

SLFP CONVENTION

CAN SIRIMA DO AN AQUINO ?— Mervyn de Silva

LANKA

GUARDIAN

Vol. 8 No. 21 March 1, 1986

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RAMBO

OUT, OUT!

**VIETNAM
SYNDROME?**

— Chris Reed



**SPECIAL: U. S. State Dept. on
Human Rights abuses in Sri Lanka**

Are the TULF demands too high ?— Romesh Fernando

**Dismembering Peradeniya — Sri Kotha's
Secret War**

**Next Round in Phillipines — Interview
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Also: Ibsen's Dolls House in Sinhala,
Bhabani Sen Gupta on Pakistan **and**
Non-ethnic factors in our crisis, arms race



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COMMISSION ON CORRUPTION

Sri Lanka may not be the Philippines but the timing of the official announcement that a Presidential Commission will be appointed soon to inquire into allegations of corruption against ministers, MP's and State officers must have made specially interesting news to those Sri Lankans who have followed the extraordinary events in Manila. The Manacalang Palace where Marcos and his cronies lived it up for 20 years was under seige. Why?

Autocratic rule, yes; intolerable living conditions for all but the affluent, yes. Yet Filipino analysts put 'the stench of corruption' first. It was 'unbridled corruption' that united disparate social and political forces, including the upper class, and large sections of the business community and the professionals, and helped swell the ranks of the anti-Marcos opposition.

Benigno Aquino himself explained how the theory of a "trade off" between political 'stability' and 'development' collapsed when economic 'depression' accompanied 'political repression'. And when 'corruption' 'mismanagement' joined 'external recession' and austerity at home, the revolt could not be contained argued Prof. Walden Bello in a short study of the political consequence of the IMF-World Bank 'stabilisation' program in the Philippines.

HOSPITAL STRIKES

The GMOA-led doctors strike (Trends-LG Feb. 1) has now been followed by a walk-out by dentists and nurses. The working class unions have been battered into submission but it is the middle-class professionals who are risking their jobs and defying the Emergency by making demands for higher salaries. Inflation has driven them beyond the tolerable limits of hardship; it is the smell of highlevel corruption however that has sickened them to the point of furious moral outrage.

M. E. P. MOVE

It is Dinesh Gunawardena MP, not his brother Indika, now detained for three months under the PTA, who represents the two distinct phases in the political career of his distinguished father, Philip. Ideologically Dinesh is more radical than the SLFP front bench but his advocacy of Sinhala-Buddhist interests can also be more strident than that of the average SLFP parliamentarian.

His M. E. P. was a constituent member of the broad left SLFP-LSSP-CP front. After the July 1983 violence, when the ethnic conflict became the dominant issue in national politics, Dinesh found himself in an increasingly uncomfortable position in the alliance, and tended to make common cause with the SLFP. Arguing for firmer measures on the separatist threat, he voted with the SLFP in support of extending the emergency each month. Recently, Sarath Mutte-tuwagama (CP) was the lone Opposition voice opposing the emergency while the SLFP and MEP abstained. On Feb. 21, Dinesh joined Sarath in voting "No".

TRENDS + LETTERS

Letter from Guyana

The only publication we get from Sri Lanka, on which we depend for the latest news, is the 'Lanka Guardian', and we appreciate your good coverage — especially on the 'ethnic' front. Recently I wrote a piece which I have called "In Foreign Soil", and I thought I'd send it to you for what it is worth.

Shelgh Goonewardena
Georgetown, Guyana.

IN FOREIGN SOIL

The cars follow each other in an orderly line as they move slowly along the dry built-up track. On either side, canals of water flow peacefully, a permanent legacy from the Dutch. The place is one that reflects and literally embraces many races — it is a cemetery in Guyana called La Penitence, a beautiful name, with lingering French grace.

