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ALL AT SEA

What the US State Dept. called a serious escalation of violence in the north has been accompanied by an Indo-Sri Lanka "diplomatic confrontation." This in turn has been prompted largely by a series of incidents, all of them at sea.

First we had the abortive "sea-borne invasion" by a mini-armada of 18 boats carrying at least 200 men who were described by government spokesmen as Tamilnadu-based Eelam rebels. The flotilla was repulsed by Sri Lanka patrol boats and aircraft.

In other encounters at sea, several fishing boats were summarily sunk and (in one incident, two got away) and close upon 100 armed Eelamists were killed.

In the final and most important encounter, an Indian trawler was sunk by Sri Lankan gunboats. Nobody died but four Indian crewmen were taken into custody, moved to Gurunagar camp and then handed over to the Indian authorities.

If the first incident produced a wordy exchange that quickly became rough and rude, the sinking of the trawler near Kachativu led to a flurry of diplomatic activity.....and at least one major move by India. Indian naval and Coastguard vessels moved into the Palk Straits, on the same day that Mr. G. Parthasarthy summoned Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in Delhi to the External Affairs Ministry.

G. P. is no ordinary "diplomat". As head of the Policy Planning Committee on Foreign affairs, he holds Cabinet rank, and is virtually the man who runs the Foreign Policy operation in Delhi. He may continue to do so under the government that will be formed later this month. Secondly, he is the co-author of Annexure "C" that controversial document which became a dead letter when everybody disowned it at the opening sessions of the All-party conference.

Lastly, Kachativu was the sole territorial dispute between India and Sri Lanka, with Tamilnadu argues unsuccessfully that Kachativu once came under the administration of the Madras Presidency. Sovereignty

was conceded to Sri Lanka in 1974 but certain rights, such as fishing, traditionally enjoyed by both countries were to be recognised, writes Prof. Kodikara.

In another age when naval supremacy had much to do with rise of empires and the scramble for territories, incidents at sea were both a classic provocation as well as a standard casus belli. Today, in the modern age of diplomacy, the war of words is often the first scene in the unfolding drama of conflict between nations, and encounters at sea are frequently early warnings of escalation on multiple fronts.

BITTER BITE

"The security zone has begun to bite" says a cheerful headline in a Lake House paper. But it has also begun to bite the budget. An American economist and banker has predicted a "difficult year for Sri Lanka". In an interview with the ISLAND, he has said he was here to take a closer look at the economic situation in the light of post-July 1983 events and the current security problems. Commenting on the likely impact of the security situation on the economy, he has stated: "Credit is going to be tight, and a bigger trade deficit is inevitable. With a large allocation going for defence purposes, the figures are already showing a bigger budget deficit. ..."

SRI KOTHA FISSURES

Like Mr. Ratnasiri Wickremanayake who resigned his post as SLFP secretary for personal reasons (mainly health) the UNP Chairman, Mr. Panditaratne has also quit for non-political reasons. The Jayamaha report on Maduru Oya and allied matters completely exonerated Mr. Panditaratne.

Despite the circumstances of his resignation, the dramatic move at this stage of the game when the UNP claims that it is not only the party and the government which face a crisis but the nation itself, has naturally provoked much speculation, in political circles.

(Continued on page 23)

TRENDS + LETTERS

Women's Peace Appeal

Ethnic strife in this country has now reached a new stage characterised by increasing loss of life on all sides. We believe that this senseless violence must immediately cease; meaningful negotiations should be conducted with the participation of **all parties concerned** in order to arrive at a political solution. We, as women are particularly concerned about our families being involved in such violence and killing.

We, therefore urge a cease-fire and an immediate political solution over a military one and call upon the women of Sri Lanka of all ethnic groups, to come out and work for a lasting peace in our country:

Nanda Malini (singer), Sunethra Nanayakkara, Irangani Serasinghe (actress), Monica Ruwan-

(Continued on page 23)

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Towards a political solution

The Sri Lanka group of the UNU Asian Perspectives (South Asia) Project met in May 1984 at a Seminar organised in collaboration with the "Lanka Guardian" in order to consider the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka and the prospects for a settlement. The group then hoped that the negotiating process which had been set in motion would lead to a just and peaceful solution.

Members of this informal group met again on 27th and 28th November 1984 to consider developments since May and concluded, with great regret, that the situation had deteriorated sharply.

The negotiating process has lacked a sense of seriousness, urgency and direction. It does not now appear likely that a negotiated settlement acceptable to the Tamil people will emerge out of the all-party conference; at this point of time, an unbridged gap exists between the minimum demands of the Tamils and the maximum the convenors of the conference are prepared to agree to, i.e. the gap between regional autonomy and the presently proposed scheme of devolution, territorial unit and powers to be vested in such units.

This failure is partly due to the negotiating process itself. The conference does not now represent all the political forces which should subscribe to the formation of a consensus. Confrontational debate rather than constructive and conciliatory discussion has generally informed the course of the negotiation. The exercise of the conference may have served to placate the international community, the World Bank sponsored aid consortium, foreign investors

and leaders as well as human rights groups; however, the manifest failure of the negotiations upto now makes the government's real commitment to a peaceful solution open to question.

While the negotiation process has been reaching this situation, the military option has been pursued. Military expenditures have been substantially increased and the security forces augmented. The scale and scope of military operation have been expanded. Far from being effective, this course of action has accelerated armed conflict. The assault on the Chavakachcheri police station demonstrates that there has been a qualitatively different change in what was previously a low-level armed resistance. The danger inherent in the pursuit of a military option of regarding the entire Tamil population as a legitimate target of attack has now become a reality. It has also become apparent that the consequences of increasing militarisation cannot be restricted to one part of the country.

There has been simultaneously a qualitative deterioration in the general situation in the country. Civil administration has virtually come to a halt in the north and become subject to serious dislocation in the east. Economic activity has been seriously affected by a lack of liquidity caused by the breakdown of wanton banking system. The disruption of fishing and agriculture, widespread looting and seizure of personal belongings are part of a pattern. This disruption of the economic life of the community in these areas can be seen as both an object and a consequence of policy.

In the South too, economic activity is affected by the instability arising from the continuance of the ethnic conflict. Even the Sri Lanka aid group has pointed out its adverse effects on the country's economic growth. The policies that have been adopted for some time of reducing social welfare outlays has been aggravated by the diversion of substantial incremental resources into military expenditure. In fact continuing emphasis on the ethnic conflict and the need to increase military expenditure has been used to mask the effects of current economic policies and to divert the attention of the masses away from their worsening living conditions.

Another consequence of the pursuit of a military option and increasing militarisation has been the restriction and repression of democratic opinion, the indiscriminate use of the arbitrary powers vested in the security forces and other agencies, a serious erosion of personal liberty and security and other inroads into civil society. Yet another consequence has been the creation of a climate of opinion characterised by chauvinism, intolerance and irrationality in which any anti-chauvinist expression of opinion is liable to reprisal.

The mass media has been a major contributor to the creation of this climate of opinion. The pattern of behaviour of the state-controlled mass media has been no different and belies the declared aim of communal amity and harmony. Similar tendencies are also evident in some oppositional sections. The continuing dissemination of chauvinist ideology means that there is still no awareness among the Sinhala masses that the present policies will inevitably

lead to greater authoritarianism to which all sections of the people will be subject.

The international context of the ethnic conflict has acquired greater importance and become more complex during the period since last May.

Sri Lanka's dependence on external sources of military assistance has been enhanced by the pursuit of a military option. The establishment of the Israeli Interests section in the American embassy is not only the most visible expression of this dependence but has also already endangered the country's so-far cordial relationships within the non-aligned movement and with the Arab-Islamic world, thereby threatening to affect adversely the gains from migrant employment.

The assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi has reinforced the stated Indian conviction that external forces are actively seeking its destabilisation. In this context, the induction of external elements into Sri Lanka is seen by India as prejudicial to its own security and foreign policy interests and has served to undermine the cordial relationships that have existed up till recent times. A failure to recognise the geo-political realities of the region could only jeopardise Sri Lanka's interests. The official admission of our diplomatic isolation and the absence of any tangible response to Sri Lanka's requests for assistance from any major power, global or regional, some long regarded by the regime as its steadfast allies demonstrate that no state will intervene on Sri Lanka's behalf at the risk of alienating India.

Continuity rather than discontinuity is likely to characterise Indian foreign and strategic policy in the foreseeable future. India has repeatedly declared its support for Sri Lanka's territorial integrity and its desire that the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka be settled through peaceful negotiations. The failure to maximise on the offer

of good services by India must be regarded as a missed opportunity.

At its meeting in May, the group concluded that a "shift of emphasis from serious political negotiations to military or quasi-military options must inevitably result in the militarisation of political life and society. An all pervasive preoccupation with security will compel policy choices ... at the expense of development, democracy and national independence". Events since then have confirmed these fears.

The group wishes to re-iterate its conviction that violence and extremism are the reflections of the collapse of democratic institutions and that this collapse is connected with the state's conceived need for political stability in order to pursue its preferred economic development policies. These development strategies regard private investment, both local and foreign, producing goods for an export market and reliance on market mechanisms as the basis for economic growth. They may result in increased growth but create conditions of deprivation for the large mass of the people, who, in the absence of democratic alternatives, are forced into violence and extremism.

