

# SOCIAL JUSTICE

VOLUME 25

No. 8

AUGUST 1991

Rs. 5/-

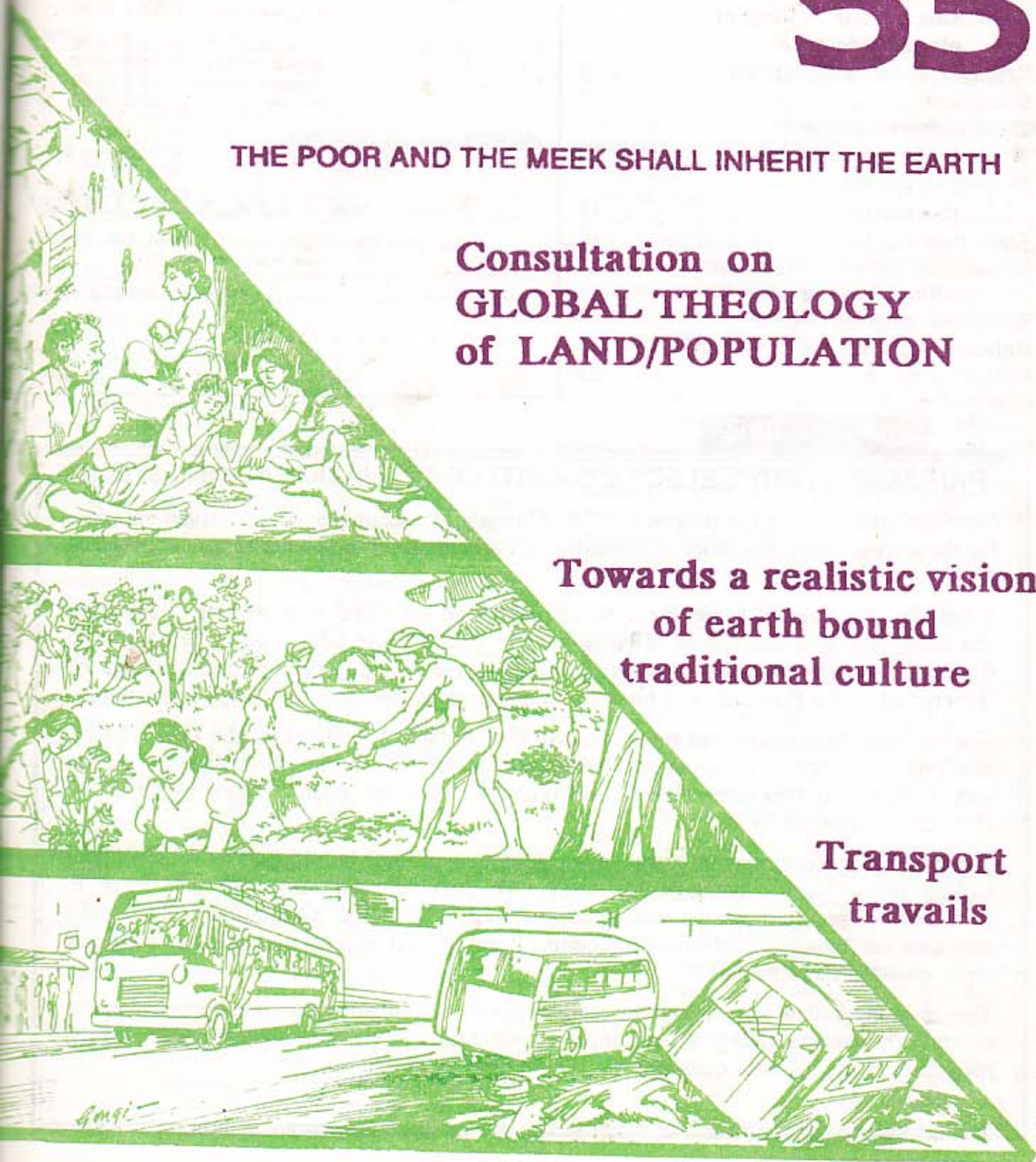
# 53

**THE POOR AND THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH**

**Consultation on  
GLOBAL THEOLOGY  
of LAND/POPULATION**

**Towards a realistic vision  
of earth bound  
traditional culture**

**Transport  
travails**



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## EDITORIAL NOTE

### PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL QUESTION

We commend strongly the proposal of Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe, SLFP Parliamentarian, for the appointment of a Select Committee of Parliament on the National question. (CDN 23/7/91 - p.3 ).

It has the advantage of bringing the Government and the SLFP to a working dialogue on this issue. A Select Committee of Parliament would have the advantage of being able to decide its own working rules and procedure, unlike the All Party Conference, at which the Government ( the President and his secretariat ) decides the agenda, process and timing.

The two main political parties representative of the majority community, the UNP and the SLFP have not agreed on a peaceful constitutional solution to the ethnic issue during the past 35-40 years. This disagreement and political rivalry has been a major cause of the ethnic disasters since 1956.

The present proposal may be a way in which agreement may be reached by them without looking for political advantage for one's own party. It can also help give back to Parliament some initiative in the policy making. The Select Committee could make provision for being in dialgoue with political parties and groups that are not presently represented in Parliament.

The on going killings of combattants and civilians at Elephant Pass - not to mention the several other recent killings should impel all concerned to give the highest priority to the resolution of the national question.



# Reaping the bitter harvest

## .... in the 15th year of the UNP

When the 15th Year of the UNP - CWC coalition came to power in 1977, after seven years of United Front and SLFP rule, there was great expectation among the people for a better future. The Government led by Mr. J.R. Jayewardena promised to usher in "a just and free society" (Dharmista Samajaya).

The Government unilaterally changed the Constitution to a centralized presidential system to ensure itself adequate powers and a long period of power.

The Economy was liberalized, foreign travel made easy and Sri Lanka was opened to the cultural winds of the world.

Much has been realized in the past 14 years. Many projects have been implemented: the accelerated Mahaveli development, increase in hydro power, growth in food production, improvement of telecommunications, modernization with high technology, the FTZ, the rural development projects, new Parliament Complex, enhanced facilities at harbour, airport, hotels, distribution of lands to peasants, houses to slum dwellers, spread of university education.

However/ there are also many serious drawbacks. In the economy there has been hardly any industrial growth, other than in textiles. The free economy has encouraged Sri Lankan Entrepreneurs to be traders rather than producers of new goods. Our public enterprises are being privatized. As there are few Sri Lankans who can buy them, they are being foreignized - as in the case of textiles and Ceylon Oxygen.

The rupee has been devalued in stages from Rs.8/= per dollar in 1977 to Rs. 41 in 1991. The cost of living is rising. The country's foreign debt has increased from Rs.5 billion in 1976 to Rs. 151 billion ( approx) in 1990, and correspondingly also the debt service charges. The IMF prescriptions followed more faithfully since 1977 have not improved the condition of the poor or the health of the economy. The few who are affluent have prospered more than ever before.

Fourteen years of the open economy policies have not led to any significant improvement in the country's productive capacity in industry. In 1988, at the end of the J.R. Jayewardena era, the UNP admitted large scale poverty and under nourishment and hence proposed its poverty alleviation policy - the

Janasaviya.

It will be argued by the apologists for the government that the ethnic crisis prevented the economic growth. Another view, that is not without foundation, is that the Government's policies including the open economy and the 1982 Referendum aggravated the ethnic disharmony leading to the 1983 explosion. The anti Tamil riots of July 1983 were not without Government support, or at least nonchalant tolerance of such violence. The political authoritarianism, centralization of power and government interference in the electoral process, have been major impediments to a peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict.

Politically Parliament has been devalued. The concentration of power and patronage in the Presidency leads to a sense of hero worship and uncritical acceptance of the dominant orthodoxy, until one President begins to debunk the sacred cows of his predecessor, long respected as the oracle of wisdom. The country is paying heavily for the unwisdom of the presidential dicta as when he said

"Let the robber barons come ....."

"If it is war, it is war..."

"I will roll the electoral map for 15 years....."

"They are animals, they deserve to be killed..."

Now the country stands badly divided, with a civil war that is draining its life blood and killing thousands of the flower of its youth. Several tens of thousands of youth, specially males, have been killed or "disappeared" during the past decade; over a million refugees.

