

Forward

THE VIEW FROM THE LEFT

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PRICE ONE RUPEE

We Say.....

Rule by thuggery

The complaint of a Wild Life Department official that, on New Year Day, he had been assaulted at Yala by a party led by the MP for Yatiyantota is the latest in a series of complaints against the use of thuggery by government MPs against public officials and members of the public.

Thuggery by government MPs and JSS leaders is fast becoming standard practice. It is proliferating because the government does nothing about it.

Over two years have passed since JSS thugs killed trade unionist Somapala on a picket line. But nothing has happened, even though the coroner found it to be a case of homicide, and evidence regarding the presence of government supporters, including a MP in a jeep, in the vicinity had been led at the inquiry.

Nor has anything been done about the despicable assault on Professor Sarathchandra and others, even though witnesses and newspapers named prominent supporters and placemen of the government among those who led the assault.

Not a single person has been brought to book regarding the mass violence in Jaffna at the time of the DDC elections there. Nor has any inquiry been held into charges made about the conduct of two Ministers in connection with some of these events.

During the cowardly attacks on Tamil estate workers in 1981, President Jayawardene himself said that he was "ashamed" that some of his party men and supporters had led such attacks. But nothing further has happened, and government MPs (including Deputy Ministers) named in connection with these shameful assaults continue in their positions.

After the Presidential elections, too, government MPs were named in connection with the spate of violence unleashed against political opponents. The MP for Polgahawela was even taken into custody and remanded for a few days. Many newspapers published reports and pictures of the injured victims. But everything seems to have been swept under the carpet.

The GMOA has taken up with the government the complaint of Dr. M. S. R. Wijetunge, DMO of Ridigama in the Dodangaslande electorate, that he had been threatened with assault on two occasions by close supporters of the MP, who is also a Deputy Minister. This time, however, some action was taken. The DMO was interdicted.

The SATURDAY REVIEW (1/1/83) has published specific complaints made to the President and the IGP naming the MP for Yapahuwa and Deputy Minister of Transport. We ourselves publish one of the specific complaints made against the conduct of the MP for Colombo West on referendum day. Similar specific complaints have been made in regard to other government MPs, District Ministers, and Deputy Ministers.

President Jayawardene owes a duty to the public to explain what action has been, or is being taken, on these complaints. Or are we to assume that "Operation Whitewash" is in force once again?

One doesn't have to look far to see that the real threat from terrorism in Sri Lanka does not come from a few misguided youth in the North or alleged "Naxalies" in the SLFP. It comes from the UNP government, whose state terrorism in the North is now being extended to the South. What makes this even more sickening are the homilies about respect for the "rule of law" when the rule of thuggery is the reality.

Not so sweet

What has happened about sugar is not so sweet. It also smells bad.

The government insisted that the price had not increased. It said sugar was "freely available" at Rs. 12 per kilo at the co-ops. But only the price tags were available there—not the sugar.

Meanwhile sugar, imported by the private trade, was "freely available" in the open market at prices that went up to Rs. 15. Asked to explain, the government said not to worry as the "controlled" price was even higher.

What price the "open" economy where competition from the private trade is supposed to keep prices stable? Whatever the price, it's too high.

J.R's Problems Multiply

President Jayawardene's hush-hush consultations with close advisers at Kandy during the Christmas holidays, as well as the decision to prorogue Parliament early this month, indicate that he wants time to sort out the many problems on his plate.

These problems have multiplied after his so-called "victory" at the referendum.

The President is aware that the fraud and terror used to win the referendum have earned the government a bad name both in Sri Lanka and abroad.

While the reaction in Sri Lanka does not bother him overmuch, the reaction abroad does.

Mass media coverage and comment in many Western countries from which he expects additional aid has been far from encouraging.

Opposition charges of referendum rigging, the fact that the government could not get more than 38 per cent approval for its proposal, the good show put up by Opposition parties in the Presidential election and in the referendum despite difficultie and obstructions, and the government's serious financial and economic position have all been highlighted by the Western media.

This will make it even more difficult for Minister Ronnie de Mel, now abroad on yet another begging mission, to find the funds the government needs for the Budget, which was due last year but postponed until March 1983 due to lack of funds for anything more than a vote on account.

Debt

The Central Bank has already pointed out that the gross public debt had increased by 26 per cent and the foreign debt by 52 per cent in 1981. It stood at Rs. 65 billion at the end of 1981, with interest repayments for the year amounting to Rs. 3 billion on domestic debt and Rs. 713 million on foreign debts. A de facto devaluation of the "floating" Sri Lanka rupee vis-a-vis the US dollar over the past year and a half has already added Rs. 2.2 billion to the debt liability.

For the past five years, the UNP government has been able to maintain a relatively high level of foreign investment and loans from the USA and some Western European countries on the basis that it was the only pro-imperialist government in Asia that had been elected by the people.

But the poor performance in the Presidential election and the blatant rigging of the referendum have cast serious doubts of the government's overall stability and capacity to deliver the goods.

The Finance Minister's task has been made even more difficult by the differences with the US administration over the tactics to be pursued vis-a-vis the bourgeois Opposition, especially the SLFP and the TULF, as highlighted in the "Kenneth Scott Affair".

But at the moment it is domestic political problems that are in the forefront of the President's attention.

National Govt.

His proposal for a "National government" has run into deep trouble. Neither the SLFP nor the TULF have officially shown any desire to respond, and the SLFP has officially rejected it.

Most of the individual and group desertions from the SLFP to the UNP that the President masterminded have proved to be liabilities, with nearly all the former electorates with which the deserters are associated being lost at the referendum.

The probable accretion to his ranks of Maithripala Senanayake, Halim Ishaq S. D. Bandaranaike, and maybe Anura Bandaranaike later, will add nothing substantial to what he already has.

Another major problem is how to honour his oft-repeated promise to clean up his own party. Many of his favourite Ministers, whom he hoped to promote still higher, have been "defeated" electorate-wise, or have scraped through by the skin of their teeth. On the other hand, most of the expendables, at Ministerial and M. P. levels, have registered "victories" electorate-wise, even at the cost of resurrecting the dead or tele-reporting Middle Eastern expatriates back to Sri Lanka, a la "Blake's Seven".

It is small wonder that even the pro-government newspapers now say that any changes in the Cabinet and the government M. Ps will be minimal.

Increases

President Jayawardene's announcement, during the referendum campaign, that he is thinking about increasing the number of M.Ps from the present 168 to the 196 recommended by the Delimitation Commission has also run into several snags.

Adding an extra 28 seats seemed to President Jayawardene a neat way of making room for the new nominees he wants, helping to form a loyal "democratic Opposition", and keeping his present forces intact.

But this will involve a fifth amendment to the Constitution and another referendum, both of which are far from desirable in the present time.

On top of this, a strict implementation of the Delimitation Commission's recommendations would involve a reduction in the numbers seats in the Matale, Kandy and Badulla districts where the UNP did well, with the main increases in districts like Colombo where the U.N.P.'s fortunes slumped.

So, while setting afoot preparations for a second inauguration on February 4 in a manner that befits a monarch in the making, President Jayawardene wracks his brains on how to solve the problems of the future.

All of which proves how true is the saying about the tangled webs we weave when we practice to deceive!

J. R. is "Killing Democracy"

President J. R. Jayawardene is "killing democracy" in Sri Lanka, says the Indian magazine LINK in a special article of the Presidential election and the referendum in its issue of January 2.

It calls the government's decision to hold a referendum instead of a general election "a flagrant violation of the accepted democratic freedoms", which in practice will give 50 per cent of the adult population of Sri Lanka no say in the political affairs of the country for 13 years.

The article accuses the UNP of "using anti-democratic methods in the power struggle" and of "trying to break the resistance of the Opposition".

Saying that "this turn in Sri Lanka politics will have a far reaching impact on the internal and external policies of the country," LINK observes that "Sri Lanka is breaking away from the glorious traditions of the non-aligned movement and virtually becoming a key post for Washington in this region".

Soviet Message to the World

(The following Message of Peace was issued to the Parliaments, Governments, Political Parties and peoples of the world by the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet and the C.P.S.U. Central Committee in connection with the 60th Anniversary of the U.S.S.R.'s foundation).

"We, representatives of all the peoples of the USSR who have assembled in Moscow to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, on behalf of the two hundred and seventy million Soviet people, send this message of peace to the Parliaments, Governments, Political Parties, and peoples of the world.

"What the finest minds of humankind have dreamed of for ages—the ending of national strife and discord and the attainment of genuine equality and friendship among nations—has become a reality in our country, thanks to the Leninist policy pursued by the Communist Party and the Soviet Government, thanks to the implementation of the socialist principles of national and social freedom and the abolition of all forms of oppression and exploitation.