Placing the ethnic issue in this background, the group repeats its earlier call for:

- (i) measures to revive and strengthen democratic political institutions in the country such as parliamentary elections, restoration of local government etc. and the evolution of economic strategies that will be responsive to the needs of the people.
- (ii) honest attempts at reaching a political solution to the ethnic problem. While seeking to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people all efforts directed at reaching such a solution should involve all political forces in the country in order to guarantee the legitimacy of the final consensus.

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UNP's difficulties 'marked' by ethnic policy — Top UNP adviser

The conflict between economic imperatives and political self-interest is dividing the once confident ranks of 'open economy' champions. While entrepreneur N. U., the master of Mercantile House and former Central Bank governor argues strongly for devaluation, Mr. Esmond Wickremesinghe, former boss of Lake House, hotelier, industrialist and adviser to the President, says further devaluation will create insurgency conditions in the whole island. The UNP's political difficulties, he states, have been "masked" by the party's ethnic policy. In an analysis submitted to the UNP Working Committee, and published in the pro-SLFP journal "FORUM", he says:

In addition, the heavy successive devaluations and consequent price rises inevitable under IMF policies from that date resulted both in the pauperisation of almost the entire population, particularly the middle classes and especially the intelligentsia, while removal of protective tariffs against foreign manufactured goods which the IMF wanted, prevented any industrialisation save by or with multinationals.

"The Government must not under any condition devalue any more and it can easily avoid devaluation by taking alternative measures...

"Any more devaluation will then create insurgency condition not only in the North but throughout the rest of Sri Lanka. Any measure we adopt to solve the balance of payment current account deficit again I will emphasise must not be devaluation but a solution.

"Many officials merely repeat traditional IMF text book theories which have in the Third World when implemented generally caused riots and violence. We have enough violence in the North Let us not create violence in the rest of the island through any further devaluations.

"Fortunately, due to the political popularity of the UNP's ethnic policy against the threat of an Indian invasion of Sri Lanka using the Terrorists in the North as their principal tool, these serious political difficulties of the UNP are masked. Fortunately the threat of Indian invasion will last for some years. General public opinion in Sri Lanka is that Indian security has drawn up a plan for the invasion of Sri Lanka. Fortunately Indira Gandhi vetoed it due to the skilful handling of our foreign policy by H. E. the President our Leader. But public opinion believes this plan remains part of the Indian security forces strategy and they expect to implement this plan in the future.

"Fortunately the country supports the UNP's ethnic policy very solidly and this situation masks our political difficulties. Thus while the danger of Indian invasion lasts might I as a member of the party request those who are in a position to do so to take necessary action to bring our economic problems, particularly the current account deficit in our balance of payments under control, create more employment so that the UNP wins back once again the support of the masses of the people independent of their fear of Indian invasion which they know only the UNP can effectively protect them against.

"I would summarise to urge that there be no more devaluation and that even the devaluation which is gradually being now done to Rs. 26 be halted at once and the parity of the rupee to the dollar be reduced to its original parity of Rs. 25.

WALTERS' VISIT

The trouble-shooter cometh

The arrival of General Vernon Walters, Mr. Reagan's roving troubleshooter, accompanied by Ambassador Ernest Corea ("a major personal success" sang the mainstream media like a well-trained chorus) was a tonic to those downhearted Sri Lankans who were beginning to feel themselves isolated and friendless.

About this same time last year, President Jayewardena had said "we asked for help and nobody came". He was explaining why an Israeli interests section was opened in the US Embassy. With the second coming of General Walters — he was here last year — there was a new mood of confidence, both among who felt that greater US military assistance would help the new threat of stepped-up armed activities by 'Eelam' rebels in the north and by the that smaller but increasingly vociferous group which wants Sri Lanka to dump nonalignment and move into a new relationship with the US, with Trinco perhaps as a down payment.

"Help us to help you" was Walters' message to Sri Lanka, according to the *Daily News* which can be regarded as well-informed and quite authoritative in these matters. But how does one interpret this message. Two schools of opinion quickly emerged. The first says Sri Lanka should make an open offer of Trinco, as a sign of goodwill. Is this a serious interpretation or wishful thinking?

The second school argues that the kind of help which the US will appreciate most is that which it can 'sell' Delhi — that is a political settlement of the ethnic problem.

Although both Washington and Delhi stand for such a settlement, there may be differences between them on the precise nature of that settlement. The 'concessions' to the Tamils which Delhi has in mind may be less than Madras but more than what Washington would insist should be the UNP's minimum offer. What is more important

(Continued on page 7)

BATTLE LINES

S. N. Venkatramani

The real battle in Sri Lanka may have just begun. Last fortnight, as the Sri Lanka Government postponed by a month the plenary session of the All Party Conference, scheduled for November 15, the war between the Sinhalese armed forces and the Tamil militants in the northern provinces reached a new and dangerous pitch. The November 18 ambush of a Sinhala army jeep in which the commander of the Sri Lanka army's northern security forces was killed, was the latest manifestation of the fact that the Tamil issue is now being resolved in the battleground rather than the negotiating table.

Charges and countercharge about reprisals and body count have now become almost an everyday affair. But clearly, both sides have decided that the battle will be of the sword and not pen.

Most observers are convinced now that the hostilities will not cease whatever the settlements reached by the All Party Conference and that they will, in fact, only intensify. The Liberation Tigers' spokesman in Madras, A. S. Balasingham, says: "We strongly believe in the guerrilla mode of warfare. The essence of these tactics is to get your arms from the enemy, launch unexpected attacks and thoroughly demoralise the enemy before the step of declaring full-scale war."

Even the more moderate Tamil groups see no other alternative in sight. Says Nirmala Nithyanandan, the renowned feminist who escaped from Sri Lanka after a daring jail break: "It is not as if we are intransigent and do not want to come to terms with the Sinhalese. But the credentials of Sinhala leaders are suspect. During the 36 years of Sri Lanka's inde-

pendence, they have reduced us, step by step, to the status of second class citizens."

All this points to the fact that the All Party Conference is now widely considered redundant. Sri Lankan Tamils and leaders of various guerrilla groups have even started to openly question the participation of TULF's Amirthalingam in the Conference. Liberation groups contend that they lost the mandate of the Tamils the moment he agreed to take part in the talks aimed at arriving at a solution to the Tamil problem within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, something that is also seen as irrelevant since *Eelam*, or a separate state, is now no longer a dream but an unshakeable conviction.

A strongly-worded article in the *Tamil Times* compared the All Party Conference to a "centre court tennis match at Wimbledon between two players who have been top-seeded on past form but who stand no hope of reaching the finals. The potential champs are elsewhere and there lies the real action."

Tamil leaders are also fully convinced that President Jayewardene lacks sufficient authority or the will

to go against the hawks in his own government or against the powerful Buddhist clergy. Observes K. Mahesan, president of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front: "For 30 long years we have explored different possibilities of a negotiated settlement and failed. It is now too late."

But in spite of the strong feelings on both sides and the apparently irreconcilable positions, there are a few who still see a ray of hope for a solution within the framework of a united Sri Lanka. Says Balasingham: "If the Sri Lankan army is withdrawn from Tamil areas, if the Government stops colonising areas belonging to the Tamils and if total regional autonomy is guaranteed to us, we may consider coming to a settlement with the Sri Lanka Government." Mahesan adds that a special autonomy of the type given to Kashmir by the Indian Government will be an acceptable basis for a final solution. But so far Colombo has given no indication that it is prepared to bend that far backwards. Till it does, the war in Sri Lanka will continue to be fought in the jungle fastnesses of the north.

—INDIA TODAY
(Dec: 15)

Walters' visit . . .

(Continued from page 6)

however is that there appears to be a wider area of agreement (rather than divergence) between Delhi and Washington on how Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict could be resolved — wider convergence certainly than some Sinhala hard-line stalwarts tend to believe. At least one American analyst suggested that the US, while responding to the request for arms and equipment, may be worried that fresh arms supplies, perhaps via London if Congressional restrictions are an impediment, might harden the attitude of the chauvinist hawks.

General Walters left for Delhi from Colombo. While its obvious significance was not missed by any

Colombo diplomat, Premier Rajiv Gandhi's extremely tough statement issued on the same day that Walters arrived in Delhi led to even more fevered speculation in diplomatic circles here.

There is no diplomat in Colombo (and, for that matter no sensible and educated Sinhalese) who does not realise that the US has far, far greater interest at stake in India than in Sri Lanka. It will do nothing to jeopardise its relations with India. That's the bottom line. And this, unfortunately for the hardliners in the UNP and other circles, is particularly so when Washington is so plainly looking forward to closer relations with Rajiv Gandhi than it had with the Indira Gandhi regime.

This article by **INDIA TODAY** staff writer S. N. Venkatramani appears in the December 15 issue of India's leading news magazine.

The 1982 elections and the new Gaullist-Bonapartist State in Sri Lanka

M. P. Moore

Part from the novel, if formally constitutional, device of a referendum to extend the life of Parliament, the most remarkable feature of the 1982 elections in Sri Lanka was that they heralded a reversal of the long established pattern of electoral seesawing. For the first time since 1956, seven general elections ago, the voters in October failed to overturn the government. J. R. Jayewardene, leader of the United National Party (UNP), which holds 84 per cent of parliamentary seats, was returned to the presidency with a slightly higher proportion of votes cast than his party had received in the 1977 parliamentary elections. At the time, this was widely attributed to the disarray of the main opposition party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), and the ineligibility of its leader and most popular figure, Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, either to stand for the presidency or to campaign on her party's behalf.² Mrs Bandaranaike was free to campaign against the extension of Parliament in the December referendum, although her party was in even greater disarray: many members had defected to the UNP at all levels,³ and her supporters had been imprisoned and legally harassed on charges yet to be proven.⁴ The referendum confirmed the electoral ascendancy of the President. While he had gained 52.91 per cent of the votes at the presidential campaign, 54.66 per cent of those voting in the referendum supported his proposal to extend Parliament, albeit on a greatly reduced poll.

