given the heading Technology Choice.

Two specific references are made to what has been done elsewhere though it is not clear whether these are indicated as models. They are: the reference in para 6.2 to Thihagoda and the reference in para 8.6 to Uvagram. There may be reports giving details of what has been done

in these two places, but they are not generally available. In referring to Thihagoda a description is given of the infrastructure created there.

Present Difficulties.

It is necessary to say now that the present impasse in the negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and other multi-lateral agencies as well as the present state of the country afflicted with floods and the spread effects of terror and slaughter are bound to have an adverse effect on the carrying out of Janasaviya. It is not intended to discuss these matters here. However it is necessary to note that the implementation of the proposal requires that it should be accepted by the people and that they should participate enthusiastically in implementation. In our society there are many, many causes that tend to inhibit such enthusiasm; without however endeavouring to go into those causes, it can be seen that the various modifications made in the proposal since the first announcement of a grant of Rs. 2,500/- per poor family was proclaimed, have done much to dull the first flush of hope.

There need be no misunderstanding. Any Proposal which assists at the least some poor people and enables a section of the poor to rise above the degradation of poverty is not to be rejected unless the social costs are so great as to outweigh the benefits.

An important aspect of the proposal is how it is to be financed. Here there appears to have been a lot of thinking and rethinking. On the first announcement that 7.5 million persons would be assisted on the basis of a scheme to assist 1.5 million families, the costs appeared to soar into the region of one hundred billion over a period of two years or Rs. 57,000,000,000 per year. Then it was said that since half the number of recipients would be obtaining employment and would go out of the scheme the sum would not be so great. Well, half the sum would be Rs. 28 billion.

How this sum is to be found presented a very difficult problem indeed. They talked about finding the money by cutting down on capital votes-even

very drastically. This however is no way of getting the money. Most capital votes are sums given for specific projects by donor governments. They are not freely transferable. Next came a speculation that various donor countries would give of their bounty with great generosity. This too began to appear to be unlikely. Now recourse is to be had to the multi-lateral agencies; the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Those negotiations are now proceeding.

Economies

Then there is the effort to raise the money internally. The new revenue proposals do not amount to any thing worthwhile although they do hurt sections of the middle class and working class. With his new proposals, the Finance Minister cannot balance his budget. There is an ugly unfinanced gap-ugly because it is well known that that gap will at the end of the year be much larger, several times larger, than is now announced. So now they fall back on internal economies. Much of this, like the curtailment of "overtime" earnings will amount to economies at the expense of the poor public servant, middle class and working class. To do this would amount to robbing one section of poor persons to give some relief to another section. And this at a time when waste and corruption with the high social costs they entail are seen to be escalating. It is no wonder that the employed sector feels bitter.

So now the scope of the proposal is to be circumscribed. This is not stated in the same terms. What is said is that implementation is to be staggered, beginning with the "poorest of the poor". Instead of the 1.5 million food stamp receivers (now said to be 1.9 million) the first receivers of Janasaviya benefits will number some 300,000 families.

The implementation of what is proposed requires that the sum of Rs. 2,500/- per family be divided into two parts: Compulsory savings and Consumption Component. The first will be Rs. 1,042/- per month; the second will be Rs. 1,458/- per month. Of the part given for consumption is again in two parts: Rs. 1,000/- for consumption on the items given in the Card and Rs. 458/- which may be saved or spent on consumption. The card lists a "Food Basket": Rice, flour, milkfoods, sugar, dry fish, local coarse grains and local pulses. School books and medicines are not in this. There is no cash given in any sum. The card gives the right to get the goods. There is no free cash for travel or for entertainment even if this means only a bus ride to Galle Face and back on a Sunday, if the family lives near Colombo. The price structure even of the goods promised is not mentioned.

There is a sad situation that arises in such an arrangement. The recipient often seeks to convert the subsidy into cash in some way. (rice ration

books were sold or hired out). There is no guarantee that this will not happen. This situation tends to be further aggravated by the "topping-up" system that is to be applied. That is to say the recipient will get the difference between the declared income and Rs. 1,000 and not the full Rs. 1,000 unless the income is Rs. 300 or less.

The consumption limit of Rs. 1,000/- is tied to the position that some work has to be done by one in the family to qualify for the aid. What are the tasks on which people will be employed? They have to be of some use to society. There were Unemployment Relief Schemes in the past that did not fit into any plan of development. There was a waste of labour.

"The marketing of goods and services also bring many unforeseen problems to the small entrepreneur. If... left to the mercies of supply and demand, quite a number are sure to fail."

Penalties

Under the Janasaviya law, the would-be recipient has to sign a declaration giving full particulars of family income and other pertinent particulars. There are penalties imposed upon the discovery of a "false" declaration. In these circumstances some are sure to opt out of the scheme. Then again the recipients are to be selected by the community. All these conditions will operate to reduce the numbers seeking Janasaviya aid. But even with such reduction, the numbers will be large in comparison with the resources available.

The Compulsory Saving is directed towards investment in employment/development projects. Many ventures have been identified as possibilities. But there are no restrictions upon choice, except what would naturally be expected. The capital for investment comes from the savings accumulated over a two year period. Both individual self-employment projects as well as group projects are contemplated.

Several problems can be seen in regard to these activities. The necessary skills have to be imparted. The project has to be selected with due consideration to many related aspects. The project must come within the scope of the possible outlay.

The biggest problem that confronts these enterprises is that of marketing. The necessary capital goods have to be purchased at prices that will rise according to exchange rates. Inputs also tend to fluctuate in price. It is necessary to give some protection to such enterprises against these hostile trends. The marketing of goods and services also bring many unforeseen problems to the small entrepreneur. If the entrepreneur is left to the mercies of supply and demand quite a number are sure to fail. What arrangements are in train in regard to these problems have not yet been revealed.

“What impact will this have upon our society? The answers so far have not been attempts at making a sober estimate of possibilities but rather have tended to remain in the field of hopes and aspirations”.

The idealisation of the small producer goes far back in human history. Many a Utopian dream was founded on small-scale enterprises in handicrafts and agriculture. There was a hankering after a blissful Arcadia where everyone would have two acres and a cow.

With the development and spread of the capitalist system these ideas acquired a new dimension. Both welfare and the development of small enterprises were advocated not by those who did not know of the class division in society, but those who knew it and feared it. Welfare was a means of ensuring social peace, that is to say class-peace. Small scale enterprise were thought of as an alternative to the socialist idea. In the years after the great depression of 1929, there was a ferment of ideas in Europe in regard to forms of social organisation. In Britain G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc put forward their philosophy of Distributism in opposition to the socialist idea ranging from Soviet Communism to Fabian Socialism.

This is not a condemnation of small enterprises or of welfare measures. It is only a statement that together with idealistic conceptions, there can be a basic motivation of buying class peace. For both measures have their due place in varying contexts in an integrated comprehensive plan of development that is not tied to the defence of vested interests.

Small Farmers

Here in Sri Lanka small-scale agriculture was advocated as far back as 1907 by Sir Hugh Clifford who repeated the idea in a report to the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council when he was giving up the office of Governor. The Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake took up the idea of encouraging the colonist and the small farmer. He dreamed of both a country squirearchy as well as of a new yeomanry in Sri Lanka. The last government of the present governing party attempted the fostering of small self-employment projects. However when you examine the experience of Third World countries like India and Malaysia, no striking success is recorded for such ventures. However, it can be noted that in Janasaviya a fresh combination of welfare and small ownership (now called peoplisation) is being attempted.

In putting this forward, insufficient thinking appears to have accompanied the announcement. That is why there have been so many modifications in a short space of time. What impact will this have upon our society? The answers provided so far have not been attempts at making a sober estimate of possibilities but rather have tended to remain in the field of hopes and aspirations. “Employment will be generated. The production of goods will curb inflation. Etc.”

The proposal at present is to commence with 300,000 families and next year move on to taking in the other poor sections. But even on this modified perspective, the methods of financing the proposal cause grave fears. Of the Ten Billion provided in the Budget, the free meal to school children is taking up a portion. What will be left for Janasaviya is woefully insufficient. Negotiations with the Bank and the Fund are proving difficult.

Treasury Bills

In this context when it is remembered that the penultimate flourish of the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech was the announcement that the limits of Treasury Bills will be raised by another ten billion, there is room for much mis-giving. With the spill-over of Treasury Bill borrowing from the previous year, the limits rise to eighteen Billion. The use of Treasury Bill financing for these ventures is sure to cause an intolerable inflation. Wages and salaries and other fixed incomes will be eroded. Prices will rise to frightening heights. The melancholy result will be that the very relief sought to be given will be frustrated at all points.

It is yet to be seen whether even this first year of modified implementation of the programme can be steered through without massive inflation and its dire consequences.



Janasaviya and Structural Changes

Dr. Mervyn D. De Silva M. P.

(Former Advisor, Ministry of Plan Implementation)

The new connotation given to the Janasaviya concept of human development, after it was adopted by the present government as one of its main development strategies is, that "the Janasaviya is a nationwide process to enable the poor to realise their human capacities and build their asset bases". Any professing Christian with a perception of God's presence in the socio-political processes that are directed to help the poor and oppressed cannot but wish that the Janasaviya program will realise its basic objectives and become a total success, for otherwise, it would reveal an unmindfulness of the biblical mandate for all Christians to remain close to the suffering body of Christ seen in the poor and oppressed in the world.

Unfortunately, there seems to be many contradictions in the Janasaviya program vis-a-vis the open economy policies which the government appears irrevocably committed to preserve and protect, which may not permit the authentic development the people and the country need.

Who are the Poor ?

Let us first of all begin by surveying who the poor are and for whom the Janasaviya and similar programs must take a stand. Are they a particular class or a wider group? Are they the poor in spirit or materially poor? To answer these questions let us start by looking at the vast majority of our fellow human beings who have been pushed into a situation of poverty which is growing rapidly and more acute, those who lack the most basic and elementary material goods while a minority accumulates wealth, and those who are unable to take a full part in social and political life.

The poor include the children damaged by poverty before they are born and sold after they are born, the vagrant and often exploited children of the cities, the confused and frustrated youth, especially in rural and depressed urban areas. Among the poor are the peasants who are pushed

aside deprived of land and left at the mercy of multinational systems which exploit them. There are the slum dwellers in the inner city and shanty towns, the workers who are badly paid and prevented from organising and defending their right, more often ill-treated and exploited by the employers, the under-employed and pensioners, the victims of the economic crisis and inhuman models of development. The poor include the old people and widows cast aside by modern society because they produce nothing, women marginalised and turned into consumer objects oppressed both at home and at work. This whole social group is not just deprived of possessions; it is also deprived of the right to participate in the many areas of society. Having surveyed and understood who the poor are, an important fact that needs to be constantly remembered is that the poor are not just statistics but that they are people in whose haunting faces we must recognise the suffering features of the God's we are so fond of worshipping in public display.

Poverty it will be seen is a very complex problem with a multiplicity of causes and a multiplicity of interlacing strands that calls for a concerted attempt to identify the causes and find appropriate solutions which should result in a number of cause-specific diverse solutions. But above all the root causes which are posited in our political, economic, social and even religious structures must be removed. The Janasaviya program must recognise the fact that poverty is not the real problem and that the real problem is the division of mankind into rich and poor within nations and between nations. It should innovate new policies and apply known policies that would halt the widening of this division which began in 1977.

What Poverty means to the Poor

What does poverty mean to many poor people? It could mean not having enough to eat, and going hungry to bed, wearing torn ill-fitting and outdated clothes, living in places under condi-

tions of squalor. It can mean facing old age without a fixed income or charity allowance with a constant erosion of its purchasing power due to inflation, or it could mean a childhood characterised by misery, degradation, and failure. However, since hunger is so closely related to poverty and indeed poverty is often measured by the prevalence of hunger, let us quote a description by novelist Richard Wright of his own experience with hunger during his early life. In order to grasp what hunger means to people who must suffer it, we have to depend on their experience.

"Hunger stole upon me so slowly that at first I was not aware of what hunger really meant. Hunger had always been more or less at my elbow when I played; but now I began to wake up at night to find hunger standing at my bedside, staring at me gauntly. The hunger I had known before this had been no grim hostile stranger: it had been a normal hunger that had made me beg constantly for bread, and when I ate a crust or two, I was satisfied. But this new hunger baffled me, scared me, made me angry and insistent. Whenever I begged for food now my mother would pour me a cup of tea which would still the clamour in my stomach for a moment or two but a little later I would feel hunger nudging my ribs twisting my empty guts until they ached. I would grow dizzy and my vision would dim. I became less active in my play and for the first time in my life I had to pause and think of what was happening to me."

This happened to 7,257,000 people or 50.1% of the population in 1979 when the UNP government abandoned the rice ration scheme and put them on food stamps.

During the period of the J. R. Jayawardena UNP government, with its massive and equally wasteful expenditure on infrastructure development and its implicit faith on high economic growth rates alone, it was generally believed that all would have taken care of the problem of poverty that existed. In fact it took 11 long years to know that poverty was increasing and swelling and that the reality was that the majority of people lived permanently outside a microscopic affluent group, and that this group which included the rulers, were blind to the social realities in the country.

