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CALENDAR 1990

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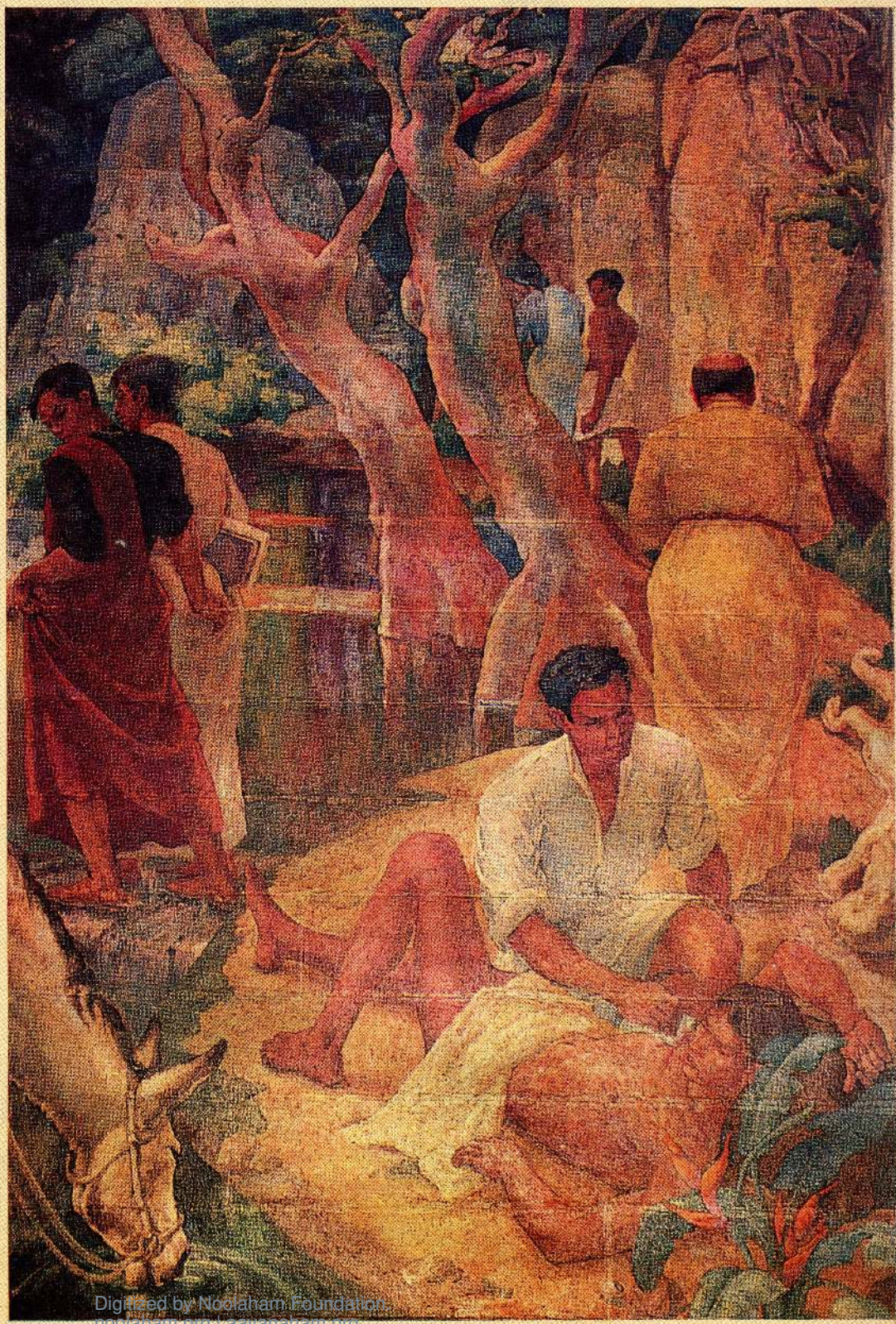
**Clampdown on
Universities
& Workplaces**

**The Work of
Bandit
Capitalism**
—Dr. Mervyn De Silva MP

**Wanted: A New
Economic
Policy**
—R.M.B. Senanayake

India: Many Uncertainties
Poland: Solidarity in Office
East Germany in Ferment
Fundamentalism in Action

A SEASON OF VIOLENCE



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Cover: The Good Samaritan by David Paynter,
(Courtesy: Trinity College, Kandy).

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Fellowship in Action

From our readers

Call for an Impartial Commission

DEAR EDITOR.,

It is with great concern and dismay that we read of the current violence and mayhem taking place in Sri Lanka. We read daily news items of the violent deaths of young men, of bodies being located in rivers and roadsides, and of brutal murders, such as those of human rights activist Rajini Thiranagama, politician Mr. Vijaya Kumaranatunga, student leader Daya Pathirana as well as many trade union leaders and peasant leaders.

The situation is one of terrible fear and oppression, where all fear for their lives. Sri Lanka feels itself caught in a squeeze, fears for autonomy, ethnic, reli-

gious, and economic, fuel this cataclysm. The surest defence is active condemnation and due process of law against all offences of violence and human rights abuses. Violence is being fought with violence, when it should be the work of a genuine and impartial system of justice to punish perpetrators and of genuine and representative government to use the political process to find a solution to the conflicts. We have the recent example of the courageous judges of Colombia to remind us of this fact.

We urge the setting up of an impartial commission, with International Human Rights Organisation representatives, to look into incidents of violence in the provinces of North and East and to make known the facts surrounding these incidents and that the due process of law be brought against those responsible. We urge you also to insist on the setting up of similar Commissions in all areas of Sri Lanka, as the first step to finding a solution acceptable to all sides of the conflict. This solution must recognise the need of the people for economic change and for their

aspiration to be part of the decision-making process. It will require a political settlement of the grievances of the Tamil people with effective devolution of power and the withdrawal of Indian intervention, together with a new awareness of their social responsibilities by religious groups.

These problems are not unique to Sri Lanka and her example could provide a blueprint for other conflicts and restore your country to its position at the head of those countries known for their beauty, kindness and good sense.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) Reginald McQuaid
Executive Secretary

8th November, 1989.

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE
CO-ORDINATION OF SOLIDARITY AMONG
SUGAR WORKERS—(ICCSASW)

P.O. Box 66, Station—"B"
Toronto M5T 2T2,
Canada

Dr. Rajini Thiranagama

A Personal Appreciation

During my childhood, it was understood that a funeral was a place to say words of comfort. It may seem that disturbing things should be said today, because Rajini's death is very disturbing. She fell victim to an assassin, a young lady and a mother of two little girls. She wanted to work for the improvement of this community and returned with her doctorate barely 3 years ago. We know how difficult it is for an expatriate to think of returning after being cut off for a number of years. One imagines assassins at every street corner to start with, and then what about the children's education? Rajini returned from Britain on the 3rd of September, barely 3 weeks ago, after a 3-month spell of research. Even at this time Rajini could have chosen to remain in Britain, a five star refugee and a full time scholar. She had all the connections ranging from the Amnesty International to the British Refugee Council. But she had a strong sense of justice. She knew that many under dire threat and less fortunate in terms of educational attainment will not be given refugee status by western governments. She more than many others felt this strongly because she befriended many, young and old, from the depressed sections of this society, who themselves and their close relatives, were subject to arbitrary violence without reprieve. No one cared for them. The legal obligation to protect them was only verbally acknowledged in Delhi and in Colombo. Besides her own students, many such people looked up to her.

A Crowded Life

Her daily routine was unbelievably crowded. she was single handedly managing the Anatomy Department at the Faculty of Medicine, often staying awake till 3-00 a.m., preparing her notes, and then rising at 5-00 a.m., Her friends were afraid to call her into additional tasks because she would not refuse, and once involved, she was insistent on being thorough. If a student was detained, she would cry over it. So strong was her feeling and commitment towards individuals in need. Her duties as mother were performed with characteristic assiduity.

I was one of those who worked closely with Rajini during the last few years and came to know her feelings during the course of our discussions. These were very profitable, because left to

myself I would have found it difficult to move away from some comfortable middle class assumptions. Rajini pointed out gently how vulgar and insensitive I could be in generalising about people and situations I did not understand. We had many disagreements. But we respected each other and never exchanged a harsh word.

This must have been difficult for her at times. She was many things to many people. Many students and employees who found her sympathy and understanding of an unusual order, regarded her a stern but loving mother. To me apart from being a friend, she was sometimes a wondering and uncertain child. She vacillated between the certainties of religious belief and a feeling that the world was a mystery in which like evolution as it is conceived, human effort could make few changes in a sea of randomness. In recent months, she had quite often spoken despairingly of the situation in our country. She wondered if human effort would be of any avail against the colossal evil that stalked the land.

Since this is a personal reflection, I shall say something of how I view this as a Christian. I was involved with Rajini in many of her activities. I with two others co-authored the book 'The Broken Palmyrah' dealing with the crisis facing us at the end of the October 1987 war. A number of us were associated with her on the University Teachers for Human Rights. What we did was imperfect. Although we strived for balance and tried to criticise institutions and actions rather than persons, we may have failed because of the dominant emotions of that time. We would certainly now express differently what we had written a year ago. We wanted people to bear with us and treat this as a necessary exercise in building democracy. It was important for Rajini, as it was for us, that every one should take a principled and courageous stand in his or her own situation. She felt in particular that the cowardice of this society had brought it so low as to be despised by everyone. why was Rajini alone killed?

A Purpose

As a Christian I believe that God does not allow an evil to happen without a purpose - even when the good die for the wicked. If we have the gift of life, it is to accomplish something for God's purpose. His purpose is ultimately good and his supreme mercy is past understanding. Rajini was extremely courageous. I am not naturally good or courageous. But goodness and courage are

gifts from God which are perfected in faith. This cannot be realised in this life. We will be judged by whether or not we work to accomplish the purpose for which he has given us the gift of life while he has taken Rajini to himself.

Let us take something that Rajini felt deeply during these past few weeks. This concerned the militarisation of our children. One side was putting them under arms by unlawful conscription and the other by using questionable forms of inducement. To what purpose? To kill each other. The powers in Delhi and Colombo, their legal protectors, were shamelessly running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. These young persons from the deprived sections of our society were a sizeable part of our future generation.

How did we react? The University community remained silent and content because of an assurance that they were exempt from conscription. The Christian Churches remained largely silent, because a number of church leaders were able to have christian children released. The rich and the upper class successfully looked after their own children. It was right and lawful that we ought to protect children we knew. What was wrong was to be passive about the children of others. About two days before Rajini died, she cried about it. Are we so blind? Had we learnt nothing from previous promises of peace? What will happen when these young men war with each other? They are already bitter about those who watched them go under arms and did nothing.

Rajini had a deep compassion for the poor young men under arms, irrespective of group, who acted in the belief that they had nothing to live for but to die. Her anger was rather directed at leaders and the hypocritical stands taken by state powers. She wanted to do something.

What do we do even as Christians? When someone like Rajini is killed, we comfort ourselves saying that she talked too much or tried to talk sense to men past understanding. We try to believe against repeated experience that we are safe. Even now, if we respect Rajini and respect God, let us wake up and do something to find a way out for these young men who find themselves trapped under the weight of arms.

God has given us grace in abundance to have courage and understanding. If we do nothing, we will be like the man who kept his one talent buried while others multiplied their talents by using them. If we remain passive, our faith will be only a lot of noise and emotion, devoid of life.

Even as the great empire of Babylon laid Israel to waste, God assured us, "The king of Babylon is my servant". If we do what is right in the sight of God we have nothing to fear. He has assured us that in all that we suffer, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us".

Those of us who are Christians need not despair unduly about the early end of Rajini's work amongst us. Tragedy is tied up with life itself and no work of ours will be left behind as perfect as we want it to be. Yet God fulfils himself. I like to think of the last scene in Tennyson's *Morte' D'Arthur*. In its prime, Arthur and the knights of the Round Table were an institution that determinedly fought for justice and for the righting of wrongs. Like all human institutions, the Knights of the Round Table became corrupted with time. In the last scene of the poem, Sir Bedivere, the last of Arthur's faithful Knights stands sadly watching, as Arthur, now mortally wounded, is about to sail for the Island of Avilion. Arthur tells the grieving Bedivere the only thing a Christian can say :

".....God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure but thou-
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul....."

Even in a tragedy such as this, the ultimate loving kindness of God is with us always. This was aptly expressed by Milton in his *Samson Agonistes*. Milton himself suffered much because of his physical blindness and his political career :

"All is best, though we oft doubt,
What th' unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close".

Who killed Rajini is at present not important for us. We do not know whether it was an accident, deliberate, a mistake or a slip up. Let us merely recognise that there is a good deal of evil around that must be fought by God's grace. We must not give ourselves to hatred, anger or despair. Let us leave to God what is his. He has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay". We are told : "If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head".

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

—Rajan Hoole,
Jaffna
23rd Sept., 1989

A Tribute to Fr. Celestine

Called to his rest, this man of God,
No common cleric collared clod,
Looked on the human as a whole
Possessed of body, mind and soul.
As such he strove for liberty
United in diversity
Of race, of creed, of language, class,
He worked for human rights *en masse* ;
He championed civil liberty
That man live with dignity,
Free of oppression, terror, force
By State or dread subversive source,
With breadth of vision for the right
He strove to shed celestial light.

—Mervyn Casie Chetty

135, San Sebastian Street
Hulftsdorp
8 October., 1989.

Eightfold Solution

EDITOR
Christian Worker

I wish to put forward eight proposals as means of bringing about inter-racial harmony, mutual understanding, goodwill, co-operation, co-existence and unity between the two major communities of our motherland, Sri Lanka.

1. Sinhala-Tamil Inter-Marriages should be encouraged and fostered so that A New Sri Lanka Nation would ultimately be evolved.
2. The Government should grant special bonuses or allowances to both parties in Sinhala-Tamil inter-marriages.

3. Sinhala-Tamil Inter-Married couples and their children should be given priority in employment, both in the public and private sectors. Similarly, priority should be given in housing, health and educational facilities should be given to them. If the Government adopts this policy, I am sure many would inter-marry among each other's community.

4. Sinhala-Tamil Mixed Schools should be immediately established in areas where the two races reside predominantly.

5. Sinhala-Tamil Cultural Centres should be started in all such areas.

6. Translate and publish Sinhala Literature in Tamil and Tamil Literature in Sinhala. The Government of Sri Lanka should set up two translation boards for the purpose.

7. Sinhala-Tamil Shramadana Campaigns should be organised immediately to raise the standard of living of backward and under-developed areas of both communities.

8. All three languages English, Tamil and Sinhala should be taught in Schools and Universities. They should be taught comparatively within the same period by the same teacher and not as three separate languages by three separate teachers during three separate periods in the time table. This will bring about Linguistic Unity and also save time in the time table.

Languages are equally impermanent and transient like all other conditioned Things (*Sankara Dharma*) in this ever-changing World. Languages are meant to bring about mutual and reciprocal understanding among various language speaking groups and not to create discord among them. This factor should be uppermost in our minds when we seek solutions to the Language Problems among different races all over the World. The above enumerated Eight Solutions may well be equally applied to solve language problems in other parts of the Globe.

BANDULA SRI GUNAWARDHANA
"Sri Guna Niwasa"
270, Park Road
Colombo—5.

The Work of Bandit Capitalism

Reflection on the Budget

Dr. Mervyn De Silva M.P.

Besides being a Member of Parliament on the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)'s National List, Dr. Mervyn De Silva has also been a former Advisor to the Ministry of Plan Implementation and able therefore to more effectively comment on the economic policies of the Government.

High prices of basic food requirements, an expanding malnourished population, abject poverty in urban and rural areas, heightening social tensions, increasing economic social and political instability, mounting unemployment, lawlessness, crime and drug addiction sweeping across the country are among the complex array of problems seriously threatening the country.

This is the second budget that was presented by this government without a comprehensive economic development plan, only updated version of what was euphemistically called a rolling plan.

Many of the familiar problems during the past 12 years derives from the absence of a sound economic development plan which aims at increasing the economic welfare of the whole community, and not merely a fraction of it.

What Economic Development entails

Economic development is a very complex process involving not only economics, but also social, political, technological and cultural changes. In short, if the primary purpose of seeking the development of a country is to increase the economic welfare of all its people particularly, those who are disadvantaged and side-tracked, then the Ministry of Policy Planning and Plan Implementation must assess the progress of development by reference to two separate indicators namely, the index of production or national income (the growth aspect), and the economic welfare of the lower strata of people (the quality aspect), and not only on the former.

I do not wish to get into the relative merits and demerits of the commonly used indices of economic development, but I dare say, that the difficulty in quantifying economic welfare does not mean that it can be ignored. Income distribution, the Gini coefficient, the physical quality of life index etc., must form an integral part of any acceptable index of genuine economic development.

The Ministry of Policy Planning must realise that it is because there is a total lack of a realistic

people oriented comprehensive economic development plan that we have an angry generation today. What was promised had not been delivered, and they cannot envision how to build for the future on what has been ruined. The idea I am trying to convey has been well summarised by Sir Arthur Lewis when he concluded that "development has left out the bulk of the population totally unaffected, and will continue to do so unless countries resort to new approaches to development. Developing countries are merely scratching the surface."

This is what has happened since 1977. Yes, tall edifices, beautiful buildings, attractive shopping complexes, gigantic dams, lakes and reservoirs, broadened roads and parks, luxury hotels and holiday resorts and a coterie of very wealthy men! I therefore believe that as we enter the new financial year one of the most important things for the Ministry of Policy Planning is to get the government out of the grip of that mindset that sees the economic policies pursued for 12 long years without results, as the only road to economic development.

How it all Happened

Just look at the figures of our external debts, balance of payment deficit, external assets, trade deficit, debt servicing ratio, Colombo consumers price index and the huge budget deficit. What are the Think Tanks in the Ministry doing about these? But first, how did all this come about? The government keeps saying that the price of the dollar, the pound sterling and all other foreign currencies have increased. This is not the real position because, it is the Sri Lanka rupee that has decreased. You will recall that the US \$ in November 15th, 1977 was only Rs. 8.59. This was prior to the policy decision to devalue the rupee at the behest of the World Bank and IMF under the guise of the "Unification of the exchange rates." The US \$ which was unified from Rs. 8.59 immediately to Rs. 16.03 in the same month of 1977 is now Rs. 40.00. The Ministry of Policy Planning might say that the IMF and World Bank demanded this financial policy as a prerequisite for granting loans, AID, and commodity assistance. But, why did it succumb to this without a correct appraisal of the dire consequences that would follow and have now come to pass? From that day onwards the entire economic and financial structure of our country went completely out of focus.

Then in the euphoria of its success in 1977 the government also flaunted the policy decision to liberate the economy and hastily embarked on prestige and infra structural lead projects, and heaps of other low priority investment types that catered to the needs of the minority consisting of the rich. These projects for which the majority of the people had to pay ultimately, actually cost double or treble on account of the unprecedented waste and corruption.

The next policy step was to open the flood-gates of the import of goods, materials, luxuries and non-essentials from every nook and corner of the world. How does the government justify this policy decision? It did so by extolling that this would help in the development of the country for, according to them increased imports of raw material would promote local production and thereby create a geometrical increase in the production cycle of goods and services. Although, this indeed did not happen, the present government is repeating the same thing in regard to its policies.

Reasons for Economic Derangement

If the government thinks it had sold brilliant economic justification for the economic gyration I think it is sadly mistaken. But, if the government has not clearly understood the causes of the economic derangement created, let me tell them briefly that the following are the reasons :—

- (1) The Sri Lanka rupee has declined steadily since 1977 and is now rapidly declining at an alarming rate.
- (2) The uncontrollable and growing inflation, despite efforts to suppress it artificially.
- (3) The ever-widening trade deficit with the volume of imports increasing concurrently with increases in the prices of imports.
- (4) The gross domestic product has steadily declined since 1982.
- (5) The balance of payments is unfavourable and the external assets are falling.
- (6) There is a total dependence on imports in relation to goods and services.
- (7) The less definable though important issues such as rampant corruption, wastage, mismanagement at public sector enterprises, conspicuous consumption and wrong priorities in planning.
- (8) The overall decreases in agricultural production particularly Tea production which has been allowed to lose its primary position in the economy.

The country has now become dependent to a very large extent on the foreign exchange earned by the poor house-maids who are toiling it out in the Middle East. Can the government which boasted so much about its development work, the open economy policies and pipe dreams of leaping to the 21st Century, name any other net foreign exchange earner for our country which is higher than this?

This is the proud record of more than a decade of so-called development, a record of 12 years of tinkering around with an economy that was stable at the time it was inherited. No doubt, the UNP's main complaint at that time was the non-availability of many imported goods. Yes indeed, there were difficulties but the lesson of history is that nations and civilisations have perished through affluence, but no nation, no civilisation, has ever died of adversity.

What have the UNP government's policies given us today? Vastly decreased acreages under Paddy, Tea, Coconut, Rubber and other subsidiary food crops; idle small-scale factories and unutilised power and handloom machinery; and 7,257,000 people or 50.1% of the population condemned to live below the poverty line.

All the propaganda about its policies, investment promotion zones and songs sung to the refrain of "bring in the robber barons", and forecasts of foreign exchange that would be earned has come to nought. Despite the inhuman labour laws practised in these zones, they cannot even match the earnings of the poor Middle East house-maids.

On top of all this, the government is propagating the theory of investment and savings beginning with consumption. If I may use an analogy - this is like attempting to re-cycle corn beef by reversing the production process, that is, inserting canned corned beef at one end in the expectation of seeing bouncing bulls come out at the other end.

Facing the Truth

13 budgets have come and gone from the hands of the United National Party but politically, economically, socially and culturally as a nation we do not qualify to occupy even square one. Permit me therefore to emphasise the fact that budgets, plans or policies however cleverly formulated or designed will never get us out of the mire unless the entire body polity in this country is purged of the hypocrisy, corruption, dishonesty and injustice that march triumphantly across the nation. The hypocrisy, corruption, dishonesty and injustice that we witness since 1977 is an extremely subtle and calculated form that is accepted, endorsed and even lauded by the middle, upper and elitist classes. Ironically it has even gained the moral sanction of the clergies and hierarchies of all religions found in this country, perhaps because they too were among the exclusive groups that benefitted from the open economy policies. It is now practised at the higher levels down to the lowest level, and our society has lost its value-system that would have enabled it to see through the frauds.

We must face the stark truth that it was the policies of bandit capitalism, a form of open economy that began this age of counterfeit where illegality passes off for legality, dishonesty for honesty, and injustice for justice. It were the vendors of these counterfeits, the knowing, and all those without exception who remained silent, who must take responsibility for the present state of our country. Therefore, while appealing to the government, and this all important and influential Ministry to give the highest priority to policies and measures that can bring about lasting changes in the body polity, may I in conclusion, commend to all the Members of Parliament the prophetic words of Dr. Sachinand Singha, one of the architects of the Indian Constitution who once said :—

"Republics are created by virtue, public spirit and the intelligence of the Citizen. They fall, when the wise are banished from the public councils, because they dare to be honest, and the profligate are rewarded because they flatter the people in order to betray them".

Wanted:

A New Economic Policy

R. M. B. Senanayake

There is no doubt that our balance of payments deficits cannot be corrected only by a devaluation or a series of depreciations of the exchange rate alone. The fact that the IMF has agreed only to a Stand-by Loan and not to the second tranche of the Structural Adjustment Facility means it considers Sri Lanka a hopeless case requiring drastic medicine.

Ostentatious Living

Our economy has stagnated since 1986. Yet to correct the chronic imbalance in the balance of payments would require further deflation which means a further reduction in living standards. There is no question that we have to cut down on imports and lead an austere life. The burden must fall on the upper class elite. We could never afford the styles of living copied from the affluent West. They took two hundred years to achieve the present living standards. It is not possible for us to emulate their style of living characterised by whisky and brandy after sundown, with luxurious houses paved with mosaic floors, with luxury bathrooms, expensive carpets, lavish interior decor, with the comforts of air-conditioning etc. This style of living includes all manner of consumer durables and modern gadgetry such as refrigerators, television sets, electric floor polishers etc. All these are paid for by the nation's scarce foreign exchange, earned by the hard work of the tea and rubber plantation workers and workers in the non-traditional industries. This foreign exchange must be conserved for import of basic foodstuffs for the masses, for the raw materials, machinery, equipment necessary for the export industries and for essential inputs for the generation of power and the transportation industry. The Western life style of the elite is definitely out and the government should ban the import of all consumer goods not consumed by the masses. Never mind the tourist industry. It is this life style of the rich which economists invoke as "the revolution of rising expectations" that is the cause of the present violent social conflict. We can't eat the fruits of development when the tree has hardly grown.

Open Economy benefits the Intermediate Class

Marxists have simplified all social conflict as the manifestation of class conflict between the capitalists and the workers. The Polish Economist Kalecki pointed out the importance of the intermediate class which includes the rich farmers, the traders and owner-entrepreneurs. It is an assorted intermediate class that has benefitted from the so-called 'open economy' of 1977. The traders, the Casino owners, the book-makers, betting shop owners, the drug pedlars, smug-

glers, the duty free shop owners and their touts and intermediaries as well as those government contractors who had special access to the ruling politicians. Those in the bureaucracy and political circle who resorted to bribery and corruption also fall within this class of beneficiaries. It must be noted that neither the organised labour nor the professional managers nor the shareholders in public quoted companies have benefitted from the inflation that is the other characteristic of this economic policy. These groups particularly the fixed income earners in both the public and private sectors and pensioners have fought a losing battle to maintain their real incomes. On the other hand the richer farmers because of higher food prices, the traders because of inflation and owner-entrepreneurs because of the relative ease with which they slip through the tax net (given the numerous tax concessions and loopholes) have never had it so good. A striking feature of the post 1977 economic growth is the growth in services. Unlike the concept of material product of the Communist countries, the GNP includes material goods as well as services. In a poor country the growth in services hardly constitutes an increase in welfare. It has meant an increase in the margins for transport and distribution in an economy where such margins are already too high a burden on the rural producers.

Cause of Political Unrest

It is the prolonged economic stagnation since 1983 that has caused political unrest. There is a feeling of hopelessness among the youth and they feel the future holds nothing for them but a threat. Thousands of youth face the bleak prospect of remaining dependent on their families for years to come. Many parents and elders have lost hope of their girls getting married. They too have little hope of their being looked after by their children in old age. Inflation and mounting unemployment, mounting partly as a result of the increase in population which brings 250,000 youth to the job market each year, have caused severe frustration.

But even this would not have caused so many youth to rebel if not for the political degeneration that took place after the Referendum. They saw how the democratic system was undermined. They find that some people have done very well out of inflation and economic stagnation. They hold the government's policies responsible for widening the gap between the economic power of a small segment and the burdens borne by the masses. Some clearly identifiable groups have become extremely rich, like those importing cars,

duty free vehicles which could be resold at a fat profit, those obtaining textile quotas through political clout, and government contractors and suppliers in general. The government servants who as a group add very little to the country's material product enjoy more rights than other sectors of society. They benefit most from free education through access to Colombo schools which impart an education superior to that in the ordinary rural schools. They pay no taxes. The peasants and workers in the unorganised sector who form the bulk of the population have no security of income.

Organised Labour — Privileged

The Leftists have always stressed the role of the workers in the organised sector as the instrument of social change. They fail to realise that in a poor country like ours, the workers in the organised sector are actually a privileged lot. Most of the conditions of exploitation — lack of job security, violation of safety rules, evasion of Provident Fund contributions and general failure to comply with the Labour legislation are more common among the small scale owner-entrepreneurs than among the companies both local and foreign which are professionally managed and where there is a divorce of ownership and capital. Organised workers and their Trade Union leaders have come under attack as much as the ruling politicians.

Economic stagnation has led to a slow down in the growth of Government revenue in real terms. It can hardly keep paying its employees without reducing their real wages. The alternative is mass retrenchment which is advocated by the World Bank. The bulk of government employees are engaged in revenue consuming employment. The State Corporations have to depend on the State banks to continue. The easiest option for the government is to cut down investment, sacrificing the future for the present, although it would only perpetuate stagnation.

The old Upper Middle Class elite which inherited power from the British in 1948 are visibly discomfited and some are migrating in hordes. They are only thinly represented in the upper echelons of the Police, the Army, the bureaucracy, the professions, the foreign-owned businesses and the Universities.

The present government of President Premadasa sought to formulate a new economic policy - the Janasaviya. It has become a non-starter because it unfortunately included an excessive consumption package. State aid to the poor must necessarily be below the minimum wage level in the economy so as not to upset the economic calculus of work versus leisure. Nor is it possible for a stagnant economy to sustain a large consumption package financed by State revenue. Any attempt to finance it by deficit financing will be self defeating. Nor are offers of free meals to school children an adequate substitute to the offer of jobs.

But a new Economic policy is required if the country is to escape the traumas of social conflict. Such a policy must include the elimination of the lavish lifestyles of the elite. Nor should such luxury goods be produced locally instead of being imported. Invest-

ment must be directed to create more jobs and satisfy the needs of the masses. Screw-driver projects where presently imported consumer durables like refrigerators, air-conditioners, television sets are locally assembled do not create employment. They should therefore be taxed heavily whether imported or locally manufactured. Manufacturers of such items don't deserve any protection either. Only those industries which are exporting deserve any protection and there too only such concessions as will enable them to compete in foreign markets.

Expenditure Tax

Many economists have recommended an Expenditure tax instead of the present Income Tax. While equality of income distribution is neither desirable nor practical, the present over-consumption by the upper classes must be curbed. A man should be taxed as Kaldor said on what he withdraws from the community's pool of resources and not on what he earns. Income for purposes of determining tax will be the balance after deducting savings. Only savings held in the form of bank deposits, insurance, shares and securities will be so deductible. Thus the tax will fall on consumption expenditure. The exemption of savings will weaken one important motive for tax evasion — namely the desire to provide for the future and the self-employment entrepreneur's desire to re-invest his profits in building up his enterprise.

New Directions for Investment

Left to itself investment flows into those industries where the return on the project is highest. But private returns and social returns are not the same. If the standard of living of the rural poor is to improve then investment particularly government investment must be channelled to such projects as benefit them and social cost benefit analysis should be applied. Investments which will benefit upper class consumption must be discouraged by high internal taxes as well as Customs duties on the imported equivalents. The exchange rate must reflect the real scarcity value of foreign exchange while capital and power which are both scarce in relation to the over-all needs of the country must be valued at above their market values. Subsidised rural electrification as well as low domestic consumer tariffs for electricity are not desirable. To balance the capital/labour ratio in favour of employing more labour and less capital, there should be taxes on capital as well. Import of machinery should not be made cheap except for export industries. Private motor cars should be taxed out of existence by a policy of high annual licensing fees. As one writer said — we must ask not what kind of transport is best suited to the city but what kind of city is best for those who use bicycles, tri-shaws or prefer to walk. The large mass of people who work in the city but live in the suburbs or distant towns, casts a terrific strain on transport. If the functions of government has been devolved on Provincial Councils speedily this enormous expenditure could be reduced substantially. Priority in the use of the roads should be for the public transport and urban planners and traffic planners should re-orient their plans. Heavy vehicles and container carriers during the rush hours

can be discouraged by a special levy. Car pools should be encouraged to enable maximum utilisation of imported vehicles and conservation of imported fuel. Private cars could be barred from entry to the City during rush hours unless they carry a full complement of passengers.