"Soviet foreign policy too, is determined by the new relations between peoples, between nations in our socialist state. Our ideal, our unchanging aim and constant concern, are that there should be universal peace, friendship, and co-operation among peoples.

NEW EPOCH

"The Great October Socialist Revolution rang in a new epoch of history. Having shaken off social and national oppression, working people created the land of Soviets, a state that has asserted relations of fraternal friendship and equality among peoples, ensuring true freedom, progress, and prosperity to all nations.

"Durable, dependable, and lasting peace is the first and most compelling need of all people, of all nations, of all humankind.

"The need of peace is of special significance today when countries have weapons that can destroy human civilisation and all life on our planet, and when the threat of war, which was appreciably moved back in the 1970s, has again begun to mount and international tension is increasing visibly.

"All the efforts of countries, the activities of governments, of organised political parties and movements, and of all citizens of every country should now be addressed to preventing a nuclear catastrophe. Nothing is or can be more important than this.

We, the authorised representatives of the Soviet people, solemnly declare that, in keeping with the Leninist policy of peace and international co-operation, the Soviet Union will do all its power to avert war.

AFFIRM

"We reaffirm that, in accordance with the commitment it has undertaken, the Soviet Union will not resort to the first use of nuclear weapons, and once again call upon the other nuclear powers to undertake a similar commitment.

"We declare that the Soviet Union is prepared, on a basis of reciprocity with the United States of America, to freeze its nuclear arsenal".

"We urge quick and productive completion of the Soviet-US talks on limiting and reducing strategic arms, on limiting nuclear armaments in Europe, and the earliest conclusion of an agreement on armed forces and armaments reduction in Central Europe.

"We offer coming to an agreement without delay on a complete and general nuclear tests ban so that no more new kinds and types of nuclear weapons may be developed.

"We urge the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons.

"We call for the earliest resumption of suspended negotiations on all other

matters concerning the limitation and reduction of armaments

"We call upon the legislative bodies and governments of all the countries of the world to contribute actively to the settlement of conflict situations and to the extinguishing of flash-points of tension exclusively by political means.

"We want a strong United Nations Organisation with a bigger role in consolidating international peace and security.

CO-OPERATE

"In furtherance of these aims the Soviet Union is prepared to co-operate with all the countries of the world, regardless of their political social systems.

"Great is the historic responsibility that devolves these days on all the countries of the world for the present and the future.

"The Soviet people are convinced that, if countries and peoples combine their efforts, they will eliminate the threat of war, preserve and consolidate peace on earth, and ensure the human right to life. It is to this pooling of efforts that we call upon Parliaments, Governments, Political Parties, and peoples of the world."

Supreme Soviet
of the USSR

Central Committee
of the CPSU

CENTENARY OF MARX'S DEATH

On March 14th, 1983, all progressive mankind will join hands to honour the memory of KARL MARX, the founder and great teacher of the immortal doctrine of scientific socialism.

For this day will be the 100th anniversary of Karl Marx's death.

The ideas of socialism are older than Marx. But before him, they existed in the realm of utopias, representing the dreams of working people about a world free from exploitation and fear, when men would live and work together as brothers.

It was Karl Marx, together with Frederick Engels, who converted the ideas of socialism and communism into a science, thereby making them

a powerful weapon and an infallible guide in the actual fight of the working people for their liberation.

Karl Marx analysed scientifically and laid bare the actual laws according to which capitalism works. He provided a scientific and valid understanding of human history as one in which changes and developments take place as result of struggles between social classes over the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange of commodities. He showed that the extraction of surplus value from the work of the toiling masses is the source of both capitalist profit and mass impoverishment.

Above all, Karl Marx showed how capitalism could be overthrown and replaced with socialism. He gave the working class and all oppressed people an invaluable method of analysing and understanding social processes, of uniting scientific theory with the revolutionary practice of the masses.

A great revolutionary thinker, Karl Marx was also a great revolutionary fighter. He was the founder of the First (Communist) International. Together with Engels, he co-authored its famous COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, whose ringing call, "Workers of the World, Unite", has become the battle-cry of the toiling masses. He was a champion of the anti-colonial struggles of his day—in India, Ireland and other countries subjugated by imperialism.

What Marx started has now become the mightiest movement for human liberation that the world has ever known. Socialism is already established in one-third of the world. Hundreds of millions of people in all continents and countries of the world live, work and fight guided by the ideas of scientific socialism that Marx first taught. His teachings have become the ideological and theoretical basis of a resurgent new civilisation.

The 100th anniversary of the death of this great leader and genius will, therefore, become the occasion on which those who already accept the doctrines of scientific socialism will re-affirm their fidelity to these great teachings. It will also be the occasion for renewed efforts to win new adherents to Marx' great cause, which alone guarantees a world without war, and human societies devoid of exploitation, hunger, fear and deprivation.

Colombo Meet Greet USSR

The USSR was congratulated on its 60th anniversary by a meeting in Colombo organised by the Sri Lanka-Soviet Friendship League.

The main speakers at the meeting were Education Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, LSFL President T. B. Subasinghe, and Soviet Ambassador Boris Kirnasovsky.

A much appreciated concert by a visiting Soviet cultural troupe followed the meeting.

New Year Greetings

We send all our readers greetings and good wishes for the New Year.

We are sorry that this issue is late. This is due to the fact that our printing press was congested with work in connection with the referendum of December 22 and to the large number of statutory holidays between Christmas and New Year.

May we remind subscribers, whose subscriptions are due to expire, to renew them?

And why not help us and our common cause by enrolling new subscribers to FORWARD for 1983?

ANDROPOV'S NEW OFFER

CPSU General Secretary YURI ANDROPOV's new proposal in regard to the reduction of medium range missiles in Europe is the latest in a series of practical proposals made by the USSR aimed at achieving nuclear and general disarmament.

Speaking at a joint celebration meeting in connection with the 60th anniversary of the USSR, Yuri Andropov announced that the Soviet Union would be prepared to enter into an agreement where it retains in Europe only as many missiles as are kept there by Britain and France, and not a single one more.

This would mean that the Soviet Union would reduce hundreds of missiles, including dozens of the latest ones known as SS-20s.

Andropov added that, if Britain and France wanted to reduce the number of their missiles still further, the USSR would make a similar reduction.

Together with this, accord should be reached to reduce to equal levels the number of

medium range nuclear weapon delivery aircraft in Europe between the USSR and NATO.

Andropov also announced that the Soviet Union was in a position to produce an analogous missile to the MX missile that the Reagan administration wanted to produce, and is testing its own variant of the US Cruise missile.

Andropov's proposal has been warmly received by the peace movement in Europe and throughout the world. It has thrown the Reagan administration into confusion, with the "hawks" rejecting it even before it could be studied, and the others suggesting further examination when the talks on strategic arms limitation between the USA and the USSR are resumed shortly. Similar divergent responses are found in the leaderships of the NATO countries.

The USSR had earlier proposed an agreement renouncing all types of nuclear weapons, both medium range and tactical, designed to strike at European targets, as well as another variant, viz.

that the USSR and NATO reduce their weaponry by more than two-thirds. Neither proposal has been accepted by the USA.

The USSR, Yuri Andropov said, would continue to work for peace and a "broad, free, fruitful cooperation among nations to mutual advantage".

Speaking also on the national question, Andropov said that the development of capitalism did not lead to the abolition of national oppression. On the contrary, national oppression was compounded and aggravated by colonial oppression and the enslavement of millions.

Marxism was the first to show that the nationalities question is linked organically with the social and class structure of society and property relations. It focussed attention on the right of nations to self determination as the only reliable means of achieving their voluntary union. The October Revolution had translated this principle into concrete organisational forms.

General Election must be Held

(The following statement was issued by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka on 28 December 1982)

"The fraud and terror practised by the government and the UNP in connection with the referendum of 22 December 1982 far exceed anything experienced before in Sri Lanka's half a century of adult franchise.

"These despicable tactics have made even more outrageous the government's original anti-democratic decision to substitute a so-called referendum for a general election, and to misuse referendum procedures in an attempt to bulldoze the people into surrendering fundamental rights.

"Never before in our country has a nation-wide vote been conducted under conditions of

a state of emergency, which covered the entire period of the referendum. Even the final official announcement that the cabinet had decided to allow the emergency to lapse on December 19 was violated.

"Emergency powers were abuse to impede, obstruct and paralyse those campaigning against the government's proposal in every way possible. Opposition newspapers were banned, and their printing presses sealed. Many hundreds of officials, organisers, propagandists and referendum agents of Opposition parties were either detained without charge or remanded. Election laws were cynically and brazenly violated, with the Police saying that they were "helpless" to enforce the orders of the Commissioner of Elections or even their own IGP.