This paper examines changes in voting behaviour between (a) the 1977 parliamentary elections and the presidential elections of October 1982; and (b) the presidential election and the referendum of December 1982. Accepting that each was a different kind of election, and that therefore comparisons must be drawn with care, it is argued that the results reflect and illustrate the changing nature of the Sri Lankan polity, and the emergence of what is here termed, for lack of better jargon, a Gaullist — Bonapartist state.

The term 'Gaullist' relates in part to constitutional questions; the formal subordination of the party-oriented legislature to a directly elected President. More importantly, it indicates that the President has the capacity to exercise his formal powers by virtue of having established an identity and a following which is both partly independent of and broader than that of his party, even while he continues to dominate the party through his control over the top party 'apparatchiks', none of whom are elected MPs. This 'Gaullist' element in the new polity has been evident for some years. The recent elections, especially the referendum, indicate the appropriateness of coupling with this the term 'Bonapartist'. The President has at least temporarily succeeded in reducing the level of political militancy of a population formerly ranking as one of the most politicised in the world.⁵ He has also either neutralised within his coalition or isolated the leading elements of the political-ideological movements which have, over recent decades, made the running in Sri Lankan politics — Sinhalese-Buddhist 'nationalism',⁶ the more specific

regional-cum-ethnic revivalism of Kandyan Sinhalese Buddhists, the militant separatism of the Sri Lankan Tamils, and the popular radicalism (Marxism) of the Low Country Sinhalese. He has obtained in a way directly reminiscent of Marx's analysis of the Bonapartist polity of Louis Napoleon, the consent of the small-scale farming population ('peasantry') for the continuance of the President's personal rule and for a cessation, in his favour, or inter-party electoral competition. And, at least until the violence of mid-1983, he had aligned himself firmly with ethnic minorities — the Indian Tamils, Sinhalese Christians, Muslims and the anti-separatist Sri Lanka Tamils of the east coast, especially near Batticaloa — whose demands are for protection and material favours from the state rather than, as in the case of militant Sinhalese Buddhists and Sri Lankan Tamils, for (provocative) changes in the form and symbols of the polity — a 'Buddhist state' and a separate Tamil state respectively.

The Presidential Election of October 1982

Although the outcome of this election violated established patterns there was no such novelty about the pattern of party competition. Despite the new Constitution and electoral system, the pattern of party electoral support was in general very much as it has been since the emergence of the SLFP in the 1950s. In sum, most voters from the majority Sinhalese community supported either the UNP or the SLFP. Among the Sinhalese, support for the SLFP and, in the densely populated south-western lowlands, support for the various Marxist

In James Manor (ed.), *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis*, Croom Helm, London and Sydney, 1984 ISBN 0-7099-3513-7

Table 3.2: Changes in Electoral Behaviour and their Determinants by Electoral District, 1977 Parliamentary and 1982 Presidential Elections

Electoral district	% of the population by ethnic, group 1981			% of the electorate voting		(e)	% of valid votes cast for				(h)
	Sinhalese Buddhists ¹	Sri Lanka Tamils	Other ²	1977	1982		(d)	UNP party bloc ³		Other Sinhalese party bloc ⁴	
						1977		1982	1977	1982	
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)
Group A ⁵											
Colombo	71	10	19	19	78	0.98	57	58	34	42	1.01
Gampaha	71	3	26	88	83	1.06	54	53	45	47	0.97
Kalutara	84	1	15	88	85	0.96	54	50	35	50	0.94
Kandy	74	5	21	88	86	0.97	54	60	34	40	1.11
Matale	79	6	15	90	86	0.96	63	58	36	42	0.92
Galle	94	1	5	87	82	0.95	54	50	40	50	0.93
Matara	95	1	4	86	84	0.97	55	49	42	51	0.89
Hambantota	97	0	3	88	82	0.95	56	46	40	54	0.83
Digamadulla ⁸	37	20	43	88	79	0.90	45	56	26	39	1.27
Kurunegala	90	1	9	90	86	0.97	57	56	40	44	0.98
Puttalam	48	1	51	87	81	0.93	56	59	40	41	1.06
Anuradhapura	90	1	9	88	85	0.96	53	50	45	50	0.94
Polonnaruwa	90	2	8	85	83	0.97	58	56	39	44	0.97
Badulla	68	6	26	88	86	0.98	59	59	38	41	1.00
Moneragala	93	2	5	85	82	0.97	55	49	42	50	0.90
Ratnapura	85	2	13	89	86	0.97	53	51	41	49	0.96
Kegalle	85	2	13	88	84	0.96	55	57	43	43	1.03
Group B ⁶											
Nuwara Eliya	35	13	65	87	86	0.98	57	63	33	37	1.10
Group C ⁷											
Jaffna	0	95	5	82	44	0.54	3	21	3	39	7.93
Wanni ⁹	7	60	33	86	59	0.69	31	46	neg.	37	1.51
Batticaloa	3	71	26	89	70	0.78	26	40	28	21	1.57
Trincomalee	32	34	44	86	70	0.82	47	49	25	41	1.03
Sri Lanka	69	13	18	87	80	0.92	51	53	36	44	1.04

Sources: As in note 1 and columns (a)–(c) from *Census of Population and Housing, Sri Lanka — 1981 Preliminary Release No 1*, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo (1981), Table 1.

Notes:

1. The 1981 census figures are not cross-tabulated by ethnic groups and religions. However, it is quite justifiable to follow the procedure used here and assume that virtually all Buddhists are Sinhalese Buddhists. At the 1946 census 99 per cent of all Buddhists were Sinhalese (calculated from data in *Census of Population, 1971 Sri Lanka, General Report*, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo (1978), pp. 79, 89).
2. The 'other ethnic groups' category includes, in order of quantitative importance: Sri Lanka Moors, Indian Tamils, Sinhalese Christians, Malays, Burghers and Indian Moors.
3. The 'UNP party bloc' comprises the UNP and the small Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC). (See notes to Table 3.1.)
4. The 'other Sinhalese party bloc' comprises, in 1977, the SLFP, LSSP and CP, and in 1982 the SLFP, LSSP, JVP and NSSP (for details see notes to Table 3.1).
5. Group A electoral districts are those in which neither Sri Lanka Tamils nor estate Tamils are represented in large numbers. They comprise all districts in which Sinhalese Buddhists are in the majority plus Digamadulla, where Muslims are the largest single group and Puttalam, where Sinhalese Christians comprise about a third of the population, giving the Sinhales (Buddhist and Christian) a large overall majority.
6. Nuwara Eliya is the only district to have a very large proportion of estate Tamils — 47 per cent of the population.
7. Group C electoral districts are those in which Sri Lanka Tamils account for a third or more of the population.
8. The Digamadulla electoral district corresponds to Amparai administrative district.
9. The Wanni electoral district comprises the electoral of districts of Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullativu.

parties, came disproportionately from rural Sinhalese Buddhists, while urban and Christian Sinhalese were more likely to support the UNP. Sri Lanka Tamil votes went mainly to Tamil parties demanding administrative and political devolution or autonomy for the Tamil areas, but with significant marginal competition from the 'Sinhalese' parties, especially outside the Jaffna peninsula, the heartland of Sri Lanka Tamil society. Finally, other ethnic minorities — Muslims, Indian Tamils (mainly estate labourers), Sinhalese Christian (mainly Catholics), Malays and Burghers (descendants of the Dutch)⁷ — were wooed by both main 'Sinhalese' parties, but more successfully by the UNP, and with more or less explicit concern for communal interests.

Within this pattern of overall stability, over recent decades there have been a number of consistent trends. Two in particular were further accentuated or confirmed by the results of the 1982 elections. The first is the electoral decline of the established Marxist parties⁸ and their partial replacement by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), now organised on a 'parliamentary' basis around the leadership of Rohana Wijeweera, who led the formerly revolutionary JVP into the 1971 insurgency.⁹ The second is the continuing decline of independent non-party voting. Admittedly voters did not have the option of voting for independents in 1982. However, except the

special case of the Sri Lanka Tamils (see below), voter turnout was elsewhere almost as high as in 1977 (columns (d)–(f) of Table 3.2), indicating that few of the voters were strongly attached to independent politicians rather than national parties.

The concern of this paper is, however, not with the continuity of electoral behaviour between 1982 and previous years, but with the fact that there were some significant marginal shifts in 1982 compared to 1977. In so far as one can identify the causes of shifts from aggregate data on voting patterns relating to electoral districts and parliamentary electorates, the data very strongly suggest that ethnic group identification was the main cause of these shifts. In sum, the UNP suffered a relative loss of support from Sinhalese Buddhists and became more dependent on the support of the ethnic minorities, although rather ambiguously so in the case of Sri Lanka Tamils. The evidence for this claim and its significance for Sri Lankan politics are dismissed below.

Interpreting the Statistics

The statistical analysis in the table is based on comparisons of voting in the 1977 parliamentary and the 1982 presidential elections. Such a method raises four actual or potential problems.