The cars stop and people emerge from them to form a ragged procession. At the head of it, a father shoulder a small deep brown coffin, helped by three other men, his friends. The mother, supported by women and accompanied by three young children, comes behind

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them, her voice raised in grief and lamentation. As the first wail bursts from her, my nerves prick and tighten in response sending frissons of apprehension and poignant memory washing over my mind. Her distorted sentence are in Tamil but one word is repeated like a refrain ... "Aiyo...aiyo." I remember, it is the last word that came softly and almost resignedly from my mother's lips as she slipped into death's oblivion, while I held her hand. My mother was a Dutch Burgher who thought and spoke in English. This woman is a Tamil and we are all bound together by a common heritage which is summoned up by one word of lament "aiyo", which as everyone knows, is a Sinhala word.

The burial ground is a marsh and the path to the grave is uncertain. We tentatively pick our way over tufts of sodden grass and carefully avoid the barely hidden pools of water. The priest says some words of Christian hope and comfort in consigning the small coffin to the earth and commending the soul of a four year old girl to heaven. As the coffin is lowered into the gaping hole in the mud, both father and mother are overwhelmed with fresh gusts of sorrow, and I have to bite my lips to keep them still. The faces around me mirror my feelings — some with lowered gaze and others staring straight ahead.

To keep my mind from dwelling on that tender child's body now permanently adrift in thick grey-brown mud, I look around and above me. At the piercing blue sky — it is a lovely afternoon and the sun is shining brightly making the grass glisten emerald, and the foliage of trees and shrubs beyond a mass of a vivid, variegated greens. The wreaths are colourful and tied with loops of delicate ribbon — all destined for the mud. A thought comes unbidden to my mind. Will the local urchins steal them as soon as we leave, as it happens at home at Kanatte, where we rip the flowers and strew them now as a matter of course, to prevent that likely occurrence?

But this is a foreign land and here we are unknown and unknown.

Anything can happen — it is foreign soil. The line of coconut palms confirms it. The trees are very tall and the palms grow right up at the top shooting out like sparse brushes sticking inelegantly into the sky — not like those graceful luxuriant palms with their drooping fronds which we know at home.

What has brought us to this strange land? My family still looks home-ward to Sri Lanka, and exults at the end of each month that brings us closer to going home. But what of the family who lost their youngest child today and so many families who are gathered here to show their unity in sorrow? They are Tamils who have left their homeland and come to a new land to make new home and new futures. They were driven here by fear and despair, and came with reviving hope. But in a time of grief, there is no consolation in a new land. Dear God, why can't we all live peacefully together in our own land, and when the time comes, be laid to rest in the friendly soil of our native country?

INCORRECT STATEMENTS

In Amaradasa Fernando's interesting piece about McCarthyism he says Mrs. Vivienne Gunawardena (sic) was "a former Deputy Minister of Local Administration." Mrs. Vivienne Goonawardena was never this. She was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs and Local Government. Parliamentary Secretaries were popularly (though incorrectly) called Junior Ministers. They were not Deputy Ministers.

When a clock strikes thirteen one does not just ignore the thirteenth stroke as a mistake; one doubts the entirety of the clock's statement. A close look at Mr. Fernando's article yields a crop of several more incorrect statements:

1. (Mrs. Goonawardena) was awarded damages in Rs. 10,000.
2. The Cabinet decided to pay up (sic) the damages.

3. The assailant sergeant was promoted to the rank of sub-inspector.

4. Rev. Dharamitipola Ratnasara... was arrested by the SP Gampaha...

5. ...for possession and distribution of anti-government leaflets.

6. The Supreme Court dismissed the case.

7. The Cabinet decided to pay the fine.

The facts are as follows:

1. The Supreme Court found the arrest of Mrs. G. was unlawful and ordered the government to pay her Rs. 2,500 as compensation. The Court ordered the IGP to conduct further inquiries and take appropriate action in accordance with the law.

2. There was no damages order against the police officer.

3. The assailant sergeant was not promoted. The sub-inspector who unlawfully arrested Mrs. G. was promoted.

4. Deramitipola Ratnasara Thero was not arrested.

5. The literature was not "anti-government literature" as such but a pamphlet against the referendum proposal to extend the life of parliament.

6. The Supreme Court did not dismiss the case. It was not a police case against the monk; it was a private complaint by the complainant monk against the SP filed under Section 126 of the Constitution. Damages of Rs. 10,000 plus costs were awarded to the complainant monk against the SP.

