

RACISM AMONG ADULTS — *Jan Pittman*



LANKA

# GUARDIAN

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BEHIND THE BHANDARI VISIT

## RAJIV GANDHI — GETTING TO KNOW THE NEIGHBOURS

— *Mervyn de Silva*



## Why we needed a general election

— *Wiswa Warnapala*

## The 'New Society' — *Alexander R. Magno*

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*Nihal Jayawickrama*

—

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## MUSLIM CONCERN

SPECULATIVE reports in political circles about a fresh demarcation of districts involving the eastern province, have caused such anxiety among both Tamil and Moslem members of the UNP that a top Tamil UNP'er summoned a meeting which was attended by nearly a dozen prominent party members, including two front-rank personalities.

Demographic change which is the essence of the new settlement plan in the north is also the motivating force behind the concept of enlarged districts — Horawapota, Padaviya etc. are some of the names bandied about in lobby circles. In part, the settlement plan draws inspiration from General Templar's scheme in pre-independence Malaya and in part from the highly controversial Israeli project in the West Bank. In both cases, the demographic changes had a 'counter-insurgency' or strategic component.

The main objective is to undermine the theory of "Traditional homelands" and to isolate the Jaffna peninsula.

In a not unconnected move, some influential Muslims who have no formal party affiliations have banded together in a new organisation loosely called a 'Council of Elders'. This is a manifestation of two problems that have begun to worry the Muslim intelligentsia — that the Muslim community is not caught in the Sinhala-Tamil crunch and secondly that the total identification of Muslim politics with the UNP may be counter-productive. The Council plans to send a five-member delegation to Madras to discuss possible solutions to the ethnic conflict. The delegation has already met Government and Opposition leaders. Interestingly, it recommends provincial councils as a unit of devolution.

## RESURGENT SENAYAKISM ?

THE prolonged unrest in the university campuses and the high schools, the burst of violence in the heart of Colombo on Women's

Day, and the defiant bank employees' "go slow" campaign had a distinct air of *deja vu*, — the end-of-term exhaustion of the SLFP in 1976-77, dramatised by the events after the Peradeniya campus disturbances.

Even more significant perhaps is the in-gathering of UNP dissidents, a trend discernible after the Panditaratne and Mathew 'affaires'. Though only a nominee, Mr. Panditaratne was after all the UNP Chairman. In Mr. Mathew's case, he was not merely a senior Minister but the JSS boss.

The newly formed Mahajana Sabha leadership has ex-Chief Justice Mr. Neville Samarakoon, (a UNP nominee to that high office and the sole "outsider" to hold the post), ex-UNP MP Dr. Neville Fernando and ex-UNP MP Mr. Rukman Senanayake and many other dissidents. The name of the organisation (a title borrowed from Mr. F. R. Senanayake's Mahajana Sabha) the place in which the inaugural meeting took place ("Woodlands") and the personalities present (Mr. A. C. Gooneratne QC, for instance) combine to give the new body a sharper political meaning. It is a revival of Senanayake-ism in broadly pro-UNP opinion-making groups in Sri Lanka.

## TRENDS + LETTERS

### Socialism Overnight

It is refreshing to read the piece on 'Race, Conflict and power' by Ms Radhika Coomaraswamy in your issue of 1st February. It is rich in insight. But her vibrant inner thoughts are too elusive (or is it exclusive?) for the average reader of the L. G. to grasp.

She would have made a better job of her homework if she had taken up continuous residence for a minimum of six months in her homeground before she leapt into the cauldron of ethnic debate which is a lot more complicated than it looks. Jaffna has undergone a seachange during the past few months — quite unwittingly the Govt has introduced socialism almost overnight by a Gazette notification and strangely enough, the people are accepting it with a well-bred whisper. Even the Kachcheri is no longer a revenue collecting agency as it used to be during the time when her grandfather C. Coomaraswamy was Govt Agent in the late thirties. The G. A., apart from being a fence-mender now acts like a wet nurse to wailing mothers grappling with the emotional tumult and practical tensions resulting from the detention of the youths

(Continued on page 2)

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## Letter. . .

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in Boosa. If Ms Coomaraswamy cares to visit the Jaffna Kachcheri, she would catch a glimpse of her grandfather in the portrait gallery looking disconsolate that the institution that he adorned once is now in shambles.

The social composition of the Tamils that she speaks of has vanished into thin air and the entire fabric of the Tamil society is torn asunder and is no longer reckoned as part of received wisdom. There is a kind of intellectual autonomy among the Tamils and they have opened their eyes to the realistic situation. It has produced anger and angry young men and women. But life goes on in Jaffna and Jaffna runs by itself. The moment of truth is yet to come. The need of the hour is a political will to evolve a package deal to reconcile apparently irreconcilable positions.

**Ms Damini Balasingham**  
Chundikuli

## LETTER FROM MANILA

**U. Karunatilake**

Let the traffic lap and murmur  
Toss to the Japanese conch blast  
There is silence beneath the blue sky  
Stark on the rumbling edge of thunder

Hush to the rustle of bodies in the tall grass  
The green armies closing their ranks  
Moving up with the mellow fruit falls  
Of this Phillipine summer.

Will they garner without rape  
Possess the white, writhing concrete limbs  
Bring grace to the naked city?

In the warm, tossed bed of Summers Consummation  
Across the flamed cheeks of fire tree buds;  
Blue fire and bird flight  
Vapour trails the hot silence  
Even F-sixteens cannot break.

**BARGAIN !**

**BARGAIN !!**

**BARGAIN !!!**

## RECENT POLITICS — THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND THE REFERENDUM — 1982

*by Prof. Wiswa Warnapala and Dr. L. Dias Hewagama*

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# Sri Lanka and Mr Gandhi's 'good neighbour' approach

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

**T**he Prime Minister of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi spoke of the "severe strain on us" when he referred to the Sri Lankan Tamil refugee problem in answering one of several questions put to him by this writer. "Fifteen thousand in one month alone, and this is over and above the 50,000 who have been here since July 1983" he said. While the Sri Lankan government is locked in an argument over the use of this term 'refugee', what is relevant right now is the emphasis that the Indian premier placed on this question.

Mr. Gandhi's rising concern goes beyond the humanitarian and the economic. It is political, and the politics has much to do with Centre-State relations in India. Mr. Gandhi's new approach to particular State issues, which were explosive in Mrs. Gandhi's time and are still simmering, and the severe setbacks suffered by the ruling Congress at the State elections in mid-March, especially in the South, Mr. Gandhi's policy is far more accommodative than his predecessor's as his new overtures to the Akali leaders in Punjab demonstrates.

The Congress party's reverses were all the more striking in the background of the massive mandate the party, under its new leader, won only two months earlier. Tamilnadu did not go to the polls for State Assembly seats. And at the parliamentary election, the Tamilnadu ally of the Congress, MGR's AIDMK swept the polls. Between the AIDMK and the Congress, the chief local rival, the DMK was given a drubbing. Yet the DMK did muster about 30% of the votes — a figure whose significance is hidden by the fact that it won

so few seats. MGR is seriously ill, and the opposition DMK is now on the propagandist offensive. One of the issues on which it is making great propagandist mileage is the Sri Lankan Tamil problem, and the connected issues of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka and the highly publicised protests of Tamilnadu fishermen. (See **Refugees and Fishermen**)

"Concentrate on the neighbourhood" the Indian premier is reported to have instructed Mr. Romesh Bhandari when he gave the latter the key post of Foreign Secretary. Indian foreign policy planners and analysts no longer regard India's relations with its near neighbours (the SARC 7) as "foreign policy" in the way they approach India's relations with China or South East Asia.

As ex-Foreign Secretary Jagath Mehta told us at a recent United Nations Univ. sponsored seminar on South Asia, "India's relations with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal have 'an extra-internal dimension'". This dimension rests on the facts of history — migrations and ethnic overflows from India, partition, the break-up of Pakistan etc. The problem of Punjab is also the problem of Pakistan, and the same connection holds for Sri Lanka and Tamilnadu. American scholars would call these problem inter-mestic — they stand at the interface of the international and the domestic.

"We have repeatedly said that we do not favour or support Tamil separatists and there is no question of Tamil extremists being given shelter or training on Indian soil" was Mr. Gandhi's reply to my question about the "contradiction"

between India's position on Sikh extremists based abroad, and Delhi's response to the Sri Lanka government's appeals for "control" over expatriate Tamil groups operating from Madras. "No comparison" replied Mr. Gandhi, alluding to the Punjab-Sri Lanka parallel.

Another of Mr. Gandhi's replies aroused much interest and speculation in political and diplomatic circles here. He said:

**"We have urged restraint so that there is a de-escalation of tension and violence in Sri Lanka".** Restraint on whom? Sri Lanka or the Tamil rebels or both?" asked a western diplomat, remarking on the careful phrasing of the answer.

There has been no major rebel offensive in recent weeks. The raid on the Madawachchiya police station was certainly significant but it was not a military operation of any serious magnitude. No policemen were killed. Surely a warning to Colombo about its new settlement plan on so-called border areas. "We must occupy the border before the border comes to us" said President Jayewardene in his address to parliament. And Madawachchiya is the northernmost 100% Sinhalese town in the NCP.

Diplomatic observers have taken note of the lower level of violence. Could it be that 'restraint' has in fact been imposed on the Madras-based groups, even if this cannot be publicly stated or discussed given Delhi's official position on "training camps and bases".

"If this is Delhi's signal to Colombo and Colombo responds,

(Continued on page 4)

# Delhi helping to search for an enduring settlement

G. K. Reddy

## NEW DELHI

THE Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Khurshed Alam Khan, told Parliament today that the Government of India was in touch with the Sri Lankan Government exploring "all possibilities that would defuse the situation and facilitate an enduring settlement" of the Tamil problem.

"As the nature of our on-going discussions is confidential" the Minister said I cannot divulge any details at this moment. "He, however, assured that at the appropriate time Parliament would be taken into confidence about the outcome of these efforts.

## Sri Lanka . . .

(Continued from page 3)

things can start moving again said a high-ranking U. S. analyst. The Sri Lanka government's case is that Sinhala opinion has been so hardened that any new initiative on the political front can be made only when Sinhalese opinion-forming groups perceive an improvement in the military situation — the situation in the North. For its part, India which was utterly disappointed and dismayed by the collapse of the APC, itself an Indian initiative partly, needs a far firmer commitment from Colombo on the resumption of talks, and a negotiated agreement based on 'genuine devolution'.