The first arises from the change in the Constitution and electoral

system, and the fact that one is not quite comparing like with like. In 1977 voters were choosing an MP partly at least to represent local interests. They had the option of voting for independent candidates representing particular local interests. In 1982 the voters comprised a single national electorate voting for the President. The impact of this change in the electoral system was almost certainly greatest among Moors and Indian Tamils. For they have a certain tradition of local community solidarity in politics, electing community leaders who then use their parliamentary voting power to obtain from the government of the day assistance for their own communities.¹⁰ However, these minorities comprise only a small proportion of voters and, more importantly, had even by 1977 been to a large extent inducted into the dominant pattern of party competition at electorate level. Apart from one Sinhalese independent MP who immediately joined the SLFP¹¹ and S. Thondaman, the leader of the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) — the trade union-cum-political party representing most Indian Tamil estate workers — who immediately became a Cabinet member, the MPs elected in 1977 represented only the UNP, the SLFP and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), the separatist Sri Lanka Tamil party. With the exception of those voting from Sri Lanka Tamil parties, in both 1977 and

Table 3.3: Changes in Electoral Behaviour in Group C ('Sri Lanka Tamil') Districts between the 1977 Parliamentary and 1982 Presidential Elections

Electoral district	% of Sri Lanka Tamils in 1981 population ¹	% of total number of registered electors voting for									% of electors abstaining			
		UNP		(c) Other Sinhalese parties ²	(f) Independents	Tamil parties ³		(i) Independents	(l) 1977	(m) 1982	(n)			
		1977	1982			1977	1982							
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)	(m)	(n)	
Jaffna	95	2	10	4.6	2	17	8.2	59	18	0.3	18	18	56	3.0
Wanni	60	26	28	1.1	neg.	22	39.4	46	10	0.2	12	14	41	2.8
Batticaloa	71	22	28	1.3	24	14	0.6	40	27	0.7	—	12	30	2.5
Trincomalee	34	40	34	0.8	21	28	1.4	23	8	0.3	neg.	14	30	2.1

Notes:

1. Corresponds to column (a) of Table 3.2.
2. Almost entirely SLFP.
3. Relates to the TULF in 1977 and the TC in 1982.

1982 the great majority of voters were consciously voting for a government. The evenness of electoral swings over the island supports this view (see column (k). Table 3.2 and the text below).

The second problem in interpreting electoral data concerns the drawing of inferences about which categories of voters changed parties and why they did so. In the absence of information on the voting behaviour of a sample of individual voters¹² one must beware of committing the 'ecological fallacy of, for example, assuming that a shift to the UNP in districts in which minority groups are numerous is in fact the result of changes in voting behaviour by members of

minority groups rather than Sinhalese Buddhists. A related issue is the danger of assuming that changes in voting behaviour by, for example, Sinhalese Buddhists, are due to their ethnic identity and not to some other unrelated factor. These problems are dealt with below.

The third and more concrete problem of statistical interpretation lies in the large-scale abstention from the polls by Sri Lanka Tamils in 1982. This was the result of the TULF's decision not to participate. Analysis would have been easier if the TULF had in fact called for a boycott, for abstentions would then be a measure of their strength. Not only did they stop short of calling a boycott,

but the standard of Tamil separatism was actually borne in the presidential contest by Kumar Pon-nambalam, a prominent non TULF politician of the Tamil Congress (TC). There is then no clear criterion for measuring either electoral support for the policy of a separate Tamil state or the relative electoral strength of the two main Tamil parties. Such conclusions as can be drawn about Sri Tamil voting in 1982 compared to 1977 are based on treating separately the four (Group C) electoral districts in which Sri Lanka Tamils form a third or more of the population. These districts are excluded from the statistical analysis because of the comparability problems caused by large-scale abstentions in 1982 (see Tables 3.2 and 3.3)

Table 3.4: Changes in Electoral Behaviour between the Presidential Election of October 1982 and the Referendum of December 1982

Electoral district	% of 'yes' votes at referendum	No. persons voting at referendum as % of no. voting at presidential election	Proportion 'yes' votes at referendum as % of UNP share of votes at presidential election	% of votes cast in all general elections, 1947-77, going to Marxist parties ¹	% of estate Tamils in the population, 1981
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Group A					
Colombo	53	83	92	29	1
Gampaha	58	82	109	8	neg.
Kalutara	49	82	98	30	4
Kandy	62	88	104	4	9
Matale	73	93	126	1	7
Galle	47	82	94	22	1
Matara	51	87	103	28	2
Hambantota	45	82	98	12	neg.
Digamadulla	59	96	105	4	neg.
Kurunegala	62	87	111	5	neg.
Puttalam	60	83	102	2	1
Anuradhapura	68	87	137	5	neg.
Polonnaruwa	58	83	104	1	neg.
Badulla	70	90	119	9	21
Moneragala	64	87	130	4	3
Ratnapura	58	88	114	21	11
Kegalle	57	87	100	19	6
Group B					
Nuwara Eliya	73	93	115	2	47
Group C					
Jaffna	9	133	42	9	2
Wanni	34	106	74	1	15
Batticaloa	39	100	98	2	1
Trincomalee	43	98	88	1	3
Sri Lanka	55	88	103	14	6

Note:

1. Includes all main recognised Marxist parties from 1947: LSSP, CP, the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (from 1959 onwards), and the now defunct Bolshevik-Leninist and Viplavakari Lanka Sama Samaja parties.

Source: as in note 1, Table 3.2.

Nuwara Eliya District (Group B) has also been excluded from statistical analysis, but for a different reason. This is the only district in which Indian Tamils form a large proportion of the population — 47 per cent in 1981 (column (e), Table 3.4). The problem here is that in the case of Indian Tamils, one cannot infer voting strength from population numbers, since only a minority have Sri Lankan citizenship. Details are not available at district level on the number of Indian Tamils who have citizenship and/or who are enrolled on electoral registers. Only in the Nuwara Eliya case would the counting of all adult Indian Tamils as potential voters seriously jeopardise statistical analysis. Nuwara Eliya has, therefore, been treated separately, but in the knowledge that Indian Tamils comprise an important fraction of its electorate.

Group A comprises all electoral districts except those in Groups B and C which have been treated separately for reasons given above. Sinhalese Buddhists form the majority or the overwhelming majority of the population in all but two of the 17 Group A districts. In Puttalam District a substantial Sinhalese Catholic population makes Sinhalese, both Buddhists and Catholics, the majority group. Digamadulla District has substantial populations of Moors, Sinhalese and Sri Lanka Tamils.



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In columns (g) — in Table 3.2, figures are given on the division of votes in 1977 and 1982 between two party blocs. The first, the 'UNP bloc', comprises the UNP and the CWC, the party of the Indian Tamil estate workers which is of major significance only in Nuwara Eliya District. The CWC was tacitly allied to the UNP in 1977 and very firmly and explicitly so in 1982. The second bloc, the 'Other Sinhalese party bloc', comprises the SLFP and the various Marxist parties which have tended to ally with the SLFP and which share the same rural Sinhalese Buddhist electoral base.¹³

The stability in the pattern of electoral competition between these two blocs is illustrated by the following results. In 1977, the Group A districts elected 129 UNP MPs and seven SLFP MPs. Had the 1982 presidential vote on the old constituency basis, the party position would be much the same, the UNP having lost eight seats to the SLFP, but winning another two from them.¹⁴ The main point here, however, is that between the two elections, there was a small but nationally very uniform relative shift of votes from the UNP bloc to the 'Other Sinhalese party bloc' (essentially to the SLFP) in areas dominated by Sinhalese Buddhists. This, on a district basis, is illustrated by regression in the appendix: compared to 1977, the UNP bloc share of valid votes cast in 1982 tended to fall, in a statistically very significant fashion, in proportion to the percentage of Sinhalese Buddhists in the district populations. This shift thus accentuates the previous pattern, illustrated by regression 2, in which the strength of UNP bloc electoral support was inversely related to the proportion of Sinhalese Buddhists in the population. Regression 3 illustrates the obverse of the relative shift between 1977 and 1982: compared to 1977, the UNP bloc share of valid votes cast in 1982 increased in a statistically very significant fashion in proportion to the percentage of all minorities. It is important to note that this relative shift of votes to the UNP bloc is in a statistical sense better

explained by regression 3 than by regression 4. In the latter the explanatory variable is the proportion of the district populations comprising 'other minorities' that is, neither Sinhalese Buddhists or Sri Lanka Tamils. The conclusion to be drawn is that in Group A districts at least — those outside the main Sri Lanka Tamil areas — Sri Lanka Tamil voters tended to support the UNP more strongly in 1982 than in 1977.

At this point, one might raise the question of the 'ecological fallacy' mentioned above. How can one be sure that the shift away from the UNP in districts dominated by Sinhalese Buddhists was the result of Sinhalese Buddhist voters themselves, and not members of other groups, shifting their support from the UNP? Conversely, was it indeed the votes of groups other than Sinhalese Buddhists which explained the relative shift to the UNP in the district where these groups were numerous? In the absence of the conclusive proof that only statistics on individual voting behaviour could provide, one can in two stages, demonstrate the overwhelming plausibility of the claim that these observed inter-party shifts were indeed the result of changes in ethnic group behaviour of the kind posited above, and basically because of ethnic group considerations.

