

PAKISTAN — IS MARTIAL LAW REALLY OVER ?

Special Report by Bhabani Sen Gupta

LANKA

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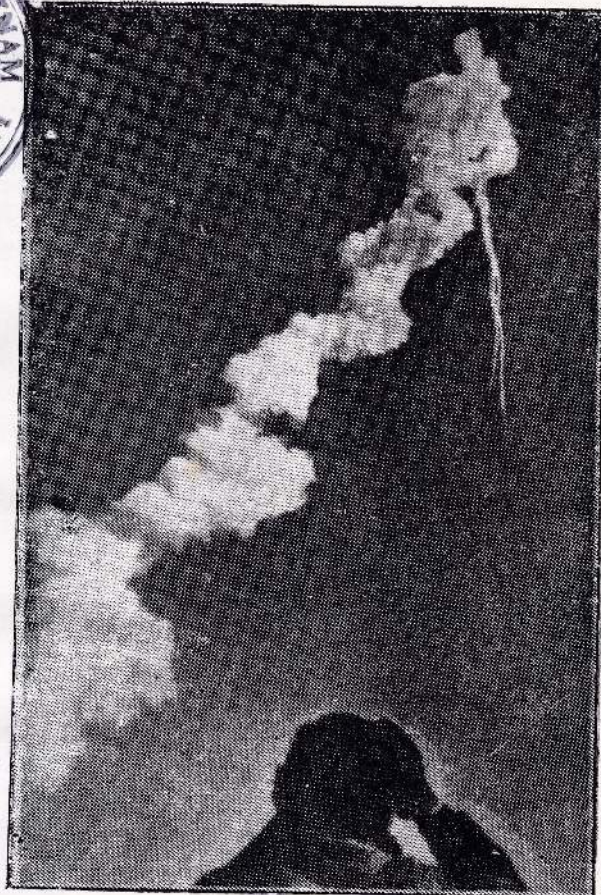
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INDIA — SRI LANKA

GANDHI GETS TOUGH

— Mervyn de Silva

JOHN ELLIOTT: Pope in India

GAMINI YAPA: Earthslips — Has the press probed deep enough ?

AMARADASA FERNANDO: The Menace of McCarthyism

MERVYN D. DE SILVA: Non-ethnic factors in today's crisis

*Also: Kelegama on "open economy" and
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REVOLT OF THE PROFESSIONALS

The arrogant 'interdiction' of a cardiologist was not the real issue behind the GMOA strike which paralysed the major government hospitals in this country. That action by a professional group once regarded as "privileged" was the symptom of a more serious disease that is now spreading among upper-middle and mid-level State employees, including those with first-rate professional qualifications.

In the new economic environment, even the status carrying strata (doctor, engineer, scientist, professor) can no longer maintain his status. Right now, they are trying hard to protect their self-esteem on a salary that simply will not guarantee their families a decent living standard. A three-fold pay increase — that was the real grievance. Political interference and perceived discrimination was only the immediate provocation, and a ready-at-hand rallying slogan. The pay demand was the main trade union issue.

The fact that professional associations are forced to adopt the behaviour patterns (and tactics) of trade unionists, usually associated with the agitation of workers and clerks, is the more revealing lesson of these developments.

Those who have left won't come back. Having failed to bring back over hundred qualified Sri Lankans who have gone abroad on scholarships for higher training, the government is threatening dire penalties. The doctors who are still here, demand higher pay.

NEW ELITES

The GMOA affair had two other significant features, one oddly ironic. In colonial times and perhaps up to the sixties, the civil service was the *creme de la creme* of the public service. Clean, orderly administration was the vital need of government and society.

Social change and the new emphasis on development shifted the focus from bureaucrat to professional and technician. When the government selected three top administrators from past regimes to inquire into the GMOA's grievances, the professionals (doctors,

engineers etc) rejected the choice. They requested representatives from their own kind. What American social scientists call the 'circulation of elites' appears to be in operation.

Did the 'strike' also hint at something seriously wrong with the circulation of blood in the 'new society' where the politician, the politically appointed corporation bosses, the business elite, the contractor and commission agent are occupying the top-rungs? The GMOA demanded a 'duty-free car' for each member, the preferred right of the new *privilegentsia*.

MAHARA MP

The official report on the shooting of the MAHARA MP, Mr. Kamal Jayakody is still not out. Factual details, evidence and judicial issues apart, does not this incident involving a government MP underline once again a trend that has been repeatedly noted in this column? Commandos use their skills to deliver death to lovers and in-laws; Home Guards rape women; reservists shoot at soldiers; policemen take the law into their own hands.

The process of militarisation and lawlessness is patently obvious. More important is the public reaction. No more shock, outrage and public outcry. It is just another event, all too familiar, and therefore calmly and passively accepted. Militarisation brutalises society, numbs human feelings, overturns old values — including the value placed on human life and the sanctity of the person.

TRENDS + LETTERS

Loss of Face

The American national disaster of the "Challenger" spaceship bust-up should convince the naive-optimistic Reagan how accurate and safe his SDI "Star Wars" scheme would be. Those mad US firecrackers are likely to fall on the heads of the innocent people of this earth.

Patrick Jayasuriya
Colombo 5

Personal explanation

I did not say Marxists were "a nearly extinct species." I said that Dr. Fonseka (a Marxist who claims to believe in a multi-party state) belonged to a rare and nearly extinct breed.

If "Marxist" has formed his opinion of my political views from what Dr. Fonseka wrote of me, I must say that the latter published several untruths about me which I did not contradict as I did not think such minutiae should be inflicted on your readers.

V. P. Vittachi
Colombo 3

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INDO-SRI LANKA RELATIONS — A TURNING POINT IN THE CRISIS ?

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

Does Lanka want Indian mediation? That was the ISLAND's headline to a front page story that quoted the SLBC report of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's press conference in Male. The Sri Lankan government should let the Indian government know whether it was interested in continuing the Indian initiative aimed at solving the ethnic problem, the SLBC said.

In fact, Mr. Gandhi and the Indian government have gone much further. According to well-informed foreign correspondents based in Delhi, an entirely new 'take-it-or-leave-it' tough line, backed up by an initial "hands-off" attitude of withdrawal have been outlined by the all-powerful Political Affairs committee of the Indian cabinet. What has puzzled both diplomats in Delhi and other observers, Indian and foreign, of Sri Lanka and Indo-Sri Lankan developments is that this new 'line' coincides with a highly appreciative Indian response to President JR's firm handling of the citizenship issue, and the local opposition and the eruption of violence in the tea plantations.

Mr. Gandhi and the Indian government has watched with "ill-concealed admiration", according to a British correspondent, the speed with which President JR pushed through Parliament the recently negotiated deal on 94,000 'stateless' (and 84,000 Indian citizens), the manner in which he has 'eye-balled' the Buddhist clergy and the (SLFP-led) Opposition, and dealt with trouble-makers in Talawalakelle, Hatton, Dickoya, Maskeliya etc, whether they were Sinhala or Tamil.

Paradoxically, on the other Tamil issue — the 'ethnic conflict' — the reaction has been exactly the opposite. A senior western diplomat has described it as "yawning credibility gap" between Colombo and Delhi. Delhi's strong scepticism is attributed to a growing conviction that is now firmly held certainty. Delhi has come round to the view that the "negotiations" and 'talks about talks' are all part of a time-buying exercise. The underlying assumption is that Colombo has more or less made up its mind on the military option as the preliminary move, and then, all going well, political negotiations from a "position of strength", meaning military dominance at least in the East, and certainly Trinco and its environs, in case the present 'stalemate' in Jaffna cannot be broken.

The cancellation of Mr. Bhandari's visit was not therefore provoked by the 57-page document which Sri Lanka sent by special courier on Jan. 30. Certainly, that document which TULF leader Amirthalingam dismissed derisively as a "legal analysis" by persons "out of touch with political realities", disappointed and dismayed South Block. But it was only the last straw.

From Muscat, Oman, when Mr. Bhandari met National Security Minister, Lalith Athulathmudali to the two meetings at summit level in Bahamas and Dhaka, Mr. Gandhi's patience as mediator was wearing thin, just as his attention was turning more and more to internal problems, especially the set-backs his party has suffered lately, and the state of the Indian economy.

Finally, Mr. Gandhi's visit to Madras in the last days of January, his talks with the TULF leader on the plane back to Delhi from Trichy, a study of the 57-page Sri Lankan response to the TULF proposals, and the cancellation of Mr. Bhandari's trip to Colombo for 2 days of top-level talks before Mr. Bhandari himself joined Mr. Gandhi in the Maldivian capital, traced fast-moving developments which in turn led to a serious change in the course which had been previously charted by the new Indian prime minister.

Delhi-based correspondents claim that this new attitude has been 'telegraphed' to Colombo through normal diplomatic channels. This wholly new thrust in Indian diplomacy on Sri Lanka can be summed up in these terms:

(a) If a 'military solution' is what you are after, good luck to you. If and when you attain your military objective, kindly contact us, in case you are still interested in a political settlement and require our help.

(b) Meanwhile India will not produce any new ideas, suggestions, recommendations, proposals etc for such a negotiated settlement.

(c) As for terrorism, India wants to help you, and has helped you but India still regards the growth of terrorism as the result of political events and policy problems involving the Tamil community, a community which has close affinities with an important state of India, which Delhi will not alienate.

(d) India stands committed to the idea of Sri Lanka's unity and territorial integrity but that does not mean it can do so at the risk of India's own unity and integrity.

Right to Object to Armed Service

The Civil Rights Movement is shocked at the manner in which the MOBILISATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY FORCES ACT was rushed through Parliament as "urgent in the national interest" without giving even MPs the opportunity to study its provisions, a procedure which led the Opposition to walk out in protest. This undemocratic haste made it impossible for CRM to study the Bill and to advise itself as to the desirability of canvassing certain of its provisions before the Supreme Court. CRM protests yet again at the misuse of the "urgent in the national interest" provision of the constitution to prevent public discussion and representations essential to the democratic process.

CRM is still studying the implications of this Act: In particular CRM is concerned about the implications of raising, training and maintaining an armed reserve and supplementary forces outside

the carefully drawn up scheme of the Army, Navy and Air Force Acts. Despite the meticulous provisions of these Acts, which are impressive pieces of legislation, in the current ethnic violence we have had serious breakdowns of morale and discipline among the regular armed forces and unwarranted attacks on civilians. What is needed is to restore and strengthen discipline in the armed forces; the creation of forces outside the regular framework and not subject to the same training and traditions seems hardly conducive to this end.

At the present moment however CRM wishes to concentrate on only one aspect of this Act. Provision is made, for the first time in our history, for conscription, that is to say the compulsory call-up of civilians to perform armed service. No provision is made for a person to seek exemption on the ground of conscience or profound conviction

arising from religious, ethical, moral, humanitarian, philosophical or other similar motives. It is the view of CRM that this right flows naturally from the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion guaranteed by Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Sri Lanka is a party. This is the view taken by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe which in 1967 set out the basic principles of the right to conscientious objection to military service. Its resolution is reproduced in Annex A.

