

Forward

THE VIEW FROM THE LEFT

VOL: 26

NO. 18

1ST DECEMBER 1982

PRICE ONE RUPEE

We Say.....

Fifth Amendment

President Jayawardene, who likes to boast about his youthful boxing days, is not averse to signalling his punches when it comes to politics, too.

During the recent Presidential election campaign he made only one firm promise—namely, to roll up the electoral map for a decade and obliterate the Opposition parties.

Re-elected as President, he has begun to fulfil this promise in the most ruthless way through the Fourth Amendment to his Constitution.

But even before the Fourth Amendment can be adopted, President Jayawardene has signalled a Fifth Amendment that he has in mind.

At this rate, the four-year-old 1978 Constitution will soon have more amendments than original clauses!

Not content with the additional six years in office he obtained on October 20, President Jayawardene told a referendum rally at Kandy that he really wants 15 years to complete what he has in mind.

He also announced that he intends to increase the number of MPs he will appoint to his "chit" Parliament by 28, and give the "democratic" Opposition parties some crumbs from this cake.

This may warm the hearts and heighten the expectations of these who, like Anura Bandaranaike, have joined voices with JR the stress the need for an anti-Marxist "democratic alternative" that can also include these renegades for whom the UNP cannot find places in its much-touted "National" government. But it will reduce Parliament to a puppet show and negate totally all democratic process that have existed in Sri Lanka for half a century.

J.R.'s Fourth Amendment seeks to filch sovereignty from the people and vest it in the President. The Fifth Amendment he has in mind envisages that the 1977 Parliament, with its built-in five-sixths majority, will be extended even after 1989, with President J.R. having the exclusive right to appoint not only government MPs but "Opposition" ones as well.

No wonder people begun to ask; why give us dictatorship in dollops? Why not go the whole hog and introduce a once-and-for-all Fifth Amendment that will make JR President for life, with a dummy Parliament that he can hire and fire at will?

In recent speeches, President J.R. has begun to tell us about his dreams. We leave it to the professional psychiatrists to analyse what suppressed compulsions these dreams signify. All we can say is: This man is dangerous! Unless we stop him by voting for the POT on December 22, JR's dreams can become the nation's nightmare.

★ ★ ★ "Naxalites"

Time was when dictators, real and would-be, saw Reds under every bed. President J.R. has added a new twist. He sees "Naxalite" cells and "moles" in every institution and movement that could remotely impede his ruthless drive for absolute power.

He has not stopped at alleging that "Naxalite hooligans" have taken over the SLFP. Now "Naxalites" are to be found in the Buddhist clergy, the Roman Catholic Church, the Civil Rights Movement, the Centre for Religion and Society, the Supreme Court, and the state's mass media.

J.R.'s dislike of the Communist Party, which is both political and pathological, is notorious. For years, he told us that this party was "dead". Now it appears to be very much alive and active, and even running the SLFP!

The Soviet Embassy was hinted at as another centre of operations. But pro-government newspapers say now that there is no "hard evidence" of this.

The cream of the jest (if we are to believe the government's well-known mouthpiece, M1GARA of the WEEKEND (28/11), is that even the American Embassy is suspect! Former Ambassador Wiggins is denounced and present First Secretary Kenneth Scott has been asked to leave because of suspected sympathies for "Eelam terrorists."

No one can, of course, criticise or even hold a different opinion from J.R. unless he is a Communist, a Naxalite, or an Eelam terrorist! This is how things stand today.

APPEAL

As a recognised political party, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka has been granted permission to state its viewpoint on the referendum on the Radio and the TV.

It will have to pay for this a sum that totals almost Rs. 100,000.

The CPSL appeals to friends and well-wishers to help it to meet this expenditure.

Donations should be made to authorised collectors, or sent directly to M. K. Arnolis Appuhamy, 91, Cotta Road, Colombo.

Referendum

'NO' CAMPAIGN OPENS

Nine Opposition parties, which have formed a National Committee to urge a "NO" vote at the referendum, opened their campaign with a mass rally at Colombo's Hyde Park on November 23.

This will be followed by similar central rallies in each of the 22 electoral districts before the referendum on December 22.

Chaired by Mrs. Sirimvo Bandaranaike, the opening rally was addressed by Messrs T. B. Illangaratne, K. P. Silva, Dinesh Gunawardena, Anil Moonesinghe, Colvin R. de Silva, A. Aziz, J. Niyathapala and G. D. I. Dharmasekera.

Over the weekend (November 27/28) referendum agents and main organisers of parties in the National Committees met at district level to map out the detailed campaigns in each district.

United referendum committees have also been set up to spearhead the campaigns at constituency, town and village levels.

The "NO" campaigners' main emphasis in the three-week campaign will be on house-to-house visits, locality meetings, distribution of leaflets and other referendum materials, supplemented with radio broadcasts and TV talks.

The first leaflet of the National Committee (see page 3) is also being distributed throughout the country. Individual parties have also issued their own leaflets calling for a vote for the POT, the 'NO' symbol.

Parties & organisations not in the National Committee have also started their "Vote NO" campaigns. The TULF has held several meetings in the North. The JVP has appealed to its supporters to vote for the POT. Many independent civic rights and democratic organisations have issued their leaflets and statements. Several trade union centres have also begun to mobilise "NO" support among their members.

EMERGENCY

Despite the demand of all non-government parties that the state of emergency should be lifted immediately, and notwithstanding the letter to the President from 11 non-government parties asking that the detention of Opposition spokesmen and officials should cease and the closure of ATHTHA and several Opposition printing establishments ended, the government has extended the state of emergency until December 20, the day on which campaigning in the referendum must end under the law.

In Parliament, the Prime Minister hypocritically remarked that the Opposition need not worry about the ban on ATHTHA as they would receive time on the

radio and TV to urge their views and the state-owned newspapers would give space to their meetings and statements.

In reality, the government seeks to close even these officials avenues of information to the Opposition parties to the maximum extent possible.

Recognised Opposition parties have been restricted to 45 minutes of radio and TV time each, while speeches of government spokesmen are relayed regularly and free of charge.

Charges for radio time have been increased by 50 per cent over what they were during the Presidential polls, while TV charges have been nearly doubled.

State-owned newspapers continue to black out Opposition rallies, press conferences and statements, or else relegate brief and distorted versions of them to obscure places on inner pages.

MAUBIMA

To fill the gap in the Opposition's propaganda campaign caused by the ban on ATHTHA, the Communist Party has converted one of its other newspapers, MAUBIMA (Motherland), into a daily newspaper from November 29.

Opposition parties, which have protested officially against the illegal display of the LAMP symbol on public highways and public transport, say that they will resort to legal action to compel the relevant authorities to obey the law and may themselves organise direct action to see that illegal symbols are removed and the law upheld.

They point out that this blatant defiance of the law is confined to certain localities only. The main offenders, they say, are UNP Municipal officials in Colombo and some towns, the Mudalali Mafia of Premier Premadasa in the Colombo district, supporters of District Minister Mallimarachchi in Kollonnawa and of Paul Perera in Attanagalla, public transport services under Minister M. H. Mohamed, and JSS groups in certain public corporations.

There is also no let up in the harassment and detention of leading officials, organisers and spokesmen of Opposition parties aimed at character assassination (with the aid of the government mass media's innuendoes) and obstructing the "NO" campaign in the referendum.

The SLFP is the worst affected. Assistant Secretary Vijaya Kumaranatunge is still detained, along with several others. In the Gampaha district alone, 5 of the main SLFP organisers are in detention.

Even where Courts release persons on bail, they are re-arrested and detained under emergency orders. In several cases before courts, government lawyers have objected to bail until the referendum campaign is over.

11 leading SLFPers, including General Secretary Ratnasiri Wickaramanayake and Politbureau members, are to be indicted for criminal conspiracy on "charges" that relate to 1980 and about which the government has taken no notice for two years.

Messrs T. B. Illangaratne and B. Y. Tudawe were among the prominent Opposition leaders asked to report to the CID last week. Mr Tudawe told FORWARD that all the CID seemed to be interested in was a statement he made at a public meeting that President Jayawardene's knowledge of national cultures seemed to be slight. But this had been slanted by some sections of the press to make it appear that he had been questioned in relation to the CPSL's involvement in the "Naxalite" assassination conspiracy alleged by the government.

