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THE ARMY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

— Mervyn de Silva

- * "New" Economics and Sri Lanka's Agriculture — N. Shanmugaratnam
- * Sinhala Buddhist ideology in the 70s — Kumari Jayawardena
- * Ethnic Discord and the Medium of Instruction — Ainsley Samarajeewa

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ELECTION TRIANGLE

A three-cornered contest has always been the ideal scenario in the eyes of Sri Kotha strategists. And quite rightly. Voting figures in the past 35 years have established the fact that the UNP has the strongest electoral base, the highest irreducible minimum. At worst it can be reduced to 35%.

Keener the competition between the main opposition forces, the better for the UNP.

And so the UNP has its wish fulfilled at the Minneriya and Kunda-sale by-elections. The SLFP and the SLMP, the leading force in the 4-party bloc, have already decided to field candidates, a "boycott" thesis put forward by some sections of the Opposition having failed to find sufficient support from the hierarchy of each camp.

The UNP's unprecedented move to deprive Mrs. Bandaranaike of her civic rights has worked wonders. The fissures and splits which tore its traditional rival, the SLFP, have also had disastrous effects on Opposition politics. Yet, the same move, correct in terms of cold-blooded **realpolitik** but a dangerous departure from the old rules of the parliamentary game, has also caused greater damage than the UNP envisaged. Mrs. Bandaranaike's non-participation in the Round table conference has been a grievous blow to all attempts to find a Sinhala consensus, the pre-condition for a negotiated settlement of the ethnic conflict.

While that conflict is now all-pervasive, socially and politically, the leading parties continue to play the old game. And in that game, what needs watching is the actual voting figures for 1, 2 and 3. If the UNP retains the seats what will be its majority? Who will come second at contests in two Sinhala constituencies which are located in different parts

of the island? What will be the margin?

THONDAMAN'S THUNDER

Mr. Thondaman has no CWC companion in the House. He is the classic loner, with no political party behind him to give him national status. Yet he speaks from a position of strength and often gets away, for a Cabinet Minister, with the most daring of statements.

He was true to form on Sept. 21 at the CWC's annual sessions and at the press conference which preceded it. He warned the government not to "create terrorists" in the plantations by its own activities as was the case with the Tamils of the north.

He controls unionised labour in the estate sector and it is tea and the boom in world prices which has given Sri Lanka a 200 million dollar payments surplus this year — just about enough to keep the IMF from throttling us.

FIGHTING FIT

The UNP, like Mr. Thondaman, seems to be fighting fit, too. Unfortunately, it appears to have a talent to pick fights that do it no good at all. The countrywide public outcry against the proposed ban on pseudonyms must surely have taken Sri Kotha by surprise. But it has not yet abandoned the plan.

It took up the Diyawadana Nilame issue next only to find the entire Maha Sangha mobilised for a confrontation. Wisely, the UNP stepped back. Yet, it persists with the unprecedented move against the Chief Justice.

TRENDS + LETTERS

US and UNESCO

AS an American who has been in Lanka one year, and will be here another year yet, I am frequently frustrated by isolation from the momentous political debates in my country. But when the Reagan administration decided to withdraw the US from UNESCO I saw a clear opportunity to make a statement, this issue being one that directly effects Sri Lanka.

Together with some other development volunteers and students, this petition was drawn up and circulated among some of the Americans with whom we have come in contact here in the last 9 months. I think the general feeling of the 19 Americans who signed the statement is that we are opposed to the Reagan administration's heavy-handed attacks on international institutions, and the underlying ideology that the US should withdraw from organizations in which we no longer exercise hegemony, and therefore our "participation does not serve the interests of the United States".

Whoever wins the Presidential horserace in November, it will still be important that clear-headed people in the North express our solidarity with the struggle for social justice in the

(Continued on page 2)

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CONTENTS

Letters	2
News Background	3
100 years of ethnic conflict — (13)	7
Racial Disharmony and Medium of instruction in Schools	10
Sri Lanka's 'New' Economic Policy and Agriculture	12
The American Crisis and Reagan's re-election	15
Failure of Left on the National Question — (2)	17
Israel's Role in Third World	19
Book Review	23

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Letters . . .

(Continued from page 1)

South, and with the institutions of global democracy that make that struggle possible.

James P. Hughes

(Ad-Hoc Committee of Americans in Sri Lanka c/o J Hughes AA3 Athula Mawatha, Ratmalana)

Whereas, the government of USA has attempted to intimidate the UNESCO to desist from its efforts toward cultural preservation and a New International Information Order by withdrawing US funds.

Whereas UNESCO is supporting important projects in the Third world, such as the cultural Triangle here in Sri Lanka and the preservation of Buddhist sacred sites.

Whereas, the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America are suffering from: a) economic exploitation from an unfair world market, b) cultural imperialism in the form of a flood of Western entertainment, propaganda advertising and tourism and c) information imperialism, in that world news is dominated by western-biased, privately-owned multinationals (AP, UPI, Reuters) and the Soviet-bloc agencies, which generally depict the Third world with little understanding and in the interests of their owners.

Whereas, the United Nations and UNESCO are being intimidated by the United States precisely because, of UNESCO initiatives, negotiated in the only arena of world peace, democracy and understanding, to overcome these problems.

Therefore, we, as American citizens in Sri Lanka, call upon the government of the United States to continue and increase its financial and other support for UNESCO and other UN agencies, to work toward the goals of New International Economic and Information Orders, and to support the efforts of the Third world toward cultural self-determination.

Signed by 19 American citizens. Presented to the American Embassy, Colombo on September 10, 1984.

A Theological Debate

RELIGION in our country is taken quite seriously. Although there is the usual gap between professed belief and practice, religion enjoys a public esteem here. It is invoked on public occasions, places of worship are crowded on festive days and surest indicator of all, politicians

invoke it at every turn. It is not so in the West where in the past few decades, it has been receding into the background. It was therefore a matter for surprise when a theological debate swept England recently. Newspapers and church journals saw a spate of letters on a religious theme and even radio time was taken up by it.

The reason for this was the fire that broke out in a famous cathedral in England — the York Minster. The 13th. century roof was destroyed and blazing timbers crashed onto the South Transept damaging it too. The famous stained glass windows however escaped with only minor damage. The fire which broke out in the early hours of the morning on July 9 is thought to have been caused by lightning.

This fire which damaged one of England's loveliest cathedrals was reason enough for the public expressions of dismay that followed and compelled the Archbishop of Canterbury to declare over Radio 4 that "I thought that it was miraculous that only the South Transept had been damaged". This drew a snide comment from the secretary of the National Secular Society "Bearing in mind that lightning and miracles are both acts of God, is this another of the mysterious ways in which He moves his wonders to perform?"

But the reason for the debate lay elsewhere. A week before the York Minster saw the consecration of the new Bishop of Durham, Professor David Jenkins. The new incumbent is a sceptic who does not believe in the divinity of Christ. His nomination and consecration at York Minster was strongly opposed by many Anglicans but the General Synod went ahead with it. And now a week later, lightning strikes this same cathedral and pious Anglicans saw some significance in it.

This was pointed out in a number of letters published in the newspapers "Don't you think the disastrous fire is God's way

of punishing people for the error of last week?" asked one letter writer. Another wrote "I spent much time last week praying that the Lord would somehow intervene to prevent the consecration. I felt somewhat disappointed when nothing appeared to happen on Friday". And again "Those of us who opposed the consecration will no doubt be feeling very strongly that divine judgement cannot be ruled out". The same conviction was expressed with more sophistication by another letter writer "I feel bound to ask whether a comment or a pointer is being made from a place further afield than the two archbishops and the General Synod about the consecration".

The Archbishop of York, one of the principal partners to the controversial consecration, was in Geneva at a meeting of the World Council of Churches. But he had to take notice of the storm which had broken out back home. "To interpret the effect of a thunderstorm" he wrote blandly from Geneva "as a direct divine punishment pushes us straight back into the kind of world from which the Christian gospel rescued us". This astonishing piece of agnosticism drew a sharp rejoinder from a staff writer of the 'Guardian'. "The dozens of letters drawing the attention of the Archbishop to the flames of divine judgement and the frequent repetition of those letters 'God will not be mocked' will assure him that kind of world still contains a large and enthusiastic population".

The point of the whole debate was defined clearly by a correspondent from Oxford. "In view of God's effective lightning strike in protest against the episcopal consecration of an unbeliever in His cathedral is it not a matter of urgency that Anglicans should now negotiate for a satisfactory credal settlement before divine assistance is withdrawn even further from a chaotic and heresy-happy church?" And this is a point that has to be made not only for the Anglican church but

(Continued on page 24)

Army's character and role in a changing society

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS
BACKGROUND

A FEW days after "Black July 83" I asked Dr. Colvin R. de Silva what he considered the most significant of the multiple consequences of that ugly outburst of anti-Tamil violence. Economic ravages? Permanent communal disharmony? Security threats? Foreign policy problems?

While discussing these and many other likely consequences, direct and indirect, Dr. de Silva picked for special emphasis, the new role of the armed forces. "The army has been thrust into politics", he observed.

The army has been thrust into "politics" before, notably in 1971. But by the end of the year the soldiers were more or less back in their barracks. If at all, there were still some scattered mopping-up operations to perform. Yet the army "presence" was minimal; its day-to-day role had no high-visibility. The police and the Justice Ministry took control of the problems left by the April insurrection investigations, release of prisoners and amnesty, the special insurgency trials. And these decisions were always political decisions taken by politicians.

The armed services returned to the barracks to assume their **traditional** role. i.e. the coercive instrument of last resort when the security of the State is threatened in the perception of the civilian government; as an auxiliary force, better equipped than the police, to assist the latter in the face of violent disturbances which the police on their own cannot bring under control, quickly and effectively enough; lastly as a special source of manpower, acquired skills and logistical gear in natural disaster situations such as floods. For the rest it was ceremonial.

There have been occasions where the army thrust itself into politics. First, in 1962, the officers coup which proved abortive, second in 1966, a coup attempt in which the name of Sergeant Hondamuni was as much publicised by the press as

'The experience of another officer were more profound, for they related to high policy. During the Federal Party *satyagraha* in 1961, this officer had been assigned to Jaffna. Having found the *satyagraha* peaceful, he urged the government to be wary of using excessive force. But, after attending some cabinet meetings by invitation, the officer soon found that some members of the cabinet were eager "to teach the Tamils a lesson." Others were more cautious, but only because they feared the consequences. A leading S. L. F. P. minister once said to him: "You know, I think you're right. If we start shooting Tamils there, we'll end by having to shoot Sinhalese here". But in the cabinet the minister was silent.'

— Dr. D. Horowitz

that of the hapless General Richard Udugama. **The comparison brings out two significant differences: firstly of an inter-service, (army, navy, police) high-level coup totally dominated by members of ethnic minorities. (So much so, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, an otherwise highly intelligent politician, was so bemused that he asked: "How could there be a coup when there wasn't a single Buddhist among the plotters...?").**

Secondly if these high-ranking officers were almost all Christians, the 1966 'conspirators' were all Buddhists. What was interesting about the 1966 "kakkussi coup" in Mr. Pieter Keuneman's memorably mocking phrase was that it introduced us to what political sociologists now term the "Sergeant Samuel Doe" phenomenon in Africa. Of the 1962 coup leaders, Prof. Donald Horowitz (**"Coup Theories and Officers Motives, Princeton Univ**) wrote **"Without exception, they were educated in the premier, English-medium often denominational schools of the island: Royal, St. Joseph's, St. Thomas', St. Patrick's and so on".**

To this ethnic minority background we must necessarily add the social values and ideological inclinations

of the western-educated upper-middle class. Analysing the "personal, familial and factional motives" Dr. Horowitz stresses the resentment over the 1960 SLFP government's policies, especially the changes in education, language policy and State intervention in many new areas activity hitherto exclusively private sector controlled.