Even industries producing stainless steel, aluminium, plastics should be taxed. Economists have pointed out how stainless steel and aluminium pots and pans for cooking have destroyed village industries producing clay pots. Any product that displaces a local industrial or handicraft product should be taxed to protect employment of artisans. In short whatever can be produced by cottage industries should not be permitted to be produced in factories by mechanised processes. At the least such industries should be taxed. This is where handloom textile industry deserves support. But subsidies are not enough. The government must see that there is a market for such textiles. It is not enough to market handlooms to a small fancy export market. The consumers must be motivated to use such handloom products. A producer subsidy to be met from a tax on factory-made textiles is justifiable in the interests of employment generation. Since the social cost of handloom cloth is much less than their market cost. The government should protect all village products by pricing them at little above the bare cost of raw materials and subsidising the village producer. The basket weaver, the cobbler, and other traditional craftsmen should be paid a subsidy where necessary and their products priced cheap to be saleable. The cost of such subsidies should be recovered from factory-made products such as shoes, textiles, plastics etc. All this can be justified on the most stringent economic criteria of social cost benefit analysis.

The organised industrial sector should be taxed if it caters to the local market but encouraged by tax concessions if their products are exported. This will prevent the collapse of cottage industries and also discourage the aping of the affluent style of living.

Housing is another sector where a change of policy is called for. The demand for housing should be met by low cost houses using labour intensive techniques. In the villages houses have always got built before the fanfare of the government started. Cheap houses with improved building materials should be the aim. To introduce radically new kinds of houses as in urban areas using such building materials as concrete or imported roofing sheets is an economic folly. Villagers if they must be assisted, should be assisted to use locally available materials such as bricks and tiles if their clay houses with thatched roofs are to be up-graded. Actually housing must rank after employment generation and if one million jobs had been created instead of one million houses we would not perhaps have the violence we now experience.

As for urban housing, the first need is to have a study made of land values for housing. Owing to the universal practice of under-declaration of the value of land and houses on deeds to cheat the tax authorities, there are no objective data on land and house prices.

Urban housing with its high rise buildings using large quantities of steel and cement would have to be frozen given the present economic stagnation and deflation imposed by the Balance of Payments crisis. House building by the Government is a heavy drain on public revenue.

The Janasaviya

President Premadasa realised that the pattern of development which has taken place in the last ten years has not benefitted the rural masses who voted him to power. He began talking of a Gandhian model of development—not mass production but production by the masses. He grasped the urgency to relieve the poverty of the populace in the countryside and formulated his Janasaviya, a financial package which consists of a consumption allowance for two years and a capital grant to be used for investment. But while promises are easy to make, their implementation must necessarily be slow and unspectacular and politically not so rewarding. The consumption allowance was too large to be financed from tax revenues. It has had to be phased out over a longer period. If it is not to be a dole it has to be tied to the performance of productive work by the recipient. If it is to be a dole it has to be low enough not to disturb the wage level of the economy.

The Janasaviya rhetoric drew on the "Small is beautiful" ideas of Schumacher. He stressed the need to support small enterprises and the self-employed among the poor of the Third World. The ILO studies also emphasized the informal sector, the small enterprises run by craftsmen and artisans in both town and country catering to a variety of needs of the lower classes. But while small may be beautiful, beauty is not enough for economic success not even for a woman perhaps. Even a small enterprise has to face the challenge of the market. There is no doubt a role for small enterprises and for the self-employed. But it is a limited role. It is not possible to depend entirely on small enterprises to carry out the task of development. Also, what if those who grow rich in the informal sector demand imported products and want to follow the life-style of the affluent? The beneficiaries of Janasaviya are to be restricted to the consumption of locally produced goods. But essential articles of food are imported such as flour and sugar. Can an increase in demand stimulate and bring about an increase in production? Is lack of demand a constraint on local production? Rather, there are a variety of supply side constraints such as poor producer prices, lack of credit, land use factors etc.

If the Janasaviya is financed by taxation, then there would be a transfer of incomes from those taxed to Janasaviya beneficiaries. But if the Janasaviya is financed by new money, then such expenditure would merely increase prices rather than lead to an increase in production. The experience of Latin American countries show how easily inflation can start galloping. Taxes collected with the usual time-lag are worth less at the time of collection. Finding its tax revenue being inflated away, the governments resort to borrowing from the Central Bank, thus printing new money

to pay its employees. But the experience of Latin American countries like Argentina shows that the reckless printing of money to meet the government's payments, causes hyper-inflation, and with it arises public disorder. The Government becomes powerless to control it. Shooting and looting and a state of siege on the government arose in Argentina.

But this is not to argue that the Gandhian model of development does not have a place. Assisting village industry even if the products are crude will help to maintain employment in the village. Assistance to such industries even cottage industries can be justified on social cost-benefit analysis. But one must not exaggerate the role that such development could play in solving the problems of output and employment generation. But this requires a change in the pattern of consumption. To really generate more jobs one must not only produce hand printed handloom textiles but also be able to persuade the consuming public that they are usable. What is required above all is to curb the consumption particularly of the upper classes. The lavish styles of consumption must be changed so that the country will learn to live within its means. The investment component of the Janasaviya could play some role in promoting self-employment and small scale enterprise if markets for their products are found. The idea of sub-contracting to small enterprises by large firms in the organised sector is particularly useful. The government corporations could give a lead in this direction. The banks which now mobilise rural savings and divert them to urban investment in trade and industry should try to reverse this flow. The setting up of Regional banks is a step in the right direction because these banks which mobilise rural savings do not have head offices in Colombo to divert the flow of their funds to the City. The scrapping of the Co-operative banks with the setting up of the People's Bank in the 1960's was an obvious mistake.

Buddhist Economics

Schumacher explained the relevance of what he called Buddhist Economics. The modern economist is used to measuring the standard of living by the amount of annual consumption by an individual assuming all the time that a man who consumes more is "better off" in welfare than one who consumes less. Only material welfare is taken into account. But a Buddhist Economist says Schumacher "will consider this approach irrational. Since consumption is merely a means to human well-being, the aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption". Thus says Schumacher "if the purpose of clothing is a certain amount of temperature comfort and an attractive appearance, our task is to obtain this purpose with the smallest possible effort, that is with the smallest annual destruction of cloth and with the help of designs that involve the smallest possible input of toil. The ownership and consumption of goods is a means to an end and Buddhist Economics is the systematic study of how to attain given ends with the minimum means".

Buddhism and Buddhist values which are inherited play a large role in our culture. It is best therefore for the government to accept this Buddhist Economics and

propagate it among the people. There must be counter propaganda on radio and television to explain that the mad scramble for more and more consumption of material goods does not add to a person's welfare. But example is better than precept and the leaders in society must set the tone of austerity if the masses are to accept such a culture. We have to overhaul the whole pattern of consumption by the elite—whether eating Western style ham and bacon, wearing lounge suits, patent leather shoes or living in mosaic drawing rooms with all kinds of consumer durables and electrical gadgetry. The climate and environment does not need such Western style consumption. Many of these Western values on which our notions of prosperity and welfare are based, have to be rejected. Buddhist Economics is in accord with the emphasis on spiritual values preached by all religions. "Man does not live by bread alone". "What doth it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his own soul"? These are sayings from the Bible which stress the primacy of the spiritual over the material. Self-denial and the acceptance of poverty are traditional Christian values. So it is time that the clergy of all religions de-emphasized the pursuit of material welfare and turned the minds of the youth to the primacy of spiritual pursuits.

A New Value System

How can we make this transformation of values? It is not possible to go back to old social institutions like temple education. But education is the method available. A deliberate propaganda campaign must be carried out through the mass media, directed at all levels of society, particularly the elite showing the need to give up the affluent life-style copied from the West. The need to patronise locally produced goods to give employment to the people must be stressed. The unity of the city dweller and his country cousin must be strengthened. In wartime there was a successful propaganda campaign to grow more food. A campaign to stress the need for austere living today for creating employment today and development tomorrow must be carried out on similar lines. Those who however insist on carrying on their affluent styles of living should be taxed heavily in the same way as cigarette smokers are being called upon to pay for their smoking pleasure. Private motor cars are a luxury which should be heavily taxed so as to conserve fuel which is paid for in foreign exchange.

The Economy must be Managed

It is not the fault of the free market economy that we went on a consumer binge in the last ten years. The free market is only a tool, a mechanism. It has to be harnessed and the economy has to be managed. There cannot be *laissez-faire* as in the heyday of capitalism in Britain. Nor should there be socialism in the sense of State owned enterprises. The State corporations have contributed their share of lethargy among workers, bred attitudes of dishonesty and corruption and indiscipline which have today engulfed the whole of society. The socialism of the doctrinaire Left is a will-of-the-wisp. Socialist ideology proclaimed that the freedom from exploitation could only be secured by abolishing private ownership of the means of production and the take-over

of economic power by the working class through revolution or other means. In practice socialism came to mean the take-over of power by a political party - the Communist Party - in the name of the working class. The State did not become the instrument of the working class but fell into the hands of a party bureaucracy which suppressed all opposition and monopolised power. The bureaucracy assumed a privileged position and squeezed the living standards of the masses to extract "surplus value" - the capital required for investment in development.

Socialism in Sri Lanka has come to mean nationalisation-not by the Communist Party-but by democratic political parties. It has meant the take-over of private enterprises to be run by politically recruited henchmen at the top with an increasingly politically recruited bureaucracy. The Marxist idea of extracting surplus value failed to materialise in these enterprises. The workers were too well organised and able through collective bargaining and strikes to secure more than their fair share of the proceeds. It is the State as owner who lost out. These enterprises have become consumers of scarce capital extracted from the poor masses through public savings or forced savings via inflation. The workers have regularly resorted to strikes to disrupt the economy to obtain gains for themselves. Britain suffered from a similar malaise until the Thatcher government of 1978. Margaret Thatcher realised that the only way to cure the 'British disease' of strikes, union power and restrictive labour practices was to introduce legislation making Trade Unions responsible and accountable for their actions. Industrial action was made lawful only when there was a majority decision of the members of the Union taken by secret ballot. The definition of a trade dispute was narrowed to one between workers and employers about the terms and conditions of employment. Union Executives have to be elected by secret ballot. Picketing was regulated by law. Secondary picketing was made unlawful and sympathy strikes could lead to actions for damages against the Trade Union responsible. Union funds could be seized for violation of the law. These reforms aimed at making Trade Unions democratic and responsible organisations without infringing on the legitimate rights of Trade Unions.

The Government of 1977 could have adopted similar measures without resorting to any covert acts of intimidation.

Institutional Reforms

A free market economy requires a legal and institutional framework which promotes business. Our Company Law, Bankruptcy laws and Debt recovery laws are hopelessly out-dated. There are strong pressure groups against change and reform. While the Courts concern with harsh and unconscionable terms in contracts of money-lending is understandable, this should not be a reason for opposing all reform. In UK the Money-lenders Acts did not apply to banks and companies approved by the Board of Trade. The Consumer Protection Act of 1974 in UK gave all necessary safeguards without curbing the recovery of debts. Company Law has been regularly revised in UK. Bankruptcy Laws have been overhauled in UK and USA.

Our business firms are puny in World markets. They are still owner-operated. But efficient markets require strong economic agents. There should be incentives for owner-entrepreneurs to grow and become public quoted companies with professional management. Tax concessions could promote such public companies.

To summarise, it is essential to curb the lavish Western style of living copied from the affluent countries if we are to appease the poor masses. Those now enjoying high incomes will have to save a large bulk of their incomes and re-invest, cutting down their lavish consumption. When the economy is stagnant there is a strong case for sharing more equitably the national product. The government must see to it that the industrial, commercial and professional groups draw from the nation's material product only what is commensurate to their contribution to society. Local industrialists, traders, middlemen, lawyers, doctors and other self employed persons should not be allowed to profiteer from inflation. Since there is inadequate competition within these groups the government must look into and regulate these prices and charges even for professional persons like doctors and lawyers. Nor should the organised working class be allowed to appropriate more than their due share through collective bargaining and strikes. To the extent that they raise the level of wages they are depriving the creation of new jobs for the mass of unemployed. They are as much a part of the privileged class as the other upper middle class groups. Savings must be increased among such groups and a new direction must be given to investment. Labour intensive investment must be encouraged and village industries protected against mechanised factory-made products as pointed out by Mahatma Gandhi 30 years ago. All efforts should be directed at export promotion but imports should be minimised by even outright bans on consumer imports. The Government will have to re-structure its budget relying on cutting consumption by the private sector as well as public consumption. Savings must be encouraged by higher interest rates. No segment of the population should be allowed to benefit from inflation. The Capital consuming white elephants like Air Lanka and the Five Star hotels should be sold to private sector, local or foreign. Where they are not viable they should be closed down without throwing more good money after bad. The Welfare Services like Education and Health should be made selective. All those who send children to free schools should have an imputed value of education added to their taxable incomes. The stamps for Health Services introduced by Dr. N. M. Perera should be revived. While Universities could be free all employed graduates should be required to pay a tax which would be a recovery of the cost of University education. Government servants should be made taxable like all others liable to tax when their incomes reach the tax threshold. Mr. Ronnie de Mel got away with very spurious arguments to exempt government servants from income tax.

There should be a shift of resources to cottage industry and small scale self-employment and away from power driven industry catering to the urban elite.

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Church leaders Voice their concern

We, being a group of Bishops, Priests, Religious Sisters and lay persons of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches met on Monday 2nd October 1989 to discuss the grave crisis of our nation.

We are indeed agonised over the massive loss of human life taking place in our country today. The political struggle now engulfing the country has already cost us many thousands of lives. The misery and fear in which our people live is indescribable.

The Right to Life and Justice

We urge all our people, the militant youth and the security forces of our state to ensure the security of all non-combatants. No one has the right to torture anyone, ever. No one should kill a fellow human being. All persons who are arrested must be assured of safety of life and limb. Their families should be informed and permitted to visit them. They must be dealt with under the due process of the normal law of our Country.

The Need for the Restoration of Democracy

Every effort must be made by the Government to sincerely take steps to restore our democratic way of life so that all political groups would be free to join in the task of creating a just society in our Country.

We believe that this is possible, only if the para military forces are disbanded, the emergency lifted, the PTA and Indemnity Act repealed. We urge the militant youth on their part to stop the killing of security forces personnel, Government Officials and other civilians. It would also be imperative that the media be freed of state control and be equally accessible to all parties. These would be essential conditions for the holding of free and fair elections.

The Underlying Causes

Many people in our country have no land to cultivate and land reform is an urgent need, so that the landless peasantry may be immediately given land and other facilities for agricultural production. Avenues of employment in industry, agriculture and the provision of services must be expanded. We believe that in order to do this the free market economy we know should seriously and radically be reviewed. Rural

industry and local agriculture must be protected and encouraged. The policy of leasing out large extents of land to foreign companies should also be ended. Our youth have not been able to participate in a free and a fair general election for 12 years and have lost confidence in the democratic process. They have seen the growth of authoritarianism, and the centralization of power in a Presidency, and the consequent loss of the sovereignty of the people. They have seen and experienced the denial of trade union rights and student rights. The arbitrary banning and proscription of any movements and organisations of protest, for example the proscription of the JVP, has embittered a large section of our young people. They feel that successive governments have failed to respond to their aspirations. They are unable to secure employment for themselves on account of political favouritism and are afraid that the welfare system on which the people now depend so much will also be gradually dismantled. They are also aware that the Judiciary has been undermined. All these factors have led a section of our youth population to resort to armed struggle — both in the North and East and the South.

While we recognise the Justice of the cause of our militant youth, and while we understand the spiral of violence that has driven them to armed struggle we believe that the strategy of violence is too costly in terms of human life, dehumanising and totally counter productive.

Towards a Just Solution

We urge that this problem be solved by effecting immediate radical political and economic reforms, such as the restoration of the powers of parliament and the abolition of the Executive Presidency, the total overhauling of the open economy and radical land reform.

Serious attention must be given to the solving of our national problem. In this regard every effort must be made to create a Sri Lankan consciousness that transcends our loyalties to our respective races and creeds.

This is a task that must be undertaken chiefly by those formulating educational policies. Our educational system must have clear objectives and be based on sound principles. Thus we urge that educational policies and principles should be determined by an independent educational commission which will not be subject to partisan political control.

The unity and sovereignty of our Nation can be protected only if we recognise our plurality. We are many races and many creeds and all of us must be encouraged to contribute to the richness and variety of our national life. This can be ensured only by a process of devolution of power from the centre to the periphery. We believe this process is negated by the institution of a centralised executive presidency. Such devolution can succeed only if democratic institutions that serve the periphery are strengthened and fostered.

A Reflection

We urge the Churches to which we belong to examine their own structures. Are we the Churches blameless? Have not our institutions served to form and sustain the very elites and forces that uphold the unjust and exploitative order that prevails? We need to examine our own structures, institutions and life style. Do they reflect Christ's concern for the poor and oppressed, His commitment to "bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the down-trodden free, to proclaim the LORD'S year of favour" (Luke ch. 4 vs. 18-19)? Thus impelled by our faith we must offer all our resources and ourselves in the creative action to bringing into being the new order of love and justice. **"There! I am putting my words into your mouth. Look today I am setting you over nations and over kingdoms, to tear up and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant".** (Jer. ch. 1 vs. 9-10).

We must stand up in defence of human rights, in this dark hour of our nation's history. And we pledge ourselves to do so. We must defend the right to life of each one of us and urge that all who violate our law should be dealt with justly, legally and mercifully.

In the name of the crucified and risen LORD we demand that the lives of all those detained in police stations and army camps are secured and protected;

that they be not denied the right to justice. We ask that we be allowed to provide sanctuary to all those whose lives are in danger and who seek refuge. We seek permission to visit those in custody.

We strongly urge that the brutal killings of our people, especially the flower of our Nation, by paramilitary squads, armed services and militant groups, throughout our country be stopped immediately.

SIGNATORIES

The Rt. Revd. Frank Marcus Fernando ; The Rt. Revd. Jebez J. Gnanapragasam ; The Rt. Revd. Andrew Kumaraage ; The Ven. Godwin Weerasuriya ; The Revd. Kingsley Muttiah ; Fr. Mervyn Fernando ; Revd. Premasiri Fernando ; Fr. Dulip de Chikera ; Fr. John Camillus ; Fr. Sarath Iddamalgodha ; Fr. Sydney Knight ; Fr. Kenneth Fernando ; Fr. John Driver ; Fr. Vincent Dep ; Fr. Shanthi Hettiarachchi ; Revd. Shelton de Silva ; Fr. George Bernard ; Fr. Reid Shelton Fernando ; Fr. Sunanda Warnasinghe ; Revd. Ranjit Fernando ; Fr. Gyom Nonis ; Fr. Hadley Perera ; Revd. Sam Premarajah ; Fr. Maurice Cobban-Lea ; Fr. Eric Bartholomeusz ; Canon John Isaac ; Revd. Elmo Fernando ; Fr. Jayasiri Peiris ; Sr. Anastasia ; Sr. Christobel Wijesekera ; Sr. Binthia A.C. ; Sr. M. Mauda ; Sr. M. Cecilia A.C. ; Sr. M. Romula ; Sr. M. Barbara ; Sr. Peter HF ; Sr. Gillian ; Sr. Helen ; Sr. M. Camis ; Sr. Winifreda Wasalathanthrige ; Sr. Anela R.G.S. ; Sr. Lucy Agnes ; Mr. Britto Motha ; Mr. G. Halpe ; Mr. Aelian Peiris ; Ms. Shanthi Peiris ; Ms. Kamala Isaac ; Mr. K. J. C. Silva ; Mr. Eliadura Francis Soyza ; Mr. Morley St. Q. Wijeyeratne ; Mr. Lionel Peiris ; Mrs. Joan de Mel ; Mr. Nihal Jayatunga ; Ms. Manel Jayatunga ; Mr. G. M. Abeysekera ; Mr. S. Fernando ; Mr. H. Karunaratne ; Mr. Ajit Tillekawardena ; Ms. S. Tillekawardena ; Mr. Damayanti Peiris.



Declaration

Roque Dalton

In the name of those who wash other people's clothes
(and scrub other people's filth)

In the name of those who take care of other people's children
(and sell their work force
in the form of maternal love and humiliation)

In the name of those who live in other people's houses
(that are no longer friendly wombs, but tombs or prisons)

In the name of those who eat other people's crumbs
(and still chew them feeling like thieves)

In the name of those who live in a foreign country
(the houses and the factories and the businesses

and the streets and the cities and the towns
and the rivers and the lakes and the volcanoes and the mountains
always belong to others
and that's why the police and the guards are there
protecting them from us).

In the name of those who have nothing more than
hunger exploitation disease thirst for justice and for water
persecution conviction
loneliness abandonment oppression death

I accuse private property
of depriving us of everything.

Salvadoran Roque Dalton (1935-1975) is considered one of the most outstanding figures in contemporary Latin American poetry. The above verses are from his final work, Poemas Clandestinos (1975).

Courtesy : Latimamerica Press



India's Post-Election Uncertainties

It is not generally remembered that ever since the introduction of parliamentary democracy in India with independence from British rule there has been only one political party that has had the ability to govern the whole of India. At the centre as well as in all the states until the split that ensued in the Congress after Lal Bahadur Shastri's death, it is the Congress Party that has been in continuous rule.

Predominant Role of Congress

The explanation for this is not difficult. India being a multi-religious, multi-linguistic state with vast cultural differences pervading the country from one end to the other, it is far from an easy task for a single political party to embody the interests and aspirations of all the different peoples. The Congress was able to do this because it was the leader and the emblem of the national unity of India against the domination of British imperialism. From the time that the Congress became a mass movement moving into conflict with the British Indian State and seeking to oust its power, the Congress Party provided the receptacle for all India's different peoples seeking their liberations. There was no challenge to the Congress Party from any other direction in the performance of this task. Other political parties in existence at the time were sectional or sectarian in character, primarily regionally based and most of all they were distinguished by their opposition to the struggle for freedom and support of the British Imperialist government.

But freedom from British imperialism changed the entire aspect of politics in the country and brought new problems to the surface which were not all of a national character. Against such a background new parties had to emerge, more sectionally and regionally based which could concentrate their appeal to the local masses on their local problems.

It should not be forgotten, however, that the Congress even in the course of its struggle against imperialism recognized the multi-lingual nature of India and based its party organization on the linguistic principle. Thus while the central leadership spoke for the whole of India, this leadership was representative of linguistic units of the Congress Party which were spread throughout the country. Immediately after freedom a constitution of India was drawn up providing the fullest opportunity for the development of the linguistic unity and the different languages of the people of India. The Constitution did not immediately carve up India

into purely linguistic units. On the other hand many struggles had to be waged by the peoples of the different linguistic areas to see that the administrative boundaries of the different states conformed as far as possible to the linguistic boundaries. What is significant is that even those struggles against the leadership of the Congress at the centre were led by the regional Congress Party.

Until the death of Indira Gandhi in 1984 it would be true to say that the predominant leaders were to be found within the Congress Party. As long as Jawaharlal Nehru was alive there was only a single leader whom nobody could challenge. But after Nehru's death there was no such single leader to take his place and some kind of collective leadership developed within the Congress organization which which found little difficulty in maintaining its domination at the centre and in the majority of states. The existence of several regions however invariably generate conflicts among them and a tendency once more emerges towards the consolidation of the power of a single leader. This was the tendency that resulted in the powerful hold that Indira Gandhi possessed over the Indian states. It is not surprising that with her assassination there was a large vacuum in the leadership of the Indian state which her son Rajiv Gandhi was brought in to fill.

Democratic Structure Undermined

The Constitution of India did not provide for a federation of the different linguistic states. But it certainly did devolve a large area of power on the state governments. So long as there was agreement and identity of purpose between the centre and the state leadership no problems would pose themselves in relation to the administration of the government and the party. But this obviously could not be a permanent and universal condition. Conflicts were bound to appear and the resolution of such conflicts would lead to the formation of oppositional groups both at the centre and in the states within the Congress Party. The question of relationship between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the All India Congress Committee and the Chief Ministers of the states and the respective state Congress Presidents had therefore to become a major factor in the politics of India. But soon the parliamentary electoral process provided opportunities for dissident elements within the Congress to defy the leadership and even breakaway from the Party. So overwhelming a factor did this become that the Congress Party soon discarded its democratic structure and

became the reflection of the will of an powerful leader. Indira Gandhi was the first of these omnipotent leaders of the Congress Party. The Congress Party under Rajiv Gandhi became even more bureaucratic and was completely dominated by him and the people he gathered round him. The Congress ceased to be the all India political party representing peoples of all parts of the country that it was once. It went to the general election of November this year as the instrument of Rajiv Gandhi's authority. There were no other political parties which had an all India character to challenge him. There were only a number of regional and sectional organizations with widely varying political outlooks and programmes as the other contestant at the election. But since all of them were opposed to Rajiv Gandhi and the power he wielded, they were able to remove the majority that he commanded in Parliament and compel him to step down from the premiership.

Precarious Balance

This does not mean that an alternative government has in fact taken Rajiv Gandhi's place. On the other hand the party that has formed the government in India today, namely the Janata Dal has a mere 141 seats in a parliament of 525. It has been compelled to depend on the support of the right wing, anti-Muslim, communal parties of the Muslim League on the right consisting of some 88 members and on the support of some 50 odd members of the left front led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in West Bengal on the left. Not only is there nothing in common between the Muslim League and the left parties but there are vital differences between the Janata Dal government party and the Muslim League. For instance the Bharatiya Janata Party stands for the establishment of what it calls Hinduity. The Janata Dal represents primarily sections of the Hindu masses in Northern India. But it has also the support of large sections of Muslims. This means that Hinduity cannot enter into the programme of the Janata Dal government. In fact the Janata Dal itself is not a completely homogenous party. Rabid caste groups such as those led by the present Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal are certain to create inseparable problems within the Janata Dal itself. It is therefore an extremely precarious balance of forces on which the Janata Dal government stands. It is impossible to predict how long the balance will continue. But if anything occurs to upset this balance the present relationship of forces within the Indian parliament makes it extremely unlikely that any new alternative government could be set up in opposition to the Congress of Rajiv Gandhi.

The Struggle for Peace

The following is a contribution by a two person worldwide peace mission supported by the Nicaraguan Christian Base Communities (CEBs), The Permanent National Commission for "La Insurreccion Evangelica" (CNP) and the Ecumenical Committee for Aid and Development (CEPAD). They were in Sri Lanka from October 24th to November 4th and addressed meetings in Colombo, Kandy, Badulla and Katunayake. Dr. George Baldwin was formerly a Professor at St. Paul's School of Theology in Kansas City, U.S.A., who left all his worldly goods to live among the poor in Nicaragua for the last 5 years. Montserrat Fernandez is a graduate teacher from Spain who has been a member of the Christian Life Community and who since June 1988 has worked as a full-time volunteer with the Christian Base Communities and the Permanent Commission for the Church of the Poor (CNP).

There are 3 basic foundations for the Revolution in Nicaragua. First, a strong sense of Nationalism based on the philosophy and struggle of Augusto Sandino, a peasant revolutionary who from 1927 to 1934 waged a war against the US Marines who occupied his country. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) is named after Sandino and today unites the people in the struggle against the imperialism of the USA.

The Marxist socio-economic analysis is the second foundation for the Revolution. It promotes a class struggle between the poor and the rich and includes the struggle between the poor countries and the domination of economic imperialism. There is a vision of a new commitment to a new socio-economic world order which would result in more justice for poor countries (Third World).

There is also a Christian foundation to the Revolution in Nicaragua. In the last several decades a movement known as Liberation Theology has emerged throughout Latin America. It finds its expression through small groups called Christian Base Communities which gather together to read the Bible and to engage in political/social action. They speak of constructing the "Kingdom of God" while the Revolution speaks of "creating a new society" and see no contradictions between the two because both focus on the option for the poor. Liberation Theology is actually a greater threat to continuing US domination than Marxism. As one

colleague in Nicaragua said, "Here (in Nicaragua), not many people have read Marx, but a whole lot of them have read the Bible".

Understanding the Struggle

The Roman Catholic Church went to Latin America with the Spanish Conquest and has historically been aligned with the rich and powerful. However, Liberation Theology is not a separatist movement, but represents a new model for the Church in Latin America, *i.e.*, a church committed to the option for the poor. It is not possible to understand the struggle in Nicaragua (and in Latin America) without considering the forces for change emerging from the "Church of the Poor". In Nicaragua, the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy continues to align itself with the rich and has been the strongest voice in opposition to the Revolution and a clear proponent for US policy.

Most citizens of the USA are confused about Nicaragua because they are the primary target for US propaganda. The US press and TV media co-operate with the US government in creating the confusion. If the people of Sri Lanka feel confused it is as a result of the same lack of clear information. Most of the information about Nicaragua is from the same media sources and is designed to gain support for US policy or to leave people sufficiently confused so that they will not mobilize actions to oppose US policy.

It is for this reason we have undertaken a peace mission around the world. We have been sent to share the story from the perspective of the "Church of the Poor" in Nicaragua, to share their message of hope and their ardent desire to live in peace.

The Peace Process and Media Distortions

Since our arrival in Sri Lanka your newspapers have reported about the peace process in Nicaragua. On November 3 *The Island* and the *Daily News* carried the identical story taken from Reuter and even used almost identical headlines.

The stories begin with the statement, "Nicaragua on Wednesday lifted a ceasefire in its war against US-backed Contra rebels". Just the use of the phrase, "US-backed Contra rebels", represents one of the subtle but real distortions by the news media. It would be more accurate to refer to the mercenary army, called the Contras, who were created by the US, trained by the US, paid for by the US and used by the US as a part of its overall strategy in the attempt to destroy the Sandinista Popular Revolution. The Contras were primarily organized from the National Guard who were the army of the former dictator, Somoza, and who fled to other countries and the USA at the time of the triumph in July 1979. Reuter even quotes from Enrique Bermudez, the Commander of the Contras, who was a colonel in the Somoza National Guard.

The point is that the basic struggle is not between the Nicaraguan government and a legitimate counter revolutionary group. The struggle is between the US government and its stated purpose to remove the Sandinistas from power.

We wrote a letter to the editors of your local newspapers which we will share with you in the hope that it will help you to be more clear about what is happening in Nicaragua - as follows :

"We read the article "Nicaragua signals return to all-out war" in this morning's (November 3) *The Island*. It is a mixture of truth, half-truth, distortions and outright lies.

It may be that Reuter has tried to provide a balanced report but the outcome presents a negative picture of the action taken by Nicaragua and makes the US government sound like the benevolent protector of democracy and freedom.