CRM urges the government to make provision for conscientious objection to military service in accordance with the principles and procedures laid down in the carefully thought out provisions of the resolution of the Consultative Assembly.

Desmond Fernando
Secretary

(Statement of the Working Committee)

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Living beyond our means

Jayanta Kelegama

Short term credits, suppliers' credits, commercial borrowing and bank borrowing together met 26 per cent of the total external payments in 1981-83 as compared to 17 per cent in 1974-76; they were equal to 41 per cent of the country's total merchandise imports in 1981-83 as compared to 24 per cent in 1974-76. As foreign exchange earnings supplemented by private remittances private capital investments, grants and long-term loans were inadequate to sustain the high level of import consumption there has been increasing resort to short term credits. This is a disquieting feature partly because short-term credits which carry a higher interest than long-term credits are costly and partly because sustaining a high level of consumption by increasing resort to short-term credits creates an illusion of prosperity.

It is beyond dispute that any developing country needs to borrow from abroad for long-term capital development and to meet unforeseen payments difficulties. This is true irrespective of the political system of the country — capitalist, socialist or mixed. Perhaps the least burdensome way of helping a developing country would be to give it aid in the form of grants but the capacity of donors to extend grants is obviously limited. Grants and long term loans (which are normally to finance long-term development projects) and IMF drawing are legitimate forms of development and payments assistance. In 1974-76 for instance, they were equal to 23.0 per cent of total

Note:

The paper which is being serialised by this journal was presented by Dr. Jayanta Kelegama to the SRI LANKA ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION.

In the last issue, the word "impurity" on page 6 column 2 should have read "impunity". On page 8 column 1, line 14 should read "is an example of this organised smuggling. Foreign currency smuggled to India in this way"

External Resources Gap (Rs. Million)

	1974-76		1981-83	
	amount	as%	amount	as%
External Payments	21,965	100.0	192,290	100.0
External Resources Gap	8,069	36.7	81,517	45.5
Financed by				
1. Official Grants	1,315	6.0	10,513	5.5
2. Long term loans	2,292	10.3	18,666	9.7
3. Short-term credits, suppliers' credits, commercial borrowing and bank borrowing	3,675	16.6	49,914	25.9
4. Direct capital investments	23	0.1	3,307	1.7
5. Others including external assets	764	3.6	5,090	2.7

external payments. This ratio had fallen slightly to 19.1 per cent in 1981-83. It is not unusual for developing countries to borrow short-term for emergencies, but it would be perilous for a country to borrow short-term beyond reasonable limits and to borrow regularly as a matter of course. Short-term credits have been a regular feature in the country's external finances for some time now but they appear to have reached unhealthy proportions now. Short-term debts formed only 15 per cent of the total external debt in 1978; it had however increased to 33 per cent by 1983.

Large scale external borrowing for both investment and consumption has pushed the country's external debt from Rs. 6826 million in 1976 to Rs. 69,122 million in 1983 or in terms of SRDs from 666 million to 2551 million or by about four times. This has inevitably led to an increase in debt service payments — amortization and interest — from Rs. 1074 million in 1976 to Rs. 7094 million in 1983 or from SRD 110 million to SDR 285 million. Debt service payments as a ratio of export earnings from merchandise and services declined from 22.9 per cent in 1975 and 20.1 per cent

in 1976 to 12.4 per cent in 1980 but rose thereafter year after year to reach 21.6 per cent in 1983. Thus the debt service ratio in 1983 is not very different to that in 1975/76; although the external debt is much higher, debt service payments have not yet reached correspondingly high levels on account of the grace period and low interest in the case of long-term loans. The Minister of Finance recently stated that "Sri Lanka in the last seven years has obtained the highest amount of concessional aid per capita for any country in the world".

The increase in the debt service payments with the end of the grace period of long-term loans, increasing resort to short-term credits and rise in interest rates will absorb an increasing share of export earnings in the years to come and the debt service ratio is likely to rise further. Debt service payments are also likely to absorb an increasing share of new borrowings. It is important to note that in the case of some developing countries debt service payments exceed new borrowings. In the case of Sri Lanka however debt service payments were equal to 46 of new borrowings in 1983 as compared to 26 per cent in 1980.

The above analysis shows that the most striking change in recent years is the transformation of an economy living mainly on its export earnings to an open economy living far beyond its export earnings with a substantial share of imports of goods and services financed by remittances of emigrant workers and short-term borrowing. The major causes of this change are the unprecedented expansion of imports to keep consumers happy and the stagnation in exports, in fact, decline in the major exports. The Governor of the Central Bank, in a speech to the Institute of Marketing on June 8, 1984 was reported by the Daily News to have stated as follows:-

"At present we are living beyond our means and we are incurring heavy debts to meet our requirements. The debt servicing burden which is the amount of export earnings inclusive of private transfers set apart for the payment of capital and interest on foreign debt is in the region of 18 per cent. This will increase further if the balance of payments position deteriorates."

The prospects for short-term credits as well as for concessional grants and long-term loans do not seem to be promising in the near future with world recession continuing. Private bank loans to developing countries could dry up in the next decade if economic conditions remain poor and interest rates stay high, says a report by economists at New York's Bankers Trust Co. The report notes that outstanding loans of the nine largest US banks to developing countries in 1982 totalled 276 per cent of the banks' capital. The growing number of governments trying to reschedule their loans also threatens the ability of Western Banks to commit additional funds. The report urges the International Monetary Fund to tighten loan conditions to developing countries as long as worldwide economic stagnation holds down export growth, increasing the balance of payments deficits and the borrowing needs of many developing countries. "If banks have reason to believe that the efficiency of the use of resources they are lending is declining," the report states, "recent experience shows

that they will act to curtail lending and harden terms.

Sri Lanka has no doubt received a substantial amount of foreign aid and on concessional terms too in recent years. This has enabled her to finance investment without reducing consumption and without tightening belts. This happy scenario however may not continue and this has been clearly emphasized by the Minister of Finance himself in his speech to parliament on July 11, 1985.:-

"Although I have every reason to be happy with our achievements at this year's Aid Group Meeting, I must once again draw the attention of the House to the fact that we surely cannot go on depending on such large flow of concessional development aid for ever. The aid-giving countries themselves are beginning to feel the strain of such concessional lending. They will very happily lend us money on commercial terms, but they are becoming more and more loth to give us money on concessional terms. Public opinion in these countries is turning more and more against concessional lending to third world countries, except in the case of severe unforeseen disasters like the present drought in Africa. Many of these countries are facing budgetary difficulties and other economic problems of their own — high unemployment and high inflation. When budget cuts are made in these countries it is natural that the aid programmes should be axed first. We cannot go on depending on aid for ever. It is absolutely essential that we must begin to rely more and more on our own domestic resources, on increasing production — our own production — on increasing exports — our own exports — on increasing our own revenues, on increasing the revenues of my Budget."

Corrective Measures and Long-term Policies

The above analysis indicates that while open market policies and massive investment have helped to achieve, on the one hand a high rate of economic growth and ensured an adequate supply of capital and consumer goods, they have, on the other, been accompanied by unfavourable side effects and unhealthy trends. Such unfavourable features as deficit financing, inflation, inequality in the distribution of income, overloaded infrastructure, high short-term debt and widespread corruption appear to be mainly the result of accelerated or telescoped development or pumping

of too much money to the economy in a relatively short period of time combined with unprecedented expansion of consumption. The Minister of Finance has described this as "Trying to do too much too soon and over extending in the process," while the Central Bank has described it as "overheating" of the economy. It is essentially an expansion of aggregate demand over and above the available real resources. Such unhealthy trends on the supply side such as the slow growth in export agriculture and some import substitution industries and the slowing down of growth generally in all sectors in recent years reflect the inadequacy of existing open market policies.

The overheating of the economy can be reduced by lowering the volume and rate of growth of investment from the present high levels. Any adverse effects on growth of output can also be neutralized by redistribution of investment in favour of projects and programmes with high input-output ratios. The crucial problem however is that resources are unlikely to be adequate to sustain even a lower level and rate of investment if, as the Minister of Finance fears, there is a diminution of external aid, which in recent years financed over half the country's investment. It will be unavoidable under these circumstances to increase domestic savings substantially by cutting down consumption.

Consumption needs to be cut down in any case in view of the increasing short-term debt which has now reached a high level. No one likes shortages, but the question is can the country afford to sustain a consumerist society allowing free choice to the consumer? If the country can afford it by increased foreign exchange earnings, there can be no objection to it. The high level of consumption in recent years, however, as shown earlier, has been sustained mainly by external borrowing which is a sign not of strength but of weakness. The crucial issue therefore is whether the country should continue to live beyond its means as at present or make a start to live within its means.

(To be continued)

Disaster in the Hills

Gamini Yapa

One day in the middle of December, last year, climbing down the 300 feet precipice from Harasbedda on the 'Ragala Roof' to the valley below to Diggala, I was struck by the tremendous erosion taking place in the area. There had been two or three days of rain and on that day, even by noon the summit was under a cloak of mist, while it was clear but wet below. The farmers preparing the fields at Diggala were moving and levering huge boulders which were dislodged by the rains. As I proceeded with my friend round the mountain and came to Rupaha, the scene was not what I had seen more than fifteen years before. The more or less self-sufficient village with a vague air of rural prosperity had changed, its economy crumbling. For some time they have thrived on tobacco cultivation but with the quick money it has brought irreversible changes in the environment, bringing irreparable damage to their land, soil and hence to economy.

Discussing with the peasants we understood that a part of their tracts of fields are covered with sand and rocks washed down from the slopes of the surrounding hills. The destruction caused by tobacco cultivation was such that I concluded, that in few years the inclines of the hills and mountains of Valapane will definitely move down during a rainy season to crush the small villages on them and on the valleys below. The peasants readily agreed but asserted that they are helpless in the situation.

A mere three weeks since, I got news from Valapane, of the serious situation caused by heavy rains at the beginning of January. And I was invited by my friends over there to visit the region so as to see how it has happened. The major news in the media was about the death of 13 people at Ketayapathana in Mathurata area due to an earthslip smashing

and erasing two houses with all the people living in them. And again some news has reached the media to the effect that Rupaha, the village I visited in December has been seriously affected and the villagers were removed to school buildings for protection.

Media coverage of the events at Hanguranketha and Valapane was so little and when I went there I was wondering why they have shown such an indifference to the events which have caused tremendous changes in the environment and landscape of the region. And I also heard that the few news trickled to the national radio was also what was informed by the postmaster of Wathumulla through the telephone considering it one of his civic duties.

When I visited the region on January 18th, 1986 it happened to be the second day of bright sunshine. The rains which continued for ten days had ceased. But as one approached Padiyapelella, the small town on Belihul Oya, a mountain stream flowing down through high hills to Mahaveli, the marks of devastation were very clear. In front of Padiyapelella just on the other side of the stream rises Okandagala is more than one thousand feet below with several villages on the slopes and summit. Okandagala had to suffer three major landslides, all of them breaking away long stretches of Mandarampura road, two of them affecting the Kandy-Ragala highway also.