Besides trying to create a better climate of feeling and de-fusing tensions, Mr. Bhandari's real task was to explore the possibilities of knitting the ideas together. In short a mutually assured exercise (an exchange of guarantees between Colombo and Delhi) which can be conducted **simultaneously** (the political-military) in order to make advances on both these inter-connected and inter-acting "fronts".

**Several suggestions:** In a carefully-worded statement he made in both the Houses, Mr. Khan disclosed that during the recent visit to Delhi by the Sri Lankan Minister for National Security, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, "a number of suggestions" had been made by both sides which, he stressed, had to be viewed in the "totality of the situation prevailing in Sri Lanka and its fall out on us." In conveying to the Sri Lankan Government India's readiness to help in any appropriate way if it so desired, the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, had emphasised during his talks with Mr. Athulathmudali that ultimately the Sri Lanka Government itself would have to find a political solution to the island's ethnic problem.

## Recriminations will not help:

The Minister said: "While the situation in Sri Lanka continues to be unstable it would be unwise to enter into an exchange of recriminations. All parties need to consider the problem in a constructive and sympathetic spirit. We continue to believe that only a political solution within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, acceptable to all concerned, can resolve the ethnic problem".

The statement came very close to deploring the insurgency of the Tamil Tigers in saying that "violence, from whatever sources is not the answer" to the present tragic situation, while condemning the Sri Lanka Army excesses that were leading to the exodus of refugees by creating a tense situation. A very large number of refugees had left Sri Lanka over the last month and more than 15,000 arrived in India over the 50,000 who had fled to this country after the July, 1983 carnage.

**Strain on India:** This influx of refugees had placed a severe strain on the Tamil Nadu and Central Governments which had to provide temporary shelter and food to them. The Government of India had, therefore been asking the Sri Lanka Government to stop Army excesses, and create appropriate condition not to only dissuade the Tamils from leaving the island but also enable those who have already left to return to their homes in honour and safety to resume their peaceful.

The Minister referred to the incidents in the Palk Strait in the last few months in which Indian fishermen had been killed, injured or arrested by Sri Lankan naval patrol boats. In conveying its concern to Sri Lanka in the "strongest possible terms" India had also sought compensation for the loss of lives and property.

## Full protection to fishermen:

He said: "Full protection is being provided to our fishermen inside our own maritime zone and Coast Guard and naval patrolling has been intensified. Since last month additional air surveillance has been introduced."

The Minister made this statement on the Sri Lankan situation, since many members in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have been pressing for a discussion through calling attention motions or regular debates to voice their grave concern over the plight of the Tamil population. The Government did not want to say anything more on the subject while diplomatic efforts were in progress to bring about a resumption of negotiations

**DMK members walk out:** The two DMK members in the Lok Sabha, Dr. A. Kalanidhi and Mr. N. V. N. Somu, walked out in protest expressing their disappointment over the statement. But in the Rajya Sabha the rules of procedure entitled members to voice their strong feelings over what was happening in Sri Lanka in the form of questions seeking clarifications of what had been said in the statement by the Government.

— THE HINDU (March 16)

# Settlement to ensure peace and justice called for

MADRAS

The former Union Minister, Mr C. Subramaniam, and 16 other prominent citizens of Tamil Nadu have urged the Government and the political groups in Sri Lanka to get together immediately and work earnestly for a negotiated settlement that would ensure peace and justice.

Sounding a note of warning that unless handled firmly and promptly the ethnic conflict would destroy democracy and the civilised way of life in the island and in the neighbouring countries, they expressed the view the only rational and enduring solution was a political structure ensuring genuine regional autonomy

for the Northern and Eastern districts and equal rights and opportunities for all citizens of Sri Lanka.

The signatories to the joint appeal include Mr. M. M. Ismail, former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, Mr. M. Bhaktavatsalam, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. C. R. Pattabhiraman, former Union Minister, Mr. P. S. Kailasam, former Judge of the Supreme Court, Dr. Malcolm Audiseshiah, former Deputy Director-General of UNESCO Mr. M. P. Sivagnanam Chairman of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Council and Messrs. M. A. M. Ramaswami, M. V. Arunachalam and S. Narayanaswami, industrialists.

The appeal stated "We Indian citizens, endorse whole-heartedly the appeal by numerous Sri Lanka citizens for a peaceful and just solution of the Tamils problem in the island."

—HINDU (March)

INDIAN PRESS

## REFUGEES AND FISHERMEN

Some other office-bearers of the association joined the discussion later. They were even more militant and aggressive. Extremists in the association see military intervention as the only solution to the Sri Lanka issue. They think the chastisement of Sri Lanka using the military might of India is the only way the fisherfolk of Rameswaram can avoid being starved to death. The moderates say: "All we want is the restoration of our fishing rights. No navy, be it Indian or Sri Lankan, should be there in the Palk Strait."

That the fishermen want a quick solution to the problem is understandable. It is their lives and livelihood that are at stake. The fishing community has already lost five men in three separate shoot-outs.

— HERALD REVIEW

The latest wave started last month after the military crack-down, and the first boats hit Rameswaram in the pre-dawn hours of February 5, having been in the water a good nine hours. That day, five families of 21 people landed. The exodus peaked four days later on February 9 when, according to official figures. 363 people

landed at different points on the Rameswaram-Dhanushkodi coast. Averaging around 300 to 400 a day last fortnight, the final tally had crossed more than 12,000 a month after the exodus started.

Tamil leaders have been warning of "another Bangladesh" and by last fortnight with the influx of refugees from Sri Lanka into coastal Tamil Nadu crossing the 50,000 mark, their words carried a prophetic ring. Over 12,000 refugees have made the hazardous crossing since early February to a new and uncertain beginning having lost their livelihood and abandoned their home.

Added to this Ramnathapuram is one of the most backward, impoverished and chronically drought-affected areas in a state where the monthly per capita income is as low as Rs 114. It is in these conditions that the Center is maintaining thousands of refugees at a total of Rs 1,100 per family. Since the refugees unlike repatriates cannot be given jobs and absorbed into the national main-stream, they will have to depend on the Government's charity.

— (INDIA TODAY)

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# General Election — a legitimate demand

Wiswa Warnapala

**M**rs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's politically legitimate call for a general election has now created a stir in the minds of the rulers and their acolytes who do not wish to part with the political and economic privileges with they have been enjoying in the name of democracy, the correct description of which is 'facade democracy'. Facade democracy, according to a leading political scientist, S. E. Finer, is a system where liberal democratic institutions, processes and safeguards are established by law but are in practice so manipulated or violated by an oligarchy with the sole purpose of staying in office. In this kind of political system, the structure of government, for a time, is superseded by an ambitious individual autocratic ruler who prefers to use all methods and tactics of political manipulation to perpetuate himself in power. A close examination of the political manipulations and constitutional innovations imposed on the political community of Sri Lanka in the last seven years, demonstrate the extent to which political institutions and structures have been made subservient to a 'super-boss', on whom the system, irrespective of the existence of such aspects of parliamentary democracy as a representative assembly, franchise and liberties, is made dependent. In my view, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's call for a general election is a plea for the restoration of democracy, and the way representative government eroded in this country, therefore, needs to be examined to provide both strength and legitimisation to Mrs. Bandaranaike's call for general election. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, because of her formidable political personality, represents a major segment of the popular political currents of the country and her call for a general election, which

made certain politicians shiver in their boots, needs to be supported by all people who value democracy as a system of Government.

In modern conditions, we recognise the representative system as the best form of government where the people as a whole can be directly and efficiently involved. It is necessary to give the community a substantial right to be in charge of its own destiny, and it can be successfully achieved by the effective application of the concept of representation.

The mere outward manifestation of representative forms — like by-elections under the UNP Government is not enough; there must be some acceptable reality behind them and it must conform to all the accepted norms of democratic practice. The argument is that representative system, in spite of the weaknesses and deficiencies that arise as a result of the cultural factors in a given country, needs to be made truly representative. In this context, the question needs to be asked whether there is any justification for allowing ourselves to be dominated by a handful of people who have somehow acquired political powers to order us on matters over which people have not expressed their judgement — for instance, the privatisation of University education in Sri Lanka by this Government which caters to the educational needs of the privileged — and to enforce their decisions on the entire community. There things, apart from their relationship to the perpetuation of themselves in power, have been successfully related to the mandate which this Government obtained in 1977, and further justification for the decision of the Government is obtained stating that this mandate of theirs was renewed in 1982. President Jayewardena recognising by-elections

as indicators of national opinion, reiterates this viewpoint to add further credibility to the concept of the mandate. It is to this dubious argument which relates to the current relevance of the mandate that we need to address our minds to prove beyond that this mandate has no meaning in the current political situation in the country. The argument that the 1977 mandate had been renewed in 1982 is not now tenable as the referendum, which the Government substituted for a general election, was a massive political fraud perpetuated on the masses of this country. The Opposition and all the leading pressure groups opposed this referendum and the low poll which it registered at the referendum, was an indication that it produced an erosion of the mandate obtained in 1977. On the basis of this argument, which cannot be amplified here, the present Parliament has no popular basis for its continued existence. A number of constitutional and political factors could be attributed to prove my thesis that the existing Parliament has no popular basis for its continuation; this, theoretically, could be linked to the concept of popular sovereignty. The validity of the referendum, as the basis of the extension of life of Parliament, came to be doubted by the UNP leadership which, by way of an amendment to the Constitution, recognised the need to conduct by-elections in a selected number of constituencies.

What was the necessity of this strategy? Though it was stated that the purpose was to re-constitute the parliamentary group, the hidden motive was to restore popular confidence which was eroded at the referendum. The method followed in the selection of the electorates was totally undemocratic; the electorates of powerful individuals were not brought inside the sample and

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the scheme was guided primarily by opportunistic considerations, one being the anticipation of a divided opposition at the by-election. Ronnie de Mel, who is now opposing a general election, was given a 'political transfer' from Devinuwara to Bulathsinhala. Such instances show that the post-referendum by-election scheme was devised with a view to deceiving the masses who opposed the extension of the life of Parliament. To say that these eighteen by-elections represented a further renewal of their mandate is political deception of the worst type; the 18 electorates represented only 10 percent of the total electorate and it, therefore, could not be an indicator of the popular thinking of the electorate. Into this analysis of erosion of the representative basis of the present Parliament, we need to add the number of 'chit MPs', whose presence in Parliament show no relationship to the mass feelings in the respective electorates. The UNP Government of President Jayewardena, surpassing any Government in any part of the world, has made provision for the appointment of 'chit MPs' in place of the elected MP who either vacated, resigned or died, and 20 such appointments were made by the Government Party. The appointment of MPs, without any reference to the particular electorate, has brought about a further erosion of the popular foundation of this Parliament which, by way of another constitutional amendment, virtually expelled the MPs belonging to the TULF. The functioning Parliament, therefore, is an under-represented Parliament because nearly 37 Members of Parliament have not been elected by the people. This, in itself, is an argument for a dissolution of Parliament, and the reason for its existence is not electoral but manipulative politics.