7. There was no fine; what the cabinet decided to pay were the damages and costs payable by the SP.

Elsewhere Mr. Fernando writes that Dr. Oppenheimer was relieved of his job because he "was said to be a calculated risk." I think I will take a calculated risk and assert that what he intended to write was "security risk". When incorrect averments are published in a prestigious paper and go uncontradicted they tend to acquire the status of established fact.

R. M. Pathirana

Colombo 4

(See also page 5)

Recovery registered, opportunity missed

Mervyn de Silva

They came in their thousands from the corners of the island. They cheered lustily, and returned home. The SLFP, divided and demoralised, had now recovered its spirit and will. It was now back in business.

The party conference after a lapse of several years registered the successful recovery of a party that had known nothing but trials of all sorts these past eight years.

Yes, it was a success. And yet, a success can fall far short of a triumph because something is missing, something vital — the fire the sparkle, the electrifying moment.

In politics that moment arrives when a leader or a political movement, through instinct or intelligence, reads the mind of the masses with unerring accuracy, strikes exactly the right chord, and catches, to change metaphors, history on the wing.

The SLFP has done that once before in 1956. A party founded only five years earlier reduced the mighty UNP to a humbling eight seats. (JR's UNP had its revenge in 1977).

What is the mood of the people today? They are confused, helpless, angry, bitter, desperate — they wait for the word, for the slightest sign of hope, the light at the end of the dark, labyrinthine tunnel. They wait for a strong injection of confidence and hope. The anti-UNP forces wait for unity, for direction, for a rallying cry.

True, the SLFP is a well established party — for more than three decades the only alternative to the UNP. It has a minimum of 30% of the national vote, a third of the electorate. On the ascendent, it has a forty percent reach.

Nonetheless, since 1960 when the widow of the assassinated Prime Minister Bandaranaike stepped forward to wear the husband's mantle and bear the responsibilities and burdens of political office, Mrs. Bandaranaike, the person became the SLFP's greatest asset. The irony is that the SLFP's top cadres have not yet understood this, or having understood it, have not drawn the right lessons in planning current strategy. The greater irony and pity is that Mrs. Bandaranaike herself for all her known intuitive skills and uncanny instinct to read the mass mind, has failed to appreciate this basic fact.

Having failed to do so, the SLFP High Command, Mrs. Bandaranaike included, did not realise what the people in this particular moment in the history of this country demand most. At this moment, the people do not want to hear about programs, manifestos, policies — all that can wait.

Wrong Medicine

Who cares whether the SLFP will have a mixed economy or a not-so mixed economy or the mixture not as before! That's old medicine for a patient — the island's electoral politics and parliamentary system — that is almost on its death-bed. Who wants to know whether the Free Trade Zone will

be continued or not, or whether private bus transport will be allowed and that the SLFP will have a "comprehensive plan for rural development". That's lukewarm tea, nikan thay! True, it's important to know that the prices of infant milk foods and drugs will be reduced. Two cheers!!

But for all that, a 'free and fair election' has to be held.

What the SLFP has not yet grasped is that the politics of this country has almost irreversibly changed. The main challenge, indeed the only challenge, is to see that what seems irreversible is halted. It was changed by the 1978 constitution and what followed; and it has been more deeply (but less obviously) altered by the "war". If the 'war' does not end, what elections are we talking about? After all, the SLFP does not seriously expect the UNP to hold elections with a war on? Why, even the British Government postponed elections during the war!

Old Politics

Since this elementary fact has evidently escaped the minds of the SLFP (and some in the SLFP camp, to the great delight of the UNP, are actually cheering the war effort!) it is not unnatural that they think in terms of the "old" politics, speaking the familiar idiom of that politics and mechanically going through the ceremonial routine of the past — manifestos, programs, etc etc. To anybody even vaguely conversant with Third World politics, such 'traditional ceremonies' can only look like a sour joke!

And that's the final irony. It was always the SLFP that was far more alive to the nature and style of Third World politics, not the UNP. Now the UNP is already advancing towards the 1990's while the SLFP is breathlessly pursuing it at the pace of the 1960's!