Even on that day a huge rock was hanging on a small plateau on the course of the largest landslide, hundreds of feet high on the slope threatening the stream below. This slide as it happened on January 10th at about 1 p.m. shook the whole area as if by an earthquake. The people of Mathurata and Padiyapelella told us how when the earth turned a swing all the people ran desperately in all

directions for their dear life. According to them high up on Okandagala, close to the course of this slide, a long crack has appeared which can cause one side of the mountain slip down and wipe out a vast populated area. The villages at the foot, slopes and summit of Okandagala are already evacuated.

Mathurata and Mandarampura, have to be approached separately from both sides of Belihul Oya, from Padiyapelella. The earthslips at Mandarampura have caused the death of four people of the same family two members of it Punci Menika a mother of 28 and a ten years old son rescued. The woman, they say, was motionless buried upto the chin and the boy waving a hand out under a bush fallen on him, when they were rescued by several brave youth who dared the threat of another earthslip and dug them out with their bare hands.

With two of my friends from Valapane visited Mathurata about 3 kilometres up above Padiyapelella. The bus route terminates at Mathurata, the small town where thousands have taken refuge during those days and were still there. On the day before for the first time the people were allowed to visit Ketayapathana three kilometres up on the Mathurata-Nuwara Eliya road. From Mathurata for about several kilometres earth-cracks have appeared everywhere indicating that an area of about ten square kilometres is sinking irreversibly towards Belihul Oya about two kilometres down. And on the other side of Mathurata, another landmass was sinking to another small stream called Ukutule Oya. There is a small reservoir at the high sandwiched between two estates Sithawatte and Marigold Estate. A longitudinal crack has appeared at the base of the dam and the people of Padiyapelella and surrounding area live in fear of a torrent gushing out in case the dam collapses. It is said that authorities in the estates are

reluctant to release more than half of the water stored, due to the fear of destruction of fish raised in it.

These earthslips have caused a tremendous destruction to property worth tens of millions of rupees. Fear and distress reigns every where. Wherever you go as I experienced in other areas of Valapane the people would not speak of any other event than what is happening to them.

And, I was able to discuss with several people of Mathurata area about the possible causes for such a natural disaster. Firstly they said that the increased cultivation, especially those on the slopes would have been a serious cause. Then the rains were also of abnormal magnitude. But this much of water! They suspect that these are mainly caused by the seepage from the Kothmale reservoir which stands at a higher altitude just on the other side of Okandagala -Vilkada Kelle range. It is a well known fact that the surroundings of the giant reservoir at Kothmale completed only two years back are collapsing at different places.

I have heard how, about five years ago our geologists after a thorough investigation had declared that through Hatton-Thalawakelle -Pundalu Oya -Thavalan Tenna-Mathurata and Hanguranketha an underground shifting or fissure has occurred which threatens the whole mountain country. But it seems that the authorities who ordered the construction of the Kothmale reservoir have not taken the advice of this report and brought out this gigantic mass of water to stand on geological strata thus weakened by these changes.

Proceeding to Wathumulla from Padiyapelella on the same day I was able to count 32 major earthslips on to the highway, which had been cleared by that time by bulldozers. But at Mulhalkele the road was impassible since a river of soil was flowing at the pace of a snail from Kothalagala about a half mile up, towards the Kurundu Oya below. The shifting mass of soil and rock was sweeping past the rural hospital of Mulhalkele

crushing several houses on the way, uprooting several giant trees. On my way back from Ragala two days since, I was able to see the river of soil fanning out in the direction of small row of shops and boutiques at Mulhalkele.

Next we were on the Ragala plateau with its lush green tea plantations and poverty stricken villages. Ragala 'Roof', in geographical language, extending from Wathumulla to Ragala about 16 kms in length and two or three kms in width, under the shadow of Makudugala, the sixth summit of Sri Lanka, had a large number of places in 'disrepair'. Starting from Wathumulla if we detail, at Millapitiya a portion of Ragala highway was completely torn out by a huge landslide. People there say that a longitudinal fissure has occurred along the foot of the range just beyond the Japanese Sama Cheithya, which one day will push the entire Millapitiya -Wathumulla high land to shift onto the Wathumulla town. At another place inside Maha Uva estate about 50 acres are affected. The small village Morabedda, off Harasbedda on the road is collapsing. At a point near to it inside the Turpentine block one place with a house and surrounding trees is sinking. At Harasbedda itself road has sunk and a temporary iron and wood bridge is placed on the gap. Between Harasbedda and Ragala several points in Malliyappoo estate and Diyanilla estate has met with the same fate. And also Rathnayaka Pathana the small village which was once famous for its apple orchards is going down into the Mother Earth. High up on the summit of Makudugala two places, one at Binganthalawa and the other at High Forest are collapsing.

Randenigala

For all these the blame is put on the Randenigala dam, which is visible at a distance from Wathumulla, located on the bottom of a huge mountainous basin, the ridges of which are made of Kothalagala, Makudugala and other ranges extending in the region. The gelignite explosions caused at the dam for months, were powerful

enough to shake even the plantation lines on the Makudugala summit at a distance of about 40 kms. The tremors have brought down tiles from roofs of houses in Wathumulla area.

I have heard that the detonations of tons of gelignite at Kochamale for the dam and the underground power-house, were registered as medium sized earthquakes depicted by 3 inch oscillations on the seismographs installed at Belilena, Pitawala, 30-40 kms away over a few ranges of hills. So were not these hills violently shaken by the blasts at Randenigala where batteries of two metro gelignite sticks used for the purpose, thus loosening the masses of soil on them? Does this not indicate that we have to study beforehand the possible effects of blastings on the environment, before starting on such huge projects?

On 19th I went trekking with my friend Chandradasa of Harasbedda to see the destruction caused on the eastern section of Valapane, adjoining the Welimada-Badulla region. Our foot-journey took us first down to Nelugaha Ela, then uphill on the slope of Nelugaha Kanda, to the villages of Kotambe and Rupaha, then to Ambaliyadda and finally to Suriyagahapathana. It was a long walk of about 16 kms, which we made in six hours with all investigations and discussions.

Nelugaha is a small hill of about 100 metres in height and 4 kilometres in length, with about a 50-60 degree slope. The whole slope is denuded, its forest cover which I have seen about 15 years back, has been completely removed for tobacco cultivation. Part of the shrub was slashed for the cultivation itself, the other was utilized as fire-wood for processing tobacco leaves. This has happened for years in spite of the law of the country prohibiting cultivations of land with an inclination of more than 45 degrees and another prohibiting deforestation.

all over Valapane an artificial prosperity was created with the tobacco plant. But the soil was transformed into dust by the agro chemicals used for it, thus accelerating soil erosion several fold.

People assert that there is no one in Valapane, who has not become rich. Because of the tobacco plant. CTC has first entered the region in 1960 with a banner in hand declaring "only for 10 years". But for 25 years the exploitation of soil and labour has proceeded undiminished, which was aggravated by another multinational **Intabex** entering the scene for a very short time. The new company withdrew in two years, leaving the peasants and barn owners indebted to Banks from which they obtained credit to cultivate tobacco for it. But today at Nelugaha, as in other parts of Valapane the presence of big tisms is very small. The fate of Nelugaha, where about 25-30 families had to abandon the houses and property and that

of some other areas can be traced to tobacco cultivation which even now exist at some places.

Stop Tobacco

It was reported that the Minister for Lands, Mr. Gamini Dissanayaka after touring the area has instructed his high officials to find out whether the government should prohibit tobacco cultivations in Valapane as one factor which caused this severe disaster. Even if they do so it would be a ridiculous thing as closing the stable after the horse escaped. It would be like "pushing a finger into the eyes of the man longing to cry" as the Sinhala saying goes.

Not only tobacco also the turpentine and Pinus plantations are under attack. The people in the locality now question the suitability of these in our environment. The two species are indigenous only on colder parts of the globe. But are they suitable to our

central hills receiving heavy rains. The root system of Turpentine spreads upto about 20-30 metres sucking a large amount of water. During the dry season it enhances the effects of the drought. During the rainy season it causes erosion since there is virtually no undergrowth to absorb excess water. And some people actually showed me the connection between Turpentine plantations and the collapsing villages.

The Nildandahinna-Rupaha-Ragala road was impassable even at that time. Several earthslips have blocked the way from Nildandahinna to Rupaha. The people were more occupied with their fields in transplanting the delayed rice seedlings, in those fields which escaped destruction.

But the worst of all landslides have happened beyond Rupaha across the hill-slope village of Ambaliyadda where at six places the road torn out 30-40 metre stretches at each place with a

(Continued on page 19)

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Non-ethnic causes of social tensions — a case for elections

Dr. Mervyn D. De Silva, *Former Advisor, Ministry of Plan Implementation*

I. INTRODUCTION:

The temptation to abandon a truthful and objective analysis of the deep-seated causes of the current racial tensions and the reasons for the unleashing of such fires of hatred comes on the realisation that truth appears to have been banished from the minds of men. But what is worst is that truth has been replaced by its deadly scion half-truth which when clothed in subtle language makes it abstract and confusing. The intellectually dishonest tactics now in use for deviating from the truth is a skill that has reached perfection in Sri Lanka.

It is in a background of a widespread conspiracy against the truth, coupled with dishonesty and rampant hypocrisy that the following analysis is written. The presentation attempts to touch on the many non-ethnic causes of the fury shown in the past and current day violence missed out by many observers, unwillingly or deliberately. The wave of violence in Sri Lanka by any reasoning cannot be attributed to just one single cause — that is an undeniable fact. It is the climax of a complex set of factors both inter-related and inter-acting. The prolonged racial tension is the immediate cause that kindled the July 1983 outburst. But, parallel to it runs a chain of related events that insidiously dismantled all concepts of right and wrong, law and order in the country.

Let us focus attention on some of these causes and look at the fundamental economic cause first.

2. ECONOMIC SCENARIO:

(i) Policy and Devaluation:

The economic situation prevailing since 1978 had all the pre-conditions conducive to a display

of fury in any matter of national discord. There was the complete and unquestioned turn-around in the main economic stance in July 1977 followed by the devaluation of the rupee under IMF command. The later was adopted at a point of time when imports were mounting and exports slackening, with no immediate prospect of the latter improving, and the promised benefits of devaluation never saw the light of day. The seeds of discontent and frustration were sown on a fertile soil.

(ii) Galloping inflation:

Instead of improving the living conditions of the majority of the people, some of the policies caused inflation to gallop to heights as if in sympathy with those high rise buildings that appeared with the frenzied pace of the building industry. The urban areas were beautified as a matter of priority, while half the population groans living below the poverty line of Rs. 350/- per household as designated in 1979. The open economy principles applied with the zeal of fanatics flooded the country with an unprecedented range of goods, food and drugs far beyond the reach of the majority and implanted decadent social values that are uprooting noble religious values.

(iii) Dependence:

The outward looking policy brought in armies of foreign experts, business collaborators, voluntary organisations, and Foundations, known for political activity, while seasoned local experts and professionals were relegated to the attics. A variety of cosmetic projects never objectively analysed to ensure that the benefits flowed to the people and country were embarked on. What did it matter as long as the benefits trickled into the pockets of the microscopic elite, new rich,

and favoured foreign and local companies?

