

Forward

THE VIEW FROM THE LEFT

VOL: 28

NO. 8

1st MAY 1984

PRICE: Rs. 2/-

IN THIS ISSUE

May Day Resolutions	—	p 2
Truth about Trinco Deal	—	p 4
Getting Ready to meet Reagan	—	p 5
Jaffna's Unhappy New Year	—	p 4
Keeping Racist Pot Boiling	—	p 8
Ronnie on Anandatissa	—	p 3
Estate Strike Gains	—	p 6
High Order for K.P.	—	p 3

—We Say.....

Terrorism

The government wants to kill several birds with one stone with its new claim that the "terrorists" of the north want to establish not merely Eelam but also a communist state.

This claim is clearly connected with President Jayawardene's impending state visit to the USA. By pretending that what goes on here is not an ethnic dispute but part of an "international communist conspiracy", the government hopes to get from the Reagan administration the same sort of financial support and military back-up that this administration lavishes on the corrupt and despotic military oligarchies that are its puppets in central and south America.

But the new slogan has a domestic angle as well. While launching a "limited war" in the north to suppress militarily the demand for self-determination among the Tamils, the government also seeks to isolate and destroy the Left movement and other forms of political opposition in the south by branding them as an adjunct and ally of northern "terrorism".

Guided by the humane and scientific teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the Left movement in our country has always opposed racism, insisted that a solution to ethnic problems should be sought through political dialogue and not through state or private terrorism, and upheld the democratic principle that nations have the right to determine their own future. But they differ profoundly from the northern "terrorist" groups, whether led by Prabhakaran, Umma Maheswaran, or anyone else.

Marxism-Leninism has always condemned and repudiated terrorism as a means of revolutionary struggle. Terrorism seeks to substitute isolated adventures by small groups in place of organised mass political action and has thus always proved counter-productive. The great Lenin himself rejected the terrorism that his own brother had mistakenly followed and said: "This is not the way".

Unlike the "terrorist" groups, Marxism-Leninism does not seek to separate the different nationalities of Sri Lanka but to unite them firmly on the basis of equality and friendship. That is why it advocates that self-determination should be voluntarily exercised in such a way as not to disrupt the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, and has proposed regional autonomy for the Tamils in an undivided country.

Anyone who reads the proclamations of the "terrorist" groups will see that, notwithstanding their occasional resort to Marxist-Leninist phrases, their essential policy has nothing to do with that great world outlook.

Prabhakaran's LTTE, for instance, obliterates class differences among both the Tamils and the Sinhalese, regards the entire Sinhalese people as enemies and oppressors, and sees isolated and sporadic military attacks on the army and the assassination of political opponents as the main form of struggle.

Although Umma Maheswaran's group declares that its fundamental aim is not separatism but socialist revolution throughout Sri Lanka, it continues to make Eelam its main political demand and harbours the unrealistic and quixotic notion of a "revolutionary" north liberating a reactionary south by armed force.

The appeal of both the President and the Minister of National Security to the "terrorist" groups to lay down their arms under promise of an amnesty will only be taken seriously if accompanied by a credible effort on the part of the government to find a political solution to the Tamil problem.

Neither the killing of uninvolved civilians in army shoot-outs in the north nor even more draconian amendments to the abominable "Prevention of Terrorism Act" can help to do so. The government should also realise that a "political solution" must be one which reasonable people in all communities will accept, and not merely the grudging, last-ditch concession of the most racist section of the majority community.

CARRY MAY DAY UNITY FORWARD

"The unity in action that the four Left and radical parties have achieved over May Day 1984 should be preserved, consolidated and carried forward in the period ahead", says CPSL Chairman PIETER KEUNEMAN in a May Day message.

"The joint statement that these parties have issued", he says, "provides a comprehensive set of demands and issues around which united campaigns can be developed".

The message says that the four main themes of the united May Day rally at Compell Park this year correspond to the most urgent needs of the current situation.

"A most serious threat to the peace and security of Sri Lanka, to its national sovereignty and political independence, has arisen as a result of the Reagan administration's efforts to establish a strong military and political presence in our country, to involve us in its aggressive global and regional war plans, and to make the Indian Ocean, which we all want to be a zone of peace, into a zone of stepped-up militarisation, nuclearisation, destabilisation and tension.

"It is also dangerous and intolerable that, in its desperate search for assistance to overcome political and economic crises of its own making, the UNP government should assist these efforts by providing facilities in Sri Lanka to US imperialism and by provocative and confrontational policies towards the socialist and other friendly countries, especially our neighbour and traditional friend, India."

SECOND

"A second urgent need", the message adds, "is unitedly to resist and rebuff the unceasing attacks of the UNP government on democratic rights, processes and institutions.

"The UNP government obviously feels that its authoritarian and dictatorial rule over the last six years is not enough to muzzle and suppress mass discontent, force through the orders of the World Bank, and complete the sell-out to US imperialism.

"That it why it is heading for more fascist forms of

rule and even towards a military dictatorship, which already exists in practice in the one-third of the country that constitutes the northern and eastern provinces.

In this connection, the message calls for the ending of the state of emergency, the restoration of civilian rule and elected institutions throughout the country, the withdrawal of anti-democratic and anti-trade union laws and regulations, the lifting of the ban on the JVP and N.S.P., and the release of political detainees.

"OPEN ECONOMY"

A third major need, the message says, is to mobilise united resistance to the disastrous consequences of the UNP government's "open economy" policies and its subservience to the neo-colonialist dictates of the IMF and the IBRD.

The policies, the message continues, have only benefitted a narrow stratum of big capitalists and racketeers. They have brought our country to the verge of bankruptcy, deepened our dependence on imperialism, led to a standstill in economic development, sent prices sky-high during a virtual freeze on wages and salaries, brought about major cuts in food subsidies and social welfare measures, started a process of widespread lay-offs and retrenchment, and intensified mass poverty.

The social consequences of these policies have been a widespread corruption of public life, an alarming crime wave, the debasing of moral standards and cultural values, and extensive destruction of the natural environment.

UNITY

Welcoming the unity in action achieved by the four

Left and radical parties over May Day, the message calls for its consolidation and further development. It appeals to other Left and radical parties to solidarise with the mainstream united action already achieved.

The message also calls for unity in the trade union movement and for the overcoming of subjective and sectarian divisions. The recent plantation strike, it says, shows how trade unions with different political outlooks and allegiances can fight successfully for common aims.

The Left and radical forces, the message continues, must spearhead the united struggles of the people. This cannot be done by the SLFP leaders, who share many of the class assumptions and policies of the UNP, as well as its hostility to the Left. Nor, in the case of the Tamil people, can it be done by the TULF leaders whose opportunist policies have brought about its isolation.

Even though broader forms of unity in action on specific issues are not ruled out, it is the Left and radical forces that alone possess the clarity of vision, resoluteness, and militancy that the situation requires and the people expect in the fight to rout the UNP and all it stands for.

"The fight against racism and racist provocateurs, for friendship, co-operation and harmony between ethnic communities, for political solutions of ethnic problems through the processes of dialogue rather than through state or individual terrorism, is also vital to-day", the message adds.

"Racism and anti-leftism are the two main ways through which the ruling class today seeks to divide the working people, and to distract and divert them from united struggle for their vital interests. We must fight these two evils back with all our strength," the message concludes.

Long Live May Day!

May Day Resolutions

The following resolutions will be moved for adoption by the United May Day Rally of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna, and the Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya at Campbell Park, Colombo:

(1) Greetings

This United May Day Rally greets and expresses its solidarity with all peoples and states fighting for peace, for nuclear and general disarmament, for national and social liberation throughout the world, and against imperialism, neo-colonialism and capitalist and other forms of exploitation.

It wishes their struggles fresh successes in the period ahead.

(2) Demands of Working People

Inasmuch as the "open economy" policies of the present UNP government have deepened Sri Lanka's political and economic crises, and brought about an alarming degeneration in public life as witnessed by appalling corruption, a sharp increase in violent and other crime, the erosion of moral standards and cultural values and widespread trafficking in narcotics and other injurious drugs; and

Conscious of the urgent need to protect the vital interests and living standards of the working people from the disastrous consequences of these "open economy" policies,

this United May Day Rally demands:-

- 1 an immediate increase in wages and salaries to meet the rise in the cost of living, and tying these to a realistic cost of living index;
- 2 restoration of the fertiliser subsidy and withdrawal of the increased irrigation rates imposed on the peasantry;
- 3 reduction of the prices of essential foodstuffs, medicines, and school equipment,

as well as bus and rail fares, and postal and electricity rates;

- 4 the stopping of lay-offs and retrenchment, and work or relief for the unemployed;
- 5 re-instatement with full rights of all July 1980 strikers who have not yet been re-employed;
- 6 the stopping of cut-backs on food subsidies, and on the health, education and social welfare services;
- 7 equal pay for equal work;
- 8 ending the shameful exploitation of female workers in the Free Trade Zone and those who seek work abroad; and
- 9 withdrawal of the unjust "rehabilitation" and water taxes.