Exposed Flank

The officer's credo is ably spelt out. **"A sense of duty, discipline standards, rationality, fairness and reward according to desert; these were the qualities the officers sought to maintain. They opposed the intrusion of mob influence electoralism, communalism, inexperience and disorder, particularly where these interfered with the smooth operation of government and the goal of economic development. It was a simple credo, but firmly implanted".**

Too simple, and firmly implanted in the mind but not in the soil of a fast-changing Third World society. The institution, its hierarchical order and value-system made it always vulnerable to the sweeping forces of socio-political change. **The exposed flank was minority domination of the officer corps.**

"The composition of the officer corps.....was skewed in the same directions as the composition of the gazetted officers of the police force. Tamils and Burghers were over-represented.... Sinhala-Buddhists two-thirds of the population accounted for only two-fifths of the officer corps in the pre-1956 period. Christians were over represented by a factor of six".

The slogans of the Sinhala-Buddhist revival were aimed at the public service (health, customs, irrigation, postal communications etc) and gradually at the universities and the professions where the same phenomenon of "over-representation" existed. Correcting

this historical imbalance was the stated objective of the revivalists and the armed forces could not possibly be isolated from the wider process of transformation.

In the perspective of current problems, any account of the army in politics and the army and politics must take serious note of the fact that in the post-1960 and more plainly in the post-1970 phase, the expansion in numbers was accompanied by a more significant change in the **social composition** of the army, particularly the lower and middle ranks, probably upto captain and major. Secondly, we must draw lessons, if any, from the concrete examples of the army's varying interventionist roles. Identifying any salient differences in performance. To my mind, the experiences (future "case-studies"?) which are of most value to the student are the communal riots in 1958 and the 1983 eruption, and the 1971 counter-insurgency operation in the South and the present counter-insurgency operation in the North. Their illustrative-value to the analyst lies in (a) the time-gap which permits one to observe the effects of political and institutional change on the army's responses and (b) the fact of situational similarities and dissimilarities.

1958 and July 1983, though different in the scale of violence, the number dead and the material damage, had Tamil civilians as the main target. In the anti-JVP and anti-Tigers (I am using 'Tigers' as an all-inclusive descriptive term) military campaigns, armed combatants are the target.

The performance of the security forces in 1958 has not provoked serious criticism from any responsible group or individual. On the contrary, most Sri Lankans, Sinhala and Tamil, hold the view that their conduct was commendable. Though the situation was emotionally charged and political in character, the armed forces responded in a manner that can best be described as professional. They were tough and used their weapons but with the force that the situation called for. They were disciplined. An incident recorded by Dr. Horowitz is a good example of what one might term secular professionalism in the best traditions of experienced and reputed armies in other countries. (See Box on Page 3)

Addressing the U. N. on the violence that swept Colombo in July 1983, Foreign Minister Hameed used the word "mutinous" in referring to the behaviour of some groups of soldiers. Interviewed in Amsterdam by the B. B. C., he explained the predicament of the government in those dangerously uncertain days and used the word "coup" in describing his own nervous anxieties.

Different Situations

Whenever comparative assessments are made of the two situations, a point which is commonly emphasised is that in the past the armed forces ran no real risk of getting killed, whereas the element of risk is much greater today. This is to confuse two kinds of situations — mob hysteria and communal violence on the one hand and counter-insurgency operations on the other. There has never been any serious army casualties in a racist mob attack.

Another aspect that is frequently stressed is "training", superior training of a smaller number in the past, and the fall in standards today. Here again, one detects a confusion between training (skills) and **discipline**, which relates essentially to a soldier's reflexes in a situation that is unusual or totally unexpected which challenges one's capacity for self-control, for the measured "professional" response, and a situation often representing a direct danger to life. At what stage or what point of pressure, does the professional discipline break down?

Like some hand-picked units of the South Vietnam army many an army in Latin America today have had the benefit of training by the Green Berets. But the problem of indiscipline is rampant and notorious.

Social Context

The problems of professional discipline cannot be examined and understood in isolation from the social context especially when the army is increasingly involved in political conflicts of such high emotional voltage that basic loyalties and allegiances often determine collective responses and behavioural patterns. This point is made quite forcefully in General Chaudhuri's short study of the Army in the Third World.

Pakistan which has four provinces is not only under military rule but the army itself is Punjabi-dominated. The contemporary African experience reveals the crucial importance of "tribal identities" as the war in Biafra demonstrated most dramatically. The rest of Africa is replete with other interesting examples. India which has built a unified institution in a highly hetero-geneous society faced a basic test when the Sikh revolt took place recently, and it was Prof. Cohen, the US scholar, and author of a major work on the Indian army who raised the question of the impact of conflicting ethno-religious loyalties on the structure of the Indian army.

The Sri Lanka army has not — and could not — escape the impact of post-56 changes. The question is how far has the affirmation of ethno-religious identities affected secular professionalism?

Race and Class

Of course race and religion are not the only conditioning factors. The 1971 insurrection was an ideological challenge to the state. Thousands of Sinhala youth, including some monks, lost their lives at the hands of young Sinhala soldiers who came from the same social strata and shared the same group loyalties (race and religion) as "the enemy". The two university students who were shot dead some months ago were also lower middle class Sinhala-Buddhists.

However, the insurgency in the north is not only a challenge to the State and to the territorial integrity, of Sri Lanka but a by-product of the much deeper ethnic issue to which the government is now striving to find a **political** solution while trying to contain the military situation. In a paper he read at the Marga Institute, General. Anton Mutukumaru, former Army commander and ambassador, noted the fact of "ethnic rapport" as one of the problems which bedevilled the situation last July. He said:

"One was the totally unexpected turn of events, and the speed and spontaneity with which the initial mob reactions erupted. A second was the size of the mobs in contrast to the size of the security

(Continued on page 11)

AMITY TALKS

Round and round, and round after round

“Breakthrough” says the optimists, but in a low voice. “Houdini magic by the great illusionist” scoff the sceptics. “A modest advance” remark the rest, more out of hope than conviction. This is the pattern of public reactions to the new proposals placed before the RTC by President Jayewardene.

Whose proposals? The RTC's or the UNP's. It is the Chairman's report of the ideas which emerged during 8 long months of formal talks and backstage consultations. That is why the UNP Working Committee met on Tuesday 25th to discuss the report and formulate the government's own position.

The TULF leader, Mr. A. Amirthalingam has expressed his party's disappointment in the most explicit terms possible in a sensitive situation where he cannot possibly appear to close the door firmly and finally on a negotiated settlement. What is the area of advance? Evidently, it is the “unit of devolution” i.e.

the inter-district coordinating and collaboration unit, which ill-defined as it is must mean that the RTC has gone beyond the District Council concept. Does this mean that all five districts of the north can coordinate their work? No unambiguous answer is forthcoming. It is also suggested that the Second Chamber which will have legislative powers is also a step forward.

In both instances, the failure to define powers and functions which will be vested in the proposed councils, whatever their territorial limits, leaves the discussion wide open. This could be the TULF's next line of attack. The UNP will probably anticipate that move and be ready to discuss powers and functions if the TULF drops its basic demand of “one Tamil linguistic unit”. Mr. Amirthalingam explained this in a recent interview as “the northern and eastern regions”.

Will the TULF be ready to forget “the eastern regions” (and there's

always insurmountable problems with strategic Trinco and Muslim dominated Amparai) in return for substantial local powers? If it is, it must still consider whether it can persuade the people of Jaffna, where its once unchallenged authority faces the serious threat of steady erosion, to accept the compromise. Every reading of the Jaffna mood suggests that the people want a withdrawal of the army as the top priority issue in any negotiations. The government will not agree to that till the scale of violence is appreciably smaller. And by the government's own calculations, this can happen only if Tamil Nadu logistical support for the separatist rebel groups is withdrawn.

So it would not only be impossible to exclude India from the negotiating process but very difficult to prevent India from playing a strong hand. If the optimists are right, there are many more rounds ahead. Otherwise, breakthrough will be breakdown. — M.

Lankan textiles — Reagan cuts the cloth ?

“Textile Barrier Threat in US?” asked a bold headline in the *Daily News* introducing the story of a sudden threat to the island's textile industry, reportedly one of the “success stories” of the present “open economy”. The issue has not only been taken up by all other newspapers, notably the *ISLAND* and *SUN*, but has prompted a team of local lawyers to rush to Washington, the source of the menace.

“Free trade” says the western industrial nations, whenever such trade, of course, suits their interests, which is most of the time. But when “free trade” (exports from Third World countries in particular) begins to hurt their own industries, “protectionism” becomes the name of the game.

Nobody has been a more self-righteous and aggressive advocate of the virtues of “free trade” than Mr. Reagan. It's his panacea for the

poor World. But now he is about to cut the cloth to suit the powerful textile lobby in his country. Reporting from Washington to the *Financial Times*, Nancy Dunn noted the pressure mounted by “domestic textile producers” and the equally strong textile unions. And this is election year!

The US textile lobby has petitioned the US Commerce department and accused 13 countries, including Sri Lanka, of “illegal imports”.

What is their complaint? According to Mr. Panditha, the Secretary to the Textile Industries Ministry, the petitioners say that GCEC incentives (mainly tax holidays) and Export Development Board rebates are in fact “subsidies”.

The threat to the three billion-rupee earning industry is so serious that the FTZ manufacturers and the non-FTZ producers have closed ranks. While money may be the main

consideration of the garments exporters (and the US is a huge market), the Ministry secretary showed that a more nagging anxiety troubles the administration. Mr. Panditha said “The livelihood of a 100,000 people depends on this single industry”. And the President of the FTZ manufacturers Association, Mr. Gerald Own told the *ISLAND* “this runs counter to the US policy of supporting developing countries”.

The crisis demonstrates once more the two-faced policy of the western industrial nations which preach “free trade” and denounce “protectionism” but practice what best suits their interests. But it also exposes the hazards of Third World countries who choose the path of dependent industrial growth — and this at the behest and promptings of western advisers and local “foreign investment” champions!



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The hegemony of Sinhala Buddhist ideology in the 1970's

Kumari Jayawardena

THESE articles have discussed the formation of Sinhala Buddhist ideology over a century — from the lone voices of Anagarika Dharmapala and others during the height of colonial rule, to the late 1970s, when this ideology became dominant and gained general acceptance among the Sinhalese. The hegemonic nature of this consensus was such that it covered all classes among the Sinhala Buddhists and all major political parties of the South. What is more, Sinhala Buddhist hegemony became legitimised through its incorporation into the two Constitutions of 1972 and 1978. Sri Lanka then became, in constitutional terms, the **Sinhaladvipa** and the **Dharmadvipa** — the land of a 'chosen' people — the Sinhalese, who had pledged to preserve and protect the 'chosen' faith — Buddhism.