Yet another fundamental factor which conflicts with the basis of representation of the existing Parliament is the PR scheme which has been written into the Constitution. Parliament, as it exists, has not been elected on the basis of the constitutionally-recognised scheme of proportional representation and three forms have been adopted to elect the representa-

tives who constitute the present Parliament. They are the General Election of 1977, appointment by the respective political parties and by-elections in certain chosen electorates these three forms, despite their relationships to constitutional manipulations, have diluted the basis of representation in the country, resulting in a further devaluation of Parliament. The transitional provisions in the Constitution relating to these matters have been utilised to justify the adoption of these methods; the primary objective, however, is to preserve the two-thirds majority which the UNP obtained in 1977. This, in a way, is similar to the mixed systems of representation evolved in Germany in 1946. This form of dilution of the basis of representation has interfered with the proper use of the franchise. Any form of representation proves satisfactory in practice only if it takes into consideration the nature of the changing composition of the electorate. In other words, the nature of the electorate has changed since the 1977 election, and the new voters, who received registration as voters, have not been given an opportunity to elect their representatives at a national general election. How can, therefore, this Parliament be said to be representative? Does it not mean that this Government has imposed a limitation on the franchise? As a result, the young voters have been prevented from participating in the electoral process and this means that according to the composition of the electorate an important segment of the voting community have been deprived of their basic right to exercise the franchise. The same argument applies to political parties which after their formation and recognition have not been afforded an opportunity to contest at a national general election.

Linked with the same argument is the changing pattern of electoral geography in the country. The introduction of the PR scheme brought about this change in the electoral arrangement, and the district, instead of the parliamentary constituency, has been made the main electoral unit. The electoral districts, as far as possible

and practicable, has been made co-extensive with the administrative districts in the country, and this change is certain to affect both electoral behaviour and electoral psychology. The numerical equality in the size of the electorates cannot be achieved in this set up and it, therefore, needs to be given a test. The Department of Elections which has a special place under the Constitution, cannot claim that it has played a fair role in the past few years. The escalation of violence, intimidation and thuggery has now become a common phenomenon at by-elections and the administration of elections in such situations is task which demands both impartiality and independence. The Sri Lankan election authorities have a lot to learn from the Indian Election Commission which, despite the size and complexities of the Indian electorate, has been doing a successful job worthy of the largest popular democracy. A general election, probably, will produce a new national political situation at which violence manifested at by-elections could not be enacted on a national scale. By-elections, which are held according to the whims and fancies of the President, are primarily opportunistic exercises which give the party in power the advantage of political manipulation.

As a person who has witnessed a couple of by-elections under the UNP Government, I condemn the whole process of by-elections under the UNP Government as a total political farce enacted with a view to wasting the limited resources of the Opposition. In the period before 1982, by-elections were regarded as barometer of public opinion, which role has now been reduced to nothing. Even the limited and legitimate role of the Opposition at these by-elections was interfered with by the employment of thuggery and intimidation. In addition to the use of violence to terrorise the voters, the Government Party, using all resources, both party and official at their disposal, deployed Ministers, Deputy Ministers, District Ministers and MPs who storm the electorate in large numbers with all sorts of official

channels of power and influence. The presence of governmental power in such forms stifles the legitimate activities of the Opposition candidates. By-elections fought under such conditions do not express the popular will of the electorate and to quote such victories as a vindication of their policies is a dubious approach to politics.

The Opposition should demand a general election instead of by-elections, which, in my view, represent another aspect of the manipulative politics of the UNP Government. The main reason for such a demand is the fact that the present Government has lost 'the consent of the governed'. In other words, the elected must be prepared to relinquish power voluntarily and seek a fresh mandate from the electors when the rulers can no longer claim to possess the confidence of the majority in the country.

Edmund Burke held the view that Parliament was 'the image of the feelings of the nation'. This, however, is not a tenable argument in the context of modern conditions, especially because of the fact that representation seems to get distorted at elections. A number of examples has been already given to show the extent to which the representation in Sri Lanka Parliament has now been distorted. In my view, a new element entered into this process of distorting the representation by the handing over of the undated letters of resignation by the MPs to the President who, though he collected them as the head of the party, wanted them to rearrange the composition of the legislature. This act, which has no parallel in any parliamentary system, devalued Parliament and distorted the representational foundation from which Parliament derived power. The handing over of the undated resignation letters by MPs, in my view, virtually meant renunciation of their role as MPs. According to Mr. Cyril Mathew's letter tabled in Parliament, these letters of resignation have not been withdrawn; in one

of his letters addressed to the Secretary General of Parliament, Mr. Mathew says that he has withdrawn his letters of resignation. This is an anomaly unprecedented in the history of parliamentary government. Therefore one can say that this is a set of MPs who have voluntarily resigned from their seats in Parliament. Can we expect such a set of people to remain in power and continue to govern. This anomaly is sufficient in itself to demand a general election because such a set of MPs cannot create confidence in the masses. This more over demonstrates that this Parliament has no right to govern.

In any democratic system, a Government must attempt to have what is called 'balanced government', especially because of the need to guard against unwanted encroachments into the liberties of the people. In Sri Lanka, we witness a trend towards 'over-government', which, in fact, is the very opposite of 'balanced government'. People, if they are aware of its potential dangers, are sure to resent this phenomenon. Let us look at some of the aspects of over-government in Sri Lanka. The most important aspect of this trend is in the Ministerial hierarchy, which, in fact, contains three tiers. In Sri Lanka, there is a Cabinet of Ministers consisting of 26 Ministers; Non-Cabinet Ministers or the Project Ministers who number 4 are yet another category. There are 24 District Ministers and the Deputy Ministers number 38. This, in effect, means that 92 out of 141 hold some kind of ministerial office. In other words, 59 percent of the legislature — which consists of 168 members of Parliament — holds Ministerial office, and this is unprecedented in any parliamentary system. It also means that more than 64 percent of the UNP membership in Parliament some office. The UNP Government is therefore a government of Ministers, Deputy Ministers and District Ministers, and this, in effect, means that the legislative role of Parliament has been allowed to deteriorate. Parliament, as demonstrated in the University Amendment Bill, does not get an oppor-

tunity to examine legislation: sometimes standing orders are suspended to curb and curtail debate in the legislature and 'the urgency' clause is utilised to such legislation through Parliament. Only 46 MPs of the UNP Government Parliamentary Group do not hold office of some kind and the present Parliament, therefore, is a sizable burden on the taxpayers of this country.

It is at this stage that we must draw comparisons from other countries which have recognised the concept of the economy of government as a basic principle in the arrangement and distribution of Ministerial portfolios. The newly elected Indian Government is the best example. Rajiv Gandhi, who steers the largest parliamentary democracy in the world, formed a Cabinet consisting of 14 Ministers, 3 fewer than that of the Cabinet of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. There are 26 Ministers of State and the category of Deputy Ministers, was abolished. Today Rajiv Gandhi's Ministerial hierarchy consists of 40 Ministers who have been appointed on the basis of the following criteria — (1) efficiency, (2) integrity and (3) result-oriented performance. The criteria followed in the construction of the Sri Lankan ministerial hierarchy is perhaps the need to give jobs and status to the ordinary Members of Parliament whose blind loyalty is essential for the functioning of the facade democracy in Sri Lanka. The considerations of efficient and good government have not been taken into account. Yet another aspect of 'over-government' is seen in the structural changes in the apparatus of Government in the country. In this respect, I refer only to the examples in the area of defence. Proliferation, duplication and overlapping of functions are a remarkable phenomenon in this particular area of governmental activity. In addition to the Ministry of Defence, there are such Ministries as the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Internal Security, the Ministry of Home Guards, the Ministry of Emergency Civil Administration and the Ministry of Security of Commercial Establishments. Similar examples are available in other areas of governmental activity. This demon-

trates that the creation of Ministerial structures on an ad hoc basis shows no relationship to those principles that govern the distribution of governmental functions in a democracy. Such a trend towards 'over-government' results in the establishment of a 'controlled political system', from which dictatorial tendencies can emanate as genuine political development. In fact, a certain Minister had mentioned the need to 'card index' the nation, which means that they intend maintaining secret files on all the individuals. This in my view, is a highly suspicious Fascist tendency. This is the potential danger against which the political system has to fight in order to maintain the correct relationship between the individual and the State.

It is in this context that we need to examine the role of the Prime Minister who, instead of playing the legislative leadership role in the limited way accorded to him under the Constitution, is presently functioning as the propaganda chief of the Government Party. His capacity for public appearances is fantastic, and every 'official' function is now a 'political' function or a tamasha; the distinction between the two is indistinguishable. The 'propagandist' role of the Prime Minister, in my view, has further devalued the office of the Prime Minister who has no 'legislative leadership' role. The conversion of every 'official' function into a 'political' tamasha creates a bad example among the public bureaucracy, the politicisation of which such an environment is inevitable. The present holder of the office of the Prime Minister has shown an astonishing aptitude for political gimmickry; his latest being the move to take the Government to the village. This political gimmick, in my view, represents the admission of the failure of the Central Government; it is also an admission of the failure and inefficiency of the village level officials and the village institutions whose resuscitation he sought via the Gramodaya Mandalayas. Yet another explanation was the utter confusion within the local government institutions in the country. In short, there is a massive crisis within the administrative apparatus and this bodes no good for the vitality of the parliamentary

system. Only a general election can create the vitality and confidence in the administrative apparatus of the Government in the country.