(iv) Foreign debt and cost of living

The drastic devaluation, the financial indiscipline, the absence of sensible and pragmatic planning and coordination, and the extravagant spending sprees raised the foreign debt of Rs. 4.5 billion in 1979 to Rs. 53 billion in 1985.

It launched the cost of living index into space. If the latter made life a nightmare to those households with a family income of Rs. 1,000 per month, are exceptional powers of imagination required to picture the plight of the 50% of the population living below the poverty line?

(v) Pulse unfelt

Notwithstanding the devastating and crushing blows brought about by the IMF dictates and domestically generated inflation, politicians continue to make their platitudinous speeches on the virtues of the Government's economic policies, the absence of queues, and the availability of luxury goods. And, these speeches are delivered from the ever increasing number of platforms consequent to the 'outbreaks' of extravagant Tamashas and the 'epidemics' of Seminars — the imagined indicators of prosperity and intellectual vibrance.

(vi) Widening income gap:

A cardinal folly any developing country can make is to permit the gulf between the rich and the poor to widen and deepen very sharply. However, while this is taking place the booming advertisement industry, known for its skill in creating greeds, is hammering through the mass media the availability of luxury foods, clothing, and electronic equipment only the super rich can afford.

On the other hand, the non beneficiaries of the new economic policies are without even their basic needs. The simmering fires of discontent and frustration become raging flames at the moment.

(vii) **Ostentatious living:**

Then, to make matters worse there is the ostentatious, almost vulgar, display of opulence by the small parvenu elite the plutocracy of millionaires enriched by reckless infra structure development, expansion/modernisation projects which the country could ill afford. Hand in hand goes the open licence for corruption, dishonesty, exploitation, and smuggling, while Tourist Hotels cater for and satisfy even the most depraved desires of the affluent from all corners of the world. As the gap between the rich and poor polarises very sharply, the ruling party, afflicted with what may be called the Marie Antoinette syndrome see no reasons for holding elections suppressed in 1982.

(viii) **The real challenge:**

The real challenge on the economic front was how to use our limited resources more efficiently and equitably. There was a need to understand clearly the role of the State, its relationship to the Private Sector, and its responsibility in encouraging efficiency in both the Public and Private sectors through legislative and fiscal measures, good public management, and correct policy making. But, instead the whole planning and Plan Implementation machinery built and developed over the years was dismantled, and resources of both men and material squandered on unproductive prestige ventures, since there is no clear cut national plan, with carefully tailored sectoral priorities.

(ix) **Obsession with growth rate:**

The rate of economic growth as an indicator of economic development became an article of faith, despite its widely admitted deficiencies. There was no concern for a more equitable distribution of income, or for the non-monetary dimensions such as welfare, education, health, food, and nutri-

tion. Nor was there concern for the formulation of projects with a sensitivity to the complexities of development activities. Economic development was equated to economic growth rate. More correctly, economic development should be the measure of the progress towards reducing the incidence of poverty, unemployment, and income inequalities. Poverty is here defined as a lack of good nutrition, health, educational opportunities, and similar dimensions of welfare. The consequences of chaotic political, economic, and social situations were flashed eloquently on the minds of the people in July 1983. At that time, 60% of the population was undernourished and 40% of the children suffering from malnutrition. The growth rate indicated that the economy was doing well, but the majority of the people were faring very badly indeed. The marauding mob of the deprived were given an opportunity to capitalise particularly when they saw other vested hirelings and private armies embroiled in the holocaust, but for a different set of reasons.

3. THE COLLAPSE OF LAW AND ORDER

(i) **Private armies:**

Today there is an attitude of scant regard for law and order in the country. This was apparently an off-shoot of the laissez faire economic policies that dominated public thinking. Political power blocs controlled all avenues leading to easy money and financial fortunes. Thus, the temptation to recruit and maintain squads of hirelings and trade unionists to protect those sources of power was a strong one. These squads of private armies as they have been aptly described, are at the disposal of political authorities to gain, maintain, or regain their power. They were a law unto themselves as their attack on the Supreme Court Judges did show.

(ii) **Why private armies ?**

The rise in the foreign debt from Rs. 4.6 to Rs. 53 billion in 1985 brought about by the un-

precedented spending spree, explains how it was possible and why it was necessary to have these unholy alliances. The fact that extravagance, dishonesty, and corruption is universal, and that almost overnight many politically influential persons have been able to amass enormous amounts of wealth in cash and property, quite out of proportion to their known assets and earning capacities, gives the clue as to how the shared-interest system operates.

In the new alignment of social groupings, the politician, the business men and their foreign collaborators, and the latter group's hirelings from the underworld become a close group totally interdependent. Perhaps, they correctly recognised that it is only in their unity that they could stand without crumbling when confronted with forces that espouse the cause of angry and deprived people.

The breakdown of law and order structures however, did not take place over night — since the night of July 23rd. No, it was a gradual operation with dismantling taking place brick by brick very methodically.

4. LIQUIDATION OF THE OPPOSITION

(i) **Fair elections of 1977:**

When the present government swept into power in July 1977, the 5/6th majority it obtained was a vote with a vengeance for a change. An important point that emerges from this massive majority that has not been commented on is the fact that it left absolutely no doubts as to the fairness with which the general elections were conducted. This must be regarded as a fine tribute to the previous regime because the elections — DDC, by-elections, presidential, and the referendum held in the post 1977 years have raised many serious doubts in the minds of the majority of the people. A loss of faith in the manner in which the system is worked poisons the faith in the system itself, and

brings about a host of attendant repercussions.

(ii) Insincerity in talk:

In 1977 the people placed their implicit faith in the newly elected government. Since the mandate given almost embarrassed the government, it publicly lamented the absence of a strong opposition essential for the efficient functioning of the democratic system. Sooner than later, the obsession to destroy the opposition completely in the Napoleonic style of rolling up the electoral maps took over, adding to the sagging faith in the democratic system. The Tamil question was high on the agenda and hopes of resolving were bright, but the first priority was the liquidation of any opposition, and there they went with full steam!

(iii) The treatment meted out to the former Prime Minister:

The first sharp attack on the opposition came in the form of the special Presidential Commission to try out among others, the leader of the Sinhala Section of the opposition in Parliament on the vague charge described as "abuse of power." To this end, special legislation was passed, and the special court set up proceeded to bring on trial the former Prime Minister of this country. All proceedings and addresses by counsel for the prosecution, some tinged with sadism, were beamed in all three languages on all waves of the broadcasting system.

Mrs. Bandaranaike was deprived of her civic rights for a period of seven years upto 1987, while the next General elections were scheduled to be held in 1983! There was no one left to pick up the political gauntlet and challenge the ruling power in 1983.

(iv) Reaction of the West:

Although, the action taken against the former Prime Minister was tantamount to placing her behind bars as is commonly practiced in South Korea, the Philippines, Indo-

nesia and Singapore, the guardians of democracy, the western news media, maintained a studied silence on such a news worthy issue. The Western democracies on the other hand, flooded the country with outright grants, aid, and loans as if to endorse the actions of a vindictive Government.

(v) Reaction of Countrymen:

What was the reaction of the country's own people? How did the political assassination of the Sinhala leader of an alternate government reconcile with the claim of the ruling party to be the Fathers of the Just and Free Society? What moral right had they now to exhort the people to have faith in the democratic system when they themselves were sabotaging it?

The deadly silence of the people that was observed across the nation bore testimony to their total disapproval of the governments' vindictive and undemocratic action.

The flood of imported foods and dazzling tinsels somewhat detracted, but deep down in the recesses of their hearts questioning was going on. Was it a betrayal of their trust in the government to improve their living conditions rather than arrogate functions best left with the gods?

(vi) Adverse effects on the Establishment:

When a former Prime Minister is said to be guilty of an offence vaguely termed abuse of power, all the service personnel and public servants who dutifully executed policies that flowed from decisions now declared as an abuse of power, are also bound to search their own hearts. Did they ever realise that all those orders and directions they obeyed so faithfully would one day be declared illegal at the source? Should they in future determine the legality of all orders and directions before executing? Would a future Presidential Commission find the orders and directions being executed at the moment as stemming from decisions that are a total abuse of power?

The whole drama struck deep at the very foundation of the democratic system and its institutions. It has further undermined, demoralised, and created a wave of uncertainty in the minds of all those who were devoted to duty.

(vii) Public hypocrisy:

To cover up its diabolical actions and demonstrate its sincerity the government meticulously selected an insignificant member from its own ranks and hauled him before the Presidential Commission on a relatively insignificant offence, while the gallery of awfully corrupt men remained untouched and flourished.

Then, as if to keep the flames of the righteousness of the Government burning before the eyes of the masses, the case was dragged on for months without end. But, neither was public corruption stopped, nor did it serve as a lesson to those actively engaged in the game. Neither, did it reduce the backlash from the action taken against the former Prime Minister, nor did it improve the credibility and sincerity of the government.

(viii) Duplicity in Justice:

Meanwhile the leaders of the 1971 uprising who were on oath to destroy the present day rulers were in the great spirit of forgiveness released from prison. It was the former Prime Minister who successfully quelled this uprising with foreign military assistance keeping to the very latter of her commitment to non-alignment, but was put on trial. It was she who saved the lives of many of the present day leaders without creating any fear of foreign troops marching in as in Korea, Vietnam or Grenada.

Double standards in dispensing justice have serious effects on the thinking and attitudes of the people because it could bring about a loss of faith in justice itself. Ironically, today years later, the same government that punished the Prime Minister who contained the insurrection but freed the rebel terrorists, has been compelled to declare the latter as the most 'wanted' men in Sri Lanka.

The Challenge of the 'Challenger' Tragedy

FOREIGN
NEWS

M. de S.

The shuttle is on... A perfect liftoff... the **Challenger** rising beautifully into a clear sky... and then... an explosion, a trail of smoke, shards of wreckage... the debris... "Oh my God! that's the capsule... that's the crew capsule..."

The scene which was watched on closed-circuit television by reporters and NASA officials at the Johnson Space Centre was also watched, sometime later by millions of people throughout the world, thanks to the global reach of communications technology.

When half a century ago, the dirigible **Hidenburg** caught fire and exploded, the *Washington Post* editorial the day after the **Challenger** disaster recalled the anguished words of a commentator on the radio, for then there was no TV to bring the tragic scene to our drawing rooms. "Oh the humanity" sobbed the broadcaster.

In the days since the **Hidenburg**, technology has taken spectacular leaps and bounds conquering, it would seem, time and space. But as the magnificent marvels of technology, and accompanying disaster, vanish from our minds with the fleeting images on the TV screen, only the humanity abides. As a NASA official, tears in his eyes, asks "What happened to the computer?", a new debate opens. Why no warning? Was there a computer malfunction? while intriguing question follows questions in the ensuing confusion and consternation, there is general agreement, wrote David Sanger in the *NYK Times* that "the absence of warning from the shuttle's processors and the complex network of sensors connected to them, could mark a tremendous setback for US computer and avionics industries. The combination of computer equipment and programs aboard, the shuttle has long been hailed as one of US technology's greatest achievements".