How Poverty Arises

Poverty is of great concern for all of us now as it poses a serious threat to the system. We have been compelled to recognise that fact among others, that poverty arises when a social organisation is based on a glaringly uneven distribution of the resources available, resulting in some people accumulating more goods and resources than others. The Janasaviya implementors must recognise this, and work towards removing or reducing these disparities, not merely at grass root level, but more importantly beginning at the source, the commanding heights of economic policy planning. Equally, the program would have to contribute to the formation and implementation of a society in which the theoretical ideal of democracy can be effectively enjoyed by the vast majority of the people of this country.

Is Poverty the Real Problem?

Voice raised in Parliament

"Nineteen years ago (ie: 1970 United Front Government - Ed.) we tried to scientifically alleviate poverty by going into their causes. The UNP scoffed at us and today, 18 years later they are trying to implement some of these policies without making the required structural changes.

"While we are glad the government has woken up to the agonies of the poor, we are constrained to think like the old trickle down theory, Integrated rural Development, Bottom up approach etc. Poverty alleviation too will end up as a fad that will resound in national and International fora, while the system and structures that inherently promote poverty continue.

"Let us be honest and see the reality why people are poor, and then, answer the question. Is poverty the real problem. I would live to

answer that question with a positive, No. No, poverty is not the real problem.

The real problem, Mr. Chairman, is that mankind is divided into rich and poor within nations and between nations. The reality and depth of this problem arises from the fact that the man who is rich has power over the man who is poor and, similarly, the nation that is rich has power over the policies of those that are not rich.

But more importantly, our economic, social and political systems nationally and internationally support these divisions and constantly increase them.

We have to face this reality, accept it, and innovate policy decisions to tackle it. This then is where the problem lies. And this is where any serious poverty programme must begin.

What appears below is a response to an article appearing in Christian Worker of 3rd Quarter December 1988 by Professor Lakshman of the Colombo University.

The writer is a former Senior State Officer presently employed in the private sector. He has specialised in economics' being a B.Sc. Econ. Hons. (London) and the holder too of a First Class Degree in that subject from the University of Pittsburgh.

OPEN MARKET AND THE SOCIAL CRISIS

A Reply to Prof. Lakshman

R. M. B. Senanayake

Professor Lakshman has blamed the so-called open economy or free market economy for various social ills that have affected the body fabric in recent months.

Prof. Lakshman says that the open economy or free market economy gets its name mainly because of the elimination of direct controls over imports, relaxation of exchange controls, removal of price controls, removal or reduction of price subsidies on food, attraction of direct foreign investments, and the provision of incentives to private entrepreneurs. He lumps with these liberalisation measures, the imposition of wage restraints in general, and particularly in the public sector.

Liberalisation of the free Market

These liberalisation measures, except for the last item, are no doubt the factors that brought about a free market economy. A floating exchange rate policy was introduced as part of such an

“In absolute terms, the people’s incomes have improved. The per capita GNP at constant prices have improved continually... The free market economy is proving to be the only economic system that can work...”

economy, as is usual in most of the countries in the non-Communist world. Measures to promote foreign capital also could be interpreted as a measure of liberalisation. According to Prof. Lakshman whatever success was attached to these measures upto 1983 was due to “beginner’s luck”—whatever that may mean. According to him, the very measures of liberalisation were the cause of the post-1983 stalemates in economic growth and development. He even says “in certain respects, the post-1982 nationality crisis had part of its origins in the market-oriented economic policies of the post-1977 era”. This is a grave indictment indeed!

What are the grounds for Prof. Lakshman to reach these unusual conclusions? It is the worsening of the distribution of incomes. But Prof. Lakshman admits that the absolute level of incomes has increased. In other words, in absolute terms, the people’s incomes have improved. The per capita GNP at constant prices, has improved continually from Rs. 6,104 in 1982 to Rs. 6,922/- in 1986. The free market economy is proving to be the only economic system that can work, and Russia, China and Eastern Europe are all trying their best to introduce market forces into their centralised, regimented and bureaucratic economies. Prof. Lakshman’s ideas are strange indeed! Adam Smith was the first to see the possibility of creating wealth through a market economy, a wealth so vast that poverty itself may some day be eliminated. Our own economies in the past, were languishing in feudalism. The entire East was in slumber, and our rulers were devoting their energies to building temples and dagobas rather than pursuing economic development. In some sense, our rulers are still carrying on this same tradition rather than giving priority to the pursuit of economic development.

Competition in a free market is a dynamic force. It may encourage certain kinds of vices, but any non-competitive Socialist system has bred even worse vices which the world is just beginning to know, under Gorbachev and Deng Tsiao Ping.

Of course, the free market economy enables people who grasp the market opportunities to become richer, much faster than others. This is the inevitable price to be paid for free enterprise. People are born unequal and with different talents and abilities. Any egalitarian distribution of incomes can only be maintained by force, and as the Communist States have shown, even there—under privileges grows up, who in fact enjoy much higher real incomes, with access to all the luxuries deprived to the masses. Statistics show that distribution of incomes have become more unequal. But this is not a permanent feature. As more and more people become oriented to the market economy, they will learn to act more rationally.

The Chinese peasants are showing how to make Money in free market sales, and have no worries about inflation. Of course, bureaucrats and teachers on fixed incomes have no possibility of benefitting in a free market economy. Hence, the absolute necessity of sound fiscal policies to avoid inflation. Our professional classes however, have benefitted from an inadequately free market, since their supply has been artificially limited by barriers of entry and long periods of training. If free entry to the market for their services as professionals is allowed, their charges would undoubtedly come down, and more people would be able to afford their services. So competition and free enterprise are not the evils they are made out to be, by Prof. Lakshman.

Consider also the increase in employment as a result of the operation of the free market economy. Over 50,000 new jobs were generated by permitting foreign capital to come in. Unfortunately, there are no statistics available of employment. But the open economy has generated jobs each year although there were not enough to absorb the numbers annually entering the labour force.

Growth Verses Welfare

Prof. Lakshman refers to the social welfare schemes which prevailed since 1948, and feels that the dismantling of these schemes was part of the free market policy. Welfare Economists have often argued for support to the poor in a free market economy. The question is more complex than one of whether subsidies ought to be given or not. Resources are limited, although the Sri Lankan politician does not see this truth yet. The social welfare measures have to be maintained, in real terms. This means that, with increasing population, these welfare measures must increase in cost. But government revenue does not increase because population increases.

“The question is more complex than... whether subsidies ought to be given or not. Resources are Limited... There are other priorities, particularly the... economic growth rate... This is the central dilemma - growth verses welfare.”

It will increase only with economic growth, and that too, at a much lower rate. There are also other priorities, particularly the need to increase the economic growth rate, which requires more investment. It is not enough to provide free education. It is necessary to generate new employment opportunities, to provide jobs commensurate with the education. This is the central dilemma—growth verses welfare. Successive government have of course, failed to increase the social welfare expenditure, in real terms, to keep up with the increase in population. They have merely increased expenditure in money terms and financed it by expanding money supply. This of course, eroded the real value of these welfare benefits. The benefit of the Food Stamps, has been severely eroded by inflation. The resources spent on education and health, were not maintained in real terms. There is no such thing as a free lunch. These cannot be maintained, except by sacrificing investment and economic growth. The need for sound finances without excessive budget deficits, is not understood or appreciated by our political leaders. Although a certain growth of money supply, with printing of new money, can be absorbed without inflation, there are definite limits to this adventure. Our welfare measures are not targeted to the poor and deserving, but are available to too many people. The foolish attempt to spend in nominal terms, using deficit budgeting has caused inflation and eroded such welfare measures, in real terms.

Consider the free education policy. Providing free University education can only lead to massive unemployment among the graduates. No sensible country will gear its education policy to produce graduates in excess of the needs of the economy. The British Colonial rulers quite sensibly gave free education in rural schools and charged fees for secondary education in English schools. Here, a distinction, based on the language media is not meaningful but there is little justification for providing free education in urban schools, teaching the upper and middle class children. As Prof. Lakshman is aware, education is also an economic good and it must be market-oriented.

Then teachers and professors would not be so under-paid. The rural folk must realise that education alone can no longer be the path to social and economic advancement, when the supply of graduates exceeds the demand for their employment.

Entrepreneurship Rewarded

Prof. Lakshman laments that the free market economy reversed the relative social status of the educated and the rich. What he means is that the educated people missed out in the race to get rich in a market economy. A free market economy rewards people for their work and entrepreneurial qualities, and not for their paper qualifications. In a free market economy, there are individuals who will use their talents and resources to assure themselves of the greatest gain, and since this can best be done by answering the needs of others, they will provide goods and services which others will choose to buy. These individuals, known as entrepreneurs, contribute to creating general prosperity. Of course, these individuals are motivated by self-interest. But, as Adam Smith foresaw, their individual self-interest leads to collective prosperity and is the principal cause of the wealth of nations. Entrepreneurs are rewarded by a free market economy only if they have produced what the market needs. It is unfortunate Education is not exposed to market forces. The government permitted some fee levying institutions like the Private Medical College. But the rural youth who think that education is a passport to social advancement, have resented this competition. What these youth are objecting to is not really the principle of charging fees, but to the increase in the supply of doctors, which they feel will reduce job opportunities for them. This is, of course, only too true, if one thinks of the absorptive capacity of the Free Health Services of the government. But if medical services can be based on the market, then a much larger supply of doctors can be absorbed, since there is a large unsatisfied or poorly satisfied health care service.

The malpractices in the health services are due again, to the failure to separate the free health services of the government from the private fee levying medical services. If government doctors are permitted private practice, then it is an administrative problem of the government to see that this concession, for concession it is, is not abused. In fact, if private patients are treated in government hospital, then these patients should be asked to pay for the services. Here again, it is the failure to distinguish the poor and the rich, and the grant of free health to all, that is at the bottom of the problem. If the rich are required to pay, then the facilities of government hospitals cannot be abused by doctors resorting to private practice.

Prof. Lakshman would blame the free market for such pernicious practices as favouring the old school tie. The free market encourages economic rationality, unlike in a State-regulated system.

These feudal practices are resorted to in our traditional culture. Markets are driven not by privilege and caste or old school ties, but by contracts based on mutual self-interest. A free enterprise economy is shackled by remnants of the past, like our feudal culture, our caste system and clannishness. Any economist knows that price controls only lead to queues and black markets; and Prof. Lakshman's lament of the abolition of price controls on commodities, is certainly not based on economic reasoning. He says the elimination of price controls enabled producers and traders to charge maximum profit prices. Price controls only lead to a suppression of supply adjustment and maximum profit was only possible

“A free market rewards people for their work and entrepreneurial qualities... of course, these individuals are motivated by self-interest. But, as Adam Smith foresaw, their individual self-interest leads to collective prosperity...”

in the monopolistic situations, which prevailed prior to the free market policies of 1977. Everyone remembers how local industrialists sheltered from foreign competitions, exploited the consumers in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Real Failure

One could, however, find fault with the government for its policy of austerity for the poor, whilst permitting extravagance for the rich. It is correct that real incomes have been reduced. According to the Table of Real Wage Index Numbers published in the Central Bank Annual Report, the real wage rate index for workers in Agriculture at the end of 1986 was 112.5, for workers in Industries & Commerce it was 88.3, for workers in Services it was 72.7, and for Government School Teachers 94.3. The base year of these indices was December 1978=100. This is the real indictment against the government. By its failure to check inflation caused by its excessive Budget deficits, the government enforced austerity on large numbers of workers reducing their real wages by 25%, in some cases. While maintenance of real wages at the 1978 level could be justified, given the large unemployment in the economy, there is little economic and

absolutely no moral basis for this reduction of real wages of important sectors of the labour force. Rather it is the excessive deficit financing for the Mahaweli at present, and for the Civil War after 1983, which is responsible for this pauperisation. Our politicians have still to understand the dangers of inflation. The extravaganza of politicians and bureaucrats, the vast tamashas and political carnivals at State expense, are more reprehensible, and it would seem that the politicians are paying for their sins. But this is not the fault of the free market economy. It is rather the failure to follow sound fiscal policy that is responsible. Even in fully regulated economies like in the Communist States the political rulers could engage in extravagance and we are now made aware of how the Russian nomenklatura obtain the best of foods and drinks from the West without standing in queues and without even paying for them. Of course, the nation pays for them.

“A free market economy does not mean laissez-faire which was a concept of the 19th Century... Markets can... and do fail... There are monopolistic situations... In all such instances the state must regulate the market economy.”

The free enterprise economy or even a regulated economy cannot develop without capital accumulation. This accumulation of capital can come only through savings and foregoing consumption. In short, whether Capitalism or Socialism, economic development requires capital accumulation. This can come about by force as in Socialist States—vide the collectivisation of Russian peasant agriculture—the enforced collection of grain from farmers to feed the urban workers, etc. Alternatively, this capital accumulation can come about by voluntary savings of the people attracted to save by the rate of interest. The government must devise appropriate policies to mobilise savings and leave it to the market to determine how these savings are invested to bring about the optimum returns. But inflation is the fly in the ointment, that can undo all this, disrupt savings and misallocate investment.

It is becoming more and more clear when we hear of Gorbachev and Deng Tsiao Ping, that capitalism or the free market economy is the only sure possibility of creating wealth, a wealth such that some day poverty itself may be eliminated.