People who oppose Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's call for a General Election have raised the issue of the extension of the life of Parliament elected in 1970, and their argument is that this extension was effected without reference to the people. The extension of the life of Parliament in 1972 and the extension made in 1982 are two different exercises enacted under different political conditions. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike has rightly pointed out in her reply to her critics that the extension of the life of Parliament in 1972 by two years was born out of a necessity that arose at the promulgation of the Constitution of 1972. The 1972 Constitution was enacted after nearly one and half years of debate in a specially constituted Constituent, and the period utilized for this purpose needed to be covered in order to complete the legislative programme of the Government. The insurgency of 1971 intervened and this too had an effect on both the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly and the legislative activity of Parliament. The 1978 Constitution, on the other hand, came to be enacted as a result of a Select Committee Report, which was debated in Parliament for a couple of days. On other hand, the 1972 extension of the life of parliament did not represent a total extension 'to cover the life span of a Government' whereas the extension of 1982, though based on a fraudulent referendum, was an attempt to extend the life of Parliament by another six years, thereby depriving the rights of the voters to elect their representative at periodical elections. This extension in 1982 cannot be justified by quoting the 1972 example which, in essence, was a constitutional requirement resulting from the enactment of the new Constitution.

The need to maintain 'political stability' to achieve accelerated economic development has been a major argument for the constitutional development in the last seven years. Lalith Athulathmudali, in the course of the campaign for the referendum in 1982, stated that a strong and

stable Government is necessary to combat terrorism. The record of the maintenance of political stability is deplorably poor, and the whole world knows that the Sri Lankan political system was as unstable as that of any other third world country. Instability, despite the special constitutional provision aimed at stability, was primarily due to the inability and incapacity of the leadership in power to maintain law and order in the country. It has deteriorated to such an extent that no citizen can freely move around the country and the 'identity card' has now become an internal passport.

The stability of a political system needs to be judged from the point of view of the ability of the regime in power to maintain law and order in the country. A Government, which lacks both the ability and capacity to maintain law and order and one which fails to provide security and protection to both lives and properties of the people, has no right to remain in power. Any attempt by such a regime to cling to power is a negation of the trust placed on them by the people. In the case of Sri Lanka, the present Government has shown its inability to establish the sovereign power of the State over one part of the country and this is a breach of the trust placed in the Government by the people. The argument of the Government against a General Election is that the situation in the country is that the districts in the North and East may not be able to return their representatives. The answer to this question is that the Parliament functioned in the last two years without the elected MPs of those areas. On other hand, the two provinces referred to above constitute less than 12 percent of the electorate. The view is that a General Election at a juncture like this can successfully transform the political situation, from which fresh initiatives towards a solution to the ethnic issue could emerge. It can transform the local political scene, the impact of which is certain to bring about a new international perspective on the ethnic crisis. The change in the political leadership can create a fresh situation

(Continued on page 16)

# Combatting ethnic prejudice and racism among adults

Jan Pittman

**M**uch has been said, and written, about prejudice and racism in schools. While more still needs to be done, there has been some progress. Textbooks have been examined, curriculum materials and strategies have been devised, and some concern has been expressed about relations in the playground, and conflicts between school and home.

Schools provide easy access to large numbers of students, in relatively controlled situations; and education authorities can issue directives or provide support for developing programs or materials. Education theory — and conventional wisdom — also suggests that children learn more easily; hence education initiatives aimed at reducing prejudice and racism tend to focus on schools.

Much less attention has been paid to combatting prejudice and racism among adults.<sup>1</sup> Yet we cannot ask schools to solve the problems of society for us. Indeed, what students are taught in schools will be shaped and subverted by what adults — including their teachers and parents — believe; and what the 'real world' teaches them about other people. Also the problems are pressing: even if schools strategies worked, we could not afford to stand by and wait until those students became adults. We need to tackle prejudice and racism where they are now — in the workplace, in pubs and clubs, in the media — already fouling our social relations and damaging many people.

We need to be by analysing prejudice and racism: both so we

can establish common understandings, to talk better with each other about them, and also to know more about them, to be able to take appropriate action against them.

For convenience, I identify four distinct but related aspects of racism:

1. **Prejudice:** negative attitudes towards people labelled as belonging to different racial or ethnic groups. This often takes the form of inaccurate or derogatory stereotypes about other groups.

2. **Discrimination:** behaviour which disadvantages people labelled as belonging to different racial or ethnic groups.

The distinction between prejudice and discrimination — belief and action — is not always clearcut, for most attitudes predispose us to act in certain ways; and the stereotypes we hold affect the expectations we have and the ways we respond to others.

Much of the discussion about racism has, until recently, focussed on prejudice and discrimination, on individual attitudes and behaviour, using socio-psychological explanations of prejudice, and therefore suggesting that the way to combat prejudice is to change the individual. Increasingly, lately, prejudice and discrimination are seen as symptoms of deeper social processes, explained in political and sociological terms. This adds two more dimensions to racism, this time on the social rather than individual level.

3. **Ideology:** social myths about other racial and ethnic groups. Racism as an ideology devalues others, asserting and 'explaining' their inferiority in ways that blame the victim. It is this function of racism, and not its particular form at a particular time, which is im-

portant. In the late 18th Century, blacks' inferiority might be blamed on their heathenness; in the late 1960s, on their cultural deprivation — their poverty, language, family background. In each case, racist ideology explains the victims' inequality by reference to their own characteristics. Thus it rationalizes white prejudice and white privilege. It therefore distracts from looking at structures, at systems, at institutions. It is so deeply embedded in popular consciousness that it functions as part of our commonsense or taken-for-granted knowledge about where people fit, what is right what is normal or natural.

Racism as an ideology was blatantly expressed in the White Australia Policy; it has surfaced again recently in the 'Stop the Asian invasion' graffiti. Such an ideology acts as a pool — and fuel — for stereotypes and racist emotions and arguments. It is especially likely in times of social stress, when visible but politically expendable groups become scapegoats to blame for social tension, or unemployment.

Racism as an ideology also encourages the situation where it is accepted as 'normal' that the worst off people will, usually, be Aboriginal; that the worst jobs will be, largely, migrant women's jobs. Here, racism permeates our institutions, and loads our everyday practices in ways which, whether intentionally or not, are racist in their consequences.

**Institutional racism** refers to these consequences: to a pattern of the distribution of social goods which regularly and systematically advantage some (usually white, Anglo Australians) and disadvantage others. We can see such a pattern in school outcomes, in who goes to university, in occupational stratification. While again Aboriginal

1. This paper draws heavily on work I am doing for the Antiracist Handbook for Australian Adult Educators, commissioned by the Human Rights Commission, and co-authored with Barbara Chambers. Views expressed are my own, and not necessarily those of the Human Rights Commission.

people are most disadvantaged, certain ethnic groups are highly disadvantaged, too.

We refer here not only to access to material goods, but also to a situation where some groups — again, especially the white, Anglo Australians — are represented in positions of power so that their values and interests are reflected in the ways our institutions operate. Members of those groups may be unconscious victims of socialization into a prejudiced white culture. They may also be unwitting maintainers and beneficiaries of institutional arrangements and rules of the game which operate in their favour.

This reminds us that we are not working in a neutral situation; nor is racism entirely the preserve of bigots, or intentional harm or abuse to others. Racism may be unconscious, or unintended; it may be the consequence of us simply doing our jobs in accepted — culturally loaded — ways, with examining what we are doing, or how it affects others.

Throughout this section, I have used racism in a wide sense, to refer to devaluing or disadvantage on grounds of race, colour, culture, or ethnic origin. When most people refer to ethnic groups, e.g. Turks, or Finns, they have a physical image in mind (not necessarily an accurate or representative). Alternately, when people speak of Aboriginal or Chinese, they are rarely speaking only of physical characteristics. Indeed, colour is important precisely because it is taken as a clue to, or symbol of, other cultural or social differences. What is important here is the determinism locking people into categories, and assuming we can predict from that, what they are like, or what they are capable of, as individuals. It is this determinism we need to oppose, whether it operates on the basis of race, culture, or country of origin.

Having analysed prejudice and racism in ways that hopefully, help us to identify and combat them; we need, too, some understanding of the nature and extent of racism in Australia today. This is some-

thing that people attending a community Relations Workshop have many ideas and information about. However, the history most of us learnt, and the widely held image of Australia as a free and open society (and comparatively it may be!) mean that there are many Anglo Australians who deny that racism is a problem in Australia.

An examination of Australian history of the last 200 years reveals that it was founded on racism, through colonisation and dispossession of its indigenous inhabitants, and their systematic exclusion from emerging white society. The history of all non Aboriginal people is a history of immigration and it, too, has been unequal. Selection policies, and both official and social treatment of different people coming in, have been highly discriminatory, and the current debate about 'Asian' immigration reminds us that many middle Australians still regard Australia as white, preferably Anglo, and are not committed to equality for all Australians, regardless of their ethnic or racial background.

Key institutions in our society — like education, the legal system, the bureaucracy, government — and Anglo-derived institutions. We may wish to maintain them as such, but we need to recognise that they do reflect the power of particular immigrant groups to recreate the values and organisational forms of their home country, albeit with some modifications here.

We can also measure inequality correlating at least partly with racial and ethnic origin, in terms of social location and life chances — where people are, and what opportunities they have to acquire social goods, like education and health and housing.

All this assumes that there is something wrong with a system that devalues and disadvantages some groups on the basis of their racial or ethnic origin, while advantaging others on account of theirs. There are many arguments which can be mounted to support such an assumption. Some of these we have elaborated for the Human Rights Commission Antiracist Handbook for Adult Educators. They

include arguments in terms of human rights: the rights of people by virtue of their humanity, rights to freedom and equality, to fair treatment; through recognition of the damage done, both to the victims of racism and to the whole society; to the fact that we have legal obligations, domestically and internationally, to refrain from and, preferably, oppose, racism. Racism also stops us from doing our job properly; it clogs communication channels and puts up obstacles in the way of tackling social problems or achieving desirable social goals.

That racism is wrong, and should be combatted, is not self evident. Indeed, as we have dramatically demonstrated in recent weeks, it is highly contested. There are many Australians who are racist, or who assert positions which have racist consequences, whether intentional or not. There are also many Australians who may recognise that racism is a real problem, but, perhaps partly for that reason, are fearful or doubtful about tackling it directly. For that reason, if we wish to combat prejudice and racism, we must develop and practice our arguments in support of our own position, and against those who would oppose us.

Racism is a highly emotional area, and there are dangers in tackling it. Alternately, if we ignore it, we leave it smouldering, to explode when we least expect it, and aren't ready for it. We also lose credibility among those who suffer from it, who see our reluctance to confront it as indicating a lack of commitment, or concern.