(3) Defend Democracy

This United May Day rally condemns and opposes the UNP government's unceasing attacks on democratic rights, processes and institutions, coupled with its ever-growing erosion and emasculating of democratically-elected institutions from the local authorities to Parliament itself.

These attacks show that the government considers as inadequate even the authoritarian and dictatorial methods it has hitherto adopted, and that resort to more openly fascist and even military forms of rule is needed to compel the working masses to shoulder the burdens of the profound crisis of its "open economy" policies and of the government's slavish obedience to World Bank dictates.

Declaring that united actions by all democratic forces to resist and rebuff this onslaught on democracy are the urgent need of the day, this United May Day rally demands that:

- 1 the ban on the JVP and NSSP should be lifted, all political detainees released, and the prolonged state of emergency ended;
- 2 civilian authority and elected institutions are restored in all parts of the country; and
- 3 all anti-democratic and anti-trade union laws and regulations should be repealed, the so-called "Home Guards" and other private hooligan armies wound up, and victims of political revenge compensated for their loss rights, homes, job and belongings.

This rally also condemns and opposes the current agitation by important circles of the ruling class, supported by leading members of the government, for the abolition of opposition political parties and the institution of one-party rule. It regards this as a further step in their drive for fascist dictatorship or military rule.

It calls for the democratisation of the election laws, and for the holding of a general election conducted by an independent Elections Commission that enjoys the confidence of all recognised parties.

(4) Defend Peace & Sri Lanka's Security, National Sovereignty and Political Independence

This United May Day rally calls on the working class and all other progressive forces to resist the attempts of US imperialism, aided by the UNP government, to involve Sri Lanka in its global and regional war strategies, and thus endanger the peace, security, national sovereignty and political independence of our country.

It calls for:

- 1 abrogation of the recently-concluded "Voice of America" and "Peace Corps" agreements;
- 2 cancellation of the Trincomalee oil storage lease, which seeks to give the US Navy indirectly and under a new guise the facilities it sought originally at this strategic Sri Lanka port;
- 3 strict enforcement of the prohibition on any vessel or aircraft carrying nuclear weapons entering or using any port or airfield in Sri Lanka;
- 4 an immediate stop to the government's departure from the peaceful and non-aligned policies that Sri Lanka has followed in external affairs for several decades, to its disgraceful support in international assemblies for imperialist aggressions, and to the current provocative statements and confrontationalist actions against friendly countries, especially neighbours, which are designed to obtain financial,

political and military support from the US and other imperialist powers; and

- 5 stopping the lease of land in Sri Lanka to foreign agencies or companies and the cancellation of leases already made.

This rally warns the people that President Jayawardene's forthcoming visit to the United States of America on the invitation of President Reagan can lead to an increased US political, economic and military presence in Sri Lanka and to even further subordination of the UNP government to the USA and its dictates. It calls for united opposition to such developments.

This rally also calls on the people of Sri Lanka to step up their fight to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, to see that Diego Garcia and other bases in this Ocean are dismantled, and to ensure that the UN Conference on the IOPZ is held in Colombo without further delay.

(5) The Fight for Unity

This United May Day rally calls for the widest unity in action of the trade union movement in conducting the struggles to defend and extend the rights of the working people at this critical juncture.

It congratulates the plantation workers whose united struggle, despite the treachery of UNP leaders of the LJEWU, won important demands and showed in practice the value and power of united trade union action for common demands, irrespective of political and other differences.

This rally calls on the workers to be vigilant against attempts by the government and the capitalist class to raise racist slogans and promote ethnic conflicts in order to divide their ranks and deflect them from united struggles for their vital interests.

It emphasises that the fight for the vital interests of the working people makes it imperative to do everything possible to promote working class unity, the unity of all progressive forces, and harmony and co-operation between the different ethnic communities of Sri Lanka.

It therefore stresses the need to rebuff racist provocateurs and disruptors and to ensure that ethnic problems are solved through political dialogue rather than through state or private terrorism, thereby ensuring that the unity, integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Sri Lanka are preserved and consolidated.

May Day Target Topped

The target set by the CPSL's Central Committee of collecting a fund of Rs. 100,000 for May Day has already been surpassed.

According to the CPSL's CC Secretary D. W. Subasinghe, Rs. 127,460 had been collected by April 10, and collections are still coming in.

April 8 was designated the day for all island collections. On this day CPSL members, from the CC to the branches, were on the streets all over Sri Lanka collecting funds. Over Rs. 80,000 has come in from this collection so far.

CPSL branches, assisted by branches of the Young Communist League, have also been making house-to-house collections every weekend and distributing copies of the 4-party United May Day appeal. This will continue until May Day.

The CFTU, PSTUF and other trade union centres have been holding factory-gate and lunch-hour meetings in factory canteens to mobilise the workers for the May Day march that starts from Havelock Park, Colombo at 12 noon and goes on to Campbell Park, where the meeting will be held.

Volunteers and participants in the cultural sections of the demonstration have been busy practising for the march.

Despite high transport costs, the CPSL branches in the

outstations are booking buses to bring in participants for the demonstration.

All branches report that the response for the United May Day call has been very good.

Not So Sweet

Are the Sugar Corporation and the Milk Board the two public sector enterprises next on the list to be handed over to multinationals?

The weekly *Tribune* has published a series of detailed articles showing how the Milk Board is being run down in order to allow its activities to be transferred to the multinational NESTLES, which already controls a considerable part of the dairy products industry in Sri Lanka.

Now the Sugar Corporation is being run down, and starved of funds. Government policy is also heavily weighted against domestic sugar production. So much so that the Corporation is scraping the bottom of the barrel to pay wages and festival advances to its employees.

Meanwhile, the British-based multinational BOOKERS has been allowed to start sugar farming on a big scale at Pelawatte and is advertising heavily on the TV for Sri Lankan share contribution.

As soon as it is ready, the government hopes to hand the Sugar Corporation over to BOOKERS or close it down.

Left Leaders Remembered

A public meeting and a seminar were held in connection with the 83rd anniversary of the birth of the late Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, the pioneer of the socialist movement in Sri Lanka, a founder of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, and its former Chairman.

The public meeting, in his home town of Akuressa, which he represented for many years in various legislatures, was held on April 7 at the Akuressa-Godapitiya Maha Vidyalaya and was chaired by Pitikatuwane Deepananda Thero.

The speakers were Pieter Keuneman, Professor Carlo Fonseka, D. E. W. Gunasekera, Dr. Michael Fernando of Peradeniya University, Aelian Nanayakkara, and Ryson Deniyaya.

The seminar in Colombo on April 11 was chaired by H. G. S. Ratnaweera. Professors Carlo Fonseka and W. D. Lakshman, Dr. Michael Fernando, Pieter Keuneman and B. A. Sriwardene were among the speakers. Leaders of many other left, radical and democratic parties were among those who attended.

The first anniversary of the death of Leslie Goonawardene, a prominent leader of the LSSP and its General Secretary for many years, was observed by the unveiling of his portrait at the LSSP headquarters.

LSSP leader Dr. Colvin R. de Silva and the Party's General Secretary, Bernard Soysa, were among those who spoke on this occasion.

A Voice from the Past

In its last issue, FORWARD branded the notorious INDIA TODAY article on alleged terrorist training camps in South India as a deliberate and planted provocation designed to aggravate tensions between India and Sri Lanka and to push the two neighbouring countries on to a course of confrontation and collision.

It also alleged that this was part of a US destabilising process, aimed at defeating the Indira Gandhi government at the coming Indian elections and furthering the US strategic aim of ringing India round with hostile states and thus moving her away from her present independent and peaceful policy in world and regional affairs.

In particular, it linked this with the mammoth US advertising agency, J. WALTER THOMPSON, which not only funds and controls INDIA TODAY but was closely associated with Minister Anandatissa de Alwis before he quit advertising to become the government's propaganda chief.

Although some government sources have sought to pooh-pooh this charge as a figment of FORWARD's imagination, they should pay heed to the warning given by no less a person than their own Finance Minister, RONNIE DE MEL, on the role of this and other US advertising giants.

In 1967, Ronnie de Mel was a mere MP and not yet a UNP Minister. Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis also was not yet a Minister but had just been appointed as Permanent Secretary of the Minister of Information and occupied a position similar to that which his present side-kick, Mr. Douglas Liyanage, the first accused in a former coup attempt, now holds.