"The image is presented of Nicaragua breaking a ceasefire and thereby renewing a war which is aimed at destroying the peace process. The truth is that no one has worked harder to bring peace in Central America than the Nicaraguan government.

"The unilateral ceasefire was initiated by Nicaragua to bring peace but during the last 19 months has never been honoured by the Contras. While the intensity of the war was reduced, the Contras continued throughout to engage in military actions including the killing and kidnapping of civilians. In spite of this the Nicaraguan government renewed the one-way ceasefire each month in favour of peace. As rep-

orted in the article the current situation is the result of increased aggression by the Contras (44 deaths in 10 days).

"Who is really responsible for trying to destroy the peace process in Central America? In October 1987 the five Central-American Presidents signed peace accords, known as Esquipulas—II, which called for the removal of the Contras from Honduras. The US Congress voted funds, so-called "Humanitarian Aid", to maintain the Contras in direct opposition to the peace accord. Nicaragua, on the other hand, had done more than any other country in Central America to fulfill the requirements of the peace accords including the decision to declare the one-way ceasefire which was not required.

"There have been subsequent meetings of the five Central-American Presidents and on August 7, 1989 they agreed on a plan to demo-

bilize the Contras before December 8, 1989. Again, the USA has committed funds to maintain the Contras. The new offensive by the Contras is obviously a design to destroy the plan for their removal and to destabilize the forthcoming elections in Nicaragua.

"So, who is responsible for trying to destroy the peace process, Nicaragua or the USA? We think the USA, and call for solidarity with Nicaragua, a small poor country struggling to maintain its independence from the domination of the USA.

*"Viva la Revolucion
Viva Nicaragua Libre!"*

*Sgd. George W. Baldwin
Sgd. Montserrat Fernandez*

□

SOUTH AFRICA

Struggle in South African Heightens

Events have moved sharply in South Africa with Church leaders taking to the streets as participants in a national defiance campaign. Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, World Alliance of Reformed Churches President Allan Boesak, and their wives Leah and Dorothy were among hundreds of people arrested in various demonstrations against apartheid in the week before the South African elections (6 September), in which the majority of the South African population was not allowed to vote.

Most people, including the Tutus and Boesaks, were released shortly after their arrests. In some cases, police used whips, tear gas, and water cannon to break up marches.

Boesak was arrested as one of the leaders of a march (1 September)

from the Anglican cathedral in Cape Town. The Tutus and 36 others were arrested later in the day as they walked toward police headquarters to protest after receiving reports that church people were beaten by police breaking up the earlier march.

Earlier that day, Tutu issued a strong statement protesting a police raid on the house and offices of Richard Kraft, the Anglican bishop for Pretoria, in a search for documents related to a campaign to integrate whites-only buses.

Tutu called the raid a 'persecution of the church' and said it is 'scandalous that the police can raid the home and office of a bishop of a church in a country that claims to be Christian.'

Winston Ndungana, the priest who is chief executive officer of the

(Anglican) Church of the Province of Southern Africa, called the arrest of the archbishop 'a further indication that the authorities will use whatever means possible to prevent a man of peace going about his work.'

In another incident, about 200 women were arrested as they tried to march to the embassy of the United Kingdom, which is on the grounds of South African Parliament, to present an appeal to UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on behalf of black children detained for security offences.

Leah Tutu and Dorothy Boesak were among those arrested then and later released.

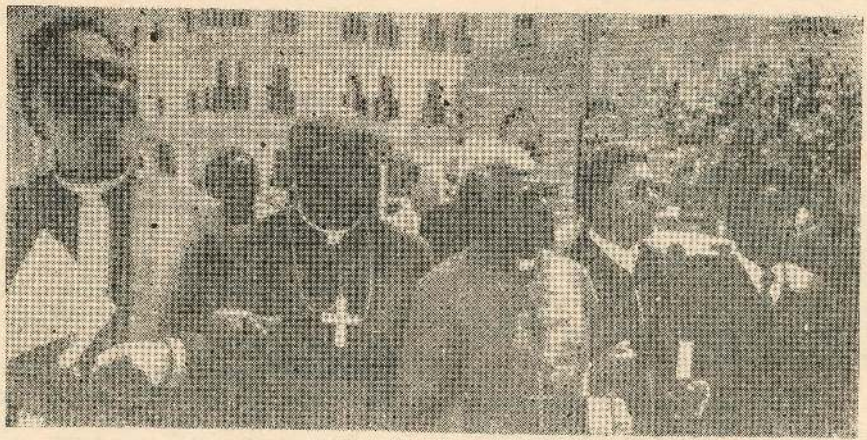
Two days before the election, Desmond Tutu and Allan Boesak were again briefly arrested in connection with separate anti-election activities centred on the Anglican cathedral and a major Methodist church in Cape Town.

Tutu said the police action involving the cathedral required reconsecration of the building; he planned to lead such a liturgy the day before the elections.

The non-government Human Rights Commission estimated that

more than 500 demonstrators were arrested, and 240 activists detained without charge since a new campaign of defiance against South African apartheid (race-separation) laws began 2 August.

Such protests and the pressure of the mass movement of black workers and youth, especially the two-day general strike of 3 million workers against the apartheid elections in September have forced the South African regime to release leaders of the African National Congress (though not its chief Nelson Mandela). But President de Klerk still excludes majority rule from his "reforms." On October 29, 80,000 people poured into Soweto stadium under the banner of the African National Congress to show their support for majority rule and to hear their released leaders.



Standing for the Truth... The Campaign of active civil disobedience took a new profile as Church leaders took to the streets in a march to parliament. They were quickly arrested, including Methodist

Rev. Khoza Mgojo, Roman Catholic Archbishop Stephen Naidoo, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Reformed Church Dr. Allan Boesak, and SACC leader Dr. Frank Chikane.

EAST GERMANY

Ferment in East Germany

The mass movement in East Germany has forced out the hard-line Stalinist leader, Honecker. Monday 16 October saw 120,000 take over the centre of Leipzig—the biggest single demonstration in the history of the state. Symbolic of the air of change was the tearing down of the Berlin Wall that separated the people of the two German States.

An eye witness report appearing in *Militant* (UK) of October 20 stated:

"Everywhere people are talking about politics and the demonstrations, without any fear.

"Intellectuals speak at meetings but are surrounded by young workers who shout their demands at them. One speaker talked about the need to get printing facilities. A worker got up at the back and said: 'What's the problem? We have the People's Presses (nationalised presses). We are the people, let's take them!'

"Everyone is involved."

"At East Berlin's Brecht Theatre the actors read out a declaration supporting the youth's marches and demands. In the workplaces the mood had been reaching boiling point. After the politbureau decided to open 'dialogue' the mood changed a little. A metal worker said to me: 'It won't last long. They have two months at most and then we'll be out.'

"As events in China have shown, if this movement is to succeed it will have to confront attempts by the regime to use the army and police to crush it at a certain stage.

"The youth instinctively try to discuss with rank-and-file police and soldiers. Many of them already support the movement, as the following incidents show:

"A few thousand youth were marching through the streets. They were blocked by rows of police who linked arms. The youth marched

right up to them and started chanting: 'You are the People's Police. We are the people. Who are you protecting?'

"They sang the Internationale. Then they started a song from the struggles against the fascists, called 'The Workers' United Front'. Its words had a particular effect on the police: 'You belong in the workers' united front also, because you're workers as well!'

"The police simply stood and were brushed aside as the youth surged forward.

"In the pubs conscript soldiers openly discussed with the workers and youth."

East Germany is not China and conditions are very different from 1953 when the Berlin workers' uprising was crushed.

After Honecker resigned as Chairman of the Ministerial Council (the equivalent to Prime Minister) weekly demonstrations three times bigger than the earlier ones continued in Leipzig. They had grown to an estimated one million in East Germany on 4 November. Honecker's replacement Egon Krenz clearly failed to satisfy the workers and youth. Most importantly, there are even signs that the workers are preparing to enter the struggle as an independent force with moves towards an independent trade union

with reported work-to-rules in many factories as the first step. Workers are demanding the right to strike and demonstrate, freedom of the press and the right to travel and most significantly an end to official privilege. The repeated renderings of the Internationale and other workers' songs illustrates that they want an end to bureaucratic repression, corruption and mismanagement. Despite the flood of over 50,000

refugees to the West, illusions in the restoration of capitalism are negligible.

On November 14, the East German Parliament elected Hans Modrow as new head of Government to replace Krenz and a new Speaker while hundreds of thousands of citizens took to the streets to urge more reforms. Leading 'reformist' Modrow, now also on the polit-

bureau, went so far as to put himself at the head of the demonstrations.

These reports show that a crisis of historic proportions is building up in East Germany in which the mass demand for workers' democracy will be on the order of the day. Not surprisingly, Czechoslovaks, Bulgarians and Romania too have taken to the streets in their thousands to demand democratic change in their respective countries. □

POLAND

Solidarity in office

Peter Taaffe

The Election (on August 24) of Tadeusz Mazowiecki as the first non-'communist' prime minister in Eastern Europe since the war is a significant turning point. But it would be a serious mistake to imagine it signals the end of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which remains in control of the main levers of state power - the police and the army.

Profound Crisis

Mazowiecki's election, as a representative of Solidarity, indicates the profound crisis of Stalinism. After 44 years of power, the 'communist' party of Poland, the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP), has been overwhelmingly rejected by the working class.

Many times the workers have moved to try to take control of society. In 1956, 1970, 1976 and during the birth of Solidarity in 1980-81, when power was in their hands but they were not conscious of it. The leaders and theoreticians of Solidarity, advised by the Roman Catholic church, wanted a compromise with the bureaucracy and power was lost.

Again after the June elections there was an opportunity for the workers, as the PUWP and the other junior parties of the bureaucracy suffered a crushing defeat by Solidarity-backed candidates. Had the workers been conscious of the possibility, they could relatively easily

have taken power, leaving the bureaucracy suspended in mid-air.

The regime has been forced to legalise Solidarity and allow the limited elections precisely because they fear a new explosion along the lines of 1980-81. The bureaucracy felt their rule was at a dead end.

It was only because the ruling Stalinist parties - the PUWP and its junior partners, the Peasants' and Democratic parties - were guaranteed a majority of the seats that Solidarity could not form an overwhelming majority in the Sejm (parliament).

Despite their in-built majority, the Stalinist parties were so discredited they could not form a government with any authority. Faced with a critical economic situation they could not have carried through the drastic austerity measures which the bureaucracy thought necessary, without the danger of any upsurge of strikes or a general strike.

The first attempt to set up a PUWP government under General Kiszczak failed as the workers replied to price rises with a massive strike wave. There was, as Solidarity leader in the Sejm, Bronislaw Geremek, put it, "an atmosphere of desperation."

So the leaders of the two smaller Stalinist parties—probably with a nod and a wink from Jaruzelski—offered to break their traditional link with the PUWP and form a coalition with Solidarity MPs.

But unfortunately the Solidarity leaders have become virtually another wing of the bureaucracy, although with illusions in the market economy. Their strategy is not to replace the bureaucracy, with whom they have more in common than with the workers, but to share power with it.

Despite the absence of any support for Stalinism, the Solidarity leaders need the bureaucracy as a scarecrow to keep the workers in check. Thus Geremek, justifying coalition with the PUWP, commented: "One must never force one's opponent against the wall, even when he is very weak... It is important that the Communist Party should have a chance of survival."

Neither the Stalinist bureaucracy nor the Solidarity leaders want a return to the 'instability' of the past. That is precisely why the new government has been hailed in the capitalist press. Like the Stalinist bureaucracy, imperialism is haunted by the nightmare of workers' democracy in Poland.

The economy is in an enormous crisis. There has been massive economic development since the war, raising Poland from the level of a poor country to an industrial one. All this was achieved on the basis of nationalisation and a plan of production, despite the waste and mismanagement of the bureaucracy.

But, lacking workers' control of the state and society, the economy has now reached its limits on the basis of Stalinist methods of command, bureaucracy and dictatorship. And by following the lunatic strategy of trying to build its own self-sufficient economy and seeking the short-cuts of foreign aid, the bureau-

cracy have built up international debts of around \$40bn.

Inflation hovers around 100 per cent. The price of many basic foods has gone up four or five-fold recently. As a result of government subsidies to cover up the mismanagement and inefficiencies within industry, it is carrying a massive budget deficit.

Solidarity economists see the solution in market forces and the closure of hundreds of 'uneconomic' factories, leading to massive unemployment. As one put it, "there are no solutions except drastic ones."

Mazowiecki's Election

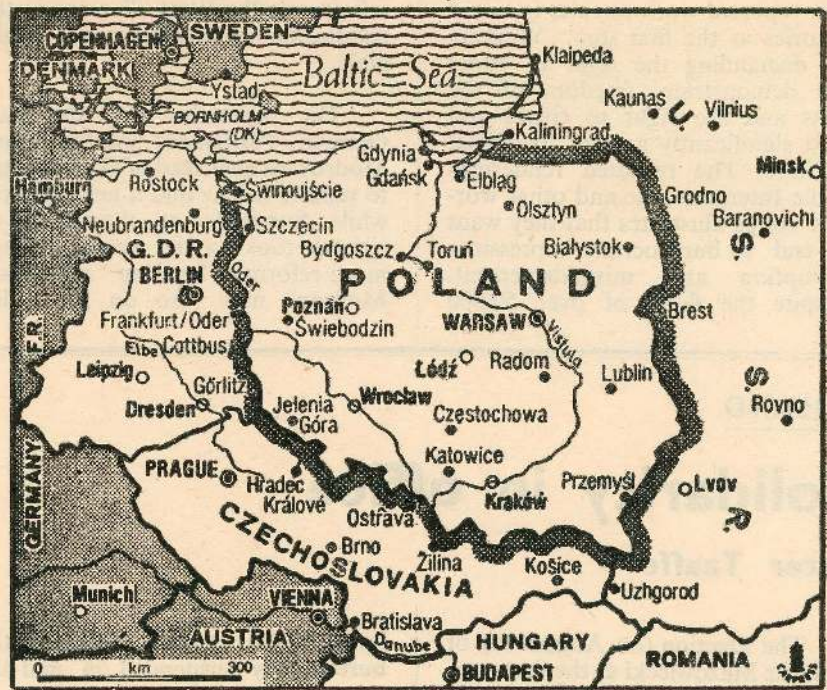
Mazowiecki's election represents an attempt by the Stalinist bureaucracy - albeit under the pressure of the masses - to draw the Solidarity leaders more closely to it, to make them carry the main responsibility for severe austerity policies.

They have been handed the poisoned chalice and they have grasped it with vigour. Mazowiecki has warned in no uncertain terms that "if sacrifices are necessary, people must make them."

Some leaders of Solidarity, including Walesa, see the new government as the first step towards capitalist restoration, with the workers shouldering the burden. If so, they may be in for a very rude awakening.

Any moves to privatise substantial parts of industry or the economy will be met by the opposition of the workers, especially when the implications - closures, redundancies and unemployment - become clear.

To forestall opposition to cuts, Solidarity leaders are pressing restraint on the workers. Echoed by the tops of the Church, they have made urgent calls for a moratorium on strikes. Most workers will probably extend a period of grace to the new government. But there will be a limit to what they will be prepared to accept, even from a Solidarity government. Attempts at big cuts in living standards and large-scale closures will produce a



furious reaction. Some workers have already issued a warning, chanting at one public event, "We don't want a prime minister, we want bread!"

There are already signs of unease among those Solidarity leaders closer to the trade union arm of the movement and therefore to the workers. Bogdan Borisievic, a prominent Gdansk union leader, replied to appeals for a suspension of strikes by calling for minimum living standards to be guaranteed.

The refusal of Walesa himself - Solidarity's real leader, as even Mazowiecki acknowledged - to stand as prime minister shows that he sees the government could clash with the workers. He does not want to be too associated with unpopular austerity measures, but he will nevertheless be smeared.

Solidarity leaders have also been appealing to western governments for economic aid. The imperialist powers would be happy to see Poland stable and able to repay its debts. But they have no confidence that Solidarity could make any fundamental changes in the economy without invoking the wrath of the bureaucracy. It is unlikely that they will put up more than token amounts of new aid.

Constraints and Options

In forming a government the leaders of Solidarity have accepted that the PUWP be given, as a minimum, the key ministries of defence and the interior. While Mazowiecki has the job of selling austerity to the workers, the police, army and judiciary remain in the hands of the Stalinist elite. And Mazowiecki's control of the economy and industry will be hampered by the 1.2 million officials, the 'nomenklature,' placed under the former regime.

As long as the new government can hold back the workers and cut their living standards the state will co-operate. But as soon as there is a threat to the fundamental vested interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy, including the foundations of the state-owned economy, the government will be met with outright sabotage.

Stalinism has been forced by the pressures of the masses into an unprecedented retreat, but is biding its time for an opportunity to re-establish its complete and untrammelled control.

With its room to manoeuvre extremely limited for now, it is calculating that enthusiasm for the Solidarity government will cool and give way to disillusion as the workers

are called upon to make sacrifices without any fundamental change in the economy or the running of society.

If, in six or 12 months time, the Solidarity leaders' strategy and organization lies in ruins, it could lead to a new explosion by the workers. That would lead either to the reimposition of Stalinist dictatorship or a successful struggle by the workers for a democratic socialist state.

Stalinism is in an impasse, but as Trotsky long ago explained in relation to the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy will never relinquish its power without a fight, without the political revolution.

When the Polish workers move again into action on prices or closures, as in 1980-81 they will instinctively bring forward demands against privilege and for control of their workplaces.

But the key element missing from the equation is the intervention of a Marxist tendency able to lead the workers in the overthrow of the bureaucracy.

For the most advanced workers and youth who would form the leaders of such a tendency the experience of the Mazowiecki government will have a profound effect.

The illusions that many workers may now have in Solidarity's present leadership, their 'co-habiting' with the bureaucracy and even their market methods, will be dispelled.

Far from being a stepping-stone to democracy, the Mazowiecki government will suffer the same inglorious fate as every other post-war Polish government, because they refuse to recognise that the only solution lies in workers' control and management of industry and the state.

—Courtesy : Militant (UK.) 01-09-89

Politics of some Solidarity Leaders

The new prime minister Mazowiecki, in an interview with IZVESTIA (24 August), described his politics : "Simply put, I'm a Christian, a Catholic who follows the social teachings of the Catholic church, which emanate from the instructions of Pope John Paul II." Upon taking office, Mazowiecki placed a phone call to the Pope to get his "instructions."

Solidarity's leader Lech Walesa, in an interview with the Italian newspaper IL MESSAGGERO (22 August), said the new government intended to pull Poland along the road "from a Communist system of ownership to capitalism." "Nobody has previously taken the road that leads from socialism to capitalism," he said. "And we are setting out to do just that, to return to the prewar situation when Poland was a capitalist country, after having gone through a long period of socialism."

CHINA

After Tiananmen

Soviet Sinologist on the results of the tragic events in Peking

Sergei Goncharov

The study of Chinese reality is my professional work. In 1984-1985 I studied in Peking University and later repeatedly visited China on business. Recent tragic events in that country aroused in me great pain and bitterness. It is very hard to imagine Peking with tanks in the streets, burning trucks, and blood stains on the pavement.

Nevertheless, it happened and caused the whole world to grieve, the Soviet public included. The people's response to the events in China, perhaps for the first time in the history of the Soviet state and its diplomacy, clearly differed from the

official reaction. What are we to expect from this ?

Different Approaches

For a start, let's go into the Soviet response to events in China. Here we can distinguish two different levels.

The first is the level of official documents. The stand is clearly expressed in the well-known statement of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. The obvious aim was to preserve and consolidate the results of the recent normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations,

and to observe the letter and the spirit of the joint communique agreed upon during the summit meeting. Therefore, in the first place the statement emphasized non-interference in the internal affairs of China and expressed the wish that the Chinese people stabilize the situation in their country.

In my opinion this official approach is also based on the considerations of reciprocity : earlier the Chinese government had responded with exceptional propriety and understanding to the tragic events that took place in the USSR (Sumgait, Tbilisi).

But it appears to me that the stand of the USSR does not consist at all of "winning over to its side" the People's Republic of China to the detriment of the interests of the US and other advanced capitalist countries, by taking advantage of the current deterioration of relations between China and Western countries. I believe that the USSR

and China will in the future proceed from the fact that the restoration of the military-political alliance of the 1950s in one form or another doesn't correspond to their own interests, or to the interests of world peace and stability.

It is quite possible that sanctions by the US and other Western countries will prompt China to expand trade and economic contacts with the Soviet Union. But this is only a natural response to the circumstances, and not a step towards the formation of a certain bilateral "strategic alliance". I am sure that our country wants Chinese-Western relations to be normal and stable.

The second, unofficial, level of Soviet response to Chinese events is also highly important. The first steps in the forming in the USSR of a civic society with an independent stand on various international events, as distinct from the official stand, are significant here.

The response to Chinese events varies very much and reflects different opinions in Soviet society. On the one hand, at crowded meetings in cities throughout the country, and in the statements by radically-minded people's deputies, there resounded a sharp condemnation of the actions of the Chinese authorities, and demands to stop the executions of participants in mass movements in China. Such views are evidence that the process of democratization is absolutely independent and it is absolutely unacceptable to use armed forces against one's own people.

Along with such opinions, conservative views are widespread in Soviet society. Their exponents fully approve of the actions of the Chinese government, and believe that it is high time to "straighten things out" in the USSR too with an "iron hand" and authoritarian methods.

The supporters of both views are concerned about the same phenomena of our present-day reality - the worsening situation in the consumers' market, the rise in crime, outbreaks of violence on inter-ethnic grounds, and so on. From the viewpoint of "radicals" all these phenomena are inevitable, though unpleasant, and can be over-

come only by moving further along the road of profound reforms. For "conservatives" social cataclysms are direct consequences of current transformations, hence the troubles must be eradicated by an "iron hand", since in the years when the "iron hand" enjoyed absolute power nothing of this kind was observed.

The causes of events in China (inflation, lower standards of living among the poorer sections of the population, corruption and nepotism in the state apparatus, a lag in political reforms) and their lessons deserve the closest attention in the Soviet Union. It is necessary to prevent the rise of negative tendencies, eliminating the causes in advance, because the price which has to be paid for subsequent solutions requiring force turns out to be too high.

The Immediate Prospects of China

It seems that the Chinese leadership will continue the policy of economic reforms and the expansion of contacts with the outside world. In light of what has happened, the feasibility of such a policy will largely depend on how able the renewed Chinese leadership is to solve and overcome the problems which contributed to the beginning and development of the recent events.

For this, Chinese leaders will have to start the implementation of a number of rather difficult and painful measures, as, for instance, a resolute removal from the state apparatus of bribe-takers, stricter control over the birthrate, the continuation of the policy of reducing capital construction, and so on. It seems to me that at the same time urgent measures must be taken to stabilize prices, to maintain the living standards of the poor, to stimulate grain production, etc.

It may be presumed that henceforth China will pursue a more rigid policy in the ideological sphere; for example, in intensifying the struggle against the "pernicious influence of the West", putting stress on the propaganda of Marxist-Leninist ideas. However, with all that, Chinese society will face the complicated search for the optimal combination of

economic, political and ideological policies with the vital need for preserving an open atmosphere in the economic and ideological spheres, and a policy of continuing political reforms.

Today China is greatly in need of an effective and authoritative central power. One of the main concerns of the leadership, judging by information coming from China, is the prestige of power, and the healing of wounds inflicted on it by recent events. It seems to me that this factor will moderate the scale of repressive measures, and prevent excessively rigid steps in the ideological and political spheres.

I don't share the forecasts of some Western analysts to the effect that China is possibly "sliding into a state of civil war", or that "strict dictatorship will be established". However, I would like to repeat that the situation will really stabilize only if the causes that brought about the instability are removed.

Some Conclusions

Today people throughout the world derive diametrically opposite conclusions from the tragedy on Tiananmen Square. Some believe that the events prove that successful reforms within the framework of a socialist system are impossible in principle. They allege that the way out of the crisis may be found only if this system is rejected. Others, on the contrary, emphasize that the Stalinist command-and-administer socialism is the ideal, and any attempt to reform or "revise" it will only lead to bloodshed and chaos.

I don't share either view. The forces of perestroika have just started eliminating the most serious distortions of socialism. They are just beginning to make the social, political and economic structures truly socialist, and therefore there are no grounds to make conclusions about the hopelessness of scientific socialism. It is quite a different thing to claim that practice has proved the hopelessness of totalitarian socialism. The alternative to its transformation is not stability and prosperity, but decay and depression, and eventually, bloody rebellions and terrible upheavals.

Courtesy: **Moscow News** July 9, 1989

The 'Marseillaise' and the 'Internationale'

Preparations for the bicentennial of the Great French Revolution this year were marked by heated debate both in France and out. The debate about the Revolution's impact on world civilization is 200 years old. Central to it is, of course the question of continuity between the French Revolution and the October Revolution in Russia. What do the two revolutions have in common and how do they differ?

Soviet and foreign historians agree that their ideals largely coincide: liberty, equality, fraternity! Addressing Moscow teachers in 1918, People's Commissar for Education Anatoly Lunacharsky thus defined the ideals of both revolutions: "All that is international and humane should be fostered. We need a man for whom everything human is important, for whom every person, from whichever nation, is a brother who cares for every foot of our common terrestrial globe."

Compare his words with what French revolutionaries used to say and you'll see many similarities. The difference was that leaders of the French Revolution planned to realise those ideals (respect for human rights) through bourgeois national and political equality, while the leaders of the October Revolution wanted to realise them through proletarian social equality. But both concepts were based on the profoundly humanist idea of well-being for nations and common human interests. Leaders of both revolutions also had the same views on the global social and national problems of humanity.

Pursuing Ideals

The key point of discussion today is how these ideals can be achieved. The motto of the French revolutionaries was "*Guerre aux chateaux! Paix aux chaumières!*" (peace on cottages, war on palaces). They hoped that very soon the countries that had gone through the

bourgeois-democratic revolutions—the USA in the New World and France in the Old World—would overthrow the feudal system and bring humanity a general reign of freedom, equality and fraternity.

The ideal proved unattainable, while it is still an ideological stereotype and the official motto of the American and French republics today.

The universal ideals of the French Revolution were later adopted by the Russian Bolsheviks who regarded themselves as successors of the Jacobins ("a Proletarian Jacobin" was the title of Nikolai Bukharin's eulogy on the death in 1926 of Felix Dzerzhinsky).

So, the Jacobins' motto was "Liberty, equality, fraternity" harking back to the 18th-century Enlightenment. The motto of the Bolsheviks and the entire Communist International was Marxist, "Workers of all countries, unite!" This impatient "running ahead" is especially conspicuous in the religious spheres. Living up to Voltaire's call, "Trample the abomination!" (the Catholic hierarchy), the French Revolution carried through a thorough de-Christianization. The churches and monasteries were closed, the clergy had its land confiscated and the "very notion of God" was rejected.

The Bolsheviks followed a similar pattern in the first years after the October Revolution. Along

with the usual calendar, they introduced the "Red Calendar" which included such red-letter days as November 7 (Day of the Proletarian Revolution), March 18 (Day of the Paris Commune) and April 16 (Lenin's arrival in Petrograd in 1917). Among other red-letter days were July 14, 1789 (The Fall of the Bastille), August 10, 1793 (Day of French Revolution Federalists), November 10, 1793 (Day of Reason), etc.

The poet Sergei Yesenin published a book of poems entitled "The second year of the world proletarian revolution." The universal doctrine of a world proletarian revolution for too long inspired the Bolsheviks. Addressing a meeting in Moscow to mark the 3rd anniversary of the October Revolution Vladimir Lenin said: "..... When we began working for our cause (the storming of the Winter Palace—V.S.) we counted exclusively on the world revolution." Even a decade after the storming of the Winter Palace, the slogans for the 10th Anniversary of the October Revolution said: "Long live the world October Revolution which will turn the entire world into an International Union of Soviet Socialist Republics! The first ten years of the world proletarian revolution have brought the capitalist world to its grave. The second decade will see it buried."

Life and Doctrine

But the course of human history proved more complex than doctrine suggested. The French Jacobins failed in their attempt to build a universal world of liberty and equality. The Russian Bolsheviks failed to bury capitalism by means of a world proletarian revolution. Both attempts to squeeze real life into the Procrustean bed of their doctrine ended in what Lenin described as "meat-chopping."

But there existed a fundamental difference in interpreting life and doctrine. Saint-Just declared, "The principle of the Republican government is virtue, otherwise it's Terror. What do those want who wish for neither virtues nor Terror?" The attempt to combine the guillotine and the rights of man ended in the Jacobins facing the guillotine blade.

In 1921, Lenin, introducing NEP realised that any stereotype—Jacobin or orthodox Marxist (world revolution at any price) spelled a threat to the man in the street and his inalienable rights. Few of Lenin's comrades heard his caution, and he was unable to carry through the principles of "civil peace" (NEP) because of illness and, finally, death.

Some of his comrades (Leon Trotsky), like Saint-Just, pushed for world revolution whatever the odds. Others (Joseph Stalin) threw overboard the world revolution slogan "Workers of all countries, unite!" and used the world revolution doctrine to disguise their course towards absolute power, while they manipulated the masses' political ignorance.

It is very important today to get over the stereotypes of 19th-century orthodox Marxism, which denied capitalism ability to survive and saw humanity's salvation solely in uniting workers (proletarians) for a world civil war on class-against-class principles.

—Vladlen Sirotkin—D.Sc., (History)
—Courtesy: Moscow News



The Road to Thermidor

Terror in the history of the Great French Revolution

That Revolution's experience was a great help in creating the theoretical basis of Stalinism. The legendary Jacobin terror was a great find for Stalin! Therefore, the period of the terror (*i.e.*, the end of 1793 and the first half of 1794) was declared "a period of ascendance" in the Revolution. It appears that only thanks to terror, did the Revolution acquire its historic significance. Allegedly it ensured the victory of the Revolution and was an example worthy of imitation. In order to make such allegations credible, the prestige of the classics of Marxism was used.

Engels on the use of Terror

Indeed, in the days of their youth, Marx and Engels admired French revolutionaries. Young Engels even called himself "Montagnard". But at a more mature age, both theoreticians of Marxism gave a different appreciation of terror. On September 4, 1870 Engels wrote a letter to Marx, in which he recalled with humour his former understanding of "the Reign of Terror" as a period which meant the rule of people "who inspire horror". "On the contrary" writes Engels, "it is the rule of people who themselves are terror-stricken. Terror implies mostly useless cruelties perpetrated by frightened people in order to reassure themselves. I am convinced that the blame for the Reign of Terror in 1793 lies almost exclusively with the bourgeois frightened out of their wits and demeaning themselves like patriots, with the small philistines quaking with fear and the mob of the underworld who knows how to coin profit from terror".