In foreign policy non-alignment is being abandoned in favour of a pro-Western stance. The USA is expanding its controversial Voice of America station in the Puttalam District. The country is increasingly subservient to the Western powers, so that it can hardly support the poorer countries in a struggle against exploitation by the rich ones, or help develop SAARC into a more self-reliant regional body.

Fourteen years is a long period in the life of modernisation in our very rapidly changing world. When the country has so much of trouble, disagree-

ment and conflict after following a given path for 14 years, should we not ask ourselves whether there are some basic flaws in the path taken, the models followed, the options made and in their underlying values?

It is our view, expressed throughout the decades, that a path of development must take the human person, all persons, as the end and objective of planning and economic activity. If profits are made their goal and criterion, humans are neglected, marginalized, alienated and even sacrificed for money. Capital, foreign exchange and loans - as the IMF/WB combine often obliges poor countries to accept - should not be the criterion of decision making.

The option for a market economy should not leave our industries defenseless against competition from abroad. Our industrialization policy must encourage the growth of local enterprises. Over the past 14 years foreign companies have captured even our food and soft drinks markets. It is pitiable that we accept a policy of unselective liberalization of imports, which has not been the background in which other countries have developed. The USA, the European community, and countries like Japan and Korea have policies for protecting their domestic markets for local industries. An uncritical open market policy has not led to economic growth of our industries despite 14 years of it.

There should be more respect for moral and social values in economic policies. The Government is now trying to defend the country against excesses that were earlier encouraged by it - thus the action against jackpots and casinos. The Government now assures us that it will not allow migrant workers, especially in the Middle East, to be exploited as slaves and harassed sexually. This too is 14 years too late - that is assuming the Government will in fact, take strong action against local and foreign exploiters in this regard. The evils from an uncritical openness are also in the drugs menace - again benefitting local and foreign drug peddlers. The State has been too lax on many such issues including prostitution - all for the sake of foreign exchange or in pursuit of an unwise openness. We pray that AIDS will not be widespread here.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION has been so controlled by the Government from appointment of Vice Chancellors to functioning of student societies, that there has been a breakdown within the Universities - alongside the greater disruption in society. Much healing is required in this sphere too to provide for legitimate university autonomy and student freedom with responsibility.

We have allowed the pollution of the environment, soil erosion on a large scale and deforestation to do damage to nature that must be checked before it is irreversibly impoverished.

We are not advocating a closed economy or a wholesale return to pre 1977 policies. We need to care of our well founded economic development based on the type of self reliance encouraged in the Janasaviya programme. The religious flavour of public pronouncements must go hand in hand with a concern for moral and social values in public policy.

The issue today is concerning the nature and extent of the openness of our pattern of economy and society. What is the type of openness that makes for genuine economic growth and what stunts it and makes the country subservient and subject to severe exploitation as cheap labour, dumping ground for foreign imports. Not all openness is necessarily beneficial to the country and the poor people. We need to be **SELECTIVE AND CIRCUMSPECT** in accepting a liberal economic policy.

The Government must be much more accommodating in resolving the ethnic conflict by a generous devolution of power to regional units. The Government must take the initiative in this - 14 years is too long a time to fail to come forward with adequately meaningful solutions. The Government should, if necessary, educate the country, especially the majority community to understand the need for effective power sharing, precisely for preserving the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. The country is paying dearly for the failures of all in this regard.

All these indicate major flaws in the package of policies of the Government. Should not a representative and unbiased Commission inquire into these and recommend remedies for the common good of all - and even of the ruling parties themselves.

TISSA BALASURIYA O.M.I.

### It's up to you

- Choose to love - rather than hate.*
- Choose to smile - rather than frown.*
- Choose to build - rather than destroy.*
- Choose to persevere - rather than quit.*
- Choose to praise - rather than gossip.*
- Choose to heal - rather than wound.*
- Choose to give - rather than grasp.*
- Choose to act - rather than delay.*
- Choose to pray - rather than despair.*
- Choose to forgive - rather than curse.*

Rev. Norbert Weber, M.S.C.

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# The meek and the poor shall inherit the earth




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## OVERVIEW OF A CONSULTATION ON GLOBAL THEOLOGY AND LAND/POPULATION ORGANISED BY THE CSR FROM 5-14 JULY, 1991

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Whenever two or three are gathered together in a spirit of collaborative goodwill and friendship there is a flow of much positive and constructive thinking. The effect is enhanced when the gathering is from many different environments and geographical zones. At a recent Consultation on Global Theology on Land, organised by the Centre for Society and Religion, over twenty seven participants (this may be considered 'two or three' in the international context), from seven countries, both developing and developed, (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Japan, Australia, USA) a lively airing and exchange of views took place. This resulted in a cluster of very thought provoking suggestions for further inquiry into the subject.

The meeting was held at the Lasallian Community Conference Complex, scenically and peacefully located at the Modera seaside - an erstwhile elitest location of the city of Colombo.

At an opening session held at the CSR auditorium Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, Director of the CSR, informed the participants of the manner in which the original concept of Global Theology had surfaced at an international programme at the Maryknoll Centre, USA in 1988. The present meeting was related to it as participants from there were invited to it along with others to continue in the sharing process of views and experiences. This exercise also enabled the CSR to widen and open up its own perspectives. A feature film depicting the theme of the Consultation, produced by the Media Unit of the CSR, further set the mood of the Consultation regarding the relative position of the have's and the have nots, and developing and developed countries.

The structure of the Consultation was a mix of formal presentations, group and plenary discussions and reporting on findings at each progressive stage. Most of the participants came from organisations that had an in-depth knowledge of theological study and teachings. At the meeting these dedicated people set

their minds to relating theological considerations to one of the major problems of the present times, namely land resource availability and sharing, bearing in mind population growth, and ecological impact not only on national and regional scales, but globally.

To give one example of the proceedings, at a plenary session following group discussions, it was felt that the need for a sharing of land on a more equitable basis was necessary, but hitherto it had remained a vision. This must now be matched with a will to concretize that vision. Humans react strongly to both the taking and giving back of land - how can this be handled in the context of spiritual teachings and



Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, Ms. Katherine McCarthy and Ms. Mar L. Peter Raoul



Mr. Philip Gain, Fr. Dick Timm, and others

religious beliefs was a question that surfaced constantly. It was also felt that the 'signs of the times' and social realities needed to be taken into account in the process. Connotations of Justice and Charity were debated in the context of linguistic understanding. The necessity, not only of sharing, but of changing attitudes was mentioned, together with the vision of land as a means of production. Consideration was given to the changing ratio of land and population, and suggestions were made for International Land Reforms. Christian charity, it was felt, goes far beyond justice, in that it recommends the sharing of possessions albeit in a practical manner, not merely on basis of one's personal needs.

It was with minds full of thinking into the future that the Group met for a final wrap up session at the CSR. Several observers joined the participants on this occasion. Following an introduction by Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, brief presentations were made by selected participants. Each presentation was preceded by the reading of relevant poems by Ms. Mar. L. Peter Raoul, of the Human Rights Prison Ministry, New York.

The first presentation by Ms. Katherine McCarthy, a Doctoral Student, of the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, called for new criteria, and a moving away from the concept of the Church as a raft

for supporting one's personal needs and desires. The Conference, she said, helped to identify the manner in which global theology related to particular issues, such as land, which were globally of topical interest and concern.

Dr. Dick Timm, CSC of the Commission of Justice and Peace, Bangladesh, and a Magsaysay Award Winner, spoke of the essential role land played in human existence, and the quality of life, i.e. food, housing etc. Were we the faithful stewards of such a Gift of God? In the past, land has been sufficient in sustaining people, there were sufficient minerals and bounty of the earth, but now the situation was changing he said. There was less and less food for more and more people; the green revolution had peaked and was plateauing, and by the year 2000 A.D. population would have increased by 60 percent, while food increase would be 30 percent. In one decade more massive financial inputs would be required to maintain an equitable land/population/food production ratio. He also referred to injustices such as the plight of the small farmer, the vicious cycle of money lending, and the decreasing availability of land for food production, the snatching of land from the indigenous population, degradation of land by multi-nationals, and inequalities of land distribution as the legacy of colonial regimes. Hope for the future lay in new approaches to

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## INTER-RELIGIOUS GROUP REPORT

No revealed religion separates or divides people. On the contrary, it abolishes the existing dividing walls. The original charisms and spirituality of all religions have been institutionalized only after the first generation of disciples. The very historical need for survival gave impetus to this insititualization and this, in turn, generated separatism.