PERTURBED

Government leaders are, nevertheless, perturbed at the fact that their campaign has not got off the ground. The pep talks of the President and Premier to government MPs (see page 8) confirms this.

They are also worried at the reports that some well-known UNP members and supporters may appear on "NO" platforms this month. Frantic efforts are being made to persuade or threaten them to desist.

The anti-government fasts and demonstrations by Roman Catholic clergy, nuns and laity, supported by non-Catholics, at what the Catholic bishops have described as "obnoxious" treatment of Catholic priests whom the government had indiscriminately detained on suspicion of being involved with "Eelam terrorists", is also causing the government concern. President Jayawardene's personal visit to Jaffna has not been able to stop these protests, which are now being echoed by Catholic populations throughout the country.

Who is "Tearing up the Constitution"?

(We publish below two letters, dated 12 and 18 November, 1982, which FORWARD has received from Mr. Ian Goonetilleke of 17, Wijarama Lane, Nawinna, Maharagama. As is known, Mr. Goonetilleke was the former Librarian of the University of Sri Lanka).

"Like a certain divine craftsman before him, Mr. J. R. Jayawardene fashioned a Constitution in his own image for the greater good of his people.

"Following due precedent, he made himself the all-powerful, all-knowing (if not omnipresent) potentate of all he surveyed. The people, however, remained supreme in that they retained the sovereign and inalienable right to elect their representatives at strictly stated intervals by the free use of a democratic device called adult franchise.

SO THEY SAY

"I have even been made to look like a fool who has been led up the garden path". (Mr. A. Amirthalingam on the TULF-UNP talks, WEEKEND 21/11)

★

"Unfortunately, many people only realise to-day that what the Communist Party said yesterday was correct, and wait until tomorrow to realise that what we say to-day is correct". (Mr. Pieter Keuneman, speech at Town Hall, Colombo, (9/11).

★

"After the referendum, I will invite all the democratic parties to form a government under a new system... The new Parliament will consist of 196 Members. This new system will be adopted to ensure fair representation of other democratic parties in Parliament". (President J. R. Jayawardene, at a referendum rally in Kandy, WEEKEND 21/11)

★

"President J. R. Jayawardene called upon the people to give him a 15-year term to meet the nation's aspirations". (Speech at Hatton, ISLAND, 20/11)

★

"We have to do some re-thinking about what is democracy and the democratic process". (President Jayawardene at Kandy, SUN 23/11)

★

"I would wish that we could follow the American method of even choosing our members of the judiciary by the vote of the people". (Ibid)

"Very soon, unfortunately, the shape of things, so neatly put together, began to come unstuck.

"In the precise American tongue, the cookie had begun to crumble.

"The Constitution-maker, pragmatic as ever, was compelled to resort to frequent amendments of his chosen instrument to maintain both imperious style and pervasive presence among his people. It was, apparently, unseemly for the people to protest too much.

by

H. A. I. Goonetilleke

"The time had come for the sovereign people to be put in their place.

HARA KIRI

"In the ensuing process the people's representatives have been forced into a collective act of *hara-kiri*.

"The sovereign and inalienable right of the voter has has changed hands.

"The Law-giver may soon be installed as the Sovereign, but, this time, not of his own making.

"Unlike in the divine script, however, it will be seen that what the Constitution had brought together for the good of the people, can, sometimes, be put asunder for the greater good and glory of the Constitution-maker.

"And so, in the fulness of time past, time present, and time future, Sri Lanka may, perhaps, inscribe yet another record in the Guinness Book of Politics—a dictatorship elected to power by the choice of the people!

Is it possible that a proud democratic nation will spawn a Sri Lankan "1984". strange

ling its life-line, like a thief in the night, with its own hands?

* * *

II - Darkness at Noon

"Freely elected legislative assemblies and the separation of powers doctrine may not be ideal forms of government, but they have been worked for the benefit of the people in the last fifty years.

"Indeed, they have led to an increasing degree of popular participation and democratic encounter, which recent moves by the Sri Lankan Grand Master are threatening to undermine.

"Dust is being thrown in the eyes of the voter in a despicable attempt to destroy the democratic gains of adult franchise and a well developed party system.

"Let us be quite clear. The Referendum is the culmination of an exercise designed, from first to last, for the eclipse of Parliamentary democracy under cover of a supposedly popular plebiscite.

"We have witnessed, since July 1977, the gradual emasculation of familiar democratic institutions and processes, sanctioned, however, by an overt display of constitutional pomp and legislative ceremony.

"Despite the specious constitutional halo around a thinning democratic pate, the political process has, for all practical purposes, assumed the forms and appurtenances of a one-party dictatorship.

T. U. L. F. & J. V. P. SAY "NO" TOO

Although the TULF will not join the National Committee of ten parties to campaign for a "NO" vote at the referendum, it will do so independently.

This was announced by TULF leader, Mr. A. Amirthalingam.

The TULF will concentrate on mobilising "NO" votes in the North and East, and has already begun its series of meetings for this purpose. Its referendum agents have also been appointed.

TULF spokesmen said that it would try to coordinate its campaign in the North and East with those of parties in the National Committee which are also campaigning in these provinces.

The possibility of the TULF holding "NO" rallies in areas of South Sri Lanka

where a considerable number of Tamils live has also been discussed.

The Janata Vimukthi Peramuna has also decided to campaign for a "NO" vote on December 22.

While it, too, will not join the National Committee, it is ready to coordinate activities with Left parties. It has already exchanged views with the CPSL and LSSP on this matter.

This leaves the NSSP of Vasudeva Nanayakkara as the only non-government party that has not yet come out in favour of a "NO" vote.

It began by asking for a boycott of the referendum, but has not made its position clear after this was rejected by other parties as tending to help the UNP, which hopes to win on a low poll.

"A spirit of totalitarianism is writ large in our polity already. Coming events have begun to cast their lengthening khaki shadows across our streets.

"Eyes getting used to darkness at noon have come to value your journal as a small candle in the enshrouding gloom."

"What the voters are being arm-twisted into doing on December 22nd is, no more and no less, than to signify their assent to a pattern of autocratic behaviour, which has systematically eroded the rights of the people.

"They are being intimidated into legitimizing a system which enables the Chief Executive to hamstring the Legislature at will and to instal a constitutional dictatorship under the transparent facade of a captive parliamentary majority.

"A largely compliant press has saddeningly aided and abetted this political slide by accommodating a veritable deluge of false propaganda and lying statements of all sorts intended to deceive and engulf the incautious reader.

"Dubious stories and murky rumours are set afloat to mask official double-talk. The truth of the political reality is consistently degraded by interminable evaluations of nauseous triviality and monumental self-deception.

A Lesson for J. R.

Turkey's military rulers can teach JR a lesson, which he can follow if things get tough.

They, too, had a referendum. But they made voting compulsory and everyone who voted had to give his name and address to the cops—to allow post-polls checks that they voted "correctly".

A novel twist was that campaigning IN FAVOUR of the government's proposal was allowed, but campaigning against it was forbidden by law!

JR is trying to do the same thing—but by locking up opponents and sealing ATHTHA and Opposition printing presses.

He can now learn from his Turkish counterparts how to do the same thing with greater finesse.

Not unexpectedly, Turkey's military rulers got 97 per cent of the votes cast. Much simpler than organising the disappearance of ballot boxes, as happened at Jaffna in last year's DDC polls.

What J. R. USED to say

"In Sri Lanka there is a full-fledged democratic government. It does not punish anyone for criticising the government; or close down newspapers, nor ban public meetings, and there is an Opposition free to express its opinion." (DAILY NEWS 24. 4. 82)

* * *

"He (President Jayawardene) posed the question "How is the sovereignty of the people exercised?" and said "It is exercised by the free vote of the people constantly held."

* * *

"He said that was because the people had the right to vote to exercise any change in elected government, all other freedoms—freedom of publication, freedom of association, freedom of opposition—flowed from it" (J. R. at Seminar on "Parliamentary Process in Sri Lanka", CDN. 11. 7. 1980)

* * *

"Universal adult franchise is an instrument by which the people elect their representatives. There may be other instruments, but universal adult franchise is the best." (J. R. at Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar. CDN. 25. 6. 81)

* * *

"Executive power will be vested in a President elected from time to time by the people. This will ensure stability of the executive for a period of years between elections. The Constitution will also preserve the Parliamentary system we are used to, for the Prime Minister will be chosen by the President from the the Party that commands a majority in Parliament and the other Ministers of the Cabinet will also be elected Members of Parliament". (UNP Election Manifesto, 1977)

* * *

"In Sri Lanka they had, under that system, free elections in 1947, in 1952, 1956, twice in 1960, in 1965, in 1970 and in 1977 and, he hoped, as scheduled in 1983". (J. R., CDN, 11. 7. 1980)

Why you should vote for the POT

On December 22nd there will be a referendum.