Does the SLFP Politburo or whatever, seriously imagine that in the post-JR transition, the UNP leadership and its powerful local big business backers and their foreign patrons are ready to hand over the reins of government just for the asking or out of love for "democracy"? If so, the SLFP politburo deserves a President's Award next year for intellectual innocence.

So, Mrs. Bandaranaike was absolutely, right in placing the single demand that she has been so tirelessly making these past weeks up and down the country. But will she receive a positive answer on a plate? Election? It so, when?

And thus, Mrs. Bandaranaike herself was the author of the final irony, the ultimate lapse.

Right at this moment the eyes of the world are focussed on one country — the Philippines. On centre stage, like a contemporary Joan of Arc or Boadicea, is a woman, the widow of an assassinated Senator until recently the great white hope of all Filipinos who want the restoration of democracy after 20 years under dictatorial and autocratic rule and martial law: Cory Aquino.

In Bangladesh, another widow of yet another murdered leader is making the same demand from a martial law administrator. In Pakistan, the widow and daughter of a prime minister hanged by the man whom he appointed chief of Staff, started a process which has now forced Zia to install a 'fake' parliament. In South Africa Winnie Mandela is leading her people against a racist garrison state in the name of her imprisoned husband.

Can Mrs. B. follow their path? That question may well decide the politics of Sri Lanka in the foreseeable future.

The Universities

SRI KOTHA'S "Protracted War"

The Political Establishment in many countries often look upon universities as unwelcome arenas of radical agitation than healthy centres of learning. Almost all administrations in this island, even before independence, have shared this basic prejudice. But no regime has displayed its antipathy to the universities, and its total lack of respect for the university ideal more openly and shamelessly than the present UNP government. Its hatred of 'free education' is almost pathological. The mere thought that a child from a poor or lower middle class family can receive university education and thus take the first hopeful step to social advancement seems to fill certain strata of the UNP with ill-concealed disgust.

Strangely such deep-seated hostility is not reflected in the statements of President JR or his prime minister. It appears to be a sickness confined to the middle-rung leadership and more so to the UNP's supportive elite.

The very first sign of that process which the eminent Sri Lankan scholar, Prof. Gananath Obeyesekere of Princeton described in this journal as "the institutionalization of political violence" surfaced on Thurstan road in 1977, the first year of the government. Student demonstrators were grabbed and forced into buses that drove straight to party headquarters and mercilessly beaten up. (Unfortunately, a Lake House reporter who was mistaken for an undergraduate, was a witness to the actions of the new gauleiters.

It is no surprise that undermining 'free education', and the break-up of the universities along with the privatisation of higher education have been priority items of UNP policy.

The latest move is to 'dismember' Peradeniya, internationally the most reputed of our campuses. The avowed aim is to re-mould Peradeniya in an Oxbridgean image! But the LSSP in a scathing indictment of the plan has laid bare its real objectives. In a press statement, the LSSP cites verbatim the relevant excerpts from an official document dated 18th Jan. 1986. In it, the authors of the new plan declare their lofty objective: **Therefore a de-centralised scheme for the university is being planned in keeping with the situation of Oxbridge**".

And why Oxbridge? The document is once again frank on its concerns. The students of the University have no dialogue with the people of Kandy".

So, the faculties of Agriculture, Medicine, Engineering Humanities, and Arts will be dispersed — Kandy, Katugastota, Digama, Gannoruwa... etc. And the Institute of Fundamental Studies will move into the Peradeniya campus, and along with it, the High Court, the Kachcheri, the District Courts etc.

The LSSP is absolutely clear about what it is all about. It views these "proposals as part of a sinister and deliberate scheme to undermine the system of free Education". It is also, states the LSSP, "part of the move to substitute private Higher Educational Institutions for the State-assisted University Act. No. 7 of 1985".

'The hand of totalitarianism is now stretching, as in so many countries, to the arena of learning', warns Sri Lanka's oldest political party.