Abuses and Checks

The free market economy is capable of abuse and evil, but non-capitalist or Socialist systems also produce harmful abuse of power, racketeering, corruption and other social evils. Some people think prostitution, alcoholism, drug addiction, and gambling are only evils of the open economy. One has only to read Russian and Chinese news these days, to know that these evils are not endemic to the free market economy. In a pluralist society there are different groups of persons who exercise power in the different levels — the economic, political, cultural, religious, etc. It is the virtue of a free enterprise economy, unlike Communist totalitarian State that the same people do not dominate all these spheres of life. The abuses of the free market economy can be checked by those in positions of power in other spheres. While the selfishness of people may be tapped through the system to promote production for the market, it is not necessary to elevate selfishness as a virtue. Nobody says that self-interest and profit motives alone should drive human beings. Altruism and self-sacrifice on behalf of others must retain their place in the scheme of behaviour and the profit motive must be tempered by these virtues. It is upto the other spheres of human behaviour to do the tempering. Economic activity, like other human activity, must be subject to and regulated by, higher moral and ethical values. The entrepreneur cannot be a robber baron.

A free market economy does not mean laissez-faire, which was a concept of the 19th century. Markets can fail, and they do fail sometimes. Welfare Economics has cited several instances where markets fail, and the State must intervene. There are monopolistic situations where firms could abuse monopolistic powers in fixing prices. This calls for government regulations. There are firms imposing costs on society where regulations are needed. There are financial services like Finance Companies (where the consumer may not be able to gauge correctly due to imperfect information and his own lack of sophistication) and professional services like law, medicine and accountancy (where there are restrictions on entry and no advertising, enabling them to maintain high fees disproportionate to the value of their services in a developing country). Without regulation, there is a danger of the consumer being ripped off. In all such instances, the State must regulate the market economy. However, it is not idle theorising that is necessary but a serious attempt to study and isolate particular instances in our own environment, where markets have failed. This is the task of Economists, among others. But there is also scope for more de-regulation and liberalisation in the export trade, domestic trade and industry.

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What Soviet - China friendship can mean for us

— a historical view and perspective —

Charita Wijeratne

Socialists the world over are hopefully looking on at the developments in the Soviet Union and in People's China, and in the relations between these two great socialist powers. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to China in May this year signifies the end of almost a three decades long enmity. The rapprochement may be said to open before us a perspective as wonderful as the one presented by the 1917 Russian Revolution and the 1948-49 Chinese Revolution. Small wonder that the recent events have therefore raised ambitions hopes in the hearts of all genuine socialists. Building of socialism could at last be an international task and the Third World may now see its way out of the present impasse. Are we at last approaching the prospect when the greater part of mankind will pool their resources to build together a social order of plenty in which every one lives without want and in equality-equality both conceptual and material?

The Epicentre Shifts to Asia

If as Lenin said, the 1917 Russian Revolution, 'broke the chain of world capitalism at its weakest link' the 1948-49 Chinese Revolution broke it at even a weaker link. The victory of the Chinese Revolution led all socialists to believe and hope that the isolation of the Soviet Union within a hostile capitalist world had come

to an end, and above all, that the socialist revolution would now be transformed into an international event. In order to grasp the full import of this belief and hope one has only to recall the price that Russia had to pay, the hardships it had to undergo and the blood it had to shed, for being the first to usher in the socialist revolution, for being a backward country and for being boycotted by the capitalist world. Yet the very factors that bedevilled the Russian Revolution now contributed to strain the relations between the two socialist powers.

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The contribution of the Soviet Union toward the victory of the Chinese Revolution was decisive. On the other hand it did everything possible to prevent that victory. These two seemingly contradictory statements have to be understood in their proper contexts in order to understand the true nature of the relations between Russia and China. Such an understanding will also provide a true perspective of the next stage in the world socialist movement.

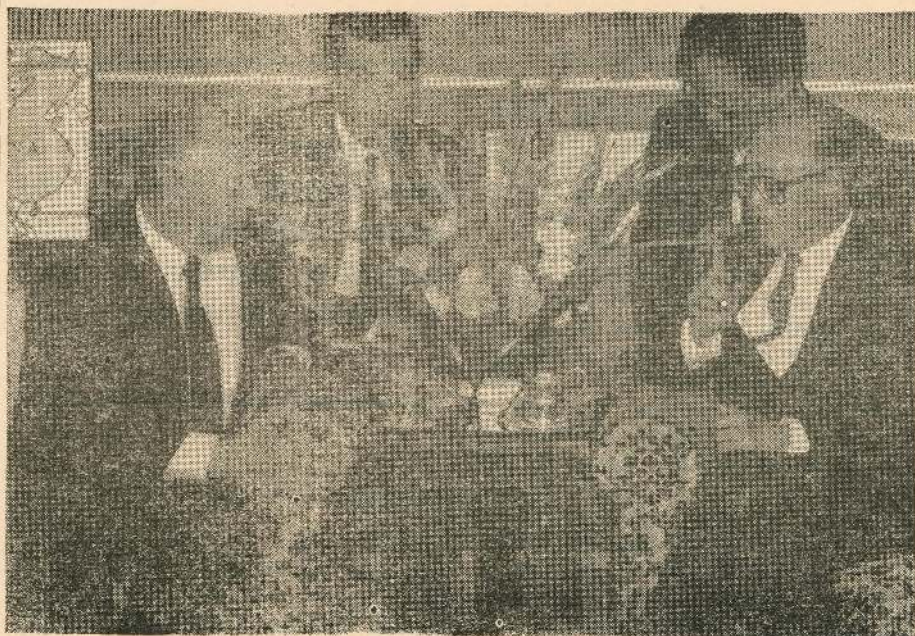
The Chinese people entered revolutionary history in 1911 by toppling China's imperial throne. No doubt, it was a mighty achievement, but the victory soon proved to be a still birth. Socially the overthrow of the imperial dynasty achieved nothing. It did not free the nation from its dependence on foreign capitalist powers; it did not unite the nation which was dismembered by war-lordism and compradore capitalism; it did not solve any of the problems of the peasantry. In short, the first Chinese revolution had no claims even to be a bourgeois-democratic revolution. The anti-imperialist movement in China thus found itself grouping in the dark without finding a way out.

More than a decade passed without any significant change. The anti-imperialist movement was limited to sporadic peasant revolts. Although all the pre-conditions for a revolution existed in China, no leader or group had any direction. It was

then that a call was heard from the outside. The Second Congress of the Third International sent out a call from Moscow to all colonial and semi-colonial nations in the East to raise the standard of revolt under the socialist banner. The Chinese were quick to grasp the meaning of the call and Bolshevik concepts of the socialist revolution began to flow into China. A way out of the morass now loomed before the Chinese leaders. Lenin's formulation of the strategy of the Russian Revolution by unifying the peasant uprisings with urban working class struggles corresponded well with the objective conditions in China. Russian Bolsheviks taught the Chinese people that their struggle aimed at unifying the nation, giving land to the landless, establishment of the democratic state and rescuing China's economy from the grip of western imperialism, could be achieved only through a socialist revolution. The Chinese Communist Party arose out of this new strategy and the Soviet Union, while providing theoretical guidance, also provided training for the Chinese communists and even supplied arms.

Revolution 1927 and Betrayal

Chinese militants, now organized under the Communist Party faced the situation with the rational perspective of a socialist revolution. And behind them was the great socialist ally to depend on for moral and material support. The second great socialist revolution was about to erupt in Asia. But by the time the guns began to boom Soviet policy had changed and moved away from its Bolshevik strategy, under the direction of Joseph Stalin. The programme of the International adopted at the Second Congress now ceased to be heard and the new Russian policy simply aimed at preserving the world status quo to which end Stalin kept away from all class struggles elsewhere and refrained from encouraging or getting involved in anti-imperialist struggles. He was now seeking safety within the existing international order and dreaded any sign or sound that might upset the balance



Gorbachev's Visit-an end to three decades of enmity.

of power. Stalin made use of the socialist and anti-imperialist movements to bargain with the imperialist powers at the diplomatic game. His concept of 'socialism in one country' was now taking its toll in the way of betraying the colonial and working class revolutions. Accordingly, Stalin prevailed upon the Chinese communists, who were already up in arms, to stop the struggle for power and accept the leadership of Chiang Kai Shek to refrain from helping or encouraging peasant revolts and make peace under the rule of the Kuomintang. The Chinese revolution, he proclaimed, should be limited to bourgeois democratic aims. Nevertheless, the rural countryside in China was already ablaze with peasant revolts. The cities were virtually in the hands of the victorious workers and the Kuomintang was about to collapse making way for the Shanghai Commune. The Chinese communists, even on the eve of their victory, gave in to Stalin and sought a settlement with Chiang the imperialist pretender. The counter-revolution seized the opportunity of the cease fire and butchered the entire working class including the best cadres of the Chinese Communist Party. Thus ended in disaster the second great Chinese revolution of 1927.

Although the defeat of the revolution was total, the counter-revolution too failed to consolidate

its victory. Nothing could have salvaged the dilapidated social structure of China. The disintegration of China had been complete. Any attempt at reconstruction and consolidation on pre-socialist lines would have failed at the very start. Peasant revolts still continued and the whole social order was crumbling under the corrupt and ramshackled administration of Chiang Kai Shek. The old regime in China was already on its death bed.

Meanwhile, betrayed by their socialist 'ally', the Chinese communists found themselves in a quagmire. There was no visible way out. The working class considered to be the dynamic motive force of the revolution, had perished in the counter onslaught. In this impasses, a totally different strategy from the Bolshevik concept surfaced. The Chinese Communist Party abandoned the urban working class altogether, turned its back on the Soviet Union and adopted the strange slogan: 'from the country to the town'. Nothing was more alien to the Bolshevik concept of the socialist revolution and indeed no socialist at the time took it with any degree of seriousness. Mao Zedong, the author of the new strategy, combined the two struggles, peasant struggle and the anti-imperialist struggle and went into the wild jungles of China with a peasant army.

Pretence of a Friendship

How would the Soviet Union and the Chinese adjust their relations under the changed situation? Many Chinese could not easily erase out of their minds the memory of Stalin's betrayal of 1927. On the other hand Mao's strategy had nothing in common with Bolshevism. Besides, Stalin saw no purpose in such a strategy for his self-centred policy. However, this was no time for him to ignore the Chinese communists, far from engaging them in an issue. Nor did it serve Mao's purposes to enter into a debate with Stalin. In the circumstances, the Russian Stalinists put on a friendly appearance but extended no positive support except in the way of deceptive flattery. In turn Mao too outwardly put on a show of accepting of Stalin's advice but in truth never even thought it worthwhile to consider it, and instead went off on his 'long marches'.

Victory

By 1948 the disintegration of China's social order was so complete that Mao's army had practically no battle to fight. Japanese aggression and occupation lasting about 15 years had ravaged the country. The social structure was totally dislocated and Chiang Kai Shek's government was visibly collapsing on its own. All that remained for Mao and his army to do was to enter the empty cities and take over power. Stalin never understood the situation in China and even at this stage insisted that Mao should submit to Chiang and accept his leadership. Although the Russian Stalinists did everything possible to strangle the Chinese revolution and although the Maoists in 1927 on the verge of victory sacrificed the Chinese communists and the urban working class and left for the wilds, the 1948-49 victory marked the second great event in the world socialist revolution that took off from Russia in 1917. If Napoleon Bonaparte saw China as a 'sleeping lion', it had now woken with a roar that echoed through and through the Asian continent and the imperialist West.

A great perspective of two socialist powers together building a Socialist economy across a vast territory, loomed.

Friendship Anew

The pattern of the new relationship between the two socialist powers naturally corresponded to the existing international situation. They were both prepared to forget past enmities and come together in their own individual national interests. The hostile and uncertain surroundings pushed them into each others' arms. The intensity of the cold war and the division of the world into two hostile camps drew them together. Like the Soviet Union in 1917, China in 1948 was also beset with a semi-colonial, backward economy. It was necessary for China to seek Soviet support and build its own economy on the Russian model.

However, the path toward a close and genuine friendship between the Soviet Union and People's China was not so smooth as it appeared. To many Chinese the Russian betrayal of 1927 was still fresh in their minds. There was also the question of the Chinese territory occupied by Japan and later seized by the Soviet Union. Nothing was being said about the earlier pledge that this territory would be restored to the Chinese.

Notwithstanding these issues, China needed the Soviet friendship and economic support. Above all it looked for security and peace to consolidate its victory. Stalin who trembled at the possibility of a Tito-Mao front was even more eager to have Mao under his care. So the two Socialist powers pledged to be on friendly terms, each for its own national interest, and both reaped rich benefits from the accord.

On the economic front, Soviet-China joint stock companies were set up through which the Soviet Union was able to exert tremendous influences over China's economy. On the side of China, the gains were even better. Thanks to the Soviet economic and technical assistance, China did not have to suffer the immense hardships experienced by the Soviet Union in its early years of trying to build 'socialism in one country'. We will remember that at the start the Soviet Union, being boycotted by the rest of the world, was confined to its own resources. It was not so for China. With Soviet engineering techniques, training and technology, and the lessons drawn from the Soviet experience, the task of socialist construction was comparatively easy. China did not have to imprison thousands of its subjects and walk over the dead bodies of millions.

In this way a great perspective of two socialist powers together building a socialist economy across a vast stretch of territory loomed before all socialists in the world.

Breakdown of Friendship

However, Stalin's concept of socialism in one country and his self-interested policy did not make way for such an ambitious prospect. Stalin's successors including Khrushchev inherited all these attitudes. They too wanted to be secure within the status quo. They too feared to get involved in the mass struggles in other countries. All that they wanted was to refrain from doing anything that was likely to upset the existing balance of power. And to this end Stalin and his successors manoeuvred the communist parties in other countries.