You will be asked if you want the present Parliament and M.Ps, elected in 1977, to continue for another six years, and the General Election due in 1983 put off until 1989.

This is one of the most important decisions that YOU, as a voter, have ever been asked to make.

Whatever political party YOU belong to or support, we ask you to think carefully before YOU vote.

AND YOU MUST VOTE.

If you vote correctly now, YOU will be able to safeguard your right to vote at a general election in the future.

What does this referendum mean?

1. For the last 50 years, we in Sri Lanka have regularly exercised our right to elect our Members of Parliament.

This referendum seeks to take this right away from us.

Do YOU want to keep this right? Do you want to continue to use it regularly?

If so, YOU should vote for the POT.

Unless YOU do so, it will mean surrendering this right for nearly 7 years - and may be for very much longer!

2. Perhaps YOU have voted several times before. YOU were then free to choose between political parties, policies and candidate.

If the "Lamp" wins in this referendum, this right to decide between parties, policies and candidates at a general election will be lost.

So, if you wish to keep this precious right, vote for the POT!

Why we should hold General Elections

1. Only if YOUR M.Ps are elected regularly by YOU will they feel responsible to YOU.

Only if YOU elect them, will YOU feel that YOU can go to them with your problems.

Only if YOU elect them, will they feel obliged to listen to YOU and to attend to YOUR needs.

It is not a good thing for any M.P., of whatever party, to continue for so long as 12 years without coming back to YOU and asking for YOUR vote.

When you elected YOUR M.Ps in 1977, you understood that you would be able to judge them again in six years.

This is the right they want to deny YOU.

What will happen if elections are not held in 1983?

1. If YOU vote for the "Lamp" at the referendum, probably a large number of the M.Ps will be APPOINTED by

the leaderships of the political parties to replace those whom YOU ELECTED in 1977.

YOU will have no voice in this matter and may not even know who these people are.

Appointed M.Ps will not be responsible to YOU. They may not care about YOU. They can never be a substitute for M.Ps YOU ELECT!

2. Since the last general election in 1977, there are now over TWO MILLION new voters who are eligible to vote in the 1983 general election.

If the "Lamp" wins in the referendum, there will be no general election for them to vote in until almost the end of this decade.

Very large numbers of them will have to wait until they are 32 years old before they can exercise their right to vote at a general election for the first time.

YOU can prevent this from happening by voting for the POT!

What will happen if a General Election is held in 1983?

1. These who approve the policies of the present government will have a proper opportunity of endorsing them and of enabling the government to continue its present programme.

Others, who may not agree with the government's policies, will have a peaceful and democratic method of freely expressing their opposition, and sending their representatives to Parliament.

This is how opposing points of view and political positions can be expressed in a parliamentary democracy. This is the method to which we in Sri Lanka are accustomed.

So vote for the POT!

2. Good government in a democratic society requires effective M.Ps in Parliament, whatever the party in power.

We need M.Ps who will criticise and point out mistakes and shortcomings.

Moreover, it is through the Opposition that the voters can, between elections, continue to exercise some control over those who govern them.

If a general election is held in 1983, YOU will preserve this right.

So vote for the POT!

This is a national issue, not a party issue

1. Are YOU someone who always votes for the UNP? Or do YOU vote for the SLFP? Or for any other party?

Do you change YOUR mind from time to time? Or have YOU refrained from voting because you do not care for any of the present parties or politicians?

Whoever you are, YOU must vote at this referendum.

What is at stake is a matter of national concern that transcends party divisions. It is the people's right to vote at regular general elections.

To safeguard this right, and the interests of YOURSELF, your children and your country - vote for the POT!

Keep the rights you have won - don't give them up!

1. All over the world people have fought to win and defend the right to elect freely those who are to rule them. Many have sacrificed life and liberty in such struggles.

In some countries, people still struggle, even to-day, to win this right.

In Sri Lanka, we have exercised this right for the past 50 years. During this time, political parties and YOUR M.Ps have come back to YOU regularly, and YOU have judged them by the free exercise of your valuable vote.

Protect this cherished heritage. Vote "NO"! Vote for the POT!

2. What is proposed in this referendum is not healthy for the welfare of democracy. It may even become a convenient precedent for future administrations to make further inroads into YOUR right to vote.

Do not be a party to the gradual destruction of democracy.

If you vote for the "Lamp" now, you may lose the right to vote FOREVER.

So, think matters over carefully.

If YOU surrender your right to vote in 1983, YOU may thereby be surrendering other precious rights - the freedom to associate, to express and publish your views, and immunity from arbitrary arrest and detention, etc.

If you give up any single right that is part of YOUR heritage as a citizen of Sri Lanka, you may lose them all.

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN.

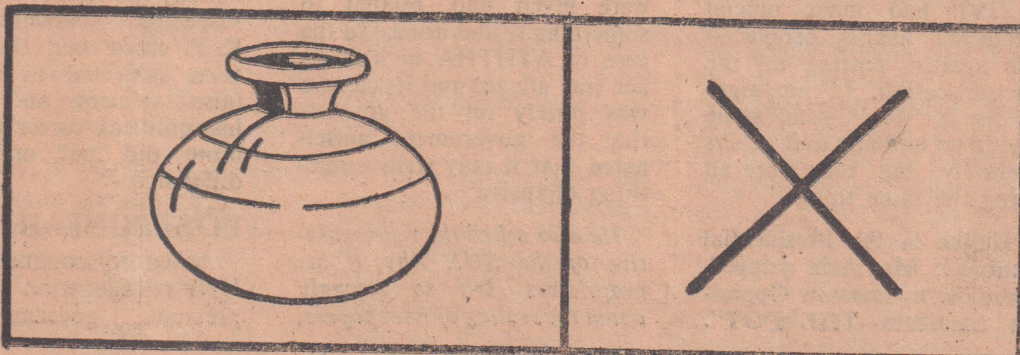
VOTE "NO" AT THE REFERENDUM!

VOTE FOR THE POT

to make certain that you

CAN VOTE FOR THE PARTY AND CANDIDATES OF YOUR CHOICE AT A GENERAL ELECTION IN 1983 AND REGULARLY THEREAFTER!

Issued by the National Committee Against Putting Off the 1983 Parliamentary General Election.



DIFFERENT VOICES

Opposition Briefs the Press

"Over 15 leading officials of the SLFP, including General Secretary Ratnasiri Wickrematunge and Asst. Secretary, Vijaya Kumaranatunge, have been detained under emergency regulations, with no charge made against them.

"Dozens of others, at all levels, are being daily hauled up and interrogated by the CID prior to their detainment.

"Our files have been seized and removed. The CID demands the lists of all polling agents we appointed during the Presidential elections.

"This is how the UNP fights the referendum. According to the way things are going, we may all be locked up before the referendum is held."

This is what Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, President of the SLFP, told a conference of foreign and local press correspondents on November 20 in Colombo. The conference was summoned by the National Committee against Putting Off Parliamentary Elections.

Associated with Mrs. Bandaranaike at the press conference were Messrs Hector Kobbekaduwa and T. B. Illangaratne (SLFP), Pieter Keuneman and K. P. Silva (CPSL), Anil Moonesinghe (SLSSP), Dinesh Gunawardena (MEP), A. Aziz (DWC-Political Wing), J. Niyathapala (Lanka Jathika Peramuna) and others. The LSSP was unable to be present owing to a Central Committee meeting held at the same time.

The conference was opened with a statement by Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, on behalf of the National Committee.

Answering questions from pressmen as to why the TULF and the JVP were not present, Mrs. Bandaranaike replied the TULF had been invited to take part in the National Committee and discussions on this matter were in progress. The JVP had also been invited to join the Committee, but no response had been received.

She added that all who opposed putting off the general election were welcome to join the Committee, which was not confined to political parties alone.