And this is said about the terror of 1793, when it can still be understood, taking into account the extreme danger of numerous counterrevolutionary rebellions, the threat of the invasion of the anti-French coalition troops, and the atrocities of the Royalist rebels in Vendée. But by the beginning of 1794 the rebellions were crushed, and shattering defeats were inflicted upon the external enemies of the revolutionary army. Some of the leaders of the progressive revolutionary party of Montagnards, especially

Danton, spoke of the possibility of and need for ending the terror, of putting into action the democratic Constitution of 1793 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Now there was nothing to justify the preservation of the dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety and the excessive personal power of Robespierre.

Robespierre's Terror

However, it turned out that the former modest lawyer from Arras, strictly keeping to the letter of the law, an exponent of the principle of people's sovereignty in the spirit of Rousseau, and active fighter for universal and equal suffrage, having tasted unrestricted power, did not want to part with it. He advanced the idea that the more victories the Revolution wins, the stronger and more dangerous are the intrigues of the enemies. Therefore, new victories demand not relaxation, but intensification of the terror, and the preservation of the dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety. Moreover, he discovered a terrible danger even inside the party of Montagnards. He sees it in the "intrigues" of the left wing, connected with the Paris poor—*Sans-culottes*, as well as the right wing in the person of Danton and his friends who represented the radical bourgeoisie.

Demanding an intensification of terror, Robespierre justified it with exalted moral ideals. On February 5, 1794 he made a long speech which, as always, was filled with rhetoric:

"The driving force of the people's government in a revolutionary period must be both virtue and terror—terror is ruinous without virtue, virtue is helpless without terror. Terror is none other than quick, strict and inexorable justice. Consequently, it is the emanation of virtue; it is neither a special principle, nor a consequence of democracy..."

Marat and Danton appealed for terror at the time when the Revolution was in a desperate situation. But they reg-

arded it as a cruel, grave and forced necessity. But now there was no such necessity, whereas Robespierre is trying to justify terror with an abstract and vague category of virtue.

Did Robespierre himself believe in his mythical bloodthirsty virtue? It is doubtful. After all, at the same time as he read his lengthy speeches in the Convention, he was engaged in an intensive, although less conspicuous activity. The police and the repressive apparatus increased without precedence. The Commune—the municipal self-administration of Paris, which served as headquarters for the people's revolutionary forces, was cleared of the democratically elected leaders of the *Sans-culottes*. They were replaced by officials appointed from above. The people's revolutionary committees, which governed Paris' "quartiers" (districts) were deprived of rights and became appendages of the police apparatus.

Power Struggle

And in the middle of March 1794, Robespierre, using as a pretext the empty ultra-revolutionary chatter of people's leaders, sought a decision for the arrest of Herbert and other leaders of the *Sans-culottes*. The trial of the followers of Herbert—a wild parody of justice—started on March 21. On March 24, they were executed on the scaffold.

Danton, Desmoulins, and other opponents of terror were delighted with it, since Herbertists were ardent admirers of the "sacred Guillotine". However, a week later came the arrest of Danton's followers. Then it becomes clear that terror henceforth was an instrument of struggle for power. In August, after a farcical trial, followers of Danton were executed on the scaffold. It would seem that the time to end the terror had come when all the opponents were eliminated. However, the Convention, having plunged into horror, voted unanimously to obey the will of Robespierre. He could no longer stop the infernal machine of terror. In fact, the cessation of its work would reveal the uselessness of the inspirer of terror—Robespierre himself. Every day carts with the convicts move from the Conciergerie prison to the Revolution Square (now Place de la Concorde). Whom do they carry to execution? Aristocrats? Royalists? They made up

A SEASON OF VIOLENCE

Events have again moved with stunning rapidity since the appearance of our last issue in September.

An All Party Conference convened by President Premadasa, the announcement of a repeated 3 day ceasefire on the part of the Security Forces, a resumption of military operations, the capture and killing within 24 hours (12-13 November) of both JVP leaders Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayake, a short time of decline in killings followed by a country-wide resurgence of violence especially in December, are some of these happenings.

In the Christmas Eve (December 24) issue of *The Sunday Times* correspondent 'Suranimala' recorded that in a matter of 30 days from Wijeweera's death, subversives killed over 580 persons and set fire to and/or damaged 23 Post Offices, 124 CTB (State) buses, 19 Agrarian Service Offices, 10 Grama Sevaka Offices, 4 Railway Stations, just to name a few. The number of suspected subversives killed by the so-called vigilante groups have of course been equally high. The one month commemoration of Wijeweera's death by the JVP on December 12 saw a sudden upsurge of violence with 60 buses being burnt on that day alone. Continued internecine warfare between the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) which heads the present North-East Provincial Council and its arch rival the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), especially with the phased withdrawal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) beginning with Ampara in late October, has also characterised this period. The traditional end of the year Season of Goodwill has apparently turned out to be a veritable Season of Violence!

International Publicity and Comments

Small wonder then that the killings in Sri Lanka have received wide international publicity and comment.

On October 7, the London based *Economist* had revealed that our murder rate in recent months was running at more than 100 per 100,000—0.1 per cent of the population. "This was 8 times Punjab's awful rate last year and 25 times Ulster's now. Only El Salvador in the early 1980's was worse" commented the journal. Dubbing these 'uncivil wars', it pointed out

that in Sri Lanka some 17,000 people have died since 1983. Defining Lanka's two wars as the 'Tamil war' and the 'JVP war' which is deadlier, *Economist* added: "After the JVP started killing the families of government soldiers and the soldiers responded in kind, the murder rate was running at more than 100 per 100,000 persons".

On December 14 Amnesty International (AI) in a report (dismissed as incorrect by Foreign Minister and State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne) stated that reports of extra-judicial executions in Southern Sri Lanka have increased dramatically since a state of emergency was reimposed in June. It said that by September, it was receiving reports of well over a thousand people being killed each month. Amnesty International has stated that "the tactics of criminal violence used by the opposition Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) have increasingly been mirrored by government and para-military forces". Both sides have openly "displayed the bodies, severed heads and limbs of their victims to instil terror in others". AI further states that some killings appear to have been carried out to prevent effective investigation of human rights violations including those of lawyers and witnesses. Responsibility for many of the reprisal killings carried out in 1989 has been claimed in the name of various pro-government "vigilantes" or para-military groups. Many victims have been young people suspected of supporting the JVP or who live in areas regarded as JVP strongholds. The Government says these forces operate independently and without official sanction but Amnesty International points to evidence indicating their links with the regular security forces or politicians belong to the ruling United National Party (UNP). AI has called for an impartial commission of inquiry to investigate these allegations. It has also called on our Government to withdraw the Emergency Regulation that permits the disposal of bodies by the security forces without post-mortem or inquest, since it believes that this regulation encourages deliberate killings by the security forces as it enables them to destroy bodies before an inquiry could be had into the cause and circumstances of death. The AI Report also notes a rising incidence of extra-judicial executions by the IPKF

in the North East of Lanka and describes alleged reprisal killings by Indian soldiers of suspected LTTE supporters. The blood-letting consequent on the open fighting between the LTTE and the EPRLF would of course come under warfare and not extra-judicial executions.

Preceding Events

It must be noted at the very outset that President Premadasa's action in convening on September 13 an All Party Conference (referred to in our last issue and the proceedings of which dragged on until early November) was itself aimed primarily at countering the moves of the Opposition Parties which threatened the very existence of the executive presidential system.

While the country was in the grip of JVP/DJV terror-inspired work-stoppages and continuing rebel violence, the United Socialist Alliance had called for the President's resignation. After that, 5 political parties namely the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), The United Socialist Alliance (USA), the EPRLF, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) called for the abolition of the Executive Presidency and the appointment by Parliament of a Provisional Government prior to the holding of free and fair elections. This call could well have served as an alternative programme and a rallying point for the democratic forces of the country and the vast mass of our people who sick and weary of the on-going slaughter, senseless destruction and consequent economic hardship, yearned for the dawning of peace and justice through a political change.

Confronted with this Opposition threat, President Premadasa showed considerable shrewdness by seeking to diffuse that call by mobilising oppositional opinion itself which held that abolishing the executive presidency was not the answer. In this, the President was helped by Rukman Senanayake and his Eksath Lanka Jatika Peramuna (ELJP) which had earlier stood for the abolition of the presidential system in the days of the 8 party alliance prior to the Presidential Election (see *Christian Worker* 1988 4th Quarter), V. Balakumar and his Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF formerly EROS) a long time ally of LTTE which was the only opposition group in Parliament not to subscribe to the 5 party call referred to already and S. D. Bandaranayake and his Sri Lanka Socialist Front (SLSF) which had claimed to have JVP backing and which duly articulated JVP positions at the All Party Conference (APC). The JVP was invited to the APC but it did not attend and later issued a statement which said that "the APC is in reality an All India Party Conference. Except for the Sri Lanka Socialist Front of S. D. Bandaranayake all other parties in it either directly or indirectly approve Indian imperialism". (*The Island* of 3 October).

Opposition Proposals Undermined

With the convening of the APC on September 13, it was not surprising therefore that further attempts were made to undermine the joint proposals of the 5 Opposition parties and to cause divisions between them with the call for individual party representation to be

made separately at the APC and to whittle down or negative the proposal made especially in regard to the ending of the present system of executive presidential rule. Mrs. Bandaranaike who led the SLFP delegation to a subsequent meeting with the President on October 6 clearly stated that the Five Parties in Parliament proposed that (1) The Executive Presidential system be replaced with a Parliamentary system of Government by amending the Constitution so as to restore the President to the position of a constitutional head of State and to vest all executive powers in the Cabinet of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister which will be collectively responsible to Parliament. (2) The pernicious provisions of Article 99 (13) (a) of the Constitution that have reduced Members of Parliament to the status of mere puppets be repealed or suitably amended. Mrs. Bandaranaike stated that once the above Constitutional changes are made, a Provisional Government should be formed by Parliament to restore peace and normalcy because the people do not have confidence in this Government and it has proved its incapacity to give the people peace, order and good government. The executive presidency is the root cause of the problem and a restoration of democracy is clearly a *sine qua non* for the restoration of peace and normalcy and our image abroad. What was originally the clear proposal of the five opposition parties to end the Executive Presidential system through constitutional amendment and its replacement with a Prime Minister responsible to Parliament before free and fair elections are held under a Provisional Government formed by Parliament, was however at this APC meeting insidiously sought to be jettisoned or subverted by the introduction of a new suggestion (alleged to have been later inserted into the original statement by certain SLFP elements before its tabling at the APC on October 6) of a referendum on the question of the Executive Presidency, which device was readily agreed to by President Premadasa but to be implemented once peace and normalcy was restored to the country.

The absurdity of this amendment to the original proposal becomes clear when it is understood that the ending of the Executive Presidency was in itself a necessary pre-condition for the achievement of peace and normalcy and formed an essential part of the proposals made by the opposition parties as a means to end the present impasse. That this cannot be achieved through the alternative suggested at the APC of the setting up of an "Interim administration" or a "Caretaker government" under the existing system of Executive Presidential rule should become obvious to anyone who had witnessed the devaluation of Parliament through the loss of its sovereignty with the introduction of the 1978 Constitution and the unhealthy authoritarian trends which become increasingly evident thereafter which have contributed in no small way to the existing carnage and destruction. In fact the mere holding of fresh parliamentary elections under the existing Constitution could have in no way enthused the masses who had already experienced such an election in February this year (1989). It was only a recognisably significant change in Government therefore that could today give our people the necessary confidence that free and fair

elections will follow and lead on to the restoration of genuine and democratic parliamentary government. It is an incontrovertible fact that we have been able to change governments at least six times constitutionally through the parliamentary system that existed prior to 1978. Furthermore, the experience of the last Referendum of 1982 (with the strictures made thereon by even the Commissioner of Elections) is still fresh in our minds to make the device of a referendum totally unacceptable to our people. Even if it may later be ruled by the Supreme Court that Constitutional amendment of such a nature would require ratification through a referendum, it was imperative that a Resolution effecting such a Constitutional amendment should first be passed by a two-thirds majority in Parliament with the support of the Government party in order to ensure that there will be no repetition of the blatant misuse of power and violation of election laws that characterised the referendum of 1982. It would appear that the Left parties in the USA were clear about this position and that what was demanded in the context of the Government's unwillingness to effect such a constitutional change to restore parliamentary democracy, was a country-wide agitation among the masses to bring pressure to bear upon the Government. Such an agitation if commenced would by now have become the battle cry of an evolving political alternative in the country that had the capacity to overcome the politics of the gun if meaningful steps in that direction had been taken by the parties concerned and especially the SLFP and Mrs. Bandaranaike with her undoubted stature as a national figure and as the Leader of the Opposition. With the present debilitated state of the working class movement which has still not recovered from the crushing defeat of the 1980 General Strike and the consequent weakness of the Left Parties, it is only the SLFP which is the main Opposition party having a considerable electoral base in the country that could lead such a broad-based nation-wide agitation. Unfortunately it would appear that while considerable sections of that party (including it is said the Executive and Central Committees) are in favour of such action, those who at present are close to Mrs. Bandaranaike and capable of taking steps in this regard tend to be dragging their feet over it for reasons of their own. This is especially unfortunate since the present revulsion of the people against the terror employed by both the rebels and the pro-Government death squads demands a political alternative around which they can rally and once again secure a democratic government of their choice through free and fair elections. That the present government does not today enjoy widespread popular support in the country is apparent to anyone. (It became possible to crush the adventurist JVP uprising of 1971 with comparative ease because the people were basically supportive of the United Front Government). What is lacking today is a clear and feasible political alternative that will meet with the aspirations of the people. In fact, if the SLFP carries out the resolution it has accepted of mobilising all progressive forces to launch an agitational campaign against the government, not just on its failure to restore peace but also over the ever increasing cost of living, the Government can have much to worry about. If however the Opposition Parties continue to remain weak or timorous and the SLFP does not rise to the occasion and assume leadership in taking the Opposition programme to the country, it is the JVP that is likely to

strengthen itself as a non-parliamentary alternative in the absence of any other. It is time therefore that the SLFP leadership in its own interests woke up to the realities of the situation. It is indeed ironical that while it has been dragging its feet over action on this most crucial matter affecting the nation and the country's future, the SLFP leadership has been quick to take umbrage at a recent remark made by the President at an unveiling ceremony about "old boys and old girls" at the "University of Parliament" who are still lingering in it without graduating and seeking to even bring him (the President) back there again. For here the SLFP leadership have promptly decided to boycott all State functions at which President Premadasa will be present, as a protest to what they consider to be a studied insult by him to the party leadership and a snub to their proposal for Provisional Government.

Ceasefire and After

Yet another matter that had engaged the attention of the Five Party Opposition grouping was the large scale killings that were taking place throughout the country. On the very eve of the APC, the Moratuwa University's Vice Chancellor C. Patuwathavithana was shot dead in his office, his killer escaping on a motor cycle. There was also the killing of State Pharmaceuticals Chairperson Dr. Gladys Jayewardene among others. The newspaper *Sun* of September 16 carried the information that 200 had been killed during the past 5 days and *The Sunday Times* of September 17 reported that over 100 bullet riddled bodies were found in Kandy. When the Opposition delegation therefore called on the President on September 19, they had with them a 10 point plan to help establish peace and normalcy. These proposals included a cessation of hostilities, surrender of those involved in subversive activity, an information centre on those arrested, formation of a Monitoring Committee, rehabilitation centres and a ban on the plying of vehicles without number plates (alleged to be used by Security Forces and/or para-military groups).

At the discussions that followed in the APC, the Opposition's proposal for a week's ceasefire was reduced to 3 days (72 hours) and since the Service Chiefs were unhappy about the use of the words "ceasefire or cessation of hostilities" the term used was "suspension of counter-subversive military operations". An acceptable Monitoring Committee headed by retired Supreme Court Judge R. S. Wanasundara was also appointed. The 72 hour suspension of hostilities was further extended by another 72 hours at the instance of the Opposition, but ended by the Government due to a lack of response by the JVP. The JVP did not respond to the Government's offer of safety for its participants to attend the APC and a ceasefire if the JVP should agree to end hostilities. Although there appeared to be a drop in violence at first on the suspension of hostilities by the Armed Forces, it appeared to be on the increase with the extension of the ceasefire. *Sun* on October 2 reported that rebels had killed 20 persons and torched 100 State buildings since the ceasefire extension and that 789 suspects had surrendered during that period. Some 322 violations including 43 murders had been reported to the Monitoring Committee. *Daily News* of October 5

reported that 76 civilians had been killed during the ceasefire, the *Sun* of the same date reporting that still more state buildings had been set ablaze. On October 7, 3 state banks in Hakmana had been set ablaze and 25 gunned down in an upsurge of violence.

The killings continued with sickening regularity and with it counter-killings on the part of pro-government death squads, manifesting itself in dead bodies being dumped regularly in places like the Kadugannawa pass. The display of dead bodies riddled with bullets, often mutilated, burnt on rubber tyres and smouldering became a common sight in many parts of the country. An incident of subversive activity was sometimes swiftly followed by the appearance of dead bodies on the scene. An example was the reported grisly spectacle on October 5 of some 14 decapitated bodies with gunshot injuries and with the heads of these bodies arranged separately around a pond near the University Senate Building on the Peradeniya University Campus, believed to be in retaliation for the murder of Assistant Registrar D. E. Nagahawatte who was a captain in the Volunteer Force of the Army and who was shot dead outside the Senate building the previous day. Terror was responded to promptly with counter-terror.

The issue of an ultimatum earlier by an over-confident DJV/JVP to the security forces personnel to resign or suffer through the death of their families was a fatal miscalculation and a turning point, for its execution only served to rouse the security forces into launching major operations against subversives. Sections of the armed services coming as they did from the same social base as many of the youthful insurgents and who themselves were generally infected with Sinhala Chauvinism tended until then to have a sympathy for the JVP. The ultimatum of the JVP to the Servicemen considerably changed all that and resulted in such a backlash of terror as systematically eliminated or silenced many of the JVP elements responsible for putting up posters, distributing directives and organising terror-inspired work stoppages. The innocent too would have suffered with the guilty and revulsion at the killings was therefore widespread. The JVP however lost much of its support when it overdid its terror tactics at the expense of the public in the organization of "protest" marches, work stoppages, curfews, blackouts and the like all enforced through terror. (There had been a time when with the debilitation of the Left after 1980 and the ineffectiveness of the SLFP, the JVP was seen as the only active opposition to the Government and had become even popular in the choice of its targets for selective killings at the village level.)

The battering that the JVP received with the elimination of many of their lower rung activists resulted in an apparent change of tactics and an attack now mainly on economic targets. The *Daily News* of October 14 reported that 60 State buildings were torched in 48 hours including tea and rubber factories. On October 15 the Pamankade Stores in Colombo of the Ceylon Electricity Board was torched, the loss being estimated at Rs. 40 million. And so it went on.

The *Sun* and *Island* newspapers from 24th to 29th October reported abductions, killings and violence: the killing of 42 persons, the alleged abduction of the AGA Homagama, 22 death squad killing by pro-government vigilantes in different parts of the country and the display of 20 dead bodies of youth outside 3 State buildings that had been torched; also the killing of lawyer Sarath Karaliyadde who had watched the interests of a student named Bandara shot by the police and the abduction of witnesses in the same case. The Committee appointed to report on missing University students had found that 198 were reported missing and 85 held in custody. (*Sun* reported subsequently that the committee had found that there have been 205 arrests and 271 disappearances up to December 28.

State Minister for Defence and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ranjan Wijeratne voiced serious concern (*Sun* October 25) over the spate of armed robberies and other crimes including rape allegedly committed by certain members of the police and armed services in the City and outstations, stating that those responsible will be severely dealt with by law. He confirmed that several army and police officers had already been arrested and detained for their involvement in various acts of crime that ranged from armed robberies to rape. During the past one and a half months at least 20 police and army officers had been arrested and several others were being sought for criminal offences committed throughout the country, the bulk of them being suspected army personnel.

Investigations said a large number of junior military officers have been involved in crime along with men from the serving ranks. Four army lieutenants had been arrested and two others sought in connection with the alleged rape of a female factory worker in Ratmalana. An army lieutenant and lance corporal were shot dead by police in attempting to rob a shop in broad daylight in Kiribathgoda and two junior army officers shot and later arrested by police when they attempted to extort 5 million rupees from the residence of a Colombo based businessman, claiming to be rebels. Such acts not only tarnished the image of the Forces but also served to alienate the people further from the Government. The Army Commander was reported on October 27 to have requested the public to send complaints on criminal acts committed by army personnel to the Courts Martial of the Army or direct to him for necessary action.

The 3-member Committee appointed to monitor the 6 day ceasefire (September 27 - October 3) in their report had charged that there could be several armed military groups or persons not necessarily of the same persuasions carrying out acts of violence and sabotage. It questioned the disappearance and abduction of people after curfew hours during the ceasefire. The Committee in their report said: "... We are constrained to believe that some of these incidents had taken place during curfew

hours and others in broad daylight in public places. It is therefore difficult for us to understand how at least some of these incidents could have gone undetected despite the check points and patrols by security forces, especially during curfew hours..." (The Sunday Times October 22). In fact the monitoring team consisting of Supreme Court Judge Raja Wanasundara and Daya Pathirana and Ombudsman Sam Wijesinha with Lakshman de Mel as Secretary when they called on the President to hand over this report had told him according to the same newspaper that killings by nondescript groups should be stopped. The President's Internal Affairs Advisor Bradman Weerakoon had then said that even school children had seen such killings. President Premadasa had said he was trying to find out who these nondescript groups were. The presence of a delegation from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) invited by the Government to Sri Lanka amid all these happenings seemed to make the position even worse. The dragging on of the APC proceedings too at a time of such grave crisis appeared so absurd that critics asked if all this was only to play for time until the Aid Group meeting in Paris.

The Leader of the Opposition Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike speaking in Parliament with the ICRC delegation present in the visitors' gallery, referred to dead bodies floating in rivers with crocodiles hanging on to the flesh and half burnt bodies being left to be eaten by dogs on the roadside. "When will this carnage end?" she asked and warned that with the spiralling cost of living the Government was playing into the hands of the JVP. The Government meanwhile appointed a seven-member "Special Commission of Inquiry" to probe youth unrest, said to be done under a consensus reached after the Opposition representations at the APC.

The continued killings, worsening economic conditions and the failure of the Government to act on the alternative proposals submitted by the Joint 5 Party Opposition at the APC resulted in the SLFP withdrawing from the APC in October 30. The SLFP decision was preceded by the withdrawal of the Communist Party from the APC on the ground of the deviation by the Government from the opposition call for a provisional government. Other members of the United Socialist Alliance too similarly withdrew from the APC. Mrs. Bandaranaike said that the whole purpose of the SLFP participating in the APC was to achieve peace in a short period. This objective was unfortunately receding in priority and endless talks and unwarranted publicity was now the focus of the APC she said. Since the Government had failed to restore law and order, the only way out she declared was the abolition of the Executive Presidency and the formation of a provisional government. The SLFP Executive Committee proposed a campaign of agitation with all anti-government forces and organizations to compel the government to implement these proposals, which resolution was also later endorsed by its Central Committee, although no meaningful steps have yet been taken in this direction by the Party. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) too in a statement on October 30 said that the APC had moved away from addressing itself to the total replacement of the present government and that the resignation of the President and the establishment of a provisional government should precede all other considerations. It was

by the mobilisation of the people for this task and not through an APC like the one performing today that a truly provisional government could be set up the statement said.

In these circumstances it was but inevitable that the APC proceedings should peter out with no proper consensus emerging therefrom. It was the military option therefore that the Government had to rely upon with intermittent calls made by President Premadasa to the JVP "to resolve problems through discussion and dialogue". The killings therefore continued on both sides, terror being met with counter-terror. 22 killings in Galnawa were reported on October 31 of men, women and children in retaliation for a landmine explosion that claimed army casualties. On November 2, 28 persons were killed in different parts of the country while the next day carried a report of Commando killings in the Kandy district of 16 "hardcore rebels", to just mention a few. A daring attack was made on the headquarters of the Janata Estates Development Board in Colombo on November 10 and Deputy General Manager of the Bank of Ceylon E. T. Fernando shot dead while at a Board Meeting in the same office. November 12 *Weekend* reported that yet more factories had been set on fire. *Sun* of November 13 reported that six key industries namely the National Paper Corporation, Steel Corporation, Mineral Sands Corporation and Cement Corporation (all State ventures) and textiles (private sector) had a loss of Rs. 2545 million for the period January to September this year (1989).

On November 12 JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera was arrested. He had been living for 2 years at Ulapane under an assumed name posing as a retired planter and had been traced through information obtained after the arrest of a JVP central committee member D. M. Ananda in Colombo. Taken to a military operation centre in Colombo and questioned exhaustively, he made a Statement that was televised and broadcast on the State-run television two days later in which he appealed "to the JVP membership and friends to eschew violence and help maintain law and order at a time of severe stress". Very early the following morning he was taken from the Centre and the official version is that he died when fired upon by a high-ranking associate H. B. Herath to whose hide-out he had led an arresting team. The bodies of both Wijeweera and Herath were cremated soon after for "security reasons" according to the Government. Just 10 minutes before the broadcast of Wijeweera's capture and death over the state radio, Wijeweera's second in-command Upatissa Gamanayake was arrested in Bandaragama South of Colombo where he had been living as a shop keeper. He too did not live long. Gamanayake was shot dead the same night, reportedly while trying to escape and his body cremated without delay. The President was reported to have ordered an inquiry into the circumstances of Wijeweera's and Gamanayake's deaths.

The Government made much of Wijeweera's comfortable cover and scenes of Wijeweera's pleasant haven were shown over television. Less than a week after Wijeweera's death, his wife Sriyani Chaturangani surfaced in Colombo with her five small children and obtained army protection from Army Commander Lt. Gen.

Hamilton Wanasinghe. She was reported to have also handed over Rs. 175,000 in cash, 10,000 US dollars and 1 kilogram of gold jewellery for safe-keeping to the Army. On television she confirmed her husband's death. "I am now being looked after by the army" she said. Wijeweera's younger sister too took refuge with the army thereafter. *The Sunday Times* correspondent 'Suranimala' has reported that by that time "a wealth of information of JVP activity and those assisting it had come to light and a list of persons involved was given to the President. In that list were names of several big businessmen, prominent persons in the police and even security personnel, leading social workers and intellectuals". On November 15 speaking at a meeting of the Government parliamentary group, President Premadasa blamed the leaders of the JVP, its membership and the party itself for the "sad fate of its leaders". For the first time singling out the JVP as responsible for "the immense damage to public property and the untold sufferings of the people" the President said: "On the basis of the information provided by Mr. Wijeweera, our security forces and police believe that it will be possible to bring to book many other persons who had been inflicting death and suffering on our people and causing much damage to public property". On the same day in its Budget the Government announced a pay rise for public servants earning less than Rs. 2000 a month—an increase that was hardly commensurate with the cost of living and the inflation (said on official figures to be 12.6% in August 1989 compared to 10.6% in July 1988/89) and with trade union demands for Rs. 2,500 as a minimum wage.

On November 16 a jubilant Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne declared: "the match is over" and appealed to JVP cadres to hand over their arms to the nearest police station or army post promising them safety and rehabilitation. The Minister also told reporters that JVP cadres who defy this appeal would be dealt with severely. Minister Wijeratne was obviously being over-optimistic, for after what appeared to be a lull in JVP activity and with news of troubles in the East capturing the newspaper headlines, violence flared up once more in the South especially in December and heightened around the time of the one month commemoration of Wijeweera's and Gamanayake's deaths.

It was certainly naive to think that JVP activity would have ceased with the death of its prominent leaders. Foreign Minister and State Minister for Defence said that the security forces had collared "all but two of the politbureau of the JVP". One of these was said to be Saman Piyasiri Fernando the leader of the JVP's "military wing" (since reported to have been arrested and killed.) The police headquarters released the photographs of the five most wanted JVP men to the newspapers on November 28. "The big cobra is dead but the small ones are still alive" read a poster in the Kandy area. To therefore dismiss the on-going violence as the work of the JVP "second eleven who are hitting all round the wicket and will soon be out—hit-wicket" as Minister Wijeratne has done, is to be downright simplistic.

For sometime now, the JVP has been operating on a decentralised or regional basis, so although the elimination of its prominent leaders is an undoubted setback,

it can still function, recoup and effectively strike back at a regional level in certain areas given the present conditions, and helped also by the troubles in the North-East which may continue to engage the attention of our Armed Services. (Its hard core will not in any case surrender for fear of being killed.) An inhibiting factor for the JVP's development of course is the fact that it has by its tactics of terror alienated the sympathy of the people. But unless proper political direction is given to the disgruntled and frustrated petit-bourgeois youth who constitute the social base of the JVP, dissent will remain a breeding ground for many more Wijeweeras and Gamanayakes, especially in the context of Sir Lanka's society with its strong petit-bourgeois pressures and the present debilitated state of the working class movement. Which is precisely why we have in these columns stressed the need for a political alternative to be presented to the country on the part of the Opposition parties. For the absence today of strong trade union activity and working class politics can once again result in the re-emergence of the JVP or some such distorted political formation to fill the vacuum created, as the only viable alternative to the politics of the Government. Statistics show that 40 per cent of the poorest citizens of the country account for only 7 per cent of the incomes. We do not have to look far for the breeding ground of discontent.

Tragic Differences

In this connection, it seems necessary not only to refer to the lack of unity and purposeful action on the part of the Opposition parties in the present context but also to the tragic divisions that are apparent within the United Socialist Alliance itself. The present mud-slinging between factions of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP) that has now become public, is hardly edifying and can only lead as it has already done, to a demoralisation of its cadres. So also the inability of the constituent parties of the USA to agree upon a nominee to fill the present vacancy caused by the death of Dr. Colvin R. de Silva the LSSP leader who was the USA's unanimous choice as its 'national list' Member of Parliament: it is now almost an year since the death of Dr. Colvin R. de Silva. LSSP General Secretary Bernard Soysa is said to have the backing of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL) too as the person suited to fill this vacancy but the USA as a whole has not been able to agree on this. The following excerpt which is taken from the LSSP's internal bulletin of November 1989 pinpoints the present unfortunate differences: "The LSSP proposed to the United Socialist Alliance the name of its General Secretary Bernard Soysa for appointment to this vacancy created in Parliament by the death of Comrade Colvin R. de Silva. The LSSP told the Alliance that this vacancy should be filled by either Bernard Soysa or Pieter Keuneman whose skills and long experience in Parliament should be of value to the Alliance. The present position is that the Communist Party of Sri Lanka which had earlier named Pieter Keuneman as its nominee has withdrawn him in favour of Bernard Soysa. But the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP) urges that its nominee Ossie Abeygunasekera be appointed to this vacancy. The LSSP cannot agree to this because the SLMP's conduct so far has given rise to questions pertaining to its relations with the UNF. The

Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) is as yet of the view that an SLMP nominee be appointed. The politics of this position of the NSSP does not appear to be clear even to that party. It is not likely that this matter can be settled unless the NSSP too decides to support Bernard Soysa". This again is not edifying or helpful in the present confused state of the country but sources say that the position remains the same up to now. It is time therefore that the USA too learnt to put its own house in order if it is to play the creative role that is demanded of it in the present crisis.