"As December 22 drew near, it became clear to the

UNP that even this degree of intimidation, not to speak of its attempts to confuse issues with talk about "Naxalite" and pro-Eelam plots, may not be sufficient to guarantee success.

"So a planned exercise in intimidation of the polling agents of Opposition parties was carried out in various parts of the country.

"They were threatened with dire consequences to themselves, their families and their homes if they dared appear at the polling stations on referendum day. Many dozens of agents who turned up despite these threats were physically threatened and driven out of the polling stations.

"In this way, the path was cleared for impersonation on a large scale.

"But despite all this, government was unable to get more

than 38 per cent of the registered voters (including several lakhs of impersonations) to approve its proposal to put off the general elections due in mid-1983. 62 per cent of the registered voters did not approve this proposal. This is the central fact that nothing can hide.

Courageous.

"The Communist Party thanks and congratulates the 26 lakhs of courageous voters, who went to the polls to register their votes for the POT, despite threats, intimidation and terror. They remain a strong force that the government will have to reckon with in its ruthless drive to dictatorship.

Despite the distortion caused by the government's massive impersonation campaign, the results of the referendum confirm that, if a general election had been held on the current

basis of proportional representation, the UNP would certainly have failed to get a two-thirds majority, and may even have not got a majority at all.

"The results also repudiate the UNP's racist cry that a vote for the POT is a vote 'for Eelam'. For it is not only the electoral districts of the north and east that have given the POT clear majorities. This has also happened in the Galle, Hambantota and Kalutara electoral districts, while the UNP's majorities in Colombo and in Matara were marginal.

"The fact that 5 Ministers, including key ones, would have lost their seats if the poll had taken place on the basis of the former constituencies, while two others scraped through with razor-thin majorities, is also significant. For it is in these areas, as well as the other areas where the UNP was defeated, that the mass terror of 21 and 22 December was either minimal or imperfect.

Hold Elections

"As it has been established beyond all doubt that the majority of the registered voters have not approved the government's proposal, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka renews its demand that the general elections due in mid-1983 should be held by or before the due date. It calls on all other Opposition parties, and all democratically minded people to do the same.

"Our party also renews its demand that the state of emergency should be lifted forthwith, that all persons detained thereunder are released, and that the ban on Opposition newspapers like the ATHIHA should be lifted.

"It proposes to all Opposition parties, to all organisations and people concerned with the defence of democratic freedoms and civic rights, that they should jointly take steps to set up a Commission of independent persons before whom the massive evidence of fraud, terror, and malpractice at this referendum can be placed and evaluated. No confidence can be placed in any Commission appointed by the government, which is the main accused in this matter.

"The government's outrageous and shameful conduct at this referendum is an indication of its weakness and desperation, rather than of its strength or popular authority.

There is no reason for demoralisation or despair. What is needed now is the strengthening, at grass-roots level, of the fighting unity between Left and democratic forces that was forged in the struggles of the Presidential elections and the referendum, as well as deep and serious re-appraisal by a number of Opposition parties of ruling policies hitherto pursued by their leaderships.

In this way, it will be possible to meet the challenges of the so-called "Jayawardene era", where increasingly sharp confrontations between the UNP government and the mass of the people, as well as still sharper attacks on democratic rights and living standards, will become the order of the day.

GREETINGS TO U. S. S. R.

The following is the text of the speech delivered in Moscow by CPSL General Secretary K P. SILVA, at the celebrations there of the USSR's 60th anniversary.

"ON behalf of the Central Committee and all the members and supporters of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, I would like to convey to the Central Committee and all the members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to all the Soviet people, our hearty congratulations and sincere good wishes on this historic 60th anniversary of the formation of the USSR.

"The USSR, the world's first socialist state, was a direct outcome of the victorious Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. Over the past 60 years, the Soviet people have made great sacrifices to defend and uphold that victory. They had to repel and defeat a war of intervention by 14 imperialist states, a counter-revolutionary civil war, and Hitler's fascist attack in World War II. They had to rebuild what was destroyed. But despite all this, they have also carried out a social and economic transformation that is without parallel in world history.

"Backward Tsarist Russia has become an advanced socialist state, where economy, science, technology and culture flourish and develop without any restriction or impediment. The scourges of capitalist society—such as periodic economic crisis, unemployment, illiteracy, racism, national oppression and class exploitation—have been abolished long ago. A former "prison house of nations", as Lenin called it, has become a free, equal and voluntary association of brotherly nations,

each maintaining and developing its national and cultural identity, and all co-operating and helping one another to build their common socialist motherland. Firm foundations for the world's first communist society are also being scientifically laid.

"The fact that all this was done so successfully and in so short a time testifies to socialism's superiority over all social systems that mankind has known up to now. What is even more striking is that the advanced socialist society in the USSR was accomplished without colonial loot and the extraction of super-profits from various kinds of unequal relations that contributed in no small way to the so-called "prosperity" of a handful of advanced capitalist countries. The compelling force of this example has led to socialism becoming a world system and gaining hundreds of millions of adherents on all continents. No force on earth can now stop its final victory throughout the world!

"The domestic achievements of the USSR in the past sixty years are matched by its immense contributions in the field of world affairs. Due to the Soviet Union and its evergrowing strength and influence, imperialism no longer rules the world as it did before 1917. Imperialism's colonial system has been shattered. Its spheres of power and influence have been greatly restricted. It is universally despised and hated.

"Thanks to the strength and influence that the Soviet Union has acquired in the past 60 years, the balance of world forces has tilted decisively in favour of peace, national liberation and social progress. It is socialism to-day that shows mankind the way to a bright and peaceful future. None of this would have been possible if there was no USSR to unmask imperi-

alism's schemes, to oppose them with its own might, to inspire with its own example, and to lend a helping hand to all who fight to end social injustice, national oppression and class exploitation.

"To-day, when the need to halt US imperialism's threat to plunge the world into a nuclear holocaust has become the supreme task facing mankind, we must all be grateful that there is such a mighty state as the USSR in the front ranks of all who fight to end the arms race, strengthen the processes of international detente, and bring about peaceful co-existence. This is the guarantee of our victory!

"The Soviet Union's dedicated fight for peace is highly esteemed in Sri Lanka, as it is throughout the world. This was expressed by all our state and party leaders at the time of Comrade Leonid Ilych Brezhnev's sad death, and manifested in the unanimous decision to observe the day of his funeral as an official day of national mourning in Sri Lanka. The firm support that the Soviet Union gives to the demands that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace, that offensive imperialist bases like that at Diego Garcia should be closed, and that the countries of this region should be allowed to work out a system of collective security for themselves, with international guarantees, are highly appreciated by our people.

"Direct relations between Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union have only existed for 25 out of the past 60 years. This is because they were obstructed by our former colonial rulers and by some reactionary capitalist governments of our own that succeeded them. But ever since 1956, when these relations were first established after a landslide electoral victory of the popular forces, our people have

fought to strengthen and consolidate these relations at all levels.

"Our people have learnt from experience that the Soviet Union is a true and reliable friend, and that continued friendship and co-operation with the USSR is indispensable if we are to protect and consolidate the political independence we have won, to resist new imperialist threats and subversions as well as neo-colonialism, and to build a new life for ourselves.

"We are most grateful to the Soviet Union for helping us to resist the pressures of the transnational corporations, to develop industry in our nationalised public sector, to train our students and technical personnel in your country, and in many other ways. That is why our people reject with contempt the attempts of the Reagan administration to have us believe that the Soviet Union is a "threat" to us or our neighbours.

"The working class of our country and its trade unions value greatly the relations of proletarian solidarity that they have with your workers and trade unions. So does our party, which cherishes its solidarity, based on mutual fidelity to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, with the great party of Lenin, the CPSU, the architect of all your victories. We shall do everything in our power to see that these unbreakable bonds are even further strengthened in the future as well.

"Long live the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the USSR!

"May the USSR and the Soviet people go forward to ever new and ever greater successes!

"Long live the friendship between our two peoples and our two parties!

"Let us advance side by side in the fight for a lasting peace, for the victory of progress and socialism throughout the world!

(We publish below the replies of PIETER KEUNEMAN to questions from FORWARD'S STANLEY RANASINGHE on the outcome of the referendum on December 22.)

Q. What do you think is the main conclusion that can be drawn from the results of the referendum?

A. What took place on December 22 was not a referendum. It was an elaborate exercise in fraud and terror by the government.

From start to finish, the government's aim was to deceive and intimidate the voters into accepting (or, at least, refraining from opposing) its decision to put off the general election until mid-1989.

This was history's first example of a referendum being used as a substitute for a general election. It was also a classic example of a referendum being misused to deprive the people of a fundamental right under the guise of consulting them on a question of policy.

Winning the referendum, by hook or by crook, was essential to the government's overall strategy of continuing the present Parliament, with its built-in five-sixth majority, for at least six more years without a general election, and thus creating conditions for a so-called "National Government" of diverse capitalist forces in order to continue the "open economy" and to fulfil undertakings given to the World Bank and the Reagan administration.