SINGLE CANDIDATE

Intervening, Mr. A. Aziz said that, as far as he was aware, both the TULF and the JVP had made official statements asking people to vote against putting off the general election. In campaigning for a "No" vote, some may do so unitedly and others separately, but they were all saying the same thing.

"Unlike in the Presidential elections", Mr. Aziz quipped, "there is a common Opposition candidate—THE POT".

Mr. Anil Moonesinghe said that the present UNP campaign of intimidation and suppression of opponents was unprecedented in the 50-years of adult franchise in Sri Lanka. He hoped that the newspapers would give publicity to their appeal that all this should be stopped and the referendum held under free and fair conditions.

ATHTHA

Mr. Pieter Keuneman said that all Opposition parties demanded that the state of emergency should be removed as the government was misusing it to place all types of obstacles in the way of the Opposition campaign.

Even if the government argued that it needed the Emergency to conduct its investigations into the alleged "assassination plot", there was no need to seal the ATHTHA and printing establishments available to Opposition parties for this purpose.

In the case of ATHTHA, the official reason given for sealing it was not anything it had said or published but an "anticipation" that it MAY publish something detrimental to public security in the future.

If this reason was genuine, the government could very well have taken necessary precautions through a pre-censorship, as it had done in earlier emergencies. Not only was ATHTHA banned, but the printing establishment where it was printed, which also printed many other newspapers and publications, was sealed and placed under permanent Police guard.

Asked by a representative of the SUN why he objected to the sealing of ATHTHA when he had not objected to the SUN under the previous government, Mr. Keuneman said that this was not the first time ATHTHA had been sealed. It had been sealed by earlier governments too, both UNP and SLFP. But there were important differences between the current sealing of ATHTHA and the sealing of the SUN under the last government.

First of all, ATHTHA had been sealed to prevent it playing its role as the premier Opposition daily newspaper during the referendum. The sealing of the SUN did not take place during an election or referendum. Secondly, the reasons for sealing the SUN were given and related to something it had done. In the case of ATHTHA, no specific act was alleged and its closure was purely on the grounds that the government anticipated that it may write something offensive.

He also asked the representative of the SUN why, if his proprietors felt so strongly about the sealing of newspapers,

they had not written against the sealing of ATHTHA in their newspapers?

"SHAMEFUL"

Asked what they thought about the government voting with Britain in the UN over the Falklands resolution, Mr. Keuneman said that it was "shameful" and a "disgrace to all Sri Lankans".

The government seemed more concerned with currying favour with a group of British capitalists, currently exploring opportunities for investment in Sri Lanka, than with questions of principle or non-aligned positions.

Mrs. Bandaranaike commented that this voting showed that the UNP government is totally unfit to represent Sri Lanka in the non-aligned movement.

S. D.

Replying to a question about Mr. S. D. Bandaranaike's favourable remarks about a "National Government", Mrs. Bandaranaike said that the SLFP had officially opposed participation in any such government and, in any case, had not been invited to do so. Mr. S. D. Bandaranaike told them, when they inquired, that he had been misrepresented and he had been asked to issue a correction. "After that, we shall see", she said.

Answering another question, she said that, as the SLFP's General Secretary was detained incommunicado, he had been prevented from appointing its referendum agents as only he could do so under the law. This has to be done before November 24. If the SLFP, as the biggest Opposition party, was denied polling and other agents, impersonation and other electoral malpractices became easier. The SLFP had asked to see President Jayawardene in this connection, but had been told that he was out of town and would not return until November 23.

She confirmed a statement made earlier by Mr. Pieter Keuneman that, when inquiries were made about why Mr. Ratnasiri Wickrematunge was detained, the "highest authority in the land" had informed her that he was held in connection with inquiries into matters dating back to 1980, when she was stripped of her civic rights and protest mobilisations were being planned.

Asked by a press representative what he had to say about being included by a Sunday newspaper among the suspected "Naxalites", Mr. K. P. Silva said that he had been subjected to so many false statements and insults in his political career that one more did not make much difference.

POSTPONEMENT

Asked to comment on the UNP's allegation that the previous government had

postponed elections, for two years without consulting the people, Mr. Keuneman replied that the situations were completely different.

In 1970, the United Front had received a mandate from the people to convert the Parliament into a Constituent Assembly and draw up a Republican Constitution. This work, in which the UNP and then Opposition parties also co-operated for varying periods, took two years. The former Soulbury Constitution was abolished and Sri Lanka was declared an Independent Republic with a Parliament, whose members took their oaths to a new Constitution and a new Parliament, whose term was six years instead of the five that existed earlier. However, it was decided that the term of the new Parliament that came into existence in 1972 would, in the first instance, be only five years and six years thereafter.

In the current case, the Parliament had been elected in 1977. A new Constitution was adopted one year later (in 1978) under which the term of Parliament was to continue until August 1983 and no longer. From 1978 to 1982, there had been no mention of putting off the general election due in 1983. Indeed, President Jayawardene had several times assured the country that this election would be held within the due time. Even as late as 22 October, 1982 (i. e. one day after his re-election as President) he had told the foreign press at a conference that

the general elections will be held "in a few months" and the only question was WHEN.

Now the government had suddenly decided to put off the general elections due next year until the end of the decade - i. e. the entire life span of the 1978-89 Parliament if it had been elected - merely because he was not sure, on the basis of the 20 October 1982 voting, that he could get even a two-thirds majority under the P. R. system he introduced.

Therefore, he said, the current extension of the life of Parliament was not due to any problems of a new Constitution. It was merely a device to retain the government's present five-sixths majority, to which it has no claim today according to the October 20th voting patterns.

Asked for his comments on the charge made by the Prime Minister and others that the CPSL was at the bottom of the alleged assassination plot, Mr. Keuneman said that it was an "adjectival LIE". Although the charge had been made nearly a month ago, not a single member of the CPSL, from top to bottom, had even been asked a question about it by those conducting the so-called investigation.

Asked whether she felt that those voting "NO" could win the referendum, Mrs. Bandaranaike answered: "If the people are given a free and fair choice, and the UNP does not attempt to rig the referendum in various ways, I am confident we can win".

VOTE 'NO', SAYS MIRJE

An appeal to all who value democracy, irrespective of their normal party loyalties, to vote against the government's proposal at the referendum is made by the MOVEMENT FOR INTER-RACIAL JUSTICE & EQUALITY (MIRJE), in a statement issued by its President, Father Paul Caspersz.

Stating that "the referendum would amount to a denial of the people to elect their own MPs", MIRJE states that it is opposed to the government's decision "to substitute a referendum for the constitutionally due parliamentary elections."

"The usually democratic device of referendum", it says, "in this context is patently demagogic. Besides there was no unanimity about even the constitutionality and legality of the move if we are to judge by the fact that three of the seven judges of the Supreme Court dissented from the majority decision of the Court."

"What would emerge in the event of a victory for the proposal of the government at the referendum," MIRJE adds, "is a Parliament devoid of even a semblance of independence and which would be nothing more than a mere rubber stamp for the President".

The proposal to put off general elections has also been strongly opposed by the MOVEMENT FOR THE DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS, in a letter to President Jayawardene signed by its Joint Secretary, Mr. S. G. PUNCHIHEWA.

The MDDR calls the government's proposal a "negation of democratic rights" and an attempt "to wrest the right to vote from the people".

The statement also demands that the sealing of ATHTHA and SUTHANTHIRAN should be immediately discontinued, and also calls for the withdrawal of the state of emergency.

BUT ALL SAY 'NO'!

DISTORTED

According to a table compiled by the CSR if the 1977 Parliament is prolonged to 1989, the representation in Parliament in relation to the voting at the Presidential elections of 20 October 1982, would be distorted.

The UNP and CWC, which, between them, obtained 3,450,811 votes, would continue to hold 145 seats. Thus, during the period 1983 to 1989, their representation would be in the proportion of 23,798 votes per seat.

The SLFP and CPSL, whose combined campaign obtained 2,548,438 votes, would continue to hold a total of 7 seats or less. Their proportion would be 364,062 votes per seat!

The JVP, All-Ceylon Tamil Congress, LSSP and NSSP, who have no representation in Parliament at present, will continue in this position.

The TULF has 16 seats. but their proportion cannot be estimated as it boycotted the 1982 polls.

LAW, NOT JUSTICE

"What is legally correct is not necessarily just and righteous", says Father TISSA BALASOORIYA, O.M.I., Director of the Centre for Society and Religion (CSR) in a letter, dated 21.10.1982, which has been sent to the President, the Prime Minister, and all Ministers and MPs.