In the first place, it is clear from an examination of Table 3.2 that in the 'extreme' cases of Group A districts with either very high or very low proportions of Sinhalese Buddhists — Hambantota and Digamadulla respectively — the observed relative shifts of votes between party blocs could not have been achieved without Sinhalese Buddhists switching from the UNP bloc in Hambantota and members of other ethnic groups shifting to the UNP bloc in Digamadulla. This is *prima facie* evidence in support of our claim, all the more so as the relative party position at electorate level was very much the same in 1982 as in 1977. Had there been a great deal of complex switching of votes between parties then, since different ethnic groups are unequally concentrated in different electorates, many more electorates

would have 'changed hands', in a figurative sense, in 1982.

In the second place and rather more importantly, the shift of Sinhalese Buddhist votes to the SLFP and minorities' votes to the UNP conforms very much to expectations based on government policies and on political issues before and during the campaign. In various ways, the minorities had good reason to be relatively more pleased than Sinhalese Buddhists with UNP policy. The minorities tend to be more urbanised, more concentrated in the Colombo area, and more engaged in non-agricultural activities, especially commerce, than Sinhalese Buddhists.¹⁵ The free market economic policies of the UNP since 1977 have tended to benefit them, albeit with many exceptions, especially among poor Muslims in North Colombo. At the same time, opportunities for foreign travel benefit groups like Sri Lanka Tamils and Burghers with foreign connections, and the UNP government's policy on admissions to higher education institutions has been less slanted in favour of rural Sinhalese-educated students than was that of the previous SLFP-led government. Even more concretely, the question of the UNP government's alleged 'softness' towards non-Buddhists was significant political issue in the year prior to the election. President Jayewardene had taken a relatively firm and very public line in quashing Sinhalese Buddhist militancy in his party, expelling from the party and thus, under the 1978 Constitution, from Parliament — the MP for Panadura for public expressions of Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinism, and severely reprimanding the District Minister for Ratnapura for less-than-total opposition to Sinhalese communal violence in his district in 1981.

1. The sources of the electoral data used in this paper are as follows: G.P.S.H. de Silva, *A Statistical Survey of Elections to the Legislatures of Sri Lanka 1911-1977* (Colombo, 1979); *Ceylon Daily News Eighth Parliament of Sri Lanka 1977* (Colombo 1977); *Island*, 22 October and 25 December 1982; *Daily News*, 25 October 1982; and *Sri Lanka News*, 30 December 1982. The term 'Gaul-list' in the title of this paper is (Continued on page 23)

A BROADCASTING PHILOSOPHY FOR THE THIRD WORLD

Wimal Dissanayake (Director of the Centre for Communication and Culture, University of Hawaii)

In a recent article in 'Atlantic Monthly' a commentator remarked:

Despite the effects of a few television historians and critics... the fact is that the most effective purveyor of language, image, and narrative in American culture has failed to become a subject of lively humanistic discourse. It is laughed at, reviled, feared and generally treated as persona non grata by university departments and the 'serious' journals they patronize. Whether this is the cause or merely the symptom of the precipitous decline of the influence of the humanities during recent years is difficult to say.

I think this point merits closer security. The impact of mass media on modern society has been profound and far reaching, and it is of the utmost importance that we seek to understand its impact with a definite humanistic focus in mind. The above passage highlights the predicament of mass communication and humanistic learning in the United States, where the mass media has become a part of everyday life much more so than any other country in the world. If this is the situation in the United States, one need hardly add that the above mentioned predicament can take a far more disturbing proportions in the Third World where the mass media are of comparatively recent origin. Third World broadcasters and media scholars, if they are to meet this situation head on, need to develop a philosophy of broadcasting. It towards the constructions of such a philosophy of broadcasting that this paper is making a tentative effort.

Mass communication is communication effected through modern technical instruments directed to-

ward a reasonably large, anonymous and heterogeneous audience. Mass communication is rapid, public and often ephemeral. There are two vital components of mass communication: the growth of the industry and the growth of the audience, and these two processes are closely interlinked. Under the generic title of mass communication I would include all communication that takes place through newspapers, radio, television and films. The term 'traditional culture' is harder to define. First of all, we need to have some idea of the notion of culture that we endorse. In 1951 two anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckhohn, in seeking to define the concept of culture realized that there were at least 154 different definitions of culture and many more incomplete definitions and statements. This only serves to underline the elusive nature of the concept. Culture has been defined as social heritage, customs and inherited traditions. It has been defined in a manner that would include the sum total of all that is artificial and man-made. Man-made systems for ordering the social and natural environments into conceptual structures which generate meaning out of the phenomena of human life. For the purpose of the present discussion I would like to call attention to these vital features associated with culture. Firstly, culture has a memory that manifests itself in traditions, conventions, customs and belief-systems. Secondly, culture constitutes an open system in which the interaction of elements within the system and the interaction with the outside environment act as stimuli for change. Thirdly, by means of accepted

values, norms, and established patterns of behavior a culture seeks to maintain its integrity by

exercising a measure of authority over its members. Therefore, when we discuss traditional cultures, we need to bear these features in mind.

Traditional culture is a culture whose growth is largely determined by the authority of inherited traditions, conventions, norms and belief systems which have their roots in the distant past. It is generally believed that traditional cultures are relatively static and display little differentiation and specialization and have low levels of urbanization. Modern cultures, on the other hand, are said to possess a high degree of differentiation, specialization, and urbanization. It is also said that the traditional cultures are normally ruled over by traditional elites who derive their authority from the past while in modern cultures popular participation in the governing process and accountability to the populace at large are more important than traditionally inherited forms of political legitimation. Furthermore, as Eisenstadt points out, traditional society has been conceived, above all, as being bound by the cultural horizons set by its tradition, and modern society as being culturally dynamic, oriented to change and innovation. However, as I shall demonstrate presently, this is too neat and simplistic a bifurcation and fails to take adequate account of the complex dynamics involved in the incessant interplay in human society between tradition and modernity.

The relationship between communication and culture is a close one. As Edward Hall once remarked, culture is communication, and communication is culture.

The imprint of this close relationship is to be seen in mass communication as well. Mass com-

munication, as we currently understand the term, came into existence somewhere in the sixteenth century with the invention of moveable type. One can identify five main stages in the evolution of communication in human society. The first stage is associated with the development of language many thousands of years ago. This was indeed a vital step in the forward march of man. In the second stage, a form of writing or notation was developed. The third stage, is memorable for the development of the art of printing. This was really the birth of mass communication. Messages could now be duplicated and transmitted across space and time as never before. In the fourth stage, electronic media like radio and television were developed. The fifth and the modern stage is characterized by satellite communication when we talk of mass communication, therefore, we are really talking of the last three stages. However, it needs to be borne in mind that not all societies are equally exposed to the mass media. While in certain societies satellite communication has become the order of the day, in other societies radio and traditional media exist side, by side performing equally valid functions.

With the growth of the mass media a corresponding growth of the consciousness takes place. Or to phrase it differently, in order to function effectively in the newer environment created by modern mass media, a change in our consciousness needs to take place. Norbert Weiner, the celebrated cybernetician once remarked that "We have modified our environment so radically that we must now modify ourselves in order to exist in this new environment. "The kernel of Marshall McLuhan's writings illustrates this same point. He wanted us to see the new mass media as electronic extensions of our nervous system. According to him, these new media of communication effect a fundamental change in our psychic balance. To read a newspaper is psychically different from reading a book. To listen to the news over the radio is psychically different from reading a newspaper. Similarly, a television news bulletin is different in terms of its impact on our

psyche from a radio news bulletin. McLuhan claimed that the older attitudes associated with Gutenberg place emphasis on privacy, individualism, linearity, sequentiality etc., while the more modern media like television tend to reinforce collectivity, communality, non-linearity etc. He was of the opinion that, with the proliferation of modern media of communication, we were moving toward a 'global village' and a 'general cosmic consciousness.' Clearly, Marshall McLuhan was overstating his case. But what is interesting from our point of view is his effort to call attention to the close link that exists between the growth of newer media and the growth of newer consciousness.

This point is of crucial importance in discussing the question of mass communication and traditional culture. In those societies which are characterized by a wealth of inherited traditions and customs and belief-systems, the impact of mass communication is likely to have far greater impact, generating tensions and conflicts. A good way of understanding these conflicts and tension is to adopt a phenomenological approach that is to say, by paying close attention to the everyday consciousness of average people caught up in this situation. Traditional cultures are characterized by a great degree of communality, interpersonal interactions, inherited traditions, forms of art, values and belief-systems. The newer forms of mass communication due to the force of both content and form, challenge some of these features. The main question before us is to find ways and means whereby the best of the past is combined with the most wholesome that modern communication has to offer. This is no easy task, but one that this Conference, and other like this, can fruitfully address. The cumulative wisdom and shared experiences of different cultures are crucial to the realization of this goal.

The concept of modernization is central to a proper understanding of the relationship between mass communication and traditional culture. Modernization, like culture, is one of those concepts which resists facile formulation. The research on the subject is volumi-

nous, and one can identify at least six different approaches to this question. First there is the historical approach which places emphasis on the broad historical movement of traditional societies toward modernization. The writings of scholars like Black are important in this regard. Secondly, there is the psychological approach as manifested in the work of social scientists like Lerner and McClelland, which seeks to posit a relationship between the propensity for modernization and psychological traits. Thirdly, the economic approach is important. Scholars like Rostow and Hagen attempt to analyze modernization in terms of economic development. We can identify as a fourth way the structuralist approach which focuses attention on the structural components of modernization. Here the works of such scholars as Parsons and Eisenstadt are deeply significant. Fifthly, there is the value-centered approach as exemplified in the writings of Pya and Verba which illuminate the relationship between values and the modernization process. Sixthly, we can identify a phenomenological approach to modernization as evidenced in the work of Berger which draws attention to the importance of examining the everyday consciousness of ordinary people caught up in this process. These different approaches have their distinct strengths and weaknesses. A feature common to all these approaches is the quest for a vantage point from which the putative dichotomy between tradition and modernity can best be observed. And this lies at the heart of any meaningful study of the impact of mass communication and traditional culture. The mass media are, after all, the most powerful agencies of modernization.