This is what Mr. Ronnie de Mel had to say then about J. Walter Thompson and Anandatissa de Alwis. It is taken from HANSARD of 22 and 23 August 1967.

High Order for K. P.

CPSL General Secretary K. P. SILVA was presented with the Soviet Union's Order of Friendship in the Kremlin, Moscow, by USSR Vice-President, IVAN POLYAKOV, on April 12.

K. P. SILVA had been awarded this high order earlier by decree of the Praesidium of the USSR's Supreme Soviet on the occasion of his 60th birthday and in acknowledgement of his contribution to the consolidation of friendship and co-operation between the peoples of the USSR and Sri Lanka, as well as his efforts in the service of peace, democracy and social progress.

In awarding the Order, Ivan Polyakov, referred to K. P. Silva's "courageous struggle for the vital interests and rights of the working people of your country and activities as an organiser".

Discussing the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation and the newspapers (then the main mass-media) in the Committee stage of the Budget, Mr. Ronnie de Mel mentioned that two "international agencies based on the United States of America" (namely, J. Walter Thompson and Grant's Advertising) were "not only a fruitful source of corruption" by way of 'commissions etc, on advertising', but are "fraught with the most serious conse-

quences for the independence of a developing country like Ceylon". He went to say:

INFILTRATION

"As you know, international advertising agencies have proved to be the most fruitful source of foreign infiltration and subversion in free countries. I speak with a due sense of responsibility.

"I know the part that advertising agencies like Grant's and J. Walter Thompson played in coups that occurred in several independent countries in Asia and Africa.

"I know the part that these advertising agencies played in the coup that toppled Mossadeq in Iran and the coup that toppled Sukarno in Indonesia. I know the part that these advertising agencies have played and continue to play in Ghana, in Nigeria, in Togo, in Dahomey, in Upper Volta—all these new countries in Africa and Asia. This is the most fruitful source of subversion and espionage in developing countries.

"It is very unfortunate that I have to raise a personal question. There has been a very close connection between one of these advertising agencies, J. Walter Thompson, and the present Permanent Secretary of the Ministry who administers the affairs of the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation.

Saying that he was "deeply touched" by the honour done to him, K. P. Silva, in reply, said that he regarded the high award "not so much as a recognition of my personal services, but as a recognition of the contribution which the Communist Party of Sri Lanka is making to the development of the international communist movement".

The award ceremony was attended by officials and members of the USSR—Sri Lanka Friendship Society and representatives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Two Sri Lankans who had been previously awarded this Order are the late Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe and Pieter Keuneman.

"I have nothing against this gentleman. He is a man of amiable character. I have nothing against him personally. But I am worried about the connection that exists between an organisation that exists here, between an organisation like J. Walter Thompson which is known to be an agent of the CIA in many countries in Asia and Africa, a proved CIA agent in many countries in Asia and Africa, a proved

By Stanley Ranasinghe

source of finance for many coups that toppled many governments.

"Organisations like the CIA infiltrate the national press. They have fully infiltrated the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, the Times of Ceylon, and the Dawasa group of newspapers. They have fully infiltrated these three organisations—not only now but over the last ten to fifteen years.

NEW SOVIET BOOK ON SRI LANKAN HISTORY

The well-known Soviet specialist in Sri Lankan history, Dr. Era Talmud, has published a monograph dealing with the salient features of the transformation of the traditional ideology of Sri Lanka under the impact of colonial rule and new bourgeois socio-economic relations in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

The book is one of the first attempts to analyse the complicated ideological processes taking place in Sri Lanka from a Marxist viewpoint.

The author examines in particular changes which have taken place in orthodox Buddhist teachings, especially after the establishment of British colonial rule in the whole of Sri Lanka in 1815, when the ancient relationship between state and Sangha was destroyed.

The author also studies changes which took place in Hinduism and Islam in Sri Lanka during the same period.

She comes to the conclusion that the development of capitalism in the country led to the enhancement of the role of bourgeoisie and newly formed intelligentsia, especially in the second half of the 19th century.

Bourgeois ideological concepts evoked an ambivalent response: a desire to accept the new was countered by the trend to preserve one's own identity, one's own spiritual values.

Dr. Talmud pays special attention to the activities of the well-known Buddhist spiritual leaders as Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thero, Miggettuwate Sri Gunananda Thero, Waskaduwe Subuthi

"They work in devious ways. Mossadeq did not know until he was toppled one fine day; nor did Nikrumah of Ghana know. It is because I love this country that I am fearful of the connection that exists between our Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation and agencies like J. Walter Thompson.

"There is also a matter of ethics involved in all these things. J. Walter Thompson did business to the tune of several million rupees and continues to do business to the tune of several million rupees with our Broadcasting Corporation.

"The gentleman who presided over the destinies of J. Walter Thompson is now presiding over the destinies of the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation. I have nothing against that gentleman. I am only worried about his connection, his financial connection with foreign agencies".

How have things changed since 1967 when Mr. de Mel uttered these prophetic words?

Firstly, the "gentleman who presided over the destinies of J. Walter Thompson" now presides over all the mass media. He is the official spokesman of the Cabinet to the media. He was the man responsible for alleging that "the hand of Moscow" was behind the 1983 racist violence, an allegation he has not yet withdrawn. He is assisted by a man whom the Supreme Court of this country found guilty of attempting a coup and got off, in appeal, on a technicality.

Secondly, the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation has been augmented by the "Voice of America", which operates from Sri Lanka. And TV has been added to the other mass media.

And, lastly, the then Minister in charge of information is now President of Sri Lanka.

Thero, who were trying to save national culture from destruction at the hands of the British colonialists and missionaries.

The author has also studied the activities of such well-known Tamil leaders as Arumuga Navalar, public figures such as Muttucumarasamy, Ponnambalam Ramanathan and Ponnambalam Arunachalam, and such Muslim leaders as Siddi Lebbe.

THEOSOPHISTS

An interesting part of the book deals with activities of the Theosophical Society, with personalities such as Blavatskaya and Olcott, who at first had very close ties with the Buddhist ideologists but whose relations later on became distant and even hostile.

According to the author, the main source of this change was not the ambitions of this or that individual but a different approach of Buddhist ideologists such as M. Gunananda Thero and their theosophic counterparts on the problems of national spiritual heritage.

She has also taken into account the educational system and its consequences in the country in the 19th century in its evolution.

The Soviet scholar gives a brief analysis of the establishment of the Sri Lankan press in the nineteenth century—such as the first English Newspaper the "Ceylon Observer" and the first Sinhala newspaper, "Sarasavi Sanda-Rasan".

In general, she divides changes in Lankan ideology in modern times according to two periods i.e. 1815-1890's, connecting it with establish-

ment of new methods of industrial capitalism throughout the country.

SECOND

The second period, which begins at end of 19th century, was in general a period directed to the rejuvenation of the humanitarian values of ancient cultural traditions.

An important aspect of this—namely, the development of the National Educational System—especially new Buddhist schools—was not a mere continuation of the traditional, but one where new methods were introduced and implemented.

All this helped to create a new circle of Sri Lankan intelligentsia whose views and ideologies were different from the small, pro-Western elite.

Nevertheless, the main ideological changes, from the author's point of view, came to Sri Lanka between the 1890's and 1915. In this particular period, the exploitation of Sri Lanka by imperialistic methods began and it became an agricultural and raw material appendage of the British Empire.

The beginning of the 20th Century—the epoch which Lenin termed "the awakening of Asia"—was characterised by the evolution of views of Sri Lankan ideologists on problems of social development of country. The dominating figures took liberal bourgeoisie positions. Their struggle for the cultural renaissance of the country was connected with their desire for a system of education which lays special emphasis on patriotic feeling.

The period just before the beginning of 2nd World War, was the nucleus, as it were, of the radical wing of the national liberation movement. But still, the dominant role was played by liberals. (A.P.N.)

Trinco Deal

A DISTINCTION WITHOUT A DIFFERENCE

In announcing to Parliament on April 5 that the Cabinet had decided to award the oil tank farm at Trincomalee (henceforth to be called the 'Trincomalee Entrepot Project') to a consortium of OROLEUM (Pvt) Ltd of Singapore, TRADINAFT of Switzerland, and OIL TANKING of West Germany, with the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation retaining 16 per cent of the shares, Minister Cyril Mathew said:

"It is very unlikely, or for that matter impossible, for Sri Lanka to get another group of companies as uninvolved politically, non-controversial, and acceptable technically, financially and commercially as this group to handle the Trincomalee Tank Farm Project". (Hansard, col. 966)

What the Minister did not tell Parliament was that two of the three companies involved are proxies for the former COASTAL CORPORATION, the US firm to whom the government had originally decided to lease the tank farm but which it had to abandon formally owing to the international and domestic scandal its decision caused.