The section of the letter, which deals with the proposal to put off the general election due in 1983 and to seek sanction for this in a referendum, reads as follows:—

"The deeper question is concerning a referendum and the sovereignty of the people. It is true that a referendum is an exercise of the electorate.

"What is now sought by Government may be legally correct if the people approve the constitutional amendment by a majority vote with at least 1/3rds of the electorate voting in favour.

"What is legally correct is not necessarily just and righteous.

"Democracy is based on the principle of majority rule and the understanding that the majority will respect the rights of the minority.

"Government by consent is acceptable only if there is a fair and reasonable chance for the minority also to share power and/or if their rights are respected. Otherwise those who are excluded from the exercise of power lose confidence in the democratic system of majority rule. The problems of the North bear witness to this.

UNDERMINES

"The present proposal, even if the referendum is positively supported by over 50% of the voters, and though it may be legal according to the Constitution enacted by this Parliament, UNDERMINES THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS for the following reasons:

- 1) The minority which may be up to 49% has no opportunity of improving their representation in the legislature for 12 years from 1977-1989.
- 2) The majority too cannot decide on their representatives as it is only the party chiefs who can nominate members to Parliament, even when there is a change.
- 3) The present Constitution does not provide for Government MPs of Parliament the possibility of expressing discontent with the Government, except at the risk of losing their seats. Crossing over can be only to the Government.
- 4) The electorate cannot change the proportion of seats even among the Opposition.
- 5) According to the system of P.R. on the basis of the October 1982 Elections, the Opposition would have had about 40-45% of the membership of Parliament. But under the referendum they will have only about 16%. The SLFP with 2,458,438 votes, i.e., 39% of the electorate, in its favour will continue to have only 6 MPs.
- 6) No new parties will be represented in Parliament. This is grossly unfair by the JVP which has obtained 273,428 votes on October 1982 and demonstrated its national status as a

political party willing to function within the democratic system. Likewise for the All Ceylon Tamil Congress and other parties not represented in Parliament. The President has often expressed his desire to have eminent political leaders of smaller parties in Parliament. This too is excluded by this legal but unfair process.

7) Younger citizens are denied a chance of contesting, nominating or voting for candidates other than those presently in Parliament, for twelve years 1977-1989.

8) The referendum does not give the voters a choice of alternative candidates, parties or policies. Nor does it give an opportunity for the electorate to opt for another proportion of party representation within Parliament.

9) The MPs are not personally accountable to their constituencies, though they were elected in 1977 to represent territorial constituencies. The vote is now for a slate of 144 Government MPs or party nominees, 16 TULF, 6 SLFP, 1 CWC and 1 CP. This must be necessarily maintained till 1989 with the possibility of crossing over only to the Government.

10) The District Development Councils too would not have a renewal of members by election, as half of them are MPs.

11) No by-elections have been held (except after election petitions) or will be held because the Constitution of 1978 provides for proportional representation. With the proposed referendum there will be neither proportional representation nor general elections.

12) If the present President relinquishes his office before February 1989 i.e. the end of this second term, it is the present Parliament, which now wants its term extended, that will elect a President to complete the balance period of the second term. This too is a breach of trust concerning the Presidency itself.

"The present referendum, if accepted by the electorate, may be legally correct, but it will be a contravention of the principles and spirit of democratic government. It will be an unfair use of power by majority in a Parliament in the last few months of its term. It is a grave breach of trust by the rulers who promised to hold elections and spoke so eloquently of proportional representation.

NO SUBSTITUTE FOR ELECTION

"It is argued that so long as the people approve the Bill to extend Parliament by a referendum, then the requirements of democracy are met. The 'will of the people' has manifested itself, so all is well. This argument must be considered carefully," says the CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT in a statement signed by Secretary DESMOND FERNANDO.

"However, what is in effect now being said, is that a referendum by means of which the life of the existing legislature is extended, can legitimately take the place of a fresh election of a new Parliament.

"One cannot treat a referendum to extend the existing Parliament as a substitute for election for a number of reasons. For the purpose of argument, we assume here that the referendum is passed by 51% of the votes, though really it needs to be passed only by 50% plus one more vote.

"One reason has already been indicated above. Our present legislature has been elected on an admittedly unsatisfactory system. Would it be fair to allow 50% of the voters at a referendum to prolong the life of such a legislature, in which 49% of the voters are unrepresented or under-represented?

"Similarly, is it fair to permit 51% of the voters at a referendum to authorise the continuance of the making of changes to the Constitution by a Parliament in which one party has, due to an anomaly which has been rectified for future elected Parliaments, a two-thirds majority? In effect, is one not permitting constitutional change by a 51% majority of the voters, whereas the Constitution clearly envisages that such change must be approved by members of Parliament representing two-thirds of the voters?

DIFFERENCES

"The reason that a referendum is no substitute for a general election is not, how-

ever, confined to the fact of the subversion of the principle of proportional representation. Even if the old electoral system continued, there are major differences between a fresh election and prolongation of an existing Parliament.

"Firstly, at an election there are clear alternatives placed before the people—parties, policies, candidates. It would have been clearly indefensible had President Jayawardene sought not to have a presidential election (at which there were alternative candidates in the field) but to extend his period of office by a constitutional amendment brought about by a referendum. Why, therefore, apply a different principle to the legislature?

"Secondly, general elections in the past have been fought electorate-wise. The composition of a Parliament under the old system would depend not on the overall voting in the country but on the distribution of votes within the electorates. A referendum might show a bare majority in favour of the continuance of the present Parliament. But a fresh election held instead, even if people voted along the same party lines as at the referendum, could produce a totally different Parliament, depending on how the support of the each party is today distributed among the electorates.

"In other words, a party receiving 51% of the votes taking the country as a whole (as is done in a referendum,) might not have a majority of members in Parliament at all.

"Even if the party strength in the newly elected legislature happened to be the same, there could also be changes in the electorates—a seat gained here offset by a loss there.

"Substituting the referendum for a general election, even under the old electoral system, thus denies the right of the individual electorates to

express a change of mind and to be represented by the party or the candidate of their choice.

"It should also be mentioned that the argument has been put forward that the voting pattern at the recent presidential election would have given the ruling party a two-thirds majority at an election based on the old 1972 system, and that therefore it is quite fair to extend the present Parliament. However, it would certainly not have produced a two-thirds majority under the proportional representation system. And in any event, it is not correct to give either of these interpretations to the voting pattern at the Presidential election. For one reason, the personalities, policies and issues are not the same in each case.

"It is true that the Constitution envisages the possibility of extending the duration of Parliament.

"Resort to this is justifiable only in an exceptional situation (e.g. war, when all parties would be likely to agree). Such an extension should also be for no longer than the situation demands. To use this provision to justify an extension for six years, with absolutely no unusual circumstances to justify it, is most extraordinary.

"Furthermore it is clear that the Constitution does not contemplate the extension of the present Parliament. The present Parliament consisting of 168 members, which has its origin in the old electoral system, is dealt with in the 'Transitional Provisions' of the Constitution. These provide that the present Parliament, unless earlier dissolved, shall continue 'for six years from August 4, 1977 and no longer' (Article 161 (e)). The provision contemplating a possible amendment to extend the duration of Parliament by

(continued on page 7)

Can we have a 'Chit' President too?

The UNP tries to cover up its gross violation of democracy in putting off general elections to Parliament by saying that, even if there will be a "chit" Parliament until 1989, the President is, at least, elected by the people.

But what will happen if President J. R. Jayawardene, now 76 years old, dies or becomes otherwise incapable of functioning as President between August 1983 and August 1989?

The "chit" Parliament will have to elect one of its "chit" members as his successor.

Then we will have not only a "chit" Parliament but a "chit" President as well.

What price democracy then?

G. Hemasiri

Rajagiriya.

"National" Government

President Jayawardene seems to have over-played his drive for a "National" government and stirred up a hornet's nest within the UNP.

The SLFPers who have responded to his appeal are relatively small and unimportant fry. Some, like Sarath Dias and Mahinda Rajapakse, seem to have crossed over because the current UNP MPs for the seats they covet are not being re-nominated, and there are vacancies for them to fill. Others, like Vernon Tillekeratne, are nonentities.