Peter Berger, the sociologist, sees this process of modernization taking place through the agency of mass media as the "urbanization of consciousness". He says "This urbanization of consciousness has been brought about especially through the modern media of mass communication. The process probably began earlier with the spread of literacy as a result

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of modern school systems pushing outward from the city into the remotest hinterlands. In this sense the school teacher has been a carrier of "urbanity" for at least a couple of centuries. This process has been vastly accelerated, however, by technological communications media. Through mass publications, motion pictures, radio and television, the cognitive and normative definitions of reality invented in the city are rapidly diffused throughout the entire society. To be linked to these media is to be involved in the continuing urbanization of consciousness...

That there is a very real conflict of interest between tradition and modernity, and that this has been exacerbated in traditional cultures by mass communication is an indubitable fact. Many of the statements I have made so far would tend to support this assumption. However, we need to bear in mind the fact that the relationship between tradition and modernity is more complex than such an initial exploration would have us believe. Culture is best understood as an open system. When a new stimulus is incorporated by a cultural system, it is seldom done in a passive way. Very often a complex interaction is set in motion. The system responds not passively but actively. While the new element influences the already existing elements in the cultural system, the new element in turn is redefined and affected by the system. Consequently, neither the new stimulus nor the culture to which it has been introduced remains the same. Hence, we must refrain from making a simple equation between mass media and traditional culture as one of donor and receiver, where the donor is active and the receiver passive.

We can better understand the complex connotations surrounding the terms 'tradition' and 'modernity' by examining an actual historical situation from Asian history. Gandhi of India sought to propagate new ideas, values and thought patterns consonant with modern times, but in terms of traditional

symbolic systems. He sought to propagate such concepts as egalitarianism, in the cultural idiom of the people within, non-violence, and the emancipation of women. His success can be attributed largely to this strategy of blending tradition and modernity. Was Gandhi a traditionalist or a modernizer? The answer is not simple. What this example illustrates, I think, is the fact that the definition of tradition and modernity and the delineation of these entities is by no means simple and calls for a far more deeper analysis than is generally available.

One can cite numerous examples from Asia to point out the fact that the relationship between mass communication and traditional culture need not be a simple relationship exemplifying tradition and modernity. This is best seen in those examples which illustrate the blending of traditional forms of communication with modern media. Let us take the case of televised puppetry in Taiwan: It is generally believed, doubtless with a large measure of justification, that modern mass media are a threat to the traditional and culturally sanctified forms of artistic communication. Hidetoshi Kato points out that in the early 1930s, hundreds of street singers and travelling story tellers were replaced by radios and phonographs. However, there are instances where traditional art-forms have been usefully blended with modern media. Bag puppetry was televised for the first time in Taiwan in 1970. Puppet shows were extremely popular in Taiwan before the arrival of electronic media. After it was televised in 1970, in a matter of a few months, bag puppetry became one of the top-rated television programs in Taiwan with revenue from advertising pouring in. The popular Indian cinema, in a different way, reinforces this same point. Today, in terms of production, India possesses the biggest film industry in the world, and the impact the popular films have had on the consciousness of the people is phenomenal. Film was introduced to India during British rule and was identified as a medium associated with European culture.

However, before long the popular Indian cinema took on a distinct identity of its own drawing as it did on the traditional storehouse of culture for plots, cinematic conventions and styles of representation. One can do a very useful comparative study of the techniques of classical Indian theatre and the folk theatre on the one hand and the modern cinema on the other. The popular Indian films may not be great works of art, but they do display a distinct Indianness growing out of the blending of traditional concepts of artistic communication with modern media.

What these examples underline is the fact that modern mass media and traditional culture should not be conceived of as polar opposites, and that a judicious and harmonious blending of the two can be achieved. Indeed, that is something worth striving for. While it is true that such a union is not always feasible, those of us who are seriously interested in mass communication should pay the utmost attention to this phenomenon. The blending of modern mass media and traditional concerns is not limited to the developing countries. One can observe analogous phenomena in the developed countries as well. Let us, for a moment, consider religion. Religion is generally associated with the past, inherited traditions. The modern temper and the essence of the technological civilization are seen as serious threats to the very survival of institutionalised religion. Many commentators equate modernization with secularization. However, the situation is a little more complex than such a cursory examination would have us believe. In the United States of America, the electronic media, far from undermining the power and authority of religion have in fact given it a greater sense of potency. Evangelists such as Billy Graham and Jimmy Swaggart thrive on the potentialities of television to reach ever larger groups of people. Indeed, it is this phenomenon that some have termed 'the electronic church.'

(To be continued)

Voting pattern indicates preference for progressive parties and reformist programs

Eqbal Ahmad

The contemporary Third World environment is indeed unfavorable to democratic development. But the obstacles to democracy there are other than those normally identified by most Western scholars, and by Third World apologists of authoritarianism. There is no evidence for the conclusion that the traditions and cultures of the Third World are alien to the spirit of democracy any more than those of the West; nor have the Asian, African, and South American peoples demonstrably lacked the tolerance, pluralistic outlook, and critical judgment presumably required for its practice. The real reasons for the "failure" or "erosion" of democracy lie in: (1) the derivative and dependent, unproductive and consumptionist character of the Third World bourgeoisie; (2) the primacy which imperial interests still enjoy in the Third World; (3) the extraordinary powers which the Third World bourgeoisie and its external allies have vested in a constantly expanding national security state. In effect, democracy has not "failed" or "eroded" in the Third World; it has been ruthlessly and violently suppressed; and more frequently than not the Western world, led by the U. S., has been an active party to suppression.

The evidence which emerges from the Third World's short-lived and sporadic experiments with constitutional democracy contradicts the allegations of its detractors. The record suggests at least the following:

(1) **The empirical evidence suggests a pattern of considerable bourgeoisie antagonism to what much of the left continues to describe as bourgeoisie democracy, and bourgeoisie freedoms.** Far from serving as an effective instrument of manipulation and control by the propertied classes, constitu-

tional democracy has been generally viewed by the dominant Third World elites with hostility and fear as being detrimental to their interests. All more or less democratic civilian governments have been overthrown in the Third World countries invariably by military officers belonging to and representing the interest of the national bourgeoisie and never by a popular protest movement or mass uprising. Thus, in Iran, the CIA-sponsored *coup d'etat* against the constitutional government of Mohammed Mossadegh found its narrow base of collaborators solely in the propertied classes. In Chile, the pot-banging housewives who attempted to prepare the political environment for the U. S. supported overthrow of President Salvador Allende were bourgeoisie *senoras*, while the poor and working class people gave overwhelming support to the democratic socialist government. Similarly, General Ziaul Haq's military "shorocracy" has been unable to gather noteworthy support among the disinherited people of Pakistan; as a means to keep the lid on, the General has made a habit of periodically renewing his promises to hold elections and restore civilian rule. Examples abound.

In a few instances, as in Pakistan in 1958 or recently in Nigeria' the military's intervention against extremely unstable or venal civilian government was greeted with relief; however, even in these instances the coup leaders at first declared theirs to be an 'interim' government and claimed their goal as being the restoration of democracy following fresh and impartial elections. The termination of **praetorian dictatorships**, on the other hand, has normally come about **through mass protests and uprisings** (e.g. Pakistan, 1968; 1971, Nicaragua, and Iran 1979) **or following defeat in war** (e. g., Greece 1975, and Argentina, 1983).

The great powers have been generally hostile to democratic development in their spheres of influence. The United States, which asserts paramountcy as a world power, has been especially antagonistic toward democracy in the Third World. There exists a fundamental contradiction between imperialism and democracy in dependent countries. If they are to remain representative, governments must evince some sensitivity to the popular desire for economic and political independence. Hence, elected governments, like those of Arbenz in Guatemala, Mossadegh in Iran, or Allende in Chile, tend to be non-aligned, and attempt to reclaim national resources away from foreign corporations. American policy, on the other hand, has been deeply committed to seeking clients in the cold war, and to ensuring for its capital privileged access to captive Third World economies. Hence, more often than not, the antidemocratic putsch in the Third World has had the support of the United States; U.S. secret services have often financed, advised, and even directed elaborate operations in order to overthrow constitutional, elected governments. (6) Since 1946, the U.S. has violently intervened in the Third World by military or para-military means once every 16 months; the overwhelming majority of its interventions have been against democratic governments or movements. Once in power, Washington's military and economic aid has sustained many an isolated dictatorship, from Argentina to Zaire, the Philippines to Pakistan, and Iran to Indonesia.