However, alongside such developments, there have always been prophetic voices inviting people to conversion to the original radicalism and universalism of the religious founder. In the realm of Christianity, it was the Fathers of the early Church who explored, interpreted and emphasized the human and global face of the charism of Jesus Christ. It is these teachings of the Church Fathers that strike a closer chord to the content, the spirit, and the ethical code of our Asian non-Christian religious traditions as well as those of tribal societies. Dialogues, therefore, from this starting point, in pre-dating the implications of Greek philosophical influences on Christianity, facilitate a direct focus on the here and now, on the basic needs of the human person to lead a life that is truly human... for "the glory of God is the human person truly alive." Collectively, on an inter-religious basis, there is a need to undermine the "other worldly element" which lends itself to manipulation by the ruling elites and their legitimating supporters to their own vested interests.

It is in this context that an inter-religious and international morality of land can be evolved to come to grips with the factors and trends impacting the quality of life for large numbers of people: the increasing population pressure on land with little or no outlet to the existing underpopulated areas of the land's surface; the re-definition of state boundaries which have deprived people of their homes, lands and national identity; the evolving disputes and communalist trends building around land rights among religious communities to land with a religious pilgrimatic significance.

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intensive cropping and use of new technologies which were urgently required to be implemented.

Mr. Philip Gain of the Coordinating Council of Human Rights, and HOTLINE representative from Bangladesh spoke on aspects of environment that were adverse, such as afforestation, deforestation, the wrong use of technology, e.g. misuse of pesticides, poisoning caused by toxicides, and the counter productive effects of some proposed environmental projects, together with bio-degradation and loss of wild life, sources of fuel etc. A contribution by Sister Gladys d'Souza, RSCJ of the Society for Education to Reality, New Delhi, India, centered on the population growth factors and their implications, particularly in Asia. She referred to population flows to and fro across the globe in various historical time frames, prior to and post World War II, in the context of the brain drain, cheap immigrant labour etc. She warned of new age structural trends in the population pyramid of Asia being further skewed by the exodus of skilled youth to Australia and America. The Middle East followed this pattern by importing unskilled labour - illegal labour was even cheaper! In fact, referring to the female labour, in future it would not be the girl child that is killed, she quipped!. Sister Gladys also referred to the sale of commodities, with raw materials sent from the First World to be assembled in the Third World and returned, also to the introduction of industries damaging to developing environment. giving the example of Bofors. She warned that the implications of all these factors for both the physical and mental quality of life in the future must be taken serious note of. In this respect, she suggested another dimension to the word MISSION, with the will to stand up to the threats of the have's taken into account. Are we making efforts to be informed or just having friendly chats over a cup of tea, was the question posed.

Fr. Peter Jacob of the Justice and Peace Commission, Pakistan, classified the population of the world as the POSSESSED and DISPOSSESSED. Religions teach the sharing of land but it is not often put into practice, he said, also advocating an inter-faith dialogue. He gave his own experience with an Inter-faith Group in Multan, Pakistan which had organised a successful Peace March. There must be a sharing of life among the millions and a trust built up that no one is trying to convert people of one faith to another. The dialogue must be at people's level and not merely among the clergy.

Fr. Emanuel Asi of the PAKTABW E ANAVEEN, Pakistan, which had publications on contextual/global theology in national languages explained how human problems related to suffering and injustice, which are universal, but can be overcome by thinking globally while acting locally. He gave the example of his village

Photographs by the CSR Media Unit



A group at the wrap up session



Centre: Ms. Noriko Okada, Sr. Winifreda Wasalathanthri, Mr. Promode Mankin

parish, at Mariamabad, where a global vision was created by informing people about global issues, and global days such as Habitat Day, Environment, Women's Day, Workers Day, Population Day etc. Thought sharing was a fruitful exercise among village people who were open minded in their thinking, and appreciate theological dimensions being added to their global thinking. At this humble level global theology particularly in communication with factors such as land and population would take root effectively.

Fr. Dick Timm spoke on the role of the United Nations and its agencies, particularly the FAO and ILO which have done useful work in helping small farmers and in suggesting Agrarian Reform. The role and function of the UN as a whole may be questioned as to its effectiveness, together with the part played by the World Bank, which gave 'hard loans' and its partner, the IMF responsible for 'soft loans'. Money was often channeled into the wrong sources or politicized. Sometimes these efforts were good, i.e. pressure to reduce military budgets, etc. Also very effective was the UN Human Rights Commission, and NGOs are increasingly playing a positive role. He cited the South Asian Forum on Human Rights which was surfacing with a view to promoting right thinking and acting on global inter-related issues. The Un as a body is not empowered to bring about the required international

land reform, so that there may be an equitable distribution of land to population.

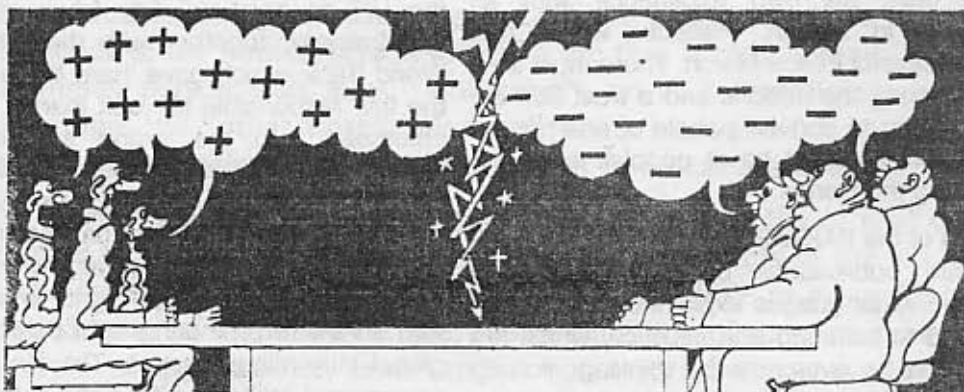
In open discussion that followed many views were put forward regarding related topics such as the universal concept of science and beneficial technology which required an infra-structure of developing country related research. If God worked through people's

hands and hearts, response to reality was envisaged, and the need to relate global to local issues mentioned.

Much food for thought was generated at the Consultation which augurs well for a follow - up to Global Theology related action in the future. Co-operation among peoples in the future particularly in SAARC countries may thus be brought about. ●

## SOME SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL ACTION RELATED TO LAND/POPULATION BASED ON A GLOBAL VISION OF THEOLOGY

- \* Strategies for global theology on land/population included suggestions for greater investment of the Church with the laity; the need for the availability of more literature in local languages; better social networking, both vertically and horizontally, and reflective action rooted in a people's struggle for realization; since the main issue, namely land-population relationship is global: inter-religions study action for global justice and the understanding of global convictions of local issues.
- \* Land strategies called for more research into agrarian reform, with the focus on marginalised and small farmers; a more positive role for NGOs in promoting an equitable global distribution of land, new systems of cropping, social forestry, and necessary SAARC intervention, taking into cognizance the fact that the main issue, namely land - population is global.
- \* Land and Population strategies suggested were: the right of individual countries to define their means of tackling the land/population ratio, educating the younger cohorts as to the effects of rapid population growth and rethinking on the fair minded use of land and human resources.
- \* Strategies pertaining to development patterns called for a more critical and analytical view of the prerogative of a few to control the use of land and capital globally; the promotion and quality control of local products, with emphasis on the rights of small producers and FTZ workers; rethinking on approaches to tourism, privatization and export oriented economies.
- \* Development pattern strategies suggested were: inquiry into exploitation of developing country resources and personnel by affluent country investors, underuse of available skilled personnel; present nature of tourist trade and detrimental effects, such as prostitution and health hazards; a better organisation of local agri-based production methods and marketing; use and misuse of natural resources as related to ecology and the environment.
- \* Suggested strategies related to the United Nations , its Agencies and other international organisations, were, a more critical study of UN methodologies which favoured the big powers; concerted action to bring about reforms in the UN system; to be more responsive to the needs of the less privileged sections of humanity; the multinational corporations' policies of dumping surplus and inappropriate products and technologies; and nuclear toxic waste into Third World countries; the need for Third World people, especially SAARC to institute organised protests and to alert people to such practices. ●



CORAX YUGOSLAVIA



## THE CHANGING FACE OF MODERN HISTORY

# Towards a realistic vision of man's social and cultural setting



One may consider the ordering of the organisation of society according to these powers - legislation, execution and judicial. Such an ordering reflects a realistic vision of man's social nature, which calls for legislation capable of protecting the freedom of all. To that end, it is preferable that each power be balanced by other powers and by other spheres of responsibility which keep it within proper bounds. This is the principle of the "rule of law", in which the law is sovereign, and not the arbitrary will of individuals.