I don't blame the UNP Ministers and MPs if they are indignant at the prospect of having to give way to accommodate people like these. It would have been different if people like Maithripala, Anura, and S. D. Bandaranaike had come over. But they seem to be still vacillating.

Kalugalle made things worse when he told the newspapers that he had discussions with the President who agreed with him that there were too many Ministers and that the number should be reduced to 12. Mr. K. also announced that he would not mind becoming one of the 12, if asked.

This will mean that over 25 present Ministers of various categories will have to bow out—either altogether or to lesser positions. As both they and the UNP's MPs have given J. R. their undated but signed letters of resignation, they do not know when and on whom the axe will fall.

On top of this, obviously spurred by the prospect of several new "chit" MPs if the UNP wins the referendum, Mr. Sellasamy of the CWC and some JSS chiefs have also publicly pressed their claims on account of services rendered.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the President has got Anandatisa to say that a "National" government is not needed just now, and Lalith Athulathmudali to say that it is demanded more by the Opposition than the govern-

ment and that the idea must have time to "evolve", and, finally, UNP Chairman Panditharatne to announce that there will be no changes until the referendum is over.

The emphasis now seems to have shifted from the need for a "National" government to Anura Bandaranaike's proposal (supported by the UNP chiefs) for a "democratic alternative".

In order to help this along, the UNP is now thinking of a fifth amendment to the Constitution to increase, after the referendum is won, the number of "chit" MPs to 198 (the number recommended by the Delimitation Commission for what expected to be the elected 1983 Parliament) and to distribute some of the extra 28 seats to "responsible" Opposition parties, provided they do not nominate "Naxalite hooligans" or people like Kuttimani.

We are likely to hear more about this "democratic alternative" as time goes by.

Ambrose Cooray

Moratuwa.

J. R. vs C. J.

I wonder why President Jayawardene decided to release to all the newspapers the confidential correspondence between himself and Chief Justice Neville Samarakoon, his own appointee.

We now know that it is the Chief Justice's opinion that "during the past few years, there has been a gradual erosion of the position of the Chief Justice and, indeed, that of the Supreme Court Judges, by Executive action." By "executive", the CJ obviously has in mind action by the head of the Executive, President Jayawardene.

In typical fashion, the President not only blackguards the former government but suggests that what really worries the CJ is not the status and independence of Supreme Court judges, but some trifling matter about the equation of his salary and that of the Governor of the Central Bank.

What made President Jayawardene release this correspondence at this moment? Is he annoyed that the Chief Justice was one of the three Supreme Court judges who held against the government in the 4 to 3 decision on the fourth amendment? Or is he anxious to demonstrate his toughness and readiness to act at a time when two matters in which he is directly concerned, namely the election petition filed by Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa against him and the new application by former Justice Minister Felix Dias Bandaranaike, are coming up for decision by the Supreme Court and when the CJ will have to nominate the judges who will hear these matters?

If President Jayawardene does not hesitate to intimidate Opposition parties over

the referendum, and if he did not hesitate to do so in regard to the Buddhist clergy in the Getambe temple affair, why should we think that he would feel any compunction in trying to do the same with the judiciary?

As a junior lawyer, I can tell you that, apart from a few UNP diehards, most of the Bar, whatever their political views may be, are impressed by the several actions that the CJ has taken recently to emphasise the independence of the judiciary.

I enclose my name and address for your information, but please do not publish them lest I, too, am branded as a "Naxalite hooligan" and detained under emergency regulations.

"FIAT JUSTITIA"

Hultsdorf.

Disgrace

What a disgrace for Sri Lanka that this government's delegation to the UN voted WITH Britain AGAINST the UN resolution calling for talks on the Falklands issue!



This was obviously done so as not to offend the visiting delegation of British industrialists and investors who were in our country at the same time to study investment prospects in the Free Trade Zone.

Not only the non-aligned states but even imperialist USA voted FOR the motion, while several NATO states abstained. But UNP Sri Lanka voted with Britain and her shameless colonial stand in this matter.

What right have we, therefore, to ask non-aligned or socialist states for their support for Sri Lanka's membership of the Security Council?

Chandra Goonetilleke

Kesbewa.

Gagged

In extending the emergency until December 20, the day campaigning in the referendum must stop under the law, the government has tried to throw dust in our eyes by saying that public meetings in connection with the referendum will be allowed.

But the ban on AITHA, the main Opposition daily, continues. Opposition officials and speakers are detained or harassed by repeated CID questioning. Printing establishments owned by or available to the Opposition parties continue to be sealed.

Opposition leaders are quite right when they say that they are asked to fight the re-

ferendum with their mouths gagged and both hands tied behind their backs.

Sarojini Thambimuttu

Kayts.

New Fib

The UNP government has told so many fibs about the referendum that I suppose one more doesn't really matter so much.

But one cannot let pass President J. R. Jayawardene's latest untruth that he decided on a referendum instead of the Parliamentary general election due in 1983 because a referendum is cheaper!

The ISLAND (18/11) reports President Jayawardene as telling the first UNP referendum rally at Ratnam Playground, Kochchigadde, Colombo, that:

"Another advantage in seeking a referendum was the saving in expenditure which this country could ill-afford, especially after a recent Presidential election."

place or a place to which the public have the right of access.

But most of the street lamp-posts on Colombo's roads have the "Lamp" symbol displayed on them. Many CTB and private buses also have this election symbol painted on them, while they ply on the public highway.

I ask the IGP and his policemen to stop issuing press statements about what they are doing in regard to law enforcement, and instead to prosecute the Mayor of Colombo for the illegal signs on the lamp-posts his Council owns and the Chairman of the CTB for the illegal display of election symbols on his buses.

D. M. R. Nissanka

Wellawatte.

Blame

As a reasonably rational person, I do not know whether to be more annoyed at President J. R. Jayawardene's assault on my democratic and civic rights, or the insult to my intelligence from the unctuous reasons he gives when doing so.

Can you blame me?

T. Jayawardene

Negombo.

(Only if you do nothing about it—Ed.)

Ombudsman

Will President Jayawardene, who prates so much about fundamental and human rights, please tell us what has happened about the Ombudsman he appointed by special law one and a half years ago in order to look into complaints from ordinary citizens about abuses of power by those in authority?

Has the Ombudsman been even given an office or staff, or even a desk, to enable him to function?

Everyone agreed that Mr. Sam Wijesinghe, who was Clerk and Secretary General to Parliament for two decades, was a good choice for Ombudsman. But what use is a good choice if he is not allowed to function?

What has also happened to the Sri Lanka Institute of Human Rights, which was set up with such a flourish under the leadership of the President's brother, Mr. H. W. Jayawardene QC, in the day when US President Jimmy Carter made "human rights" an important lever of US foreign policy?

It still occupies a prestigious government bungalow in Colombo 7 and gets government funds. But has it closed shop lest Mr. Harry Jayawardene is asked what his Institute is doing about the innumerable violations of the human rights of Sri Lanka citizens by his brother?

Ranjit Gunawardena

Colombo 5

Upholding the Law

Newspaper reports say that the IGP has detailed a force of over 10,000 policemen throughout the country to see that the law is not broken during the period of the referendum campaign.

If so, what are he and the Police doing about gross breaches of the law by the pro-government forces seeking a "YES" vote?

The law expressly forbids the exhibition of an election symbol or poster in any public

Money Matters

At the summer session of the UN Economic and Social Council, the US delegation was the only one to vote against financial aid from UN agencies to the oppressed peoples of South Africa and their national liberation movement.

In April this year the IMF, under US pressure, discontinued payments to the poorest countries. 5,000 million US dollars worth of IMF aid to countries like Bangladesh, Togo and Senegal was blocked.

Now the Reagan administration has, despite worldwide protests, approved an IMF loan of 1,100 million US dollars to South Africa.

An earlier loan of 476 million dollars in 1966-7 was used by South Africa on military spending that year.

Observers say that the same will happen to the new loan. It will be aid to the white racist regime to suppress the blacks in their own country and to carry out aggressions against Angola and other black African Republics.

C. P. S. U'S NEW LEADER

The new General Secretary of the CPSU, YURI VLADIMIROVICH ANDROPOV, has been a member of Lenin's party since 1939.

Now 68 years old, he was born on 15 June 1914 into the family of a railway worker at Nagutskaya station, Stavropol territory, northern Caucasus.