On the same day (Jan. 30) the editor of *Science and Government Report*, Daniel Greenberg warned that the US has ignored the "lesson of space junk". Putting Murphy's law to good use he propounded this new "law":

"An iron rule of aerospace politics dictates that whatever can be done should be done — especially if the costs are colossal and the payoff negligible".

"The evidence is there in numerous gleaming turkeys including a draft US program in the 1950's that consumed one billion dollars in futile try to build an atomic-powered plane. Then there's the **Supersonic Concorde**..... And now there's the **Space shuttle**, a high-wire act that ran nip and tuck with **Murphy's law** until **Tuesday's tragic event**".

"Surely lessons will be learned from these grand aerospace debacles. You'd think so. But hang on, another one's on the way, and it may well overshadow all previous ventures in high-tech megalomania. It's the aerospace plane....."

Evidently, the Reagan administration has looked upon the project kindly. In December, his science adviser, George Keyworth II, remarked ecstatically "I think you'll see research accelerating dramatically... and a rapid thrust to get a prototype flying at the turn of the decade".

Editor Greenberg foresees to Congressional opposition to this 'newest celestial boondoggie'. (The American word 'boondoggie' means a 'useless time-wasting activity').

When it (Congress) does consider, it's safe to expect that the proponents will argue that the aerospace plane will initially be a military craft, and therefore must be judged under the rule of anything for national security".

Industrial Military Complex

After all, it was America's most popular soldier-president who introduced us to the concept of a "military-industrial complex".

Greenberg thus cannot resist a sardonic side about 'the welfare state'. "Industry" he notes "is excitedly interested since it would get the bulk of the money for designing and building the aerospace plane. But apart from financing a few relatively inexpensive studies to keep abreast of technical possibilities the aerospace industry remain a faithful client of the welfare State, waiting for Washington to bankroll the venture".

Industry apart, NASA, the creator of the **Challenger**, has been bank-rolled by the Pentagon, its best paying customer. By an agreement signed last year the US Defence Department guaranteed NASA that it would buy one-third of the 24 shuttle flights which will be undertaken annually by 1988. Eight billion dollars will be spent on the satellites that will be launched in each of next five years and NASA's shuttles, says *Washington Post* report will be the primary vehicles. Hence the immediate impact on NASA of the **Challenger** tragedy, and the much wider repercussions in the whole field of US military spending and planning, including most of all, Mr. Reagan's project, 'Star Wars' (SDI), the most crucial controversial issue in super-power negotiations on arms control, both pre-Geneva and after the first Reagan-Gorbachev summit. In a despatch from its Washington correspondent, the *Financial Times* reported:

"Popular confidence has also been somewhat undermined... in the US's ability to deliver a flaw-proof 'Star Wars' defence system. An effective

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space defence will require far more complex computer than the ones that apparently could detect nothing wrong with Challenger. The time-table for 'Star Wars' research, some of it conducted aboard the shuttle, will also inevitably have been setback by the suspension of flights..."

Third World Reactions

Tragic disasters like that which overtook the Challenger seven passengers, including an adventure-loving civilian, the New Hampshire school teacher, Christa McAuliffe, bring in their wake worldwide sympathy and grief. Yet the moment of "humanity" passes, and the fundamental and awesome issues that they raise are ignored or dismissed with a shrug. Especially in the Third World. What have the infirmities of high-tech, the perils of space shuttles, the distant, yet-to-be drama of 'Star Wars', nuclear arms and superpower dialogues and debates got to do with poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, inflation and the day-to-day vexations and preoccupations of the average Third World citizen? **The portentous questions of war and peace, the arms race or a possible Armageddon leave even the educated Third Worlder cold.** These reactions, most natural in terms of historical and social circumstance, are perfectly understandable.

For the poor of the Third World, that is for the vast majority of the peoples of the under-developed nations, the life-and-death issues are those which touch them, which press on them, each day of their lives. **Their 'war' is a long unending battle for survival against the relentlessly hostile forces which seem so much a part of their "fate". To protect their families from want, to send their children to school, money to buy them books or medicine, to pay the rent and repair the roof, to enjoy some peace of mind — that is their war and peace.** Nuclear weapons and disarmament are outlandish matters which do not belong to their universe.

The educated Sri Lankan, even the politically conscious and world affairs oriented, responds to these critical issues with a similar unconcern and apathy but accidentally for somewhat different, more sophisticated reasons.

Europe was the breeding ground of major wars, certainly the two great wars of the 20th century. The last war ended in a new division of Europe, the dividing line being different socio-economic systems, ideologies, rival military blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, with the US as leader of one camp, and the USSR leading the other.

The peace which followed the defeat of Nazi Germany, was not always stable and was indeed punctuated by "crises" that almost threatened new confrontations but it was nonetheless stable enough to permit a steady economic rehabilitation, recovery and growth. The capitalist West has surpassed the socialist countries achieving higher living standards. Yet the post-war generations in the socialist states have their own impressive achievements material, social and cultural, to instil in them a strong sense of pride, and a resolve to preserve these remarkable gains, most of all against the dangers of armed conflict and war.

Parity and Detente

Ultimately however the peace in Europe between conflicting systems and competitive blocs has been founded on 'detente', primarily on an understanding, whatever the intermittent frictions and 'threats' of confrontation, between the superpowers, the bloc leaders. And this in turn has been firmly grounded in what the International Institute for Strategic Studies (London) in its annual "military balance" termed last year the USSR's "approximate parity" with the US. In short, a strategic balance. In the terminology appropriate to the discussion, both sides are conscious of "Mutually Assured Destruction". (Its highly appropriate acronym 'MAD' speaks volume)

The main implication of this doctrine of MAD of course is that any attempt to gain 'military superiority' will undermine

the foundation of "parity" and therefore detente and peace.

This debate however remains largely academic even to better informed strata of the Third World intelligentsia. For them, these questions including the ultimate decision of pushing the nuclear button lie in the hands of Washington and Moscow. The Third World is powerless; the final decisions are beyond their control.

True. This is the stark reality. But the question is whether the Third World is uninvolved, whether its own life-and-death issues are unaffected by the fundamental problems of nuclear arms control and disarmament.

Arms and Debt

Part at least of the answer to these questions are to be found in a study published just before the Reagan-Gorbachev summit entitled "**World Military and Social Expenditure**" (1985), a survey sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and the U. K. Council of Churches. Its author is Ruth Leger Seward, former chief of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). It observes:

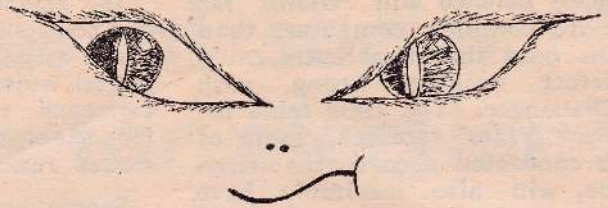
"In a world in which one in three adults still cannot read or write, and one person in four is hungry, military spending has reached 800 billion dollars a year despite the existence of enough nuclear weapons to kill everyone 12 times over."

40 years of the arms race, she notes, has cost over 3-4 trillion dollars to produce 16,000 megatons of explosive nuclear compared with the 11 megatons that killed 39 million people in the second world war, Korea and Vietnam. For the author this is "global suicide, the ultimate absurdity".

But there are also other equally telling ways of relating military spending to the harrowing problems of the Third World. Its poverty and more recently its oppressive burden of foreign debt are intimately connected to US military spending, high interest rates, and budget deficits and what has most worried such institutions as the World Bank,

(Continued on page 16)

CAT'S EYE



WOMEN IN JAFFNA PROTEST

Major upheavals in a country invariably produce a new awareness of democratic rights for women as well as a response from the women themselves about the need for a change in position.

The events in the North have been no exception and as the **Cats Eye** column has reported earlier, there is a dramatic social upsurge going on in tradition-bound Jaffna society. Caste, dowry, and male domination are some of the hallowed institutions that are being challenged and the women of Jaffna have shown their radicalism in both theory and action; this has caused surprise in the South and consternation among the social diehards of the North. Women of Jaffna are coming out from behind the cadjan fence and are speaking out about their subordination in family life, about the social pressures on them, about the double standards of morality applied to them, about the iniquities of the dowry system, about the discrimination against them in the Thesavalamai law, and about hitherto unmentionable subjects such as rape, chastity and prostitution and of course about the conflict ravaging the North and East.

Recently the Mother's Front has taken the lead in protest. They led a demonstration of thousands women who surrounded the Jaffna Kachcheri and prevented work being carried out, requesting the withdrawal of the army camp from the Dutch Fort. Their letter to President Jayewardene states:-

We are deeply perturbed at the situation which has been developing in the Jaffna District progressively over the last few months and

culmination in the recent announcement of the proposed security zone in respect of the Dutch Fort of Jaffna.

We understand that this proposal has been made to ensure security of the Fort and its premises from attack by the militants. This situation developed only after the army was shifted from the Gurunagar Camp to the Fort recently. Our major objections to the establishment of the Security zone Jaffna Fort are as follows:-

1. This area will include a number of leading schools catering to a students population in the region of 15,000 to 20,000. The parents will not send the children to these schools in this zone, when the security forces have been given full authority to use heavy artillery.

2. The Jaffna Government General Hospital which caters to the whole peninsula along with its peripheral units and other hospitals located in various parts of the peninsula will also fall within the 1000 metre zone.

3. The Central Bus Stand, the Bazaar and Market together with the commercial enterprises and activities are housed in this area and will result in a complete stagnation of the day to day life in Jaffna.

4. The Telecommunication department, the Central Post Office, the High Court, the District Court, Magistrate Court, the Municipal Council and its offices are all located in this area. It will not be possible to shift some of these institutions nor it is possible to house them elsewhere and provide public transport facilities, which are already scarce

to cater to the thousands of members of the public who visit these places daily from all parts of Jaffna.

Despite assurances that the public will not be inconvenienced as a result of the establishment of Security Zones in the event of any minor act of indiscipline on any body's part, heavy artillery would be utilized. It is most unreasonable to locate an army camp in the middle of the Metro-pole of Jaffna, where people have to attend to day to day work in the midst of fear of death.

We request you in earnest that the army camp be removed from the Dutch Fort and withdraw the Security Zone in respect of all Army Camps in the Peninsula.

The Challenge . . .

(Continued from page 15)

IMF and UNCTAD, "the over-valued dollar" and "protectionism".

Just a few days after the Challenger disaster, Mr. Reagan's new budget was presented to the US Congress. It raises military spending by 40% for the next 5 years. Defense Dept. outlays rise from 258 billion dollars in 1986 to 274 billion in 1987 and 356 billion in 1988. The budget of NASA, the maker of Challenger, goes up from 7.3 billion in 1986 to 9.5 billion in 1990.