Less obvious, though more insidious, has been the effect of foreign aid, especially US "security assistance" on Third World state formation. These states emerged from the colonial experience with

two antagonistic political traditions — of command and consensus, the vice-regal and the republican, the imperial and the democratic. The colonial executive — with the Viceroy, Governor-General, or Resident General at its helm, and the army and bureaucracy as its pillars — represented the tradition of command. It owed allegiance to and served the interests of the metropole. Its role was to ensure the stability and conformity required for an efficient exploitation of the colony. The colonial state was a centralized, elitist, authoritarian entity inclined to rule by decree and given to associating the function of government with the maintenance of order and smooth accumulation of surplus.

The nationalist opposition to colonialism, led by its popular leaders, endowed with political parties and myriads of social, educational and economic institutions, necessarily became the carrier of the republican traditions. Support of the populace was its primary source of power. Hence it tended to be populist, often liberal, keen

to enlarge the consensus and expand its constituencies. Normally excluded from state power, it was inclined to concentrate on the civil society and favored representative government and federalist practices.

Inevitably, after independence the two traditions of government contested to gain hegemony over the independent state. It is this contest which the United States aid programs helped resolve in favour of the authoritarian institutions — the army and the bureaucracy — heirs to the colonial executive, the vice — small regal tradition. This process occurred rapidly in countries which joined the U.S. security system. A comparison between India and Pakistan is instructive: US policy alone is by no means responsible for the succession of military dictatorships in Pakistan; nor can nonalignment be credited as the sole cement of a democratic consensus in India. Other differences between the two regions of colonial India also explain the stability of democratic rule in one country, and the see-saw

struggle between authoritarian and democratic forces in Pakistan. However, there is little doubt that beginning in 1953, Pakistan's military alliance and aid relations with the US, vastly augmented the power of the army and bureaucracy. Thenceforth, the democratic forces in society, already weakened by the passing of its founding fathers, Mr Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, were unable to compete with the heirs to the vice-regal system. Hence, when General Mohammed Ayub Khan took over in 1958, four years after Pakistan had made its fateful alliance with the United States, no one was surprised. (7) Comparable developments occurred in the historically different environments of such countries as Iran, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, and South Korea. In each of these countries, Washington played a key role in strengthening the authoritarian state sector at the expense of civil society.

A "weighty consensus among "modernisation" theorists and

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media pundits in favor of the proposition notwithstanding, there appears to be no correlation between democracy and the levels of a country's economic development, literacy, or infrastructure. In the 1960's, for example, the trend toward neo-fascism began with the emergence in Brazil (1964) and Argentina (1966) of institutionalized militarism. Together, the two economically and educationally advanced countries produce about 75% of South America's industrial output. Similarly, India and Jamaica, among the poorest and in many respects the less developed among Third World countries have sustained democratic forms of government, while such rich countries as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait have not. For the causes of democracy's absence then, one must look beyond poverty, illiteracy, and political culture. (8)

The people's participation in the democratic process refutes the allegation that Third World masses

are ill-prepared for the role of discerning and informed electorates. The record so far yields conclusive evidence that, given an opportunity to choose from a plurality of parties and programs, Third world voters have displayed a sophistication which the majorities who have elected Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the U. S. and Great Britain ought to envy. The voters' turnout has been invariably excellent in contested and free elections. The voting pattern indicates a marked preference for progressive parties and reformist programs. Secular parties and leaders have been favored over religious fundamentalists: socialists and social democrats over conservative candidates, civilians over soldiers, independents and nationalists over the aligned pro-Western or pro-Eastern parties.

Examples abound; only a few should suffice. The average voter turnout for contested elections has been 65-70% — a figure con-

siderably higher than in the Western world. In a 1954 election, Pakistan's first after independence, East Pakistan's (now Bangladesh) electorate voted the conservative Muslim League (the party of independence) out of power in favor of a United Front of progressive parties. This result so frightened the West Pakistan's military and bureaucracy that they prevented the elected government from assuming power, and began preparing for a military take-over. In 1971 the West Pakistani electorate, similarly elected secular and reformist parties over the conservative Muslim League, and the fundamentalist Jamati-Islami, which did not return a single candidate to the parliament. In no Muslim country, including Pakistan, Turkey, and Malaysia, have fundamentalist Islamic parties showed noticeable strength at the polls. In Iran's first and only free election after the revolution, people elected a

(Continued on page 23)

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History and ideology in Sri Lanka — (2)

BOOK
REVIEW

N. Shanmugaratnam

Ethnicity and Social Change in Sri Lanka (Social Scientists Association, 1984)

Although Goonatilleke's paper bears the title 'The Formation of Sri Lanka Culture' it is actually a study of Sinhala Buddhist culture which cannot be equated with Sri Lanka culture. He deals with some aspects of the formation of Sinhala Buddhist culture which have not been deeply analysed so far from the perspective that informs his analysis. Of particular interest to me is his treatment of the ideological synthesis of Buddhism to serve the function of legitimation of secular power and exploitation. I shall first sum up the main points that are relevant to the questions I have in mind.

- (i) "Sinhala language and Buddhism were introduced at a time of consolidation of state power on an all island basis with the growth of an adequate surplus." (p. xiii). This growth of surplus was facilitated by the growth of the productive forces with the advancing hydraulic technology which enabled the creation of centralised irrigation systems.
- (ii) King Tissa (later to become Devanampiya Tissa) "was seeking means to consolidate at a level of ideology his hold on the country." Now, Buddhism was already a part of a powerful external dynamic impinging on the local order and Tissa and the ruling class of the time accepted it and converted it into an instrument of legitimation and social control by 'soft' means. The pervasive power of this ideology was

almost complete from the "centre" to the "periphery".

- (iii) At the time of introduction of the Sinhala language and Buddhism Sri Lankan society was feudal and it has remained so for 2500 years. The peasants' standard of living remained static since all the surplus was extracted "without the use of much organised violence" i. e. the ideological control was so total surplus transfer by taxes and labour services was made possible without any serious extra-economic coercion.

Before I take up some questions arising from the above points I wish to add a note on my earlier observation of Goonetilleke's identification of Sri Lanka culture with Sinhala Buddhist culture. The author has rightly identified the Southern Indian factor as a part of the external dynamic, but his total omission of the Sri Lankan Tamil formation as an internal aspect is only too eloquent. It appears that to Goonetilleke this aspect is an externality, perhaps part of the South Indian formations and processes. He seems to imply that Sinhala Buddhist assimilation was the only internal dynamic operating for 2500 years. A Sri Lanka Tamil has hardly anything to learn about his Sri Lankan cultural heritage from this paper which bears the misleading title of Sri Lanka culture. Goonetilleke should have appropriately titled his paper "The formation of Sinhala Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka". But perhaps he wanted

to give the subtle message that Sri Lanka culture is nothing but Sinhala Buddhist culture. If this impression is correct then Goonetilleke has exposed himself to the serious charge of an ethnocentric historiography which serves the ideology that Sri Lanka culture and Sinhala Buddhism are co-terminous. I will be only too glad to withdraw this comment if the author can offer a convincing denial.

By developing the argument of ideological control as opposed to direct repressive means of surplus extraction Goonetilleke has attempted to offer additional evidence against 'Oriental Despotism' and the Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP). Earlier Siriweera (1972) had effectively challenged the prevailing theory of a unicentric form of land tenure by offering a convincing model of a multi-centric pattern in medieval Sri Lanka. With this contribution Siriweera has supplied some vital material against the view that Sri Lanka had an AMP. However, Goonetilleke's arguments are not without flaws which in my view are products of his penchant for sweeping generalisations and the construction of a macro model of a history covering a span of 2500 years without due regard to the diversities and complexities of the internal processes and due to his cursory treatment of the modes of surplus extraction. Let me ask some simple questions.

On what basis does the author assume that Sri Lanka was feudal

for 2500 years? To my knowledge no historian of feudal societies has even suggested that feudalism had such a long history any where. In the light of Goonetilleke's argument Sri Lanka would seem an exception not only because of more than two millenia of feudalism in the whole island but also due to the highly sophisticated ideological state apparatus which made violent forms of social control almost unnecessary. I would admit that the latter point (ideology) has been more systematically treated than the former by the author. But the apparently sophisticated treatment of ideology notwithstanding one has yet to know how a single type of class structure and its mode of surplus extraction continued without change for 2500 years. This extraordinary stationary socio-political state had existed while the productive forces developed. The only possible explanation one can elucidate from Goonetilleke's paper is the ideological factor. But that is ascribing too much to the ideological. Goonetilleke cites Siriweera's study of 1972 to which reference has been made earlier in this note. However, he seems to have missed an important consequence of Siriweera's interpretation of medieval land tenure in Sri Lanka. That is, due to the varied forms of land tenure the whole class structure and landlord-direct producer relations would have been more complex than assumed by the class analysis presented by Goonetilleke. I do not know what evidence exists to prove or disprove the conjectural statement I have made. But this has to be pursued by those who are keen to offer an alternative to the AMP. It may be mentioned here that studies of medieval peasantry in Europe and the feudal society of Japan (1603-1868) have shown that differentiation did exist among feudal peasants due to various. Further in Europe and to India peripheral regions of feudal societies were not subject to the same degree of repressive control as the heartlands of the regimes. On the basis of documentary evidence Japanese feudal society seems to be the most thoroughly feudalised throughout the whole territory of any country. Japanese

historians have periodised feudalism to cover a span of 265 years prior to the Meiji reformation of 1868. But from Goonetilleke's assertion one would think that Sri Lanka was thoroughly feudalised from the "centre to the periphery" for an indefinite period and in ways incomparable to other feudal societies. One is beset with serious doubts about this and these doubts become confirmed to a great extent when we move to Leslie Gunawardena's cautious treatment of the development of Sinhala consciousness.