The main tactics that the government adopted in the referendum were (1) to demoralise and paralyse its opponents by the abuse of state power and through physical violence, so that they would not be able to mount an effective counter-campaign; (2) to misuse its monopoly of the media to confuse and frighten the voters with scare stories about "Naxalite plots" and "a vote for the POT is a vote for Eelam", etc; and (3) to organise further defections, especially from opportunist and right-wing elements in the SLFP, by holding out the bait of positions in a "National government".

But despite all this fraud and terror, which is without precedent in this country, the government was only able to get 38 per cent of the registered voters to approve its policy of putting off the general election. Even this is not a true figure, as the UNP organised mass impersonations that ran into several lakhs of votes.

As against this, 62 per cent of the registered voters did NOT approve the government's proposal.

So we can say that, even though the government's anti-democratic proposal has been legally "adopted" in terms of its peculiar referendum law, the outcome of the referendum is a clear moral and political defeat for the government.

The post-referendum conduct of the UNP shows that they realise this. The usual jubilation and lighting of crackers are missing. There are no "victory celebrations" this time; it is more like a funeral house. Even in Parliament, the UNP behaved like drenched chickens, shivering in the cold and trying to shake the rain out of their feathers.

They are acutely aware that any "victory" they have won is very much a Pyrrhic one.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. The long-term damage that they have done to themselves far exceeds any temporary advantage they may have gained.

First of all, they have earned a bad name for themselves, both here and abroad. Everyone knows that the result was obtained by fraud and terror. In the coming weeks, when all these facts are exposed in detail, even many of their supporters here and abroad will be shaken still further.

Secondly, five Cabinet Ministers—Messrs Anandatissa de Alwis, Ronnie de Mel, Ranjith Attapattu, K. W. Devanayagam and C. Rajadurai—were defeated in their former constituencies.

Two other important Ministers—Messrs Lalith Athulathmudali and Cyril Mathew—only scraped through with razor-thin majorities of 103 and 850 votes respectively.

Prime Minister Premadasa, who led the UNP's referendum campaign and tried to use it to justify his claim to be President Jayawardene's successor, got a major slap in the face. The man who boasted that he would get "at least one more vote than President Jayawardene did" not only failed to do so by three lakhs of votes but also dropped 17,000 votes in his own constituency of Colombo Central, despite the fact that all its MP's and Mr. Sellasamy were working for him. Five Deputy Ministers and the Speaker were also defeated.

Thirdly, despite all the electoral rigging, the Opposition parties were able to poll 2.6 million votes as against the UNP's 3.1 million. They won 8 out of the 22 electoral districts, and lost two more in wafer-thin defeats.

In fact, even on the basis of the rigged election results, the Opposition would have won 75 out of the 168 seats in Parliament if the general elections, on the new PR system, were held now. This number would have been much greater if the impersonation by the UNP is discounted.

What all this means is that, although the UNP can legally continue with its present Parliamentary majority for six more years, its position among the people is far from stable.

Added to this is the fact that what the UNP has done in this referendum is to reveal, in the crudest possible way, the class essence of bourgeois democracy. Many sacred cows, in which it wanted the people to have implicit and ever-lasting faith, have been slaughtered.

After what they have experienced in this referendum, how many people will continue to place their trust in the familiar shibboleths that a bourgeois Parliament is "the supreme expression of the people's sovereignty, power and will", the "rule of law", the "impartial" state apparatus, especially the police, and so on?

In this respect the UNP has contributed to the political education of the masses, just as they did by their support for the abortive coup d'état of the 1960.

They have helped to shake mass faith in the effectiveness of purely Parliamentary struggles, and have emphasised the priority need for mass extra-Parliamentary struggles.

This is bound to boomerang on the UNP and any "National" government it may form, when the full implications of the crisis of its "open economy" mature next year and thereafter.

Q. You spoke about the referendum being rigged. Could you amplify this?

A. To begin with, despite the protests of all Opposition parties, the referendum was conducted from start to finish under conditions of a state of emergency, in which mass arrests and detentions of Opposition officials, organisers and referendum agents took place on a large scale. The Opposition's main daily newspaper, ATHITHA, was banned throughout the referendum. Printing establishments available to Opposition parties were sealed.

The state of emergency was renewed twice during the referendum. Although Cabinet spokesman, Minister Anandatissa de Alwis, told the press that the Cabinet would not renew the emergency when it lapsed for the second time on December 19, this solemn assurance was also violated. This referendum was the first example of a nation-wide poll under conditions of a state of emergency.

Even other rights granted to Opposition parties by law were violated. Their public meetings were disturbed and attacked by UNP goon squads, often led by MPs, while the Police looked the other way. As traditional places of public meeting were usually refused to Opposition parties by many UNP-controlled local bodies, these parties had to hold their rallies in obscure nooks and corners. Many rallies had to be cancelled owing to the Police refusing permission on

the grounds that the UNP may create violent disturbances! The Opposition parties were also not able to make full use of the radio and TV time available to them, as the government doubled the fees that have to be paid.

The situation over the illegal display of the LAMP symbol became farcical. Despite the Commissioner of Elections holding that such displays were illegal and the IGP ordering Police stations to see that they were removed, these orders were openly defied.

In many areas, UNP Ministers District Ministers and MPs directly instructed the OICs of Police Stations to ignore the orders they had received from their superiors.

As a result, these illegal displays were added to, day after day. When protests were made, the Police said that they were "helpless"—but not so helpless that they could not



Pieter Keuneman

arrest anyone who put up a POT symbol, or was accused of doing so!

By the time that campaigning ended on December 19 under the law, the UNP realised that, despite its terror tactics, it could lose the referendum.

So the decision was taken to launch a major terrorisation of Opposition polling agents so as to prevent them from being present at the polling stations. This was intended to clear the way for mass impersonation.

Q. Which section of the UNP organised this, and where? How do you establish your charge of massive impersonation?

A. The main organisers were the "Muda ali Mafia" and "thug MPs" associated with Prime Minister Premadasa. But "J.R. loyalists" did not lag far behind. What happened at Colombo West and Atanagalla, two of the worst areas, was master-minded by "J.R. loyalists"!

These terror tactics did not take place everywhere. But they did take place in several areas. In the areas where they did not take place, the UNP generally lost.

The tactics were pre-planned and uniform. The day before the polls, Opposition polling agents were approached by UNP goon squads and told that they and their families would be assaulted and even killed, and their houses and places of business burnt, if they dared to show up at the polling stations the next day. A special concentration was made on polling agents of the SLFP. As a result, many of them did not turn up the next day. Several hundreds of such cases have been reported.

Where agents did man the polling stations, they were often chased out physically by UNP goon squads, while polling staff and Police looked on helplessly. In Colombo West, a young UNP MP, brandishing a pistol, stormed his way into polling stations, ejected Opposition agents at the point of the gun, rescued UNP impersonators who had been caught, and even assaulted polling staff and threatened the Police. At Atanagalla, a mini-civil war was enacted.

Incidentally, the fact that even the Opposition's main Presidential candidate, Mr Hector Kobbekadduwa, was impersonated in a Colombo West polling station was due to the fact that Opposition polling agents were not present, due to such intimidation.

The worst areas were the Colombo district (especially Colombo Central, Colombo West, Kollonnawa and Borella), the Gampaha district (especially Atanagalla and Dompe), the Kurunegala district (especially Polgahawela, Yapahuwa and Hiriyala) the Anuradhapura district (especially Kekirawa, Kalawewa, Medawachchiya, Mihintale and Horowupothana), the Nivithigala and Balangoda areas of the Ratnapura district, the Galigamuwa area in Kegalle, and the Himiduma area of the Galle district. Such tactics were also widespread in the Matale, Kandy, Moneragala, Polonnaruwa, Badulla and Nuwara Eliya electoral districts.

A feature of these districts is the large increase in the votes received by the government for the LAMP. They contrast markedly with the overall drop in the total votes in adjoining electorates and districts, and in the country as a whole. They even exceed considerably the vote that President J.R. Jayawardene polled only two months earlier.

Take, for instance, the vote at Matale, where there are 187,276 registered voters. In October 1982, President Jayawardene polled 94,031 of these votes. When the referendum was held in December 1982, considerable parts of the Matale electoral district were cut off by floods, earth slips and landslides. So much so that polling staff and ballot boxes had often to be taken to the polling stations in helicopters. But nevertheless,

the Referendum

this did not prevent nearly 16,000 MORE votes (110,689) being polled for the government:

Similarly, at Attanagalla, where UNP terror made it impossible for any Opposition polling agent to be in a polling station, an SLFP majority of 9,000 in October, 1982 was transformed into a UNP majority of over 17,000 in a mere two months. It is the same story elsewhere.