## PART THREE

This is the final installment of insights containing the philosophical thinking in the form of abstracts from the **ENCYCLICAL LETTER** of Pope John Paul II.

Furthermore, the totalitarian State tends to absorb within itself the nation, society, the family, religious groups and individuals themselves. In defending her own freedom, the Church is also defending the human person, who must obey God rather than men, as well as defending the family, the various social organizations and nations - all of which enjoy their own spheres of autonomy and sovereignty.

## Democracy and the Law

In modern times, this concept has been opposed by totalitarianism, which, in its Marxist-Leninist form, maintains that some people, by virtue of a deeper knowledge of the laws of the development of society, or through membership of a particular class or through contact with the deeper sources of the collective consciousness, are exempt from error and can therefore arrogate to themselves the exercise of absolute power. It must be added that totalitarianism arises out of a denial of truth in the objective sense. If there is no transcendent truth, in obedience to which man achieves his full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people. Their self-interest as a class, group or nation would inevitably set them in opposition to one another. If one does not acknowledge transcendent truth, then the force of power takes over, and each person tends to make full use of the means at his disposal in order to impose his own interests or his own opinion, with no regard for the rights of others. People are then respected only to the extent that they can be exploited for selfish ends.

The culture and praxis of totalitarianism also involve a rejection of the Church. The State or the party which claims to be able to lead history towards perfect goodness, and which sets itself above all values, cannot tolerate the affirmation of an objective criterion of good and evil beyond the will of those in power, since such a criterion, in given circumstances, could be used to judge their actions. This explains why totalitarianism attempts to destroy the Church, or at least to reduce her to submission, making her an instrument of its own ideological apparatus.

Authentic democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the "subjectivity" of society through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility. Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and sceptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitudes which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.

Freedom attains its full development only by accepting the truth. In a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation and man is exposed to the violence of passion and to manipulation, both open and hidden. The Christian upholds freedom and serves it, constantly offering to others the truth which he has known, in accordance with the missionary nature of his vocation. While paying heed to every fragment of truth which he encounters in the life experience and in the culture of individuals and of nations, he will not fail to affirm in dialogue with others all that his faith and the correct use of reason have enabled him to understand.

## Concern for Human Rights

Following the collapse of Communist totalitarianism and of many other totalitarian and "national security" regimes, today we are witnessing a predominance, not without signs of opposition, of the democratic ideal, together with lively attention to and concern for human rights. But for this very reason it is necessary for peoples in the process of reforming their systems to give democracy an authentic and solid foundation through the explicit recognition of those rights.

Among the most important of these rights, mention must be made of the right to life, an integral part of which is the right of the child to develop in the mother's womb from the moment of conception; the right to live in a united family and in a moral environment conducive to the growth of the child's personality; the right to develop one's intelligence and freedom in seeking and knowing the truth; the right to share in the work which makes wise use of the earth's material resources, and to derive from that work the means to support oneself and one's dependants; and the right freely to establish a family, to have and to rear children through the responsible exercise of one's sexuality. In a certain sense, the source and synthesis of these rights is religious freedom, understood as the right to live in the truth of one's faith and in conformity with one's transcendent dignity as a person.

The Church respects the legitimate autonomy of the democratic order and is not entitled to express preferences for this or that institutional or constitutional solution. Her contribution to the political order is precisely her vision of the dignity of the person revealed in all its fulness in the mystery of the Incarnate Word.

## Influence in Economic Sphere

Another task of the State is that of overseeing and directing the exercise of human rights in the economic sector. However, primary responsibility in this area belongs not to the State but to individuals and to the various groups and associations which make up society. The State could not directly ensure the right to work for all its citizens unless it controlled every aspect of economic life and restricted the free initiative of individuals. This does not

mean, however, that the State has no competence in this domain, as was claimed by those who argued against any rules in the economic sphere. Rather, the State has a duty to sustain business activities by creating conditions which will ensure job opportunities, by stimulating those activities where they are lacking or by supporting them in moments of crisis.

## Family Role

In order to overcome today's widespread individualistic mentality, what is required is a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity, beginning in the family with the mutual support of husband and wife and the care which the different generations give to one another. In this sense the family too can be called a community of work and solidarity. It can happen, however, that when a family does decide to live up fully to its vocation, it finds itself without the necessary support from the State and without sufficient resources. It is urgent therefore to promote not only family policies, but also those social policies which have the family as their principal object, policies which assist the family by providing adequate resources and efficient means of support, both for bringing up children and for looking after the elderly, so as to avoid distancing the latter from the family unit and in order to strengthen relations between generations.

Apart from the family, other intermediate communities exercise primary functions and give life to specific networks of solidarity. These develop as real communities of persons and strengthen the social fabric, preventing society from becoming an anonymous and impersonal mass, as unfortunately often happens today. It is in interrelationships on many levels that a person lives, and that society becomes more "personalized". The individual today is often suffocated between two poles represented by the State and the marketplace. At times it seems as though he exists

**Overseeing the exercise of human rights belongs not to the State but to individuals and groups**





only as a producer and consumer of goods, or as an object of State administration. People lose sight of the fact that life in society has neither the market nor the State as its final purpose, since life itself has a unique value which the State and the market must serve. Man remains above all a being who seeks the truth and strives to live in that truth, deepening his understanding of it through a dialogue which involves past and future generations.

### Origins of Culture

From this open search for truth, which is renewed in every generation, the culture of a nation derives its character. Indeed, the heritage of values which has been received and handed down is always challenged by the young. To challenge does not necessarily mean to destroy or reject a priori, but above all to put these values to the test in one's own life, and through this existential verification to make them more real, relevant and personal, distinguishing the valid elements in the tradition from false and erroneous ones, or from obsolete forms which can be usefully replaced by others more suited to the times.

In this context, it is appropriate to recall that evangelization too plays a role in the culture of the various nations, sustaining culture in its progress towards the truth, and assisting in the work of its purification and enrichment. However, when a culture becomes inward looking, and tries to perpetuate obsolete ways of living by rejecting any exchange or debate with regard to the truth about man, then it becomes sterile and is heading for decadence.

Creating such conditions calls for a concerted worldwide effort to promote development, an effort which also involves sacrificing the positions of income and of power enjoyed by the more developed economies.

This may mean making important changes in established life-styles, in order to limit the waste of environmental and human resources, thus enabling every individual and all the peoples of the earth to have a sufficient share of those resources. In addition, the new material and spiritual resources which are the result of the work and culture of peoples who today are on the margins of the international community must be utilized so as to obtain an overall human enrichment of the family of nations. ●

## "Sanathana Suwada" - songs of eternal fragrance

Sanathana Suwada ( Eternal Fragrance ) is the title of the first song album of Saminda Jayasinghe , a young man who sings of Society and Religion in eight meaningful songs recorded at the Media Unit of the CSR. The lyrics, music, compositions and singing are all by Saminda.



Others who have contributed lyrics to Sanathana Suwada are Rev. Pallegrama Hemarathna, Srimath Indrajith Liyanage, Samantha Herat and Joe Ranjith Gunasekara. The album design is by Prem Dissanayake and the photographs

are by Asoka Siriwardena. Sound engineers were Guy Halpe and Randula Pathmasiri.

Susil Nonis, Shalika Aroshini Peiris, Anoma Jayasinghe and Irangani Thilakaratne contributed to the singing.

"Let our smiling faces light up those in misery and sadness,

Let us rise like the lotus flower out of the corruption and hate of this world,

Let us be sensitive to the sad plight of those who speak no words, or are silenced.

Can we recognise their yearning in their silence and can we do something about it?

Let us see what we can give this world not what we can take out of it ... a helping hand to a person who cannot stand on his own feet.

How can one sing or dance when some think that killing is the only solution to problems.

Just as from the drought fresh leaves bud forth, .. may the

dry land bloom forth after many rains and storms of national disasters.

Can killing be the only means to solve our problems?

Has our creative thinking power failed, gone blind, or dulled.