Battle in the East

When Minister Ranjan Wijeratne made his now celebrated "the match is over" comment, he was asked by the reporter "What about the East?" to which the Minister replied: "One match at a time". The time came perhaps sooner than he expected for the very next day saw the storming of four police stations in the south-eastern Ampara district. Vacated by the IPKF from October 19 to 23, Ampara soon became the focus of the Tamil conflict. This withdrawal of the IPKF was in terms of the new agreement between India and Sri Lanka in Colombo on September 18 in the form of a joint communique signed by the two parties. On the IPKF pull-out described as "de-induction" in the joint communique, India agreed to accelerate the withdrawal process which re-commenced on July 29 and said that "all efforts will be made" to complete it by December 31. During the three months ending December 31 there was to be a phased transition of security control of the northern and eastern provinces from the IPKF to the Sri Lankan authorities which would include the provincial police force of the North-East Council. The supervision of the process of transition was to be handled by a security co-ordination group comprising the Minister of State for Defence, the Chief Minister of the North-Eastern Province, the Defence Secretary and the GOC of the IPKF. Sri Lanka informed the Indian side of her decision to set up a Peace Committee on 28th September to afford an opportunity to all political and ethnic groups in the North-East Province to come together and settle their differences through a process of "consultation, compromise and consensus" and to bring all the groups into the democratic process. But as we have repeatedly insisted in these columns, given the intolerant attitude of the Tamil militant groups and the present internecine conflict between them, it became imperative for our Government to provide adequate safeguards for the peace and security of the people of all communities and political persuasions in these areas with the phased withdrawal of the IPKF. The withdrawal of the IPKF was an emotional issue but the real question was how Sri Lanka would cope with the situation thereafter.

The presence of the IPKF in Sri Lanka was in terms of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987, the primary purpose of its continued stay being to disarm the LTTE rebels and ensure peace and normalcy in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. It was clear that a bitter and bloody conflict between the LTTE and the EPRLF and its allies would ensue once the IPKF withdrew and for

this purpose the North-East Provincial Council set up a Citizen Volunteer Force (CVF), an Additional Citizen Volunteer Force (ACVF) and an additional force generally referred to as the Tamil National Army (TNA) or Tamil National Volunteer Force (TNVF). Although North-East Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal has denied the existence of any such army, the presence of militarily trained additional forces to complement the CVF cannot be gainsaid. (The CVF was to eventually be absorbed into the regular police force for the area). One of the main thrusts of Indian policy too in the last phase of the implementation of the Indo-Lankan Accord was obviously to ensure that the Provincial Government was given the means to defend itself from both the LTTE and from any possible threats from the Sri Lankan Government once the IPKF withdrew. This was obviously prompted by the present friendly relations between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE and the on-going talks between them. The delay of the Government in devolving adequate powers to provincial Councils only aggravated the position. It would have in any case been irksome to the IPKF which was there at the instance of the Sri Lanka Government to disarm the LTTE and to the EPRLF which together with its allies ran the new North-Eastern Provincial Council, to have witnessed the parleys being held by the Sri Lanka Government with the Tigers without so much as a reference to that Council, leave alone their being brought into such negotiations. Furthermore neither India nor the EPRLF would have liked to see the Tigers over-run territory that the IPKF had won at the cost of over 1100 Indian soldiers' lives over the past two years.

For the purpose of defending the North-East Provincial Council from possible attacks, a scheme of mass conscription and recruitment to the CVF, the Additional Citizen Volunteer Force (ACVF) and what is referred to as the TNA or TNVF was begun. While the CVF is a legal and open force trained by the IPKF, the TNA/TNVF had a more shadowy existence not being trained by the IPKF but by those said to be "Indian advisors". The three anti-LTTE militant groups, *i.e.*, EPRLF, the ENDLF (Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front) and TELO (Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation) placed their forces under a unified command in the TNA/TNVF. All these three Tamil militant groups had been attacked by the LTTE during 1986 and 1987 and have lost several hundred cadres. So it was primarily the fear of a repeated performance which ultimately forced these groups together. Both the CVF and TNA were untested in combat though well-armed and it was highly doubtful even before the battle started whether they would have been able to take on the LTTE who though much smaller in numbers were skilled fighters who had been seasoned by battle not only with the local forces but with the IPKF-the fourth largest army in the world.

The EPRLF had the opportunity of course after it assumed office in the Provincial Council to build close rapport with the people of the North-East and be generous to its rivals, seeking to win them over instead of hounding them together with the IPKF. Unfortunately,

the EPRLF when it came to power adopted the same ruthless tactics that the LTTE had used when it was previously dominant in the North and East and this naturally alienated the local population. It must be remembered that whereas the LTTE's high-handedness was apparently accepted because it was fighting the Sri Lankan Army and the people saw the LTTE as their only defence against the armed forces, the EPRLF, ENDLF and TELO could not claim any such justification for perpetuating the rule of the gun. In fact the people of the North and East even today are at the mercy of the militant groups whom they would well like to be rid of and have no effective civil authority as such to appeal to. Reliance on the gun rather than on the people and a leaning back too on a foreign army, i.e., the IPKF as its protectors, deprived the EPRLF of the great opportunity it had of building up with the co-operation of the people a genuine civil administration that would have unified rival militant groups too rather than aggravated animosities. It is said that even in the Batticaloa district a former stronghold of the EPRLF, the people are not supportive today of the EPRLF and its allies. In a sense this is not surprising since all these militant groups coming as they do from the same social base as the JVP in the South, resemble the latter in their reliance on terror and the politics of the gun, despite their professed "socialism". The absence of both a working class base and clear ideology make them the petit-bourgeois terrorist groups that they basically are.

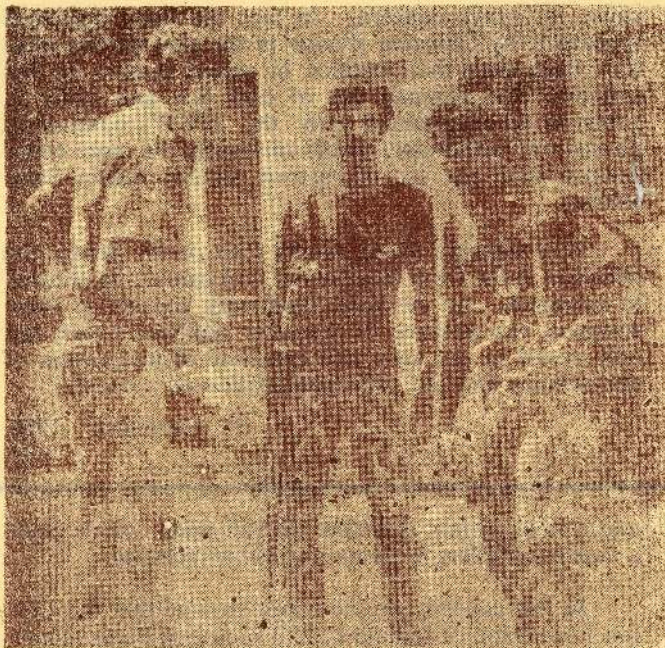
Tiger Strategy and Tactics

However as far as the LTTE was concerned it apparently had a two-fold strategy. Firstly it seemed uncompromising in its position on a separate State of Eelam as is seen in its past actions. The past massacres of Sinhalese by the LTTE in Anuradhapura, Arantalawa, Kokila and Nayaru and the Dollar and Kent farms were ostensibly carried out in pursuance of the objectives of securing a "Tamil homeland". Secondly, the LTTE has consistently sought to eliminate all other rivals especially those who showed an inclination to compromise as was shown even more recently in the brutal gunning down of Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leaders Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran on July 13.—(See last issue of *Christian Worker*). Dr. Rajini Thiranagama's death too is attributed by some to the Tigers. In the same way it sought to portray North-East Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal as a traitor and the North-East Provincial Council as one that had shamelessly sold the Tamil people and Tamil soil. This is also obviously why the repeated offers of the North-East Chief Minister to share power with the Tigers and have fresh elections to the Provincial Council if necessary, fell on deaf LTTE ears.

The Peace Committee set up under the September 1989 agreement too did not materialise on account of the difference between the Tamil militant groups. What was inevitable therefore on the withdrawal of the IPKF was a clash between the EPRLF-led forces and the LTTE. And this is precisely what happened.

On November 3 the LTTE mounted a dawn attack

on two EPRLF camps in the East, a mile apart from each other, situated at Tirukovil and Thambiluvil in Akkaraipattu, killing over 30 and abducting over 90 EPRLF and TELO men besides seizing two tractor loads of weapons. After the attack the LTTE is said to have withdrawn via Kanchankudi bordering the Potuvil jungles, a part of the Ruhunu national park. State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne said that the LTTE had informed the government that it had attacked the two camps to prove that an illegal army was being trained by the EPRLF! The Minister admitted that the LTTE attack was a violation of the ceasefire that was said to be in operation in the North and East since September this year. *Daily News* of October 10 reported the Indian High Commission as saying that there were 44 violations of the ceasefire between September 20 and October 4, 34 of which were attributable to the LTTE, 1 to the EPRLF and 9 others still being investigated). On November 7, LTTE cadres had a confrontation with the Sri Lankan Security forces too at Wilpattu and the 11 militants killed were confirmed by the Secretary to the Defence Ministry to be LTTE members (*Sun* November 10). Then came the TNA attack referred to already on 5 Police Stations (Samanthurai, Kalmunai, Chavahkadai, Karaitivu and Akkaraipattu) in the Ampara district on November 17th giving State Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne an opportunity to make the crack that the North-East Chief Minister was now attacking his own police stations! It is tragic that 38 Muslim reserve policemen were reported killed when the Karaitivu Police Station was stormed. These attacks as well as subsequent forays were not only repulsed but the TNA and CVF ultimately were forced to completely withdraw from the Ampara and Batticaloa districts with the Tigers in pursuit. This meant a virtual take-over of these areas by the LTTE. The EPRLF has alleged that the Government had helped the Tigers in their attacks (STF involvement was referred to) and even afforded them shelter in Sri Lankan military camps - allegations that have been flatly denied by the Government. However a Reuter report with a picture of a LTTE platoon appeared in the *Daily News* of December 5 with the caption: "Members of a platoon of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) patrol a street in Kalmunai on December 1 during the 7 days of fighting between the illegal Tamil army and Lankan security forces. Since then both the Lankan army and the Tigers have been patrolling" (Reuter). The very next day *Daily News* (December 6) carried a denial from the Army. It stated that "General Wanasinghe had said that there was no joint patrolling anywhere by the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE. He said that the men in the picture may have come in for supplies"—whatever that may mean! However on December 16 *Daily News* carried another picture in which "A Sri Lankan Policeman chats with armed LTTE cadres in Batticaloa...following the LTTE's victory over the TNA during three days of fierce fighting which left over 100 TNA cadres dead—Pix by Mohan Seneviratne"—see picture reproduced on next page. The reporting in the official media and the national press of North-East events, referred to an "illegal" TNA with no such tag being placed on the LTTE armed squads freely roaming the area, prompting an EPRLF MP to ask in Parliament whether the LTTE forces were now legal! Whatever the official denials made in this regard, it seems very likely that there was some tacit if



A Sri Lankan Policeman chats with armed LTTE Cadres in Batticaloa (Courtesy: Daily News)

not open support and/or connivance on the part of the Government in the LTTE onslaught on the EPRLF. This is apparently borne out also by the reported directive of State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne to the Army to disband the TNA on his visit to Batticaloa (*The Island* December 3) conveniently ignoring as it were the armed LTTE cadres on the offensive. So also the Minister's earlier warning (*Sun* November 17) that those elected to power in the North-Eastern Province should act in "an exemplary manner" and that if they could not do so, there were "other capable people". *The Island* (December 10) reported LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham as saying that the LTTE was not prepared to lay down arms even after the complete withdrawal of the IPKF in view of the "illegal" TNA activities. *The LTTE is now helping the government to disarm the TNA units.* Already hundreds had surrendered to the LTTE he claimed. *Mr. Balasingham said that any attempt to deploy the Sri Lankan forces to disarm the Tigers would be disastrous.* The "sign on" call said to have been sent from the Government to militant groups offering to absorb armed cadres into police and security services has thus been ignored. In fact the LTTE had even refused to hand over the two tractor loads of arms and ammunition it had captured when its cadres destroyed the TNA camps in Thirukkivil and Thambukovil in the Ampara district on November 17. Security sources said that the LTTE was also conducting search operations to recover further arms (*Island* of 18 December).

The Dangers

While the EPRLF/TNA offensive even if under provocation was foolish in the extreme, it will be seen from the above that the Government appears to have tacitly accepted or connived at the transgressions of the Tigers. We have repeatedly urged in these columns that the Government should have commenced consultations with all Tamil militant groups instead of confining its

discussions to the LTTE alone. As TELO spokesman N. Sri Kantha pointed out to President Premadasa at the APC in early October: "Any agreement with the LTTE without the concurrence of other Tamil political groups is bound to be counter-productive. The entry of one should not lead to the exit of another or others". When questioned what agreement if any had been reached by the Government with the Tigers, the President is said to have replied that the LTTE had agreed to accept a unitary state, give up violence and arms and to register itself as a political party with the Elections Commissioner.

LTTE ideologue Anton Balasingham at an interview given to UNI in early December has said that in their talks with the Government no major issue had been resolved so far. He said that the LTTE was prepared to accept the Provincial Council framework which was "totally inadequate" only as an interim measure. It would appear therefore that the LTTE has made its position clear and kept its options open, making it possible in the event of its demands not being met, to wage war against the Government or secede in the exercise of its proclaimed right of self determination to create a separate State of Eelam.

Of interest in this connection is a TULF statement released by its UK branch in August 1989 on the Assassinations of Tamil leaders which sets out details of what transpired between the TULF leaders and their LTTE killers immediately before the murders: to quote a few lines: "... Mr. Amirthalingam then asked Visu about the progress of the talks the LTTE was having with the Sri Lanka Government. Visu said that they were deluding the Sri Lankan Government". Banking entirely on the LTTE with its known record of intransigence could therefore cause serious problems for the Government.

Meanwhile the LTTE has stated that it would be running for office in the North-East Province and that its political wing will function now as the 'People's Front of Liberation Tigers'—(PFLT). While denouncing Indian interference earlier, the LTTE has also sought now to build its bridges with India, after the defeat of Congress (I) in the recent general elections and the appointment of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi by Premier V. P. Singh of India as a negotiator with Tamil groups to help bring peace to Sri Lanka. LTTE's Balasingham is reported to have said that bureaucrats who were dealing with the Indo-Lanka issue in Delhi must not be allowed to handle "our future relationship". "The new administration should ensure that they have new people who will understand and accommodate," he said, thus implying that the LTTE too would like India to continue to play a deciding role in Sri Lankan internal affairs to LTTE's advantage instead of backing the EPRLF.

Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne's visit to Prime Minister V. P. Singh of India where he urged a withdrawal of the IPKF by December 31 was followed by an outburst in Colombo when he rejected the offer by the Indian High Commission to have discussions on a "pull-out" schedule. He said he "had no faith in the Indian bureaucrats who had misled the political leader-

ship with the connivance of North-East Provincial Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal" (*Daily News* December 22).

Meanwhile India has set March 31, 1990 as the deadline for the IPKF to complete its "de-induction". On December 29 it vacated the central sector of the North-East Province, leaving the IPKF troops only in the Jaffra and Trincomalee districts.

The situation is thus fraught with uncertainty and danger and the Government will do well to ensure that people's lives are not disrupted and endangered with the internecine conflict that can erupt with the further withdrawals of the Indian troops. The thousands of refugees in the East recently—13,000 from Ampara and perhaps even more from Batticaloa during the fighting, give us

cause for grave concern. In fact the fears expressed repeatedly by *Christian Worker* in the past on this issue have been more than justified by recent events. In this situation the planning out of how law and order is going to be maintained with the IPKF's continuing phased-out withdrawal would obviously be more constructive than the use of rhetoric against Indian State officials.

Thus whether in the North East or the South, the situation is far from satisfactory and cannot be allowed to continue. As we have repeatedly warned in these columns, the absence of remedial political action can only result in the ruin and complete disintegration of our country and our total annihilation as a people.

31 December 1989.

POSTSCRIPT

Clampdown on Universities and Workplaces

With the announced re-opening of the Universities in January, the Government has recently on the ground of combatting subversion, effected a virtual clampdown on Universities and workplaces through the promulgation of Emergency (Prevention of Subversive Political Activity) Regulations No. 1 of 1990.

These regulations place restrictions on workers and students engaged in political activity in educational institutions and work places and even in community residences of workers and students. They also aim at preventing any person from entering or remaining in a workplace or educational institution without permission. The holding of meetings, rallies, demonstrations or processions within such workplaces, institutions or premises and display of posters or placards or paintings of signs in such places without the permission of those in charge is forbidden under these regulations. They also permit police officers and Armed Services personnel to enter these premises and arrest any person at such workplaces, institutions or premises, provided those in charge are merely informed of such entry or arrest.

Effect on Trade Unions

It will be seen that these regulations can have serious adverse effects on the functioning of even lawful trade unions in workplaces and deprive workers and students of their fundamental rights of association and peaceful assembly. They must therefore be deprecated by all those who value human rights and democratic freedoms.

What is more, a clampdown on workers and students can well result in the gradual smothering of freedom elsewhere in the country.

In fact these Emergency Regulations would amount to making illegal all trade union activity in a workplace

and it is important therefore that all trade unions made a concerted effort to demand their withdrawal.

In this context, we are happy to note that the Ceylon Federation of Labour (CFL) President Batty Weerakoon has in a press release (January 10) pinpointed the danger that these regulations pose to normal trade union activity. Commenting on Regulation 2 which makes it an offence for *any person* at any workplace to engage in any activity political or *otherwise* connected with, or concerned in conduct *designed* to adversely affect the due functioning of such workplace, the CFL release states :

"All trade unions in this country conduct their trade union work in workplaces through workplace committees which function in the workplace itself. These committees in almost all cases have no special offices outside the workplace for carrying on these branch level activities. This work is done during the lunch break or after hours. There is no item of such branch level trade union activity that can be seen as not affecting the workplace. As to whether such item of activity adversely affects the due functioning of a workplace is only a matter of opinion. A management or a policeman (and now even a serviceman) can decide this matter on prejudice and presumption. These regulations therefore expose a trade unionist to instant arrest on the arbitrary decision of a workplace management, policeman or serviceman.

"Considering the degree of abuse to which a regulation like this can be put it can be said with certainty that no worker will be safe in his workplace.

"A worker will be subjected to these regulations not only in his workplace but in any workers' housing scheme as well. It extends to "any premises used for community residence" of the worker. One may just pause to consider their effect on a plantation workforce.

"This is a most inequitable regulation and there is no question it must be forthwith withdrawn. We call upon the President to immediately withdraw this Regulation for under it a worker is in danger even if he does nothing. It can operate on invisible or non-existent evidence or mere opinion.

"The other regulation in this set of Regulations apply to meetings, demonstrations (even the harmless lunch-time pickets we are used to) and the display of posters and placards. One can see how harsh these will be especially in their application to the plantations or estates. Further, under the normal law a trade union official can enter an estate without prior reference to its management. Under these regulations such official can not only be stopped but immediately arrested and placed in custody.

"We certainly agree that in the recent past a sinister terrorist movement did create difficulties in some workplaces. But that was in a situation in which the workers themselves were terrorised. That terrorism emanated not from within the workplace but from outside it. These regulations do not touch that type of activity. They are aimed at genuine trade union activity and at a time when the worker has been hit by the rising cost of living."

Re-opening of the Universities

Welcoming the decision to reopen the Universities, the United Socialist Alliance in a press release said :—

"The entry of security forces into the universities must be prevented. The students, staff and other employees should be assured that they will not be arrested by security forces or kidnapped by vigilante groups on their way to the universities or on their way back".

"It is evident from the stringent and the authoritarian conditions laid down for the re-opening of universities that the government has failed to learn much from the tragic experience of the past three years.

"Unless the government took meaningful steps to eliminate the factors that led to the crisis in higher edu-

cation there cannot be much hope that the universities will return to normalcy after they are re-opened."

The resumption of education in these universities is of immense importance to the training of the future generation of intellectuals, professionals and other personnel necessary for the development of the country. It will no doubt be a matter of great relief to the undergraduates who are seeking to complete their education and the thousands of students who have been selected for admission but had hitherto being prevented from beginning their university careers. The distraught parents of university students will also be relieved of part of their worries".

"The main responsibility for the events leading to the closure of the universities and the closure itself lies with the government. The government's repudiation of university autonomy and academic freedom, its denial of the basic students' rights including the fundamental democratic rights of association, its attempt to privatise university education beginning with the establishment of the North Colombo Medical College, its failure to give sufficient financial assistance to needy students, its failure to provide basic facilities and amenities at the university campuses, and the authoritarian manner in which the government dealt with university problems were the primary factors that contributed to the crisis in higher education.

"The primary obligation of the government is to ensure the students and the staff freedom to engage in their work without fear or outside interference".

The Government would do well to heed these warnings.

—10 January 1990

The Clampdown Regulations No.-1 of 1990

Following is the full text of the Gazette notification on the Regulations :

1. These regulations may be cited as the Emergency (Prevention of Subversive Political Activity) Regulations No.—1 of 1990.

2. No person shall at any place of work, or institution imparting education, or any premises used for community residence of the workers of such workplace or the students of such institution as the case may be engage in any activity political or otherwise, connected with, or concerned in conduct designed to adversely effect the due functioning of such workplace or institution.

3. No person shall without the prior permission of the person in charge of any place of work or institution imparting education, or any premises used for community residence of the workers or students as the case may be enter such place or remain thereon or seek access to any person working, studying or residing at such workplace, institution or premises.

4. No person shall without the prior permission of the person in charge of any place of work or institution imparting education or any premises used for community residence of the workers or students, as the case may be, hold any meeting, rally, demonstration or procession within such workplace, institution or premises.

5. No person shall without the prior permission of the person in charge of any place of work or institution imparting education, or any premises used for community residence of the workers or students, display or cause to be displayed posters or placards, or paint any signs at such workplace, institution or premises.

Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any provision of these regulations, shall be guilty of an offence and shall on conviction after trial before a Magistrate be liable to rigorous imprisonment for a term not less than three months and not exceeding five years and to a fine of not less than five hundred rupees and not exceeding five thousand Rupees.

Any Police Officer, or any member of the Sri Lanka Army, the Sri Lanka Navy or the Sri Lanka Air Force, who requires to enter such place of work, institution imparting education or premises, for the purpose of performance of their functions under these regulations, shall keep informed the person in charge of such workplace, institution or premises.

Provided that where any person is arrested at such workplace, institution or premises, the officer making the arrest shall inform the person in charge of such workplace, institution or premises of the fact of the making of such arrest.

The FUTA Memorandum and Re-opening the Universities

Prof. Osmund Jayaratne President, FUTA.

Reproduced below are excerpts of a memorandum submitted to the Hon. Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology by the Federation of University Teachers' Associations (FUTA) regarding the situation in the Universities.

Subsequently a set of ten conditions was laid down by the Cabinet of Ministers, subject to which the Universities would re-open. Due mainly to representations made by FUTA, these were later whittled down to five conditions but supposed to refer not only to the Universities but to "workplaces" as well. (See Emergency Regulations No. 1 of 1990 referred to above and reproduced here).

We leave it to readers to judge whether they are in any way practicable or capable of implementation.

As a result of FUTA's agitation, at least the proposed Monitoring Committees have been now set up in every University. How effective they will be, only time can tell.

While supporting firmly the decision to re-open the Universities in view of the serious damage already caused to the country by their closure, we reserve our judgement regarding their continued functioning. We can only live in hope and do everything in our power as academic staff to ensure such continued functioning.

1st Dec. 1989.

The Memorandum of 15 Dec. '89

The present crisis of higher education in Sri Lanka is of great concern for all university teachers. The causes for student unrest and dissatisfaction with the university system, both from the student's point of view as well as the university employees, have been identified and presented in various fora, documents, and reports. In summary they are, abolition of student's councils, lack of adequate residential and catering facilities for students, financial hardships, inadequate preparation for following degree programmes, including the inability to work in English, lack of job opportunities after graduation. We are also aware of the fact that the entire university system of higher education, including the scheme of admission to the universities, the structure of degree programmes and university administration which are at present being critically examined also contributed to the above problem. The Board of Representatives of the Federation of University Teachers Associations at a meeting held on 18th December 1989 decided unanimously to submit their recommendations on the re-opening of the universities and the continuation of academic programmes. These recommendations are in the form of :-

- (a) Short term proposals for immediate implementation and
- (b) Long term plans which seek to improve and maintain university standards, provide a conducive environment for wider opportunities for university education

Short Term Plan

1. Establishment of Student Councils within two or three weeks after reopening.
2. Establishment of Security Councils for each university and reactivation of the Monitoring Committee.
3. The university level security council should be authorized to investigate and report on any provocative actions which will disturb the smooth running of the university regardless of those who are involved.
4. Each university security council should comprise of the Vice Chancellor of the respective university, one or two representatives from Teachers Associations, two Lawyers, a representative of the Inspector General of Police, a representative of the Joint Operation Command, Chief Security Officer of the University, two students (appointed by the Vice Chancellor before the formation of student councils and later, they should be representatives of the student council), two Parents of undergraduates and a nominee from the UGC.
5. The establishment of a properly organised student welfare centres in each university headed by a senior academic. He or She should work on full time basis and the post should be designated as Dean, Student Affairs. The Dean, student Affairs should have the same status of a university Dean. A Board of Management of student affairs should be formulated. The members of the Board should be as follows :

The Dean, Student Affairs as the chairperson, the Wardens of hostels, one Student Counsellor from each faculty, two representatives from Student Councils, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Senior Assistant Registrar Student Affairs, Senior Assistant Registrar Administration, the Bursar and the Maintenance Engineer.

6. At the time of closure of the Universities, the students found it extremely difficult to pay for their meals. During the past six months the food prices have increased considerably. Hence, the caterers will find it impossible to provide the food for the prices stipulated earlier by the Universities. Therefore food prices must be revised and subsidised accordingly.

Long Term Plans

1. Restructuring the administration.
2. Career development and placement.
3. Further improvement of students welfare.
4. Construction of residential facilities.
5. Provisions for the welfare of university employees.
6. Ensuring adequate financial assistance.
7. Curriculum reforms and restructuring of degree programmes.

□

less than 10 per cent of the executed. But the overwhelming majority of victims were people from the third estate, mainly poor people mounting the scaffold because of a carelessly spoken word, the denunciation of a neighbour, or simply on suspicion.

Fabrications—Frame-ups

The hungry people remembered their executed leaders keenly. Robespierre felt his isolation and saw no other means to preserve power except by further intensification of terror. But how to justify the continuation of executions? Now that the conspirators were destroyed, Robespierre with a handful of devoted friends, fabricated fictitious plots. But crude mystification may easily be discovered even during a formal hearing. It is necessary to rule out such a possibility. On June 10 (22 Prairial by the revolutionary calendar) Robespierre forced upon the Convention a new law on the strengthening of terror. Legal proceedings were cut short and simplified. There was only one punishment—death. Death was merited for anyone who may "cause depression", who "spreads false news", who "prevents the enlightenment of the people", "spoils manners and customs",

or "corrupts public consciousness." Any spoken word may henceforth bring one to the scaffold. No evidence was needed, "moral" proofs were suffice. No witnesses, no jury or counsel for the defence. Actually it was meant to deal with disagreeable people without trial, a programme of mass extermination of people.

Robespierre formulated a new programme of "clearing" the whole of France :

"There exist two peoples in France," he declared. "One—the mass of citizens, pure and simple... The other—a riff-raff of ambitious men and schemers, chatterboxes, impostors, and swindlers, who appear everywhere, occupy the stands and quite often public posts, and engage in the abuse of education... As long as this shameless race exists, the republic will be miserable and unstable".

The "Great terror" in the summer of 1794 finally isolated Robespierre. The people's suppressed but formidable discontent matured. In the Convention everyone, especially Montagnards, and people from the party of Robespierre, terrified for their own existence prepared a coup. Thus the events of the 9th of Thermidor ripened, bringing to the scaffold Robespierre himself, and a group

of people devoted to him. The people, Sans-culottes, far from supporting Robespierre, even experienced delight with the death of the "tyrant"...

Fatal Fear

Something fatal happened. Before the terror the Revolution had a clear, pure, and radical appearance. Its enemies embodied tyranny, cruelty, and crimes. It counterposed to them the banner of freedom, equality, fraternity, and justice. Therefore, it aroused the enthusiasm of progressive people throughout the world. But in the tragic period of terror, cruelty and crimes began to be associated with the Revolution. Many people shuddered with horror. The bourgeoisie of many countries wanted reforms and progress, but it feared the blood that was shed so lavishly in France. This fear of the danger of the revival of revolutionary terror delayed progress in France and in all Europe.

—Prof. Nikolai Molchanov D.Sc.,
(History)

(Courtesy : Moscow News) Excerpt

BURMA

Repression and Struggle in Burma

The 18th of September is the day on which the dreams of the Burmese people for democracy were shattered by a military coup. It has now been one year since the military regime seized state power at gun-point. With sorrow in our hearts, and with tears in our eyes, we can still hear the voices of our comrade students, mourning in pain and demanding democracy. We can still see clearly in our memories, the young students in green longyis, hoisting the student banner the Fighting Peacock, as they were cut down by the bullets of the brutal military.

Looking back at this year, the political developments in Burma seem anything but hopeful. The military regime has continued to abuse the human rights of the people, and the opposition parties and students activists inside Burma have continued to be suppressed. Along the border, the military regime has launched severe military campaigns against students camps and the ethnic minority territories. As our democratic movement progresses at a very slow pace, the ghost of fascism rapidly and steadily grows bigger and bigger. Now the military dictators bitterly oppress any dissident oppositionists who dare to criticize them.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo have been placed under a one-year house arrest. Nearly all the NLD (Nat-

ional League for Democracy) offices have been closed down and student leaders Min Ko Naing, Nyo Tun and Ko Ko Gyi have been arrested. Sources say that at least 2,000 dissidents are now in detention. They are subjected to various inhuman tortures that include beatings, cigarette burns, electric shock, standing in knee-deep water for long hours, beating while hung upside down from the ceiling, rolling the shins with batons and confinement in small cells etc.. Recently it has become known that 500 political prisoners were taken to combat zones where the army is fighting ethnic minority groups, and there they were forced to serve as porters. They were forced to carry very heavy loads of arms, ammunition and food for the army. Those who could not carry their loads were beaten and kicked. They were usually half-starved. Some of them died along the way.

Once all the voices of the opposition are silenced, the Saw Maung regime will hold elections. These elections will be like a runner in a race who runs without competition. How can we believe that free and fair elections are a possibility under these conditions? There are elections, and then there are farces posing as elections. Ne Win is very clever and has plenty of experience in making use of the second type of election.