One frequent criticism levelled at those opposing racism is that we are being 'political', and that politics should not be introduced into the workplace, or wherever. Yet every social arrangement is political, every value or political position is ideological. The present situation isn't neutral. It is advantaging some and penalising others, on arbitrary grounds like race or birthplace. Not taking a stand allows the present political, unequal, unfair arrangement to continue. It distracts attention from question about what the rules are who sets

them, who gains by them, and who loses.

Another common criticism levelled against us is that we are 'prejudiced against prejudice', or seeking to impose our views on others. Indoctrination, or imposition of our views, is both self defeating, and a betrayal of what most of us are about. Racism has flourished partly because of received wisdom, of an education and political process which has not encouraged critical thinking, or an understanding of how our society operates.

We are seeking to open up issues, to equip people with the skills and concepts to grapple with racism. They, and we, must be open to scrutiny, and take responsibility for our own views and behaviour. This is precisely the opposite of indoctrination, which is untechnical, and unproductive.

\* \* \*

To summarise so far. If we are to combat prejudice and racism effectively, we need to

develop our understanding of what racism and prejudice are, as concepts, and as practice, so we can identify them in ourselves, in others, in the ways institutions operate. We need, for example, to be able to recognise racist stereotypes, or language, and to offer explanations of social problems which discredit racist myths.

analyse our own views, and where we got them from. For example, to recognise that, if we have grown up in a racist society, we will inevitably hold some racist views.

develop our understanding of the terms of the debate, including arguments which can support our efforts, rally others, all challenge racists.

we also need to develop some understanding of other groups, so we can recognise inaccurate stereotypes, correct misinformation, realize that behaviour that we expect, like looking people in the eye when talking, may be considered rude or aggressive in other cultures. Here is a risk of reinforcing stereotypes. There are differences within, as

well as between, groups. We all share many things, so should recognise the similarities as well as the differences. There are also other social processes which affect our relations, for example poverty or powerlessness, or the experience of migration and resettlement, which flow over cultural boundaries.

We can never know everything, and learning about different groups, about racism, and about ourselves, is an ongoing process.

But we can get the parameters straight (or at least more clear),

- \* develop concepts we can use as handles

- \* develop ways of gathering and testing information

- \* find out who to go to/where to go for support, ideas, resources

- \* develop strategies, share those that work, discard those that don't

### Strategies and Action

Which strategies work will depend on who we are, where we are working (whether paid to or not), who we are working with. It's very hard to generalize; however, I will put forward some guidelines, which I have drawn both from my own experiences, and from many others in the field — those who have written up their ideas (and the ones I found most useful are cited in the bibliography), and those with whom I have talked, but who are too busy getting on with the job to stop and write it all down.

1. We need to get our objectives straight. It helps if we have thought about, and talked about, what we want to change, and why. We are likely to have personal views and goals, (whether or not we have made them explicit to ourselves or others). We may also have objectives as part of our job or position: there may be tension between what we are expected to do, and what we want to do. We may have set ourselves objectives which are a compromise, the best we can do, given the situation.

2. We need to analyse that situation to identify the constraints,

and the possibilities. Some of us — for example adult educators, training officers — have formal opportunities to raise issues, present counter arguments, and ask people what they are doing about it. Others have to make those opportunities — ask questions at staff meetings, contest racist views in social forums. Others, like those from the Ecumenical Migration Centre, may be called in to help when racism has been identified as a problem. They may meet resistance because they are labelled as biased or do gooders before they begin. They may also be given only two hours — or even 20 minutes — to do it all. In that time, it is only possible to begin to question and raise doubts, to indicate that it's all very complicated, but that resources and ideas about it do exist... and so, hopefully, prompt requests for more information or activities.

What we know about the nature of racism also suggests that the targets for change are ourselves, and our colleagues, as well as our students, clients, or outside audience. Thus we often find ourselves working on several levels at once.

3. We need to begin where people are, and keep in mind what we know about how people learn, where we get our views and prejudices from, how we change them.

In any group, we usually find people with different views, or perhaps sharing the same view, but for different reasons. Any uniform approach might work with some people, will miss others, and possibly antagonise still others.

Some people may be prejudiced simply because they have been socialized into a culture which stereotypes and devalues other people. Or they may not have examined their everyday language and behaviour for unintended racist consequences. Providing them with more reasonable or accurate information may lead them to change. (Here we can usefully distinguish between a misconception, and a prejudice: the former is open to

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# Govt should work to dissipate irrational fears of the Sinhalese

J. R. Roberts

**W**HAT policies can realistically be expected to establish domestic harmony and prevent further violence?

The answer to this question should be divided into two parts: short term and long term policies. In the short term, outbreaks of Sinhalese mob violence are most likely to be the result of perceived threats from Tamil terrorist attacks. (Other possible perceived threats may come from radically new political alignments, a serious 'capitulation' by the Sri Lankan government to certain demands of the TULF or the hint of intervention by a foreign power. These possibilities are not seriously imaginable and need not be discussed further.) The government's possible measures, which at best will be stop-gap and expedient without correcting the underlying cause, nevertheless require elucidation if only because of the very real danger of more violence erupting shortly. The direct object of these measures should be less containing terrorism as responding to the Sinhalese fear of terrorism attacks. One possible scenario would be to lower the profile of government troops in the north and the east even to the point of pulling out entirely. This has the advantage of reducing or eliminating risk of terrorist attacks against government installations. Without such attacks, and the subsequent publicity given to them, it is likely the Tamil terrorists will be less perceived as a menace to the Sinhalese. Such a scenario poses a problem in the medium term in that pulling troops out of the north and the east is tantamount to the Colombo government admitting non

-sovereignty in these regions. Such an admission, even implicit, will only exacerbate Sinhalese fears of a threat to their existence as a people. Nevertheless, this scenario has the advantage of its simplicity and ease in application.

A second scenario is the breaking of the terrorist organization. This is not impossible but depends on the cooperation and support of the general Tamil population in the north and the east. For this support to be forth-coming, the government forces must be seen to be extremely competent which means, practically, that their arrests and detentions are selective and precise. If the general Tamil population has nothing to fear from the government's forces and it can trust them, and if it is evident that genuine terrorists are the ones being arrested and not mere suspects, then support and cooperation will be forthcoming. In the final analysis, it is the average Tamil citizen who has the most to gain by the eradication of terrorism.

For police and military operations to be precise and selective, it is necessary that the armed forces have an intimate understanding of the Jaffna Tamil community in the north. As such, the only people likely to possess such understanding are Jaffna Tamils themselves. Thusly, the essentially Sinhalese government in the south must turn over all policing activities, and in particular its direction, to identifiably Jaffna Tamils who are dedicated to eradicating terrorism in a united Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government must give free rein and total commitment to the Tamils selected to

direct anti-terrorist operations. Further, it must provide any resources requested and not second guess any decisions taken by the Tamil direction.

The kneejerk desire to unleash the Sinhalese army to confront the Tamil terrorists directly will be clearly ineffective without intimate knowledge of the Jaffna Tamil community and when seen to be ineffective, will only serve to heighten Sinhalese fears and insecurities. Further, and more obviously, such confrontations result in a greater division between the general populations of the two communities.

Controlling terrorism is only a short term solution to the danger of future mob violence in Sri Lanka. In the long term, if the government is to eliminate the risk of this violence, it must deal with the underlying perceived fears of the Sinhalese people and with the collective inferiority complex which engenders these fears.

Firstly, let it be clear that current discussions about a possible federal system, devolution to Tamils, or power-sharing as solutions to Sri Lanka's communal problem are mere rearrangements of furniture faced with its real cause. Conflicts between groups in multicultural society are inevitable. Whatever government structure is chosen to resolve these conflicts, short of separating into two distinct states, it will be ineffective if at the base, one group feels threatened by the simple presence of another group.

Alternatively, hopes for an eventual 'pan-Sri Lankan citizenry' and a concomitant national mentality

above specific parochial interests are mere pipe dreams given the strong traditions of virtually all Sri Lankans. In any event, genuine internationalism or, to coin a term interculturalism is generally dependant on first being comfortable and confident in one's mother culture.

Lastly, beyond preventing further mob violence and dealing with Sinhalese insecurities, the government has an interest in making a united Sri Lanka work. This is because Sri Lanka is more than the sum of its Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim constituent parts. That these different cultural groups exist and flourish vibrantly makes for a more civilized and interesting life for all Sri Lankans.

To deal effectively with the sense of inferiority and the perceived fears of the Sinhalese people it is my opinion that the government must stand four-square behind the Sinhalese language and culture and the Buddhist religion. However, it must do this without oppressing Sri Lanka's minorities and, in a small country necessarily dependent on international trade, without cutting Sri Lanka off from the outside world. These suggested objectives are less contradictory than might be first assumed. For example, it is a shameful state of affairs that the essential language of the upper echelons of business and government is English. Some will justify this by claiming that the supposed language of world affairs is English while others will claim that the Sinhalese language is not suited for complicated communication. Neither argument is particularly sound. Japan, France and West Germany are well integrated internationally yet day to day internal affairs are conducted in their respective native languages. The government of Sri Lanka makes little or no effort to increase the usage of or improve the quality of the spoken and written Sinhalese language. Instead, more often than not, reports are written first in English and then translated later, as if by afterthought, into Sinhalese and Tamil. In the popular mythology, to speak English and be Christian are synonym to being successful and modern whereas to speak

Sinhalese and be Buddhist are synonym to being poor and backward.

The government should create an environment where it is entirely possible for an average Sinhalese person to succeed in life without having to change his basic living patterns. Further, it should make it clear that being comfortable/y Sinhalese is alone sufficient to face the outside world. That is, the values and customs inherent in being Sinhalese provide enough complexity and substance to stand independently in the world.

Beyond applied policies, the government should also preach by example. One of the most disheartening aspects of July's violence was the popular suspicion of the government's loyalties. The government should never fear being accused of evenhandedness towards Sri Lanka's minorities. However, neither should it ever be open to accusations of disloyalty towards the Sinhalese people. For all members of the government, it must be plainly clear that they put Sri Lanka first and that Sri Lanka is the country where they will work, retire and die.

Let it be noted finally that this is not an appeal to simplistic nationalism that the government should attempt. Suggesting that the Sinhalese are a superior race because of their origins or that they are better for some other reason will do little to restore confidence. Rather, such talk is merely a sad reminder of a people who feel inferior trying desperately to feel superior.