From the Chinese point of view, the existing world order was detrimental to their country. The imperialist camp treated China as an outlaw that should not be permitted into any international body including the United Nations. China was subjected to a tight trade boycott. It was almost besieged by a cordon of American war bases. In this reality China could not tolerate a hostile world environment. The only way out for it

was to encourage all forces that threatened the existing international order. The two contradictory and conflicting policies came into confrontation bringing the friendship to its end.

Soviet engineers, technicians and experts were recalled from China. Plans and blue prints for industrial infrastructure too vanished with them. Large factories in which China had heavily invested ceased to function, leaving thousands of workers unemployed. China, like the Soviet Union, fell back on its own resources and consequently adopted a self-interested and inward-looking policy. Both powers sought to use the communist parties abroad for their own diplomatic ends.

The recent visit of the Soviet Leader to China after nearly three decades of enmity now opens before us the vision of a vast socialist commonwealth. The Soviet Union has already provided

employment for many Chinese subjects and there is a great deal of technological exchanges between them. Are we then despite the Stalinist legacy and distortions of the past, witnessing the future prospects of one-third of the world's inhabitants pooling their resources and planning a socialist economic order over a vast stretch of territory? Will the other communist countries, from Eastern Europe to South Asia join in this ambitious effort? As for me there is no reason to be pessimistic. The new Soviet-China friendship is being forged on a more advanced economic background and in a better and hopeful world environment than it was three decades ago. Militarily and economically the imperialist world is no longer able to exert pressure and seek to arm-twist the socialist nations, which are now not one but many. If the Chinese revolution held a vision of a socialist commonwealth extending from the seas of China to the Elbe, we can now see it on even a larger scale encompassing

the greater part of the globe. The prospect of ending the exploitation of man by man and of a human society based on affluence and characterized by equality is perhaps already looming ahead.

Editorial Note :

While acknowledging the Soviet Chinese Summit as a most welcome step, we find it difficult to share the sanguine hopes of the writer that an international Socialist Order can be a foreseeable consequence therefrom, given the present bureaucratic power structure in countries that have taken the Socialist road. The recent tragic events in China should be a sufficiently grim warning. Socialism involves not merely the development of the productive forces (of especial importance to backward countries) but also the socialization of production and above all the democratization of all aspects of social and political life in order to sustain it.



The Student Challenge in China

China has witnessed massive student demonstrations beginning in April this year. Tens of thousands are reported to have marched the streets singing the Internationale and chanting "Long live freedom, Long live democracy! Down with tyranny and dictatorship!"

The Chinese students began their protests to commemorate the death on April 15 of Hu Yaobang whom they saw as a Government "liberal". Hu was removed as Communist Party Secretary two years ago to appease the more hardline leaders in the wake of student demonstrations demanding democracy. On his death therefore, Hu became the symbol of democracy and a Chinese style of *glasnost* (openness) with the student outbursts that followed his death.

In their April protest movement this year, the students showed great initiative in their marches and in building up their own independent campus co-ordinating organization embracing some 30 colleges and universities in Beijing, turning their backs on the two officially recognized student unions with whom the Government sought to negotiate. This was followed by massive student demonstrations in Shanghai and other cities. It was clear that the students were revolted by the privileges enjoyed by the top officials and bitter too about the comfortable positions held by their children, in stark contrast to the squalid condition of students on campuses with 4 to 6 bunkers cramped into small rooms. China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping has himself admitted that education is the

biggest failure of his decade of reforms. The students also called upon the leaders and their families to declare their financial holdings. It is noteworthy, that when the Government in the face of the demonstrations set up talks, it also banned further imports of luxury cars and announced that its annual summer sojourn to a seaside resort would be discontinued.

Although the police initially sought to beat up and disperse the students when they demonstrated outside the Communist Party Headquarters on April 17, the resulting massive demonstration on April 22 of an estimated 150,000 students at the historic Tiananmen Square (Gate of Heavenly Peace) passed without any police intervention.

May 4th this year marked the 70th Anniversary of China's first Student Movement in 1919 which led also to a political awakening of the Chinese working class under the inspiration of the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Chinese Communist Party. On this May 4th Anniversary, tens of



at the tiananmen square, Beijing, a gathering of studentsdifficult to crush

thousands of student demonstrators marched to Tiananmen Square demanding democracy and press freedom. They reiterated their earlier demand for talks with the Government. Their demands included democracy, greater attention to science and education and a clean and efficient administration. These they said were "by no means contrary to the Government's ideas and are aimed at realising the modernisation of the Chinese nation". The students were also joined by over 200 Beijing-based journalists who called for press freedom. That the student protests enjoyed wide public support and sympathy was seen not only in the spread of similar protests to the other cities but also in the popular response to the protests with people blocking the movement of police and even of the troops when martial law was declared by the authorities. It is however significant that despite hints and even threats of using strong arm methods, the Government did not for a long time make a serious attempt to crush the student movement but preferred for the most part to watch and give the agitation time to subside. This was also understandable in the context of a movement which was able to draw a million demonstrators on two occasions in Beijing in May

and hundreds of thousands elsewhere. (It was absurd to merely denounce this as the work of "counter-revolutionaries" and "disruptors"). The subsequent attempt by the Government on June 3 to use troops who appeared unarmed to clear Tiananmen Square of the students, was successfully repelled by workers and angry citizens. However in the early hours of June 4, armed troops estimated at more than 10,000 coming from all directions and backed by tanks mowed down the demonstrators and took control of Tiananmen Square. At least 1,400 people were reported killed and 10,000 wounded during this brutal army exercise. (Government sources have put the dead at 300 but students claim about 3000 were killed). Even after thousands of troops had cleared and sealed off the Square, unarmed protestors were reported to have gathered to demonstrate and shout "Down with Li Peng!" (the Chinese Prime Minister). Widespread unrest throughout the country was reported after the crushing of the student protest.

It is now known that the massacre was carried out by the hardened troops of the 27th Army recently transferred from Inner Mongolia to the capital and whose commander is a relative of the Chinese President. The regular

Beijing garrison the 38th Army refused for 2½ weeks to enforce the martial law ordered by the government. There have been reports of conflict within the Communist Party itself and sections of the Army over this butchery of the Students. It is known that Communist Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang himself (since dismissed) was sympathetic to the students and put under house-arrest before the crack down. Needless to say, this slaughter and repression has only served to discredit the Government leadership and tarnish the image of the communist party and the Peoples Liberation Army of China.

It is noteworthy that the state visit of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to China on May 15 while the student protests were continuing, became also the occasion for the students to welcome Gorbachev's policies of **glasnost** (openness) and **perestroika** (restructure) and demand that China follow in the Soviet Union's footsteps and allow greater freedom of political action including free elections to political offices. Before meeting Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping at the Great Hall of the People, Gorbachev was to have paid his respects at a memorial in Tiananmen Square but this was dropped because of the presence of student demonstrators. Even as Gorbachev had his 2½ hour discussion with Deng the students continued their chanting of slogans which Gorbachev could not have helped hearing. The patterns of "liberalisation" in China have been different from those in the Soviet Union for while there appears to have been a lot of **perestroika** in China there has been very little by way of **glasnost**!

Classically, students in any society act as a pointer and indicate the gathering tensions and unrest in society at large. While the Chinese students have articulated popular resentment at the life-styles of the bureaucrats their protest also came after several strikes by workers primarily over prices. It may well be therefore that the student protests have given notice too of more serious unrest welling up in Chinese society.

Two past issues of *Christian Worker* have carried article on the Reforms being carried out in the USSR and China. We reproduce here a completely different viewpoint taken from the *Militant (UK)* on developments in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Will the devil cut his Claws?

'Reform' in the USSR and Eastern Europe

— Peter Taaffe

Fifty-two years ago Leon Trotsky commented on the Stalinist regime in the the USSR :

"The further course of developments must inevitably lead to a clash between the culturally developed forces of the people and the bureaucratic oligarchy. No devil has yet voluntarily cut off his own claws. The Soviet bureaucracy will not give up its positions without a fight. The development leads obviously to the road of revolution".

Recent events in Eastern Europe appear at first glance to have falsified Trotsky's analysis. The USSR is in the throes of 'elections', due in March, to a new 2,250-seat "Congress of People's Deputies." This will elect a 'working parliament' of 400 representatives, which will choose a president, certain to be Gorbachev himself. (This has already happened-Ed.).

In Poland Jaruzelski has done an about turn and is about to legalise Solidarity. (This has happened and solidarity has scored in elections —Ed.) The British press has been full about attempts by the Hungarian 'Communist' Party to allegedly restore "a multi-party system by enacting a law that enshrines the right to form political parties".

In Yugoslavia a 'Slovene Democratic Alliance' has been formed according to the *Daily Telegraph*, "an independent party born inside the Yugoslav Communist system".

Has the 'devil' then indeed begun to cut off his own claws?

Purpose of Reforms

A closer examination of these 'reforms' will reinforce the analysis of Trotsky and *Militant* that the ruling bureaucracy will never voluntarily concede the right of other parties, particularly those based on the working class, to challenge its monopoly of power.

Gorbachev is a consummate and intelligent representative of the bureaucracy. The purpose of his 'reforms' is precisely to prevent a political revolution by the mighty working class of the USSR leading to workers' democracy.

It is a measure of the impasse confronting the Stalinist regimes that he has resorted to such 'daring' measures as multi-candidate elections. He has been compelled to lean on the lower layers of the bureaucracy and on sections of workers to strike a blow at the middle layers of the elite whose swollen privileges have acted as a monstrous drag on development.

But despite Gorbachev's promises of economic development massive shortages, even of basic foodstuffs such as meat and potatoes, persist throughout the USSR.

Workers' indignation at these conditions burst out during Gorbachev's 'walk-about' in Siberia last year. The masses have lost their fear of the naked terror which was employed under Stalin and the continuing brutality under Krushchev and Brezhnev.

Gorbachev's proposed 'reforms' will involve big price rises and

the closure of so-called uneconomic plant with an estimated 16m Job losses. This path has already been trodden by the Yugoslav bureaucracy, with absolutely disastrous results.

Elections

It is in an attempt to sweeten the pill prescribed by Dr. Gorbachev that the 'elections' have been organised. However, what kind of democracy is it that reserves the majority of seats in 'parliament' for one party?

The Congress of Deputies will have 750 election constituencies of equal populations, 750 divided among the 15 republics, and 750 from 'social organisations'. Both in the 'constituencies' and from the '15 republics' the vast majority of candidates will come from the 'Communist' Party.

Out of 19m Party members the Central Committee has received 105,000 nominations. This has been cut down to a 'golden list' of 100 who are assured of seats. Thus even among the bureaucratic elite themselves the choice is limited by arbitrary decrees from above.

What worker in Britain would tolerate elections in shop stewards' committees and trade union branches of candidates restricted to one party?

Nor does the probable election of the dissident scientist Sakharov, who only recently was languishing in internal exile, and former Moscow Party chief Boris Yeltsin fundamentally alter the undemocratic character of the elections.

Yeltsin is considered a heretic for daring to echo some of the criticisms of the working class of the lavish lifestyle of the upper layers of the bureaucracy. But the fact that their meetings have attracted thousands is an indication that even the limited choice offered by Gorbachev has led, as the Marxists predicted, to an outpouring of suppressed criticism of the Stalinist regime.

The bureaucracy as a whole now feels itself an impediment to the further development of society. From a relatively progressive factor in the development of the productive forces, science, technique and

the organisation of labour, it has become an absolute fetter.

Gorbachev is attempting reforms from the top to prevent political revolution from below. But it is evident to the ruling elite that its 'Party' has lost all authority among the masses. Hence the attempt to seek points of support outside the party while at the same time carefully maintaining its monopoly of power.

It can quite easily accommodate the occasional Sakharov or Yelisin within the new Congress. Sakharov, in any case, has outlined a programme which fundamentally supports Gorbachev's proposals, calling for "unprofitable farms and enterprises to be closed and for perestroika to be deepened".

The Gorbachev wing of the bureaucracy view such measures, inevitable as they are, with great trepidation. Similar measures in Eastern Europe have ignited explosions among the masses. Hence the constant postponement of the 'evil day' when they will have to be implemented in the USSR.

Hungary

The demoralisation of the bureaucracy is expressed in a particularly striking form in Hungary. Jenő Andics, new Party propaganda chief, recently declared; "My party has been an absolute failure for the past ten years".

He added: "The basic economic idea (a planned economy-PT) has gone down a cul-de-sac, so why spread it?"

The desperation of the bureaucracy has led to the floating of the concept of 'pluralism'. They have promised a Bill which would "set out the right of private persons and legal entities to establish political parties, trade unions and other social organisations". An incipient 'alternative party', the Democratic Forum' has already emerged with the blessing of the authorities.

But the small print in the bureaucracy's proposal adds that the role of alternative parties will have to be clarified by separate Act of parliament". In the meantime no new parties will in effect be allowed to function. The mono-

poly of deciding who should form parties is firmly held by the Stalinist elite.

Nevertheless the bureaucracy in Hungary, as in the USSR and Eastern Europe, will zig-zag between policies of concession and repression, sometimes combining features of both. The instability of the regime is rooted in the absolute impasse which now faces Hungarian society.