We formed the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) on the 1st of November, 1988. Then we joined with the ethnic revolutionary forces under the umbrella of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB). Now there are about 3,000 students in the Karen, Karenni and Mon areas, 1,500 in the Kachin area and over 1,000 students along the India/Bangladesh border. All of these students are under the banner and leadership of the ABSDF and taking active part in the implementation of the programmes of the ABSDF such as the Democratic Educational Movement, Grass-root Level Democratic Movement, and the Rural Development Programme. We have already opened a Jungle University in Thay Bow Boe camp where some of the students are studying political science, English, Thai and others are attending basic medical training. The aim of the educational movement is to upgrade the political ideology and educational level of students and to implement a form of democratic education. After evaluation, the programme will be extended to all the people living in the areas controlled by the ethnic minority groups.

We have built up solidarity with supporters of the Burmese struggle, and continue to seek for international political and economic pressure on the military regime.

The ABSDF has often called on all democratic countries not to recognize the military regime and to withhold all economic aid and trade relations.

—Dawn News Bulletin of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front.

Workers' Struggles

Towards Fresh Unity among Unions

The trade union movement was beginning to come out of the paralysis it underwent since the smashing by the Government of the 1980 General Strike when the JVP/DJV forcible work stoppages imposed through terror stultified its improvement. Since May Day last fresh activity was observable in the trade union field. The launching of the United Socialist Alliance within which were parties with a working class base held out fresh hope for the employed class. The desire for unity surfaced and developed. The terrorist activities and the counter-terror unleashed by the Government proved to be the main stumbling blocks in the path of getting the trade unions together. Inter-Union rivalries too affected this process. Trade Union centres with a fetish for mere formal unity failed to take into account the new pressure within the movement for new thinking and purposeful action for unity. It is in this respect that this column welcomes the various moves underway to achieve the broader unity among workers on issues that are of immediate concern to them.

Closing Ranks to Defend Worker Interests

The formation of the Joint Trade Union Council (JTUC) which groups not only trade unions belonging to the main opposition parties but also such unions as the Ceylon Workers' Congress, the DWC, UPTO, the General Services Union and the Ceylon Teachers Union is a step in the right direction.

In a related development it is to be observed that Unions with large white-collar (middle class) memberships in the mercantile, banking and Telecommunication fields are grouping together to defend their interests. Their main activity at present appears to centre around building opposition to the Social Security Pension Scheme proposed

by the Government to replace the existing Employees Provident Fund.

The Government Clerical Service Union is also seen engaged in promoting greater unity among trade unions belonging to various sectors.

The trade union movement in Sri Lanka is facing one of the most difficult periods in its history. The repressive measures the Government employed in order to meet the situation created by the terroristically organised transport stoppage "strike" still exist. The ban on distribution of leaflets, display of posters, holding of meetings, mobilisation of the rank and file for trade union activities etc., continues. To add to the problems the steep rise in the cost of living and the increasing burdens cast on the wage-earner as a result of the ill-advised economic policies of the Government are reaching intolerable limits. The Cost of Living Index has reached a staggering 861.5.

In this situation the trade unions have come up with demands that are of immediate concern to their rank and file. The twin demand for trade union freedom and economic relief occupy the centre place in the mobilisation of their membership. Among other demands lined up for agitation are :

1. A 50% increase in the present wages with Rs. 2,500/- as the minimum wage ;
2. The provision of reasonably priced essential goods of every day use ;
3. The payment of Rs. 5/- for every point increase in the Cost of Living Index ;
4. The reinstatement of July 1980 Strikers ;
5. The withdrawal of all restrictions placed on the free functioning of trade unions ;
6. Withdrawal of the State of Emergency and the ending of terror ;

7. No privatisation of State undertakings.

The Budget and Workers

Trade Unions have registered their dismay with the Government over its failure to bring meaningful relief to wage earners groaning under the impact of high prices and inflation. The Minister of Finance met representatives of Unions led by the Government Clerical Service Union, Ceylon Federation of Labour, the Mahajana Trade Union Federation, Government Workers Trade Union Federation, the Central Bank Employees' Union a few weeks before he presented the Budget for 1990 and made it known to the gathering that he and the Government were well aware of the plight of wage-earners in the context of escalating prices.

The Ceylon Federation of Labour drawing the Finance Minister's attention to this meeting has, in a communication addressed to him after the Budget, stated :

"This Federation was disappointed to see in 1990 Budget Proposals only a monthly increase of Rs. 200/-. What is more, up to now the Government has taken no meaningful steps to extend the benefit of even this payment to the private sector. You are no doubt aware that that in the time of the United Front Government wage increases proposed in the Budget were extended to the private sector by Emergency Regulations. At present Government has Emergency powers and we fail to understand why these are not availed of in order to extend this to the private sector as well.

"We do not also see that any arrangements have been made to ensure that Corporations follow suit, nor do we see the justice of the Rs. 200/- wage increase being limited to those drawing a salary of Rs. 2,000/- a month. It is a known fact that the Trade Union demand is for a minimum wage of Rs. 2,500/-. The limiting of the Rs. 200/- to Rs. 2,000/- maximum reflects an unawareness of our basic demand."

Human Rights

The Murder of Dr. Rajini Thiranagama

Statement of the University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR) Jaffna

On the 21st September 1989, Dr. Rajini Thiranagama, a live wire and leading member of the UTHR (Jaffna) was murdered while returning home, a few yards from the Faculty of Medicine where she worked. One may ask, in a community benumbed by hundreds of senseless killings and driven to protective indifference, what is the significance of this particular murder? To be sure, as many speakers had pointed out at commemoration meetings, the killing was a dastardly act against a lone, helpless and unarmed woman, and a mother of two little girls. Its phenomenal significance lay in what the killers were trying to destroy. This represented a whole spectrum of values which Rajini upheld both in practice and precept and deemed both by her and fellow members of the UTHR as being necessary for the life and freedom of the community. Her field of activities included, telling the truth about the unpleasant side and hypocrisy of this suicidally-bent community, the practice of academic freedom, telling students that some of their views were simplistic and narrow, and practical involvement in the concerns of women who had suffered.

The killing was very different from what one might expect from an undisciplined military force in a state of anger. It was coldly premeditated and meticulously planned. Even the detail of minimum disruption, by scheduling the killing just after the last viva voce examinations in Anatomy had been looked into. The murder took place on the second day of the ceasefire. The killer had waited at a relatively lonely spot that she would have to pass while rushing home from work to care for her little ones. He had even found the time, after Rajini had fallen, to park his bicycle and pump a few more bullets into her head, before making his escape.

Even Rajini's death brought out from the society around many of the attributes of fascist regimentation—the antithesis of a freedom struggle—the very thing Rajini had stood against throughout her career. On hearing the assassin's shots, with the exception of a few medical students and some ordinary people, the rest ran away or shut themselves inside their homes. It was difficult to find a vehicle to transport her to hospital. Those who volunteered to look after her children or visited them the night following the killing were neither neighbours nor colleagues. There was fear of association. Many close to the family admitted fear of attending the funeral and the meetings which followed. Far from showing a sense of solidarity and outrage, the local medical profession and her faculty colleagues were divided and confused as to how to respond to this killing. No doubt everyone knew that it was wrong and totally unjustified, not least the killers. The latter chose silence and anonymity. Rajini's friends and admirers were many, who had enjoyed her personal care and had benefitted from the many risks she had personally undertaken. Her enemies were those who were against what she stood for, but would not say it openly, lest they expose before the people their emptiness, real motivations and intentions. Yet initially at least, the dominant reaction to her killing, as for other killings, was not anger, but a mixture of sadness and fear. This was the society, pliable and spiritless, that her killers were trying to build; and herein lies the chief significance of the event.

The UTHR and the future of Education

The UTHR (Jaffna) in its reports over the last year, concentrated on exposing the devaluation of human norms by all armed groups, relying only on the strength flowing



from integrity. It also attempted to foster, from within the community, discussion of the social dimensions of its drift towards a fascist order. This was thought of as a necessary self-purifying process. Rajini was amongst those most conscious of the truism that we cannot condemn the society as aliens outside it, but that we must examine ourselves as part of the problem and our conduct and attitudes as contributory to the growth of evils. Thus in many senses the men who held the guns were some of the most tragic victims of this society. Rajini's anger was never unmingled with compassion.

It was this realisation that impelled Rajini and several others to strengthen their efforts at tackling problems within the university as members of staff unions, as student counsellors and as members of Senate and Faculty Boards. Nearly all those who felt a need for reform, from professors to assistant lecturers, became members of the UTHR. Student counsellors, of whom Rajini was one, had one of their busiest times dealing with problems faced by students in the way of arrest and security, together with specific problems of new entrants. Amongst the most important issues within the university was the exercise of administrative power in a system where the hierarchical differences had been strengthened while channels of accountability had fallen

into disuse. An important event in the university during this period was the setting up of the co-ordinating Committee of staff, students, executive and employee unions, with the Vice Chancellor as chairman. It has stood up to several tests in dealing with crises involving the university.

Many saw this urge for reform as crucial for the raising of educational standards, as well as for the elimination of violence in the society in general.

A crucial element in the maintenance of educational standards is the return of those who go abroad for doctoral training. After the July 1983 riots it almost came to be taken for granted that such persons would not return. Administrators thought they would be lucky if only the bond obligations, which included travel and salary advances, could be collected. Meanwhile the exodus of trained persons continued. Rajini's example is a case in point. In this country which has five medical colleges there were four trained Anatomists (three now), to run a proper Anatomy course. Each medical college requires a number of Anatomists, Anatomy being the key pre-clinic subject. Rajini ran the department single handed, making many sacrifices to uphold standards. If not for Rajini's ability as an administrator in representing the problems of an assistant lecturer whose research programme suffered because of war difficulties, the university would have lost an Anatomist who is now under training in Britain. The training of doctors in Jaffna has now suffered an irreplaceable qualitative setback.

In spite of the disincentives, a number of trained academics returned in recent times. They did not come for the salaries or for the research facilities. They came because they felt an obligation to answer the challenge, and because they felt that the community had a need of people who would take a principled stand on issues. They did not think themselves extraordinary, but wished to be ordinary working people and a sobering presence. This is attested to by the fact that all four persons, including Rajini, who returned from Britain with doctoral degrees from early 1987, have been committed and active members of the UTHR. Thus the educational advancement of the Tamils is linked to the society

demonstrating that it values and has room for commitment of this kind.

In Rajini's own case, she had with three other academics co-authored 'The Broken Palmyrah' in early 1988, which attempted to examine impartially the Tamil predicament. It spoke frankly about the actions of state powers and militant groups, and their ideologies. Rajini was conscious of the risk and had referred to her possible death a number of times. Personal letters in her possession and letters written by her, testify to a number of friends and those of influence putting pressure on her to remain in Britain while she was there for a three month research stint. But, Rajini came back on 3rd September. Two commitments uppermost on her mind were the Anatomy viva voce examinations for the 2nd MBBS and the teething problems of Poorani Illam, a women's rehabilitation centre she had helped to start. Her killers were cynical enough to wait for her to complete her examinations.

A letter addressed to the Vice Chancellor soon after her return from England, and read out by him at the first commemoration meeting on 2nd October, says much about Rajini. In it she informed the Vice Chancellor of her research successes and went on to say, 'There is no life for me apart from my people. So here I am'. It is this kind of commitment and integrity that the killers find most unwelcome. The Tamil society they have in mind is one that is spiritless, uncaring, where every man fears his neighbour and which is moreover a cultural, educational and intellectual desert.

The Protest

In every crisis, however numbing the initial shock, there are mysterious well-springs from which strength flows. From grinding fear and a feeling that there was no option but flight, the move to protest, to express disgust and to preserve the integrity of Rajini's work and memory gained momentum. Students, staff and members of the public joined forces to give it strength. Where men faltered, women and girls stepped in. The impossible became possible as fear waned. Students went about putting up defiant posters all over Jaffna. Three well attended commemoration meetings were held. University of Jaffna (2nd October),

Jaffna College (4th October), Chun dikuli Girls' College (6th October). The last was very encouraging in view of the feeling and help forthcoming from staff members and senior girls. On the morning of 2nd October, the Vice Chancellor and the Dean of Arts led the largest demonstration in the history of the university. Up to almost the time the demonstration set off, the general opinion was that it would be lucky to have two hundred participants. The eventual figure ran into thousands. All this took place against a backdrop of terror and fear of the unknown.

It is one thing to discover strength and quite another to deploy it effectively. If a university and its members forget that it is much more than a degree-awarding institution, it surely dies. A university is a place where people are trained for positions of leadership as citizens of the modern world. Not only does a university implant in persons a respect and assertion of human rights, but it is also part of a process that helps the community to enjoy human rights such as obtaining control over their environment. Nothing is assured. Whether the university or the UTHR will stay alive are matters that cannot be determined by our resources alone. We are unsure of our next step. It is a reality that in a society where only mad men and gunmen are deemed fit to take risks, the students who came forward to give the lead in protest activity are exposed and live in fear. We need all the help and understanding that we can get.

An Appeal

A large number of persons living both in the South of the country and abroad have over the years shown a sincere concern for the Tamil problem. But it is not widely recognised that it has moved far from the simple ethnic problem that it was seen to be in 1983. It is now one, where for the short term at least, the internal dimensions have by far overshadowed the external. We appeal to all, particularly the Tamils abroad, to be sensitive to this new reality that faces us, and not to jeopardise those tendencies that work for greater accountability from within. What faces us now is a battle for basic humanity and civilised values. Its outcome will decide whether Rajini and many others died in vain. —UTHR Jaffna Mid-October 1989

The Pope and the Plight of East Timor

In October this year the Indonesian Government sought to use the Pope's visit to Indonesia and East Timor to "legitimise" as it were the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

Earlier this year Roman Catholic Bishop Belo Apostolic Administrator of East Timor sent a letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations in which he appealed to the international community to support the rights of the East Timorese people to a referendum to decide their future.

Bishop Belo personally has come under increasing pressure as a result of his decision to publicly express his views. In a telephone interview, Belo says that all his in-coming and out-going mail is now intercepted and/or confiscated. "We are in a cage", he is quoted to have said. There is speculation that Belo will be dismissed or forced to resign, repeating the experience of his predecessor, Mgr. Costa Lopes, when he too became too outspoken for the comfort of the various authorities. It is also reported that those who have expressed support for Mgr. Belo's statement have been detained and interrogated. In an act which has further escalated tensions in East Timor, the Indonesian authorities are reported to have banned the use of the native language, Tetun, in the saying of Mass. Belo, supported by all his clergy, has refused to obey the proscription.

Although the Vatican has sought to distance itself from Mgr. Belo's statement, a number of national Catholic structures, such as the Conference of Bishops in Holland and the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, have expressed unreserved support. In a pastoral statement issued in anticipation of the Pope's scheduled visit to East Timor on 13 October, the Portuguese Bishops state: "Timor aspires to the full expression of its own individuality, and impeding this becomes not only genocide but also let us say 'cultural' genocide, the latter being more serious because it affects not only those who die but also the survivors of present as well as future generations".

Another response came in May, when the European Parliament adopted a resolution, part of which stated:—

"The European Parliament... aware of the dramatic appeal made by Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, Apostolic Administrator of East Timor to the UN Secretary General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, in which he states "not only are we dying as a people but also as a nation," (and) considering that the Indonesian Government has stated it is not prepared to consult the East Timorese people on their own future,

1. Reaffirms its view that to choose their own future is a fundamental right of all peoples,

2. Once again requests that member states' Foreign Ministers to take diplomatic measures with a view to obtaining self-determination for the people of East Timor,..."

Finally, the UN Human Rights Sub-Commission adopted a resolution on 31 August 89 which notes Bishop Belo's letter, draws attention to the fact "that more arrests, torture and summary executions are alleged to have taken place since the end of 1988", and calls upon the Indonesian government "to allow representatives of human rights organizations to visit the territory". Not only have such observers been refused entry into East Timor, but the Indonesian government also refused an exit permit to Haji Princen, director of the Jakarta-based Institute for the Defence of Human Rights. Princen had been scheduled to give testimony before the UN Sub-Commission in Geneva.

Since the Indonesian invasion, some of the worst possible atrocities have been committed. An estimated 200,000, one third of the population, have died from the direct or indirect results of military intervention and almost the entire East Timorese were forced to re-settle in specially built camps.

Although the mass killings have apparently abated more recently, East Timor continues to be one huge prison. Because the Indonesians have so much to hide in East Timor, the half island has been closed off from the outside world and has become one of the most inaccessible regions in the world today. □

Sarawak Native People's Fight For Survival

Eighty-seven natives in Sarawak mainly from the Penan tribe were arrested in September as part of the government's response to the native people's blockading of logging roads, seeing more and more of their ancestral lands destroyed by logging with the government turning a deaf ear to all their numerous petitions, the native people have been forced into direct confrontation with the loggers:

Their first wave of arrests occurred in early 1989 when the native people brought the logging industry to a complete standstill over a huge area by means of wooden barricades flung across logging roads. Owing to international pressure and outcry the 128 arrested natives were released by May this year.

The second wave of arrests came soon after the latest blockades. The realization that their whole way of life will be destroyed if they don't stop the logging companies has made the natives bringing their whole families - men, women and children to put up their 'last ditch' blockades. They are prepared to go to jail and refuse to be released until such time as they can speak to the Government and stop the Companies from destroying their land. This is what they have said in a statement released on September 29 after they were produced in the Marudi Magistrate's Court in Baram:—

"Today is our 14th day in detention. Although life in jail means hunger, thirst, loneliness, mosquitoes, frustrations and other hardships, we have no choice. We did not go to jail by choice. The authorities arrested and put us here.

"Jail is for criminals. We are not criminals. We only asked for our land, forest, burial grounds and other properties in our own areas are not destroyed, and our rivers not polluted from logging activities. These are our rights because the forest is our home.

"We have refused to be bailed out by our relatives and friends. This is because even if we are released, the authorities will not bring us back to our respective settlements. We have no money for food and transport back.

"Even if we can afford to go back, we will face severe difficulties looking for food. This is because our land and forest on which we depend for food have been destroyed and are continued to be destroyed. Our very survival is at stake.

"In fact, we have made it clear to the authorities that if they want to arrest us, they should arrest all of us—ourselves, our wives, children and grandchildren. Because none of us can live without the forest.

"We are very sad that while we, the people of the land and forests, are in jail, the timber companies are very happily logging and destroying our land and forest. Certain quarters seem very determined and happy to keep us in jail forever.

"If the politicians and companies want timber to log, by all means plunder their own property. Don't log our land and forest.

"The timber companies have also brought gangsters to threaten our people recently. We are really afraid that they might hurt our families. Now we are in jail, we don't know what they would do up in our settlement.

"Since we do not know when we will be out and logging is still continuing on our land and forest, we urgently appeal to all our brothers, sisters and friends throughout the world to help us stop the loggings and destructions immediately. By the time we got out of jail, it might be too late.

"Even if we are released and try to stop the logging, the companies might send gangsters to beat us up. If we retaliate, the authorities would surely arrest and bring us to prison again.

"Please pray for us. If you are sending us letters, telegrams, etc., please send them to Lambir Prison Camp, Miri, Miri Division, Sarawak, Malaysia. Extend copies of your letters to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Chief Minister of Sarawak and the Chief Justice of Borneo.

"We thank you very much for your assistance and prayers. May God bless you". □

MALAYSIA

ISA Update

The restrictions on the freedoms of 16 former Internal Security Act (ISA) detainees have been lifted. Included among the persons who have had their rights restored are Brother Anthony Rogers, Lim Chin Chin, and Patricia Lourdes Irene. All of the 16 had been arrested under the ISA in the 1987 "Operation Lallang" crackdown.

Several of the former "Operation Lallang" prisoners have signed affidavits alleging that they were tortured while in detention in what is being described as the Special Branch's "Chamber of Horrors". Aliran, the prominent Malaysia social reform NGO, has called for an independent commission to investigate the interrogation and detention practices of the Special Branch.

Although all of the "Operation Lallang" prisoners have now been released, some 68 persons remain in detention in Malaysia under the ISA.

Isa Amendment

Prior to the final releases of the "Operation Lallang" prisoners, a number of detainees successfully challenged the legality of their arrests before the courts. In most cases the government simply issued new detention orders. In order to preclude future embarrassment, the government introduced amendments to the ISA which were adopted by Parliament on 26 June 89. The amendments increase the absolute, discretionary powers of the government. ISA executive detention orders are no longer subject to judicial review, including challenges under the constitutionally guaranteed right to apply for a writ of *habeas corpus*. ISA detainees no longer have any grounds or procedural recourse to challenge executive action, even if it results in unlawful or improper detention. According to Prime Minister Mahathir, "The government is in the best position to consider and study whatever information is in its possession to arrive at decisions on whatever preventive action that may be needed".

Poem by Teo Soh Lung (Singapore)

*Make me a martyr,
A name I did not ask for.
Make me a martyr,
A name I did not want.
All the might you have
You can throw on me.
I will try my best to survive.*

*Once, my mind was clouded with fear
Of losing my freedom and all that I love
But now my mind is devoid of fear;
I no longer think of my freedom.*

*Make me a martyr,
Make me a martyr.*

SINGAPORE

Update on Detainees

Two of the political prisoners held under the Internal Security Act (ISA) since the "Operation Spectrum" arrests in 1987 have had their two-year, executive detention orders arbitrarily renewed. Vincent Cheng, now 42 and formerly executive secretary of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, and Teo Soh Lung, a 35 year old civil rights lawyer and former Council member of the Law Society of Singapore, both remain in solitary confinement. Of course, neither has yet been charged or brought to trial.

In late June 89, Cheng filed an application for a Habeas Corpus hearing, which finally took place in early September. The hearings represented the first occasion in which Cheng's case has been presented in an official forum since his arrest in May 87. In the hearings, Cheng repudiated his televised "forced confession" which he alleged resulted from physical and psychological mistreatment during the initial interrogations. The court has reserved its decision. Earlier this year, in March 89, Teo's attempt to challenge the legitimacy of her detention through a Habeas Corpus appeal was turned down by the courts.

Two other ISA prisoners who were granted conditional releases last year, Kevin de Souza and Wong Souk Yee have had the restrictions on their fundamental rights arbitrarily extended for an additional two years.

Legislative Changes

Absolute executive power in Singapore had remained subject to one constraint in that the constitution recognized the Privy Council in London as the final court of appeal. The significance of this was demonstrated by opposition leader J. B. Jeyaretnam's successful challenge before the Privy Council of his disbarment and disqualification from Parliament. (See *Christian Worker* 1988 4th Qr and 1989 1st Qr). In April 89 the government moved to eliminate this final check on its authority by introducing a constitutional amendment. *The Wall Street Journal* (12 April 89) observed: "Over the past few years Singapore has revamped its internal security laws, press laws, election laws and parliamentary privilege laws in ways that raise drastically the penalties of criticising or opposing Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and his ruling party. Now the government is ready to enact a new law which suggests that Mr. Lee is ready for Singapore to resign from the civilized world".

Military Service Centre

Ignoring the objections of its neighbours, the government of Singapore has indicated its willingness to accommodate some American military facilities should the U.S. be forced to withdraw from its Philippines bases. Singapore already provides the U.S. Navy and Air Force with considerable supply and service facilities.

The proposal to expand U.S. military facilities has given rise to pointed oppo-

sition from Singapore's immediate neighbours, Malaysia and Indonesia. Seeking to clarify that Singapore's offer is intended as a regional contribution, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yeo stated in Parliament that "Singapore is prepared to host some U.S. facilities to make it easier for the Philippines to continue to host the U.S. bases there".

Courtesy : Currents (Canada-Asia Working Group)

PHILIPPINES

Philippines Church people continue to be victims

Six Filipino church people active in human rights work have been killed from January to May this year. This was disclosed by the Promotion of Church People's Rights in its report entitled "Cases of Church Repression" in the Philippines.

Killed were : Armando Anosa, a UCCP pastor in Samar, Fr. Dionisio Malalay, assistant parish priest of Dimataling-Tabina in Zamboanga del Sur, lay leader Rufino Rivera, Zenaido Reulo, UCCP pastor in Pitogo, Zamboanga del Sur, and Rev. Viz-minda Gran, UCCP pastor and her husband Lovello.

"These victims of violence share one common mark of identity: they all lived their faith and preached the Good News of the Lord within the context of the Church's preferential option for the poor, in solidarity with the struggling and suffering poor and are renowned in their human rights advocacy", PCPR reported.

Church Chronicle—(Manila)

El Salvador

Church sources in El Salvador report raids on many church-related buildings and offices in recent days, and "an alarming number of death threats against church leaders, leaders of the popular movement, leaders of opposition political parties and journalists."

Among the most publicized actions against the church was the killing of eight people, including six Jesuit priests, affiliated with Central American University. They were tortured and killed by people in uniforms. The dead include the university rector and vice rector, and the director of its human-rights institute.

Opponents of the Jesuits and the university accuse them of fostering subversive, leftist ideology. The government and armed forces denied involvement in the murders, through government-controlled radio called the six slain priests 'communists'.—(EPS)

Bishop Barbara Harris

Background of the World's First Female Anglican Bishop

*“Paul Washington
the preacher.....thundered out
at the crowd of eight and a
half thousand, ‘What did you
come out into the wilderness to
see? A woman being ordained?
I tell you, not only a woman,
but a black woman.’”*

“Are you persuaded that God has called you to the office of bishop?” asked Ed Browning, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, at the key moment of her consecration as a bishop.

“I am so persuaded,” answered Harris, with the emphasis on “so.” When the large group of ordaining bishops laid their hands on her head they were heard to say “without fear....without fear....”

Her previous 58 years may be deemed to have prepared her well to do it without fear. She had a favourite story told in *The Witness* (October 1988).



Her great-grandmother, Ida Brauner Sembley, lived on a plantation in Maryland when General S. Grant rode in one afternoon looking for a drink. He asked her to rinse the dipper and get him a drink.

She told him, “You don’t need to rinse the dipper – it’s clean”.

Grant explained that someone might be trying to poison him because he was a general. “You see, I’ve been fighting for little boys like you”.

Ida Brauner Sembley shot back. “I’m not a little boy. And I don’t need anybody to fight for me. I can fight for myself.”

That feisty spirit that her great-grandmother displayed was to be passed on. Born into a working class family in Philadelphia, Barbara was the second of three children. She had a good education and at the age of 18 went to work for Joseph V. Baker and Associates, a black public relations company. It was significant that she was President of the company by the time she was 28.

She became active in the civil rights movement during the 1960s and marched from Selma to Washington with Martin Luther King. She went on to the Sun Oil Company in 1968 and rose to senior staff consultant at the corporate headquarters by 1977.

She was a church warden and was the crucifer in 1974 when the "Philadelphia Eleven" were irregularly ordained as priests in the Church of the Advocate. Although she had a comfortable job, Barbara chose a church that was the centre of the civil rights movement in Pennsylvania. The church fed the hungry, was involved in prison reform and fought for the homeless, especially blacks.

Her first thoughts in office (as Suffragan Bishop of Massachusetts) were about the overcrowded prison system.

Her area of responsibility is pastoral care - the area that had galvanised her in the past. She is not one of these charity-minded Church workers. She gave a chuckle over "what some folks call the old clothes syndrome."

She described how with every good intention, there are those church people who respond to a crisis in the ghetto by sending along old clothes, regardless of what the problem is. "People don't want their oppression made more bearable, they want to liberate themselves."

Paul Washington, the preacher she chose for her consecration service and previous Rector of the Church of the Advocate, thundered out at the crowd of eight and a half thousand, "What did you come out into the wilderness to see? A woman being ordained? I tell you, not only a woman but a black woman!"

This was one of the miracles of this event amongst the sequence of events that have meted out the slow emancipation of women in the church..... that which was despised and rejected, that which still sits uncomfortably in the minds of most white Anglican bishops, has been incarnated in the very midst of the house of bishops.

Somehow Barbara has managed to bring so many with her. Letters have poured in from young and old, from Catholic and Protestant without discrimination.

Ruth Fitzpatrick, co-ordinator of the Women's Ordination Conference of the Catholic Church wrote: "We consider you extremely valid and celebrate with you as you become a role model for us of what a liberating bishop can be. And I know that you won't confuse the Roman Catholic Patriarchal Papal powers and principalities with the People of God. Thank you for paving the way for us."

For those of us who had borrowed our fares to be in the Hynes Centre, Boston, on Saturday 11 February, 1989 for the consecration ceremony, Christian hope took on fresh shape, our hearts leapt within us as the black choir of St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church, Cambridge, exploded into the processional hymn that swept Barbara forward on that joyous tide of history.

*"Ride On, King Jesus,
No Man Can Hinder Thee!"*

Indeed, no man can hinder Thee,

—Courtesy: National Outlook, —(Australia)

Keeping Anglicans together Over Women's Ordination

Guidelines to keep Anglicanism together despite major disagreements over the ordination of women have been "warmly commended" by primates of the 27 autonomous Anglican provinces around the world.

With one exception, they endorsed proposals for a special commission set up to examine the question. It was chaired by Robert Eames, the Anglican primate of all Ireland.

"Both protagonists and antagonists of the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate should consider carefully what anomalies they are prepared to accept for the sake of unity," the report advises.

"Both sides would have to acknowledge that the other's position might, in the long run, prove to be the mind of the church."

The report argues strongly against Anglicans ending communion with each other over the issue of the ordination of women.

The primates rejected the commission suggestion that at least for now "ordinations be carried out collegially. The collegial participation of a male bishop does not question the validity of a women bishop's consecration nor her capacity to confer orders, but rather protects the interests of the ordained and the communities in which he or she may minister in the future."

Generally in Anglicanism, more than one bishop ordains a new bishop, but only one ordains a new priest or deacon. The primates decided that to require that a male bishop join in ordinations by a female bishop "would have the effect of questioning the validity of her own consecration, and be demeaning to the woman concerned."

First Woman to Head Anglican Diocese

Penny (Penelope Ann Bansall) Jamieson, 47, is to be the new bishop of the Diocese of Dunedin in the (Anglican) Church of the Province of New Zealand. She is to be consecrated in mid-1990. The current bishop, Peter Mann, retires at the end of February. Jamieson would be the first woman to head an Anglican diocese. The first female Anglican bishop, Barbara Harris, is a suffragan (assisting) bishop in a diocese of the US-based Episcopal Church.

Married and mother of three, she came to New Zealand from England in 1965. She was ordained deacon in 1982 and priest in 1983 and is currently a parish vicar.

Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, 'first among equals' in the Anglican episcopate, described her election as a 'further development in the life of the Anglican Communion.' He repeated a call from the 1988 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops for respect for decisions each province makes about women as bishops, and for continuing as much communion as possible with each other.