Q. How successful do you think these intimidatory tactics were?

A. Naturally, they did succeed in pushing down the total Opposition vote. The figures suggest that this fall is in the region of half a million votes.

Q. Do you think that the desertions from the SLFP to UNP played any part in this drop in the Opposition's total vote?

A. Please remember that it is not only the Opposition's total vote that dropped. The UNP's total vote also dropped by over 3 lakhs, as compared with October 1982.

Terror and impersonation had far more to do with the drop in the Opposition's total vote than the so-called "desertions".

As a matter of fact, the UNP actually LOST most of the former electorates with which the SLFP deserters were associated, even where they had won them in October 1982, without these desertions.

This is the case with Sarath Dias at Habaraduwa, Dixon Silva at Devinuwara, Basil Rajapakse at Mulkirigala, M. M. Mustapha at Kalkudah, Senapala Samaraweera at Akmeemana, and in many other areas. In Colombo Central, the UNP's vote fell by 17,000 despite Halim Ishak's defection. The only exception seems to have been Medawachchiya, where Mr. Maithripala Senanayake's defection has added a mere 2,300 votes to what the UNP got there in October 1982.

It should also be noted that Gampaha, (where the SLFP MP Mr. S. D. Bandaranaike, did all he could to help the UNP, except to appear on its platform,) was also lost.

Q. Have you any comment to make on the conduct of the Police in the referendum?

A. As I said earlier, the myth of the Police as an "impartial" upholder of the law was shattered in this referendum. The UNP made it clear to the Police that it must carry out its orders and not care about the law.

I never thought that I would ever feel sorry for the Police. But when all ranks, from gazetted officers to constables, tell you that they are "helpless" and cannot do their duty, one can only feel pity

for the more decent among them, and anger and contempt towards the rest.

I recall two incidents. The first was when, on the eve of the referendum, I had to intervene to secure the release of one of our party's referendum agents in the Colombo district, who had been arrested on a patently trumped up charge. The OIC concerned admitted that there was no evidence to sustain the charge but, as it had been made by the supporters of a Minister, he had to keep our referendum agent in custody for some time as otherwise the Minister would be angry and have him transferred. The second incident was when I went to cast my vote at a polling station in Colombo West shortly after a UNP MP had burst in and threatened the polling staff and the Police. Roles were reversed, and the Police complained to me instead of I to them!

This is the sorry state to which the UNP has reduced the much vaunted "rule of law".

Q. Do you think the referendum results call for re-appraisals by Opposition parties of their performances and positions?

A. Certainly. Such re-appraisals should cover both the referendum and at the earlier Presidential election.

Speaking off-hand, I can suggest some themes that need to be examined more deeply.

Why, for instance, did even the SLFP organisation that

functioned during the Presidential election collapse in many areas during the referendum?

Or again, how is it that, apart from the north and east, it was in the traditional Left areas like the Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Kalutara and Colombo districts that the Opposition was able to withstand, and often defeat, UNP terror at the referendum, while it collapsed in many areas where the SLFP virtually monopolised the anti-UNP movement? What happened in the Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Gampaha, Nuwara-Eliya, Badulla, Kandy, Matale, and parts of the Kurunegala & Monaragala districts is a case in point.

As for the SLFP, its internal divisions and crises, which are now public, were a major negative influence on the mobilisation of the forces opposed to the UNP at both the referendum and the Presidential election.

Mrs. Bandaranaike has said, with some truth, that these divisions were engineered and masterminded by the UNP and especially by President Jayawardene.

But is this the only reason for them? The SLFP members should consider what other factors have brought their party to its present position. They should ask themselves whether all the forces that were trying to take the SLFP into a "National Government" with the UNP, or to make it a loyal, "democratic" Opposition that will criticise details but accept the basic substance of the

UNP's capitalist and neo-colonialist policies, have departed. Why has the SLFP been unable, even up to now, to analyse the political reasons for its shattering defeat in 1977, or to formulate an alternative programme to that of the UNP?

As for the LSSP, its members will have to examine the reasons that led to their total isolation and debacle at the Presidential elections. They should also re-think whether their fortunately abortive attempt, during the referendum, to create a so-called "Left alternative" with a handful of pitiful rejects from the mainstream Left parties, including their own, offers any way out of this isolation.

The JVP, too, will have to do some self-critical re-thinking. It is now reaping the whirlwind of having reared its members and supporters to regard the mainstream Left parties as the "main enemy" and the UNP as the "lesser evil".

Disillusioned at the collapse of their high hopes at the Presidential election, many hundreds of JVP members and supporters are, like the SLFP right-wing, now deserting to the UNP. But a healthy development in some areas is the grass-roots co-operation with the CPSL in the referendum campaign.

Having swung sharply from ultra-left adventurism to an opportunist repudiation of mass struggles, the JVP will have to do some serious re-thinking if it wants to find a correct policy.

Members of the TULF too, will have to re-assess their position. Neither co-operative "dialogue" with the UNP nor barren separatism has got them anywhere. The experience in the referendum struggle should help them to move in the direction of co-operation with the Left and democratic forces among the Sinhalese.

Q. What about the Communist Party?

A. Our defects were more organisational than political. Indeed, the important political role our party played in both these struggles has been admitted by other Opposition parties and by the anti-UNP movement generally. Voting patterns also show that our party has not only held but improved its position in the areas where it is traditionally influential, with the exception of a slight set-back in the Ratnapura district. We shall, nevertheless, appraise our own experience as well.

Q. What will be the future of the National Committee that several Opposition parties formed during the referendum?

A. This was a strictly ad hoc committee, formed for the specific purpose of opposing the referendum proposal to put off the general elections. It did not represent all Opposition forces and its main function is now over.

What is important now is to strengthen the grass-root fighting unity of the left and democratic masses that was achieved during the Presidential election and the referendum campaign.

Q. What are the next steps?

Our Political Bureau has made three specific proposals in its statement on the referendum. These provide an immediate set of demands around which joint actions can be conducted.

A Letter to the President

(Many Colombo West residents, some of them supporters of the UNP, have written to President J. R. Jayawardene about the thuggery and intimidation that took place at various polling stations in this constituency on referendum day, December 22.)

Many of these complaints refer to the pistol-packing activities of Colombo West's UNP MP, Mr. Anura Bastian, and his supporters. The activities of these people in connection with forcible interference in polling stations and other malpractices on this date have also been reported in the ISLAND and other newspapers.

We publish one such letter, sent to President Jayawardene on the day the referendum was in progress (December 22) by a Colombo businessman, Mr. MOHAMED SALEEM CADEK of No. 24, 28th Lane, off Flower Road, Colombo 3. In it Mr. Cader describes what happened to him and his family

members. The text of the letter is given below.)

"Honoured Sir,

"This morning sometime after 11.00 a. m., my mother Mrs. I. A. Cader, my two sisters, my three year old nephew and I went to St. Anthony's Maha Vidyalya polling station to cast our votes.

"At the polling station, my sister Mrs. Ayesha Cader was unable to cast her vote because she had been impersonated. The rest of us i. e. my mother, my other sister and myself, having cast our votes, were on the way out driving along Duplication Road. Then we saw Mr. S. Nadesan Q. C. walking with a lady and a gentleman. I asked my driver to stop the vehicle and offered Mr. Nadesan a lift. He and the lady got inside my Toyota van, when suddenly a Mitsubishi jeep cut across our van and Mr. Anura Bastian MP, and a number of his supporters opened the door of my van. Mr. Anura Bastian is known to me as a fellow Royalist.

"Mr. Anura Bastian pointed a pistol at Mr. Nadesan and the lady and threatening them asked the lady to hand over some list. The lady said that she had no list and Mr. Nadesan said that she denies having any list. Then Mr. Anura Bastian said that the lady had taken some snaps and wanted to take the film roll from her camera, and the lady refused to hand over the film roll. I then requested Mr. Bastian to go the Police station and settle any problem.

"At this stage my mother and sisters were threatened and insulted in the most abusive and crude language by Mr. Bastian's supporters while Mr. Bastian was brandishing his revolver at them. I too was insulted and called a "pimp" by a supporter of Mr. Anura Bastian who was wearing a green shirt. When I asked the man who called me a pimp whether I had supplied him with any women to be insulted in such a manner, I was physically assaulted and slapped.

"By that time, a police squad car had arrived and I

asked the Inspector present as to why he was watching the whole incident and not taking any action. By this time the revolver of Mr. Bastian was not to be seen and when my mother questioned him about its whereabouts, his reply was that it was for his protection. Then I asked him if Mr. Nadesan or any of us had harmed or threatened him in any way for him to point a revolver at us.