Hungary, from being the showcase of Eastern Europe with an abundance of consumer goods and burgeoning living standards, now faces economic catastrophe. It has zero economic growth, with unemployment expected to rise to at least five per cent and 100,000 workers to be sacked next year.

It is their morbid terror of the workers' response which has determined the bureaucracy's efforts to shelter behind an alleged opposition which is led by the nose with vague promises of 'pluralism' in the indefinite future.

But even a well-known dissident, Miklós Haraszti, has stated that the "collapse of the one-party system would not come for a while, perhaps 15 years". The Hungarian Democratic Forum has boldly declared: "We don't want to become a party, merely an association"!

The bureaucracy can quite easily come to an accommodation with such 'democratic' lions! Meanwhile basic foodstuffs have gone up by 17 per cent, with beef and dairy products costing 44 per cent more. Medicine prices will rise by up to 350 per cent, and on average 80 per cent. Public transport will go up by 60-80 per cent, and postal charges by 50 per cent.

The average Hungarian now has to work 70 hours a week to maintain living standards. Pensioners, real income has fallen for nine years in succession.

The scene is set for an explosion which could be a repeat of the tumultuous Hungarian revolution of 33 years ago. The satirists of Budapest are much clearer than those who expect the bureaucracy to commit suicide. They have

"imagined Lenin's ghost saying that the Hungarian government was 'indeed revolutionary, and if it went on like this it could soon overthrow itself,' !

Poland

The Jaruzelski regime in Poland is in a similar precarious situation. Jaruzelski's somersault was occasioned by two factors: looming economic collapse, and the need for new 'harsh measures' which he hopes a tamed Solidarity will be able to sell to the workers.

The regime wants to 'liberalise' prices once more and close 140 factories throughout Poland. It is expected that the already dismal living standards of the Polish masses could be hit by 45 per cent inflation as a result.

In 1980-81 Solidarity represented the aspirations of the Polish workers for workers' democracy as an alternative to the Stalinist regime. Now it has been considerably weakened through the actions of its leadership, while they have become a prop of the regime.

The former 'firebrand' Lech Wleśa, cosseted from the hardships facing workers and virtually a millionaire, now acts as a firehose. In June he was warning the bureaucracy: "If we don't carry out perestroika, if we don't make reforms peacefully together with the nation, then we are threatened with a revolution."

Solidarity's economists and advisers are striving to avoid such a revolution - a political revolution for workers' democracy-at all costs. They now argue that "wage rises, even though forced by strikes, can only aggravate economic weakness" and warn that upheavals in Poland would endanger perestroika and Gorbachev.

They have become, in effect, a wing of the incipient 'liberal' bureaucracy. The failure of the magnificent movement in 1980-81, entirely due to their misleadership, has confirmed them in their scepticism and contempt for the working class as the main agency for change. Hence they direct their gaze to above, to the 'progressive' wing of the bureaucracy itself.

However, Jaruzelski insisted on

Solidarity's acceptance of the 'dominant' role of the Communist Party and a 'reform programme'—in reality, a counter-reform programme aimed at living standards. While the right to strike is conceded, Walesa has already indicated that he will act to derail workers' movements.

In August he opposed a national strike over the closure of the Lenin shipyard. Barracked by younger workers, he resorted to the same kind of denunciation that had once been used against himself, calling his critics 'loud-mouths' and 'rabblers'.

Yet collaboration between the tops of Solidarity and the regime will not prevent further movements of the working class. The concessions to Solidarity, including the right to strike, will be seized on by the workers to defend their rights, possibly to fill out and democratise Solidarity itself, and to mobilise their forces against the bureaucracy.

—Courtesy ; Militant of February 3, 1989. □

Cuba and the Soviet Union: Strong Links despite differences

The long-awaited visit of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to Cuba produced no surprises. Gorbachev neither "laid down the law" on perestroika nor glasnost, and the two countries appeared to be more united than ever.

Whatever discrepancies they have on specific issues remain "within the family", and unavailable for public scrutiny. In part, this divergence within unity is consistent with a major thrust of perestroika. It says that each country must build socialism according to its own particular characteristics and needs.

Some of the points emphasized during Gorbachev's three-day visit reaffirmed what the two leaders have been saying over the past year:

* Each country is seeking the most effective methods to solve its own particular problems.

* Neither country necessarily expects the other to apply solutions found to be effective in another context. □

* Like capitalist countries, no two socialist countries are exactly alike. Neither country criticizes the other for the methods each has chosen.

While the methods may be different, the principles and the final objective are the same: to produce a more efficient, stronger socialist system that works for the peoples of each country.

Emphasis on Security

A determining factor in all Cuban policies is the close association between U.S. antagonism and domestic policy. Moreover, the fundamental logic behind Cuban policy is the need to assure the continuation of the revolution. In the context of ongoing hostility from the U.S., Havana is worried that processes like glasnost and perestroika could threaten Cuba's capacity to defend itself.

—Latinamerica Press. 27 April. □

Burma: Troubles Continue

A Far Eastern Economic Review article of March 13, 1989, stated that Burma had only 10 million US dollars in its coffers by the end of 1988. Other sources suggested that the amount was even less. However, it indicated that the national budget was in severe trouble, and Saw Maung could not carry on with his oppressive manipulation of the Burmese people, nor could he continue his fight against the ethnic insurgents who have been a thorn in the side of the Burmese government for many decades already.

Not only was Saw Maung facing serious economic problems, but he was also feeling the pinch of being politically isolated from the rest of the world. Many countries

had seriously criticized him for his bloody take-over of the government, and of his continuing violation of the human rights of the people. He was weak and vulnerable.

Investments & Concessions

The 35th press conference given by the Information Committee of the Union of Burma held in Rangoon on April 19, 1989 did not deny the information given by the Far Eastern Economic Review. Their failure to do so suggests that the Saw Maung government was indeed in deep trouble during this time. However, the informa-

tion Committee quickly added that "the government received over U.S. \$ 17 million as deposits for fishing licenses, and expected to earn more as and when fishing works progress. From sale of timber by auction beginning October 17, 1988, the government earned about 34 million US dollars". At least two thirds of these contracts were made by Thai private and government companies.

This emphasizes the immense importance of the visit Thai Supreme Commander Chavalit made to Burma in December of last year which threw open the door to economic investments by Thailand and other countries.* Because of this visit, and the consequent logging and fishing concessions which it helped arrange, Saw Maung has gotten the money he so desperately needs to purchase guns and ammunition to control

* These include lucrative logging and fishing rights sold off to Thai, Malaysian Singaporean, South Korean and Hong Kong companies for a figure estimated at tens of millions of dollars.

the people. The political recognition he gained from this visit also has given him the confidence he needs to carry out his acts of suppression against the Burmese people who still cry out for democracy. He can do this freely now, knowing that he has "neighbourhood friends" who will help cover for him.

Attacks on Karens and Students

In the past month, the Saw Maung military has made serious attacks against several Karen strongholds near the Thai/Burma border. During one such attack, the Burmese soldiers entered Thai territory in

order to attack the Karen from the backside. Student camps have also been affected by these attacks, and several students have already been killed in battle. At the same time, many students in Rangoon and other urban centres who have remained there to continue with their non-violent struggle for full human rights have been arrested, and have disappeared inside Saw Maung's prisons. Many have been tortured—some may have been killed.

All of this has been made possible by the money paid by Thai companies for the right to exploit Burma's rich resources. Little if any of the benefits from this

exploitation reach the Burmese people. We can, in fact, say that the bullets now killing the Burmese people are "paid for by Thai money". This must stop!

We call on all countries to stop all economic aid to the Saw Maung government, and to isolate it politically so that the Burmese people can finally solve their own problems. Be aware that your economic interests in Burma do not benefit the people in any way, and simply pay for further exploitation and suppression of the students and working people.

—Dawn News Bulletin (All Burma Students Democratic Front) April 1, 89.

A page from Recent Burmese History

On July 28, 1988, the moon hung full and heavy in the night sky over the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon. The largest pagoda in the world was filled with people saying prayers and slowly walking around the base of the gold-covered spire which climbs majestically into the sky. For many years, this pagoda has played an important role in Burmese life and struggle.

On this night, the evening breezes were not only filled with the smell of burning incense, and the hum of murmured prayers, but also the excited voices of hundreds of high school students. They had gathered here to give speeches calling for an end to the one-party rule of Ne Win, which had already lasted 26 years, and they were calling out for democracy for their land and people. The fire of discontent in the country was quickly growing.

On August 3rd, at least 20,000 students and working people gathered at the Sule Pagoda in central Rangoon, and began marching towards Rangoon University. This was not just a hit-and-run demonstration, it was a public display of anger over the way the country was being run by the military, and the general population of the city cheered the demonstrators on.

Obviously the government was concerned by this open show of criticism over their ineffective rule of the past 26 years. From one of the wealthiest countries in Southeast Asia, Burma had recently been listed as the 6th poorest country in the world, and the Burmese people were not proud of this title. To control the population, the government declared martial law on that night, but it was ineffective. The demonstrations continued, and grew in size.

In nearby Pegu city, a clash between demonstrators and police occurred on the 6th. The demonstrators were completely unarmed, and many fell in the streets on that day. About 5 students were killed instantly and another ten wounded seriously. The cruel actions of the police and military only served to anger the people more, and the number of participants in the demonstrations grew.

August 8 had been identified by the students as an auspicious day to call for a nation-wide strike. It was significant because it represented the 8th day of the 8th month in the year 88 (8.8.88). The BBC broadcast this planned strike over their regular programme and so the news spread over the entire country.

On August 5, the Rangoon General Hospital was ordered by the government to begin preparing for the 8.8.88 general strike. Beds and medicines were to be prepared for the large number of people the military knew would have to be admitted. This is evidence that the military planned to use violent force to prevent the people from carrying out non-violent calls for democracy.

The fiery red sun rising over the Rangoon skyline signaled the arrival of 8.8.88. It was a new day for Burma, for it started the nationwide protest which finally saw the resignation of two prime ministers, and the end of the one-party system of government. Never before in Burmese history had so many people united across the land to protest so strongly and in such a spontaneous and united way.

8.8.88 stands as one of the momentous days in Burmese history, and will be celebrated as a true example of PEOPLE'S POWER struggling to build justice where

only oppression has existed.

—Courtesy: Dawn News Bulletin

EDITORIAL NOTE

The massive popular movement described above which almost ended Ne Win's iron-fisted rule of 26 years, was crushed by the military coup staged by General Saw Maung on September 18 the same year, driving dissident students underground, many of them to the jungles in and around Burma, while still others have continued non-violent forms of protest in the cities. Given that Saw Maung has been a close follower of both Ne Win and his successor, Sein Lwin—"the Butcher of Burma" who also stepped down to be replaced by Maung Maung before the coup, there seems no doubt that the previous power structure remains intact. Even if, the promised elections are held, there is no indication that the military would relinquish power. Meanwhile the atmosphere is charged with repression and the number of arrests keeps mounting with every passing day.

The Dawn News Bulletin of May this year comments as follows:

"We Burmese are a happy and easy-going people. We do not demand many things for ourselves. We live together, share together and celebrate together. We much prefer to laugh and eat together than to argue and fight together. But we have been pushed to our limit. The brutal military government has attacked our dignity as human beings, and continues to treat us as if we have no rights in our own country. Even the lives of those who are committed to working for free and fair elections are threatened. We have been forced to take action which we trust will lead Burma back to sanity. It is not the elections alone which are necessary, but the rights and freedom necessary to prepare for those elections. Without these, no election can be free and fair."

The 'Sell-Out' Settlement Over Bhopal

- Radhakrishna Rao

The Indian Government's US \$ 470 million Bhopal settlement is widely attacked as a 'surrender' to Union Carbide. Scarcely affected by the compensation award, the company is meanwhile expanding its germplasm collection of Indian crops, thus raising a new controversy.

Radhakrishna Rao is an Indian science writer with special interest in international and development issues.

The Indian Supreme Court judgement directing Union Carbide to pay only US\$ 470 million to the Indian Government as compensation to the Bhopal gas tragedy victims confirms the suspicion that lives in the Third World are valued cheaply and that multinational companies can get their way easily with politicians and bureaucrats.

Opposition members in both Indian Houses of Parliament have described the settlement as a 'sell-out' of the victims' interests and a 'surrender' to Union Carbide. In Bhopal itself thousands of victims have been staging sit-ins and demonstrations, joined by groups of students, lawyers, trade unionists and social workers.

Indeed the judgement is a clear victory to Union Carbide's strategy of having 'double standards' in valuing human lives differently in the Third World and in the West. As one American jurist put it, if the accident had taken place in the US, the court compensation would have run into billions of dollars, pushing the company into the clutches of instant liquidity.

Instead, the compensation amount for Bhopal is miniscule for a company of Carbide's stature. Out of the US\$ 470 million, \$250 million will come from insurance firms and \$200 million from a reserve fund already set up by the company. This means that Carbide has to shell out only \$20 million.

Shocking Settlement

It is no wonder the entire city of Bhopal is shocked over the acceptance by the Indian Government of a compensation amount that is nominal, given the 3,000 deaths, the over 200,000 injuries and the ongoing misery, social disruption and economic dislocation caused by the lethal methyl iso-cyanate (MIC) gas leakage. The Government's climb down from its earlier claim of US\$ 3.3 billion to US\$ 470 million raises suspicion that the politicians and bureaucrats deliberately kept back from the Supreme Court full documentation on the extent of the victims' medical problems.