—(EPS)

Christmas Reflection 1989

In the year 274 A.D. the Roman Emperor Aurelian introduced in the imperial capital the festival of the invincible Sun, Natalis Solis Invicti on the 25th December. As the High Priests of the official Religion of Imperial Rome offered the sacrificial bullocks on the altar of Apollo, the ruling elite and their fawning beneficiaries prayed "may the sun never set on the empire - may he bless and preserve our divine Ceasar." Thus the Religion of the Empire served to preserve the largest slave society the world had ever known. Deep in the heart of the slave - as he plied the oar of his master's galley, as he toiled in the fields of the Patrician and the new rich, as he saluted Ceasar, as a gladiator in the Collesium ready to die spectacularly for his entertainment, as a violated serving maid servile before her loathsome overfed master - just returned from the vomitorium, as a highly educated teacher compelled to teach the master's spoilt brats - there burnt an impotent contemptuous rage, a prayer that called for the sun to set on this monstrous empire. The short-sighted and foolhardy Spartacus had risen only to be crucified along with his comrades all along the Appian way. After this brief spell of insecurity - the elite began to clink their goblets brimming with imported wine and gormandize with added confidence. The slaves and the poor wouldn't try their nonsense again. Crassus and his legions had really smashed them - taught them a jolly good lesson. But the God of history never fails to hear the cry of the slave, the poor - the wretched of the earth - for these constitute

his chosen people - his true Israel - his church. He never fails to feel their pain, their torture and their death throes. He never fails to blaze out in anger against those who have usurped thrones not theirs to own. Thus he never fails to cast them down. The good news to all the poor who are excluded from the God given means of production and the fruit of their labours is "Rejoice it is yours, no more shall your tongue be tied, your hands manacled and crippled, no more will you be entombed by the rule of Mammon and his demonic forces, - for I am in your midst - as your brother - I have renounced the Pietistic, the conventional traditional role imposed on me by the powerful and wealthy and their clergy, of power as dominance - a blasphemous reflection of themselves. In you I am incarnate and with you I defy the tomb and prison and rise with power of my resurrection to the new order of life. I hate and abhor those who claim to represent me - they have false credentials. They have done a horrible thing - they have named the 'Golden Calf' after me and inscribed it with the sign of the dollar - the sign of Mammon and dance round it assailing it with ghastly imported choruses and hymns. They have the audacity to hold seminars and camps, and prayer meetings to it in the pleasure resorts of the rich and say its for me! They are the successors of the imperial cult of Natalis Solis Invicti, whom they conceal under my name. I spew them out of my mouth - and you my true comrades - I invite you to feast with me."

□

X'MAS 1989 SRI LANKA

*Christmas comes but once a year
And usually it brings good cheer,
But you will pardon me, my dear
It's only blood, and tears, and fear!
The same again and more and more
Of burnings, hackings, guts and gore,
Smouldering corpse on roadside pyre
Petrol-drenched, necklace of tyre;
Dismembered bodies, shots at night
At end of tunnel seems no light;
The killer squads who roam at will
No mercy show to those they kill;
Where stands our famed Ahimsa isle
In climate so insanely vile?
So steel your nerves to face the music
Of a 'Dance Macabre' that's truly
sick!!*

*And what will Nineteen Ninety bring
Nothing, comrade, unless you sing
Your own quiet song, bitter or sweet
But walls have ears down every street,
So mind your step, before you speak
It's better to be mild and meek;
That heritage is yet to dawn
More lambs are likely to be shorn
By fascist blade, whether blunt or keen
The terror stalks, unknown, unseen.
Decapitated stars blaze in the skies.
No heralds sing when prices rise;
But tides do turn and people rise,
From years of despair to surprise
And overturn the world they own
For reasons which are clearly known!*

—IAGO

□

Christmas: 'The Real Owners'

CHRISTMAS

Season of pine trees with lights and Santa Claus,
season of buying things to make us happy,
season when those with money and power
give gifts and say lovely things
to convince themselves they're good
and that everything goes well.

They've come to believe they own Christmas.

*They've stolen it.
But with their artificial snow,
their coloured papers and ribbons,
They have, in truth, stolen
an empty box.*

*The contents continue in the hands of the real owners :
men who can't find a job
or must work hard
for miserable wages,
women who suffer agony everyday
wondering how they'll feed
all the people in their homes,
the elderly and the sick
thrown out like no longer usable cast-offs,
young people who see their future cut short
because they can no longer study
or find meaningful work,
children . . .*

*For them, it is a GIFT OF GOD,
what no money can buy
and no power can usurp :
liberation and new life
in Jesus Christ.*

*Christmas, Nativity, Birth,
it is God who IS BORN among us,
who becomes a NATIVE in our land,
one of our people,
companion.*

*Christmas is God himself
who comes to take on
the suffering of the poor
and their hope.*

*That is why,
Christmas is a new birth
of our dignity,
the new birth of our love,
which we cherish and give,
the new birth of our commitment
to struggle for a world of justice and freedom,
the new birth of our faith
in the final victory of love
and of life.*

—Ronaldo Munoz, Chilean Theologian



The Rushdie Affair: Cultures in Collision

Chaiwat Satha - Anand

Dr. Chaiwat Satha-Anand is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Political Science at Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand.

Writing a book can still be a dangerous enterprise. Not only has Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, been banned in many countries, but the spiritual leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, sentenced to death Rushdie and all involved in his novel's publication: "I ask all Moslems to kill them wherever they find them. . . . Whoever is killed doing this will be regarded as a martyr and will go directly to Heaven."

Contrast in Cultures

The controversy highlights the contrast between modern "western" and Islamic civilization. For Moslems, the Holy Book, the Prophet and other prophets are to be respected. From such respect springs spiritual tranquility for hundreds of

millions of Moslems. For them, the Rushdie novel is a dagger attacking the division between the sacred and the profane.

In the secular world in which Rushdie wrote his novel, the division between the sacred and the profane no longer exists. A critical attitude is considered a value in itself, indeed a higher value than religious faith. Why is it that attachment to things spiritual can be called into question, while freedom of expression cannot?

In a dusty world, it is not easy to see clearly. Perhaps this is why passion seems so often to supercede intellect and why ugliness reigns supreme.

As a Moslem, I too feel dis-

turbed by this controversy. Images are important in the modern world. Clearly the images of Islam that exist among non-Moslems are unattractive. Moslems living among non-Moslem majorities, like myself, must work hard to overcome the undesirable impression resulting from centuries of religious prejudice.

It is painful to see the image of Islam as a religion of violence being reinforced day in and day out. Even if *The Satanic Verses* is blasphemous, has the effect of condemning the author to death been thought through? What will the effect be on Moslems elsewhere in the world?

A better way to deal with a book considered blasphemous is the literary way. History has taught that weapons hurled at a book merely glorify the book. It is immortalized and its author becomes a hero. The literary qualities of the book are forgotten. As a result of the opponent's violence, his blasphemy is spread more widely and even becomes institutionalized.

Which God ?

In the history of Israel, and of that growth out of Israel which is called the church, there has been a constant struggle between a view of God as the god of the unchanging order, the god of the courthouse, and a view of God as a liberator, the God of the Exodus, the God of the covered wagon. This conflict is seen at its sharpest in the Old Testament polemic against idolatry. For the idols were, and are, supremely the gods of the status quo. They know their place. They can be controlled by use of the right formulas. Their territory is clearly defined. Unlike the true God who is shrouded in the mystery and dazzling darkness of Sinai, the idols can be seen and encountered directly. There is no mystery in this religion, but religious certainty with no need whatever for doubt.

By contrast, the God of the Exodus is only known and can only be followed in the

process of movement, of struggle, of pilgrimage. The God of the Exodus is revealed only insofar as we take up our bags and follow. To change the metaphor, and revert to today's gospel passage, it is only when the dominion of death is left behind that the God of the Exodus can be known. As Jesus goes on to warn, once the hand is laid to the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God. So the Exodus is more than a historical memory: it is the central symbol of the mystery of liberation.

Idoltrous Religion

Today we are in the midst of a new resurgence of idoltrous religion, religion whose primary concern is to provide moral and spiritual reinforcement for established structures. It is settler religion with a vengeance, and the church is valued, if it is valued at all, to the extent that it helps to shore up the values and culture of Thatcherism. In his book *After Virtue* the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre says that

we are in a new Dark Age, an age of barbarism, and darkness. The difference with the first Dark Age is that the barbarians are no longer on the frontiers but in our midst: they have been ruling us for some time.

The choice before the Christian community at this time is a choice between a religion of death and oppression, and a liberating and life-giving faith. It is a choice between the theology of the courthouse and that of the covered wagon. It is the choice between a religion of preservation and a faith which strives and strains towards the newness of the God of the future. And it is to this crisis that the words of Jesus come home to us with fresh urgency: Leave the dead to bury their own dead. Your duty is to proclaim the Kingdom of God.

—From a Sermon delivered by FR. KENNETH LEECH at the Passover and Exodus Service to mark the end of 12 years at St. Botolph's by the LGCM.

(See article next page)

Reflection

The Rushdie controversy draws me to reflect on a story of the father of all the major monotheistic religions, Ibrahim (or Abraham, peace be upon him), appearing in the commentary to the Holy Koran.

Ibrahim was usually happy to have a guest eat with him. One day a wayfarer approached. Ibrahim ran to the stranger and invited him to dine. The old man gratefully accepted the invitation, but while they were washing their feet, Ibrahim said: "There is one condition for eating together. After the meal we will pray together to the One God in gratitude for his Bounty."

The wayfarer answered: "I cannot do that. I have been praying to my own gods for 60 years. Just for one meal I cannot give up my faith." Ibrahim grew angry, but the old man would not change his mind and left without eating.

Immediately the angel Jibreel (Gabriel) appeared to Ibrahim and said: "Ibrahim, Ibrahim, you truly have sinned."

"Why?" asked the prophet.

"God has been feeding this pagan for 60 years. He has patience with him and his lack of faith. Yet you cannot feed him one meal without demanding that he convert."

Ibrahim arose and ran after the stranger and at last succeeded in convincing him to return for a meal without any conditions.

When they finished eating, the guest asked why Ibrahim had changed his mind. Ibrahim told him about Jibreel's admonition.



Salman Rushdie with his Satanic Verses

The old man replied: "If your God has waited patiently for me for 60 years. He must be the true God. Let us pray together."

Courtesy: Movement, SCM (U.K.)

The Unwelcome Community

The expulsion of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement from St. Botolph's Church, Aldgate, London

Ken Leech

Fr. Kenneth Leech is Director of the Runnymede Trust. Formerly he was Race Relations Officer for the Church of England Board for Social Responsibility.

The city of London is the national shrine of Mammon-worship. There, more than in any other square mile of Britain, the god of riches is worshipped and the values of Thatcherite culture are extolled. For the most part the churches have gone along with the dominant ideology, choosing to exercise a personal pastoral ministry within the framework of the financial system. And undoubtedly these churches have ministered to the personal needs of the makers of wealth within the City.

Ministry of St. Botolph's

On the eastern border of the City, there has been for many years a ministry to the casualties of our economic system. St. Botolph's Church, Aldgate, shines out like a bright light in the City. St. Botolph is the patron saint of travellers, people on the move. It was at the end of the 1950s that the then Rector, George Appleton, established a ministry of care for down and outs, crude spirit drinkers, vagrant alcoholics and others. Since those days St. Botolph's Crypt has become famous all over Britain as a place of sanctuary, of welcome, for the outcasts and rejects of our society.

In the last fifteen years or so, St. Botolph's has shown a particular concern also for the homosexual community, and one aspect of this has been the presence in its tower for eleven years of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. Its presence has been well-known, and its work has been of great value to homosexual Christians in all the Churches. However, a faculty had not been obtained for the presence of the LGCM, and during the General Synod debate on homosexuality in November 1987 this came to the notice of diocesan officials.

Opposition and Court Action

When a faculty was sought, opposition to it was led by the Archdeacon of London, on the advice of his legal officers. This led, in September 1988, to the removal of the LGCM from the church. On the 10th they had held a moving liturgy of Exodus. I was deeply impressed by the sensitivity, the liturgical warmth and the theological depth of this community of Christians. The contrast with the Diocese's clumsiness, lack of theology and slavish following of secular

fashions was most striking. I believe that this sad episode raises important issues which are symptoms of deeper disorders within the Church, displayed perhaps with particularly tragic clarity in the Diocese of London.

It is clear from (the Archdeacon) Fr. Cassidy's letter that he was completely obedient to the lawyers. Indeed the whole episode was seen in terms of law rather than grace with no attention to theology, pastoral need or the moral obligation of honesty. And here we need to locate the episode in its wider context.

Pressure and Dishonesty

In November 1987 there had been a debate in Synod in which homosexual bishops and clergy were forced to vote against their own natures and their own identities, so strong was the pressure against them. There was no theology in that debate at all. It was, as Clare Sealy has put it in an impressive essay, a case of 'bearing false witness'.

Within a short time of the debate, bishops were falling over themselves to say that they had not ordained, or would not ordain, 'practising' homosexuals. It is difficult to know whether they were simply very naive and believed that what they were saying was true, or were succumbing to the pressure to toe a line which they knew to be false. However, the result was that the slight progress which had taken place since John McNeill's book *The Church and the Homosexual* (1975) and the Gloucester Report (1979) was now undermined, and homosexual Christians were forced back into the closet. Anyone who was closely in touch with gay and lesbian Christians in this period was conscious of the very profound hurt, fear and pain which they experienced. Once again it was a 'love that dared not speak its name'. McNeill wrote sadly in 1987:

"I hoped that my book would open up a serious moral debate in the churches concerning homosexuality. But in ten years no such debate has taken place."

Rowan Williams correctly identified the central moral issue as one of honesty.

"It is becoming harder all the time for a gay person to be honest in the Church. We have helped to build a climate in which concealment is rewarded - while at the same time conniving with the hysteria of the gutter press, and effectively giving in to their hands as victims all those who do not manage successful concealment."

Linked with this a second aspect: the way in which the Church has, on this as on so many issues, colluded with secular prejudices, ignoring theological inquiry and spiritual and pastoral need. The debate and the hearing took place against a background of press headlines such as 'kinky vicar's Gay Playtime' (*The People*), 'Revolted Revs in School Scandal' (*The Star*) and 'Scandal of Gay Vicars' (*Daily Mail*); and a background of increasing prejudice, bigotry and physical violence against gay and lesbian people. For their part in contributing to and reinforcing this climate, the members of Synod and those who pursued the LGCM in the name of 'the rule of law' should be deeply ashamed.

Unintelligent Fundamentalism

There is a third aspect of the issue which is deeply worrying. The current anti-gay campaign is one facet of the resurgence of a new type of unintelligent Christian 'fundamentalism.' Historically such types of religion are associated with bigotry, intolerance and violence. In the political context of secular bigotry, the reappearance of religious bigotry is a very harmful and dangerous phenomenon. There is enough evidence of the damage done by such revivals. The persecution of minorities is one aspect. The example of the expulsion of the LGCM should serve as a warning to all who care about the defence of minorities and the love of strangers. As several of us put it in a letter published in the *Church Times* on 22nd January last:

"We... are shocked and scandalised by our Church's apparent readiness to collude with a wave of fear and loathing directed towards a profoundly vulnerable sector of our society. It is this sort of collusion - not the making available of church premises to a responsible pastoral organisation - that represents the real capitulation to the standards of this world."

The quotations from Rowan Williams and Clare Sealy are from a Jubilee Group symposium "Speaking Love's Name: homosexuality; some catholic and socialist reflections", obtainable from the Jubilee Group, 40 Racton Road, London SW6 1LP-(£2-50).

Courtesy: LGCM Journal—(Excerpts)

Robbing Peter to pay Paul

The Evangelical Tide

John McCoy

Latinamerican Press has recently reported the stunning advances that evangelical Protestants have made in converting Latin America - once a bastion of Roman Catholicism - to their version of Christianity.

This reconversion, largely to Pentecostalism, has far-ranging implications not only for the churches but for the culture, politics and social structures of the region. In Guatemala, for example, two "born-again" candidates are now vying for the presidency in a nation where half the people may be evangelical within a decade.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church is divided between those who blame outside causes for the "proliferation of the sects" and those who blame the church itself. Critics say Catholicism will not recoup its losses until it learns to evangelize in more personal and more affective ways.

Latin America is the most Christian continent on earth with more than 93 percent of its population professing allegiance to Christ.

Nonetheless, it is now the battleground between two distinct versions of Christianity: Roman Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism.

Once upon a time, to be Latin American was to be Catholic. Arriving with the Spanish conquest, the Catholic Church had ruled the social and religious life of Central and South America for more than four centuries. In even the smallest villages, the church sat on the main square between the police post and the mayor's office. From its hallowed sanctuary, the rhythms and rituals of Latin American society were played out in baptisms, first communions, weddings, processions and funerals. Catholicism was woven into the fabric of life, indivisible from the culture.

No more. In recent years, a tide of evangelical Protestants - most of them Pentecostals - has swept across Latin America, winning the souls of millions of former Catholics. The evangelicals have made their presence felt among rich and poor,

mestizo and indigenous, rural and urban. They whittle away at the Catholic majority, gaining converts at the rate of 400 an hour.

In the middle-class Lima district of Miraflores, for instance, more than 50 newcomers to the Living Water Christian Community came forward at the close of a recent Sunday service in the El Pacifico movie theatre. Applauded by the congregation and assisted by "counsellors," they walked to the stage as evidence of their personal conversion to Christ. Some cried. Others embraced. All had been "born again".

The conversions were the culmination of a three-hour service in which some 500 worshippers prayed, sang, clapped and danced to the amplified beat of a five-member band. Some spoke "in tongues", an indecipherable language believed to come from the Holy Spirit, while others experienced physical healings. In prayer, they stood, arms extended heavenward, palms open to the Lord.

In an hour-long sermon, Pastor Juan Capurro said only those filled with the Holy Spirit will be able to deliver Peru from hunger, corruption and terrorism.

"If you are not 'born-again', he warned, "you will not enter into the kingdom of God".

Capurro, a North American, urged newcomers to enroll in a Bible course in which they would learn of "God's 6,000 promises" to mankind. "Counsellors" and "prayer captains", he said, were ready to receive them.

The Living Water Christian Community is one of the tens of thousands of Pentecostal churches that have sprung up in Latin America. Like other evangelical Protestants, the Pentecostals hold to a literal (fundamentalist) interpretation of the Bible, preach adult conversion (hence, being "born again") and stress a personal relationship with Christ as saviour.

'Gifts of the Spirit'

What makes Pentecostals different from other Protestant fundamentalists, however, is their emphasis on the "gifts of the Holy Spirit". They derive their names and their theology from the New Testament Pentecost story in which the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ's apostles and gave them the ability to prophesy, heal, perform miracles, speak in tongues and interpret tongues. Consequently, Pentecostal services tend to give full sway to emotions as manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

As late as 1936, Pentecostals amounted to only 2 percent of the Protestant population of Latin America. Today, they are said to comprise two-thirds to three-fourths of the continent's estimated 48 million Protestants. Moreover, most of those Protestants who are not Pentecostal are evangelicals. The historical Protestant churches, such as the Methodist, Lutheran and Baptist, have not experienced any significant growth.

Evangelicals now claim 10 to 12 percent of Latin America's 480 million people. In many areas, they are increasing three times faster than the general population. Even Catholic sources concede that evangelicals amount to a third of the population in Guatemala, 28 percent in El Salvador and approximately 20 percent in Chile and Panama.

The Assemblies of God, the world's largest Pentecostal denomination, claims 6 million adherents in Brazil. In Bolivia, it is growing at the rate of 17 percent a year, while in Guatemala it grows 40 per cent annually.

"In Santiago, Sao Paulo, Mexico, Guatemala and elsewhere, locally-rooted movements, generally charismatic (Pentecostal) in style, have sprung up and mushroomed into one of the most significant factors of religious progress on the continent", editorialized the Mission Handbook, a guide to Protestant mission groups. "One such church in Brazil boasts more than 20,000 members".

Crusades by big-name evangelists and substantial investment in radio and television have spurred evangelical growth. The Trinity Broadcasting Network, which owns and operates 130 television stations in the United States, has built a station in El Salvador, received permission to broadcast in Honduras and begun plans for stations in Bolivia and Brazil.

While U.S. evangelists such as Jimmy Swaggert, Pat Robertson and Billy Graham have visited Latin America, the spadework has been done by native-born super-preachers such as Alberto Mottes, Luis Palau and Hermano Pablo. Motessi, who works out of a California office with colour-coded maps illustrating the Protestant advance, calls himself "God's troubleshooter in Latin America".

If current growth rates continue, Latin America will have an evangelical majority in the early 21st century. Actually, in terms of church participation, "practicing" evangelicals may already outnumber "observant" Catholics.

The Brazilian Catholic Church, for example, claims 105 million members, but only 12 percent go to Mass on Sundays.

Protestants in Latin America

1916	170,000
1925	240,000
1938	633,000
1949	3,172,000
1957	4,230,000
1961	7,710,000
1970	15,000,000
1980	28,000,000
1989	48,000,000(est.)

"Seventy percent of the people in Latin America say they are Catholic but they are really indifferent", sighs Brazilian Bishop Bonaventura Kloppenberg.

The possible consequences of an evangelical majority are significant and far-reaching. Pre-occupied with personal salvation and release from a sinful world, evangelical theology tends to discourage social activism, community co-operation and political participation.

"What the great majority of sects (evangelical churches) offer is profoundly demobilizing, conformist and alienating", writes Tomas Bamat, a sociologist who has studied sectarian churches in Ecuador. "They legitimate the status quo and constitute a brake on social change".

Admittedly, the "born-again" experience can result in a radical personal transformation in which the convert forsakes drinking, womanizing, and other sinful activities. But the self-righteous "us-them" mentality of the evangelicals can also divide families and tear apart communities.

Unlike the historical Protestant churches, evangelicals tend to be anti-Catholic and anti-ecumenical. They see themselves as saved and others as damned.

For example, one of the lessons in the Bible course offered by the Living Water Christian Community helps students "recognize the grave errors of Catholicism and the damage they cause".

Such religious belligerence bodes ill for the shrinking Catholic majority. In Guatemala, Catholic Bishop Mario Rios Montt, the brother of former evangelical dictator Efraim Rios Montt, predicts the his country could find itself "in a religious war more serious than our political war".

So far, the typical reaction of the Catholic hierarchy to losing its flock has been to advance the "conspiracy theory". According to its most extreme version, Protestant "sects" bankrolled by the CIA are sent to Latin America to destroy liberation theology and further U.S. imperialism.

Honduran Bishop Luis Santos for instance, recently charged that

"Protestant sects constitute an aggression toward our right to be a sovereign and independent republic because-consciously or unconsciously - sects speak for conquest ideology and Yankee neocolonialism".

In Nicaragua, where the debate is especially heated, some Sandinistas have decried an "invasion of religious sects" that "subtly preach a spiritualism impregnated with a reactionary ideology for neutralizing the revolution".

The Rev. Franz Damen, a Belgian priest who serves as an adviser to the Bolivian Catholic bishop's conference, argues that it's time to lay aside the misinformation and stereotyping of the conspiracy theory. He notes that the Catholic Church also receives substantial funding from abroad and that conservative prelates are among the most vociferous critics of liberation theology.

"Why appeal to such far-fetched explanations," Damen asks, "when it is obvious that the (evangelical) sects as well as liberation theology are concrete realities, mostly native-grown, fundamentally religious and intensely tied to the life of the people?"

Privileged moments

Luis Samandu, a Costa Rican sociologist, agrees. If money buys religious adherents, he asks, why haven't the Mormons, who have spent millions proselytizing and building temples in Latin America, been more successful?

Samandu contends that Pentecostalism, in particular, obviously provides something lacking in traditional churches. Pentecostal services, he says, present "privileged moments in which the Holy Spirit is felt to be present," offering a kind of security in the face of poverty, war, repression and natural disasters. Moreover, he adds, worshippers are able to give free expression to folk beliefs about demons, spirits, revelations and divine healings.

Critical Catholics admit that their churches are often cold, impersonal, little more than "supermarkets for the sacraments." In a 1986 document, even the Vatican conceded that the church "gives too

much importance to structures and not enough to drawing people to God in Christ."

In a May report, the Mexican Institute of Christian Social Doctrine, an adjunct to the Catholic bishop's conference, attributed Catholic losses to a shortage of priests, insufficient evangelization, poor use of communications and a lack of Catholic identity.

Among other things, the institute study urged the church to recruit and equip lay leaders, much as the evangelicals have.

"The Protestant churches have advanced much further in the prac-

tice of developing local leadership in spite of being anti-cultural and historical," notes Damen.

At a late 1986 meeting in Ecuador, Catholic and mainline Protestant bishops drew up a plan for revitalizing their churches in the face of the evangelical onslaught. Among other things, the document puts special emphasis on empowering lay people, utilizing the Bible and developing base Christian communities.

Many Catholics see the base communities as providing the friendship, emotional support and popular religious express on missing

in large, anonymous church gatherings.

The Rev. Bill Donnelly, a veteran U.S. missionary priest in Guatemala, argues that a good dose of Catholic evangelism is the best antidote to the evangelical advance.

"We can stop them by just being active and teaching our catechists as best as we can," says Donnelly, the lone priest in a highland parish that covers 1,000 square miles. "We've got them at a standstill now."

—Courtesy : Latinamerica Press
June 29., 1989. □

'Born - Again' Dictator Rios Montt Seeks Presidency

When "born-again" Gen. Efraim Rios Montt seized power in a 1982 military coup, he cast his rule as a call from God to deliver his war-shocked people from what he viewed as the snares of a moral crisis.

Rios Montt is hearing that call again. After a seven-year sabbatical from public life, he is seeking the presidency through popular election this time. For many Guatemalans, the news that Rios Montt will run in the country's 1990 presidential election revives frightening memories of a brutal dictator.

Under Rios Montt, democratic institutions were made subservient to the designs of his agenda: All political parties were outlawed. Congress was dissolved, and his notorious "Special Tribunals" transfigured the judicial system into a well-oiled mechanism for legalizing executions of political and social "delinquents".

'Capture and shoot them'

"They were criminals", Rios Montt said of those killed by the tribunals. In a rare interview with a Costa Rican magazine, he said, "We didn't execute them for political crimes. It was for assault, rape. They would get into homes and rape whole families. Then we'd capture them and shoot them. Does that go against human rights?"

In rural Guatemala, Rios Montt undertook one of the most brutal and successful counterinsurgency campaigns in modern Latin American history to repel the advance of a guerrilla army that had broad popular support among the country's Mayan Indians.

Before the retired general's 16-month rule was ended by another coup, tens of thousands of Indians were dead and hundred, of thousands displaced. Indians

fleeing army repression for refuge in the mountains and in Mexico left behind a wasteland of burned villages and broken lives.

Rios Montt likens his fall from power to the tribulations of Jesus Christ. Referring to Christ, he said, "He entered the temple and cleaned it of all the merchants. That is what I was doing. For that, they crucified him, me they deposed".

Despite his record and his rhetoric, Rios Montt is enjoying enormous popular support in his presidential bid. The high expectations that accompanied the arrival three years ago of the elected government of President Vinicio Cerezo - the first civilian president in 16 years - have been deflated by the realities of Guatemalan life. The powerful Guatemalan army remains the ultimate authority, common crime is on the rise and charges of government corruption have fed a traditional cynicism for politicians.

Rios Montt, a former Bible teacher, strikes a chord among Guatemala's urban middle class, who remember that he ended the civil war, cleaned up government corruption and bowed neither to the army nor the powerful oligarchy.

"I don't care if he's an evangelical, I'm going to vote for Rios", says a Catholic woman whose restaurant is boxed between the national palace and the national cathedral. "Things were different when he was in power."

Even in those areas hardest hit by the violence, Rios Montt enjoys a measure of popular support. As part of his post-war "hearts and minds" programme, he poured an estimated 60 percent of the national budget into development in rural conflict areas, building roads, water systems and hospitals as well as offering other public services.

Under his military government, Guatemala was centre stage for the unfolding of a great evangelical experiment. As elders from Rios Montt's Church of the Word took office in the presidential palace, evangelicals were dizzied by the prospect of a kingdom of God here on earth.

Conservative Christians flocked to Guatemala to lend their support, bringing money, missionaries and enthusiasm to rebuild the country on a solid Christian foundation.

Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan praised the born-again dictator, defending him in the face of mounting evidence of gross human rights violations. Evangelist Pat Robertson called on American evangelicals to pray for "this plain and simple man, with impeccable personal integrity and with a deep faith in Jesus".

Vanished Vision

Today, the vision of a religious state has vanished but evangelicals have benefited from ingratiating themselves to the military.

"We believe the citizen should be obedient to the government no matter who's in charge", said Edmundo Madrid, president of the Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala. "It seems military governments like this teaching".

Direct political activism, however, is something else. Even within evangelical circles, the presence of evangelical advisers in the Rios Montt government was a highly divisive issue. Many Christian leaders feared that it invited unwanted conflict and diverted attention from saving souls.

This time, Rios Montt and another evangelical, Jorge Elias Serrano, a former adviser to the general, are downplaying their identification as evangelicals and church leaders are distancing themselves from the campaign.

—Courtesy : Latinamerica Press □

BOLIVIA

Pentecostal revivalist's message cause six murders

The murders of six people by villagers trying to purge their church of the devil has underscored the possible destructive power of Pentecostal preachers with an apocalyptic message.

The murders took place on April 29 and 30 in Candelaria, a jungle town 16 hours upriver from Riberalta, in the Bolivian department of the Beni. With the help of European missionaries, the Riberalta branch of the Assembly of God won over Candelaria's dozen families some time ago. After that, Candelaria was left to ponder on its own the warning that a vengeful Christ was coming soon to reward the faithful and destroy sinners.

Candelaria, like hundreds of other tiny settlements along the Amazon tributaries, is isolated from almost everyone except the landlords and the merchants who arrive by canoe to buy Brazil nuts and sell goods. Since the merchants keep track of what is earned and what is owed, villagers remain for ever in debt. Illiterate and suffering from malnutrition and malaria, they make easy victims.

Into this desperate scene entered a band of three itinerant Pentecostal revivalists preaching, fasting, religious dancing and speaking in tongues as the way to prepare for the imminent end of the world. The preachers, who called themselves "Christ Lives", made contact with the Assembly of God Church in Riberalta in January. Over the next several weeks, the preachers sought out church members scattered in the nearby jungle.

In mid-April, the three members of Christ Lives arrived in Recreo, a riverbank settlement with many Assembly of God members. Their frightening message had such an impact on Recreo that, after they had left, the locals decided to spread the word on their own. Spurred on by two "prophets" appointed by Christ Lives, the entire settlement of 48 people marched off to Candelaria, two days away on foot.

In Candelaria, the zealous Recreo prophets took over. "They took all the benches out of the church and started dancing and singing religious music and prophesying," said Lars Anderas, a Swedish missionary and the spokesman for the Riberalta Assembly of God Church.

After five days of rituals, the people from Recreo departed with the chilling warning that the "devil was in the church" in Candelaria. Before leaving, the Recreo "prophets" appointed 10

pre-teen boys and girls from Candelaria as "prophets". These "prophets", together with Efrain Guari, a 49-year-old Assembly of God layman and self-described "discerner of thought", took charge of the rites.