Tiny man born in a tiny cave, living in a tiny village, dying on a tiny cross showed a tiny way of living by dying".

# Repatriation of Asian Workers

Graziano Battistella

Scalabrini Migration Center

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait generated a massive repatriation flow of foreigners working either in Kuwait or Iraq. Any accurate numbers for the foreign population at the moment of crisis is hardly possible. The closest approximations we have are based on estimates from the governments concerned, which, in spite of monitoring mechanisms, are unable to account for the irregular movements of their overseas workforce; nor can they present any accurate assessment of the situation.

The majority of returnees left for their homes from Jordan. However, many Pakistanis returned through adjacent Iran; Bangladeshis reached the border with Turkey while still others crossed over to Saudi Arabia.

Aside from overestimation by country of origin and people stranded in different countries, a proportion of overseas workers remained in the area; those living with their families, those hoping to recover their money deposited in the banks or owed to them by employers; those forced to remain for the maintenance and servicing of the infrastructure. International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that before the commencement of the ground war over 1 million third country nationals continued to work in Iraq (mainly Egyptians, Sudanese, Palestinians).

## Estimate of Economic Loss

The impact on national economies of the repatriation of overseas contract workers (OCWs) starts with the loss of remittances. In 1985 the officially reported flow of remittances from the whole Middle East amounted to approximately US \$6.6 billion. In 1990 that figure could have been slightly smaller, because for most countries foreign labour in the Gulf has been declining.

To the loss of remittances one should add the loss of savings resulting from Iraq's abolishing the Kuwait currency. Based on occupation of migrant workers extrapolated from general data, ILO has calculated the estimated gross earnings of Asian workers in Kuwait and Iraq.

Assuming that each person lost the equivalent of three months of earnings, the gross loss for Asian countries was 615 million.

## Lessons from a Crisis

While a crucially significant battle has been fought and won, the Gulf crisis is far from over. A peaceful settlement has yet to be reached and it will take some time for all the pieces to fall into place. Like earthquake disasters, a series of minor shocks occur before the telluric forces find a new adjustment. Overseas workers are part of this settlement and not necessarily according to pre-existing terms. All in all certain aspects have emerged which require additional reflection.

1. Migrant labour is a crucial element of the total economic system. This awareness does not belong to the countries of origin only, but also to the countries of employment. For many years, migrants have been understood as a transportable and disposable commodity which in times of economic prosperity could

Table 1. Returnees from Kuwait and Iraq to Asian countries from August 2 to Early December 1990.

Country of Origin	Contract Workers	Returnees
Bangladesh	90,000	62,000
China	60,000	60,000
India	181,000	170,000
Korea, Republic of	400	400
Pakistan	95,000	90,000
Philippines	40,000	30,000
Sri Lanka	101,000	73,000
Thailand	13,000	10,000
Vietnam	16,000	8,000

Table 2. Estimated Annual Earnings of Asian Workers in Kuwait and Iraq (Million US Dollars)

Country	Workers	Estimated Earnings
Bangladesh	90,000	312.8
India	181,000	666.8
Pakistan	95,000	305.5
Philippines	40,000	199.7
Sri Lanka	101,000	323.6
Thailand	12,000	38.7
Total	438,000	1,847.1



be expanded for controlling labour demands; and in times of economic sluggishness could be retracted, to avoid surplus unemployment. While part of the workforce maintains such a precarious quality, the bulk of migrant workers are indispensable to the functioning of labour importing economies. Because they reveal their importance precisely in time of crisis, this equation provides vital terms for bilateral bargaining related to migrant work force.

2. An international crisis of major proportions can cause such a displacement of people that governments alone are unable to respond to adequately. Regulated export of labour contains provisions that make employers responsible for the round trip expenses of the migrant worker. However, when confronted with mass repatriation because of the crisis, employers have argued that such provisions be applicable only at completion of work contracts. The experience of the Gulf war suggests that a clearer policy should be adopted, which makes employers (and contracting agents) responsible for the travel expenses also on circumstances not applicable to the worker responsibility. After all, employers and contracting agents are the ones profiting most from the migrant labour and, therefore, should bear the responsibility for its safety, including emergency circumstances.

3. The information system concerning migrant workers has been revealed to be inadequate. Country of origin estimates were far from accurate. The cry for better information is not new, but the crisis has demonstrated its necessity. Information exists, most of the time, but it is not organised among the relevant government departments, nor is it processed because of inadequate information systems. Our age of information has made relatively inexpensive machines affordable for any government. It is merely a matter of political will and co-operative administration. Slightly more complex is the organisation of information in countries of employment (while some countries have identity cards for foreigners, other countries still consider such a system as an invasion of privacy). However, a better coordination among countries could produce effective results.

4. The role of international organisation was crucial for the safe repatriation and emergency relief of migrant workers. The structures of the international community have acquired a new relevance throughout the Gulf crisis. Not only has the UN system proven to be the only forum where all nations can gather for international relations, but UN agencies have been highly effective in gathering and using international funds. Even if at the time of its most effective functioning the UN system has commissioned a war instead of achieving peace, the interdependence of nations has received additional confirmation. Such interdependence requires further affirmation at other times, particularly in the protection of "international" persons such as the highly vulnerable migrant workers. International instruments are not lacking: they simply need recognition, adoption and enforcement.

# OVERHEARD



Have you got a job yet ?

No - I am trying to decide whether to join the forces and die for my country, or join a private van service and perish on the road, or just to stay at home !

\*\*\*\*\*

What are you carrying in that parcel ?

Not a bomb, but my groceries for the week, which makes a much smaller package !

\*\*\*\*\*

Why are you dressed up like a perahera elephant ?

Because I hear they are short of elephants.

\*\*\*\*\*

What is that CTB bus without a number ?

Don't you know - that bus is on its way to the Ambepussa farm which recently changed hands - the Koreans are now in possession I am told

Every rumour is not correct, but I give you the benefit of the doubt.

ENVIRONMENT

# Coral Hunters Threaten Sri Lanka's Reefs!

By Rohan Gunasekera

Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka:- Destruction of Sri Lanka's coral reefs has reached a critical stage with over-exploitation threatening their disappearance in some areas.

Chunks from the very base of the reefs are being extracted by coral hunters along parts of the island's southern coast. This prevents the growth of reefs, which form the heart of a delicate and enormously valuable marine ecosystem, because there is nowhere for new coral larvae to settle.

'We're losing the resources very fast', warns Arjan Rajasuraiya who heads the Coral Study Unit of the National Aquatic Resources Agency (NARA), the organisation responsible for studying the island's aquatic wealth and developing plans for its exploitation.

Rajasuraiya estimates that at least half the reefs along the 85 km stretch of coast between Tangalle and Akuralla, close to the tourist resort of Hikkaduwa have been destroyed in the last 10-15 years.

The damage is caused mainly by the villagers living on the coast who mine the coral to produce lime for building industry. Tough laws exist to prevent the mining and processing of coral, but are rarely enforced.

The vested interest of local politicians in keeping coral miners employed may explain why lime kilns continue to line the coast though the police are empowered to demolish them.

Even in Hikkaduwa, which is nominally a marine sanctuary, boatmen can be seen openly breaking coral from the reefs to sell to tourists. It is ironic that the reefs are being destroyed in this way since they were one of the prime reasons for the area's development as a tourist centre.

To export coral, a permit is required from the Department of Wildlife Conservation. Coral is protected under the Con-

We are losing this precious resource very fast

vention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), but Sri Lankan exporters normally side-step controls.

NARA & Wildlife Department are considering employing special officials to enforce controls on coral exports. The government is also trying to wean miners from the reefs by giving them land to cultivate.

Reefs are under attack from other directions too. Deforestation for unplanned development of land in hills results in soil erosion. Silt is washed downstream to the sea, especially during rains and smoothes the coral which needs light to grow.

Dredging the reclamation of low-lying areas also blocks the corals. Pollution has exacerbated the damage. Oil from fishing boats, chemical wastes, plastics, and other rubbish in the sea and floods all help kill the coral and stop the renewal of the damaged reefs.