Dons Oppose

On a more subdued note, a high-level committee of Peradeniya dons has also called on the government to defer the decision. The

Committee, chaired by Professor Shelton Kodikara, consisted of Professor C. R. de Silva (Dean), Prof. L. V. Jayatilaka, Prof. Hiran Dias, Mrs. Chandra Ranaraja, Dr. Nihal Karunaratne and Mr. C. G. Abeykoon.

The committee found nothing objectionable in the "concept of a university township" provided it did not damage academic life, the integrity of the campus, the university's traditions.

The Committee recommended the development of the university as a Peradeniya township rather than the much larger Kandy township. The idea of a student desire to "develop linkages" with the Kandy public is a mistake. The students place a greater value on "developing linkages among their fellow students, from other faculties and other disciplines and building closer links with the faculty".

D.

Letter

Political Freedom

While thanking you for publishing my article on 'fascism and McCarthyism' may I point out that the "great Marxist leader" whom I spoke of in the concluding paragraph was Rosa Luxemburg. She said: "Freedom for supporters of the government only or for members of one party — however numerous they may be — is no freedom at all for the one who thinks differently. Not because of any fanatical concept of 'justice' but because all that is instructive, wholesome and purifying in political freedom depends on that special characteristic, and its effectiveness vanishes when 'freedom' becomes a special privilege".

As I said Rosa Luxemburg disagreed with both Lenin and Trotsky on this subject.

May I also point out that 'The Prussian Act' was dated 1752 not 1952.

Amaradasa Fernando

ETHNIC ISSUE

J. R. : here I stand

In content and style, it was different from any other Address to Parliament by President JR, said senior MP's from both sides. The speech was in English, without any introductory words in the official language. It is a lawyer's speech, an address to the Appeal Court, observed Opposition stalwart. If it was 'Jayawardene and Jayawardene' (an allusion to the documents prepared before and after Thimpu by Dr. H. W. Jayawardene PC and his lawyers' team and the address was to 'an International court'. A foreign audience, anyway — to Delhi and the world.

"Future discussions must be on the basis of the draft terms

of the accord and understanding (working paper) initialled in Delhi on Aug. 30 1985."

Sri Lanka will not re-open any talks on the so-called "four cardinal principles" of the Tamils: nationality, an identified homeland, right of self-determination and the right to full citizenship by all Tamils.

Meeting the new Indian argument about "the unity and territorial integrity of India" (see LG. Feb. 15) — a reference to the possible impact of the Sri Lankan issue on Delhi Madras relations — President JR said "the unity of India and Sri Lanka are ephemeral".

Slaughter must stop

— SLMP - LSSP - CP

The mounting number of tragic deaths in the battles in Jaffna and in the wanton attack on a vehicle carrying refugees in Dehiwatte, Serunuwara further point to the urgent need for a peaceful and political solution of the worsening conflict, states a joint Press release issued by the L.S.S.P., C.P and the S.L.M.P.

The Release adds: "The deaths of combatants on all sides are to be deplored: but specially tragic is the slaughter of innocent non-combatant Tamils and Sinhalese.

"Meanwhile, the country is heading for economic and political ruin.