Once the government begins to deal seriously with the collective inferiority complex of the Sinhalese people then many popular irrational fears will dissipate and, further, the necessary structural solutions to Sri Lanka's multicultural nature will be much easier to implement. In this regard, optimism seems perfectly justified. On one hand, the Buddhist religion in its finest form is a tolerant one and on the other, the mainstream of Sri Lanka's minorities, particularly the Tamil minority, are not requesting the impossible. There is little doubt that all can live peacefully in a uni-

ted Sri Lanka with a strong central administration.

It is my personal hope that one day the Sinhalese people will be able to elect as their prime minister a Tamil, undoubtedly fluent in Sinhalese, whose commitment to and confidence in everything that is Sri Lanka go as deep as any Sinhalese. When this occurs, then I'll know that the modern Sinhalese people are finally the equal of everything their culture and history implies they should be.

## General Election . . .

(Continued from page 10)

for a new dialogue and the experience has shown that tough and tactless attitudes hamper negotiations. In terms of regional political, an electoral change can change the international outlook on the question, and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, for instance, is certain to utilise her good will and understanding with the Sri Lankan neighbours in finding a permanent solution to the ethnic crisis. The sharp political cleavage in the country and the stiff attitude of the Government towards the Opposition since 1977 — the UNP Government did not allow the Opposition to play its legitimate and limited role in the highly controlled parliamentary system in the last seven years — prevent the emergence of a consensus on the matter, and this was very well demonstrated at the All Party Conference which became another glorious fiasco under the UNP Government. In such a situation, political parties must look for a fresh mandate and a General Election, which can restore the confidence of the people in the democratic system, therefore is inevitable. In the absence of a constitutional provision for recall, people do not have any other alternative except to clamour for and demand a general election. The capacity and the capability of a Government cannot be judged by the wit and rhetoric of its leaders, some of whom excel in making contradictory and undiplomatic pronouncements, and this Government of J. R. Jayewardene's, which has forfeited its right to govern Sri Lanka, needs to be told that enough is enough.

# Eruption of ethnic violence

Nihal Jayawickrama

**A**t the general election held in July 1977, the Tamil United Liberation Front sought and obtained from the Northern and Eastern Provinces a mandate

"to establish an independent, sovereign, secular, socialist State of Tamil Eelam that includes all the geographically contiguous areas that have been the traditional homeland of the Tamil-speaking people in the country".

At the same election, an overwhelming majority in the Sinhala-speaking areas of the country agreed with the United National Party that:

"there are numerous problems confronting the Tamil-speaking people. The lack of a solution to their problems has made the Tamil-speaking people support even a movement for the creation of a separate State. In the interests of national integration and unity so necessary for the economic development of the whole country, such problems should be solved without loss of time".

Accordingly, a decisive mandate was given by them to the UNP to summon an All-Party Conference to "take all possible steps to remedy grievances in such fields as education, colonisation, use of the Tamil language and employment in the public and semi-public corporations". Despite one party comprising the Government and the other the principal Opposition, neither took any steps to fulfil or implement the promises they had made to their respective electorates. Accordingly, it was only a matter of time before militant Tamil youth groups emerged espousing violence as the only alternative to the lack of political negotiation.

## Proscribing of Liberation Tigers Law

In May 1978, the National State Assembly enacted the Proscribing of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and Other Similar Organisations Law. The objectives of this law, which were to proscribe a particular Tamil militant youth group, enable the proscription of other similar organisations, and provide for executive detention, could all have been achieved through the declaration of a state of public emergency. Perhaps due to the fact that proceedings were about to commence against the previous Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, for having advised the continuance of a state of public emergency for nearly six years, the Government appeared reluctant to invoke the Public Security Ordinance at that stage. This law, which was originally intended to remain in force for only one year, was extended for a further year, and then replaced by a more comprehensive statute, obviously because the former had failed to serve the purpose for which it had been enacted.

## Prevention of Terrorism Law

In July 1979, Parliament enacted the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act as a Bill certified by the Cabinet to be "urgent in the national interest". This certificate enabled the Bill to be presented in Parliament without prior publication in the Gazette, and prevented any citizen from challenging its constitutionality before the Supreme Court. Section 29 of the Act confined its operation to a period of three years; but in March 1982, Parliament repealed this section, making this Act a permanent law in the country's statute books.

Nearly all the provisions of this Act are inconsistent with the

obligations undertaken by the Sri Lanka Government under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. For example:

(a) Sections 2, 23 and 31 of the Act, by making a Person liable for "unlawful activity" by reason of any action taken by him before the Act came into operation, which action when so taken was not contrary to law, conflict with Article 15 of Covenant which prohibits the retroactive application of criminal law.

(b) Section 4 of the Act, which provides that when a person is convicted of any offence under the Act, then, in addition to the enhanced punishment which the Court is required to impose, "all property, movable and immovable of that person shall, by virtue of such conviction, be deemed to be forfeited to the Republic", whether or not such property had been applied in or used for the commission of the offence, and regardless of the consequences such forfeiture might have on his family and dependants, appears to conflict with Article 7 of the Covenant which prohibits cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

(c) Section 6 of the Act which enables a police officer to arrest a person without a warrant and keep him in police custody for three days without producing him before a judge; which requires a judge, if a police officer so requests, to remand an arrested person until the conclusion of the trial; and which denies a judge the discretion to order bail or to determine the lawfulness of detention, appears to conflict with Article 9 of the Covenant which guarantees to everyone the right to liberty and security of person.

(d) Section 9 of the Act, which empowers the minister to order the detention of any person for a period of 18 months, is inconsistent with Article 9 of the Covenant which prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention.

(e) Section 11 (1) (a) to (c) of the Act which empowers the Minister to impose prohibitions or restrictions in respect of a person's movement outside his place of residence, his places of residence and of employment, or his travel within or outside Sri Lanka, for a period of 18 months conflicts with Article 12 which guarantees the right to liberty of movement.

(f) Section 11 (1) (d) of the Act which empowers the Minister to impose prohibitions or restrictions in respect of a person's

activities in relation to any organization of which he is a member, for a period of 18 months, conflicts with Article 22 of the Covenant which guarantees the right to freedom of association.

(g) Section 11 (1) (e) of the Act which empowers the Minister to prohibit a person from addressing public meetings for a period of 18 months is inconsistent with Article 19 of the Covenant which guarantees the right to freedom of expression.

(h) Section 11 (1) (e) of the Act which empowers the Minister to prohibit a person from taking part in any political activity for a period of 18 months, is in conflict with Article 25 which declares that every citizen shall have the right

and the opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs and to vote or seek election.

(i) Section 13 of the Act which substitutes an Advisory Board of three lay persons for a Court as the institution having jurisdiction to review a detention order, is in conflict with Article 9 (4) of the Covenant which guarantees access to a regular Court for the purpose of determining the legality of detention.

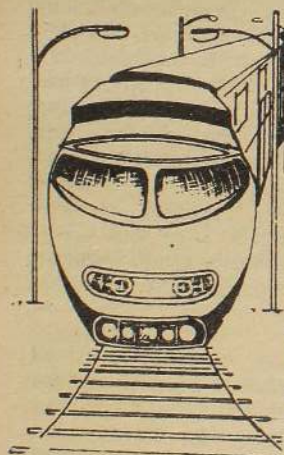
(j) Section 14 which empowers the competent authority to censor news and to prohibit the distribution of local and foreign newspapers, is in conflict with Article 19(2) of the Covenant which guarantees the dissemination of information and the freedom of publication.

(Continued on page 20)

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# The repressive ideology of underdevelopment

Alexander R. Magno

The declaration of martial law throughout the Philippines on September 21, 1972, "to save the republic and form a new society,"<sup>1</sup> gave rise to an authoritarian political structure with a military and technocratic character. Confronted with, on one hand, intensifying political unrest and the rapid mobilization of revolutionary mass organizations, and, on the other hand, deepening economic crisis characterized by steep inflation, rising unemployment and precariously sagging public and international confidence in the Philippine market, the regime swiftly acted to contain what it saw as "widening disorder." At the same time, it handed out the promise of social transformation to root out the source of the social crisis.

From the onset, the regime saw its role not merely as the guardian of public order, but also as the vanguard of 'national development.' It understood clearly that the crisis of political disillusionment was inextricably linked with the problem of social justice.<sup>2</sup>

The developmentalist-authoritarian state is not only a phenomenon of ideological curiosity. Planners and powerholders were not only the ones conscious of the problems of development. Such consciousness had gained popular support to a point where positions and perspectives on the problems of development had become compelling mass ideologies with the ability to sustain and validate either existing state forms or revolutionary move-

ments premised on programmes of alternative lines of development. The main thrust of this paper than, concerns the 'New Society' regime as an ideological phenomenon without in any way diminishing its importance as an object of investigation in political economy. It is a preliminary attempt to understand the ideological formation that accompanies the development of authoritarian processes in the Philippines.

The first part of this paper gives a brief contextual description of the inauguration of the martial law regime and the subsequent 'New Society' government that it parents. Included necessarily, are both its distinct historical features and a theoretical presentation of its meaning.

The second part notes the evolution of bourgeois-liberal theory and its distillation into the dominant line of self-justification held by the regime.

The third part describes the theory of 'revolution from the center', the basic ideological premise of the developmentalist regime. The fourth part examines the corporatist ethos of the technocratic regime and its emphasis on 'national discipline' as it is consistent with the overall worldview advanced by liberalism.

The fifth part looks into the dominant line of development sponsored by the regime, premised on the theory of 'take-off' and its requisite political basis.

## Inaugurating Development

Martial law was proclaimed amid what the architects of the coup

considered to be severely deteriorating condition that threatened the very existence of the Republic.<sup>3</sup>

From a merely governmental standpoint, the manoeuvre resulted in a coup on the legislative by the executive, and a subsequent concentration of presidential power. This limited view of the process lends credence to narrow conceptions of the phenomenon of authoritarianism. Some see the process as entirely the result of the power machinations of one man,<sup>4</sup> while others view it as an expression of the presumed affinity of the Filipino mind to one-man rule.<sup>5</sup> While these views may not be entirely wrong, they are grossly limited medes of comprehending a broad historical process.