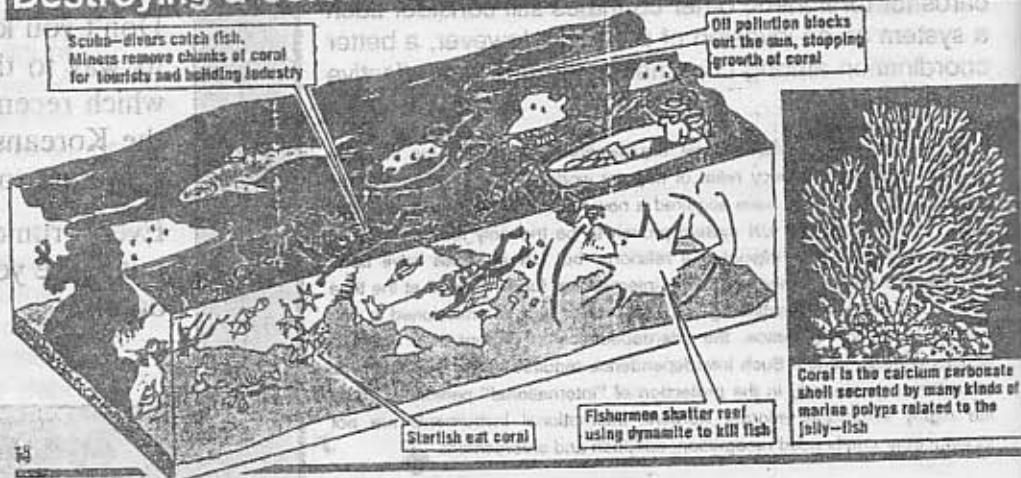
Fishermen shatter the reefs by tossing dynamite into shoals of fish to provide an instant catch. Fish population has also decreased in the reefs. Harvesting of young fish and scuba-diving for short-term gains in fishing catches have devastated the area.

Over-exploitation of lobsters has reached to harvest even spawning females and under-size lobsters. Lobsters are good export items. "Ten or fifteen years ago, you could catch lobster during the day in this area," says Rajasuraiya. The fact is that lobsters are nocturnal, and day-catch reflects their plentyfulness in the area.

"But now, if you swim for one kilometre at night and

(Continued on p.16)

## Destroying a coral reef





## PEOPLISATION

# Transport system in transition -

Till January 1958, the transport service in Sri Lanka was entirely in the hands of a few private companies. Among them were small as well as bigger companies. In most companies that functioned in remote areas, their structure was such that they had one magnate who claimed ownership to several buses and a few more who owned just one or two buses joining hands with him in forming the company. In most instances, ultimately the magnates became more and more powerful while the small owners who joined hands with him got displaced and became just employees of the organisation.

In 1958 however, with the nationalisation of the transport service, the most worthy change that took place was the displacement of the generation of the so called "bus mudalalis". This resulted in the weakening of the influences on the political and economical aspects within the country which were to a certain extent promoted through them.

At the time that the transport system was taken over by the Government there were 76 different bus companies functioning within our country. The employees of these companies amounted to 150000. The number of buses owned by them were 3400. Out of these about 2300 were on the roads each day. The distance covered by these buses was equivalent to about 200,000 miles. They were able to cater to 100,000 passengers each day.

The objective behind the establishment of the Sri Lanka Transport Board was to give a more modernized twist to the transport service.

The CTB/SLTB was established only after the passing of the Sri Lanka Transport System Act in Parliament. As such, the structure and functioning of our transport service became part and parcel of the Law of our country. Thus, it was understood that a change in the structure could follow only after a revision of the Law had been made.

However, from the time of nationalisation, the transport service in our country functioned not as a profit making venture but as a service to the general public. As such, the passengers as well as the employees were benefited by this service.

## ● Improvements for Maximum Service

To render the maximum service to the public the Sri Lanka Transport Board was conscious of promoting the following as part of their services. They had to

supply buses that were comfortable enough for travel. More vehicles had to be added to their original collection. The adoption of a time table and promotion of its systematic operation was required. It was also

## - and the travails of travellers

A VIEWPOINT BY

Nandana  
Amerasinghe

essential to open up new routes for the operation of buses.

A well disciplined and devout work force was what was most essential for the smooth functioning of a project of this nature. It was definitely so during that period. The employees during that era showed a deep affiliation towards this service.

Without assessing the outcome in rupees and cents, but giving priority to the comfort and convenience of the general public, numerous bus routes were opened, unravelling a vast area of territory untouched before. However, it was only after the nationalisation of the transport service that those who had not even encountered a bus during their lifetime enjoyed the privilege of travelling in a bus to fulfill their duties and obligations in everyday life.

At the time of nationalisation, the mileage covered by the transport system was 200,000. This increased rapidly, and by 1977 it was 800,000. The objective behind the increase in the number of buses and the bus routes was not the earning of an extra income for the SLTB but it was in order to cater to more passengers that would benefit by it. When the service towards the public is given priority naturally it becomes a profitless venture. From a commercial point of view, such a venture is supposed to run at a loss. But it is worthwhile remembering that whatever project is targetted at the public it turns out to be a service worthwhile in itself though economywise it becomes worthless. Consider the education and health services. Have they ever been profit making ventures to a government? Can they do away with these services considering them to be a loss? Nobody

can deny the fact that the nationalisation of the transport service has been of immense benefit and a valuable service to the general public. It was undoubtedly more systematic and organised than during the era of the bus magnates.

It is obvious for a project as vast as this to have its shortcomings. The shortage of buses, the poor condition that the buses were in, certain shortcomings in the operation of the time table, the passengers being harassed on and off by unkind conductors, were some of these. Nevertheless, the general public and the employees together were determined to safeguard this valuable service since its advantages were definitely more than its shortcomings. It could even have been identified as a valuable national resource.

### ● Development Hands

In spite of this situation in the nationalised transport service, to convert it back to the private ownership by peopling, is a step that has been taken in keeping with the policies of the new government. It is clearly seen that the government has no faith in the fact that the "heights of development could be reached by nationalisation" - it is even proved by their numerous statements and actions. At the first stage, only the organisations that functioned at a loss to the government were privatised by them. However, later they did not abide by any logical reason for privatisation, wherever it was done the government moved in. A good example for this is the privatisation of the State Distilleries Corporation which was no doubt a profit making venture. It clearly shows that according to today's policy, "development is in the hands of the private sector".

Certain actions within the nationalised bus service, like in any other nationalised service, was manoeuvred according to the whims and fancies of narrow minded politicians. The SLTB was made to be a tool to support their worthy supporters who gave them their full support at the elections. Thus, without considering the number of employees that were actually needed or the qualifications that they should possess, not only were they given employment, but even recommended for promotions and transfers and sometimes allowed to idle when they could not be made use of. The outcome of this was the SLTB being excess-staffed and turning out to be a burden that was too heavy to be borne by the government.

In 1980, the SLTB employees of all grades amounted to 65930. The number of buses that were functioning that year were 5676. Thus according to these statistics each bus should accommodate a work force of 11.6.

However, though the SLTB ran at a loss they have

been of service to some by rendering employment by fair or foul means.

### ● Lost Opportunities

There was been a proposal once by the Fiat Company of Italy to open up a factory to assemble buses in our country. It was turned down because a few had opposed it. If such a venture had been established it would have supplied buses at low costs and also provided employment for a number under the sponsorship of the SLTB. Possibilities were there to establish a lorry corporation which could have accommodated the excess staff of the SLTB and also could have been maintained as a profit making venture to balance the loss.

However, to promote development in a country there should be efficiency in the production sector as well as the supplies in all fields. Such an efficiency could be brought about only on the physical and mental fitness of the work force. If the employees are unable to report for duty at the correct time for no fault of their own, if while coming for work they undergo much torture in public vehicles, there is bound to be a certain amount of mental unrest. In such a state nobody can expect the rate of production to improve. Can efficiency be expected then? Can the supply rate be increased? If there is no possibility of increasing the rate of production and supply can the target be achieved? Therefore it is no exaggeration if we do blame the SLTB for the all round deterioration in all sectors.

After the peopling in the transport service, the general public, school children and university students were even deprived of the monthly season ticket which were earlier issued at concession rates. This is in itself is a great blow to the public. ●

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Coral ... (Continued from p.14)  
catch one lobster, you are lucky".

Rajasuraiya's unit aims to determine the condition of the island's coral reefs and to identify areas that can be preserved. It is also exploring ways of rejuvenating them by transplanting coral and re-introducing fish into depleted areas.

But even Nature is attacking the reefs now. The fast breeding Crown of Thorns Starfish, which eats only live coral, has recently appeared off the North-Western and Eastern coasts of the island.