He became a worker in the town of Mozdok, in the north Ossetian autonomous region of the USSR when he was 16 years old, joining the Leninist Komsomol at the same time.

After this he worked as a crew member aboard several ships of the Volga shipping lines, specialising later as a telegraph operator.

His early political life was spent in the Komsomol, serving in several posts in the Yaroslavl region. In 1940, he was elected first secretary of Central Committee of the Komsomol organisation of Karelia.

From the first days of the Great Patriotic War, Yuri Andropov was active in the guerrilla movement in Karelia, rising to the post of a political

commissar on the Finnish front. In this period he also began to hold various Communist Party posts.

After the city of Petrozavodsk was liberated from the fascist invaders in 1944, Andropov was elected second secretary of that city's party committee. In 1947 he became second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Karelia.

Transferred to Moscow by decision of the Central Committee, CPSU, in 1951, Yuri Andropov worked for two years as the head of a sub-department of the CC, CPSU. In 1953, he was transferred to diplomatic work and served as the USSR's Ambassador in Hungary for several years. Returning to Moscow in 1957, he was appointed head of a department of the C.C., CPSU.

He was appointed a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU at its 22nd Congress and has remained a member ever since. He became a secretary of the CC in 1962 and a member of its Political Bureau in 1973.

He has been a deputy of the Supreme Soviet for many years

YUGOSLAVIA - SRI LANKA CO-OPERATION

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia celebrated the 39th anniversary of its foundation on November 25.

In this connection, it has received congratulations and good wishes from many political parties and public organisations of Sri Lanka, with which the SRFY maintains good relations, both bilaterally and in the non-aligned movement.

Economic relations between the two countries started in 1957, with the signing of a trade agreement, which has been renewed and supplemented in 1959 and 1975.

Economic co-operation has since been developed in the fields of both commodity trade and capital ventures. Yugoslav's main exports to Sri Lanka are pharmaceutical products, aluminium products and synthetic materials, and

also includes various machines, household appliances, motor spare parts and metal furniture.

Co-operation in the sphere of capital construction began in the first phase of the Maskeli Oya hydro-electric power station, and was later extended to various projects involved in the first stage of Mahaveli Ganga irrigation system. The construction of the Polgolla dam and tunnel was a highlight of these efforts.

Yugoslavia, in turn, imports coconut fibre, desiccated coconut, natural rubber, tea, cinnamon, sesame seed and other spices from Sri Lanka.

A Mixed Committee is at present examining the prospects of further economic co-operation in fields such as sea fishing and tourism. An exhibition of Yugoslav industrial and consumer goods in Colombo is planned.

INDIAN PAPERS SLAM J. R.

Two prestigious Indian newspapers, the TIMES OF INDIA and THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, have published sharp editorial comments criticising President Jayawardene's decision to seek to put off general elections through resort to a referendum.

In an editorial on 2.11.1982 entitled 'A Shoddy Strategem', the TIMES OF INDIA writes:

"Having won a fairly impressive victory in Sri Lanka's presidential poll, Mr J. R. Jayawardene has regrettably chosen to blot his copybook. Rather than live up to his earlier promise to dissolve Parliament and hold elections to it, too, much ahead of schedule, he is trying

to prolong his present tight control on Parliament through a dubious manoeuvre."

Saying that "Mr. Jayawardene's discomfiture (at the Presidential polls results -Ed) becomes easy to understand", the newspaper adds: "But this can in no way justify the strategem with which he is trying to overcome it".

The editorial continues:

"For the kind of cutting of corners that Mr. Jayawardene is attempting is precisely what has eroded, weakened and eventually destroyed democratic institutions in a number of countries in the region where India and Sri Lanka are the only bastions of democracy".

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, in an editorial dated 8.11.1982 and entitled "Bad for Sri Lanka", is even more caustic. It says:

"Having won the Presidential contest with a comfortable margin, President Jayawardene should have curbed his autocratic ambitions. What else but limited dictatorship has he in mind when he wants to do away with elections to the new Parliament?

Calling the government's proposal a "mockery of democracy" and a "dubious constitutional measure", the editorial continues:

"President Jayawardene's constitutional changes confirm that he does not want to brook opposition of any sort. During the years he has been in office, he has upvalued his own office and devalued Parliament. Every step he has taken to strengthen his own position has weakened Sri Lankan democracy".

No Substitute...

(Continued from page 5)

a two thirds majority and a referendum, very clearly refers only to a future Parliament of 196 members elected under proportional representation. (Articles 83 (b), 62, 98 & 99).

"It should be emphasised here that our Constitution envisages fundamental constitutional changes being made not by a referendum alone but by a two thirds majority in Parliament plus a referendum. (Article 85). There is certainly a crucial difference between a two thirds majority of a Parliament elected by proportional representation, and a two thirds majority of the present Parliament."

Elections 'Rigged', Says 'Link'

Progressive newspapers in neighbouring India are critical and apprehensive about what President Jayawardene's victory at the October 20 Presidential polls means.

The influential weekly 'Link', in its issue of October 31, says:

"Obviously, the elections were already rigged even before the elections went to the polls on October 20".

It also says that "there were clear indications immediately after the announcement of the election results that Jayawardene would go about, first of all, to fulfil his prime polls promise, viz. to completely destroy and demolish the Opposition politically".

Commenting on the policies followed by the J. R. Jayawardene government, the journal says that, in foreign policy, it "changed the country's non-aligned thrust itself", while "Jayawardene's internal policies have been equally retrograde".

Pointing out that between 1. 8. 77. and 31. 7. 81. the government had borrowed Rs. 8,657.4 million from the IMF as compared with the Rs. 1,394.4 million borrowed during 1971-77, and that US loans, amounting to 83.8 million US dollars, had "increased dramatically", the journal states that, in the long run, "the 'impressive' show of growth through foreign assistance is not going to be so impressive" as "the man in the street judges the government not by its impressive statistics

but by his own economic condition. A common complaint heard from one end of the island to the other is that under Jayawardene the rich have become richer and the poor poorer".

The journal also expresses apprehension regarding the attempts "to convert Trincomalee into an American naval base; and there are also plans to permit the subversive American radio systems to establish their stations in Sri Lanka".

"PATRIOT"

The influential Indian daily newspaper, PATRIOT, commenting editorially on the Sri Lanka elections in its issue of October 25, said:

"Under President Jayawardene, Sri Lanka is swerving from the centre-left policies his predecessor pursued in the domestic field and external relations. There is even talk about base facilities being made available at Trincomalee to the US navy.

"In the economy, the President has opted for the high-inflation, import oriented policy that is meant to encourage investment of foreign capital. The domestic distress caused by this policy is sought to be allayed with the petro-dollar remittances from the Sri Lankan workers who are encouraged to emigrate to the Gulf countries.

"But Sri Lanka's problems, economic and ethnic, are mounting. President Jayawardene took frequent recourse to emergency powers in the last five years. Another emergency has been clamped on the morrow of his election triumph.

"The countries of the Indian Ocean littoral will watch with anxious interest how the President copes with Sri Lanka's problems—some of which are of his own creation—in the new term of office".

FORWARD

Subscription Rates

1 year.....	Rs. 24.00
6 months.....	Rs. 12.00
3 ".....	Rs. 6.00

Send your subscriptions to

The Manager, "FORWARD",
91, Cotta Rd. Colombo 8.

"A PACK OF FAIRY TALES"

The "second edition" of the so-called "Naxalite" assassination plot, as retailed by Premier Premadasa to Parliament on 26 November 1982 in order to justify the continuation of the state of emergency, has some important differences from the first.

Missing is the charge made earlier by the Premier, and by Ministers Ranil Wickremasinghe and M. H. Mohamed, that the Communist Party of Sri Lanka was at the bottom of this plot and had even master-minded it.

Also missing are the innuendoes of Minister Mohamed (repeated by the kept press in obviously synchronised editorials) that a "foreign embassy" had meddled in our internal affairs, acting through the CPSL.

Instead, the Premier treated Parliament to a bizarre account of second-hand and hearsay stories about what two fringe supporters of the SLFP are supposed to have told a retired archaeologist and a retired cop.

As Sarath Muttetuwegama aptly remarked, the "whole scenario could have come from Franz Kafka". It was "a pack of fairy tales".

"According to what I have heard", the Communist MP said, "those who have been arrested cannot even be taken before a primary court".