"At this stage I told Mr. Bastian and his supporters that I was the son of the Mr. I. A. Cader who was an Honourable Member of Parliament and a son of an honourable father. My family and I are grieved and feel deeply hurt at being insulted, assaulted and threatened in public for no reason whatsoever.

"After careful consideration we have decided not to make a complaint to the police, but to bring the facts to Your Excellency's notice

(continued on page 7)

PREMADASA BLOWS A FUSE

Prime Minister R. Premadasa really blew a fuse in Parliament on December 27, when speaking on the referendum.

One can understand his fury as the result had upset all his calculations. He made himself the leader of the government's referendum campaign, boasting that he would poll at least one vote more for the government than President Jayawardene did in October. His mudalali backers helped to inflate his cult of the personality to the maximum. Portraits (3 to 4 times larger than life) of the PM were erected at almost every junction, and illuminated at night. His photograph was plastered on every wall. He dominated the state-owned mass media. But in the final tally, despite massive impersonation, the referendum campaign produced three lakhs of votes less for the government than the Presidential election did.

Mr. Premadasa's setback in his own constituency of Colombo Central must have been particularly galling. Despite the fact that all the candidates in this seat in the 1977 general elections (other than Pieter Keuneman) worked for Mr. Premadasa this time, he dropped 17,000 votes while the opposition vote went up by nearly 10,000.

But the Prime Minister's rage in Parliament is not due solely to this humiliation. He is aware that his setback has made him vulnerable in the succession stakes for the next President. He must surely have noticed what everyone else did - namely, that President Jayawardene pointedly excluded him from the televised ceremony in which he received the official referendum results from the Commissioner of Elections. Even Ananda tissa de Alwis, who was defeated, Lalith Athulathmudali, who just scraped through, and Gamini Disanayake, who has emerged as the main challenger to the PM as front-runner in the successor stake, were present - but not the PM. Mr. Premadasa must now be wondering whether the President, in his usual crafty way, allowed him to take charge of the referendum campaign so that he could have a big fall.

Was the PM's intemperate attack on Upali Wijewardene therefore, an attempt to pre-empt President Jayawardene from using this setback to cut him down to size? Why bring up Upali in the first place, and was he worth so much powder and shot? Was this melodramatic and hysterical performance really staged for President JR's benefit?

According to the DAILY NEWS (28/12), the PM, said:

"I tolerated his nonsense in silence all this time. But let me tell him now that he better be careful. Whatever I have said has never gone wrong any day. And nobody who has earned my curse has ever prospered."

One need hardly comment on the PM's claim that nothing he has ever said has

ever gone wrong. One has only to recall his most recent boast about polling at least one more vote than J.R. did. And his bombastic warning about persons whom he has "cursed" is more likely to produce guffaws than shivers down the spine. But the real crunch point about his warning came next:

"I say this with all sincerity - and I say this not only to Upali Wijewardene. I want all of his ilk to get the message"

One has no doubt that J.R., who has always pushed Upali's case, has also got the message. But with the PM's undated letter of resignation in his pocket and with the guarantee of a Parliament whose members he can now appoint and fire at will for the next six years, it is the President who decides what happens. It seems that the PM and his supporters, who walked into the President's trap when they meekly handed him their letters of resignation, have now got this message.

E. J. Samararatne

Colombo 10.

Educated

A number of UNP spokesmen, including Premier Premadasa, have said that the government's "disappointing" performance at the referendum was due to the fact that the "educated" people voted for the POT.

Are we to conclude from this that only "uneducated" people voted for the LAMP?

G. Hemasiri

Rajagiriya

Vijaya

Prime Minister Premadasa is adept at using the floor of Parliament to attack people who are not there, and therefore cannot reply.

We remember his tirade after the Presidential poll, when he attacked composer Premasiri Khemadasa, several government servants and officials of the SLBC and Rupavahini, as well as others.

His speech after the referendum result is no different. It is a blot on our country and our Parliament that a Prime Minister can speak in this way.

I am not interested in the attack on Upali Wijewardene, who is rich and powerful enough to defend himself. But the attack - or rather, the attempt at character-assassination - of Vijaya Kumaratunga, whom the government still keeps in detention without charge, is inexcusable.

The Prime Minister read out what he said was a confidential report on Vijaya when he apparently applied to join the Police in 1969. How the PM is supplied with

such "confidential" Police reports in order to be used against political opponents in Parliament is a matter for inquiry. But in order to support the conclusion that "he is a thug and his character is questionable" all that is mentioned about Vijaya is that (1) he was a "staunch supporter of the LSSP", (2) he had led a group of persons who jeered at a UNP meeting at Seeduwa in 1965, and (3) an employee of his brother, who runs a club, had been fined for selling a bottle of beer without a license.

If this is evidence of questionable character, the Prime Minister should check on how many of his Ministerial colleagues (including his boss) have "Leftist" pasts. It will also be interesting to know what the confidential Police reports about him say.

Indrani Wattededara

Katana.

Good Augury

Seven electoral districts have rejected the President's efforts to set up a dictator-

ship. All the Tamil-majority electoral districts and 3 Sinhala electoral districts have inflicted this defeat on the government.

This is a good augury for the unity of the Sinhala and Tamil people in future struggles for democracy, national unity, and social progress.

Within the past two months, the Tamil people have twice demonstrated their desire to identify with progressive forces in the south. It was seen in the reception given to Mr. Kobbekaduwa in Jaffna when he visited this district during the Presidential election, and also in the vote he received. It was demonstrated again when the leaders of the National Committee visited Jaffna during the referendum campaign, as well as in the vote for the POT in the Tamil-majority districts.

Let us hope that a similar realisation will grow among progressive forces in the South so that, through the joint efforts of the Sinhala and Tamil peoples, a political solution of the national problem of the Tamils can be reached.

Recognition of the right of Tamil people to self-determination can be the first step in this direction. If this is done, there will be no need for obnoxious laws like the so-called "Prevention of Terrorism Act", which is now

being applied against democratic forces in north and south, or for an army of occupation in the north.

A. Vaidialingam

Jaffna.

Poll Cards

Opposition parties should check how undelivered poll cards got into the hands of the UNP to be used for impersonation during the referendum.

Anyone who observed what was happening in the afternoon of December 22 outside the polling stations at the Kollupitiya Lane Tamil Maha Vidayala and at Ladies College, both in Colombo West, would have noticed how large numbers of obvious impersonators were being conveyed to these polling stations, where there were no Opposition polling agents, in jeeps by green-shirted UNPers, given poll cards at the gate, and rushed into the polling stations to cast impersonated votes. Entries about this were made

was the ink supplied by the government to prevent voters from voting more than once.

Although Opposition polling agents were not allowed to be in the polling station, how is it that the polling staff and the SPO did not recognise the impersonator who claimed to be the main Opposition candidate at the Presidential election, who polled nearly 2.5 million votes only two months ago? The Commissioner of Elections should investigate to see whether this was due to connivance or dereliction of duty.

Asoka Ponnaperuma

Bambalapitiya.

Joke

What a joke! The Gampaha Police has arrested and charged three LSSPers for putting up the POT symbol in a public place during the referendum.

Will the IGP tell us how many instances there are of his Police arresting or charging anyone for illegally putting up or displaying LAMP symbols - even though these illegal symbols were everywhere?

Kusuma Dias

Havelock Town.

Bail

Sarath Muttetuagama was quite right when he linked the government's extension of the Criminal Procedure Code (Special Provisions) Act for two more years with its overall attack on democratic rights and freedoms.

As he rightly pointed out in Parliament, this Act, which takes away from the judiciary the discretion to grant bail in the case of a number of alleged offences, is not merely an erosion of the powers of the courts, but also a misuse of the power of remand, which is now being made a form of punishment rather than a precaution to be used with care and under special circumstances, to ensure that suspects are present at their trial or do not try to interfere with witnesses.

Faiz Mustapha

Hultsdorf.



at Police stations, but nothing seems to have been done about them.

M. R. Perera

Colombo-3

Hector

Prime Minister Premadasa had the effrontery to suggest that Hector Kobbekaduwa's vote was not impersonated, but that he was stopped when trying to vote for the second time.

I wonder whether the Prime Minister will have the courage to repeat this libellous statement without Parliamentary privilege to protect him.

Even if we take the PM's absurd statement at face value, it only shows how defective

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Romania: 35 years

On 30 December 1982, the Romanian people joyfully celebrated the 35th anniversary of the proclamation of the Romanian People's Republic.

The Romanian people are one of the oldest and most stable nations in Europe. Their history goes back to the Dacian state, which existed in the first century B. C. But the greatest of all their states, and the one that has done the most for the Romanian people, is the Romanian People's Republic.

The RPR came into existence in 1947, following, and as a result of, the liberation of Eastern Europe from Hitler fascism by the Soviet Union, as well as the heroic struggles of the Romanian workers and people, led by their Communist Party.