All-class hegemony

In the 1970s and early 1980s, there was a determined racist propaganda campaign designed to appeal to all sections of the Sinhala Buddhists. While many issues were raised to arouse the Buddhists in general, other specific 'grievances' were promoted in order to excite identifiable classes — the Sinhala bourgeoisie, working — class and peasantry. The propaganda was carried on in Sinhala and the more scurrilous documents of various Sinhala organisations were circulated in the post or by hand, never actually reaching the bookshops or newstands but nevertheless reaching influential sections of the Sinhala people. However, other chauvinist material was continuously published in the daily Sinhala newspapers; several leading Buddhist monks were also active

in publishing agitational papers and journals and by the early 1980s hardly any section of the Sinhala population remained unaffected by the agitation of the Sinhala Buddhist crusaders.

The Buddhist crusade

In the campaign to whip up Buddhist feelings, the most high-lighted issue was that of the Buddhists archaeological remains and shrines in the Northern and Eastern areas. Based on the view that only **Sinhalese** were **Buddhists** (thereby totally ignoring the earlier existence of Tamil Buddhists and the fact that many early Buddhist scholars and commentators were Tamils), the Sinhala Buddhists were even urged to wage a **dharma yudhaya** (holy war) for the preservation of the Buddhist sites.

It is no secret that the archaeological ruins of the Northern province, which was a part of the Raja Rata in the days of the Sinhala Kings, and of the Eastern Province, which was a part of the ancient state of Rohana, have faced the threat of destruction for quite some time now. If we any longer permit this destruction to go on, shutting our eyes to it or engaged selfishly in our own personal affairs, we will be supporting this anti-Sinhala, anti-Buddhist campaign which is directed towards erasing and destroying completely all traces of Sinhala Buddhist culture from these areas (**Sinhaluni! Budu Sasuna Bera ganiw! Sinhalese! Save the Buddhist Faith! 1981, p.13**)

This was an effort not only to rebut the claims of Sri Lankan Tamils to a 'traditional homeland,' but also to warn the Buddhists about the dire consequence of separatism.

If Sri Lanka is divided into two, into Sinhala and Tamil areas, many famous old Buddhist places of worship such as Seruwila, Deegavapi, Kiri Vehara and

Naga Dipa as well as those shrines which are not covered by the jungle, would fall into the hands of the Tamils (Sinhala Adisi Hatura, (The Unseen Enemy of the Sinhalese, Feb. 1970, p.48)

Arousing the peasantry

In the specific attempts made to arouse various classes and groups of Sinhalese, by raising issues that were likely to agitate them, the Sinhala peasantry of the Kandy district was set up against the plantation workers. Politically these workers had for many years been deprived of political rights but after 1964 a section had received citizenship while others were repatriated; but the old bogey that the plantation workers would politically, economically and culturally and 'swamp' the Sinhalese continued to be a theme of racist literature.

The foreign Indians will, in the futureBy conferring citizenship rights on a large and rapidly growing community such as the Tamil-speaking Indian plantation workers, we see that Sinhala culture, Buddhism and the up-country villager will all vanish in the not so distant future (ibid p 5-7)

Arousing the traders

Similarly, much of the propaganda directed against traders and shopkeepers of minority groups found a ready response among their Sinhala competitors both from the petty bourgeoisie, and also from the higher levels of Sinhala entrepreneurs.

A fact that should be especially mentioned here is that the wholesale and retail trade (which was about 68 years ago in the hands of the Sinhalese in Colombo as well as in the Uva, Sabaragamuwa and Central regions) is now completely in the hands of Indian nationals. This has not happened spontaneously. It is a result of an organised move by Indian trade unions and other

organisations to supply Indians with cash and other necessities to purchase Sinhalese-owned business enterprises and buildings. Because of this far-seeing and organised plan of the Indians, the number of Sinhalese traders has been reduced by about 90% and they have been replaced by a similar number of Tamil traders. (ibid. Chapter)

Arousing the youth

Another important section of opinion-makers who were prone to racism, and at whom much of the racist propaganda was directed, were the students, youth and parents of prospective graduates. These sections of the population were made to understand that there was 'diabolical conspiracy' of Tamils to deprive Sinhala youth of both higher education and prestigious employment. In a situation of intense competition, where very large numbers of students competed for a few thousand university places each year and where the results of the university examinations determined future careers, the allegations of conspiracies by Tamil teachers to give Tamil students higher marks, became indeed a '**burning question... exploding within the hearts of our Sinhala students, parents and teachers**' (Diabolical Conspiracy, un- (1980 ?) p. 23)

With the expansion of education concurrently with the aggravation of the economic situation, and the contraction of the number of jobs available in proportion to the numbers of graduates, it is not surprising that the ethnic battle ground shifted to the arena of education and that both the petty bourgeoisie and sections of the Sinhala bourgeoisie and professionals became involved in the issue. The chauvinist sentiments that are expressed today by Sinhala professionals, are linked to the high level of competition for education and employment.

Thus apart from a minute number of radicals and members of the intelligentsia, the whole Sinhala nation — **workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie** (including students and youth), and the **bourgeoisie** (of large merchants, entrepreneurs and professionals) have become engulfed in the tidal wave of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism that has swept the country. The conflicts between Sinhala and minority groups, which have been the basis of Sinhala

Buddhist chauvinism, could be summarised as follows :

a) Competition between Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim merchant capital, industrialists and other large-scale interests which have increased with the 'open' economy since 1977.

b) Competition between professionals of the Sinhala and Tamil communities.

c) Competition between small businessmen, shopkeepers and petty traders of all communities.

d) Competition for limited job opportunities between Sinhalese and Tamil in white collar jobs.

e) An intense scramble for places in schools and universities and the increase in bitter communal recriminations between Sinhalese and Tamils on this issue.

f) The prevalence among the working-class of antagonism to minority working-people in a period of inflation, unemployment and continuous racist propaganda in the Sinhala press.

g) Antagonism between rural Sinhalese and plantation workers, as a result of trade and employment rivalry and increased racist propaganda.

* * *

Constitutional enshrinement of Sinhala Buddhism

WHILE the propaganda war against the Tamil minority was being intensified in the 1970's, Sinhala Buddhist ideology became constitutionally legitimised in the two new constitutions of the decade, the 1972 constitution of the Bandaranaike government and the 1978 constitution of the Jayewardene government.

The massive electoral victory in 1970 of the United Left Front (composed of the SLFP, LSSP and CP) and led by Sirima Bandaranaike, had raised hopes of a solution to the ethnic problem which had by then become critical. But instead, the minorities were further disillusioned during the ULF period of government (1970-77), and were especially disappointed by the new Republican Constitution of 1972. Its author, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva leader of the LSSP,

who was Minister of Constitutional Affairs, had laid great emphasis on the radical content of the constitution. But for the minorities, the 'socialist democracy' envisaged in the constitution, was seen to be confined to Sinhala Buddhists and could not, by definition, be either socialist or very democratic. After the landslide victory of the UNP in 1977, a new constitution was adopted in 1978, which ostensibly gave more rights to the minorities and was said to be based on 'democratic socialism'. But there is no question that the 1978 constitution too, continued to give primacy to the Sinhala Buddhists.

Sinhala Only

The constitution in force from independence in 1948 to 1972, had neither enumerated fundamental rights nor made any declaration on language or religion; but under the important section 29 (b & c) of this constitution, **parliament could not enact laws** which made 'persons of any community or religion liable to **disabilities or restrictions** to which persons of other communities or religions are not made liable; nor could parliament confer on persons of any community or religion any **privilege or advantage** which is not conferred on persons of other communities or religions'. (emphasis added)

The constitution of 1972, in the framing of which Left parties played an important role, abrogated these safeguards to minorities. The principle of 'Sinhala Only' which had been in existence for 25 years, was enshrined in the constitution by the provision (Section 7) that 'The Official Language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala as provided by the Official Language Act of 1956. Regarding the Tamil language, it was stated that 'The use of the Tamil language should be in accordance with the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act of 1958', adding that any regulations under this Act "shall not in any manner be interpreted as being a provision of the constitution" Article 8 (2). Thus, while Sinhala was to be given at special **constitutional** status as the 'Official Language', the status of Tamil was to be treated as governed by **ordinary** legislation.

In addition, the 1972 Constitution stated that 'all laws shall be enacted or made in Sinhala' with a Tamil translation and that "the language of the courts... shall be Sinhala throughout Sri Lanka and their records... shall be in Sinhala" (Section 9 & 11). There was provision for parliament to make alternate provisions in the North and East only in the case of courts exercising original jurisdiction and also for persons in these areas to submit petitions etc. and participate in the proceeding in Tamil.

The 1978 Constitution however made some significant changes in this respect; while Sinhala continued constitutionally to be the official language, Sinhalese and Tamil were both accepted as 'national languages'. Moreover Sinhala was to be the language of administration and the language of the courts **throughout Sri Lanka**; there was provision for Tamil to also be used for administrative purposes and in the transaction of business by public institutions, for all laws to be published in both languages, and for the exercise of

original jurisdiction in Tamil in the North and Eastern provinces.

In spite of these provisions the constitution clearly provided for a privileged and primary status for Sinhala and Buddhism and relegated minority ethnic and religious groups to a secondary role.

Buddhism Only

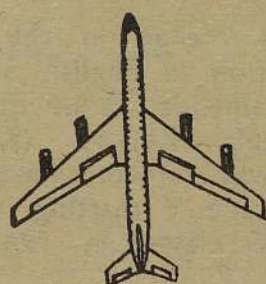
Special privileges were accorded to Buddhism by the Constitution of 1972 which declared (under Section 6) that 'The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster Buddhism while assuring to all religions the rights granted by Section 18(1) (d) (that all citizens had the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion). The provisions on Buddhism had not existed in earlier constitutions, which were secular. However, although Buddhism was not made the 'State religion', yet **the earlier secular nature of the State was changed**. It is ironic that it was the veteran Trotskyist, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva,

who had to defend the inclusion of this provision, stating that "the religion, Buddhism, holds in the history and tradition of Ceylon a special place and the specialness thereof should be recognised" A. J. Wilson the Gaullist system in Asia 1980:104)

In the 1978 Constitution, the 'foremost place' of Buddhism was again constitutionally reaffirmed and in addition Buddhist religious institutions were also given a special mention, Article 9 stating: "The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana, while assuring to all religions the rights guaranteed by Articles 10 & 14 (i) (e) (which guaranteed certain freedoms including freedom of thought, conscience and religion, speech expression etc.) Thus the two constitutions of 1972 and 1978 gave constitutional cover to the agitation of the Sinhala Buddhists to recognise the special and hegemonic role of Sinhala Buddhism in the life of this country.

• (Continued on page 11)

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Racial disharmony and the medium of instruction in schools

Ainsley Samarajiwa

In present day discussions of racial tensions a favourite flogging horse has been the change in the medium of instruction in schools. The impression given by our numerous voluble 'experts' in the field of education whose only expertise seems to be their own past experience as pupils in schools, is that the standard of education has gone down, communal disharmony has set in and the country is morally bankrupt, all because the previous regime changed the medium of instruction. English simply has to come back as the medium if we are to develop this country.

As a teacher whose service covered the period from 1945 and as an educational official who served during the critical years from 1962 to 1979, I feel that I should set the record straight in this matter by sketching the development of swabasha in education:

(i) From Dutch times right up to the Colebrook reforms the medium of education in almost every school in the island was Sinhala or Tamil.