As was mentioned in earlier articles in FORWARD (which first broke the story) the Cabinet approved on 7 October 1981 an agreement between the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation and the Coastal Corporation USA for an oil tank farm at Trincomalee.

For this purpose, Coastal Corporation USA set up a subsidiary firm, which was incorporated in Sri Lanka as Coastal (Bermuda) Ltd, Singapore. The two promoters of this firm were DOUGLAS HENRY MILLER and COLIN NICHOLAS REFE.

The decision to award the oil tank farm to the US firm was made without calling for tenders. The amount they had to pay was a mere 25,000 US dollars. But what was much worse was the fact that Coastal Corporation's main customer was the US Navy which was looking for fuelling facilities for its Sixth Fleet in the Indian Ocean.

The exposure of this underhand deal by FORWARD and ATHHA caused a domestic and, later, international furore.

So much so that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was compelled to make discreet inquiries from our Ambassador in the USA, Mr. Ernest Corea, about Coastal Corporation Ltd.

Ambassador Corea engaged the prestigious Wall Street firm DUNN and BRADSTREET to make this inquiry.

This firm reported back that Coastal Corporation was in the red. Its operating loss of 54 million dollars in 1980 had been nearly doubled to 98 million dollars in 1981. Moreover, Mr. O. S. Wyatt, its Chairman, and Mr. Sam P. Wilson, its Senior Vice President, had

been fined 40,000 dollars by the US District Court at Houston for "criminal misdemeanour in contravening US energy regulations".

The communication between Ambassador Corea and our Foreign Office also made clear the keen interest of the US administration in this deal.

The US State Department had, he reported, briefed the firm's Chairman Wyatt about the "sensitiveness" of the deal.

In February 1982, after the CDN reported that the original agreement reached had been called off, Ambassador Corea informed his masters that while

by
Our Political Correspondent

the State Department was sensitive to the regional and domestic difficulties Sri Lanka's government may have to face if US naval fuel was given exclusive rights as envisaged in the original agreement, "the Pentagon might have different views."

Ambassador Corea also reported the opinion of an Administration spokesman, Murphy, that the ability to store fuel for the US Navy was essential to the viability of the project, and that US trade sources confirmed this.

In the face of this "stink" the government back-flipped.

It instructed the CPC not to sign the approved agreement.

On 8 April 1982 a notice was published calling for "world-wide" tenders for the oil tank farm.

Seven offers were received, including a new offer from Coastal Corporation.

Apart from the three firms that later formed the consortium that was finally awarded the tender, there were tenders from PACIFIC RESOURCES INC. USA/VAN OMMERON, of HOLLAND, UNITANK of UK and the INDIAN OIL CORPORATION of India. On the request of the Sri Lanka government, NEFTCHIMPROM EXPORT of the USSR also offered to put the 100 tanks back into servicable condition, set up the farm, and hand it over to the CPC for operations.

While the government was considering what to do, the international and domestic furore over this deal became louder. Its connection with the Reagan Administration's geo-strategic plans in the region become obvious and widely-known. On top of this, it became known in trade and political circles in Sri Lanka that the offer of the Indian Oil Corporation was the most advantageous to Sri Lanka commercially.

Faced with this dilemma, Coastal Corporation made a new move.

As Minister Mathew put it in Parliament (Hansard, col. 965):

"Coastal Corporation USA, withdrew their offer and OROLEUM (Pvt) Ltd of Singapore submitted an offer of a joint group consisting of OROLEUM (Pvt) Ltd, TRADINAFT, Switzerland, and OIL TANKING, West Germany".

If the conditions of the original tender were going to be changed so radically and suddenly, elementary procedures required that fresh tenders should be called for. But this did not suit the government or, for the matter of that, Coastal Corporation and its promoters.

The reason why Coastal Corporation decided to back out was not far to seek.

The Managing Director of OROLEUM, which made the new proposals for a consortium, was none other than the same DOUGLAS HENRY MILLER who had been one of the co-promoters of the original company that Coastal had incorporated in Sri Lanka.

As for TRADINAFT a company with mainly Pakistani capital although located in Switzerland, one of its Directors was none other than the other co-promoter of Coastal COLIN NICHOLAS REFE.

Both Mr. Miller and Mr. Refe were present at the signing of the latest and final agreement in Colombo on April 12, according to the ISLAND of the next day. Mr. Miller signed for OROLEUM, while a lawyer signed for TRADINAFT with Director Colin Refe looking benevolently on.

It was thus a case of a distinction without a difference. "World-wide" tenders had resulted in the oil tank farm being awarded to Coastal Corporation under the guise of subsidiaries.

Mr. Mathew has claimed that the new deal would not "affect the security interests of either Sri Lanka or any other country" (Hansard, col. 967) because it precludes the foreign investor from renting tanks or storing or supplying oil for military purposes.

Mr. Mathew must be deliberately naive. What the agreement actually says is that, while the foreign investor is given "exclusive rights" in this regard, it is only required to "take all steps reasonably within its powers" to see that oil is not supplied for military purposes.

Recent history abounds with examples of the US government and firms deliberately breaking solemn undertakings.

One of these is the admission of the former US Ambassador to Japan that the US regularly brought nuclear-armed ships into Japanese ports for fuelling and service although bound by Japanese law not to do so.

Nor is there any prohibition on the foreign investor leasing out tanks or sub-contracting to third parties, who are not bound by these obligations.

Indeed, Article 67 of the agreements gives the foreign investors powers "which should not be unreasonably withheld" to transfer shares to third parties.

The Trincomalee tank farm issue is by no means settled. All that has happened is a deception.

JAFFNA'S UNHAPPY NEW YEAR

Like their Sinhalese counterparts down south, the ordinary people of Jaffna were looking forward to celebrating the New Year in style on April 13. But it was not to be.

The reason was not, as in the south, the high prices and shortages which put much of the traditional New Year fare out of reach of the ordinary man. New Year, here, had to be "celebrated" under a curfew, with a section of the armed forces on a trigger-happy rampage, amidst the destruction of fire and counter-fire, and in a general atmosphere of fear.

The people lived in fear of the army. The army was in fear of the "terrorists". And the death and destruction these fears produced is still being counted.

No one can say exactly how many were killed in the black days between April 9 and 12. Conflicting official figures put it between 32 and 57. But, as the army and the Police can bury their dead without a coroner's inquest, everyone regards this figure as a gross underestimate. Unofficial sources put the count at between 200 and 250, but these include not merely corpses but those reported missing and untraced. No one knows how many were injured.

Forces

Nearly all who died were killed as a result of shooting by the security forces. These forces sustained some injuries, but have not so far reported any deaths among their ranks.

The official claim is that most of those killed were "terrorists" or their active

supporters. But how they establish this fact is beyond anyone's comprehension unless every young man under 25 is classed as a "terrorist".

Mr. Douglas Liyanage, whose credibility is by no means high after his notoriously biased and inaccurate performance as Competent Authority during the July 1983 riots, has said that some of the dead had weapons on them. But even he (and the Minister of National Security) have admitted that innocent bystanders have also been killed.

The evidence here suggests that the majority of the dead were such persons (including curfew violators shot at sight) and that only a microscopic minority could by any stretch of the imagination be described as hard-core "terrorists" or their active supporters.

Damage to property is easier to identify. The armed services seem responsible for the destruction of the Jaffna MPCS and some shops opposite the hospital, as well as for the damage done to the Roman Catholic 'Our Lady of Refuge' Church, although it is possible that this was not deliberate. Some bakeries and shops owned by Sinhalese were burnt in apparent retaliation, and damage done to the Sinhala Maha Vidyalaya and the Naga Vihara.

There is a lot of doubt here whether the attack on Sinhala school and the Naga Vihare was the work of any of the established "terrorist" groups.

It is certainly not their style, for they have always boasted that they only attack the armed services and "Tamil traitors"

and never Sinhalese civilians or their property.

It is thought likely that those who attacked the school and the Naga Vihare were unruly elements from among the Catholic population of Jaffna Town, who had been incensed by fast-spreading rumours regarding an army "attack" on their church, especially that a cannon had been fired at the roof.

Common people here, like those throughout the island, condemn the attacks on places of religious worship, both Catholic and Buddhist, as well as on the houses and private businesses of civilians. This is a new and disquietening feature as far as the Sinhalese civilian population in Jaffna is concerned. The Catholic factor that has now be injected into this issue has given it a new and equally disquietening dimension.