"After they had been at it for a total of at least eight days without proper food or sleep", said Anderas, "the killing started".

They first found the devil in a grapefruit tree, which was chopped down. Then the devil was said to be in various dogs and cats, which were killed. Finally, they turned on a 16-year-old boy.

"I gave him until the next day to repent, Guari was quoted in a newspaper as saying", but he really wanted to stay possessed".

The boy was beaten and drowned in the Ivon River. The next to die was the village school teacher. After she was forced to confess all her sins, she threw herself in the river.

"They went out with their canoes and pushed her down", said Anderas.

Then came a 6-year-old girl. Her parents had taken her to the "prophets" to be cured of an earache, but Guari said the girl's cries of pain meant she was possessed, so she was beaten and drowned.

Finally, as a long Saturday night turned into Sunday morning, an entire family unit - father, mother and son - was killed.

By mid-day Sunday everyone in Candelaria thought he was next, even Guari, so he called off the killings. Two days later a police patrol boat took all Candelaria residents back to Riberalta and put them in jail.

Interviewed by *Latinamerica Press* in the Riberalta jail, Guari readily admitted his role in the murders, but he said the blame lay with the Recreo "prophets" who had put the whole said process in motion. He said they were possessed. The devil's intention, Guari said, was "to do away with all of us".

News of the Candelaria killings made headlines all over Bolivia, sparking calls for the expulsion of the Assembly of God and other evangelical groups. Fighting to stay in the country, evangelical leaders in Riberalta ardently disowned any responsibility for the events. Downplaying the fact that both Recreo and Candelaria were satellite communities of the Assembly of God church in Riberalta, they blamed the killings on the "anti-biblical" teachings of the Christ Lives group.

In a private interview with *Latinamerica Press*, Anderas was more candid. "We do feel a responsibility for these people", he said, acknowledging that the city church had lost touch with its outlying settlements. "But we have grown so big, so fast". □

Interview with Fr. Primo Racimo, PIC

Fr. Primo Racimo is Executive Assistant to Bishop Maximo Ganno of the Philippine Independent Church. He is a member of the Forum for Inter-disciplinary Endeavours and Studies (FIDES); and participates with a group of theologians in articulating the Theology of Struggle.

Question: Please comment on the pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops regarding fundamentalist groups.

Prof. Primo Racimo: The coming out of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) with a pastoral letter on the fundamentalist groups is an indication that the fundamentalists have already made a dent to the life and work of the Catholic Church. This means that a great number of Filipino members of the Roman Church have already joined the fundamentalists. It further shows that the alternative theology, worship, among others, offered by the fundamentalists have been accepted by many members of the Catholic Church. And, therefore, trooping away from the fold of the Catholic Church.

In other words, there are two phenomena that the Roman Church (and for that matter, the other churches) face in relation to the fundamentalists. One is the continuous "desertion" of members to these groups. The other is the alternative christian ethos they offer to that of Catholic dogmas and doctrines.

These two phenomena have been felt by the Roman church and perhaps all churches. The two phenomena have "pierced" the institutional Church. Thus, the pastoral letter.

Recent events however, show that the Roman Church is coming out very forcefully, with some kind of a "counter-reformation." This must be watched out. Bear in mind

A Tradition of Radicals

A Priest from the Philippine Independent Church (PIC) discusses the continuing tradition of radicalism in the church and its response to the fundamentalist issue.

that the Second Plenary Council in the Philippines is forthcoming. This will not only have far ranging implications on the internal condition of the Roman Church but also to the society as a whole. This has been proven by the First Plenary Council in the 50s.

One more thing, the Pastoral letter did not take into consideration the generally rightist politics of fundamentalist groups. I don't know whether this is intentional or not. I raise this point because when the theology of liberation and maybe someday the theology of struggle, is mentioned or discussed, it is immediately linked to Marxism. The instructions from the Vatican clearly illustrates this point.

Q Why do you think fundamentalist groups flourish ?

A One must recognize that fundamentalism and charismatic are expressions of some forms of spirituality. These offer some kind of spiritual catharsis that the more rigid ones do not.

Their liturgical life also draws people to them. There is spontaneity and individualism which caters to their own individual needs.

Their frontiering evangelism to christians is a major factor in their growth. Their lay ministry is crucial in this aspect. They utilize lay ministry to the maximum.

One decisive aspect in their flourishing is their massive logistics. Business people, rightwing politicians and similar groups give generously. Others may have been receiving directly or indirectly from the CIA. There are already numerous

studies on this matter. But continuing researches are to be done.

Their right wing theology invites those who want to preserve the status quo to be more extra generous to fundamentalists' ministry. And in a society where the preservers of the status quo are the ones who dictate on the politics, economy and cultural directions of people, surely, the flourishing of fundamentalists takes place. But that will not go on forever. An emerging politics, economy and culture coming from other quarters working together for the transformation of church and society may put an end to the system where fundamentalism thrives.

Q Is there a progressive tradition in the history of christianity in the Philippines ?

A Yes ! There is a progressive tradition in the history of Christianity in the Philippines. This tradition is intertwined with the continuing struggle of the Filipino people. That started with their revolution against Spanish colonialism, war against American Colonialism and neo-colonialism and the intensifying revolution against those Filipinos who have become proxies of the former masters, particularly the US.

Church people like GOMBURZA (GOMBURZA stands for the name of Father Gomez, Burgos and Zamora, three Filipino martyrs during the Spanish rule) Sevilla and Aglipay represent varying shades of progressiveness and radicalism. Aglipay, for example, is the most popular symbol of a church person who became a guerilla fighting the Spaniards and later the Americans.



Bishop Gregorio Aglipay

Today, the likes of GOMBURZA, Sevilla and Aglipay continue this tradition.

Q Please explain briefly what the theology of struggle is.

A The Theology of Struggle is a testimony of people who are engaged in the continuing struggle of the Filipino people for national sovereignty, democracy, justice and peace. This testimony takes a particular political theology that is not readily, or perhaps, will never be accepted by the institutional church.

Theology of Struggle focuses not so much on the goal but on the process of attaining the objectives of liberation and salvation. This puts into focus the whole question of means used in the struggle. In the process, both the struggle itself and the means used bring out a new understanding of Christ, a different view on ecclesiology and a new view on mission.

Added to these, the question of culture becomes crucial in the theology of struggle. For in the struggle, an emerging culture is to erupt.

Theology of Struggle is definitely a Philippine experience and articulation. It may inspire others but cannot be duplicated elsewhere.

— Courtesy : Simbayan (Philippines) (Excerpts)

Militarism Condemned

Bishops Renew Activist Stance

The Philippine Independent Church (PIC), also known as the Aglipayan Church, issued a pastoral letter dated May 9 and signed by its 46 bishops warning the Aquino government against tolerating militarization of society. They also declared they were ready to shelter in their churches and diocesan centres the "oppressed" including communist rebels. The Aglipayan bishops condemned "militarism" in their pastoral letters and called on the Aquino government to assert its supremacy over the Armed Forces of the Philippines. They defined "militarism" as "the tendency of some nations for the military apparatus to have ever-increasing control over the lives and behaviour of citizens."

By "oppressed sector," the Aglipayans mean labourer's, farmer's and fishermen's organizations who would like to avail of the facilities of the church, said Bishop Roman B. Tipples Jr. of the Aglipayan Diocese in Negros Occidental. Asked if members of the communist movement covered the definition: "Every-

one is in need of the Church," he answered. "To house people is a sacred duty," he added.

Bishop Tipples denied allegations that Aglipayan buildings are being used as safehouses by the rebels. "Our buildings are not just for worship, they're also for organizing". Tipples declared, "to see the Church as a mere building will be to confine it to the fundamentalist theory of duality. We don't divide the sacred and the profane. They're one".

In the pastoral letter, the Aglipayan bishops called for a nuclear-free Philippines, the implementation of a "genuine" land reform programme, and a "nationalist" approach to industrialization. It also attacked the so called "born-again" fundamentalist Christian groups for "being used wittingly and unwittingly by outside powers contrary to the Filipino national interest." The pastoral letter also supported the demand of organized labour for a P30 across-the-board increase in the daily minimum wage.

The Aglipayan Church has 3.5 million members, mostly in Visayas and Mindanao. In their pastoral letter, the Aglipayan bishops said the Church should be a witness of God's liberating acts.

—Courtesy Church Chronicle
(Church Data Centre, Philippines)

Editorial Note:

The Iglesia Filipina Independiente (Philippine Independent Church) has been described as "the only tangible result of the Philippine Revolution of 1896" when the Filipino Church led by Fr. Gregorio Aglipay and Isabelo de los Reyes (President of the Democratic Labour Union) became independent of the Spanish rulers and of Rome. During the Revolution, the Philippine Government nationalised income-generating church properties. After the American invasion destroyed that Government, the Filipino Church under Aglipay's leadership liberated the same property making use of the power of the people to do so. But the United States occupation forces restored that property to the foreign dominated Roman Catholic Church by means of a puppet Filipino Court. Today this colonial manoeuvre appears in Philippine school books as the imposition of law and order on illegality and anarchy!

The Church and Freedom Fighters

Difference Between Archbishop and Pope

The meeting in Lusaka (Zambia) between Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie (leading bishop in world Anglicanism) and the best known Anglican lay person in southern Africa provided a fitting ending for a four-nation southern African tour in which the church's role in the struggle against apartheid was a constant theme as Runcie visited Malawi, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Runcie's host in Lusaka was African National Congress President Oliver Tambo. Were it not for apar-

theid, they might have met as fellow clergymen: the ANC leader was preparing for ordination as a priest until South Africa's apartheid government curtailed his studies by arresting him for high treason in 1956.

After their meeting, Runcie said the church seeks a non-violent end to apartheid, but understands the ANC use of violence.

Runcie said the church understands and accepts the moral posture of those who embrace the ANC's armed struggle against apartheid as a just war.

Runcie would not say—under repeated questioning from journalists—if he shares that view. However, he did speak in Zimbabwe of his own experience as a tank officer during World War II.

Having 'supported freedom fighters in many countries' during that war, Runcie said, he would find it hard to tell Africans they cannot engage in 'armed struggle in defence of liberties.' He endorsed sanctions as one of the last remaining options for ending apartheid.

Runcie's words contrasted with those of Pope John Paul II.

On two trips to southern Africa in the past year, he called on everyone, including apartheid's foes, to unequivocally 'renounce the use of violence' under all circumstances.



Archbishop Runcie

He also declined to take a public stand on sanctions or other forms of non-violent, direct action against apartheid.

The Runcie difference could not have displeased Tambo, who has repeatedly defended the anti-apartheid war as morally just, and asked for church 'understanding' of ANC actions, but never sought a blanket religious endorsement.

'The church doesn't have to give the ANC a rubber stamp', Tambo said in 1987, after a WCC-sponsored conference with Christian leaders from around the world. 'We don't say they should carry arms (but) they should be in the forefront, resisting, defying apartheid'.

While the struggle against apartheid provided Runcie's main social-justice theme, the emotional high-point came during an eucharist honoring a 19th century Zimbabwean martyr, Bernard Mizeki, who was born in Mozambique, baptized in South Africa, and killed in 1896 in what was then Rhodesia.

Addressing an estimated 5000 people at the annual pilgrimage to the Mizeki shrine, Runcie said the martyr's travels made him a symbol of southern African unity and a reminder that 'the church in southern Africa must be a force for unity, for human dignity and justice for all.'

(EPS. 11-19 August)



Vatican Moves to Silence Church of the Poor

By Jose Pedro S. Martins (Sao Paulo)

Conservative forces within the Vatican have renewed their attack on Brazil's progressive Catholic Church.

At the end of August, Archbishop Jose Cardoso Sobrinho of Olinda and Recife, in the northeast state of Pernambuco, withdrew official authorization from the Recife Justice and Peace Commission (CPJ), a Catholic Church-funded human rights organization.

In a statement released Aug. 25, Sobrinho prohibited the CPJ from using the name and letterhead of the archdiocese "in any of its actions or statements".

Apparently, the archbishop was responding to a statement by the commission criticizing his actions against a group of campesinos camped in front of the bishop's offices. On Aug. 14, Sobrinho called on military police to dislodge 30 campesinos who were demanding that the archdiocese reinstate the Rev. Tiago Thorlby, an Irish priest who worked for the church-sponsored Pastoral Commission on Land. Thorlby had been relieved of the position while he was on vacation in Ireland.

Inadequate Formation

But the assault did not end there. In late August, the Vatican's Congregation on Catholic Education ordered the closing of the Theological Institute of Recife (ITFP) and the Northeast Regional Seminary (SERENE) by the end of the

year. The congregation stated that SERENE "did not correspond to the notion of a major seminary" and that ITER "did not offer an adequate intellectual formation for future priests".

The closure of the two seminaries affects at least 20 dioceses, close to 200 seminarians who are studying theology and philosophy and about 250 lay persons who attend weekend classes at ITER. The decision was made without consultation with the national bishops' conference or Adjunct Archbishop Vincente Zico, of Belém, the apostolic visitor for formation in Recife, who, in fact, was appointed by the Vatican itself.

When Zico visited the two seminaries last year, he gave both positive marks. He has revealed his "dismay" with the congregation's decision to close them.

The crisis within the church in Pernambuco grew even larger when it involved one of Latin America's best-known progressive clerics, retired Archbishop Helder Camara, of Olinda and Recife.

Silencing Helder Camara

On Sept. 5, Auxiliary Bishop Joao Evangelista Terra, of Olinda and Recife, asked Camara to abstain from further comment on the church situation in Pernambuco.

Upon returning Aug. 29 from Europe, Camara declared that "no one will silence the Commission for Justice and Peace" in Recife. He said that the commission's actions are based on the Second Vatican Council.

Camara said he hoped that misunderstandings could be cleared up and accord reached between the people and Archbishop Sobrinho.

The Pernambuco affair reverberated throughout the church in the northeast of Brazil. On Sept. 5, three progressive bishops, Jose Maria Pires, of Joao Pessoa, Paraiba, Marcelo Cavalheira, of Guarabira, and Luis Fernandes, of Campina Grande, met in Paraiba (which adjoins the state of Pernambuco) to analyze the implications of the closing of the two seminaries.

Observers contend that the northeast region of Brazil had been chosen by the Vatican as a symbolic area for restoring Rome's authority in the face of a progressive local church that champions the causes of the landless, the poor and minorities. The church in northeast Brazil is especially known for its Christian base communities, which were promoted by Camara, an advocate of liberation theology.

The Vatican's strategy in the region has consisted of naming conservative bishops when seats become vacant. For example, Archbishop Sobrinho took possession of Camara's diocese in June 1985 and Terra was elevated last year.

Faced with the order to close the Recife seminaries, the president of the bishop's conference, Archbishop Luciano Mendes de Almeida, travelled to Rome in mid-September to complain to Pope John Paul II. Their talk encouraged some hope among the Brazilian bishops that the closure order might be reversed. Nonetheless, the Vatican reaffirmed the decision.

—Courtesy : Latinamerica Press



Cardinal Arns' Letter to Fidel Castro

As Archbishop of Sao Paulo, Brazil Cardinal Evaristo Arns has been a controversial figure. He defends liberation theology and accompanied Leonardo Boff in Rome when he was silenced. He has made strong statements in favour of the poor and against payment of the Third World's foreign debt, a debt he has repeatedly declared unpayable and immoral. His diocese, the largest in the world, was recently divided into five parts by the Vatican in what appeared to be an attempt to diminish the ecclesiastical stature of this outstanding figure in the Latin American church.

Cardinal Arns stirred up another hornet's nest by writing a letter to Fidel Castro congratulating him and the Cuban people on the advances in their country since the revolution. The letter was first published on January 15 in the Cuban Communist daily, Granma. In an interview Arns said the furor died down once Cuban Catholic leaders made it clear they gave prior approval to its publication in hopes of improving church-state relations.

Dear Fidel,

Peace and every good!

I am taking advantage of Frei Betto's trip to send you an embrace and a greeting to the people of Cuba on the occasion of this 30th anniversary of the revolution. We all know how much heroism and sacrifice the people of your country achieved in resisting the external aggressions and the immense challenge of eradicating misery, illiteracy and chronic social problems. Today Cuba can be proud to feel it is an example of social justice on our continent, so impoverished by external debt.

Christian faith identifies, in the achievements of the Revolution, the signs of the Kingdom of God manifest in our hearts and in the structures that permit making of political experience a work of love.

Here in Brazil, we are experiencing important moments of light and darkness. On the one hand, the popular victory achieved in the recent elections renew the political framework of the country and open hopes that the indescribable suffering of our people could be lessened in the future. We live with a monthly inflation rate of 30 percent and a draining of resources absorbed by the

unjustifiable payment of the external debt. On the other hand, we know that victory does not yet indicate our liberation and we are obliged to confront, in our own country, all sorts of pressures and difficulties created by the owners of large capital.

This is a moment of great pain for those who make of their episcopal service an act of effective love for the poor. Nevertheless, I trust that our basic ecclesial communities will know how to conserve the seeds of new life that have been sown.

Unfortunately, there do not yet exist favourable conditions to bring about our meeting. I am certain that the Lord Jesus will indicate the opportune moment.

I remember you daily in my prayers and beg that the Father grant you always the grace to lead the destiny of your Homeland.

Receive my fraternal embrace on the festivities of the 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution and my wishes for a prosperous New Year for your Homeland.

—Courtesy: LADOC (Peru) June/July 89

Church Going Backwards

As in the case of the Vatican's appointments of Bishops in Brazil, the outstanding progressive Christian leader Bishop Antonio Y. Fortich of Bacolod in the Philippines has been replaced by Camilo Gregorio who though he headed the Visayas Commission of Social Action has not been involved in any church based organizations working for human-rights, justice and peace. In fact the new Bishop has clearly said he is not "a Xerox copy of Fortich" and will not duplicate the stance of the latter who incurred the ire of the landlords and the military by championing social justice and human rights.

Gregorio who has served as a bishop in Cebu and also vice-chairman of the Bishop's Businessmen's Conference of Cebu was not friendly to the Base Christian Communities in that region depriving them of proper funding and personal support. Knowledgeable sources have said that the bishop's new appointment fits the government's need for an ally and that "the landlords in Negros will also be comfortable with him".

Theologians lash out at Vatican's "regressive tendencies"

Prominent theologians are protesting "regressive tendencies" in the Vatican and have called for greater freedom of thought in an open letter published in the Italian Roman Catholic Publication "Il Regno".

The letter reignited the clash between Western European theologians and the Vatican. It was preceded by a similar declaration by German-speaking theologians issued last January which garnered support from some French, Belgian, Flemish and Spanish colleagues.

According to the letter, the 63 Italians charged that there were attempts to limit the reforms introduced by the Second Vatican Council in 1962-1965. They also asked for more independence for local branches of the church. Furthermore, the letter also reflected the split between the Vatican leaders, consisting of those who believed that church unity and an authoritative hierarchy are the best means to combat secularism and other challenges to Roman Catholicism, and those who feel the church will only flourish if it adapted to local cultures and new philosophical ideas.

—Courtesy: Church Chronicle (Church Data Center, Philippines)

Old Catholics mark 100 Years of Union of Utrecht

Old Catholicism, one of the smaller Christian communions in the world, marked the 100th anniversary of its formal organization with major festivities (22-24 September) in Utrecht (Netherlands).

The Old Catholic Union of Utrecht groups dioceses in the Netherlands, FRG (West Germany), Austria, Switzerland, USA, Canada, and Poland. There are also Old Catholic communities in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, France, Italy, Belgium, GDR (East Germany), and Sweden.

Worldwide Old Catholic population is roughly 500,000. The 4.5 million-member Philippine Independent Church is Old Catholic in orientation, but not a member of the Union of Utrecht.

Three streams have flowed into what is now Old Catholicism - a split in Dutch Catholicism in the early 1700s; 'national Catholicism' in Switzerland, Germany, and what was then Austria-Hungary, and resistance there to the 1870 declaration of papal infallibility; and a split in Catholicism in North America at the end of the 19th century, involving chiefly ethnic Poles.

On 24 September 1889, Old Catholic bishops from the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany and Austria-Hungary formally began the Union of Utrecht by signing a declaration of their allegiance to what they described as the faith and order of the undivided church as handed down in the creeds and dogmatic decisions of ecumenical councils of the first 10 centuries.

They began with a motto taken from the fifth-century theologian Vincent of Lerins: 'Let us hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all. For that is truly and in the strictest sense Catholic.'

Under the terms of the 1931 Bonn Agreement, there is full communion between most of Old Catholicism and most

of Anglicanism, although in the 1970s the Polish National Catholic Church of North America ended that relationship with the (US-based) Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada because they have ordained women as priests.

In Old Catholicism, women have been ordained deacons, but not priests, although the Catholic Diocese of the Old Catholics in Germany went on record this year in favour of such ordinations.

Earlier, that diocese established a relationship of eucharistic sharing with the Evangelical (United, Lutheran and Reformed) Landeskirchen (regional churches) in the two Germanys. That decision has been strongly criticized in some other parts of Old Catholicism.

Besides with Anglicanism, Old Catholicism has also had extensive dialogue with Eastern Orthodoxy. In recent years, theologians from those two traditions have announced full agreement on main theological issues, which some think could lead the way to full communion between them.

The Eastern Orthodox co-chair of the dialogue, Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland, was the main ecumenical speaker scheduled in Utrecht. Other events held in connection with the anniversary, included an international conference of theologians, a seminar for women, and a youth gathering.

The 25th International Old Catholic Congress is scheduled for Geneva next August (27-31).

—EPS, September 1989

Fellowship in Action

Peace Mission From Nicaragua

The Christian Workers Fellowship had visitors from Nicaragua in late October this year: a two-person peace mission travelling through many countries and sponsored by the Christian Base Communities and the Permanent Commission for the Church of the Poor in Nicaragua. It consisted of Dr. George Baldwin who had earlier taught as Professor in St. Paul's School of Theology in Kansas City, USA and who had for the last five years settled among the poor in Nicaragua and Ms. Montserrat Fernandez a graduate from Spain who had since June last year worked with the Base Communities in Nicaragua. (An article on Nicaragua by this team appears elsewhere in this issue).

The CWF Centre arranged meetings for the visitors in co-operation with its branches in Badulla (where George Baldwin had to preach at two church Services on Sunday October 29 before addressing a well-attended meeting held in St. Mark's Church that day), Hatton where they met trade union leaders, Kandy where a meeting was held on October 30 in the City Mission Hall, followed by meetings at Ratmalana (industrial workers), in Colombo where a public meeting was held in co-operation with the YMCA Forum and at Katunayake before the visitors took their next flight to Bangkok.

The 13th World Festival of Youth and Students—(WFYS)

Primal de Mel and Fr. Diloraj Canagasabay represented the Christian Workers Fellowship at the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students held in Pyong-yang, capital of North Korea, from July 1st to 8th. Over 20,000 young people from 180 countries attended this Festival.

Our delegates were able to make contact with many persons from other countries, some of whom were surprised to see a Christian priest as a delegate from Sri Lanka. Perhaps because he was the only Christian priest present, Fr. Canagasabay was specially interviewed by both the Korean Television and Korean Radio and had an opportunity therefore to speak over the media about the CWF which he represented. Our delegates were also able to visit Christian churches manned by lay people coming under the Christian Federation.

While our delegates appreciated the difficulties of the organizers in hosting such a large number of persons, they felt that the programmes could have been better co-ordinated to ensure the fuller participation of those present.

Trade Union Consultation

Three persons were sent by the CWF to a trade union consultation organized by the Urban Rural Mission of the Christian Conference of Asia. This was a Consultation among trade unionists and those associated with workers organizations at the grass-root level. K. Illangakoon and K. Ramasamy both members of the CWF and Linus Jayatileke, a close sympathiser, attended this Consultation. The participants were drawn from countries in South Asia.

CWF Branches

News received from our Branches show that they have been able to resume in some way activities that have been affected this year due to the disruption of transport and other difficulties even though the pre-st position cannot be

described as normal especially in the provinces. The Anuradhapura and Jaffna groups have resumed study sessions for their cadres and sought to make new contacts for their extension work. The Wattala Branch has also had a study programme and set about planning its work for 1990. A new group in Kegalle district too has similarly participated in a study programme and intends to link up with another group in the area to further CWF activity. New contacts have also been made in Puttalam, Negombo, Galle and Peradeniya.

The Katunayake Branch has also shown signs of more activity and its members have organized a Death Donation Society with the support of several residents in the area.

At the CWF Workers Centre in Ratmalana there was a well-attended end of the year concert on December 4 given by the children of the pre-school and those following the sewing, music dancing classes. Parents of the children provided refreshments.

The Badulla CWF Branch has had CWF study classes despite difficulties and has continued the regular programme of activity at its Centre in Badulla town. The Branch has also helped several parents and relatives of those arrested during search and cordon operations of the security forces to locate the persons so arrested and obtain release of the innocent by the authorities. Our Branch has been fortunate to receive the assistance of Provincial Council members and others in this regard. The Badulla CWF Branch has also taken up the cause of Municipal Council workers of recent Indian origin who have remained for years on a casual basis while their counterparts in other Municipalities like Chilaw and Negombo have had permanency in employment. Discussions



Some children at the Ratmalana Centre after their Concert.

on this matter are being held between Badulla CWF and the Municipal Commissioner and an early resolution of this issue is sought.

On December 10, the children of the pre-school run by the Badulla CWF Centre had their end of the year concert and distribution of gifts. There was also a party organised by the parents of these children to celebrate the occasion. A crowd of over 300 participated in this event. The present batch of children will join the regular schools in the area as students from next year. The pre-school at the CWF Centre has served the needs of workers' children in the area and is very popular.

The Badulla Branch hopes to have the opening of its new building as also the dedication of its chapel in January 6 (Feast of the Epiphany) next year. The old building bought with the property was found unfit for use and had to be pulled down. On-going regular activities however have had to be held in the old building and part of the present construction upto now.

The Christian Worker and Sanvada (Sinhala) journals have had good sales and our Branches too have assisted in the sales of these and other publications.

Galaha (Gami Seva Sevana - Rural Service Centre)

A group of youth who described themselves as the Deshapremi Janata Sannadha Balakaya (Patriotic People's Armed Force) came to our farm house on 21-10-1989 and removed the Sinhala Typewriter and the Roneo machine at gun point. We reported this matter to the Police Station.

The Ceylon Electricity Board conducted a four-day training programme in the construction of fuel wood stoves

with our assistance from the 27th to the 30th November, 1989. Twenty persons from three villages around Gami Seva Sevana received the training. At the end of the training programme, 18 houses received one wood stove each. The team trained by them hopes to continue building wood stoves for every home, thereby reducing the consumption of wood in the village in order to save as many trees as possible from being felled.

The Central Environment Authority of Sri Lanka has formed an NGO Committee and Gami Seva Sevana has been invited as a member of that Committee.

Our music group performed before a group of visitors from Diakonia, from Sweden. They were very much interested in indigenous music that was used in Christian Worship.

The Rt. Revd. Andrew Kumara, Bishop of Kurunegala, visited Gami Seva Sevana on 12th November. The visit of the Bishop to this Centre is an annual feature.

The Gami Seva Sevana conducted a four-day Health Training Programme for young persons selected from 9 different NGOs. This programme was co-ordinated by our health educator Sirimal Peiris.

Video Films

The CWF recently completed the production of a video film on the Workers Mass focussing on the 30th celebration of the May Day Mass this year. A documentary of the Workers Mass with a commentary taken from slides of the Workers Mass since the mid-nineteen sixties has also been made to explain the Workers Mass fully and give its historical background. Both these have now been put into a single video cassette for educational purposes, both of the CWF membership and of others interested. English and Sinhala versions of this cassette are now available and could be obtained at cost from the CWF office in the Colombo Fort YMCA Building.

The Legal Aid and Education programme of the CWF has taken steps to produce a video film on the case of Amal Sudath Silva vs. Kodituwakku, Inspector of Police and others which is a case relating to the violation of Fundamental Rights guaranteed under Article II of our Constitution, torture and inhuman punishment.

This case was decided by a Supreme Court bench consisting of Chief Justice Sharvananda, Justice Atukorale and Judgment was delivered by Justice Atukorale.

The essence of the Judgement has been well presented in the video versions in Sinhala and English. The Panel for the English version consists of Attorneys-at-Law Siri Nanayakkara, D. A. Jayamaha, Channa Gunawardena, Dr. Benedict Jayamaha and Joe Wickremaratne.

The Panel for the Sinhala version are Attorneys-at-Law B. K. M. S. Rodrigo, Dr. Benedict Jayamaha and Joe Wickremaratne. Both discussions are moderated by Basil Fernando who was organizer of the CWF Legal and Education Team, himself an Attorney-at-Law.

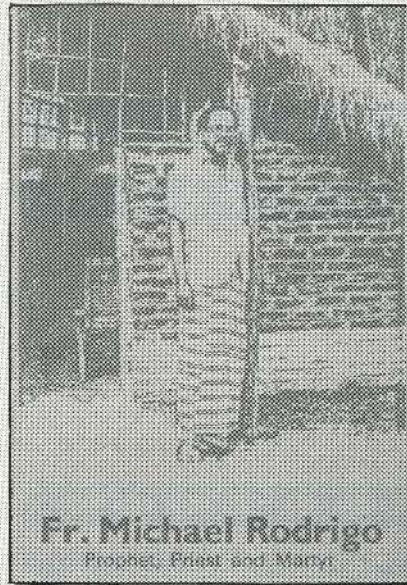
Yet another case of Fundamental Rights violations affecting the CWF itself (reported in *Christian Worker* of 3rd Quarter 1988) has become the subject matter of a video panel discussion also arranged by the CWF Legal Aid and Education Team. This case - Jayantha Wanigasuriya and others vs. S. I. Peiris of the Wattala Police and Reginald Perera, Chairman of the Wattala-Mabole Urban Council - relates to the violation of the Fundamental Rights of Freedom of Speech and Expression, Freedom of peaceful assembly and association (Articles 14 (a), (b) and (c) of the Constitution).

The Respondents stopped a seminar organized by the petitioners on behalf of the CWF Wattala Branch on the ground that a discussion of Supreme Court decisions on Fundamental Rights did not fall within the ambit of an "adult education seminar" for which the Urban Council hall was hired. The Petitioners successful established that this action of the Respondents was illegal and constituted a violation of Fundamental Rights. The Judgement delivered by Justice G. P. S. de Silva (with Justices Atukorale and Jameel agreeing) which deals with several issues of public importance is now subjected to a lively discussion on video. All participants in this video panel discussion have been directly involved in the case. Attorney-at-Law Gomin Dayasiri who appeared for the petitioners speaks on the finer legal aspects of the case while Basil Fernando who is the 2nd petitioner and an Attorney-at-Law discusses the facts of the case. Secretary of the CWF Vijaya Vidyasagara himself an Attorney-at-Law leads the discussion. Both Sinhala and English versions of this video discussion are now under preparation

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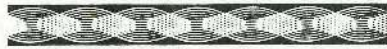
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