(ii) The Colebrook Commission's recommendations regarding education attempted to discard the swabasha medium' emphasised the importance of English and advocated the closing down of all government 'vernacular' schools. Fortunately like many of the ideas in regard to English that are so glibly put forward even today, this proposal was not implemented owing to its sheer impracticality.

(iii) English missionaries and their local counterparts attached no value to the mother tongue in education during the latter part of the 19th century. It was left to foreign educationists like H.W.Green (Director of Public Instruction), F.W. Woodward (Principal of Mahinda College), J.J.R.Bridges (an HMI who

was appointed as a one-man Commission to report on educational reforms) press for a change in the medium in 'English Schools', while A.G.Fraser of Trinity College, alone among missionary Principals, stressed the value of the mother tongue medium at least in the Primary School.

(iv) While all this was happening administratively, it should be remembered that **the medium of instruction was English only in a very small minority of schools, called English Schools**, which were meant for children whose parents could afford to pay fees, while **the vast majority of children were educated in the mother tongue media in separate schools**. There were a few bilingual schools run by the Government as well as by denominational bodies, where in theory both English and Sinhala/Tamil were taught but the medium remained Sinhala/Tamil.

(v) The change in the medium of instruction in English Schools on the recommendation of the Special Committee's Report (Kannangara Report) was effected progressively up to Grade V starting with the Lower KG classes in 1945.

(vi) In the Administration Report of the Director of Education for 1951 it was reported that the then Minister of Education (Mr. M. D. Banda) "issued direction that the medium of instruction.....all be Sinhala or Tamil". It is on this fiat of a U.N.P. Minister of Education (obviously with Cabinet approval) that the medium of instruction up to Grade VIII was changed to the mother tongue, in continuation of the policy of the Special Committee.

(vii) In 1955 the medium in Grade IX and X was changed, also by administrative action under the U.N.P. Government of that period.

(viii) In 1964 the concession given in 1955 for Science teaching in English was withdrawn by the S.L.F.P. then in power. This is perhaps **the only administrative fiat issued by a non-U.N.P. Government on this subject**.

It will be seen that the medium of instruction in schools was changed cautiously after due deliberation by succeeding U.N.P. Cabinets on all of which the President sat as a senior Minister. In fact, **Mr. J.R. Jayewardene as Minister of Finance under the first U.N.P. Government should be credited with the progressive educational policies which enabled the children of this country to receive their school education in their natural medium, not in a foreign tongue which eminent educationists of an earlier generation had deemed unsuitable**. Neither the M.E.P., S.L.F.P. nor United Front Governments can claim the credit for such a change, although enlightend persons such as Dr N. M. Perera were strong advocates of the change, which was based on sound educational principles.

It must also be noted that the change involving quite naturally segregation of children in cosmopolitan schools into language streams, was significant only in those few schools, whereas **the majority of children in this country in any case received their schooling in separate schools from Dutch times**. Until 1945 90 per cent of the schools in the country were Sinhala or Tamil Schools, where the medium was always Sinhala or Tamil and not English. The change involving segregation which most well-meaning but ill-informed persons keep condemning, affected only a 'microscopic minority' in the country.

Perhaps the only valid criticism that can be made of the political

and administrative decisions made in regard to the medium of instruction is that such change was made compulsory in all schools, even in the denominational schools that were outside the sphere of governmental control up to 1961. Those few parents to whom the English medium was preferable owing to their home and family backgrounds had perforce to submit to the transition much to their chagrin. However, such compulsion was justified since it was Governmental policy to change the medium, and if pockets of English medium remained there would have been unfair discrimination against the children who used Sinhala or Tamil, and an advantage for the elites.

The racist tensions of the present day can in no way be attributed to the change in the medium of instruction in schools and the consequent separation of classes according to medium. In the hey-day of 'Language Imperialism' in the 30's, 40's and early 50's there was ample evidence of inter-communal disharmony and the tyranny of the majority over the minority as also the intransigence of the minority vis-a-vis the majority. It is strange that in our Faculties of Education or Departments of Sociology in the Universities, no major research on this subject has still been forthcoming except for a few snippets published in the University Review of a previous generation embodying some studies made by Professor Green and his students, of whom I was privileged to be one. In that era where the medium in the Secondary School was English in the better class of school, the inherent inter-personal tensions based on race (and class) were definitely in evidence even though children in those schools were by no means segregated.

The causes for the failure of successive governments to solve the national question are to be found not in this simplistic argument about segregation and de-segregation in class-rooms, but **in the bankruptcy of our capitalistic social and economic system which nurtures racism as a means of preserving the status quo of exploitation and misery for the vast majority while the few elites both Sinhala and Tamil prosper.**

Army's . . .

(Continued from page 4)

forces who have been described as very thin on the ground until the mobilisation of the volunteers. A third was the delayed deployment of troops and delayed imposition of a curfew. A fourth was the ethnic rapport which appeared to exist between some of the soldiers and the mobs who indicated they were destroying Tamil establishments as an act of retaliation for the killing of thirteen soldiers. The fifth is closely connected with the fourth. As it centres round the assertion that the mobs were identified as members of "private armies" of political personages or as members of political parties having adherents in the forces."

Backlash Danger

Since August last year, the government leaders, notably President Jayewardene and the Prime Minister, have warned the country of the danger of a "backlash" in the South to events in the north. It is National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali who has taken up that theme most consistently, declaring emphatically that a "backlash" plays into the hands of "the strategists in Madras". The poster on our cover is a clear expression of the government's sensitivity to this ominous possibility. In so far as this backlash has been avoided, the government can claim a victory in "disciplining" the mass mind. Since he wears two hats — conference spokesman and National Security Minister (the political and the military) — it is Mr. Athulathmudali who should know best of the profound implications of the issues we have raised.

The hegemony . . .

(Continued from page 9)

Fundamental rights

One of the flagrant acts of discrimination of the 1972 Constitution was the distinction made between 'persons' and 'citizens' on the question of fundamental rights. While

all persons were declared to be equal before the law, and no **person** could be 'deprived of life, liberty or security of person except in accordance with the law' (Sections 18 (a) (b)), **only a citizen** had the basic fundamental rights of freedom of thought, conscience, religion, speech, publication, movement, choice of residence and the right to promote his own culture; in addition **citizens** could not be discriminated against on grounds of race, religion, caste or sex, and a **citizen** could not be arrested, held in custody, imprisoned or detained except in accordance with the law. Section 181, c-i)

This denial of fundamental rights to non-citizens, mainly affected **the stateless plantation workers of Indian origin** who had not received Sri Lanka citizenship. Not surprisingly this was one of the provisions of the Constitution that was sharply criticised both by minority political organisations and trade unions and by those concerned with civil rights. The constitutional denial of basic rights to that group in society that, perhaps, needed them the most, was rectified in the 1978 constitution. The distinction between **citizen** and **person** was changed: persons were granted freedom of thought, conscience and religion were equal before the law, had access to shops, hotels, places of worship etc, could not be subject to torture or cruel punishments, or arrested or punished except according to due process of the law and were presumed innocent until proved guilty. However, **citizens** and persons with **10 years continuous residence** were to be free of discrimination on grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion and place of birth, and were to be entitled to the freedom of speech, publication, peaceful assembly, association, movement, promotion of own culture and the freedom to engage in lawful occupation. (Articles 10-14).

Both the Constitutions of 1972 and 1978, in granting a special status and role to the Sinhala language and to Buddhism, were in effect, subordinating the rights of minorities to that of the major group, thereby giving legitimacy to the demands of the Sinhala Buddhists that had been gathering strength for a period of over a century.

(To be continued)

Sri Lanka's "new" economic policy and agriculture

N. Shanmugaratnam

THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT of the United National Party (UNP) swept to power in 1977 with the promise of putting Sri Lanka's economy on a new course of development. Its election campaign was based on, among others, a manifesto which offered a 'new' model of economic development, apparently inspired by the success stories of the Newly Industrializing Countries (NIC's) of South-East Asia. However, the UNP strategy — as admitted by the government itself — was more directly inspired by the prescriptions of the World Bank and the IMF. It would be wrong to think that these two agencies of international capital forced the strategy on an unwilling Sri Lanka government. The choice was primarily the responsibility of the latter which was motivated by the interests of the dominant domestic classes.

In a world, the UNP approach to Sri Lanka's economic development was termed a "liberalization strategy". An outstanding feature of this strategy was its promise of opening up new avenues of accumulation for the domestic bourgeoisie and its allies with the assistance of international aid and the collaboration of transnational corporation (TNC's) and other sources of foreign investment. The UNP victory in 1977 signalled a more active role to the state to promote and safeguard the private sector. The state was to play an important function in channelling funds secured as foreign aid to the private sector, thereby enhancing the privatization of capital. In order to fully appreciate the shift in the role of the state it is necessary

to recall certain antecedents of the political change of 1977.

Sri Lanka's private sector dominated by a mercantile bourgeoisie felt severely constrained by certain policies and actions of the 1970-1977 government. The SLFP-dominated United Front government pursued a policy of capital through nationalization and creating new state ventures with limited foreign aid. The state was used by the politically influential petty bourgeoisie and its middle class ideologues in the governing alliance to further their own class interest, by strengthening and expanding the state sector which offered them access to power and finance via managerial position. The United Front adopted an ideology of "socialism" to legitimize the expansion of the state sector in an "indiscriminate" manner. Such a role of the state, coupled with import controls and quotas, severely restricted the economic space for the private business sector. The bourgeoisie as a class was to a great extent alienated from the state which in its view should have served as an instrument to promote and legitimize private accumulation and private property.

But it was not only the weak and compradore-dominated bourgeoisie that felt dissatisfied with the performance of the United Front government. The broad masses also felt disappointed due to the economic hardship that kept consistently growing. This popular discontent paved the way for the return of the UNP to power with a landslide victory at the polls. Thus the liberalization policy, stated in very general terms in the manifesto of the UNP, got the "approval" of the electorate.

Basic Elements of the Liberalization Package

The basic elements of the 1977 strategy may be summed up as follows:

1. Higher growth rate of the economy through incentives to the private sector and minimal state intervention in the domestic commodity and financial markets and in international trade. Import liberalization, uniform exchange rates, decontrol of prices and an increased interest rate were among the first measures taken towards these ends. The government also pledged itself in principle to the privatization of state corporations in keeping with the spirit of the new strategy.

2. Higher levels of public investment in infrastructure development and rehabilitation to promote private investment in productive ventures. These higher levels of state investment were to be achieved by reducing government consumption in order to increase public saving for investment and with generous foreign aid in the form of grants and loans.

3. Export promotion through unification (and devaluation) of the exchange rate and special incentives to attract export oriented foreign investment. The incentives included tax holidays and facilities offered by the Free Trade Zones (Industrial Processing Zones — IPZ).

In 1982, the sixth year of the present government, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, reaffirming the government's faith in its 1977 strategy, stated that "this policy package was designed to move the economy away from a long period of rigid government controls to one in which market forces and

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the private sector would play an increasing role".

This paper is concerned with the role of the agricultural sector in the new strategy. What place has been assigned to this sector in an economic strategy which is also labelled 'export oriented'? How have the policies affected agriculture and what are the major issues raised at the level of the agrarian structure? These are the main questions that will be discussed here.