(To be continued)

Profiting from Apartheid

Raymond Lotta

The systematic depression of black living standards, as part of a system of coerced wage labour, has direct and indirect effects on profitability in a way that is perhaps clearest in the manufacturing sector, where the US has the bulk of its investments. Certainly, manufacturing capital has sought to avail itself of low wages, a factor of obvious importance to labour-intensive operations. But firms and sectors marked by sophisticated technologies and capital-intensive machinery and equipment also derive important benefits from cheap black labour (even when they do not directly employ it). The state corporations have sold basic inputs to foreign enterprise at or below cost. ISCOR, the state steel corporation, has sold cold rolled steel at 25 per cent below British prices. And low wages for black workers employed in the iron and steel industry are a major reason it has been possible to hold prices down or keep them at internationally competitive levels: the average monthly wages of black workers in 1976 were less than a quarter of those of whites employed in the industry. ESCOM, the state electricity corporation, has charged lower rates to industry and mining than to private consumers. Here, too, low wages to African employees have been a significant factor. In 1982, blacks in the construction industry earned, on an average monthly basis, 18 per cent of what whites in the industry did; in the electricity industry, blacks earned 27 per cent of what whites did.⁸ Interestingly, both ISCOR and ESCOM received substantial loans from American banks in the 1970s.

Thus, even where individual firms employ a largely skilled white labour force (receiving relatively high wages) or where firms have offered token upgrading and equal pay to blacks on the

lines of the Sullivan Principles, they benefit from the fact that low-wage African labour reduces the costs of local infrastructure and inputs (as well as some foodstuffs originating from a highly developed agriculture, which also makes use of cheap labour). Further, corporate taxes can also be held down, since the state does not undertake any significant social investment for the black majority. At the same time, the local privileged white minority constitutes a substantial domestic market for durable goods.

Foreign investment is undertaken and dominated by the largest and most strategic units of capital of the imperialist economies. The profitability and stimulating effects of this investment, particularly in the Third World, contribute vitally to the reproduction of internationalised capital.* One concrete example: investments in the South African transport sector were the leading edge of foreign capital's manufacturing expansion in the country in the 1960s and 1970s, and the ability of this investment to lower total, worldwide costs facilitated competitive expansion in Europe and North America in that period.

Table 5 compares rates of return on US manufacturing operations in Europe with the performance of its manufacturing investments in South Africa.

And these figures understate both the true level of US investment, since some US capital is invested in South Africa through the firms of the United Kingdom, France, and West Germany in which US capital participates, and the true level of profits, since US overseas firms have devised all manner of accounting practices to underreport profits. Although GM, GE, Mobil and IBM are trumpeting their new

*This is a major theme and thesis of *America in Decline*.⁹

—found sense of brotherhood, apartheid is the real music to which they dance. The problem is they have never been in deeper trouble.

Crisis and the strategic dimension

Economic slowdown

South Africa is in the throes of the most serious economic crisis since the 1930s. The regime also faces, in the tempest of the black masses, the most serious challenge to its existence. These are hardly unrelated facts, although one must be careful not to reduce them to one another. The economy grew by only 3 per cent a year between 1978 and 1984; there was an actual decline in gross domestic product in 1982–83, and economic growth is likely to fall this year. At the level of external economic linkages, there are two major causes of the slowdown. The first involves the country's export position. Exports account for about 25 per cent of gross domestic product, and gold accounts for almost one-half of the country's exports.¹⁰ South Africa was able to ride out some of the storms of the global crisis of the mid-1970s by taking advantage of rocketing gold prices. But the price of gold has plummeted over the past four years, as have the prices of other export commodities, mostly, minerals. This is a principal contributing factor to the country's current 14 per cent rate of inflation. At the same time, South Africa depends heavily on the rest of Africa as a market for intermediate and advanced goods: over one-half of its chemical exports and about three quarters of its machinery and equipment manufacture exports were sold to the rest of Africa at various times during the 1970s. But the crisis gripping the continent has dried up many of these markets. Now if we stop to think about the role of cheap and brutally treated black labour in the South

Table 5: Rates of return on US manufacturing operations in Europe and South Africa (%)

	1967	1974	1980	1984
Europe	8.6	13.9	13.7	4.3
South Africa	12.6	17.9	31.7	143*

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Department of Commerce

*reported loss, \$m.

African mining industry and the relationship between the apartheid system and the fact that the most advanced operations of foreign capital on the continent are concentrated in South Africa — a phenomenon which, in the context of the overall imperialist domination of Africa, has contributed to its imbalanced development — then we see that South Africa's export difficulties are linked with the very logic and structure of the South African economy.

The second major cause of the economic slowdown concerns foreign investment. The private sector has not been gaining as much foreign capital over the last few years. Actually, net foreign investment in South Africa's private companies fell by \$360 million between 1976 and 1948. That capital inflows begin to taper off in 1976 has rather obvious significance. Soweto, is erupting and the global crisis is taking its toll on capital exports. Investments in South Africa now bear a greater risk premium and international capital has less freedom to restructure globally. Since 1982, foreign capital's share of new fixed capital formation in South Africa has declined sharply, and the traditionally profitable auto industry has been in a chronic recession. US direct investment in South Africa fell in 1948, while US manufacturing corporations reported book losses in 1984 (see Table 5). Nevertheless, South Africa has managed to preserve a net surplus of long-term capital inflows. This is mainly because the government and nationalised industries have dramatically increased their international borrowings. According to Federal Reserve Bank data, the value of loans by US banks to private and public South African borrowers rose from \$1

billion in 1980 to \$4.3 billion in 1948. But, as we shall see, these loans have a decidedly and increasingly strategic cast.

Imperialism thrives on superexploitation internationally. And its economic network is overlaid by a vast structure of military, administrative and financial control. This is perversely apparent in South Africa, and increasingly costly. State spending is about 25 per cent of gross domestic product. The state must spend on white farmers and civil servants to maintain its social base; over one-third of the white workers are employed by the state. It must cocoon and prop up certain industries for economic and strategic reasons. And it organises immense military force. By 1978, South Africa had an army of 55,000 regulars and 130,000 reserves, equipped with 362 combat planes, 91 helicopters, 170 tanks and 1,600 armoured cars. The defence budget for 1984-5 was twice its level of only four years ago.¹¹ One of the contradictions of the apartheid system is that it has grown more difficult to increase the inflow of capital and raise the rate of exploitation to a level commensurate with the needs of holding the entire enterprise together which brings us to the conditions of those upon whom that enterprise rests.

Crisis and the black masses

The combined effects of capital-intensive development and the current recession have produced an unemployment rate among black people admitted to be in the range of 30 per cent. It is probably higher, since official statistics do not adequately capture the employment status of black women. Only about a third of the black population actually lives in the bantustans; and of those who do,

only about one-tenth can eke out a living from the land. Figures for black income in the bantustans declared independent are not available (although it is known that they contributed 2.3 per cent of South Africa's total gross domestic product in 1980). But for the bantustans not declared independent by 1980, 5,163,150 people had no measurable income. The infant mortality rates for blacks in some rural areas are among the highest any where in the Third World. Malnutrition has grown even more acute in the countryside due to the severe drought. In the cities, where the majority of the black population lives, the estimated percentages of black households with incomes below the official household subsistence level were: Johannesburg 62 per cent, Pretoria 58 per cent, Durban and Port Elizabeth 70 per cent. In real terms, African's wages are decreasing.¹²

Satisfactorily to get at the depths of the contradictions in the apartheid system of cheap and coercible labour would require fuller investigation and analysis. But this much can be said. As a result of declining productive capacity and deteriorating social conditions, increasing numbers of blacks have been pushed out of the reserves, forced to lead a shadowy and desperate existence in the urban areas. Yet the institutional and economic arrangements that have been discussed in this article remain at the foundation of the South African economy.

It has been necessary to 'modernise' this system of superexploitation. Limited attempts have been made to upgrade the skill levels of black workers, to expand education and to increase mobility. But such changes remain within the framework of apartheid. This is not a matter of irrationality or stubbornness but of things turning into their opposite: one of the safest investments in the world is now rated as one of the riskiest; a highly profitable system is now bursting at the seams. The regime is making a show of concessions while mainly tightening up and clamping down. It must reinforce restrictive measures that limit black numbers in the urban areas in order to safeguard its rule and

deflect the demand for popular rule in a unitary state. The result, however, has been the further discrediting of its tribal collaborators and homeland schemes, and an unprecedented wave of strikes, protests and violent rebellions.

The geopolitical context

The growing crisis and instability within South Africa must be seen against the canvas of its geopolitical importance to the western alliance's preparations for war against the Soviet bloc. The region's mineral resources are part of the lifeblood of the imperialist countries; the West cannot lose control over them and the Soviet-led bloc cannot allow the West to continue to control them. Further, huge quantities of Persian Gulf oil travel around the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of South Africa on the way to Europe and the Americas. The South Atlantic sea lanes are of immense economic and military importance. The Soviets have been building up their naval presence; the western alliance used the Falklands War to test and improve its naval capabilities. South Africa is not only a gendarme for western interests in Africa — as was made evident in Angola and Mozambique — but a vital quartermaster as well. By the early 1970s, South Africa could manufacture a wide range of explosives, ammunition, small arms, napalm bombs, guided missiles, aircraft, radios, mine detectors and other classified electronic equipment. This has been made possible through agreements with western firms, while the auto plants in South Africa can be rapidly converted to military production. Further, the Americans, French and West Germans all played parts in helping developing various aspects of South Africa's nuclear capability. South Africa is intended to function both as an economic rear and forward staging area for military operations in a global confrontation.

And so the West has sought to bolster the regime even, and especially, in the face of mass resistance and mounting economic difficulties. US support for the regime is as predictable as it is obscene. Five months after Soweto,

when the gold price was falling precipitously, South Africa asked the International Monetary Fund for a new loan. Not only did that loan go through, but during 1976 and 1977, when the regime was facing protest and pressure, South Africa received more money from the IMF than any other country except Britain and Mexico. And 'the IMF loans, as it happened, almost exactly corresponded to the increase in South Africa's arms spending during that time'¹³. What is called 'constructive engagement' and what have come to be known as the Sullivan Principles (governing employment and pay practices of American firms in South Africa) are but the latest efforts to fortify and prettify the regime. On their own terms, the European Community and Sullivan measures to desegregate are pitiful: less than one in three British companies has desegregated its lavatories, and only 0.21 per cent of blacks working for US signatory companies hold jobs that involve supervision of whites (yes, the decimal point is in the right place).¹⁴ Recent congressional measures to curb inflows of US capital into South Africa are just another form of cosmetic surgery — for instance, US corporations can continue to reinvest retained earnings, and South Africa's mineral exports are not even touched by this legislation. Through torture, economic assistance and deception, the West is trying to prevent South Africa from exploding.

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Disaster . . .

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10-15 metre gash, as if by six giant fingers. The worst has happened along with a mountain stream called Hotupihilla-Agala, during which even a fire has arisen amidst the vast torrent crashing down, possibly due to heated rock particles created by tremendous friction. And along the summit of Ambaliyadda hill longitudinally a long fissure has appeared into which even a man can be lowered, according to the villagers. And they fear what would happen during the next February rains or during December monsoons, if the hilltop comes down on them.