Since many of its natural predators have been killed off by tropical hunters, there could be an explosion in the number of starfish. And they can devour reefs even more efficiently than coral miners. (EEG/Panos Features) ●





## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



### Police Entries

*The main function of the Police is to maintain law and order and assist the public when they complain about what they think is a breach of the law. In some cases, the Police will attempt to bring about a settlement of the dispute, while in others (offences under the Penal Code) the Police will institute action in a Magistrate's Court or in a Primary Court where you will be summoned to give evidence as complainant. In certain matters the Police will advise you to file a civil suit. In order that the Police may perform these functions, it is necessary for you to go to the Police Station in your area and lodge an entry.*

Here is a list of events where you, as a law-abiding citizen, should make a complaint which will be recorded by a Police officer:

- 1) accident in which you are involved as a pedestrian, passenger, driver or travelling in a vehicle
- 2) loss of valuables from your home, or from your person (this includes loss of your identity card, passport or any other valuable document)
- 3) any murder, homicide, suicide witnessed by you
- 4) any hurt or damage caused to your person or property
- 5) termination of your employment in circumstances that you consider wrongful
- 6) departure of a person in your household and his/her failure to return home, and possible 'disappearance' abduction, kidnap etc.
- 7) matrimonial dispute when either you or your spouse leaves your marital home

There are many other events, but the above list will suffice for general legal knowledge which is what this column is about.

#### ● Procedure

Go to the Police Station and inform the officer at the Reception that you have come there to make a complaint. Wait for your turn if there are others who have come for a similar purpose. You may be asked to give the gist of your complaint before the officer decides to record it (to avoid having to record frivolous complaints). The entry will be recorded for you (you cannot record it yourself) in Sinhala (the only official language till recently) or in Tamil (if there is an officer conversant with that language). You have a right to have the recording done in your language, but English will be difficult in a country where only 5-6% use it. The most practical thing to do if you do not understand Sinhala is to go with one who does who will be your interpreter. After your statement is recorded, you will be able to read it or have it read to you and you will sign it at the end of the last line of the record.

The date, time, page no., para no., name and rank (with the no. in the case of constables and sergeants) will be given to you on request so that you could ask for a certified extract from the Information Book for any further purpose such as a civil action (in a District Court) or Labour Courts application. You will have to provide a Rs.10/= stamp and a small copying charge when you call subsequently to get the extract.

CSR Attorney-at-Law



## UTILISATION OF LAND RESOURCES ...

# Present Pattern of Land Use and Policy Planning

S. Berugoda

Director, Land Use Policy Planning Division, Ministry of Lands, Irrigation and Mahaweli Development

Paper presented at the Symposium on Land and Land Use in Sri Lanka, AT THE CSR

"Land is the source of all material wealth. From it we get everything that we use on value, whether it be food, clothing, fuel, shelter, metal, or precious stones. We live on the land and from the land, and to the land our bodies or our ashes are committed when we die. The availability of land is the key to human existence, and its distribution and use are of vital importance".

Thus to a great extent, the quality of life of man will depend on the degree of efficiency with which the available land is utilized by him. The need for efficient use of land will be felt more as the land/man ratio decreases. In Sri Lanka, the land/man ratio has decreased over the years as given in Table 1.

*Sri Lanka is caught up in a major struggle to control land use problems created by its violent population expansion*

Table 1 - Land/man ratio Sri Lanka 1830-2001

Total land area : 65,000 sq.km.  
(6.5 million Hectares)

Year	Population	Land/man ratio
1830	962,155	6.83 Hectares
1901	3,565,954	1.84 "
1950	7,647,000	0.86 "
1981	15,012,610	0.44 "
2001	21,073,685	0.31 " (Projected)

The efficient use of land involves the utilization of land on the basis of sustainable development taking into account the needs of the future generations.

The present land use, land holding and ownership patterns are illustrated in Tables 2,3,4.

A consideration of the terrain of the land will indicate that the area of land over 1500 metres (m) above mean sea level (MSL) amounts to about 75,000

hectares. A considerable area of land between the elevations of 1500 m -2000 m in the Nuwara Eliya District is already being used for various forms of agriculture.

The following are some of the deductions that can be made from a study of the above patterns.

(a) The major land holder of the country is the state.

(The lands under private ownership are mostly within the densely populated south western sector of the country. These lands are subject to various forms of tenurial problems such as co-ownership in uneconomic units).

(b) Out of the area under agricultural holdings, nearly 20% form estates under the control of the state.

(c) 72% of the area under agricultural holdings is in the small holding sector.

(d) 59% of the area under the small holdings sector are lands alienated by the state and hence can be subjected to suitable land use control without difficulty. (However this facility appears to get reduced with the issue of Swamabhoomi Grants under the Land Development Ordinance).

(e) The balance 41% of the area under the small holdings sector will be subject to various constraints in different degrees in implementing land use plans due to the tenurial problems mentioned above.

### ● Concepts guide activities

Sri Lanka's position in land use management has been stated in the following words:

"Ceylon is a good example of a tropical country with almost every advantage for good land - use management. There are well developed technical services based on an advanced educational system, ... a highly developed cash crop industry, ... great reserves of uninhabited land...with good overall water resources ... yet, inspite of all these advantages, Ceylon is caught up in a major struggle to control land use problems created by its violent population expansion."

Therefore there is a need for the co-ordination of the several activities pertaining to land use planning being handled by several institutions at present. The Land Use Policy Planning Division of the Ministry of lands,



## STATISTICAL DATA ON LAND

Table 2 - Status Land Use in Sri Lanka 1988

				%
Forest cover	-	1.6 million Hectares	- -	24
Wild life reserves	-	0.7 " "	-	11
Chena cultivation	-	1.0 " "	-	15
Highland annual crops	-	0.1 " "	-	2
Grassland and scrub	-	0.5 " "	-	8
Water bodies, ) swamp, marsh )	-	0.2 " "	-	4
Tea, rubber, coconut	-	1.0 " "	-	15
Paddy	-	0.8 " "	-	12

Table 3 - Land holding pattern - Small holdings sector

Category	Number	Area in Ha	%	Area in ha per Unit
(a) Home gardens	1,333,070	358,829	25.3	0.3
(b) Other high lands owned by operators	621,180	542,098	32.4	0.9
(c) Other high lands owned by others	155,730	114,878	8.1	0.7
(d) Paddy lands owned by operators	534,130	555,089	25.0	0.7
(e) Paddy lands owned by others	265,150	129,679	9.2	0.5
(f) Unspecified	5,290	711	-	0.1

Table 4 - Land holding pattern - Estates sector

Type of management	Number of estates	%	Area in Ha	%	Area in Ha per Unit
1. Total	9291	100	540,663	100	58
2. Private - Total	7349	79	168,644	31	23
Private - individual	5469	59	91,163	17	17
Private - company	1880	20	77,482	14	41
3. Government - Total	1942	21	372,019	69	192
S.P.C.	646	7	153,712	28	238
J.E.D.B.	483	5	127,857	24	265
L.R.C.	369	4	20,235	4	55
Others	444	5	70,215	13	158

Irrigation and Mahaweli Development (LUPPD) has been created for the purpose of achieving that degree of coordination & for promoting & carrying out scientific land use planning.

The concepts that guide the activities of this Division have been formulated after a series of studies. These concepts can be spelt out in the following words:

That the resources of the natural environment must be seen to belong ultimately to the whole nation and must be devoted to the national welfare;

That there is an obligation on the social democratic state to erect an institutional structure by virtue of which such resources may be located, evaluated, conserved and distributed so that they may be utilized on a sustainable basis and to the greatest national advantage.

That, as land provides the conceptual and operational plane of contact between nation and environmental resources, this institutional structure should be framed in terms of land policy and land use planning;

That land policy and planning should be rooted in scientific knowledge of bio-physical processes and in a deep understanding of economic progress and of socio-political change;

That they should be supported by reliable, qualitative and quantitative data;

That they should have a positive development orientation and that they should be comprehensive and closely integrated, but sufficiently flexible to permit and promote the operation of state, corporate and private sectors in a mixed economy;

That the objective must be that the nation should learn to live in productive equilibrium with natural resources;

That access to resources should be widely and equitably distributed ; and

That basic needs should be safeguarded for all citizens.