It is clear that, after the Round Table Conference was adjourned for several weeks, the armed services in the North have launched a widespread "flush-out" operation in the peninsula. Stolen property from bank raids and, in some cases, weapons and ammunition have been discovered in certain houses. The ambushing and blowing up of the army truck opposite the Sinhala MV, in which some army personnel were injured, is thought to be the "Tiger" answer, although the similarity with the incident that triggered off the July 1983 events has not been overlooked.

On April 9, after some sections of the security services began retaliatory attacks on

the MPCS and other premises, all shops in the bazaar closed, public transport stopped, people remained in their homes, and Jaffna was literally a ghost town.

Matters grew really serious the next day, when attacks on Sinhala houses, bakeries, the garage of the MV and the outhouses of the Naga Vihare started, with the troops opening fire to restore order.

Jaffna was wreathed in smoke from high explosives and gunfire, and the smoke could be seen several miles away. A curfew was declared at noon on the 10th in Jaffna Municipality, but in practice the whole peninsula was under curfew.

Continued

Shooting continued on the 11th and 12th, with fresh attacks on the Naga Vihare and about 65 persons killed in army fire. It was only on New Year Day (April 13) that order was more or less completely restored.

Although there have been no major incidents since then, life is by no means normal. The disruption of lorry and train services has taken the form of an unofficial blockade. Fuel is in short supply and bus services are still skeletal. Although the hours of curfew are being progressively relaxed many goods and foodstuffs are in short supply and prices are very high. There is a shortage of fish as fishermen don't go to sea.

All in all, it was one of the most unhappy and traumatic New Years in Jaffna's history.

(April 16th, 1984)

PROFILE OF J. R.'s HOST

RONALD REAGAN, who will host our President J. R. Jayawardene next month on his official visit to the USA, is the 40th President of that country.

Many have often wondered how this former actor in B Grade Hollywood films could have risen to be the head of the world's most powerful capitalist state. But Reagan's rise is no case of "from log cabin to White House".

To find out why Reagan pursues such a reckless, aggressive and explosive policy in foreign affairs, one has to examine the powerful forces of the military-industrial complex of the USA which manipulate the present incumbent of the White House as their puppet.

The rise of Ronald Reagan to power in the Republican Party, and later in the US itself, is closely related to the change that has taken place in the oligarchic power groups in Washington. These groups are not mentioned in the US Constitution but, in fact, run and rule the country. They are engaged in producing and selling weapons of mass destruction, and in earning fantastic profits by doing so.

Each of these groups seeks to outdo its rivals, to get the White House under its invisible control, and thus gain positions from which it can dictate the government policies which will bring it even greater profits. The huge industrial giant GENERAL MOTORS once summed up this policy in the pitby phrase: "What's good for General Motors is good for America."

CALIFORNIA

Much is known about the earlier, but still active, monopoly oligarchies like the Rockefeller, Morgan, Mellon and Du Pont groups. But at the present time the "boys at the top" are what is popularly called "the California Group", with Ronald Reagan as their front-man and who represent the ultra-right circles of US imperialism.

The "California Group" grew and rose during and after World War II, when the aircraft, ship-building, steel, and laser missile industries began to sprout in the west of the United States. The group's great wealth and political influence grew rapidly, and it was soon able to match the Rockefeller and Morgan groups more than evenly.

New Food Stamps Ban

UNP MP and former Prime Minister, Dr. W. Dahanayake, MP, has given notice of the following private members' motion in Parliament:

"This House is of opinion that the circular prohibiting the new issue of food stamps should be withdrawn, that they should be issued to any family at any time provided they are qualified to receive them on the basis of family income, and that the monthly income limit of a family to be qualified for the receipt of food stamps should be raised from Rs. 300 to Rs. 500".

Reagan's teacher was the former leader of the US ultra-right, Barry Goldwater, who boasted that he had never read a book when a young man. When Goldwater died, the California Group picked Reagan as its successor, nominating him for the post of state Governor in 1966.

WAY UP

At this time the California Group was on its way up, and already proclaiming that, politically, "California is the true America."

by D. E. W. Gunasekera

Although its population was only 20 million, California produced as big a volume of goods and services as the 100 million Japanese did. California produced 40 per cent of all the fruit and vegetables Americans consumed, and also the bulk of the aircraft and missiles sold to the US armed forces.

Reagan was an ideal candidate for the California Group. Like Goldwater, he was not over-fond of reading. The main thing about his meagre library was that it was dusted regularly. But he was "a great communicator". He knew how to act, and for whom. He could be relied upon to stick to the script and to get across the message of his producers and directors.

Edmund Percy, the Democratic Party candidate who opposed Reagan in his first bid to become state Governor, asked Reagan in a TV debate:

"How can an actor without any experience of public affairs run one of the biggest states?"

Reagan replied that he would act as kings had done before and would somehow or other cope with the post of Governor.

ECONOMY

In his report on the economy of California in 1968, Governor Reagan claimed that California's aerospace industry accounts for one-third of the USA's total industrial output.

The biggest bank in the US—namely, the Bank of America—and the biggest arms firm—namely, Litton Industries—belong to the California Group.

The California Group soon had the whole state machinery of California, from top to bottom, in its hands. Led by the Bank of America, the biggest corporations in this group who relied on military orders, are:

1. The Lockheed Aircraft Corporation,
2. Rockwell International.
3. McDonnell-Douglas Aircraft.
4. Litton Industries.
5. Hughes Aircraft.
6. The shipping and steel monopoly of Edgar Kaiser.
7. The Bechel Shipbuilding concern.

By the 1970s, one-third of all workers in California were employed in war factories. The California Group earned

millions of dollars from the Korean war, the war in Vietnam, and the arms race. They began to dictate the political line of the right-wing of the Republican Party. Reagan was their man for the White House. He would have no truck with the policies of detente that had made headway under Nixon and the early years of Jimmy Carter.

When Reagan was elected to the White House, "Tip" O'Neill, the present Speaker of the US House of Representatives, said:

"It is sinful that a man who is totally unformed and ignorant about international problems and who doesn't even read the documents is President of the United States".

Alan Post, the well-known political analyst from California, said just before Reagan's election:

"I am scared to death he will get elected. What troubles

me is that he is so superficial. He is an actor"

This "ignorant and superficial" actor, who dances to the tunes of the California Group, now has his finger on the nuclear trigger and has the power to unleash a nuclear holocaust. The California Group, which calls his bids, wants more and more profits from more and more arms. This is why their front-man, Reagan, has proclaimed a new arms race, the deployment of nuclear missiles in Western Europe and elsewhere, the expansion of US bases throughout the world, the re-arming of US satellite governments, a space war, and a "crusade" to wipe out socialism, non-alignment, peace and national liberation.

It is this man who has now invited our President Jayawardene to come a-calling. He dangles the bait of increased military and economic aid in exchange for a still greater US presence in strategic Sri Lanka and even more direct involvement in the USA's global strategic plans. And a willing fly is ready to enter the spider's web.

Getting Ready to Meet Reagan

The government is now finalising its extensive preparations for the visit of President Jayawardene to the USA next month on the invitation of President Ronald Reagan.

President Jayawardene, it is learnt, has already sent a personal letter to President Reagan drawing attention to Sri Lanka's economic plight, and asking him to assist it in restoring "political stability" by greater economic aid; by increased finance for under-financed on-going projects (especially the attempt to re-organise the plantation sector); and, especially, by asking the World Bank not to insist on the government carrying though certain measures which can only jeopardise its political stability by further reducing the "quality of life" of the people.

Briefing the President on what and what not to ask for, the Foreign Office has, it is learnt, asked him to concentrate on proposing an US-Sri Lanka Economic Co-operation Agreement, similar to that which the US has with Pakistan.

This will include the setting up of a Joint Commission, which will be chaired alternatively by a US Secretary of State and a Sri Lankan Minister, and cover mutual co-operation in the fields of the economy, commerce, science and technology, and cultural, educational and other exchanges. Both the private and public sectors, especially the latter, would be involved.

High-Level

A major advantage of such an arrangement, it has been pointed out, is that it will make the US adminis-

tration aware at the highest level of Sri Lanka's requests and needs.

This is in contrast to past agreements with the US, concluded in the 1950s and 1960s, which were focussed too narrowly, lacked comprehensive coverage, provided for ad hoc matters only, and thus only claimed the attention of minor officials of the US administration.

The President has been asked to take full advantage of the "goodwill" that has been created in the Reagan Administration as a result of the signing of the Peace Corps, the Voice of America and Trincomalee oil farm agreements. Also to be emphasised is the common "ideological outlook" of the two governments.

Sri Lanka's representatives in Washington and the UN have also drawn the President's and the government's attention to the fact the US administration would like Sri Lanka to be a model that it can hold up to the rest of the developing world of how the political and economic policies the US advocates for developing countries can really work.