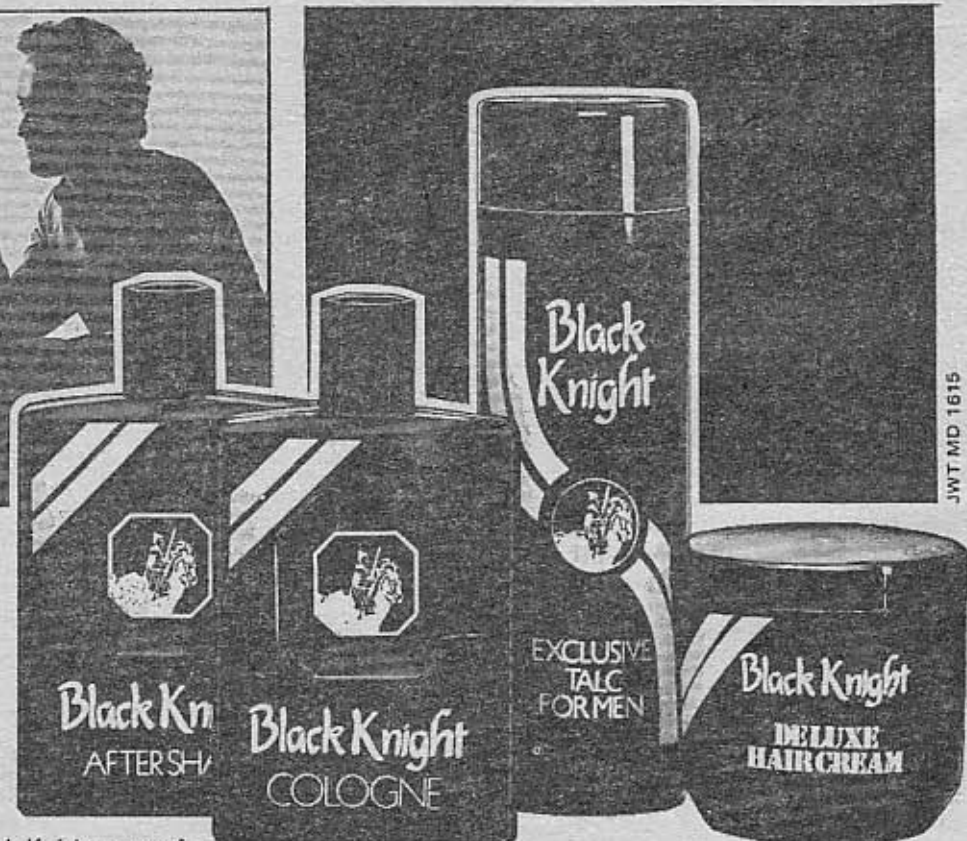
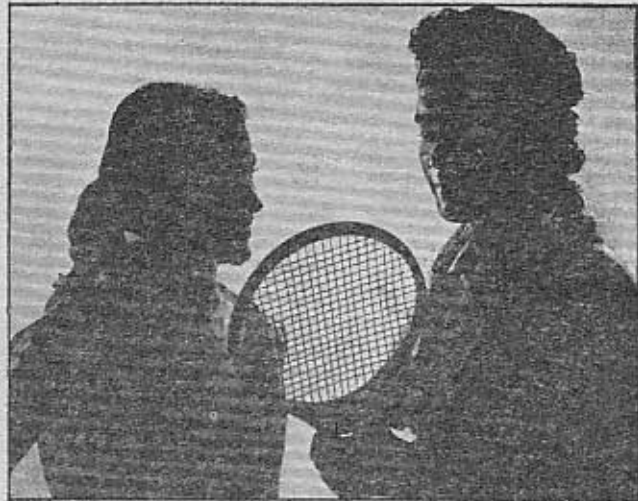
"As we have pointed out before this is a war in which all are

losers and through which the country will be destroyed.

"This slaughter must stop. We call upon the fighters and the Government to end this intolerable situation. Let them recognise the fact that their is an ethnic problem to be solved. Let them recognise that the solution must be reached on the basis of ensuring the integrity of the nation and the unity of the country.

"Let the will of all who are revolted by the killings, the destruction and the unbearable tensions generated by the conflict prevail. Let that will prevail in order to bring about a peaceful political solution that will enable all communities to live together in peace."

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U. S. STATE DEPT. ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA

SECTION I

Respect for Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Political Killing

The death toll, mostly in the North and East, from politically-motivated violence arising from the communal conflict rose again in 1985. The Government estimated that 1,078 persons were killed due to ethnic violence. Of these, 885 were civilians, 75 police, and 118 members of the armed forces.