The martial law regime can be better understood as an expression of a crucial transformation of Philippine society. However, not much systematic investigation has been done to clearly delineate the historical significance of the last decade, mainly because its meaning has begun to be conceptually distinct.<sup>6</sup> It may be termed 'revolutionary,' as indeed the regime wants to see itself, although there should be much reservation to the term. The various programmes advanced by the regime had indeed transformed social relations substantially over the last nine years. But evidence suggests that while qualitatively changes have indeed accrued, they have resulted in the deepening rather than in the resolution of the crisis of underdevelopment.

In a way, the language employed by the regime resembles those used by similiary developing 'strongman' regimes in other underdeveloped societies. The general characteristic

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of authoritarianism may be shared, too, among such societies, however one must take into account the particularities peculiar to any nation's socioeconomic dimensions. In another way, too, the development of a technocracy educated in the economism of western schools and the consolidation of political power on the basis of strong military control have come to be shared political development among periphery societies closely linked to the capitalist center economies. Working around the guidecalls of 'national security' and 'national development', these regimes have pursued a more or less uniform line of development not antagonistic to monopoly capital and relatively preservative of the most basic patterns of neocolonial interdependence. More significantly, these regimes have a shared antagonism towards Third World national liberation movement which demand an anti-imperialist revolutionary 'break' as the starting point for genuine liberation.

In what has been to as the neo-fascist character of these regimes, technocrats tend to see the problem of underdevelopment simply as problems of efficiency, control and management. They view the rising antagonisms in the underdeveloped societies as a failure of management rather than as the clash of irreconcilable interests. Thus they support the 'law and order' line of authoritarian states which necessarily require a 'political framework' for 'development.' Which this may be viewed by some as constituting a rather naive understanding of social and historical processes, it is often translated to fit into already persisting and well-developed ideological systems readily passing them off as commonsensical views.

#### **Developmental Authoritarianism**

In a very general sense, it may be argued that the phenomenon of

developmental authoritarianism in the Philippines results from a fragmentation of the ruling classes under pressures of imperialist crisis which demands a re-transformation of increasingly inadequate modes in the imperialist world order. An aspect of this re-transformation is the shifting relations in the neocolony marked by a change in production from commodity producers and suppliers to processors of monopoly capital. Cheap labor is directly employed to create surplus value for monopoly capital. The transnational corporations, as the organizational expression of monopoly capital production, propel the development of pre-capitalist sections of the periphery society into the more advanced neocolonial capitalist mode, transforming both market and the utilization of labor power away from old modes of social relations.

These demands for change, a conceptualization that may completely obfuscate the distinction between popular disenchantment with a neocolonial society and the demands of the local finance capital sector of the comprador bourgeoisie, result in a heightened social tension — or what bureaucrats simplistically explain as 'worsening order.'

**(To be continued)**

#### **Eruption of . . .**

*(Continued from page 18)*

(k) Sections 10 and 11 (5) of the Act which excludes the jurisdiction of a Court to examine the validity of a detention or other order made by the Minister are inconsistent with Article 2 of the Covenant which requires the Government to ensure that a person whose rights are violated shall have an effective judicial remedy.

(l) Sections 15 to 20 and 22 23 of the Act which prescribe a different mode of trial and different rules of evidence and procedure if an offender is charged under that Act instead of under the Penal Code, appears to be inconsistent with Article 26 which

prohibits discrimination and guarantees equality before the law and the equal protection of the law.

It would appear, therefore, that what the Prevention of Terrorism Act seeks to do is to enable the Government to exercise permanently powers of an extraordinary nature which it could have acquired only for limited durations under the Public Security Ordinance and that too only upon the formal declaration of the existence of a state of public emergency. These powers are not available to any government in normal times, and by arrogating them the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Sri Lanka has acted in contravention of its obligations under Article 4 of the Covenant.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act has now been in force for over five years. During this period, a state of public emergency has also been in operation, intermittently, for over three years. However, terrorism has not only intensified, but has also become more widespread and manifested itself in several different forms. Sri Lanka's dilemma is no different from that of the United Kingdom where, despite the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act of 1976, the Irish Republican Army continues to gather strength as it pursues its policy of violence directed at freeing Northern Ireland of British control; or for that matter, of South Africa where the rigorous application for over seventeen years of its Terrorism Act has not succeeded in silencing the strident demand for majority rule being articulated by black liberation movements, nor the violence that invariably accompanies that demand. The lesson that one is compelled to draw from this experience is that the Prevention of Terrorism Act is not only inconsistent with Sri Lanka's international obligations; it is also undeniably futile. It seeks to deal with violent conduct, which is only a symptom, using techniques that will ensure that the symptom will keep recurring with greater intensity. The perceived grievances, of which violent conduct is only the outward manifestation, draws little or no response. The wound continues to fester.

# He pioneered transition towards "the Church of the poor"

Rev. Fr. M. Anandanpulle

THIS struggle of the people to be free is absolutely just in the context of El Salvador. As bishop Romero indicated "the Church is only interested in one thing: If the aim of the struggle is just the church will support it with all the power of the Gospel, and he continued "No less can the church shirk the task of defending the weak and those in real need, whatever the nature of the groups or individuals who support these just causes. This factor became the rationale for mediation when attacks on dignity, life or liberty were being perpetrated.

The third principle is that the people's struggle for liberation is inextricably linked with the concept of Christian salvation for firstly, the church understands liberation as involving the totality of man both spiritual and material. It proceeds from the inspiration for the scriptures which in turn demands a conversion of heart and mind.

Bishop Romero focussing his attention upon these principles, began to apply them to "various problems presented by Church's relations with the 'popular organizations'". The Church's willingness to initiate an intimate dialogue with these organizations whose aim is "to struggle for justice in the political sphere" is due to the fact that the majority christians have made an honest reflection on the message of the scriptures within the basic ecclesial communities which consequently have sharpen their consciousness and enable them to resort to fundamental demands of justice.

Eventually, such an acquired faith has provoked them or led them to a political vocation, which is in no way dissimilar to that of the popular political organization.

Bishop did draw attention to the claim that "many of our Salvadorean brothers are active in organizations which do not profess to be christians". In reply to this issue, the bishop holds that "Much of what has already been said is equally true of these as of the christian organizations in their relationship with the Church". The church in El Salvador would not hesitate to extend support to any group be it christian or otherwise as long as it is "an important means for establishing justice". He reiterated the fact that "strivings of individuals and groups, even if they do not profess to be christians, derive their energy from the spirit of Jesus. The Church will try to see them in this way in order to purify them, encourage and incorporate them ..."

The third and the final part of the Third Pastoral Letter of Bishop Romero is related to the "judgement of the Church on violence". This is a logical corollary to the preceding section with dwelling on the need for solidarity with the popular organizations which regard violence "as a suitable means" to obtain their social, political and economic aims. The inquiry into this issue is centred on three aspects:

- 1) Different sorts of violence,
- 2) The Church's moral judgement on violence,
- 3) It's application to the situation in El Salvador.

In the context of rapid escalation of violence in El Salvador, the stand-point of bishop has been "no to violence, and yes to peace". This was revealed in the Conference of Latin American Bishops held at Medellin in 1968, in the words "we place no trust in violence". However, bishop Romero expected to drive home a few salient ref.

lections on different sorts of violence when he said "if it is easy enough to put forward the ideal of peace, it is much less easy to deal with the reality of violence which, historically, seems inevitable so long as its true causes are not eliminated". He continues to state that "Normally speaking... violence is no part of man's make up.

People do not fulfill themselves by humiliating, harming, kidnapping, torturing or killing others. Violence has other roots which have to be exposed".

The Medellin Bishops Conference high-lighted one form of violence persisting in Latin America in general and El Salvador in particular, and christened it as institutionalised violence". Bishop Romero explains it as "the product of an unjust situation in which the majority of men and women and above all the children in our country find themselves deprived of the necessities of life". He says that "this violence finds its expression in the structure and daily functioning of a socio-economic and political system which accepts it as normal and usual that progress is impossible unless the majority of the people are used as a productive force, under the management of a privileged minority." It is this group who monopolise economic power instead of sharing it.

The Second form of violence that the bishop Romero reminded of was 'the State's repressive violence', which runs parallel to the institutionalised violence. To put it differently it is the use of violence by the States security forces in order to contain the aspiration and the legitimate struggle of the majority. This is a real form of violence the bishop concluded. How-

ever, four other forms of violence are referred to as well viz., seditious or terrorist violence, spontaneous violence, violence as legitimate defense and the violence of non-violence. As regards to the terrorist violence in its strict sense the bishop admits that it produces and provokes useless and unjustifiable bloodshed.

What is essential to note at this juncture is that bishop Romero's willingness "to make different judgements on each sort of violence, despite the fact that the official teaching of the church considers violence in general as a sign "of the imperfection which is part of man" and judgement can range from prohibition and condemnation to acceptance in certain conditions. He states that the church allows violence in legitimate defence but under the following conditions:

(1) that the defence does not exceed the degree of unjust aggression (for example if one can perfectly and adequately defend oneself with one's hands, then it is wrong to fire at the aggressor)

(2) that the recourse to proportionate violence takes place only after all peaceful means have been exhausted;

(3) and that a violent defense should not bring about a greater evil than that which is being visited, for example, a greater violence, a greater injustice.

Legitimacy of violence is articulated by the teaching of the church in the event of an insurrection which occurs in the context of a "clear and lengthy tyranny, which seriously attacks the fundamental human rights of individuals..." (14) The church warns that an insurrection can spawn new violence and new destruction and in effect exhaust the government to use all its moral and coercive power to guarantee a truly democratic state one based on just economic order in which justice, peace, and the exercise of every citizen's fundamental rights are defended."

Judgement on violence by the church constitute prohibition and condemnation as well. Firstly, when it is pursued "for its own sake

or used as the first and only method to defend and advance a human right. Secondly, because it is the root of greater evils, which is likely to provoke further violence in legitimate self-defense.

Mgr Romero as the archbishop of San Salvador has clearly proclaimed that he and his people believe in peace and not violence and hope to secure it at all cost, but however such peace would scarcely dawn outside the realm of justice. Peace for him is the fruit of justice. He indicates "as a simple analysis of our structures shows and as history confirms, violent conflicts will not disappear until the underlying causes disappear. To that extent, as long as the powerful minority persist in their transience and refuse to accept even the smallest changes then there will be renewed outbreaks of violence." He maintained the position that "even in legitimate cases, violence ought to be a last resort. All peaceful means must be first exhausted."