Although I was not able to visit all the places, news was current among the people, of a crack at the foot of Nelugaha at Pandithaya-Kumbura, of another serious fissure on the hill sloping from Uda-Pussellawa at Kurupana-wela, and of the sinking houses at Gaketiyawala on the slope of the range extending towards Randenigala from Nildanda.

All lives and lands in Valapane are in jeopardy. The natural and manmade factors have worked in close collaboration to bring about this unprecedented disaster. Severe changes in the environment have caused the earth itself to change for worse. It needs a kind of urgent rehabilitation to prevent the total collapse. Fast and sure action is needed. But it seems the government does not have the will and wisdom for such an endeavour. They seem to be content with distributing daily necessities to the refugees and making promises on their resettlement.

The people of Valapane are talking to each other. They speak of causes, happenings and the doings of the government and are deeply concerned about their own uncertain future. Thousands or hundreds of thousands of people of Valapane and Hanguranketha have lost all their land and property. But to fight against these consequences of complex man made processes they also need generate social processes in face of the challenges of Mother Nature.

Somewhere between military rule and democracy

Bhabani Sen Gupta

History moved in Pakistan exactly at 11.35 in the forenoon of December 30. From my room in a hotel in Lahore, I watched on the colour television screen President Zia-ul Haq put his signature on a proclamation that lifted Martial Law after eight and a half years. As far as I could notice, his hand did not shake; he was wearing a hero's smile on his face. In a speech lasting 90 minutes, in which he frequently deviated from the written script, Pakistan's third Martial Law Administrator waxed eloquent on the benefits he had conferred on the 85 million people of Pakistan since he banished the country's only parliamentary-democratic regime in June 1977. He warned the leaders and followers of the defunct political parties that if they did not conduct themselves with restraint, if they pushed Pakistan into another period of turmoil, he would not hesitate to clamp down Martial Law again. The warning went home. Zia-ul Haq was now not just the "elected" president of Pakistan. He had chosen to remain chief of the army staff too. The head of state, and also an employee of the government.

After the president, it was Mohammed Khan Junejo, prime minister of Pakistan. Junejo is a sad-looking reflective man of Sind, one of its largest landlords, his village one of the forty close to the desert, the majority of whose inhabitants are Punjabis. Junejo, unlike Zia-ul Haq, stressed the triumph of democracy. What he said in a 30-minute address amounted to a political sermon without parallel in contemporary history. "You are free of all shackles, my countrymen," Junejo in effect declared. "But do not assert your freedoms. Not only has Martial Law gone. With

it has gone the state of emergency that prevailed in Pakistan for 20 years without a break. Pakistan is now a full and complete democracy. But, wait! You can't act free except slowly, gradually, step by step."

Pakistanis broadly agreed with Junejo. The country stood somewhere between military rule and parliamentary democracy. Where exactly no one knew. Nor was anyone very anxious to find out immediately. Pakistan did not look like a state born again; it was not striding the challenging waves of time thrusting out its democratic chin.

There was no popular enthusiasm at all at the passing of Martial Law. Outwardly nothing had changed. Prison gates had not opened to let off the 300-odd political prisoners. The draconian martial law orders (MLOs) restricting the freedom of the press and of the citizens remained unlifted. Only the military courts were abolished, but that too after hurriedly handing down hundreds of sentences in the last ten days of their life. The political parties remained defunct. The president would take his time to frame the rules under which the parties must get themselves registered. But before that, they will have to qualify for registration. Which of them may be fit to register and which one may not would be determined solely and entirely by the authorities.

In the political heart of Pakistan, that is, the city of Lahore, intellectuals and politicians were nevertheless astir. There was little doubt that the nation's heart was beating faster; the wind of change was around, if it had not already blown

in. I sat through two animated discussions on what had really happened and where Pakistan had arrived and whither was it going. One was amongst 22 intellectuals linked to political parties, amongst whom were some middle-ranking political leaders. The other was an informal dinner meeting of the provincial political party leaders, the occasion provided by the hosting of a lavish dinner by a leading industrialist, who is also a left-leaning political man, in honour of Mir Ghaus Baksh Bizenzo, scarred soldier of many a battle, but still, at the age of 68, straining for the next round. Besides, I met with groups of academics, youths, journalists, and lawyers, and interviewed two dozen of them individually.

When I returned to Delhi on January 2, Pakistanis in Lahore appeared to be divided into three groups in their assessment of the meaning of the presidential proclamation of December 30. Retired justices and practising advocates were nearly unanimous that a qualitative change had taken place in Pakistan's political life. Many of the MLOs not formally lifted by the government had lost their legal validity, they argued. Amongst them were a series of MLOs which rendered the political parties defunct. The legal experts also held that the fundamental rights had been fully restored; the MLOs restricting the basic civic rights of the Pakistanis had ceased to be legally valid.

Others were much less certain that the system had really changed. "We're worse off," cried a middle-level leader of the Pakistan People's Party. "We have a military president and a one-party state. Martial

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Pontiff on a rough passage to India

John Elliott in New Delhi

SEVERAL THOUSAND Hindus marched through the southern state of Kerala recently to the beach where St. Thomas, the Apostle, is believed to have landed in the first century to found Christianity in India.

They were protesting against the construction of a huge temporary podium from which Pope John Paul II will say Mass next Saturday, and which many fear may become a point of pilgrimage for India's 14 Christians.

The march demonstrates the sensitivity here about the Pope's 10-day tour of India which starts today. The Pope himself is aware that he may provoke hostility and unrest if he either appears to be trying to convert Hindus to Christianity or preaches against voluntary sterilisation and other artificial methods of birth control.

An alleged assassination threat has been received in the southern city of Madras where posters have appeared opposing the visit. It is both a state and pastoral event because the Pope has been jointly invited by the President of India and Roman Catholic bishops.

After meeting Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister, and the Dalai Lama in Delhi this weekend, the Pope will tour India for 10 days, saying Masses to congregations numbering hundreds of thousands. He will end up in Bombay where he will briefly meet Dr. Robert Runcie Archbishop of Canterbury, who will be starting his own 19-day tour.

Such attention to India by Christian leaders, raises suspicions among some Hindu extremists. They fear the power of missionaries and Christian conversions which can disrupt village communities, upsetting the power of local fiefdoms, endangering established political allegiances, and raising the ambitions of the poorest sections of India's 740m population, especially the 150m in scheduled castes and tribes.

With Catholics representing only 1.7 per cent of India's population (roughly the same number as Sikhs) out of 2.6 per cent Christians, and since India only provides 1.8 per cent of the world's Catholics, the cost of the Pope's extensive visit is being criticised both by Hindus and by left-wing Catholics.

St. Thomas is credited with starting a Syrian community in Kerala, called St. Thomas Christians who are now divided into Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Communities. The Catholics in the area make up about 25 per cent of India's total of around 14m.

The next wave of Christianity came in the 15th and 16th centuries when the Portuguese invaded Goa on the west coast, instructed by their Church both to conquer and convert the people. They were followed by Portuguese Jesuit missionaries. As a result, Christians provide the governing elite in India. Elsewhere in India, where conversion was less military, they tend to be found among the poor although Christians in top posts include the current chief of air force, senior politicians and the Indian High Commissioner in London, Mr. P. C. Alexander.

The third wave brought Protestants, starting in the early 18th century and building up with British rule. The Anglican Church was established and is now merged with Methodist, Baptists and congregationalists into the independent Church of North India, which claims 700,000 members and the Church of South India with 1.8m. Both churches and an orthodox group recognise the Archbishop of Canterbury as the world's leading Anglican bishop.

Missionary work in some states was shared out about 40 years ago between various Christian groups. Catholics predominate among the tribal population of the far north eastern state Megh-

laya which is to be visited by the Pope. The neighbouring tribal states of Mizoram and Nagaland are Presbyterian and Baptist territories.

Missionary work among tribal communities in such politically unstable states close to borders with China, Burma and Bangladesh, often causes problems.

There are about 1,990 expatriate missionaries in India, including 1,285 Catholics. Their presence has been queried more closely by the Government since visa regulations were tightened 18 months ago, originally to keep extremist Sikhs out of the country. Six elderly missionaries working with tribal communities in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh were asked to leave last year but have yet to go. "People complain when we lift up poor people who have provided cheap labour for middle men," says Angelo Fernandes, Catholic Archbishop of New Delhi.

Liberation theology has similarly made its mark in India's often violent social disturbances with Kerala priests demonstrating in support of poor fishermen whose catches have been lost to fleets of commercial trawlers.

"India still has to catch up with many economic freedoms and in backward areas poor people are in thrall. So priests have to lead where there is not sufficient lay leadership and they then become a thorn in the side of the better off," says Archbishop Fernandes, cautiously condoning action which has split his church.

Hindus are also suspicious that since the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s, Hindu customs have been absorbed into the Catholic church. For example in the south, Catholic Congregations bow their heads to the floor in the Panchanga or Paman style of Hindus and Muslims. Such inculturation, as it is called, is seen as a form of subversion of poor illiterate communities.

Both Archbishop Fernandes and Mr. Krishna Kumar, India's Deputy Public Health Minister, say they believe the Pope will not say anything about birth control, though they deny that there has been any private diplomacy to stop him speaking against artificial methods which are about to be propagated by the Government in new R32.5bn (£1.9bn) five-year publicity and development programme.

Social workers say that Catholics often accept artificial methods, and that sterilisation of women has even been tacitly accepted by some senior South Indian clergy. But Archbishop Fernandes rejects this.

"The best possible contraceptive pill is development. We don't want the thinking of the West imposed on us. We propagate responsible parenthood based on an ovulation method programme which is 98 per cent successful," he claims.

Government officials are highly sceptical about such claims although Mr. Krishna Kumar tactfully says: "Our programme embraces all methods of family planning."

Sterilisation of women is the methods favoured by the Government which hopes that 19m people will accept some form of artificial birth control this year.

A programme of advertising backed by local volunteer workers is about to be launched to persuade people not to have more than two children, to stop child marriages, to have children immunised at birth, and not to continue having children until a son is produced.

India's population problem is acute. The Government estimates that since 1951 when family planning work began, 71m births have been averted. But during that time the population has doubled and the birth rate is still as high as 33 per thousand. Since a Pope last visited India in 1964 the population has grown by over 250m, more than the entire population of the US.

Somewhere...

(Continued from page 20)

law has not been abolished. It has been legitimised." This I found to be a widely shared perception among political workers and politically concerned intellectuals. "President Zia has rendered the political parties redundant; with his broader-based government he has the support of the people," remarked the Urdu press's most well-known analyst, Mohammed Haqqani, of The Jung. In Paris, Benazeer Bhutto also took a very negative view of the event of December 30.