Romania's revolutionary workers' movement dates back to 1893, when the first social-democratic party was formed. This was transformed in 1921 into a communist party. Under the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party, the workers and peasants waged many great struggles against

the oppressive monarchy, against the exploitation of themselves by landlords and foreign and domestic capitalists, against domestic fascism, and against the link-up of their country with Hitlerite fascism.

The victorious advance of the Red Army across Eastern Europe in World War II facilitated and accelerated the victory of the revolution in Romania. The king was forced to abdicate, and the Romanian People's Republic was born.

In the past 35 years, led by their Communist Party, Romania's liberated working people have made fundamental socio-economic, cultural and political changes in their nation's life. Its socialist system has ended all forms of exploitation and speeded its economic development in all fields.

In foreign policy, Romania is linked with the rest of the socialist community, and adds its weight, influence and authority to the fight for peace, national liberation and social progress throughout the world.

SRI LANKA — A "BANANA REPUBLIC"

President JR, Jayawardene's "antics" are rapidly turning Sri Lanka into a "banana republic", says David Selbourne, in an article published in the British journal, TRIBUNE, in its issue of 10 December 1982.

Mr Selbourne is a tutor in politics at Ruskin College, Oxford and was in Sri Lanka recently, when he also interviewed President Jayawardene. His article to TRIBUNE was written after the Presidential election and before the referendum.

Under Mr. Jayawardene's government, Mr. Selbourne says; "Sri Lanka faces more of the same melancholy business; of growing indebtedness and instability, the further "liberalisation of the economy", and an embattled human rights and Left movement, as the UNP vainly

pursues the economic (and political) Singaporeanisation of Sri Lanka".

Referring to the referendum, Mr. Selbourne remarks that "if carried, (it) would exchange much of what remains of a liberal democratic order for the law of Sri Lanka's jungles". "The country would, in effect, have lost its parliamentary system".

Mr. Selbourne concludes his article thus:

"The only consolation for Sri Lanka in its descent into the political depths is that, whatever Jayawardene's amendments to its Constitution (in post-colonial states one of the spoils of power) a permanent lease of life will be harder for him to secure than an indefinitely prolonged term in office. In more senses than one, 76-year-old Jayawardene's days are numbered".

Laos: 7 years of advance

The People's Democratic Republic of Laos, which celebrated its seventh anniversary last month, has made rapid strides forward during this period.

As Laos is still basically an agrarian economy, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRD), which leads their efforts, pays great attention to strengthening and consolidating this sector.

The total area of irrigated fields has been doubled since the victory of the revolution in 1975, and the aggregate area of cultivated land has increased by one-third.

In the past six years, the gross domestic product has

grown by 43 per cent, and the per capita national income by 40 per cent.

The first 5-Year Plan aims at boosting the production of rice to 1.4 million tonnes a year, and for sizable expansion of the areas under vegetables, cotton, tea and coffee.

The creation of a national transport system, which is of crucial importance for Laos's economic development, is being accelerated.

Great attention is also being paid to urban development, notably that of the country's capital, Vientian. This will be one of the requisites for strengthening the leading role

Moves to Derail Summit

With the next summit meeting of the Non-Aligned movement in New Delhi only three months away, imperialism and its supporters have once again started their familiar game of trying to de-rail and sabotage the meeting, to divert it from discussing the main issues of the day like the threat to world peace, national independence and the new international economic order, and instead to dilute the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial essence of the movement.

A host of major issues that have developed since the last Havana Summit have to be discussed by the New Delhi meeting. They include such matters as the grave danger to world peace from the American decision to station nearly 600 new missiles and missile systems in Western Europe, targeted on the USSR, this year. This will surely upset the present nuclear missile "balance" and start a new arms race, with deadly consequences.

Equally urgent for the attention of the non-aligned leaders are the decision of the US to station its "Rapid Deployment Force" in West Asia; its re-armament of Pakistan; its support for the continued occupation of Lebanon and other Arab states by Israel; its political and military support for counter-revolutionary attempts to overthrow non-aligned governments in Central and South America; its attempts to intervene in and destabilise the situation in Indochina and Korea; its support for the South African racists against national liberation forces in Africa; and similar matters.

Anxious that the non-aligned leaders should not address themselves to these and other burning issues, the imperialists and their supporters have begun to play up such issues as Kampuchea and Afghanistan as a diversion.

KAMPUCHEA

A major effort is, for instance, being mounted to get the non-aligned movement to accept the dummy government that the US, China, some ASEAN countries and others have knocked together under the leadership of Norodom Sihanouk.

of the working class, which will increase to 200,000 by 1985.

In the sphere of education, the elimination of illiteracy has highest priority. This has already been ended in 7 out of Laos's 13 provinces, and will be eliminated everywhere soon.

Laos is helped in its economic and social development by the Soviet Union, Vietnam and other socialist countries. In foreign policy, it co-operates with its sister nations of Vietnam and Kampuchea, and extends its links with the socialist community and the non-aligned movement.

The 6th Havana Conference turned down the attempt of pro-western forces in the non-aligned movement to seat the genocidal Pol Pot regime, and kept the question of who should represent Kampuchea open. In line with this decision, India, as chairman of the 7th Summit, has refused to invite the Sihanouk government, which includes Lon Nol but is still based mainly on the Pol Pot forces, to attend the New Delhi meeting.

Speaking at new Delhi recently, Vietnam's Foreign Minister, Ngyuen Co Thach, succinctly described Sihanouk as representing no one but China and his so-called government as "nothing but Pol Pot with Sihanouk cosmetics, which are available at such a cheap price that no respectable lady would ever use it".

He reminded his audience that those who now wanted to seat Sihanouk were the same people who wanted to throw him out from the Lusaka summit of 1970 as unrepresentative.

Replying to those who argued that the new Sihanouk-led coalition had been seated by the UN, Vietnam's Foreign Minister pointed out that the non-aligned movement is not the UN. For 20 years the UN had refused to seat the lawful government of China, the PRC and propped up Chiang Kai-Chek. But in the end "it was the situation in China that reversed the voting in the UN."

Similarly, four years of voting for Pol Pot in the UN could not reverse the rebirth of the Kampuchean people or cancel out the legitimacy of the Heng Samrin government.

FOUNDING FATHER

In a final attempt to upset India's decision, the pro-western forces have asked that Sihanouk should be invited to address the 7th New Delhi summit, as "one of the founding fathers of the non-aligned movement who had attended the first Summit at Belgrade in 1961".

Saying that "too many fathers are not too good", Ngyuen Co Thach told reporters that, of the 25 heads of state who attended the first Belgrade Summit, only 12 were still alive and their whereabouts known. 9 had died and no information is available about 4 others. Of the 12 still alive and known, only 4 are still in power, 4 more are in opposition and the other 4 in retirement or out of politics.

He said that it was strange that those who wanted Sihanouk to attend the New Delhi summit as a "founding father" spared little thought for the only "founding mother", Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka.

AFGHANISTAN

Another attempt to de-rail the non-aligned summit is the renewed clamour about Afghanistan.

With the attempts of the US, China and Pakistan to support with arms and money the counter-revolution in Afghanistan running into

greater and greater difficulties, the US demand for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country, (where they help the Afghan government, on invitation, to repel counter-revolution supported from outside) without at the same time ensuring that this external threat is removed, enjoys less and less credibility.

So a new slogan is being raised about the "neutralisation" of Afghanistan.

This is apparently to be achieved by the removal of the Babrak Kamal government, its replacement by a government acceptable to the US, China and Pakistan, the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the continuation of the secret support to the counter-revolution. Naturally, this preposterous suggestion has been rejected.

Pro-western forces in the non-aligned movement, continue to urge that the only way to stop US re-armament in Europe, West Asia and elsewhere is for the non-aligned movement to demand the unilateral withdrawal of Soviet forces and the "neutralisation" of Afghanistan.

They hope that the non-aligned nations will be so naive as to believe that the Afghan events are the only reason for US bellicosity, which actually began long before these events took place. A "dry run" of this viewpoint was made by Rex de Silva in WEEKEND (2/1/83).

But the majority of the non-aligned states, who are familiar with such tactics before every summit, are unlikely to be deceived or to move away from the fundamental anti-imperialist content of the movement.

A Letter.....

(Continued from page 5)

in the confidence that Your Excellency will be pleased to ensure that this sort of conduct will not occur in the future.

Your sincerely, (sgd) M. S. Cader

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is one of many public complaints about the activities of Mr. Anura Bastian M. P. and his supporters in the Colombo West electorate on referendum day. Other incidents relate to polling stations at Ladies College, Thurstan College, and Lindsay Girls School. Inquiries made by FORWARD reveal that the lady mentioned in Mr. Cader's letter angered Mr. Bastian and his supporters because she had been taking photographs of the impersonation that was being openly organised at this polling station, and had obtained a "list" of names of those who were to be impersonated. We would like to know what action the President has taken on this specific complaint, and what the IGP intends to do in regard to one of his Inspectors who merely watched passively the perpetration of an offence under emergency regulations which, if proved in court, could result in a long term of imprisonment.