In its conclusion the pastoral letter reveals that the mission of the Church is to be an instrument of Christ in bringing about a transformation in the society of El Salvador. She must be able "to give more intelligent and effective service and support to the just aspirations of the people". To pursue this task the only prerequisite is to "Listen to Him". As he says "The voice of the Father on that Holy Mountain is the best guarantee there is which is to point out Christ as the beloved son of God and only saviour of mankind and to remind men of the supreme duty of listening to Him if they want to be truly free and happy".

Bishop Romero in addition to his being a believer and follower of Jesus, he spent his last stages of his life as the archbishop of San Salvador. As indicated earlier, it was during his archiepiscopal ministry that he experienced a unique transformation within his own self, forcing towards his option for the poor and the oppressed. The charismatic leadership of Bishop is referred to by some writers as one of "perfection" of the duty laid by Jesus on St Peter, the

first pope. His contribution remains in the deepening of the faith of his people by enabling them to be responsive and sensitive to the unjust realities that they had to encounter. He understood that his episcopal task is to "make the christian faith 'credible' at its deepest level, and he became a true witness to that faith that he wished to impart on his people. To put it in a different way, his commitment to Jesus was clearly and unambiguously expressed in his option for the defense of the poor and the oppressed, the marginalised Indian population. It constituted the central and principal function of his episcopal ministry. As a liberation theologian says "His pastoral activity clearly put him on their side. He denounced the destitution from which they suffered, and its causes. He drew near to them. He defended their interests. At the administrative level he had the human and material resources of the archdiocese redistributed to their benefit". (15) In short, he was a spokesman and chief mediator on their behalf when in time of land conflicts, torture, indiscriminate murder and other atrocities were inflicted by the armed forces, or when the latter surrounded the churches and when young people were suddenly missing from their houses. It is reported that they came to him "as a protector, who was in duty bound to put the full weight of his episcopal authority at the service of the poor and oppressed".

The most remarkable achievement of bishop Romero was that he enabled the workers and the peasants to come to his residence spontaneously, and that suggests a factor that cannot be explained by the stroke of a pen namely, that he was victorious in "institutionalising" the much quoted phrase coined at the Medellin Conference: the "preferential option for the poor". The process of institutionalization in this regard does not reveal a trend towards intensive bureaucratization but that the Church's official institutions and structures which hitherto had been playing a legitimising role vis a vis the ruling class are dramatically transformed so that their resources both men and material totally be

reserved and disposed in the interest of the workers and the peasants. Obviously, there is no gainsaying of the fact that it was bishop Romero who pioneered the transition towards "the Church of the poor". He emphasized that the individual options and conversion towards justice in society are inadequate and that, what is imperative for the Church as an international institution is to spearhead the cause of the poor. In other words he progressively radicalised the church structures and its components by de-mythologising many of its roles and functions. He brought them closer to the very essence of reality particularly during his archiepiscopal ministry.

In the establishing the church of the poor, bishop Romero initiated a new relationship with his own people, those who possess economic power, the middle class, the professional associations, the political parties, last but not least the public authorities composing the ruling class. From the latter he demanded firstly laws which will ensure their just rights and basic necessities of life (land, wages, social and educational facilities) for all people.

Secondly, that they ought to widen, "the narrow area of political discussion and give formal and real admission to the various political voices in the country. Thirdly, that the opportunity has to be provided to "those who have been unjustly deprived of this human right especially the peasants".

Fourthly that they "take notice of the people's rejection of the law for the defense and maintenance of public order and in its place let them promulgate other laws which do in fact guarantee human rights and peace; that they establish "adequate channels for civil and political dialogue, so that no one need be afraid the common good, even if they imply a criticism of the government".

Fifthly, that they should "stop the terrorization of the peasantry and put an end to this tragic situation of confrontation between peasants, exploiting their poverty to organize some under the protection of the Government and

persecuting others just because they have organised themselves independently of the government to seek a reasonable standard of living and their rights.

Sixthly, that they "win the confidence of the people with some intelligent and generous gestures such as the following:

(a) An amnesty for all prisoners who have not yet been brought before any court but who have 'disappeared' after being captured by the security forces; and a chance of returning all those who have been expelled or who are unable to return to El Salvador for political reasons.

#### Conclusion

The foregoing analysis reveals the character of Mgr Oscar Anulfo Romero and his role as an archbishop of San Salvador. His presence and witness in the crisis ridden state has undoubtedly made him a protagonist to all the bishops of the tri-continents. As one who has correctly understood the problems poverty, repression and militarization in the third world within paradigm of Centre-periphery, dominant-dependent relations; he responded to these realities with courage and determination to the extent of sacrificing his precious life. Bishop Romero helped in a great way to achieve the aims and scope of liberation theology as stated by one of its originators, Gustavo Gutierrez: "The theology of Liberation attempts to reflect upon the experience and meaning of the faith based on the commitment to abolish injustice and to build a new society; this theology must be **verified by the practice of that commitment, by active, effective participation in the struggle which exploited social classes have undertaken against their oppressors.**" (16) (emphasis added)

May his name and of his fellow comrades who had died for this one single cause, live for ever.

#### Notes and References

12. See Vatican II Council Documents, *Gaudium et Spes*, No., 42
13. See *Populorum Progressio*,
14. *Quest.*, Op., Cit., p. 92
15. It also denounced institutionalised violence and it paved the way towards the origin and development of the theology of liberation in the subsequent decades.

16. Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973, p.307

## Combatting ethnic . . .

(Continued from page 13)

change in the light of new information, while a really prejudiced person will not notice, or will discount, information which does not agree with their views).

Other people share prejudices with family or friends, and may cling to those views because they value belongingness or conformity more than concern for an accurate or fair representation of others. Others again may blame Asians, or married women, for unemployment, not because they necessarily have anything against them, but because in times of trouble or insecurity, it is tempting to blame others, rather than feel a failure oneself. Here, providing more effective explanations, for example about what happens to jobs in a recession, might undermine scapegoating and prejudice.

Some people — the real bigots — hold their prejudices because of deep seated personality problems. They need their prejudices, to bolster their own faulty egos, and may react strongly against anyone who challenges their views. The chances of convincing a bigot are near nil, so strategies are needed to stop them from disrupting activities in which they are involved. Anti-discrimination legislation and social pressure can also be applied to discourage them from acting out their prejudices.

Thus we need to know what people think, and preferably why, so that we can respond appropriately and effectively. We need an armory of arguments, so we can select from them. At Church groups many support the notion that all are equal in the eyes of God, a harassed social worker or union official may welcome way of reducing cultural or language barriers, thereby making their job easier.

(To be continued)

## Letter

# NATIONAL DEFENCE FUND

The following is the text of a letter sent to the Minister of Education by the Joint Committee of Teachers' Trade Unions

## National Defence Fund

Your attention is drawn to the circular No: 4/Est/Tea2/292 dated 1985.02.14 issued by your Secretary, Ministry of Education.

The undersigned teachers' trade unions readily agree that your government has every right to appeal to the people of this country to contribute to this or any other fund that may be. At the same time we believe that the citizens of a democratic country should also enjoy the right to appeal to the masses not to contribute to any fund initiated by the government.

From the time this government assumed power, it allocated millions of rupees and enacted laws and acts to suppress every section of the populace that agitated against the cuts

in living standards and has now initiated the "National Defence Fund" pointing its finger towards the North and the East. We unions firmly believe that there is no militaristic solution to the just struggle of the people in the North and the East. There is also no doubt that this fund initiated now against the North will eventually be used against the working class, the students and the other oppressed people. We have therefore requested our membership to refrain from contributing to this fund.

In some Educational Circuits, with the intervention of Education Officers, contributions had already been collected from teachers for this same fund. Again, the Secretary to the Education Ministry had in his circular stated above, appealed to the teachers to contribute their January-February salary increases, given to them from 1985.01.01. The

committee has also advised every Education Office to maintain a list of teachers who consent to contribute. This amounts to a formulation of a list of teachers who do not contribute.

Although contributions should be collected on a voluntary basis this circular indirectly compels the teachers to contribute to this fund. We, therefore hereby request you to withdraw this circular.

**Sri Lanka Jathika Guru Sangamaya.** Gen. Sec. Sgd./Poulter Gunawardane.

**Ceylon Teachers' Union.** (1984) Gen. Sec. Sgd./H. N. Fernando.

**Sri Lanka Islam Guru Sangamaya.** Gen. Sec. Sgd./I. Nizam Sheriff.

**Sri Lanka Eksath Guru Sangamaya.** President. Sgd./W. O. Vithana.

**Eksath Guru Sangamaya.** President. Sgd./Christie George Perera.

## CEYLON BULBS & ELECTRICALS LTD.,

MANUFACTURERS OF SUPERGLOW, JAYANTHI

AND

DAYLIGHT ELECTRIC BULBS

Address :

60, Rodney Street,

Colombo 8.

Telephone : 595567, 596751

Cables : 'Lamplight'



## Our business goes beyond tobacco.

For well over five decades we have been involved in the tobacco industry in Sri Lanka. We are pioneers in tobacco growing, promoting self-employment and generating income for the rural farmer. We contribute to government revenue and earn foreign exchange for the country.

Utilising our expertise, we have ventured into other fields. Horticulture and alternate fuels are just two of them.

We have established a tissue culture laboratory, mainly for the development of new varieties of orchids. We also produce tissue cultured strawberry and house plants for export.

In our search for alternate fuels, we have perfected the manufacture of briquettes out of waste coir dust. These briquettes offer a solid fuel alternative to fuel oil and to firewood.

We also offer consultancy services in energy conservation.



**Ceylon Tobacco Company Limited**

A member of the B.A.T. Group.

# WE ARE A DIFFERENT KIND OF GUARDIAN TO YOU !

*There are a multitude of guardians during your lifetime*

- They who guard the freedom of speech & expression
- They who protect the basic human rights of mankind
- They who guard the democratic freedoms to which each of us are entitled to as citizens

*Each of us is a guardian to others who view us for their  
dependency in day to day life*

**BUT THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR GUARDIANSHIP  
RESTS ON OUR DEEP CONCERN FOR YOUR FUTURE  
WE ARE TRUSTED GUARDIANS OF YOUR HARD-EARNED  
MONEY, GUIDING YOU ON HOW TO SPEND AND HOW TO SAVE  
FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS' TOMORROWS**

**SO REACH OUT TODAY  
FOR YOUR LIFE-LONG GUARDIAN**



## PEOPLE'S BANK

*A Different Kind Of Guardian For You*