The International Chemical Workers Federation has said that the compensation paid by Carbide is too little and too late. And the Brussels-based International Chemical, Energy and General Workers Union has warned that 'the next Bhopal could happen anytime, anywhere'.

In May 1986, the American courts ruled that India was a more appropriate forum for resolving the claims. Consequently, the legal battle shifted to the Indian Supreme Court in New Delhi.

But while delivering its historic judgement in February 1989, the Indian Supreme Court did not reveal the basis on which the figure of US\$ 470 million was

computed as the amount of compensation. How much would be paid to each of the families of the 3,000 dead and several thousand seriously injured, no one is sure as yet.

As it is, the Government of India's track record in providing relief and compensation to the victims of industrial accidents leaves much to be desired. Five years after the disaster, nearly 600,000 citizens of Bhopal continue to suffer from the after-effects of MIC poisoning.

Thousands of men continue to be jobless as a result of physical incapacity. Abortions, still births, excessive bleeding and related gynaecological disorders continue to affect thousands of women in the city.

At least 100,000 victims still throng the corridors of the city's major hospitals exclusively meant for 'gas victims'. Doctors say the rush in the hospitals has increased because lack of resistance has rendered the gas victims vulnerable to all sorts of infection. Common complaints from the victims include breathlessness, cough, abdominal pain, anxiety, lack of appetite, blurred vision and numbness in the limbs.

The Government's rehabilitation efforts have been sharply criticised by the victims and social workers. Shortage of drugs, equipment and hospital wards have added to the suffering and on average at least one gas victim continues to die a day, five years after the catastrophe.

Union Carbide's earlier claim that MIC gas does not produce any toxic reaction is thoroughly contradicted by the victims' continuing sufferings. Bhopal citizens were recently shocked to learn that Union Carbide's storage plant still holds 20 tons of MIC mixed with chloroform though the State Government claims to have neutralised all the dangerous chemicals in the Carbide factory.

Meanwhile on another front Union Carbide is making headway in collecting germplasm of agricultural crops from the north-eastern region of India. The company was able to get the go-ahead for the project with the permission of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), though normally such activities come under the purview of the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources.

It is an open secret that Union Carbide continues to send its Indian germplasm collection to its headquarters in the USA. Significantly, by gobbling up smaller

seed firms, Union Carbide is rapidly emerging as an agro-chemical giant with its tentacles spread around the globe.

Meanwhile Indian defence scientists are piqued over the way in which DST allowed Union Carbide to conduct field studies in India using new chemical agents without high-level political clearance.

'We are concerned about reports that Union Carbide's studies covered the grey areas between agricultural research and anticrop warfare. We are worried whether the company is testing new chemi-

cal agents on crops,' said a spokesman of the defence ministry.

The nerve centre of Union Carbide's questionable agrochemical activities in India is its US\$ 210 million research centre at Bhopal, comprising five insect-rearing laboratories and two hectares of experimental farm for testing the chemical agents.

It is not known what insects and pests were reared and what precautions were taken to ensure that they did not escape from the laboratories to the fields.

Courtesy: Third World Network
Features

World's First Herbal Non-toxic Pesticide Being suppressed

Dr. Wishwas Rane

After a decade of research, an Indian has developed the world's first herbal non-toxic pesticide. However the Indian Central Pesticides Board recently withdrew its registration of the product, allegedly owing to pressure from the multinational-controlled chemical pesticide industry.

The writer, Dr. Wishwas Rane is a renowned medical practitioner of Pune, India, who has been long associated with campaigns to educate the public about hazardous drugs.

Indiara is the world's first non-toxic herbal pesticide. Yet, despite the world's desperate need for such safe pesticides, Indiara may never be used on crops. In December 1988, the Indian Central Insecticides Board wrote to Mr. M. N. Sukhatme, the developer of the pesticide, withdrawing a provisional registration certificate it had allowed him earlier.

Sukhatme fears the withdrawal of the certificate is due to pressures exerted by the multinational chemical pesticide industry, which has a vested interest in marketing toxic pesticides and in importing even more toxic substances when conventional ones fail. Recent developments in the pesticide industry lend substance to his fears.

Indiara is a contact poison: nearly 50% of insects that come in contact with it die within an

hour. The rest are killed within the next few hours.

A Safe Herbal Remedy

The product is made of edible vegetables and herbs including garlic, ginger, mustard, acorom calamus, Impomea Muricata and Rametha. It is also useful as a potent but safe domestic insecticide against cockroaches, bugs, houseflies and mosquitoes, and for the protection of dogs and poultry animals from pests.

Indiara acts as a **broad-spectrum pesticide**. In addition, it works against nematodes and viral diseases in plants. An Indiara emulsion has been used in the soil prior to sowing in order to eradicate ants and termites. The Pesticide was also sprayed on crops like cotton mango, lemon, orange, guava, coconut, pomegranates,

grapevines and roses. Field experiments and farm tests lend credibility to the product as an effective rat repellent, fungicide and viricide—all combined in one preparation.

It can also be used for preserving seeds and plants, food and fibre crops, fruits and flower plants, covering a wide range of horticulture. Seeds and cuttings, dipped in the emulsion, gain effective protection.

Experiments show that Indiara is 500 times less toxic than DDT.

Dr. M. B. Bhide of the Indian Institute of Toxicology, reporting on the effect of Indiara (marketed by Herringer Bright Chemicals Pvt. Ltd., Pune) on reproductive process, stated: 'Indiara did not induce any teratological effects in rats when dams were fed up to 1000 mg/kg of the test material orally from days 6 to 15 of the gestation'. Other scientific studies confirm the pesticide's non-toxic impact on health.

The production of Indiara does not require water, power, heating or any heavy machinery and no pollution results from the manufacturing process. No fumes are emitted and hence the atmosphere is not dirtied. The sludge is used as a fertiliser and dumping of hazardous solid waste on land or discharge of liquids into rivers is not called for.

The Central Insecticides Board granted 'Provisional Registration' to Indiaro for the purpose of large-scale trials and for generating data on various crops.

When applying for this registration, Mr. Sukhatme was relying on data generated by the Mahatma Phule Agricultural University, Rahuri, Maharashtra, on the product's impact on bhendi (Okra) and cabbage.

After getting the provisional licence from the Central Insecticides Board in April 1987, Mr. Sukhatme got a manufacturing licence from the Maharashtra Government's Agriculture Department in August 1987.

He immediately commenced conducting large-scale trials in the cotton-growing areas of Cidharbha and Madhya Pradesh. The results and test-reports of the farmers who used Indiaro on their cotton farms showed 100% efficacy. All of them stated that the white fly and other endemic insects of the cotton plant were controlled with Indiaro spraying.

Following the Board's written instructions on 25 May 1988, Mr. Sukhatme tested Indiaro widely on tomato, chilli, brinjal, tur and fruits like mango, orange, papaya, chickoo and pomegranate. He had to sell his product to the farmers.

Why Registration was Revoked

And then, without warning, the Central Insecticides Board and the Registration Committee wrote to Mr. Sukhatme on 23 December 1988, informing him that the Registration Committee had decided to

withdraw his certificate. They also demanded that he immediately surrender his certificate of registration; otherwise, legal proceedings would be initiated against him.

Mr. Sukhatme's allegations that multinationals have lobbied the insecticides Board to have his registration revoked is hardly far-fetched in the light of recent developments concerning the pesticide economy.

Recently, the Insecticides Board allowed the import of some extremely toxic pesticides which the same Board had vetoed for indigenous production earlier. The import was allowed in order to save the cotton crops of some Indian states which were being ravaged by pests that had become resistant to conventional poisons.

The Indian journal Commerce, in its December 1988 issue, reported: The recent decision of the Registration Committee for Pesticides (RCP) allowing the import of three extremely hazardous pesticides, shows how insensitive the administration is to vital issues on ecology.

'The chemicals being imported are Methomyl, Triazophos and Fenprothrin, manufactured by the multinational giants, Du Pont, Hoechst and Sumitomo respectively. . . . The very same committee had 18 months ago rejected the application of Coromandel Indage Pvt. Ltd., a Madras-based company, to manufacture Du Pont's Methomyl.

'The main ground for rejection was that it was an "extremely toxic insecticide" classified by

WHO under the "highly Hazardous" group. . . . The Committee on the basis of available epidemiological data, observed, "a dose of 12-15 mg ingested as a bolus with food can be lethal in human beings".

'What is inexplicable is that both the Registration Committee and the Agriculture Ministry ignored the public sector Hindustan Insecticides Ltd. (HIL), the canalising agency, and favoured import licences to three private companies. HIL could have been asked to import the basic materials for formulation and distribution by Indian companies. Such a step would have ensured that no company took undue advantage of the situation by dominating the market.

'It appears that the Government has deliberately kept HIL out of the picture to help these companies capture the Andhra Pradesh market, which accounts for 35% of the total pesticide consumption in the country

The import of toxic pesticides into the country is worth Rs. 400 million (about US\$ 25 million). Obviously, those with vested interests wish to maintain the status quo. The imported pesticides are destined largely for the use of cotton farmers in Andhra Pradesh. Yet, Indiaro is the only effective pesticide which controls the white fly. Sadly, the Government of India has been unable to protect the interests of its own scientists or to save the nation from deadly imported poisons.

—Courtesy ; Third World Network Features



Women in society

Pope: Ordination of Women a block to Anglican-Roman unity

Pope John Paul II says the ordination of women as priests and bishops in some parts of Anglicanism seems to 'effectively block the path to the mutual recognition of ministries'. The pope made his comments in an exchange of letters with Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie.

John Paul says Roman Catholicism and Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy are 'firmly opposed to this development, viewing it as a break with tradition of a kind we have no competence to authorize'.

Also, he says, such ordinations seem to pre-empt the study of 'all that hinders the mutual recognition of ministries of our communions' which the Second Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II) has been working on since 1982.

It is 'urgent', the pope says, that Anglicanism give 'much greater attention' to ecumenical and ecclesiological dimensions of the question 'in order to prevent a serious erosion of the degree of communion between us'.

Besides being the leading bishop in world Anglicanism (which is made up of 27 autonomous provinces, plus a few extra-provincial dioceses), Runcie is also primate of the Church of England, which is still debating the ordination issue. Because of the 'delicate nature' of Runcie's position, the pope warns, 'a highly problematic situation could certainly arise' for Anglicans opposed to the ordination of women were any to be ordained Anglican priests in England.

The pope does, however, emphasize the notable degree of Anglican-Roman Catholic unity now existing, and the commitment each has to increase it. He describes the letter Runcie sent him about the proceedings last year of the global Lambeth conference of Anglican bishop as a 'gracious gesture'—'further indication of the trust that exists between us, and of the strong bond of communion by which we are already united'.

In his letter, Runcie refers to a need for much more study—pre-

ferably on an ecumenical basis—of the ordination of women. Quoting one of the Eastern Orthodox speakers at Lambeth, Runcie says "we have not even begun to treat the issue of the ordination of women as a theological problem at an ecumenical level". He says he prays 'such ecumenical debate... may be taken up and carried out in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect'.

The letters were released during a meeting here (26 April–2 May) of the primates (heads) of the 27

autonomous Anglican provinces. Meeting with them were the bishops who are the moderators of four United churches (South India, North India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan) in full communion with Anglicanism.

Runcie is scheduled to go to Rome late in September. He said his visit there with the pope will 'express the fact that our dialogue continues in genuine hope in spite of obstacles'.

(EPS) □

Women Bishops

US Anglican Presiding Bishop Explains

"... For 12 years, our church has experienced the gifts of women in the priesthood. It is our hope, prayer, and clear expectation that we will have a similar experience with women in the episcopate.

We believe that the incorporation of women in the catholic episcopate and priesthood as the Anglican Communion has received it, enhances the wholeness and the mission of the church.

The Episcopal Church seeks to maintain and develop the highest possible degree of communion with partner churches. We have taken every reasonable step. Within our own church, we have sought pastoral provisions for those who cannot accept women in the episcopate.

We rejoice in the growth of communion in recent years with Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Protestant churches. Yet the road to Christian unity is not a straight line. The question of women's ordination, in the form in which it is put today, is a new one, and is still in an early stage of reflection and discussion among the churches.

Our ecumenical dialogues will be driven to a deeper theological seriousness as a result of the ordination of women to the episcopate. In dialogues with churches that maintain the historic episco-

pate, we should concentrate on the serious theological reasons for opening the historic episcopate to women. In dialogues with churches that do not claim to have the historic episcopate, we should show how teaching about the catholic episcopate is compatible with the ordination of women.

At this moment, our action brings rejoicing to some and anguish to others. The Lambeth Conference (of Anglican bishops last year) spoke directly to this situation when it resolved, 'The church needs to exercise sensitivity, patience, and pastoral care towards all concerned'.

We remember, too, that within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, some suffer pain because women are excluded from the episcopate and priesthood, and others suffer pain because they see ordination of women as a violation of God's will.

I ask that we enter into one another's pain so that the fellowship of suffering may become, together with the fellowship of rejoicing, a sign of our deeper communion and a witness to the healing of the nations".

—The Rt. Revd. Edmond Lee Browning Presiding Bishop, Episcopal Church, U.S.A.

(EPS) □

Archbishop Romero's Murderers identified

Nine years after the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, the government of former President Jose Napoleon Duarte finally identified the prelate's "material and intellectual murderers".