In particular, the US admires the present government's adherence to a free-market and private-sector-oriented strategy, which corresponds to its own outlook.

The President has also been advised that he should keep in mind that the US is to-day the largest bilateral donor, the largest export market for Sri Lanka's non-traditional exports, the most influential country with multinational aid agencies, a vital source of foreign investment and tourism, a potentially large

Commando Training

Attention was focussed on the new "commando" units that the Sri Lanka Army is training for the "war on terrorism" when the newspapers published that the Police were looking for some of these "commandos" in connection with the gruesome Punchi Borella "parcel bomb" murder.

Police believe that the parcel bomb itself may have been manufactured in one of these commando training camps.

Political circles say that the commando units for anti-terrorist work are being trained with the assistance of "experts" from Britain, Israel and some other western countries. They will be used not only against northern "Tigers" but also opposition in the south.

So the Army too has its special training camps—the whereabouts of at least three of which are known.

supplier of scientific and technological expertise and equipment, an increasingly important trade partner, an important destination for students, and the home of a sizable expatriate Sri Lankan community.

Warned

However, the foreign affairs establishment has warned against any attempt by the President to propose, at the present juncture, the conclusion of a "defence agreement" with the USA, as suggested by important circles in the government and the country.

It says that, in view of the elections this year in both the USA and India, such a proposal would not be immediately acceptable, and that any rejection of it by the USA would create a "bad impression" abroad and among Opposition circles, especially the leftists, domestically.

Such a rejection, they say, would create an impression of a "failed visit", weaken Sri Lanka's image, tend to suggest that the US does not support the Jayawardene government in a tangible and practical way, and thus lessen the government's reputation in pro-western circles internationally and its creditworthiness in the World Bank and the Aid Club.

The President was therefore been advised to concentrate on an economic and cultural agreement, and to leave the question of a "defence agreement" to be taken up later when US-Sri Lanka relations are further consolidated. Purchase or donation of military equipment is not, however, ruled out.

GAINS OF THE ESTATE STRIKE

Congratulations to the plantation trade unions for the important victories they gained in the recent strike, which they conducted unitedly despite the opposition and sabotage of the UNP-led LJEWU, the hostility of the press, the efforts of racist rabble-rousers, and the undisguised anger of the government.

Winning equal pay for equal work, as well as 6 guaranteed working days a week, is a big achievement. Although the wage increase obtained is inadequate and largely formal, wage matters can still be adjusted by the joint committee of management, government and unions that will be set up.

For the first time, the CWC has officially joined with other plantation unions in a major strike, rather than relying on the special relationship between Mr. Thondaman and President Jayawardene. CWC workers should learn a lesson from this, as well as from the treacherous attitude adopted by the UNP-led trade union leaders in this matter.

S. Ramiah

Talawakelle

Jaffna Library

The Lionel Fernando Commission, which the present government appointed to recommend compensation for the damage done by a section of the security forces and leading UNPers to property in Jaffna during the DDC elections of June 1981, recommended that compensation in the amount of Rs. 10.2 million should be paid to the Jaffna Municipal Council for the wanton burning of the Jaffna Public Library and its 97,000 books.

Although this act of arson shocked public opinion both here and abroad, the government has been both slow and inadequate in giving effect to the recommendation of its own Commission.

Sometime back a sum of Rs. 1 million was transferred from the President's Fund—which is supposed to help persons affected by natural disasters—to an account entitled the "President's Jaffna Library Reconstruction Fund". Members of the public were at the same time asked to contribute to this fund. But up to date, the Jaffna Municipal Council has only received Rs. 2.1 million for this purpose. Of this sum, Rs. 9 lakhs is from the original grant and the rest from public contributions.

Why is the rest of the recommended compensation withheld up to date? Does the government not care about this act of vandalism, or does it feel that anything more will

amount to an admission that it bears a direct responsibility for what happened?

S. Navaratnam

Jaffna.

Strange

Isn't it strange that Prime Minister Premadasa was so conspicuously absent from the gala opening of the Victoria dam?

Was he not invited? Or did he not want to occupy third place after the President and Minister Gamini Dissanayake?

To rub in the point, the PM staged his counter-show at the same time—namely, the opening of his 202nd "model village."

At the Victoria show, the President praised Britain, expressed his admiration for Britain's parliamentary traditions, reminded Britain of her obligation under the 1947 "Defence Agreement" to come to Sri Lanka's aid if she is attacked by a foreign country, and revealed that, in gratitude to Britain's help and in recognition of the "special relationship" between the two countries, he had personally ordered our UN mission to vote for Britain when she was being universally condemned for her Falklands aggression—even countermanding our Foreign Office's advice to remain neutral!

At the PM's show, Mr. Premadasa chose to single out the Ambassadors of Czechoslovakia and the GDR, as well as the Charge d'Affaires of Yugoslavia (the only three representatives of the diplomatic corps present) to say how impressed he was at their development when he visited their countries. Conveying his personal greetings to their Prime Ministers, he also thanked them for not harbouring "Tigers" or allowing them to operate from their countries.

The next move was when the DAILY NEWS leaked a photo-copy of a letter from Mrs. Thatcher to the PM in her own handwriting, confirming that, in response to his representations, the "Iron Lady's" government would honour the offer of the defeated Labour Party government to fund the Victoria Project.

This was, of course, to suggest that the Victoria Project was obtained by our PM and not by the President or Gamini.

All this goes to show that you can't beat our PM when it comes to self-promotion.

P. Baasnayake

Kandy.

High Tech

There are many political lessons to be learnt from the successful space flight of India's first cosmonaut, Rakesh Sharma, who has victoriously returned after accompanying two Soviet colleagues in dock-

ing their Soyuz-II with the Salyut-7 and Soyuz-10 complex.

Apart from being yet another re-affirmation of the developing friendship and co-operation between India and the USSR, this dramatic space odyssey also shows once again that, unlike the USA, the USSR is ever-ready to share its high-technology with the less developed nations in the cause of peace and friendship.

Rakesh Sharma is the 12th foreign cosmonaut to accompany Soviet colleagues on a space mission. The USA, in contrast, has up to now kept its space secrets to itself and not invited even its NATO allies to send one of their cosmonauts to accompany the US spacemen (or woman) on a mission. The USA was quick to discontinue even the 1975 joint USSR-USA space research initiated by the first Apollo-Soyuz flight.

The USA wants to keep its space secrets to itself because it wants to use space research for military purposes. Even its present experiments with the "Challenger" project would have aroused greater world acclaim if they had not been connected with President Reagan's current "space war" preparations, for which colossal sums of money and technology have been set aside.



Of course, the USA is prepared to commercialise some of its space capacity. It charges developing countries high prices for supplying them with satellite pictures for weather and other research. But even here, politics is combined with profit. For example, India has found the US Ford Aerospace, which fabricated INSAT-1A at a cost of 65 million US dollars, guilty of deliberate sabotage of India's satellite programme. The US Hughes Aircraft also sold Indonesia the PALAPA-B-2 telecommunication satellite which conked out in a few days.

In contrast to all this, the USSR has taken an Indian cosmonaut aboard, not as a passenger but as a full and equal crew member. His training, and the cartographic and geological photographs he and his colleagues have taken of India, will be of immense value to India's future development plans. And not least, Rakesh Sharma himself has also started an investigation into whether yoga exercises have anything to contribute to the study of weightlessness and men's ability to withstand it in outer space.

The USSR has shown in practice that it regards—and

wants to keep—outer space as a arena of peace and co-operation between nations.

Lakshman Ediriweera

Colombo 8.

Cheap

With nearly 250 by-standers killed in army shoot-outs in Jaffna between April 9 and 12, and 23 persons murdered in private New Year fights between April 12 and 14, not to speak of grisly killings like the "parcel bomb" murder and Matugama murder of the kidnapped schoolboy in the last fortnight, is human life the only thing that is cheap in the 'dharmista' Sri Lanka of the UNP?

Padmini de Alwis

Colombo 5.

Malpractice

The law says that the public can inspect a draft Municipal Budget before it is finalised.

Accordingly, the Special Commissioner of Batticaloa, who has been hand-picked by the Prime Minister, published in the DAILY NEWS of March 15 a notice that the

Does our President know that President Reagan, whom he will soon visit, was elected in 1980 by the votes of only 26.2 of the electorate? Or that the present Tory government of Mrs. Thatcher in Great Britain won an absolute majority of 114 seats although only 30.8 per cent of the total registered voters cast their votes for that party?

There are several cases of US Senators who hold their seats although only between 15 to 20 per cent of the voters actually voted for them.