WHAT WILL THE NEW YEAR BRING?

The New Year will probably see the accelerated development of a number of economic and political processes that started to manifest themselves in Sri Lanka in the 1970s, when the impact of the many-sided and profound crisis of world capitalist economy began to be felt on our weak, dependent and stagnant economy.

These processes had begun to come to a head when the Presidential election and the referendum were held. Now that they are over, more rapid development is on the cards.

The sudden switch in 1977 from a "controlled and protected" to an "open" economy has created its own problems. Our economic dependence has deepened to the extent that a minimum of 60 per cent of a "normal" Budget has to depend on financing from foreign sources. The public debt, which was Rs 11 billion in 1974, shot up to Rs 65 billion by the end of 1981. Annual interest payments on this debt have increased from Rs 0.58 billion to Rs 2.2 billion in the same period. Debt service and interest payments constituted 25 per cent of government revenue in 1980 and 33 per cent in 1981.

This led to a critical situation where the Budget due in November 1982 had to be postponed until March 1983, where the Budget for 1983 has to be presented in two or three instalments depending on aid receipts, and where the government had to push through a Presidential election and a referendum to prolong Parliament before anything other than a "vote on account" could be presented.

Concern

Whether the "open" economy can be continued in the way it operated over the past five years is now the government's immediate concern on the economic and financial front.

Everything depends on the result of Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel's frantic dash to London, Washington and other capitals of the imperialist world to beg for still more 'aid'. Even here his main concern is getting the aid to bridge the immediate budget gap, especially in regard to the current escalation of costs of "development" projects, rather than with any long-term commitments.

Apart from the fact that they, too, are in big financial trouble and need all the money they can spare to finance the new nuclear and conventional armaments they want to produce, the imperialist countries no longer have the same incentives to give the Jayawardene government aid on the scale known between 1977 and 1980.

Sri Lanka is no longer the Chairman of the Non-aligned movement but only a somewhat obscure member. Even though the Jayawardene government dutifully followed all the main orders of the World Bank, the attempt to promote it as a model of how Third World countries

can prosper through World Bank recipes has failed to attract any other takers.

The government itself has not been able to carry out political and economic directions fully. For instance, as the Kenneth Scott affair showed, the US government feels that the UNP spends too much time fighting other capitalist parties like the SLFP instead of uniting with them to fight the "real enemy"—the Left. Expenditure on subsidies and social services, though cut drastically, are also still too high by World Bank standards.

And the only "hard collateral" that can be pledged in return for increased aid are naval facilities at Trincomalee and support of imperialist policies in the UN and the non-aligned movement.

In-Fight

Nevertheless, the prospect that the "open" economy may not be able to continue in the old way has already led to sharp in-fighting within the government and among its advisers.

The spirited resistance of the state banks and the Central Bank to Ronnie de Mel's demand that more attention

LAST PAGE

by
Gamini

should be paid to providing rural credit, as well as Premier Premadasa's speech in Parliament and New Year message in which he asks demagogically for more attention to the "poor" rather than the rich, are signs of this.

The fact that both Premadasa and Ronnie have lost face and authority within the government and the UNP as a result of poor performance at the referendum also has some bearing on this.

The struggle within the government between those who want to make the rich disgorge a little of their speculative profits, or to continue the policy of inflationary finance, and those who argue that any more such nonsense will, as the Central Bank (*Island*, 26/12) put it, lead to the "major disincentive" of "taxation in productive areas of the economy" and "squeeze development dry", is likely to become sharper and sharper in 1983.

Structures

The economic dilemma as posed by the "open" economy are, of course, reflected in the political field. They are seen at state level and within

individual capitalist parties, although they are sometimes obscured by their dramatisation as clashes between personalities.

The major feature of the political process engendered by the economic crisis and the switch to the "open" (i.e. neo-colonial) economy has been the disintegration of the political structures that existed earlier.

The Westminster-type Parliamentary model has been the main casualty so far. Struck a heavy blow by the 1978 Constitution and the "Executive President" system, it was given its *coup de grace* in the referendum.

The transformation taking place within the bourgeois parties is another example.

Mr. J. R. Jayawardene spearheaded the "transformation" of the UNP from the party of established big business, the landed gentry and the privileged elite, which it was under the Senanayakes, into what it is today—namely, a party that still represents the interests of the big bourgeoisie, but which uses mass demagogy, as well as an organisational structure filched from the Left parties—namely, a recognisable party apparatus dependent on local branches, its own trade unions, youth, women's and other 'mass fronts'.

this a waste of time and prefers direct action and demagogy. It also sees no point in propping up a bourgeois "alternative" as a show-piece.

In the same way, the disintegration of the SLFP and the sharpening tensions within the TULF are also indicative of the erosion of their former support among sections of the bourgeoisie in the face of the "open" economy, and the open questioning by them of any further need for "alternative" bourgeois parties. The desertions to the U.N.P. are a sign of this.

These processes will continue to grow sharper in the new year. So, too, will the changes within the political structures of the Left and working class movement, spawned by changes in the composition of the working class, by its still low level of proletarianisation, by the fact that political patronage has given a marked petty bourgeois content to the rapidly expanding corporation sector, and by other changes. This will most probably be reflected most sharply in the LSSP and the JVP, both of whose basic calculations have been upset in the political situation that has developed with, and after, the Presidential election and the referendum.

Fresh efforts at left unity, on a new basis, are likely.

U. N. P.

It is doubtful whether Prime Minister Premadasa's hysterical outburst in Parliament in the debate on the referendum will do him any good.

His outburst after the Presidential election at least got him a foothold in the T. V. through placing Mr. T. Guruge in charge. It also got his face back in several of the government-owned newspapers. But he failed to remove the J. R. loyalists from control of the S.L.B.C.

Now the J. R. loyalists are closing in on him. Premadasa is being told in no uncertain terms that he still has a place in the U.N.P. but only if he knows his place.

The proposal for a new constitutional change to establish a Vice-President has put him in a spot. If he takes this, he gives up what executive power he has as Prime Minister. If he doesn't, he allows someone else to be inserted between J. R. and himself in the line of succession.

Now that he has handed in his resignation and gone through with the referendum, Premadasa has lost whatever power of blackmail he had earlier to threaten J. R. with the consequences of a split in the UNP, which could have been serious if there had been a general election. But if Premadasa goes now, almost none of his "Mudalali Mafia" and other supporters will follow him. So he may shout, but must submit if J. R. goes ahead with bringing Upali Wijewardene and other cron-

ies into the Cabinet, thereby weakening the PM's position still further.

The PM's demagogy about "helping the poor" won't help him. Already people are pointing out that the new offer of Rs. 2 lakhs repayable in 25 years from his new "Housing Bank", to people who want to build houses, will involve them paying Rs. 6 lakhs back to the bank by the end of the period.

S. L. F. P.

The situation within the SLFP, whose All-Island Committee meets in a few days, continues to be sharp and explosive.

Not content with the suspension of S. D. Bandaranaike, the radical elements in the party are demanding sharp disciplinary action against Anura Bandaranaike whose anti-party conduct, they say, has not been all that different. This is being resisted by the "Anura loyalists" who also seem to be girding up for a show down.

The big question is: will J.R. intervene once again to push his announced intention to help the "democrats" in the SLFP to win leadership back from the "Naxalites"? He did so before the last meeting of the All Island Committee, which could not be held as the government, on the eve of the meeting, arrested and detained the most prominent "Naxalites" and seized the party's documents.

The next meeting takes place with the main "Naxalites" still in detention. But will J.R. spring a new surprise? Meanwhile, Upali Wijewardene is promoting the idea of Anura for President.

Judges

The announcement of new amendments to the Special Presidential Commissions law indicates two new developments.

First, it seems clear that the government has been unable, despite several weeks of investigation, to find sufficiently hard evidence to charge the alleged "Naxalites" in court. So, following what was done to Mrs. B., they may now be brought before a Commission, appointed by President Jayawardene, their main accuser. Hearsay evidence will be admissible, and sentence, involving the loss of civic rights, can be pronounced by the tame five-sixths majority that the U.N.P. has in Parliament until 1989.

Secondly, it seems to confirm what this column warned last week—namely that J.R.'s next victim may be judges who show any signs of independence. What people ask is whether the proposal to allow decisions of the Supreme Court judges which affect one of its members to be re-canvassed before a Presidential Commission, is a typical J. R. manoeuvre to compel some judges, whose independence he does not like, to quit?