For instance, Goonetilleke seems to take it for granted that Sinhala and Buddhism were inseparable throughout the 2500 years, but Gunawardena offers a different interpretation which seems more plausible. Gunawardena approaches his main theme viz. Sinhala consciousness with due regard to the diversities, contradictions and intertemporal variations of the internal dynamics. Throughout most of his paper Goonetilleke gives the impression that there were no other power centres or principalities in the island than that of Tisso's Anuradhapura at the time of the coming of Buddhism. He seems to suddenly become aware of the existence of several other kingdoms and the unreliability of the Mahavamsa version of a single sinhala kingdom for the whole island towards the end of his paper in his conclusion. This belated qualification devalues the preceding analysis since the whole complex process of territorial and political consolidation has been assumed away. But this is where the whole onus of explaining the formation of "Sri Lanka Culture" lies.

As one moves to the paper of Leslie Gunawardena one sees historical reality in its really complex, not so neat form. After examining several sources other than the Mahavamsa he concludes that, "It is evident from information in these sources, that at the beginning of historical times there were several petty rulers holding sway over various parts of the island. Of these rulers, those at Anuradhapura sent a delegation

to the court of Asoka held a consecration ceremony with the ritual goods provided by the latter and assumed the titles Devanambiya and Maharajah" (p. 18). Gunawardena further asserts very positively that, "There is no evidence, however to show that the other rulers acknowledged his suzerainty or that he was more than a mere aspirant to over lordship over the whole island." (p. 18).

Gunawardena guides the reader through the intricate processes and vicissitudes of state formation and the phases of Sinhala consciousness including the evolution of a state ideology. He recognises the plurality of the Sri Lankan society and the crisscrossing or intersecting elements of Sinhala-Tamil and Buddhist-Hindu while showing the processes of ethnic consolidation. Sinhala consciousness as a part of the ideology of state formation has gone through a protracted process. It began with a form of local group consciousness based on lineage and evolving through stages towards a Sinhala Buddhist identity after the seventh century when Tamils came to be regarded as opponents of Buddhism. But, as shown by Gunawardena, this identity was qualitatively different from the present day Sinhala buddhism.

Further, the Sinhala ideology and consciousness did not bring together all the Sinhala speaking people into an ethnic bloc on the basis of hostility to the Tamils. Siriweera's reassessment of the Dutthagamani-Elara episode puts to rest (at the level of historical analysis) the latter day projections of Dutthagamani as an anti-Tamil warrior king. In fact, Dutthagamani had to defeat 32 petty Sinhala rulers before he took on Elara, won the final battle and unified the whole country under his rule. There were Sinhala officers in Elara's army and Tamils in Dutthagamani's.

(Concluded)

The 1982 elections . . .

(Continued from page 13)

- borrowed from A. J. Wilson, *The Gaullist System in Asia — The Constitution of Sri Lanka* (1978) (London, 1979). The author is grateful James Manor for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.
2. Only one of three or four factions of the SLFP actively supported the campaign of the party's presidential nominee, Hector Kobbekaduwa.
 3. Other leading SLFP figures had not formally defected to the UNP, but were throwing their support behind the President.
 4. The most notable case was Vijaya Kumaranatunga, Mrs Bandaranaike's son-in-law, and a key figure in the faction of the party which had actually supported the SLFP candidate in the presidential campaign.
 5. J.P. Jupp, *Sri Lanka: Third World Democracy* (London, 1978), p. 186 and *passim*.
 6. For some discussion of the conceptual problems involved in talking of 'nationalism' of the various Sri Lankan ethnic groups, see M. Roberts Meanderings in the Pathways of Collective Identity and Nationalism in M. Roberts (ed.), *Collective Identities, Nationalisms and Protest in Modern Sri Lanka* (Colombo, 1979).
 7. Jupp, *Sri Lanka: Third World Democracy* especially chs. 2, 3, 5 and 7
 8. The oldest and, until recently, the largest of the Marxist parties the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) suffered a humiliating rebuff in 1982 when its presidential candidate Colvin R. de Silva, obtained less than 1 per cent of the vote despite being a well-known and respected public figure. The Communist Party did not contest the election, and supported the SLFP candidate.
 9. The core of JVP support lies in south-western lowlands, the established base of Marxist electoral support (Jupp, *Sri Lanka: Third World Democracy*, ch. 3).
 10. *Ibid.*, ch. 5.
 11. R. P. Wijesiri, the second MP for the two-member Harrisspattuwa electorate. He was to rejoin the UNP after the 1982 presidential election.
 12. Sri Lanka has no public opinion polls.
 13. For details of the Marxist parties see the notes to Table 3.1. For an account of the history of their relationships with the SLFP see Jupp, *Sri Lanka: Third World Democracy*, ch. 3.

(To be continued)

Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)

The national-political crisis and security threat have placed such tremendous pressure on a party heirarchy known to be riven by factional differences, personality conflicts and succession squabbles that the Panditaratne resignation was described by a top LSSP'er as "only the tip of the iceberg"

Women's Peace . . .

(Continued from page 1)

pathirana (poet), Irangani Ratwatte (teacher), Kumari Jaya, wardena (university lecturer), Sister Helen Fernando (Holy Family), Lakshmi de S. Wijeratne (President, Federation of University Women), Bernadeen Silva (Centre for Society and Religion), Shireen Samarasinghe (Voice of Women), Rohini Weerasinghe (Kantha Shakti), Padmini Palliyaguru (Ceylon Teachers Union), Gowrie Ponniah, Kamini Vitharana (Scientist), Kumudini Samuel, Sepali Kodagoda, Anna, Subramaniam.

More signatures are being collected.

The Challenge . . .

(Continued from page 20)

social democratic candidate over both an Admiral, and the official candidate of the Islamic Republican party. In Iran's previous free election, nationalist democrats led

by Mossadegh had the majority. Similarly, in India, the religious, right-wing, and separatist parties have not been able to match the electoral strength of either the Indian National Congress or the left. The voting pattern has indicated also a preference among Third World voters for issues and ability to deliver on programs, rather than for personalities. Furthermore, in the cases of elections involving incumbents, there has been a tendency to punish governments which did not deliver on promises, or strayed from the democratic path. The Indian elections of 1976 and the Jamaican election of 1982 are cases in point.

The evidence of peoples preference for democracy over any other form of government is equally conclusive. In the absence of democratic rights, people have only negative, if much too risky, means to demonstrate their preferences and antipathies. When, on the morrow of independence, there were invitations and opportunities to participate in politics, constitutional democracy was the first choice of every decolonized country. Its overthrow was, in each instance, the responsibility of Western trained and, with few exceptions, pro-Western armies and bureaucracies. The only *coup d'etat* which have elicited some popular support were those that were aimed at ending corrupt and unpopular monarchies; Gamal Abdel Nasser's Free officers movement against King Farouk of Egypt, and Abdul Karim Kassem's coup against the Husseinite dynasty in Iraq being examples. In no country, except in China, did people mobilize against a parliamentary system. Even in nominally democratic China, they gave the Kuomintang regime two decades of lease on corruption and repression. Popular democratic resistance against police states, on the other hand, has elicited broad and inspiring courageous and sustained support of the masses, from Argentina to Iran, the Philippines to Pakistan.

(To be continued)

Left unity

IN trying to seek a military solution to the Tamil national question J. R. and his faithful adjutant, Lalith have fallen from the frying pan to the fire. They said their sole aim is peace and stability; now they have a continuous war and a string of curfews. They said, they were totally committed to a unitary state; now they have a defacto divided country. On top of that they are pressed by the international financiers to resort to austerity measures, which will definitely create a tremendous opposition in the urban areas and also among the youth in Sinhala areas too.

It is in this context that government propagandists have started a malicious slander campaign against Marxists under the pretext of exposing J. V. P. activities. It is clear that the government is making use of the opportunity provided by the silly tactics of the J. V. P. The J. V. P. could have used the mobilization of the left forces that existed few months back to come out and challenge the government openly. This is exactly what the N. S. S. P, did and we made the government retreat. But they did nothing of the sort and allowed the government to launch a slander campaign and to terrorize their rank and file members. Frightened by the campaign J. V. P, leaders, are now on the one hand proposing a "democratic front" with the S. L. F. P. whereas the latter accuses J. R. for releasing the "terrorists" that they had safely put in prison in their times. On the other hand they claim the Sinhala youth arrested by the government to be "reactionary conspirators" thus betraying their thinking that it will save their necks. They have forgotten how they were wrongfully accused of being C. I. A. agents in 71.

However it is clear that the campaign of the government has a deeper meaning than merely frightening the J. V. P.'ers. The whole idea behind this malicious campaign

is to confuse the workers and disorient the agitation at the work place for higher wages and better living conditions. All left activists are to be isolated from the mass of workers.

We appeal to the other parties of the left the S.L.M.P., C.P.S.L., L.S.S.P. and the M.E.P. to activate the joint agitation of the left. We have shown our willingness to participate in such a front and we have repeatedly appealed to be invited to any joint discussion that will be held. With this serious threat against the left movement of this country facing us, we appeal again to the other left parties to convene a joint discussion as soon as possible with the intention of projecting a combined left alternative to the masses which can give a democratic unity, defeat imperialism and pave the way forward for socialism.

Vickramabahu Karunaratna
General Secretary
Nava Sama Samaja Party

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