2 Years Late

In regard to the only hard fact mentioned by the PM, it would appear that, although the government is supposedly investigating an alleged assassination conspiracy that was due to take place after 20 October 1982, the main case that they intend to file against 11 named SLFPers, including its General Secretary Ratnasiri Wickremanayake, relates to something that is supposed to have taken place in 1980!

The Premier did not deign to explain to Parliament why the government sat idly by for two years before suddenly deciding, in November 1982, to investigate a so-called "Action Committee" that Mr. Wickremanayake and others are alleged to have tried to set up in 1980 to organise violent protests against Mrs. B. being stripped of her civic rights by the government.

The delay is all the more inexplicable as the P.M.'s speech reveals that the main "evidence" on which the government relies are statements that Messrs Wijesiri and M. Senanayake are supposed to have made to a Parliamentary Select Committee a year ago, and which have been available to the government since then.

The whole story stinks.

What has obviously happened is that, having concocted one tall tale to justify imposing an emergency on October 20, the government has been unable to find any evidence to support the wild allegations they made then, and are now trying to cover this up by talking about, and taking action against, something that is said to have happened two years ago.

So what it all boils down to is that the government has decided to extend the state of emergency for a second month, not to deal with any on-going threat to public security, but to investigate a so-called "conspiracy" of which they have had "information" for over a year but did nothing about.

However hard it tries, the government cannot wriggle out of the Opposition charge that it has declared and prolonged the state of emergency so that it can misuse emergency powers for its benefit at the referendum.



Nervous

Nevertheless, it seems clear that both the President and P.M. are far from confident that the referendum will go in their favour.

The official communique issued after the meeting of the Government Parliamentary group on November 26 quotes the P.M. as telling the UNP M.Ps not to be "complacent", but to "work harder than they did at the 1977 general elections in view of the fact that this time, all Opposition votes would go to one place" (Island, 27/11)

plantations. Having lost their votes in 1948 under a UNP government and only partially regained them subsequently, these plantation workers have told Mr. Thondaman's agents that they do not want to risk losing them again for a long period by voting for the LAMP.

This is why the government's campaign has not progressed much beyond a few meetings, speeches over the mass media, and getting mudalalis to defy the election laws with an illegal display of the LAMP symbol in public places and on public vehicles. Thus pep-talks from President and P. M. have become necessary to make the UNPers buck up and get moving.



Legal Drama

Act One: President unilaterally publishes a somewhat sharp private correspondence between himself and the Chief Justice, in which the CJ complains of a "gradual erosion" of the status of the Supreme Court by the "Executive" and the President seeks to create the impression that the CJ, who was one of the judges who dissented on the Fourth Amendment and will shortly appoint the Bench to hear the election petition against the

LAST PAGE

by
Gamini

President Jayawardene also "exhorted Government M.Ps to work harder than they did at the Presidential election for the forthcoming referendum" (Ibid) He wanted them to match the Opposition's house-to-house campaign with "personal appeals to the people".

The UNP top brass are worried at the lack of enthusiasm among their supporters over the referendum. Many M.Ps, especially those who feel that they may be chopped after the referendum is over, are less than lukewarm. UNP supporters, who rely on promised favours or hard cash to go into action, find that it is difficult to get the accustomed "support" from an anonymous LAMP.

On top of this, many of those who vote UNP traditionally or who supported J.R. for personal reasons on October 20 say openly that they do not agree with putting off general elections. "I have always voted for the ELEPHANT", one of them told this column, "but this time I'm voting for the POT in order to safeguard my right to vote for the ELEPHANT in future, too".

The CWC chiefs also experience a new resistance among their supporters on the

President, is annoyed with him over a pay dispute.

Act Two. Scene One. Bench to hear the election petition against the President is announced.

Act Two. Scene Two. DAILY NEWS announces that the CJ will go on a 3-month holiday to Australia, prior to retirement.

Act Three is still being written. Suggested theme; the other judges "still in office", at whom the President took side-swipes in his letter to the CJ. Suggested 'treatment'? President receives "information" of a "Naxalite cell" in the Supreme Court and takes over its functions in order to help the "democratic" elements to gain the upper hand!



Uproar

One can hardly be surprised at the uproar in the North about the way the government has handled the investigation into what is claimed to be active connections of certain Roman Catholic and other Christian priests with the "Eelam Tigers" - more specifically, with the Prabakaran group.

To judge from the protests made to the government by six M.Ps of the North, as well as by many religious and public organisations - not to speak of protest marches and picketing - the same misuse of emergency powers to make indiscriminate arrests and the detention of persons on flimsy and often self-generated suspicions that has been taking place in South Sri Lanka over the so-called "Naxalite" conspiracy, have been repeated in Jaffna too.

As in South Sri Lanka, the "investigation" was also accompanied by a carefully orchestrated campaign in the newspapers - especially in the SUN and ISLAND groups, which the government now uses very often for such purposes after Lake House lost all credibility - to misrepresent facts and fan sectarian hatreds through calculated innuendoes.

Things got so bad that they became counter-productive and started to affect adversely the government's referendum prospects among sections that the UNP had hitherto taken for granted - especially among Catholics and Tamils. So Army Commander "Bull" Weeraratne (J.R.'s nephew) and the Security Commander in Jaffna, Brigadier S. C. Ranatunge, were asked to take the unusual step, after a Security Council meeting on November 23, to give a press conference to set the record straight.

The Army duo told the DAILY NEWS (44/11) that "The Church had no hand in it". They also named two priests whom they said had helped to invest stolen funds for the "terrorists" and a university lecturer and his wife, who are suspected of having given shelter and medical treatment to wounded terrorists.

But they did not explain why several other Catholic and Anglican priests were rounded up by the security forces, detained and grilled for several days, and later released without a further word except to say that they possessed badges, posters and taped music in favour of "Eelam" or had received letters from Fr. Singarayar, the main suspect.

As for the background to these incidents, it looks as though the government had become worried at the number of Christian priests, especially among Tamils, who had begun publicly to urge their parishioners to vote "NO" in the referendum. What could be more convenient to counter this than to discover a "Naxalite" group in the Roman Catholic Church on the same lines as the alleged "Naxalites" in the SLFP?

But, as usual, things were over-done. The SATURDAY REVIEW reports that "the Christian community of Jaffna was deeply annoyed at the indiscriminate arrests, rude treatment by the soldiers, and prejudiced and highly coloured reporting by the Colombo press". Maybe they can now realise what more can be in store for them if the government obtains, at the referendum, authority to extend its life for six more years.

Passing the Buck?

The Commissioner of Elections has noted, and passed on to the IGP, complaints from a delegation of the CFTU, led by L. W. Panditha, and the SLFP, led by Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, against the illegal display of the "Lamp" symbol on lamp posts, buses and in public places.

The IGP, according to the SUN (26/11), has passed the complaints on the local authorities.

One hopes that matters will not end here and the whole thing fizzle out as an exercise in passing the buck.

If the local authorities ignore the IGP's request, he is duty bound to prosecute them. Let him make a start with the two worst offenders - the Mayor of Colombo and the Chairman of the CTB.



Hitler's Example

President J. R. Jayawardene did not originate the device of using referenda for anti-democratic purposes.

The late (but by no means lamented) Adolf Hitler was the first to set the fashion that JR now follows.

He used the referendum (plebiscite) for the first time in 1933, shortly after he became Chancellor. He sought approval from the German people to withdraw from the League of Nations - an emotional issue that started his drive for world conquest. He received 95% approval.

His second resort to a referendum was after President Hindenburg's death in 1934. This was to unify the Chancellorship and the Presidency. Having obtained a 84.6% approval, he promptly filled the combined offices.

In 1935, Hitler held his next referendum, to obtain approval for the annexation of the Saar, a disputed territory which had been under a League of Nations mandate since 1919. Obtaining 445,000 votes against 2,000, he promptly annexed the Saar.

Hitler's next annexation - this time, Austria - was also backed by a referendum. This time terror was used on a large scale to obtain a 99% vote.

Hitler got the massive majorities for his referenda by resort to continuous repression of opponents, false arrests, racial hatred, anti-communist and anti-socialist campaigns, and concocted plots like the burning of the Reichstag, which was done by the Nazis and blamed on the Communists.

Two factors that contributed to his massive majorities, let it be remembered, were the disunity among his opponents and futile "boycott" campaigns.

So JR isn't very original after all. He is only following in the footsteps of the Master!