Since 1977 the government has emphasized the revitalization of the plantation sector and self-sufficiency in rice. In keeping with the growth objective the Minister of Finance announced in his first budget speech in November 1977 that the private sector would be granted several incentives to entice it into agricultural ventures, particularly food production, horticulture and animal husbandry. The incentives included a five-year tax holiday. The latest budget (November 1983) has offered further incentives to promote non-traditional exports, livestock, sugar production and fisheries. Land alienation policy has undergone modifications to accommodate large and medium scale agro-industrial ventures and contract operations and Agricultural Promotion Zones (APZ's). The emphasis on export oriented agribusiness has become even greater at present due to the disillusionment with export oriented manufacturing which has not shown much promise. Moreover, the World Bank a principal guiding agency of Sri Lanka's economic policies, has brought home the message that "a key feature of development experience" is the "strong association between agricultural advance and overall economic growth" in its 1982 World Development report.

In the sections that follow it is proposed to present first an outline of the government's agricultural policy, followed by an analysis of the performance in terms of growth and a discussion on the contradictions that have sharpened and surfaced in the agrarian structure and their implications for the larger social formation.

The Strategy for Agriculture

In keeping with the spirit of the overall economic policy the

strategy for agricultural development included the following major components: (i) a programme of public investment in land and irrigation infrastructure and land settlements; (ii) a programme for the rehabilitation of the export tree crops sector (plantations and small holdings) including "development subsidies" for replanting and fertilizers; (iii) liberalization of internal trade of farm products and changes in price policy in accordance with it; (iv) replacement of the Agricultural Productivity Law and the Agricultural Lands Law by the Agrarian Services Law as a means to take greater administrative control of the peasant sector; (v) changes in land policy to enable the flow of private capital and enterprise into agriculture and agro-based industries to produce for local and foreign markets; (vi) involvement of the private sector in the management of land settlement projects in the Mahaweli areas with a view to improve overall project performance in terms of output and efficiency; (vii) special incentives like tax holidays for non-traditional exports and processing of sugar, milk products, livestock production and fisheries.

Agriculture has been receiving a major slice of the public investment commitments since 1977. According to *Public Investment 1980-84*, the allocations to the agricultural sector amounted to Rs 29.65 billion or 47 per cent of the total budgetary provisions. In addition to this there were also extra-budgetary resources

from cess and other funds allocated for the rehabilitation of the plantation crops. Although these allocations were subsequently revised, agricultural sector continued to receive a major share of public investment. The revised allocations for 1982-1986 amount to Rs 47 billion or 48 per cent of the total.

More than 60 per cent of the public investment was planned to be met by foreign assistance. The centrepiece of public investment since 1978 is the Accelerated Mahaweli programme. The government's own feasibility studies for this project were found to be inadequate by donor agencies abroad. These studies had not only underestimated the costs but overestimated the available organizational capacity for implementation. They were revised on the advice of the World Bank and on the basis of a report prepared by NEDECO (1979). The allocation for the Accelerated Mahaweli Programme and other agricultural projects according to the annually rolling Public Investment Programme are shown in Table I. Apart from these investment programmes there are also the Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDP) which are funded by foreign agencies. At present seven districts are covered by IRDP's. Another two districts were to be brought under IRDP's in 1983 according to the annual report (1982) of the Central Bank of Ceylon. The IRDP's are also essentially infrastructure development projects.

TABLE I
ALLOCATION OF GOVERNMENT CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FOR AGRICULTURE
(Rs. MILLION)

	1980-1984		1982-1986	
	Total	Foreign aid	Total	Foreign aid
Agriculture	29647.0	14968.3	46980	21023
i. Accelerated Mahaweli*	18207.0	11030.0	30629	15381
ii. Other irrigation	4109.1	1050.0	4324	1175
iii. Field crops and minor export crops	2994.0	1450.0	4709	1775
iv. Forestry and land settlement	1278.0	142.4	1319	397
v. Plantations	1462.7	956.9	4238	1704
vi. Animal husbandry	398.4	146.8	859	316
vii. Fisheries	1197.8	141.4	902	275
Agriculture as % of total Budget	47.0		48.1	
Mahaweli as % of total Agriculture	61.4		65.0	
Foreign aid as % of total Agriculture	50.5		44.7	

*Cumulative Expenditure on Mahaweli Programme as per end of 1982 — Rs 13,329 million.

SOURCES: Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Public Investment 1980-84; 1982-86*; Central Bank of Ceylon Annual Report, 1982.

As regards the plantations sector, Master Plans for rehabilitation of tea and rubber were drawn up. For tea the programme included replanting, infilling and factory modernization. The small holdings sector was also incorporated into the programme as far as possible. Rubber cultivation has also come under a similar programme. The tree crops sector (tea, rubber, coconut) has been granted replanting and fertilizer subsidies. The replanting subsidy and the investment programme for the state plantation sector are funded by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

Evidently the investment programme is capital intensive and involves long gestation periods. The magnitude of public investment is unprecedented and its implementation is heavily dependent on the private sector. The major projects have been farmed out to private contractors and sub-contractors, foreign and local. The government has also sought the assistance of private consultants. The state bureaucracy coordinates and oversees the progress of implementation. The state, as mentioned already, has come to play an active role in promoting private accumulation through large scale public investment programmes using the mechanism of contracting and subcontracting.

The acceleration of the Mahaweli programme has also helped the government to strengthen its political base among the peasantry. The programme provides for the resettlement of thousands of landless peasant families on newly developed land and the improvement of existing irrigation facilities for vast areas in the dryzone. Apart from the popular appeal of such a programme to the peasantry as a whole, it opens up fresh grounds for the growth of rich farmers through internal differentiation. These rich farmers, as shown by the experience, would also include people from outside the ranks of "official" settlers. The Accelerated Mahaweli Programme meets the aspirations of this category of enterprising men by formally recognising their role through the necessary policy modifications.

The investment programme, however, has a broader economic objective as far as agriculture is concerned. It is aimed at accelerating agronomic

intensification of production, crop diversification and overall project efficiency. The political factors that motivate the resettlement of landless peasants will continue to have their priority but settlement management has become a serious business. Thus new para-statal have been created for the express purpose of more intensive management of peasant settlements. There is also a growing presence of the private sector in project management. Legislative changes were introduced to enable the state to supervise more strictly the entire sector. The Agrarian Services act No. 58, introduced in late 1979, replaced the Agricultural Productivity Law of 1972 and the Agricultural Lands Law of 1973. This new legislation has provisions to enforce productivity undergoing a series of administrative changes, invariably ad hoc. At present there are two national level corporations — the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation (SLSPC) and the Janatha Estate Development Board (JEDB). These two have under them several regional boards. There is a Ministry of Plantation under the President and in addition there are the Ministries of State Plantations and Janatha Estate Development. There is also a separate Ministry of Coconut Industries. This proliferation of regional and central level institutions is most striking and confusing. At present agricultural development is a direct concern of at least eight ministries and more than ten corporations.

The various ministries, corporations and departments connected with agriculture, including animal husbandry, have their own programmes for the promotion of technological diffusion and agronomic intensification. This has been the case since the early 1960's but the pressure from above for intensification has increased after 1977. The liberalization policy has helped to increase the import of tractors and agricultural equipments.

(To be continued)



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The American crisis and Reagan's re-election

Gail Omvedt and Bharat Patanker

"The third world is going to come home to the advanced capitalist countries". This was the prediction of a young Pakistani-American Marxist economist as we sat in a coffee house in New York city, a few blocks down from Columbia university, across from Harlem. His argument was economic: in order for the U.S. economy to recover from the current crisis, such a level of automation would be required as to generate the kind of dual economy found in third world countries — islands of high technology and well-paid employment amidst a vast sea of under-employed masses surviving on minimal state services and surveyed by an increasingly repressive state apparatus.

But the third world has already "come home"—at least to the U.S.—in a more direct social sense. The United States is thought of the world over as a white man's country, an off shoot of Europe, and certainly white culture and white patriarchal capitalism are dominant. But the presence of coloured minorities, in popular speech the Black, Brown, Red, and yellow, the internal "third world", their growing numbers and their growing social and political assertion, is the key

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Bharat Patankar is a well known leftist and grass roots activist.

to the transformation of this bastion of world imperialism. Some of these (native Americans, blacks) have been there as long or longer than the European colonists. Even the Mexicans or chicanos (the Chicanos claim the south west as their historic homeland; of others Mexican-Americans it has been said by one anthropologist that "Mexico retaliated for its conquest by the U.S. by immediately beginning infiltration") can claim a longer history. Some minorities have been brought or lured from a century ago as labourers; others still come today to seek the jobs and wealth of the "golden land". Historically, many have been political refugees, fleeing both from revolutions (Russians, Latians, Cubans, Vietnamese) and from the Latin America terrorist regimes. The presence of an estimated 500,000 El Salvadoreans fleeing the bloodshed in their homeland, settling illegally in the U.S. but helped by wide sections of the population to put down roots, is a fitting answer to U.S. sponsorship of that terror.

Such minorities may be 25-30% of the total population, and their number is growing. But their exact properties cannot be known since so many are illegal ("undocumented") and unwilling to be counted that census figures are notoriously inaccurate. What is clear is that all the desperate barriers of U. S. immigrations cannot stop the infiltration and the slow self-assertion of the national minorities. The third world is pushing its way inside the beast, and the dialectics of race and colour are shaping all the economic, social and even ecological contradictions to be found in the U. S. today.

Deindustrialization

The U.S. today is a contradiction-ridden society, a fact made clear

by several months of visiting there in 1983 — 4 after an absence of nearly seven years. Part of this was a family visit, spent in a white middleclass home of a retired couple in Minneapolis, a largely white industrial mid-western city with at least a superficially liberal reputation. Part of it was academic-social, with visits to many cities, and meetings with many types of activists throughout the country made possible by university-based women's studies programs, South Asia studies programs and even international student organizations which had both money and willingness to sponsor lectures on the women's movement, anti-cast movements and working class movements in India.

The economic aspect of the contradictions is in some ways the easiest to describe. It is not accidental that for almost all Indians the U.S. is a land of wealth living among the majority of whites or the middle classes of the colored minorities, and you may be overwhelmed by the green lawns, carpeted homes with multiple TV's, automobiles and even computers; green lawns, trees and parks everywhere in cities and small towns (there are no "villages" as such) Most of the country-side too still appears vest, lonely and even beautiful, with ecological devastation still at a relatively less visible level—not for nothing is the population density one-tenth of India. For much of the industrial working class too, the "American dream" of having a house of one's own, a TV, a refrigerator, a lawn, a yearly vacation trip have been for a long time substantially realizable.

It is only recently, that the gap between promises and reality has become glaring. At the other end of the scale, totally excluded from prosperity, are an estimated two million homeless in the U.S. These include old people — old men muttering away to themselves in big city railroad stations, old women left without pensions, social security

or families, sleeping on park benches or huddled inside telephone booths with their worldly belongings kept beside them in a bag; the "shopping bag ladies". They also include many younger men thrown out of work, reaming the cities in search of jobs while their wives and children suffer less visible destitution within ill-heated houses. During the long bitter winter, only a few cities provided public shelters for such homeless, and often the gap was taken up by churches which provided temporary places to sleep or stocked-up food for distribution, inadequate "charity" to fill in what the economy was generating and the state was refusing to manage. These homeless and destitute do not yet have the overwhelming and ubiquitous presence of these in countries like India, but they are there.