Continuing violence throughout the year was punctuated by a number of particularly serious incidents of violence by both sides. While conclusive evidence is often lacking, the following are instances in which security forces allegedly attacked innocent civilians. On May 9, after a landmine explosion the previous day in which an army major was killed, members of an army patrol allegedly killed 43 young Tamil males in Velvettiturai on the Jaffna Peninsula. On May 15, a ferry enroute to the Jaffna Peninsula was stopped and 26 Tamils were killed by a group of men armed with knives and blunt instruments; survivors of the attack claim to have recognized several of their attackers as members of a nearby Sri Lankan naval detachment; on the basis of a high-level naval inquiry, the Government has reported that there was no evidence that naval personnel had been involved. Members of the local home guards were identified by survivors as the perpetrators of an incident on June 3 outside of Trincomalee on the east coast in which a bus was stopped and 13 Tamil passengers were shot dead. On August 16, near Vavuniya in the north central part of the country, members of an army patrol who had escaped injury from a landmine explosion moments earlier allegedly undertook reprisals against nearby Tamil civilians, reportedly killing as many as 100 people. The Government initiated an inquiry and repor-

ted that 22 were killed when army reinforcements arriving on the scene "acted without restraint," and that it was taking disciplinary action against the officer in charge of the reinforcements. On November 16 four policemen were killed in the east coast town of Batticaloa when a landmine detonated under their jeep. According to witnesses, police subsequently shot and killed nine local civilians.

In the few cases in which investigations have revealed that the security forces have acted improperly, the Government has maintained that it was unable to obtain adequate evidence to prosecute. It has instead dealt with misbehavior administratively. In 1985, four servicemen were "discharged with ignominy," and inquiries or disciplinary proceedings were being conducted against other members of the security forces allegedly implicated in such incidents as the deaths of Tamil civilians in Velvettiturai in May and in Vavuniya in August.

In 1985, more than in previous years, Tamil militants targetted civilians in addition to the security forces. Typically Tamils accused of collaborating with the Government were tied to a lamp post or telephone pole with a sign noting their alleged crime, and then shot. According to Government figures, 61 Tamils were killed in this manner. The militants also assassinated several prominent members of Jaffna's Tamil community, including a school principal and two former members of parliament, for allegedly being traitors to the cause of Tamil Eelam. Militants were also responsible for setting the explosives which on January 19 destroyed most of the Yal Devi express train from Jaffna to Colombo, killing 29 soldiers and 11 civilians.

Tamils attacked police stations in Jaffna and Mannar in April and May respectively, killing close to 50 police. On May 3 guerrillas attacked a naval base, an army camp, and

a police station on the Jaffna Peninsula.

Whereas most previous attacks against civilians had been directed against members of their own ethnic community, Tamil militants on May 14 attacked Sinhalese civilians in and near the ancient Sinhalese capital of Anuradhapura, killing 146 persons, including 21 women and 14 children. It is widely believed that this incident of terrorism was in retaliation for the alleged killing of 43 young Tamil males in Velvettiturai by army personnel 5 days earlier. Tamil militants are also credited with attacks on the Eastern Province village of Namalwatte on November 7 in which 10 Sinhalese civilians were killed and an attack on September 16 on the Buddhist temple in Thirukunamadu, also in the Eastern Province, in which 2 Buddhist priests and 3 pilgrims were shot dead.

b. Disappearance

Although no accurate statistics are available, reported disappearances rose during 1985. There were a number of reports of the disappearance of young Tamil males who had been arrested and taken in for questioning by the security forces. In a practice once limited mostly to the Jaffna Peninsula, police and military patrols operating in the north-central and eastern coastal parts of the country also began making large-scale arrests and detentions of young Tamil males as the insurgency spread to those areas. Amnesty International estimated in October that 180 such detainees had "disappeared" in "recent months." Some of those detained were later discovered by their families to be in detention at police stations or in army detention camps. Others have not been found. In several instances, relatives or organizations seeking information about the missing say they were told the individual had never been arrested, or had been released and departed for terrorist training outside the country, or had been

shot while trying to escape. The Government estimated that 60 civilians and members of the security forces were abducted by Tamil militants and are presumed to have been killed. The most prominent case of disappearance in 1985 involved Father Mary Bastian, a Tamil Catholic priest in the western coastal Mannar area. On January 5-6, an army patrol searching for guerrillas opened fire in the vicinity of his church reportedly killing eight persons. According to some eyewitnesses among those killed was Fr. Bastian.

His body was never found and a government investigation reportedly failed to find evidence that security forces had killed him. At year's end, seven Sinhalese pilgrims traveling to a Catholic shrine in northwestern Sri Lanka were reportedly abducted by militants; their whereabouts remain unknown.

c. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Constitution guarantees that "no person shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" and in 1982 the government submitted to the UN a unilateral declaration opposing the use of torture.