Far from elections in these countries representing "the will of the majority", the proportion of registered voters who actually vote in a US Presidential election gets less and less. In 1960, 63 per cent voted; in 1964, 62 per cent; in 1968, 60 per cent; in 1972, 55.4 per cent; in 1976, 44.3 per cent; and in 1980, 42.5 per cent; While in the mid-term Congressional elections after 1974, less than 40 per cent of electors on average have voted.

The money spent on these elections, however, grows. In 1980, for instance, the Republican Party spent over 62 million dollars, and the Democratic Party over 56 million dollars. In all the elections of 1980, more than 800 million dollars were spent. Expenditure on the current elections will be more than one billion dollars.

So in these countries elections tend to demonstrate the power and will of the moneybags rather than of the people.

This is why it has become more and more necessary to be a millionaire oneself in order to hope to be elected as an US Congressman.

What a contrast to the USSR, where the candidates for election are all workers, collective farmers or members of the intelligentsia and where no one is declared elected unless more than 50 per cent of the eligible voters positively vote for him or her.

G. Hemasiri

Rajagiriya.

Fund

Maybe the reason why no one—except big capitalists like Mr. N. U. Jayawardene—seems interested in contributing to the so-called "National Defence Fund" is that they see it as another gimmick like the "rehabilitation tax" to squeeze money out of the people to finance the government's budget deficit.

I invite the government to contribute to my personal "Defence Fund" by increasing my salary so that I can defend myself and my family from semi-starvation.

Shantha Jayasekera

Badulla.

Will of the People

President Jayawardene is fond of extolling the political systems of countries like the USA and Great Britain, claiming that they represent government by the will of the people, while in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries there is supposed to be a "dictatorship".

U. Athamlebbe

Kattankudy.

That "World Award"

The ISLAND of (appropriately) April 1st published a large photograph of portly CWE Chief RAZIK FAROOK receiving an "international food award" in Barcelona, Spain, from an equally outsize gentleman.

A similar photograph appeared in a number of other newspapers as well.

The story accompanying the photograph in the ISLAND ran:

"CWE won an international award for food distribution given by the prestigious Editorial Board of Barcelona, Spain.

"The award, won over 52 other competing companies in the world, was based on the CWE's performance in keeping the country's food supply alive during the July disturbances.

Seminar on Neo-Colonial Destabilisation

The Afro-Asian Solidarity Association of Sri Lanka will hold a public seminar at the Moors Islamic Cultural Home, Bristol Street, Fort, Colombo on Friday, May 4 at 4.30 p.m. on the theme of "The strategy of the neo-colonial offensive to destabilise the countries of the Third World."

Medagoda Sumanatissa Nayake Thero will preside over the seminar, which is held in preparation for the 6th Congress of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) to be held in Algeria shortly.

Ambassador of the PLO in Sri Lanka, H. E. KHAIREDDIN ABDUL RAHMAN, will be the Chief Guest.

Former judge of the Supreme Court, Mr. T. W. Rajaratnam, will make the keynote speech.

Other speakers will include Dr. Colvin R. de Silva and Mr. Pieter Keuneman.

"Picture shows CWE Chairman Razik Farook receiving the award at a special ceremony in Spain".

The facts, however, are somewhat different.

The "prestigious Editorial Board" is, in fact, a publishing-cum-advertising firm called Trofeo International which doles out these awards to Third World companies as part of its business.

For the past seven years, it has been distributing these "food awards" to firms and institutions in most Third World countries-provided they are prepared to pay for them.

The CWE was one of several companies and institutions in Sri Lanka that received a circular letter dated 16 January 1984 from the "Editorial Office" of TROFEO INTERNATIONAL in Madrid informing them that "the Election Committee of the 7th International Food Award established by our publishing house has elected your firm, which has thus been awarded the 1984 International Food Award related to your field of operations".

Recipients of the circular letter were told that, if they wished to receive the award, all they had to do was to pay 1,950 US dollars and also buy their tickets to Spain and back.

The Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall has hitherto been reserved for international conferences, classy concerts, and the exhibition of foreign film classics.

But last week it was, for the first time, the venue of an ostentatious private wedding.

The bride was the daughter of a garments tycoon, whose other activities have attracted

In return, they would receive, in addition to the "award", two nights stay at Princess Sofia Hotel, Barcelona, and membership of something called the "Trade Leader's Club".

It is not known whether, in "accepting" this "prestigious international award", Mr. Zarook paid these expenses from his own, or from the CWE's funds.

The "Editorial Office" circulates Sri Lanka firms every year about this award. But so far, only one firm, CEYLON BISCUITS LTD, has obliged.

Lenin's 114th Birth Anniversary

Representatives of Sri Lanka's major political parties were on one platform at the Public Library Hall, Colombo, to commemorate the 114th birth anniversary of V. I. Lenin at a well-attended meeting organised by the Sri Lanka-Soviet Friendship Association.

SLSFA President, T. B. Subasinghe, presided.

Trade Minister M. S. Amarasinghe said that Lenin's fame was world-wide and associated with man's efforts

for peace, economic development and the transformation of society. Sri Lanka was grateful to the Soviet Union, which Lenin founded, for its assistance in industrial development, economic relations, the training of students and specialists, and in other fields. The USSR was a good friend of Sri Lanka, he said.

SLMP leader, T. B. Illangaratne said that what Lenin had achieved in a comparatively short life of a little over 50 years was truly remarkable. He had inspired the great world movements for peace, democracy, and national and social liberation.

Lakshman Jayakoddy MP said that his party, the SLFP, had a high respect and affection for Lenin whose teachings and example exercised a powerful influence on world events in this century, and inspired so many movements of social progress and for friendship and peace between nations.

Athauda Seneviratne of the LSSP said that the people of Sri Lanka could usefully turn

to Lenin's teachings to find solutions to the serious problems they faced like economic crisis, unemployment, ethnic strife and threats to democratic rights.

Sarath Muttetuwegama MP of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka said that Lenin was the greatest leader of the 20th Century, who had not only led the struggle to create the world's first socialist state but showed mankind the main lines of transition from imperialism to socialism on a world scale in the present epoch.

Soviet Ambassador Boris Kirasovsky said that the Soviet people, guided by Lenin's teachings, were today in the forefront to save mankind and the achievements of human civilisation from a nuclear holocaust.

The USSR, he said, fully supported the efforts of Sri Lanka and other states of the region to see that the Indian Ocean becomes a zone of peace and the UN Conference on this matter convenes in Colombo early.

DOING IT IN STYLE

Customs attention and were described in last Sunday's DIVAINA as a major obstacle to the development of the textile industry in Sri Lanka.

The bridegroom was the son of a big gem merchant.

2,500 specially invited guests attended the function, which was performed according to Muslim rites. The host paid the Oberoi Hotel, the caterers. Rs. 250 per head for refreshments for the guests, chief among whom were the Prime Minister and Mrs. Hema Premadasa.

The government-controlled Committee which runs the BMICH let it to the host for Rs. 13,000.

The wedding, which outdid all earlier ones in lavishness, was attended by "the notables and the notorious".

The host paid over half a million rupees for it.

What people want to know are whether the government is so had up that it has to earn money through letting the BMICH to the super-rich for their private functions, and whether it is the policy of the government to encourage such ostentatious displays of wealthy extravagance at a time when it preaches austerity and belt tightening to the poor.

CANCEL POWER SURCHARGE

The Public Interest Committee, a non-party and non-secretarian consumer organisation, has written to the Ceylon Electricity Board asking it to stop charging the exorbitant surcharge known as the "fuel adjustment charge".

This surcharge was introduced some years ago on the plea that the CEB had been compelled to work its thermal plants in order to avoid power shortages and thereby had to pay more for imported fuel.

The Committee points out that there has been a FIVE-FOLD INCREASE in electricity charges in the past three years. The additional surcharge of 185% is, the

committee says, an immense burden on the middle-class consumer.

As power from the recently impounded Victoria reservoir will be fed into the grid by mid-1984, the committee demands that the surcharge should be abolished as far as domestic consumers are concerned.

The resistance of the CEB to these demands shows that the surcharge has really very little to do with its increase, reliance on thermal power which is now minimised, but is really due to the determination of the CEB to extract as much as it can while it can from the consumer to meet the repayments of the loan it has taken from the World Bank.

United May Day Rally

(CPSL - LSSP - SLMP - MEP)

CAMPBELL PARK

4.30 p. m.

(Demonstration Starts from Havelock Park at 12 noon)

Speakers:

T. B. Illangaratne, Colvin R. de Silva, Pieter Keuneman, Dinesh Gunewardena, L. W. Panditha, Batty Weerakoon, Vijaya Kumaranatunga, R. H. Jayasekera, S. Thiagarajah

KEEPING THE POT BOILING

President Jayawardene's speech at the UNP's Borella meeting and, even more so, his appalling interview to INDIA TO-DAY have strengthened suspicions that, far from working purposefully for a political settlement of ethnic problems, he is merely keeping the ethnic pot boiling for his own and his government's purposes.