### ● Future plans

The activities of the Presidential Task Force on Land Utilization and Redistribution envisaged distribution of a large extent of land which was - at the disposal of the state. The LUPPD provided certain guide lines for the identification of land for redistribution. It has been found that towards the end of the year 1990, all available land had been identified for redistribution.

Assuming that all land needs of the population as at end 1990 had been met by this exercise, an attempt

was made to study the sufficiency of the balance available land to meet the basic needs of the increasing population during the period 1991-2001. Only two basic needs (viz. housing and agriculture) were taken into account. The land needs were worked out assuming that the present ratio of employment in the agricultural sector and the present model of land needs for housing would continue. A study shows that the present models of employment and housing have to change in view of the anticipated shortage of land. Some of the solutions to remedy this situation will be diverting a higher percentage of the labour force on employment outside agriculture and promoting housing in forms other than detached housing units.

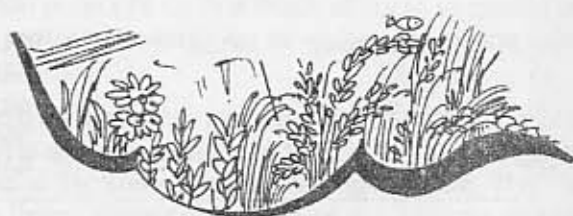
It may also be necessary to increase the output from the present extent of land devoted to agriculture without overlooking the need for introducing development on a sustainable basis. Introduction of registration of title to lands is expected to help in this process by providing state guaranteed title and thereby increasing credit - worthiness of such land. A further aspect that would need consideration in this respect is the introduction of procedures for land consolidation (ie. rearrangement of properties) where necessary.

One of the very important decisions to be taken from a conservation point of view will be on the locations for forest cover. This forms one of the recommendations of the 1985 Land Commission. Apart from identifying the land required for the preservation of the sources and courses of streams and canals, it will be necessary to leave steep land (eg. those over 60% slope) permanently under forestry.

The development of the infrastructure to support the planned land uses will form an integral part of the land use planning and implementation process.

It will also be necessary to provide supporting legislation to ensure co-ordination of this activity. Draft Action Plan of the National Conservation Strategy envisages such a procedure.

The above are only a few of the aspects that will have to be considered in formulating land use plans to support development. The LUPPD will be following this activity as an exercise in integrated planning by multi-disciplinary teams working at different levels and encouraging popular participation at each level. ●





## WOMEN'S FRONT

# Relative social status of women in the East and West



*THE PRESENT UPSURGE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IS NOT CONFINED TO A REGION OR HEMISPHERE BUT AN UNIVERSAL CHALLENGE WHICH REMAINS TO BE MET*



Behind each woman in power was a powerful man or an influential political dynasty. In their election campaigns, Aquino and Chamorro constantly reminded voters that they were carrying on the work of their deceased husbands. Aquino is the widow of Benigno Aquino Jr., Ferdinand Marcos' most bitter rival, who was assassinated in August 1983; Chamorro is the widow of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, the newspaper publisher whose murder in 1978 led to the downfall of the brutal Anastasio Somoza regime. During her 1988 election campaign, Bhutto never ceased alluding to the legacy of her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was executed in 1979 by the military government she was then fighting to succeed. She titled her autobiography *Daughter of Destiny*. Ousted in a constitutional coup in August, Bhutto lost a subsequent election, even though she tried to rally her followers to the banner of her descent.

Political succession by pedigree, however, by no means precludes women from brilliantly exercising power. For most of history, it was the only path by

which women could come to rule. The pattern is not alien to the West, where potentates of genius included daughters of kings, such as Elizabeth I of England; their widows, such as Catherine the Great of Russia; and their mothers, such as Eleanor of Aquitaine.

In the 20th century, the most successful female dynast has been Indira Gandhi of India, daughter of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Over a span of 16 years, Gandhi proved herself the most formidable

Prime Minister India has ever had, masterly melding the charisma of her family with the subcontinent's rich religious images of motherhood and successfully passing her office to her son Rajiv. Six years after her assassination, she is still idolized. Says Sudhir Kakar, an Indian psychoanalyst: "She is looked upon as the sacrificing mother of the joint family." Born to privilege, Gandhi believed she was born to rule as well. She once quoted Robert Frost to Rajiv: "How hard it is to keep from being king, when it's in you and in the situation."

Though they have yet to match Gandhi's political acumen, Aquino, Chamorro and Bhutto share with the late Indian Prime Minister the same aristocratic sense of destiny. No other politicians - certainly no men - were capable of leading their countries at the time of their ascendancy. Aquino and Chamorro united quarrelsome opposition groups. Only Bhutto had the charisma to overcome the puritanical appeal of Mohammed Zia ul-Haq's Islamic regime. But winning was the easy part. Ruling has proved problematic. ●

## ISRAEL - Agony of the Agunot

They live in a marital limbo, separated from husbands - sometimes for decades - but unable to divorce. According to Jewish religious law, which binds Israeli Jews, a wife may not be granted a divorce without her husband's consent. At least 10,000 Israeli women, known as the Agunot (the anchored) have husbands who are unwilling to give that permission. Says Ora Sasson, who has been trying to get a divorce for eight years: "I don't know where I stand. I'm not married. I'm not a widow."

Earlier this year relief seemed near after Agunot protesters made their voices heard at demonstrations. In response, Zevulun Hammer, the Minister of Religious Affairs, proposed that recalcitrant husbands be threatened with suspension of such rights as cashing checks and holding a driver's license. But Hammer left office in June, and since then the small ultra-Orthodox parties whose leaders oppose change have faced little challenge from politicians on this issue.

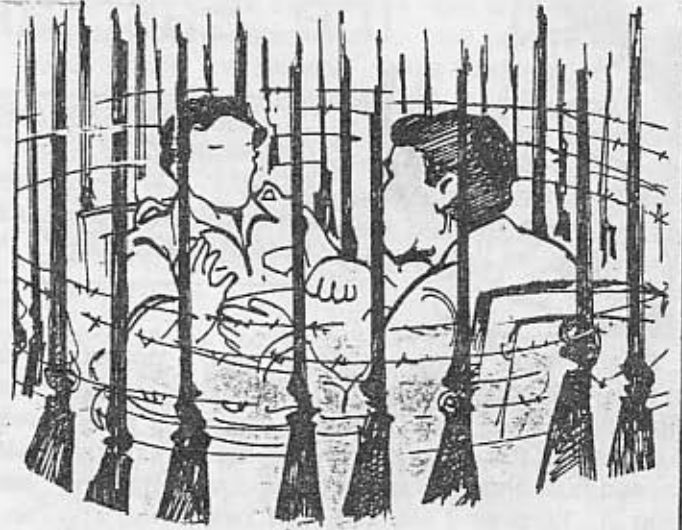
The nation's feminists still hope to end the suffering of the Agunot. Alice Shalvi, chair-woman of the Israel Women's Network, wants to strengthen the civil courts by giving them the power to threaten husbands with financial penalties and even arrest them if they refuse to release their wives from broken marriages. In Israel's volatile political climate, that seemingly sane proposal stands little chance of success.

## Native Prospect

Is this your gift, O imperial Powers -  
 Is this a laboured century's legacy?  
 What dark horizons now beckons in all  
 Who dimmed our lights to follow yours?  
 Is this the end or just another turning?  
 Or just the way held out to "simple men ...  
 Half devil and half child"?

We are the garish ghosts of those gone before us  
 Cold ghosts, painted ghosts—the pots of paint  
 You sold us for our birthright  
 Have made us tuppence coloured. Yes we are  
 The motley pantomime to humour both the peasant  
 The unchanging peasant, and the spirits of our dead.

Now we know how wheels go round  
 The engines hoot, the income tax and wages  
 The exchange rate, the market price  
 Your old waltz and your latest vice  
 For we like you, have had our fill  
 Of the tree that nurtures world-wise sages  
 The Tree  
 Of the knowledge  
 of Good  
 And Evil.



Let's have a Conference!  
 The Garish Ghosts and Hollow Men.  
 May the spirit of Aquinas and the Buddha  
 Brood over our deliberations!  
 Come Pragmatist, Logical Positivist  
 Humanist, Evolutionist, Existentalect  
 Come Marxists, wise as serpents

Here we go round the great big Tree  
 Under whose shade we all came "free"  
 But then some fool  
 Let fall  
 The Bomb!

G.I.O.M. Kurukulasuriya

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