And there are entire communities, large urban areas—Harlem, the black areas of Chicago—many of which have the look and feel even of Bombay slums. Minus the crowding, there are still the broken-down buildings, boarded up windows, trash littering the streets, men sitting around, and violence and threats of violence. Driving through Harlem, a man leaps to aggressively wash the car window; it is almost impossible to force him away. In Chicago an Indian doctor (not one all that strange to the coloured poor: she works at Cook country hospital) tells us she avoids driving through the black areas even during the day: "once some one just opened the car door and grabbed my purse off the seat". These are all realms not only of poverty but also of the nonwhite, realms where Whites simply do not go. They generate some times brilliant artistic expressions such as the graffiti that emblazons the subways of New York, but they also generate an informal economy of prostitution, sweat-shops, gambling, numbers and petty crimes.

What are the underlying economic trends? Around last December, the media began proclaiming a upswing in employment and the end of the "recession". But economists are writing of "de-industrialization" as a permanent phenomenon of all advanced capitalist societies, and theorists of the bourgeoisie admit this in their usual backhanded way by promises of "de-industrialization." There is a per-

manent less of the basic manufacturing jobs that have been the foundation of industrial capitalist economies—steel, automobiles, textiles—due partly to intensified automation, partly to the increased mobility of multinational corporations which makes it possible for them to shift manufacturing the cheap labour areas. This is not difficult to see in the U. S. In Buffalo, the city most tourists know only as the gateway to Niagara Falls but in fact the northeastern edge of the great U. S. steel-belt, we saw three major closed-down steel plants, with over 7000 workers permanently out of jobs not to mention the effects on the wider economy supplying their communities. Here was a white working class area, with small houses rather than tenements (as is true of many minority "ghettos" and "barriers" in much of the west) but with the same run-down look, roads filled with ditches, fading paint, weeds and dirt instead of lawns.

And northern Minnesota, center of lumbering and then of iron ore and taconite mining and finally steel plants, by waves of Scandinavian working class migrants, is now a permanently depressed area. Closed down steel mills are reopening at only a fourth capacity or being sold off and closed down. A museum in Duluth, the Great Lakes port city of this industry, tells an eloquent story. Downstairs are the old great locomotives that carried the lumber and ore to the ports (now most of of the train tracks are closed and the passenger runs from Minneapolis to Duluth only once a week) along with framed 19th century advertisements promising jobs and lands to the immigrants: upstairs a series of paintings by a contemporary folk artist shows people standing in "soup lines" for free food, huddled sleeping in doorways, sebbing as their land is auctioned off to pay debts—scenes of a depression, not that of the 1930's, but of the 1980's!

Of course, unemployment affects only a "minority" — but the official statistics of 7-8% or less unemployed not cover the fact that there is a much higher percentage among minorities, women, and the young just entering the job market but also leave out those who are so thoroughly out of work and discouraged to look that they are not in the "job

(Continued on page 24)

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THE OLD LEFT, FP AND CWC

N. Sanmugathan

The safeguards in the Soulbury constitution were (a) A Senate which was intended to impede precipitate legislation; (b) A Public Service Commission which was designed as an impartial and authoritative body, free from partisanship; (c) Section 29 (2) which prohibited legislation that discriminated between Communities.

The UF regime

In 1964, the Privy Council had observed in the case of *Ranasinghe Vs. Bribery Commissioner*, that section 29 (2) of the 1946 constitution was unalterable for the reason that it represented "the solemn balance of rights between citizens of Ceylon the fundamental conditions on which, they accepted the constitution." "The passing of the Sinhala Only act in 1956 clearly violated section 29 (2). The Tamils could do nothing. Nor could they do anything now in 1972 when the new Republican Constitution of Sri Lanka repealed section 29 (2) and abolished both the Senate and the Public service commission without providing any alternatives.

In the constituent assembly, the proposal of the Federal Party for the setting up an autonomous Tamil state within the frame-work of a Federal Republic of Sri Lanka was rejected without even a discussion. The Tamil people were further humiliated when the new constitution refused to recognise the regulations made by parliament in 1966 for the Tamil Language.

It was with the passing of

the new Republican constitution of 1972 that the Tamil people lost all hope in the possibility that they could win any of their demands with the help of the left.

The situation was further aggravated by senseless anti-Tamil acts by the United Front government. **The most notorious was the process of standardisation by which Tamil students seeking admission to the universities had to obtain more marks than their Sinhala or Muslim counterparts.**

This was a most unjust act. It was the sense of injustice that arose as a result of this unjust discrimination against Tamil students which spawned the militant youth movement among the Tamils which rejected the bourgeois parliamentary path.

This estrangement of the Tamil people with the left movement was not unwelcome to the leaders of the Federal Party. Because of their class position, these leaders have always taken up anti-left positions. While they always rushed for talks with the bourgeois leadership of the Sinhalese and, on more than one occasion, arrived at bargains with them, they consistently avoided negotiations or agreements with the left.

Kobbekaduwa

The same United Front government also adopted hostile positions towards the people of Indian origin, parti-

cularly the plantation workers. Although Srimavo Bandaranaike had signed a pact with Indian Prime Minister, Shastri, the question of nearly one hundred thousand people who received neither Sri Lankan nor Indian citizenship, remained unsolved. Typical of the anti-Indian sentiment of the S.L.F.P. was the reported speech of Minister Kobbekaduwa where-in he threatened to deport Thondaman, the main leader of the Indian Tamil people, to India. It was a senseless threat which he could not have implemented. But it alienated the sympathy of the people of Indian Origin from the S.L.F.P. and its coalition partners, the L.S.S.P. and the C.P.

Not to be outdone, Anura Bandaranaike came out with the proposal to acquire ten thousand acres of plantations for settlement of Sinhalese peasants. The intention was quite clear. Deprive the workers of Indian origin of their concentration in the up-country and settle Sinhalese peasants in their midst in order to weaken any attempt at concerted action by them. It was no wonder that such a proposal created such a swell of protest among the plantation workers which finally led to a successful ten days strike in the plantations.

Another fact that added to the disillusionment about the left among the plantation workers was the fact that under the united front government, the plantation ministry was held by one of the L.S.S.P.'s top leaders, Dr. Colvin R. De Silva. He had it in his power to solve

at least some of the problems facing the plantation workers. Neither the problem of monthly wage nor that of equal wage for equal work irrespective of sex or that of six days work a week or that of a reasonable wage structure. None of these problems were solved. It is ironic that the demand for equal wages for equal work irrespective of sex and six days work in the week was granted this year by a U.N.P. government under the threat of a strike!

It was the open anti-Indianism of the S.L.F.P. from which the L.S.S.P. and the C.P. did not differentiate themselves and the failure of a Left minister to solve any of the problems of the plantation workers that made it so easy for Mr. Thondaman to persuade these workers to vote for the U.N.P. in 1977 and 1982 and to lead them as a whole into the camp of reaction.

After the T.U.L.F. formulated its demand for a separate state of Eelam in 1976, the question of the right of self determination became an important question of national politics. **Most of the smaller left groups that have split from the L.S.S.P. or the C.P. have come out strongly in support of the right of self-determination for the Tamil people although most of them are not agreed that a separate state should be the form through which this right was to be exercised.** The C. P. S. L. has supported the right of self-determination for the Tamils and has suggested that this be exercised through the form of regional autonomy in the Tamil areas. The L.S.S.P. has been more vague and has not made any pronouncement on principle except to state that they stood for devolution of power.

The beginning of armed struggle by militant Tamil youths posed new questions for the left. Deep in the mire of parliamentary opportunism and revisionism, neither the L.S.S.P. nor C.P. could afford to support the rejection of parliamen-

tary democracy. In fact, the joint 1984 May-Day manifesto of the L.S.S.P., C.P., M.E.P., S.L.M.P. contains not a word about the National Question!

This ambivalence was also noticed in their attitudes towards the communal holocaust of 1983. As a result of their parliamentary opportunism and their refusal to offend Sinhala Chauvinist opinion, neither of them were in a position to make an unqualified condemnation.

The most disgraceful exhibition of this attitude was seen in parliament when it debated the sixth amendment to the constitution which sought to deprive the Tamil M.P.'s of their seats in parliament. The only C.P. M.P abstained from voting on the ground that he could not come to a decision because his party's political bureau could not meet as four of its members had been arrested.

We find the same frustrating attitude on the part of these two parties with regard to the Round Table Conference convened by the President to find a solution to the ethnic problem following the July violence. Every political analyst knows that nothing could come out of this exercise. The conference was convened in the context of a complete lack of political democracy in the country. The country was under a continuous state of emergency. Two left parties had been proscribed and several of their leaders had been arrested while warrants for the arrest of others were out. Hundreds had been arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism act and were languishing in jail without trial. Yet these two parties accepted the invitation to the conference without raising the return to political normalcy as a condition for participation.

Sri Lanka is a multi-racial, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-caste society. In any homogenous society, with a single race speaking a common language, territorial representation and adult franchise as granted to Sri Lanka by the Donough-

more constitution in 1931 is the ideal form of representation. But when society is torn apart by conflicting racial, linguistic, religious and caste divisions, such form of representation naturally leads to the subjugation of the minority by the majority. This is what happened in Sri Lanka. That is why all minorities demands some form of communal representation or safeguards. When this is denied to them they opt for a separate state and separate existence. This is also what has happened in Sri Lanka.

The only thing that could have prevented such a development would have been the existence of a healthy left movement. Such a movement could have rallied both Sinhalese and Tamil behind common economic demands, like the abolition of unemployment and poverty etc. That could have cut across sectarian differences of race, language, religion and caste. Sri Lanka would then have seen a horizontal division on the basis of class instead of a vertical one on the basis of race and language. The exploited classes — the workers, peasants and the intelligentsia among both the Sinhalese and the Tamils would then have united and risen against both the Sinhala and Tamil exploiting classes and their foreign imperialist patrons.

That such a development failed to take place or was aborted in Sri Lanka is the extent of the failure of the left movement. It is true that they tried. But they failed because of wrong policies and the abandonment of the true principles of Marxism-Leninism. Their failure can be traced to their parliamentary opportunism.

Once the socialist path is abandoned, the reactionaries have no difficulty in misdirecting and channeling mass unrest into communal and chauvinistic paths. That is how the communal holocaust of July 1983 occurred. It was an attempt by the reactionary forces to distract the mass public unrest which was growing as a result of the deepening economic crisis and to channel it on to communal and chauvinistic lines.

(Concluded)

Israel and South Africa

Jan Nederveen Pieterse

In November 1981 the second Begin government instituted a Civil Administration in the West Bank. Installed in the wake of Begin's campaign rhetoric about **Eretz Israel**, and simultaneously with efforts to uproot all expressions of Palestinian national resistance and to move the maximum number of Jews into settlements across the 'green line,' the Civil Administration was interpreted in the West Bank as a step 'to pave the way for the annexation of the occupied territories and tie them directly to the various Israeli ministries.¹⁹ Hence it was greeted with a massive boycott and demonstrations, which unleashed an unprecedented wave of repression in the West Bank. 'Demonstrations in the first months of 1982 resulted in more Arab casualties than had fallen in all previous 15 years of occupation.²⁰ At the time, settler vigilantes became more actively involved in doing the 'dirty work' of the occupation, displaying greater brutality than the IDF in forcing the Palestinians into submission or departure.