On February 6, the then Justice Minister Julio Samayoa announced that former Major Roberto D'Aubuisson was the "intellectual author" of Romero's murder, which occurred March 24, 1980 while the archbishop celebrated Mass in a San Salvador cancer hospital.

D'Aubuisson a deputy in the National Assembly is the founder of the right-wing ARENA Party, a party human rights organizations accuse of being linked to death squad activity. ARENA presidential candidates Alfredo Cipriani easily won the elections held this May, against the colourless Government Christian Democratic candidate Fidel Chavez Mena.

Samayoa said that government investigators had evidence that Antonio Regalado, a Salvadoran dentist and "expert marksman", fired the bullet that shot Romero through the heart. He said that the actual plan to assassinate the archbishop was organized by ex-Capt. Alvaro Saravia. The former airforce officer had been imprisoned in Miami by U.S. officials as a chief suspect in the Romero murder, but was released December 19 by a U.S. federal court when the Salvadoran Supreme Court announced that it would not ask for Saravia's extradition.



Archbishop Oscar Romero
of San Salvador

On February 5, the Salvadoran government televised a detailed account of its investigation into the Romero murder. The government entrusted the case to its Commission on Criminal Acts, created by legislative decree in July 1985.

In 1986, the commission solicited the help of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at the request of Duarte, who swore before the archbishop's tomb on assuming the presidency in 1984 that he would do all in his power to bring the assassins to trial.

The proof the government now has in its possession contains the results of separate investigations carried out by the Attorney General's office, the security forces, human rights organizations of the

Catholic church, El Salvador's fourth district court and Divine Providence Hospital, where the murder took place.

A breakthrough came in the case, said Samayoa, when Amado Garay was captured and confessed to having driven the getaway car for the operation. He fingered D'Aubuisson, Regalado and Saravia.

Regalado is also accused of being behind the death squads operating in Santiago de Maria in the eastern department off Usulután.

The death squads, which reached their high point in the early 1980s and are believed responsible for thousands of murders of peasants, trade unionists, students and politicians opposed to the military government, have recently reappeared. D'Aubuisson has tried to distance himself from the squads, but his ruthlessness in the alleged torture and murder of opponents has earned him the nickname "Major Blow-torch".

D'Aubuisson has denied he had anything to do with Romero's murder and accused the former government of using the case as a campaign trick to undercut ARENA's lead in the elections.

—Latinamerica Press



INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP PEDRO CASALDALIGA:

"We Must Fortify Our Church's Latin American Identity" Attempt to re-Romanize the Church

Ed. Note : Before he left in late January for a trip to Central America that will not include Nicaragua, Brazilian Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga gave the following interview to Latinamerica Press. Casaldaliga, bishop of the rural diocese of Sao Felix de Araguaia in Mato Grosso, was reprimanded last year by the Vatican for his pastoral visits to Nicaragua.

Question :

Why aren't you going to Nicaragua ?

Casaldaliga : I recently wrote a letter to the pope and to Cardinals (Joseph) Ratzinger (President of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) and (Bernardin) Gantin (President of the Congregation for Bishops). I told them that in order to avoid conflict, I would not go to Nicaragua for the time being. I also assured them that as always, and by God's grace, I continue within the church, in faith and also with a sense of commitment to Latin America and, especially, in solidarity with Central America.

I also reminded them that no one has prohibited my visit: neither any local bishop nor the Roman Curia. Like any other prelate, I am permitted by Canon Law to exercise my ministry in any part of the world, as long as I am not expressly forbidden to do so by the local bishop.

Question :

What is the purpose of your visit ?

Answer :

It's a visit of solidarity to those peoples and those churches. When I went to Nicaragua in 1985 on the occasion of the fast being carried out by (Foreign Minister and Maryknoll priest) Miguel D'Escoto to protest U. S. intervention in Nicaragua's internal affairs, I promised to spend a month each

year in Central America. My objective is to offer the people of Central America solidarity in the name of our church in Sao Felix de Araguaia and of many people here in Brazil. A solidarity we want to be both church-centred and truly Latin American. I go as a Latin American by adoption, (Casaldaliga was born in Cataluna, Spain), as a Christian and as a bishop. This decision has led to problems and tensions, because within the one church there are different opinions. I refer to the recent, confusing directives from the Vatican.

Question :

According to the local press, there has been a change in the Brazilian hierarchy that favours the conservatives.



Bishop Casaldaliga

Answer :

I think there's a real attempt, official or unofficial, to turn the church back from the journey it has undertaken as a result of

liberation theology, or else to control its steps and those of grassroots Christian communities and all the fruits our church has borne since (the 1968 Latin American bishops' conference at) Medellin.

I also believe that there's an attempt to "re-Romanize" the church before the 500th anniversary celebration of the discovery of the Americas, to keep the church united by keeping it highly centralized. Of course, we'll continue to be church-Catholic, Apostolic and Roman—but we also want to be Latin American, precisely to make sure our catholicity is real, effective and complete.

Certain things are irreversible. The theology of liberation is now a given, as are the thousands of Christian base communities. Today, many of us have been changed: members of the hierarchy and of the people of God, religious, priests, martyrs—and there are the documents of Medellin, Puebla and Second Vatican Council. There will be some tensions, perhaps there will even be a time of some backsliding, but we will not turn back. We can only go forward, because history never repeats itself.

It's true there have been changes that favour conservatives, beginning here in Brazil, the largest Catholic country in the world. But, thanks be to God, the Brazilian bishops' conference continues to be openly committed to the poor and the Brazilian church continues to move in the same general direction. The change is more evident in Peru, where several conservative bishops have been named, among them some from the Opus Dei.

All this gives rise to conflict, but not the kind that could create a schism similar to those occurring in some European churches. I think that here in the Americas tensions will be on a smaller scale, because the majority are Catholics and because many more bishops have identified with the people's struggles.

I had a taste of this last year during my conflict with the Vatican when I received many letters of solidarity. Many people were indignant, but there was no sense of wanting to break with the church.

Question :

How do you interpret the pope's decision to divide the archdiocese of Sao Paulo into four new dioceses ?

Answer :

It's another expression of church policy oriented, in this case, toward reducing the ecclesiastical authority of Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns, who is a bishop of tremendous stature not only in Brazil but throughout Latin America, the Third World and perhaps in the whole world. He is perhaps the most important episcopal figure in the church today.

Question :

Organizers of the Vatican's "Evangelization 2000" project plan to hold a meeting in Brazil next month. What is your opinion of the project ?

Answer :

The project proposes to evangelize via satellite—a pyrotechnic spectacle organized with many millions of dollars in a style very similar to those put on by U.S. tele-evangelists. We don't think this is the most evangelical way to evangelise. Furthermore, it's not the earth's poor who have access to these millions of dollars; it's the big multinationals that are organizing the project and there's a danger that the Gospel will be used as a publicity tool despite the good intentions of the church people organizing it.

I believe it would be much better to use the money to form more pastoral agents, strengthen local church groups and support already existing Catholic or Christian radio and TV stations, newspapers and magazines.

Question :

How would you characterize the role that the Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM) is now playing ?

Answer :

I think it should continue being what it was in the marvelous times of (Bishop Manuel) Larrain (of Chile) and other wonderful ecclesiastical figures who were the real holy patriarchs of the modern Latin American church. In the perspective of the 500th anniversary of the "discovery" of the Americas, CELAM should bring all its efforts to bear to fortify the Latin American character of our church, reinforce the continent's ecclesial identity and make sure that our continent's ethnic reality, its Amer-Indian and Afro-criollo peoples are visible.

Ideally, we should use the 500th anniversary to reflect on the region's history, to ask pardon and to show a willingness to make amends. It should be a time to pledge ourselves to be a continent and a church with their own unique face.

Question :

You're saying what CELAM should be.

Answer :

In the last few years, CELAM has become more conservative and more interested in centralization. It appears to have trimmed its sails, and no longer pushes for the legitimate, native autonomy the continent's Catholic Church should express. It has even encouraged some suspicion about liberation theology and the so-called "popular church". I don't think these things foster a legitimate Latin American church identity.



Vatican - approved Translations only

According to the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*, Pope John Paul wants all Spanish-speaking countries to use the same translation of the Ordinary of the Mass and the Bible by 1992, the 550th anniversary of the so-called "discovery" of the Americas.

Many Latin American church workers take exception to the Vatican-approved translations because they use the formal vosotros ("thee") form common in Spain instead of the ustedes ("you") form used throughout Latin America.

When the pope visits Latin American countries he inevitably uses the vosotros form—and the people respond with the usted form.



'The Debt is Related to Our Daily Bread'

Brazilian churches' Solution to debt problem: Don't Pay

As a parliamentary commission begins a six-month study of Brazil's foreign debt, the country's Christian churches have already come to a conclusion: Don't pay.

The churches argue that paying Brazil's \$115 billion debt will further aggravate the misery of the poor.

Some 150 representatives of the Catholic and Protestant denominations that make up the National Council of Christian Churches (CONIC) discussed the debt issue in Rio de Janeiro in late March. Also attending were foreign church representatives as well as law-makers, trade unionists, economists and others.

The Rev. Gottfried Brakemeier, a Lutheran pastor, opened the meeting by saying that the social, moral and ethical issues of the debt cannot be separated from the economic issue.

"The debt is related to the daily bread to which every Brazilian has a right — not just for survival — but to have a life with dignity," Brakemeier said.

Last year, Brazil paid \$17 billion to international creditors. That sum, if spent at home, could have built 81,000 schools for 60 million students or 7.7 million low-cost houses for 30 million people, according to economist Marcos Arruda, of the Getulio Vargas Foundation, an economic think tank.

Arruda estimates that with an \$18 billion investment Brazil could carry out an agrarian reform programme that would benefit 12 million landless rural workers.

Military Debt

Despite regular interest payments, Brazil's foreign debt has increased astronomically in the past two decades. It grew from \$4.4 billion in 1969 to \$115 billion at the end of 1988 even though the country paid \$163 billion in interest and principal during those 20 years.

Most of Brazil's debt was acquired during the military government which was in power from 1964 to 1985. The generals borrowed to finance giant projects such as the Itaipu hydroelectric plant and eight nuclear power plants being built with German assistance. Although the plants are supposed to be finished by 1990, only one nuclear plant, the Angra dos Reis I in Rio de Janeiro, has been completed so far. And that one functions precariously.

At their Rio meeting, the church representatives called the debt "neo-colonial". They said the rich

nations, operating through international lending institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, dominate and exploit the poor nations.

Most of Brazil's debt was incurred without consulting the people, the church representatives noted. Yet the lower and middle classes end up paying its cost in decreased public services, lost jobs and lower living standards.

Debt Audit

The church representatives called for an international audit to determine the principal sources of the debt.

According to the churches, Brazil's continued willingness to make debt payment has aggravated its economic problems by driving potential investment capital abroad. Brazilian capitalists take their profits, church critics say, and invest them at higher interest rates in the United States, Switzerland, Panama or elsewhere.

The national workers' federation (CUT) estimates that \$18 billion left the country in capital flight from 1973 to 1985. According to a 1986 study by the Morgan Guaranty Bank, capital flight from the 18 largest debtor nations was \$200 billion from 1976 to 1985. Of that staggering sum, 60 percent came from the four largest debtor nations: Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Venezuela.

Capital flight and debt payments aren't the only ways that Brazil loses potential investment money. Multi-national corporations that over or under-charge their Brazilian subsidiaries cost the country \$6 billion annually in lost revenues, according to the CUT.

The debt document drawn up by church representatives in Rio is now being circulated throughout the country for debate in communities and parishes. It is also being studied by the parliamentary commission charged with figuring out what to do about Brazil's onerous debt burden.

—Latinamerica Press, 11 May 1989

The Poor's Way of the Cross

The following is a selection of meditations of the Cross written by Chilean priest Esteban Gumucio and published last year by the Santiago-based theological magazine Pastoral Popular:

First Station:

The Poor One stood before all the Pilates. And the Pilates asked: "What is poverty?" The Poor One didn't know how to define it. He had the hands of the poor, the silence of the poor and the age-old look of innocence, pained with hunger.

The Pilates washed their hands: And the water in the Pilates' basin turned to gold (gold that is in danger, they say. . . .) "It is necessary to save our gold!" shout the royal attendants. "If you don't condemn the Poor One, you are no friend of Caesar's." So the Pilates call in the finance minister. "Yes, I agree" says the minister. "We must crucify him so the dollar doesn't go down. . . ."

Sixth Station:

Senora Veronica searched all the jails and the police stations for her son. They told her he had disappeared. So Senora Veronica, with some other women, went to ask Gov. Pontius Pilate if he would let them

see the faces of their children and spouses. But their bodies were not in the Pretorium or in the morgue. They weren't on the premises of the police.

The women criss-crossed the country from north to south looking for crosses of unmarked graves; they combed the desert in hopes of at least finding their loved ones' bones. Senora Veronica said, "I hope no mother ever has to suffer what I've had to suffer. . . ."

When she arrives home with her feet swollen from pounding so many sidewalks and riding so many buses, she inevitably picks up the photo of her son on his First Communion day. She kisses it and wets it with her tears as she thinks about what his tortured face must look like now.