Bizenzo and others belonging to the MRD coalition, on the other hand, believed that the lifting of Martial Law and emergency created a new political situation. It did not amount to restoration of democracy. But it certainly signalled that the military was retreating from the centre of power. General Zia was not as strong on January 1 1986 as he had been on January 1, 1985. The new situation created great opportunities for the political parties to reassert their pivotal role in democratic politics. It also created challenges they had not faced for seven and a half years. They had avoided facing issues and coming up with precise answers to specific critical problems. Now they would have to give the people of Pakistan the concrete feeling of a democratic alternative. Bizenzo said in the course of a discussion in my hotel room running beyond midnight, "The battles will be joined soon. Sooner than General Zia expects. In a year, you will see major change in the politics of Pakistan."

The political parties that are bound together in MRD are taking their time to review the new political situation. "We will take stock of the present situation", said retired air marshal Ashgar Ali Khan, president of the Tehri Istiqlal party, and his voice lacked the crack of urgency. Only in the last week of January will the leaders of MRD meet to determine where Pakistan stood and where it could be led from there.

Meanwhile, no one was anxious to test the validity of the MLOs

which, according to legal experts, had ceased to be valid. The newspapers went on submitting themselves to "self-censorship", but except the *Pakistan Times*, activities and opinions of the defunct political parties were being reported at greater length. The political factions did not take out processions nor convene open-air meetings. At the Pearl-Continental Hotel, where I was staying, Bizenzo addressed a meeting of 400 invitees on why democracy did not succeed in Pakistan. I was surprised to see in the packed conference hall a fairly large number of young men, and a girl who couldn't be more than 16. But everybody was moving within the orbit permitted by the regime.

The reason was easy to find out. "The highest courts in Pakistan have twice sided with martial law regimes at crucial moments in our political life," explained an advocate who holds a high office in the National Awami party. "We do not know where the justices stand now, how they see the political drift. If they believe that the change is no more than cosmetic, they will side with the regime, and we will have a major setback. Let the climate get clearer, and let the democratic pressure on the president increase. We will have to go to the courts, but we want to go when the judges will be less intimidated by the hidden or not-so-hidden power of the military."

While Pakistanis debated the pros and cons of political change, most of them wondered why General Zia-ul Haq had finally lifted Martial Law and even the emergency? No one believed that he had suddenly become "democratic". His record of keeping promises made to the people of Pakistan was not exactly inspiring. He had come to stay 90 days, stayed 3,000 days, and was still not gone, not really! What, then, had happened to make him do something he had resisted doing for eight and a half years? To this widely asked question too there were a number of answers.

(To be concluded)

How McCarthyism is born

Amaradasa Fernando

In the very recent past there have been attempts to restrict the freedom of expression for students and teachers and University Dons. The press reported that "No Government Jobs for extreme left students and graduates". "All applications of graduates who register for employment at Government Service would hereafter be subject to a security clearance". No government scholarship would be given to students tainted with leftist ideas or activity and any holder of a Government Scholarship would have it withdrawn if he or she was found involved with left activity". One does not know whether this is only a trial balloon for repression in general. So far the axe has fallen on a few individuals in the higher echelons of the public service — Dr. Mervyn de Silva, Consultant to the Ministry of Plan Implementation and Dr. Wickrema Bahu, of the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya — to mention just a few who did not see eye to eye with the authorities.

However if it is those who support the establishment, even if their political actions may be called despicable by normal decent standards, such as threats and demonstrations against (even) Supreme Court Judges, then their actions are condoned. While a peaceful demonstration was smashed up, and led to the assault and arrest of veteran politician, Mrs. Vivienne Gunawardena, a former Deputy Minister of Local Administration. The Court Case decided in favour of Mrs. Gunawardena and she was awarded damages of Rs. 10,000/-. The Cabinet decided to pay up the damages and to add insult to injury, the assailant sergeant was promoted to the rank of sub-inspector. A similar case was that of Rev. Dharamitipola Ratnasara of Gampaha who was arrested by the SP. Gampaha for possession and distribution of anti-government leaflets. The Supreme Court dismissed the case and awarded damages to the monk. The Cabinet ignoring

the order decided to pay the fine, thus virtually insulting the Supreme Court. In contrast to this favouritism, teachers and workers have been given punitive transfers for not toeing the line.

The President recently proclaimed that he stood for the freedom of the press. He said that to gag the press as the previous Government would only make matters worse. "Let the people judge and let them refuse to believe the slanderous material". Notwithstanding what the President says, his Ministers and administrators are assailing not only press freedom but the right of the individual to express his opinions without fear of reprisal. Mrs. Bandaranaike too was guilty of muzzling the press in 1970. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike when he was a Minister in the coalition Government, said that a "little bit of totalitarianism was a good thing".

This "little bit of totalitarian" syndrome comes as a result of the pressure of the class interests these governments serve. When the working class and the students press for their demands the local bourgeoisie and the multinationals want to see that their government comes down heavily on basic freedoms. The Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency is giving the Military and the Police the legal backing to carry out the crushing of any signs of protest against the burdens that are being continually heaped on them.

In this new context of incipient fascism and McCarthyism, a glance at the emergence of such ideologies is useful. The Third Reich Education Minister enacted laws which permitted him to appoint and dismiss professors and teachers like any other Government official. While the law enabled the Professors to retire at the age of sixty-five, "reliable" men were allowed to hold office by the grace of the Minister. Rectors or Vice-Chancel-

lors were no longer chosen by members of the faculties. The Prussian Education Act of 1952 which guaranteed certain academic freedom was abolished. The nationalization of art and culture made the intellectual climate so oppressive that thousands of intellectuals — mostly Jewish — fled the country.

In Gottingen University the Reich Government dismissed seven professors for refusing to support a reactionary constitution. Bonn University in 1937, publicly deprived Thomas Mann of his degree. Einstein and Richard Strauss, son of the Great Johann, in his own right a great composer, who found it too difficult to fit into the new 'Weltanschauung' left Germany during Nazi rule. Learned University journals and societies folded up because it became unbearable to conform to the Nazi pattern of thinking. The celebrated German historian, Friedrich Meinecke, was forced out of the Editorship of the "Historische Zeitschrift". During the anniversary celebration of the University of Heidelberg in the summer of 1936 the status of Pallas Athene on the facade of one of the buildings, a classic head of the Republic of Letters was replaced by the German eagle and the inscription "To the Eternal Spirit" was changed to the chauvinist slogan "To the German Spirit". In the University of Munich the speech of the poet Ernst Woechert, which was to be published was banned by the censor. It had later to be secretly cyclostyled and passed from hand to hand.

McCarthyism in the U. S. A.

In 1925, a court hearing, attracted nationwide publicity when a teacher in Dayton, Tennessee, was found guilty of teaching Darwin's Theory of Evolution to a 14 year old boy and fined 100 dollars and costs. The teaching of the theory had been banned in the State.

The climate for intellectual freedom in the U. S. A. has been made oppressive by the capitalist-class. like in the Soviet Union there is

a ceaseless witch hunt going on. There is "Freedom" but with restraint. If one's views are Marxist then an individual is branded. He will find no place in the public service. Jobs in the teaching profession become scarce. Thus we find great Marxist Professors like Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, Leo Huberman being driven from pillar to post, hunted down like criminals by Senator McCarthy's hands. Dr. Allen Kreps, Professor of Sociology was fired from Adelphi University after visiting Cuba in 1964. Stoughton Lynd, Professor of History, Yale, fell foul of the State Department for his peace mission to Hanoi, Dr. James Mellin a political scientist was sacked from Drew University for his supporting the Vietcong position in the war. These are but a few names; but the American academic field is strewn with the casualties from the firings of Monopoly capital opinion.

Senator McCarthy's Committee for the American Activities was a veritable modern inquisition. Thousands of American scholars were hunted and ferreted out by this Committee, with the assistance of the F. B. I. Besides scholars in universities men and women in the public service were asked to appear before this infamous Committee even if there had been the vaguest connection with Marxism. If one had friends in the Marxist Movement and had one time or another given a subscription or had attended Marxist sponsored meetings, this was enough for dismissal from one's job. It was in this manner that the famous Atomic Scientist Dr. Roffert J. Oppenheimer was said to be a calculated risk and relieved of his job.

American academic opinion cannot be said to have resisted the onslaught on the freedom of the intellectual as did their counterparts in the United Kingdom. This can be clearly seen by the attitude of American and Canadian Professors on the subject of academic freedom. A report entitled, "The Rights and Responsibilities of Universities and their Faculties" published on 30th March 1953 by the Association of American Universities, which while stressing the necessity for academic freedom expressed the opinion that

this freedom should not include the right to belong to the Communist Party! Laying down this last proviso of restraint, is contrary to the spirit of free inquiry and therefore contrary to the spirit of the University.

If intellectual freedom in the University is trampled today then the turn of people would come tomorrow. Thus it is the responsibility not only of these graduates but under-graduates and dons but all people who cherish freedom, to fight back against any inroads which will but any restraint on this freedom.

It is worthy of quoting at length from the late Prof. Baran's article "The commitment of the intellectual" in the hope that it will jerk our "intellectuals" from their complacency.

"The more reactionary a ruling class, the more obvious it becomes that the social order which it presides has turned into an impediment to human liberation, the more is its ideology taken over by anti-intellectualism, irrationalism, and superstition. And by the same token, the more difficult it becomes for the intellectual to withstand the social pressures brought upon him, to avoid surrendering to the ruling ideology and succumbing to the intellect workers' comfortable and lucrative conformity. Under such conditions it becomes a matter of supreme importance and urgency to insist on the function and to stress the commitment of the intellectual. For it is under such conditions that it falls to his lot, both as a responsibility and as a privilege, to save from extinction the tradition of humanism, reason and progress that constitutes our most valuable inheritance from the entire history of mankind.

"It may be said that I am identifying being an intellectual with being a hero, that it is unreasonable to demand from people that they should withstand all the pressures of vested interests and brave all the dangers to their individual well-being for the sake of human advancement. I agree that it would be unreasonable to demand it. Nor do I. From history we know of many individuals who have been

able even in its darkest ages and under the most trying conditions to transcend their private, selfish interests and to subordinate them to the interests of society as a whole. It always took much courage much integrity, and much ability. All that can be hoped for now is that our country too will produce its "quota" of men and women who will defend the honour of the intellectual against all the fury of dominant interests and against all the assaults of agnosticism, obscurantism, and inhumanity".

Climate of fear

Under the previous government particularly Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, made life intolerable to those who crossed his path. As it was then, a climate of fear pervades the land. People are afraid to talk, lest they be hustled by the Police to the Fourth Floor. Alexis Tocqueville describes in "Democracy in America", what tyranny can be under a democracy..... It would degrade men without tormenting.... it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood... the will..... is not shattered but softened and bent, and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are consistently restrained from actions... it stupefies people and all the nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of tamed and industrious animals".

Political leaders who say that the Marxists are a threat to democracy, should not forget that they themselves are undermining democracy, by condoning political thuggery, hooliganism, favouritism among their own ranks — (I have cited some cases at the beginning of this article). Besides what happens in the political arena, is the arrest beatings, and murders in police cells and prisons. The excesses of the armed forces are too wellknown to recount here. If we are to have a Dharmista Society, (the President is very fond of harking back to the reign of Emperor Asoka), then his government might heed the words of this great leader of the Russian Revolution who was at variance with Lenin and Trotsky on this subject.



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