Rabbi Meir Kahane and the Kach party, Gush Emunim and TNT may be dismissed in Israel as a 'lunatic fringe,' by contrast to the rationality and moderation of the Israeli mainstream; yet they echo the same themes that are upheld by the mainstream, and differ only in that they advocate more drastic variations on them. In a poll of September 1981 only 19 percent opposed continued colonization of the West Bank.²⁰ Kahane, in **They Must Go**, meaning Arabs, is voicing but more loud and shrill the same **demographic problem** that has been the continuous preoccupation of Israeli administrations: 'Should we allow demography, geography and democracy to push Israel closer to the abyss?'²¹ Kahane is advocating overtly what at least a part of Israeli power structure has been practising cover-

tly. As recently came out in trial, the bombing attacks on three Arab mayors in 1980 involved Israeli Army officers in the West Bank military government as well as leading rabbis in the settler movement connected to the Tehiya Party.²² 'It is quite safe to assume,' according to Adam Keller,²³ 'that until mid-1983 a clear government policy of benevolent non-interference with the terrorists was followed.' Prior to the trial, Prime Minister Shamir warned: 'don't touch our messiahs who are creating historical facts for generations to come.'²⁴

Race and Class

An environment where the demographic obsession looms so large, founded on the conception of Israel as a Jewish State, constantly replayed as Likud's favourite melody, an environment where sectarianism is promoted as state religion, is an environment that nourishes extremism. The theme of **race** ('demography') is being replayed so as to avoid dealing with questions of **class**, in particular the slumbering issue of the discrimination of the Sephardim (Oriental Jews). The Sephardim are being used as a pawn in the game, put to sleep with a cult of Jewishness as a substitute for justice, and lured into thinking that they should obtain the justice that the Ashkenazim would not give them at the expense of the Palestinians. Thus they are tempted into the West Bank settlements as it is there that they are offered the better housing that is not available to them in Israel. In opting for the 'strategy of tension' Likud is the more extremist party, but in fact it is following in the footsteps of Labour who led the way through the deliberate creation of a siege mentality in Israeli society. As Moshe Dayan said about the 'reprisal actions' of the fifties: 'They... help us maintain a high tension among our population and in the army.'²⁵ The Likud has been

reaping the fruits of the 'high tension' sowed by Labour.

After this brief review of Israel's methods in her domestic environment, we may be in a better position to assess Israel's contribution overseas and look at the situation of some of the recipients of Israel's security assistance in light of the Israeli experience.

Guatemala

The struggle in Guatemala is rooted in a familiar problem — they wanted the land but not the people. The land, to grow coffee and cotton, not the people, because they are Indians. The majority Indian population has been experiencing loss of land continually through 450 years. Landless, at least they add to the cheap labour pool. When several years ago groups of Indians migrated to the jungles of the North, once oil and nickel and other minerals were found they began to be dislocated from there also, and then not even their cheap labour was in demand anymore. Thus, Guatemala had a **demographic problem**. Again we encounter a configuration of policies similar as in Israel, involving land, domination and exploitation, population policy, and terror. The military, as part of the oligarchy, looms large in all these spheres, as a landowner in its own right, through military governments, and through methods of population control which involve terror as a strategy, include the wholesale slaughter of entire villages. Following the presidential elections that established the power of Gen. Lucas Garcia in 1978, terror was unleashed, notably with the massacre of Panzos of May 29. At the time, between 1977 and 1981 (the Carter years), Israel was the sole arms supplier to Guatemala. The presence of Israeli advisers, along with Argentinians, was reported in 1981, at the time of the Garcia government's July offensive.²⁶ Months later, in Israel,

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Gen. Benditto Garcia, Lucas' brother, chief of staff of the Guatemalan Army, attributed the government's military success to Israel's assistance. He explained: we see the Israeli as the best soldier in the world today, and we look to him as a model and an example to us.²⁷ A sturdy compliment, considering that the Guatemalan army itself has displayed considerable skill in dealing with Guatemala's 'demographic problem' — the number of persons, mainly Indians, assassinated or 'disappeared' is estimated at 60,000 over the past fifteen years, and the number of refugees from Guatemala at 150,000 in Mexico alone, not counting the tens of thousands refugees inside Guatemala and in Honduras.²⁸ Since 1981 the emphasis is on 'civic action' as the means to 'pacify the country'; as a *New York Times* report notes:

Schools and health clinics are built under 'civic action' programs. Unfortunately, large numbers of peasants are often killed to deny the guerillas their support.²⁹

A recent development, in conjunction with the 'model villages', is the creation of 'civilian patrols' of villagers coerced into participating in local vigilante groups, a feature that is reminiscent of the West Bank.

Another country with a 'demographic problem' is South Africa. The congruence between apartheid and Zionism has been conspicuous enough to attract the attention of the UN General Assembly (1975). Both South Africa and Israel have turned questions of land and 'demography' (to abide by the Israeli euphemism) into national obsessions, and devised elaborate systems of repression and discrimination around it. Both view themselves as 'outposts of western civilization,' both are wont to claim biblical justification and enjoy the support of organized religion domestically (though not unanimously), both are national security states with a broad emphasis on counter-insurgency and methods of psychological warfare. The parallels extend to the finer print as well, as with South Africa's pass laws and Israel's special IDs for Arabs (stamped with a 'B') and requirements for travel passes in the occupied territories. South Africa's homeland

policy exhibits a similar architecture of domination combined with racial arithmetic as applied by Israel; Transkei, for example, is characterized by 'physical fragmentation of territory, combined with ethnic dispersal'.³⁰ The extensive military, political and economic cooperation between the two countries has been frequently reported on³¹; of interest at this point are the parallels between their policies vis a vis their surrounding frontline resp. confrontation states.

Angola

Reciprocating South African assistance in the October 1973 war (South Africa sent a squadron of Mirages), Israel sent two dozen officers as experts on 'anti-terrorist' tactics to South Africa in 1974. In 1975 Israeli officers took part in drawing up South African plans for invading Angola. The invasion of Angola in 1975 conformed to the strategy of the 'pre-emptive strike' — attacking guerilla forces in their bases across borders — as practised earlier by Rhodesian defence forces in their forays into Zambia and Mozambique.³² But the South African invasion was not just aimed against SWAPO bases but in fact at Luanda, in order to install UNITA in the center of power; in this objective it failed due to Cuban intervention. South Africa's efforts to make Angola pay a high price for its support of SWAPO and to remove the ANC from neighbouring countries, are similar to Israel's efforts to drive the PLO out of Lebanon. As South Africa sponsors the MNR in Angola, so Israel maintains a presence in Lebanon through the 'Army of South Lebanon' of major-Gen. Antoine Lahd (the successor of Maj. Haddad); moreover, since 1976, Israel has been supplying the Falangists with arms. When Israel went into Lebanon in June 1982 it was also with a dual objective, to destroy the institutional bases of the PLO and to push through to Beirut to see, with US backing, to the 'Falangisation' of Lebanon. In the latter objective it failed. Encouraged by Israel's advance into Lebanon, the South Africans have invaded Angola anew and are now holding on to their position in Angola just as Israel is maintaining her

positions in south Lebanon. In Lebanon Israel applied the strategy that Gen. Haig, through 1981, was advocating in relation to Central America — 'going to the source.' It was in these terms that Richard Allen, US National Security Adviser, defended Israel's invasion of Lebanon: Reaching to the source is generally recognized as hot pursuit of a sort and therefore justified. Claiming Nicaragua to be the 'source' of the Salvadoran insurgency, the United States, starting December 1981, has been practising the same approach in Central America. Israeli assistance on this front consists of military sales to Honduras and acting as a back-up source of assistance to **contras** in case US aid would be cut off due to Congressional restrictions. In a visit to Honduras former defence minister Sharon offered weapons captured from the PLO free of charge, if transportation costs would be paid. Thus the Middle East, southern Africa, and Central America — today's three major 'regions of instability,' according to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff³⁴ — are interconnected in, at least, as many ways as Washington — Tel Aviv — Pretoria are.

Electrified 'wall'

In 1977 Israeli technicians built an electrified 'wall' at the Namibia-Angola border, to keep SWAPO forces from entering Namibia.³⁵ A similar system of electronic border surveillance ('valla electronica') has been under construction since 1982 in Costa Rica on the border with Nicaragua.³⁶ It is precisely this item that brought a delegation of the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland to Israel in January 1984. They believed a solution for the Irish problem could be found by erecting a £14 million electric fence on the border with Ireland, touch-sensitive, monitored with computers, with permanently manned security posts at every five miles.³⁷ The DUP is the largest Unionist Party in Northern Ireland, led by Rev. Ian Paisley. Apparently, the world's 'demographic problems' may not be quite confined to the so-called 'third world.'

Situations such as the above, only a sample out of Israel's global security operations, suggest other dimensions beyond Israel's role as one
(Continued on page 24)

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BOOK
REVIEW

THE THREE WORLDS: Culture and World Development; by Peter Worsley (Weidenfeld, by £8.95 paper; £16.95 cloth).

PETER WORSLEY is an anthropologist by training, a sociologist by profession, and an historian by natural instinct. His books are consequently three times as interesting as those of single discipline authors. The present work is a remarkable achievement — world history strewn with fascinating details, leading up to our present discontents. In 60 pages of Prologomena, Peter Worsley discusses and dismisses contemporary sociological theory. His preference is for a cultural Marxism, jettisoning concepts like “the Asiatic mode of production” and the base superstructure dichotomy.

He argues forcefully that Third World countries are not “naturally” poor; they have been made poor. Humanity’s truly affluent age came before the invention of agriculture, when everyone had access to land, technique was adequate and leisure abundant. He quotes Sahlins: “the amount of hunger increases, relatively and absolutely, with the evolution of culture”. Pastoralists too an economy which could nourish great civilisations, until agriculturalists filched their best lands and pushed them into marginal areas where they faced “a vicious cycle of over-stocking and soil erosion. This is then held up as evidence of their incompetence”: a self-fulfilling prophecy.

“Underdevelopment... began not in the Americas, in Africa or in Asia, but... with the transformation of Eastern Europe into a region supplying wheat and other primary materials to the more dynamic economies of Western Europe.” Colonial conquest extended underdevelopment to central America, China and the Near East, whose cultures “had for centuries been more advanced than anything Europe had to show”.

Their subsequent impoverishment was due to western plunder and

destruction of native industries. The colonists’ entrepreneurial energy, traditionally emphasised, was less important than military violence used by the colonising power to remove obstacles, whether natural or more often human. “The advance of the frontier... required an apparatus of genocide.”

Enforced specialisation on single crops — spices, cotton, cocoa — rendered many areas totally vulnerable when the crop failed or market demands changed. Independence has not given new states control over their economies. Capital comes from multinational corporations, whose products can undercut those of the First World in spite of exorbitant profits.

In agriculture new irrigation systems machinery, fertilisers and pesticides (often ecologically disastrous) led to remarkable increases in production, which benefited only the biggest landowners — or the multinationals, who were also the main purchasers. As in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, the peasantry is being eliminated. In spite of mass emigration, unemployed peasants flock to the towns, which expand fastest in the Third World.

There are more landless Mexicans today than 70 years ago, before land redistribution. Meanwhile in the last 10 years, thanks to high technology, US farm exports have tripled again usually to the advantage of big corporations. Third World countries must complement rather than compete with American production.