When he suddenly adjourned the Round Table Conference for six weeks, his spokesman, Lalith Athulathmudali, told the media that the long adjournment was to allow time for legislation to be prepared to give effect to the two items of consensus that the RTC had arrived at. But though five of those six weeks are now over, no instructions have still been issued to the Legal Draftsman to start drafting.

Instead, the government has used the recess to appoint Mr. Athulathmudali to the new post of Minister of National Security, and to start a major military offensive in the north.

Although the declared aim of this offensive is "to flush out the terrorists", its main victims have, by all accounts, been uninvolved civilians.

Army excesses have given a new dimension to the already complicated problem in Jaffna by involving a section of the Catholic population of the north in the clashes that took place over the New Year. The bitterness among the Catholics can be judged by the statements to Reuter by Jaffna's Roman Catholic Bishop Diogupillai that: "It is the army who is terrorising our people and not the terrorists."

In addition, a virtual economic blockade of Jaffna by land and sea has come into force.

Food, fuel and other essential supplies are not getting through as lorry traffic has virtually ceased and the trains run irregularly up to Chavakachcheri only.

Fish is in short supply as fishermen do not go the sea, fearful of the Navy's new cordon sanitaire. As most of these fishermen are also Catholics, bitterness among this religious community is at its zenith.

Although the curfew is officially only in force in Jaffna's Municipal area, it exists in practice all over the peninsula.

Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, who masterminds the military offensive, has been at pains to insist that this does not signify that the search for a political solution has been abandoned, or that the government is once more seeking a "solution" through military force.

He has argued that this "flush-out" operation is necessary to make a political solution possible.

But all that the operation has produced so far is needless civilian deaths and the

hardening of bitterness among the Tamils. This is, needless to say, not conducive towards a political settlement.

Anti-Communism

In his Borella speech, President Jayawardene returned to the anti-communist theme that the government first adopted during the July 1983 events but later dropped.

He was at pains to emphasise to people here and, especially, abroad that what the "terrorists" sought was not merely Eelam but the establishment of a "communist state" in Sri Lanka. They also, he alleged, received aid from "revolutionary" forces abroad.

All this was, no doubt, intended for consumption in the USA which President Jayawardene will visit soon in search of aid.

As he had done earlier in interviews to US publications, the President told INDIA TODAY that last July "nobody helped us because they thought that this was an internal racial problem". The

When asked whether he agreed with the Premier that India was trying to "bully" Sri Lanka, the President replied: "That's what they are trying to do" (CDN 16/4). In reply to another question, he said: "I'm not going to be frightened by India". Mrs. Gandhi and India's High Commissioner here "don't accept what we tell them. They accept only what Amirthaligam tells them."

In regard to the threat of an Indian invasion (which Lalith Athulathmudali dismissed as imaginary after his discussions with India's leaders) President Jayawardene hedged.

"The worst India can do," said he, "is to invade us. If they invade us, that is the end of the Tamils in this country."

While not allaying the fears of the Sinhalese about an Indian invasion, the President by this statement also sent shivers down Tamil spines at the veiled threat that genocidal annihilation of the Tamils (he did not clarify by whom) would be the result of any invasion attempt.

In his INDIA TODAY interview, the President also accused the JVP of "planning to overthrow my government".

The "government was to be attacked with dissidents' help

funds for development and education among other things" and a "joint executive combining two or three districts of a region". But apart from the question whether he will abandon this suggestion (as he did Annexure C), it seems unlikely that the TULF will buy the suggestion, especially with the radical youth groups breathing down its neck and general Tamil opinion hardening under the army excesses.

The President's criticism of the SLFPs role may have substance (it certainly bears a big responsibility for torpedoing the chance of a satisfactory negotiated settlement by withdrawing from the RTC for sectarian and subjective reasons) but the main blame must be shouldered by the President and his abdication of leadership.

The government also undoubtedly finds that keeping the ethnic pot boiling is a most convenient way of diverting the working people's attention from their already acute economic difficulties and preventing united action to better their lot.

As the Finance Minister has failed to get the World Bank to modify its tough stance many government circles feel that this is the only way to save the situation for themselves.

gives him grass-roots contacts which he tries to retain. So when he took over as Minister of Trade from big-talking Lalith Athulathmudali, he began with a few minor price reductions in essential foodstuffs and a brave but reckless promise to reduce general price levels in three months.

He also pointed out, quite correctly that it was the private trade that was responsible for increasing prices, and promised to give greater attention and a bigger role to public sector trade agencies like the Marketing Department and CWE which he would "reform".

But the demands of the UNP's "open economy" policies are more powerful than Mr. Amarasiri's good intentions. And his next major move has been to allow the private trade a further 10 per cent of the food import trade handled by public sector trade agencies!

Subversive

The SUN (who else?) has published a story about an "Eastern bloc" official with airline connections who has allegedly been expelled from Sri Lanka for "subversive" activities.

But the facts, one learns, are different. The official's visa was not renewed—but not for "subversive" activities, as alleged. What apparently happened was that representatives of a local firm, who had earlier done bookings etc for the airline, were queried by the official about irregular charges and these sidelines stopped. Political influence was used to lobby the Ministry concerned to refuse an extension of the visa.

Naturally, none of this bothers the SUN, which is always ready for an anti-communist sally.

May Day

The united CPSL-LSSP-SLMP-MEP rally at Campbell Park will, without doubt, be the main event of the May Day celebrations this year.

The UNP will hold its usual bajow party at Galle Face. But, due to its strident anti-Indian campaign in recent weeks, it is finding it more difficult than before to bring down the usual film artists from India who provide the main attraction.

After hoping (and in some cases, trying) that the UNP will use the ethnic situation to prohibit May Day rallies and thus get them off the hook, the SLFP has decided to go ahead with a meeting at Hyde Park. Each newly-appointed "organiser" has been asked to provide Rs. 1,000 and 500 people for the procession. The money has come in, but many organisers have said that they cannot guarantee the people as enthusiasm is low.



countries from whom they asked help also did not want to annoy India because it is "a big market for trade purposes."

He implied that, if the Reagan administration could see that events here were not a mere ethnic fight but part of the world-wide "communist conspiracy", they must surely give his government the same sort of "aid" as they give the military juntas in Central America.

The leading anti-communist newspaper, the SUN, was quick to grasp the President's message, and editorially congratulated him for having unerringly "put his finger on the right spot".

Anti-Indian

Although the official visit to New Delhi by Minister Athulathmudali to defuse the tense atmosphere between the two countries had been arranged, President Jayawardene chose to add fuel to fire by underwriting, in the INDIA TODAY interview, the anti-Indian hysteria that has been whipped up by several of his colleagues, notably Premier Premadasa.

in the armed forces". "We don't know for sure whether any foreign power was involved in this", he added.

Stuck

With regard to a political solution through the RTC or any other form of dialogue, President Jayawardene, the man who boasted that he was so powerful that he could do anything but turn a man into a woman and vice versa, mournfully confessed; "I'm stuck. I'm a prisoner, not of any particular group, but a prisoner of circumstances, law, the constitution, and the political parties".

As for Annexure C, regional councils or even provincial assemblies, all he had to say was: "Even if I like the idea, my party may not like it. They are reacting to the attitude of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party". Or again: "How can I say I want Regional Councils when everyone else is against them?"

However, he did make a new proposal—namely, the setting up of at least four Tamil-majority District Councils with "local police,

Lalith

Meanwhile (to use the favourite media word nowadays) the anti-Indian hysteria seems to have subsided to some extent after Lalith Athulathmudali's visit to India.

His speech to Parliament on his return had important features. He categorically rejected talk about an imminent Indian invasion; repeated the assurance of India's leaders that they had no desire to interfere in Sri Lanka's internal affairs or violate our sovereignty or integrity; stated that the fight was against "terrorism" and not the Tamil people; declared that even the "terrorists" should be regarded as "opponents" and not "enemies"; revived the President's offer of an "amnesty" if they laid down their arms; and emphasised the primary need for a "political" rather than a military solution.

The sentiments are noble, but how far do they represent those of the government or even the President? Actions speak louder than words, and only actions can convince. It remains to be seen what the government will do when the RTC reconvenes on May 9. Or will it be postponed again until the President returns from the USA, thereby giving him an alibi to dodge awkward questions while abroad?

Amarasiri

Mr. M. S. Amarasiri is one of the more down-to-earth of the UNP politicians. His former Left background also