Seventh Station:

The second fall comes in winter, when the unemployed worker's kids come down with flu. The money he got for selling that useless silverware must now go to buy penicillin and those little pink pills they used to give out free at the clinic. The doctor said the boy must have a special high-protein diet so he doesn't get TB. . . .

"And where is it going to come from, I ask?" He and she slog determinedly through the mud, shaking off the rain, to buy a half litre of cooking oil.

At the temple gate in Jerusalem, the pharisees say: "They don't work out of sheer laziness. Crucify them".

Eleventh Station:

It's so simple to crucify the Poor One.

Tell him that you can't pay more; that there are many others who'd do anything to have his job. Tell him to come back another day. Tell him the country needs the poor's sacrifice so the national economy of the rich remains stable. Tell him how much we've grown; that things couldn't be better. Tell him how great a free market economy is; and that how, after the wealthy's cup is full, it will overflow with abundance for the poor.

Tell him to wait! It's as simple as attaching a horizontal beam to a vertical one. But Christ is in each of the poor, nailed hand and foot between the earth and the heavens.

And above all these crosses his voice is heard: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do".

Fellowship in Action

May Day Mass: 30th Anniversary

On May 1st morning this year, the CWF celebrated the 30th Anniversary of its May Day Mass which has been held without a break since 1960. This Mass was held in St. Michael's Church, Polwatte, preceded by a procession through the streets of the neighbourhood, singing the Workers Litany and accompanied by drummers and dancers. Clergy of different Churches led by the Bishops of Colombo and Kurunegala celebrated the Workers Mass which significantly has been drawn up and arranged by CWF laypersons in a Sri Lankan cultural setting and improved on by them over the years. This Mass and its ceremonial is essentially local in character, the musical setting based on contemporary Sinhala drama music. Portions of the Mass were rendered in Tamil too.

As in earlier years, workers themselves conducted the Ministry of the Word, a short play replacing the sermon. After the intercessions, the clergy gathered round the Altar for the Ministry of the Sacrament beginning with the Peace and followed by a colourful offertory procession when the Red Flag of Labour and implements of work were offered at the Altar with the Bread and Wine, preceded by little children carrying lotus flowers to offer and dancers. The bearers of the offerings stood behind the clergy during the Eucharistic Prayers and raised their hands upwards to support those of the clergy when they were extended over the oblations during the Epiclesis (invocation of the Holy Spirit), thus making it clear that the Mass was the common action of God's People and not something done by the clergy alone. This Eucharistic prayer which was sung responsively by clergy and people to Sinhala drama music was followed dramatically by the Breaking of Bread and the Elevation after which there was a prostration of clergy and people in deep silence. The communion followed immediately, the clergy receiving last. The implements of work were then received back and carried out, led by the Red Flag to the accompaniment of the Sri Lankan equivalent of the Internationale, thus linking the Mass with the workers' demonstrations that were to follow later in the day.

The CWF has always insisted that the May Day Mass was a preparation and not a substitute for the workers' demonstrations and rallies. Buddhist clergy, leaders and prominent members of working class parties including the General Secretaries of the LSSP, CPSL and SLMP were present at the Mass, as were also certain SLFP Members of Parliament and the Chief Minister of the Western Province. A very large crowd filled the Church for this memorable and moving May Day Service (see pictures on the inside back cover). A fellowship breakfast followed in the Parish Hall.

The CWF May Day Mass in Colombo was followed by another May celebration of the Mass on the Labookelle plantation in the Nuwara Eliya district. Here too the Mass was preceded by a colourful procession wending its way amidst tea bushes to the place where the Mass was celebrated. Fr. Joshua Ratnam presided at this Mass which was sung mainly in Tamil. Workers from Colombo and elsewhere joined in the singing of hymns in Sinhala too, where the tunes were common. Clergy who joined in the concelebration included Fr. Paul Caspersz S.J., Fr. N. Rose, Fr. Sathiaivel, and the Revd. M. Sathianathan of the Lutheran Church. A large crowd was present and the Mass was followed by a fellowship lunch given by the CWF Labookelle Group. This was on May 6

Moratuwa

The CWF Moratuwa Group has involved itself in several issues of importance to the area and to the poorer and oppressed sections of the population in particular.

On May 30th, the CWF group addressed a letter to the Chairman of the State Timber Corporation with copies to His Excellency the President and relevant authorities on the hardships suffered by carpenters on account of the pressures exerted by big furniture dealers and other vested interests. Facing a restricted market which is controlled by big-time furniture dealers, these carpenters are forced to sell their products at prices dictated by these big private sector interests. Furthermore the timber permits issued by the Timber Corporation to most small-scale carpenters are for 15 square feet of timber for the whole year—a quantity of timber that will barely go to construct two almirahs! Persons not at all involved in carpentry have however also had permits issued in their names. The CWF has urged that the Corporation ensures that only those actually engage in carpentry work should be issued permits and that the permits presently issued (15 sq. ft.) should be for a quarter and that the annual quota of timber per carpenter should accordingly be raised to 60 sq. ft. for the year to enable small carpenters to earn their livelihood.

In December last year as a consequence of agitation on the part of the CWF and others, a Timber Depot of the State Corporation was opened at Kaldumulla in Moratuwa, (Earlier people had to travel to Colombo to obtain timber). However it is learnt that this State Timber Depot is to commence auctions of timber in the near future. This move has been opposed by the CWF group as this will again benefit only the monied interests and not the small carpenters and craftsmen. The CWF group has in its letter to the Timber Corporation urged that this new Depot become a sales outlet for timber which will benefit the

small producers, instead of organising auctions for big interests. The CWF Group has now organised area carpenters around these issues.

The construction of the new Galle Road at Moratuwa has resulted in the displacement of several shanty dwellers - mainly fisherman and vendors whose huts have been broken up. These folk have been removed to a new location on vacant land behind the Soysapura flats at Katubedde where they have had to face many problems of housing, livelihood and schooling for their children. The CWF group has discussed the problem of schooling with the Provincial Councillors of the area and these children have consequently been admitted to the closest school without having to pay the now customary donation to meet the cost of furniture and other needs of children. Vendors especially who used to take daily loans for their trade were deprived of these sources on their shift to the present new location. The CWF group has now helped to start a revolving fund to help these folk.

The problem of pollution in the area too has been taken up by the CWF group. As a result of the flow of factory chemicals and lavatory waste into the Moratuwa lagoon, the Laxapathiya, Angulana and Uyana areas have suffered serious pollution which has also adversely affected fish and other lagoon life. The CWF group has already formed three Environment Protection Committees in these three areas. The Group has also contacted the Medical Research Institute (MRI) to have samples of water in the lagoon taken from these places. It is hoped through the Environment Protection Committee to create a public awareness and pressure to put an end to this pollution.

Katunayake

The drama group of the CWF Katunayake Branch was responsible this year for the playlet staged at the May Day Mass in Colombo.

During the Vesak celebration, the Branch helped to set up a Dansala (Alms outlet) to offer soft drink to the festival crowds, which received the support of our members and supporters in the area.

With the fullest Co-operation of our Duwa Fishermen's Group, a meeting of Fisheries co-operative representatives for the entire district was held on June 11th at the Duwa Fisherman's Centre to discuss the 'Trawling' issue affecting the whole area in which discussion the state Minister of Fisheries and Provincial Councillors Nanda de Silva and Nimal Cooray participated. Other issues affecting the fishing population in the district were also discussed at this meeting.

Other activities of the Branch included

a successful discussion on Nanda Malini's musical 'Pavana' which was attended by members of other organizations in the district as well as our own. A cassette recording was also used to clarify viewpoints in this discussion.

It has been decided to organize special programmes on the fourth Sunday of each month both for CWF initiates as well as for our cadres.

Wattala Branch

The CWF Wattala Branch has received a donation of medicines valued at over Rupees Sixty Thousands (Rs. 60,000/-) to be given to poor patients living in the area. This donation was made by the Mazino Trust of Moratuwa.

The CWF Wattala Branch has arranged with a number of free medical clinics run by social service organizations in the area to also assist in the distribution of these drugs.

The CWF Wattala Branch has launched a self-help programme for fishermen, involving the distribution of teppan rafts and fishing nets to fishermen who are now working as daily paid workers and who have no means to acquire the instruments of their trade on their own. In terms of this project, one-third of the costs have to be raised by the family of the fisherman who receives the rafts and the fishing nets. The balance will be raised through local resources such as donations and the screening of films etc.

Salute to a Martyred Comrade



Sarath Mallika de Silva

It is with deep sorrow that we record the death on April 12 at the hands of an unidentified gunman, of Sarath Mallika de Silva, Secretary of the Kantale Branch and Trincomalee district organizer of the Christian Workers Fellowship. Sarath was shot dead in a cowardly and surreptitious manner while travelling in a crowded bus (mostly packed with women) on his way home after finishing work at the CWF Office in Kantale town and after buying

crackers for his four little children to celebrate the Sinhala and Tamil New Year which was to commence the next day. After the murder, the gunman jumped off the bus and disappeared into the scrubland but the local DJV has since claimed responsibility for his death. Sarath was 36 year old when murdered.

Sarath who took the lead in forming the CWF Branch at Kantale was also the undisputed leader of the Sugar Corporation workers and President of the Workers Council there, besides being a trade unionist and an outstanding leader of the Left in the district. He was fearless in his espousal of what was just and right and matched his words with courageous action. As a result of his untiring efforts in promoting racial harmony, Kantale remained peaceful on every occasion when there were racist outbursts elsewhere. He was also able to rally people in defence of their own rights and was respected for this by even the state officers whom he had on occasion to confront, not excluding the security forces. In Sarath was found a rare combination of honesty, courage, intelligence and efficiency which made him the unique character he was.

Sarath was always bent on exposing injustice and corruption not the least in his own workplace and so found himself at the receiving end of frivolous charges made against him by Corporation officials which he was able to easily disprove. Even at the time when he was killed, he was due to give his evidence at an inquiry into a charge of "anti-government incitement". With his accustomed thoroughness, Sarath had prepared a case that could in turn have resulted in unseating or at least greatly embarrassing several important officials. Small wonder therefore that he was seen as a threat to several unsavoury elements in the area especially on account of his gifts as an organizer of people and as a fearless and charismatic leader. Rightwing and chauvinist forces always saw in him an obstacle to their designs and it were these elements that ultimately conspired to take away his life. The excuse that they were able to give for this foul murder despite Sarath's undoubted stature in the area, was that Sarath had supported a Tamil candidate and organized a meeting of the United Socialist Alliance at Kantale during the General Elections which was addressed by the North-East Provincial Council's Chief Minister who had pledged his support there to assist in Kantale's development. This was enough for these chauvinists to have him branded as an IPKF and EPRLF agent and a traitor to the Sinhalese. It may be argued of course, that this action of Sarath was tactically unwise and one of trying to force the pace of integrating the racial communities in the district (which he had so successfully done through the CWF work at Kantale) besides exposing him to attack, but that Sarath meant well and tried in this way to advance the interests of the people of Kantale is beyond dispute. Everybody knew of Sarath's selfless dedication to his cause and to the working people of Kantale; even members of the LTTE and JVP respected Sarath's qualities of dedication and leadership.

Sarath was devoid of pettiness and spite. Whenever a person was in a difficulty, he or she could always count on Sarath's help. When it came to common problems of the people too, he was an indefatigable worker. It was he who was instrumental in organizing the people on behalf of the CWF to file some 400 cases against the authorities for compensation in respect of the damage suffered by them as a result of the breach of a dam of Kantale's ancient reservoir. At the Commission appointed, by the Government to probe this incident, Sarath was able to show that it was neglect by officials that was responsible for the breach. It was Sarath too who organized small scale rehabilitation for 50 families sponsored by CWF through an area committee representative of the villages of all three racial communities and also meticulously monitored the progress made by these families in their rehabilitation. The bullet that so cruelly struck Sarath therefore was aimed also at the poor and oppressed of Kantale for it is these people now who have been deprived of their organizer and champion. What person with a basic sense of humanity would ever want to do away with a life like this?

Sarath's death has moved us of the CWF in a very special way and that surely is an indication of the impact he had on us all. Before his body was carried out for burial with the honours due to a Left militant, the CWF had a Service for him round the bier, at which appropriately there were two readings one with Che Guevara's words "The true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of Love" and the other the words of Christ—"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends". And that surely would sum up the meaning of Sarath's life.

"Need I say more? Time is too short for me to tell the stories of Through faith they overthrew kingdoms, established justice, saw God's promises fulfilled. They muzzled ravening lions, quenched the fury of fire, escaped death by the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength, they grew powerful in war, they put foreign armies to rout. Women received back their dead raised to life. Others were tortured to death disdaining release, to win a better resurrection. Others, again, had to face jeers and flogging, even fetters and prison bars. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were put to the sword, they went about dressed in skins of sheep or goats, in poverty, distress misery. They were too good for a world like this. They were refugees in deserts and on the hills, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. They also, one and all, are commemorated for their faith; and yet they did not enter upon the promised inheritance, because, with us in mind, God had made a better plan, that only in company with us should they reach perfection"

(Hebrews 11: 32 - 40)

30th Celebration May Day Mass



The Christian Workers Fellowship celebration the 30th Anniversary of its May Day Workers Mass in St. Michael's Church, Colombo preceded by a procession.



" From Slavery to Liberty
Egotism to Fellowship...."



Bishops and clergy join the working people in procession and worship arranged in a local cultural setting

Symbol and foretaste of the new society.



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