“The Making of the Working Class” follows “The Undoing of the Peasantry”. In 1968 a Zambian wage labourer earned $4\frac{1}{2}$ times as much as a Zambian peasant; a mine-worker nine times as much. The rural economy depends for subsistence on remittance from absentee labourers. The ILO designates as “seriously poor” 67 per cent of the population of Africa, Asia and Latin America; 39 per cent was

Christopher Hill reviews a formidable study of underdevelopment

“destitute”. Hong Kong’s “economic miracle” depends on low wages and child labour. From Malaysia and Egypt to the Philippines and the Dominican Republic, multinational corporations export products of sweated labour.

Few urban immigrants obtain regular employment. They live in the “shanty towns” which shock western visitors, doing odd jobs for minimal pay. Neither a lumpenproletariat nor economically “marginal”, they are part of the working class, most of them at least partially employed. They correspond, Peter Worsley shows to Mayhew’s London poor in mid-nineteenth century England.

Poor though they are, they are substantially better off than country dwellers. They pay no taxes or rent. It is cheaper to let them construct their own hovels. They are ineligible for social security benefits which make a section of the working class relatively privileged. “Exploited classes,” Peter Worsley comments, “are not inherently revolutionary, nor reformist... or anything. What they become is a function of the institutions and values available to them.”

“Ethnicity and nationalism” is a subject which Worsley rightly says Marxists have neglected. Immigrants, taking on badly paid and unpleasant jobs, have split the First World’s working class. Their presence helps to hold down wage rates, especially when — like many Mexicans in the US — they are illegal immigrants. Being inferior citizens, they are forced into mutual dependence, into emphasising their national identities, which exacerbates feeling against them.

Finally, super power rivalry for the Third World’s mineral wealth leads to political subordination. Africa’s debt burden multiplied 20 times

between 1960 and 1976. "Our mistake," said Nyerere, "was in the assumption that freedom — real freedom — would necessarily and with little trouble follow liberation from alien rule... Our countries are effectively being governed by people who have only the most marginal interest in our affairs."

Soviet patronage is perhaps less economically destructive, but it leads to policies of repression and ideological conformity. The non-aligned movement raised high hopes; but its component states have now been forced into alignment. Israel and South Africa probably already have nuclear weapons; "authoritarian regimes from Brazil to Iraq are hell-bent on acquiring them."

This is a vast, rambling, marvelous book, which does not force conclusions down our throats but gives us material for a great deal of thought.

— *The Guardian* (Lond.)

The American . . .

(Continued from page 16)

market". More than this, the threat of unemployment affects a very large proportion of workers for whom it may mean the bottom dropping out, a loss of the houses, TV's refrigerators and cars which have been bought by mortgage and "time payments". The U.S working class is the most heavily indebted in history, and this itself is another side to the picture of seemingly plentiful jobs, computer jobs, jobs opening up in the "high tech" new industries; There is a yawning insecurity at the base of the electronic economy.

(To be continued)

Israel . . .

(Continued from page 21)

of the major arms exporters — Israel as a party or accessory to state-organized terrorism, and holocaust, certainly in the case of Guatemala and South Africa, perhaps in others as well. South African invasions in Angola — planned with Israeli advice — have resulted in cold-blooded massacres, such as the attack on innocent men, women and children in the refugee camp of Cassinga on 4 May 1978. A sinister pattern suggests itself — the export of West Bank expertise. Thus in the shadows cast by Deir Yassin, Kibye, Beirut, shabra and Chatila, other silhouettes emerge — Cassinga, Panzos, Chiapas. Among the questions that present themselves is, why is Israel doing what it is doing?

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

19. Azmi Shu'aibi, *MERIP Reports*, Nr 116. July/Aug 1983
20. Peter Demant, 'Israeli Settlement Policy Today,' *MERIP Reports*, Nr 116 Jnly/Aug 1983, 6
21. Quoted in *The Jewish Defense League: A Cult of Racism and Terror*, Washington DC, ADC, n.d.
22. *International Herald Tribune*, 25.5.84
23. *Israel & Palestine*, Nr 105, June/July 1984, 5
24. *Guardian*, (New York), 16.5.84
25. Livia Rokach, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism* Belmont, MA, AAUG, 1980, 7
26. *Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win*, New York. URNG, 1982
27. *Ma'arv*, 22.11.81
28. *Guardian*, (New York), 23.5.84
29. *New York Times*, 14.3.82
30. Ali A. Mazrui, 'Zionism and Apartheid: Strange Bedfellows or Natural Allies?', *Alternatives*, Vol IX, Nr 1, Summer 1983, 89
31. See James Adams, *The Unnatural Alliance*, London, 1984
32. *The Apartheid War Machine*, London, IDAF, 1980, 63
33. Joe Stork, 'Israel as a Strategic Asset,' in Naseer Aruri et al, *Reagan and the Middle East*, Belmont, MA, AAUG, 1983, 26
34. *United States Military Posture for FY 1984*, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington DC, 1983
35. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, 'Israel and South Africa 1977-1982: Business as Usual — and More,' *New outlook*, Vol 26, Nr 2, March/April 1983
36. *CounterSpy*, Vol 8, Nr 1, Sep/Nov 1983
37. *Guardian*, (London), 11.1.84

Letters . . .

(continued from page 2)

for all the churches because we live at a time when there is a veritable anarchy of beliefs among Christians today. And except for the fundamentalists most Christians are confused as to what to believe and the fire at York Minster would not have been in vain if it makes the churches look at themselves more closely and define more clearly what they stand for.

Narada de Silva

Dehiwala

Marxist Niagara

For the last several months you have been treating us to a seemingly never-ending Niagara of words from the articulate pen of Kumari Jayawardena on the subject of Sinhala chauvinism. To hear Kumari tell it one would imagine that this is the only kind of ethnic chauvinism known to exist in Sri Lanka. But she must know that this is simply not the case.

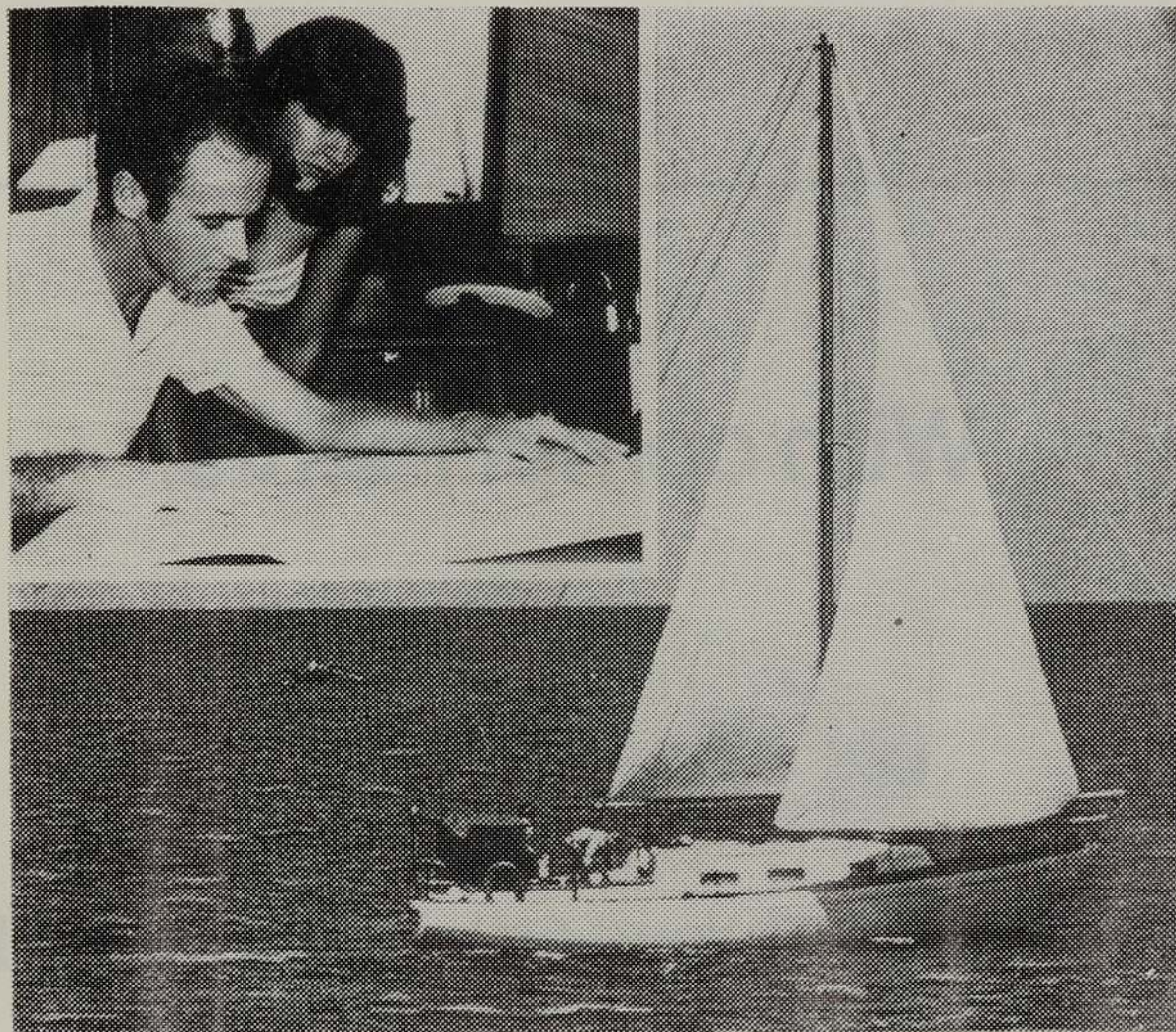
Kumari Jayawardena is obviously well armed with Marxian analytical equipment and probably subscribes to the view that human societies move and are changed by social pressures rather than by acts of heroism and betrayal by individual leaders. So one would presume that she is well qualified to find the correct answer to the question why a man of Philip Gunawardena's antecedents (whose physical and moral courage to fight for his convictions was never in question) and even lesser men like NM and Colvin and the communist leaders, in the evening of their lives, and at the risk of being accused of communalism; began to concern themselves with the plight of the Sinhala Buddhists. But the simplistic answer Kumari comes up with is "political opportunism".

I suggest that if she uses Marxian theoretical equipment to look for the answer she will soon stumble on the truth which is staring her in the face.

S. Wirasekera

Nugegoda

John Player Gold Leaf Mild.



GARADS



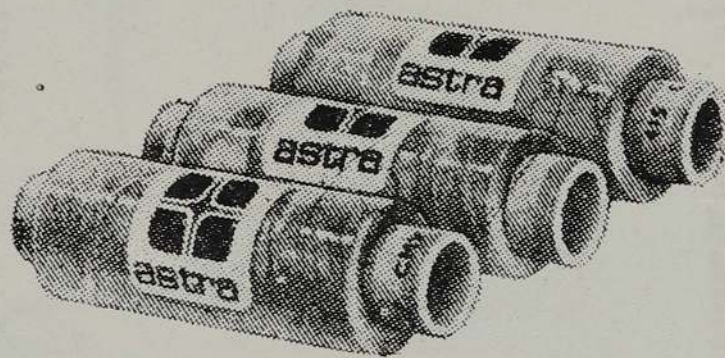
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