There have been persistent reports of torture or ill treatment by military and police of persons detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Amnesty International published a special report in October on torture in Sri Lanka. The report cites affidavits submitted by alleged victims, as well as statements by doctors who claim to have treated the victims and said that they were able to corroborate their allegations of ill treatment. The Amnesty International report noted that torture victims are most often those detained for political offenses, either radical leftist Sinhalese or Tamils accused of collaborating with the separatists. The Government states that, because the alleged victims are not identified in the report, it is unable to respond to specific allegations of torture or to pursue inquiries into individual cases.

Amnesty International also alleged that ill treatment of detainees usually occurs in military camps or police stations, but is rarely reported in prisons, where regular criminals are held. The Government has stated that no police officers have been convicted of causing physical harm to persons in police custody.

Prison conditions in Sri Lanka are not good, particularly in pre-trial detention centers, many of which are old and overcrowded. In prisons for convicted prisoners, however, there is less overcrowding. The Government has begun construction of a new prison which is scheduled for completion in several years.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention or Exile

The Constitution stipulates that no person "shall be arrested except according to procedure established by law" and that an arrested person must be informed of the reason for his arrest. Within 24 hours, an arrested person must be brought before a magistrate who may authorize bail or, for serious crimes, continued detention. A suspect may be detained up to three months without bail, or longer if a court so rules. Persons convicted of criminal offenses may be sentenced to "rigorous imprisonment", (hard labor) under which they are compelled to work.

There are exceptions to the normal rules for a person detained under the emergency regulations or under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Under the state of emergency, first declared in May 1983 and renewed monthly by parliament since then, the President reissues each month the emergency regulations by gazette notification. The regulations give extraordinary powers to the police to use preventive detention on persons suspected of planning to commit offenses or to arrest individuals suspected of having committed a wide variety of crimes. Detainees under these emergency regulations can be held for up to 90 days on orders of the Attorney General, after which time the suspect must be

produced before a magistrate. The magistrate is not empowered to investigate the case, but under the regulation he "shall" remand the detainee to a prison, where he can be held indefinitely. Bail may be granted at the discretion of the Government.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) provides that any person arrested under this law must be produced before a magistrate within three days unless the Minister of National Security orders the suspect to be detained for a period of three months. Such an order may be renewed for a period of up to 18 months. The terms of detention are set out in this order; detainees do not have the same rights as other prisoners regarding visits by family, access to lawyers, food and other conditions of incarceration.

The PTA and emergency regulations were used extensively in 1985 to detain large numbers of persons, mostly Tamil youths, especially in the north and east. The Government has reported it arrested 1,878 persons under the PTA. Of those 880 had been released at year's end. According to local human rights activists, there were 55 detainees, as of November, who had been held without charges under the PTA for more than the legally permissible 18 months. In five cases, the Government chose to redetain them under the emergency regulations. The others were to be released, but at year's end only eight of the 50 had been released and one charged under the PTA; the other 41 remained in custody.

Several observers reported that a common practice of the security forces is to round up all young men between the ages of 16 and 35 within about a square mile radius of the site of a terrorist incident. Those detained under the PTA are questioned and some are released, while others are taken to detention facilities. Relatives may write to the Defense Ministry and ask that the case of their family member be reviewed. The review is conducted by a three-

(Continued on page 15)

Non-ethnic causes of our crises

Dr. Mervyn D. De Silva

(Former Adviser, Ministry of Plan Implementation)

Those strutting the corridors of power never reflect the probable repercussions to their actions. At that time the corridors of power were overcrowded with foreign aid missions, foreign and local industrial collaborators, representatives of non-governmental organisations of all descriptions, hordes of expatriate nationals, foreign experts, and the usual supporters and cross overs — all falling over each other in offering generous support. They did not realise that politically motivated actions against leaders could undermine public faith in and respect for, the law of the country.

(x) Political machination:

When the civic rights of the leader of the SLFP or the Sinhala Section of the opposition were removed, questions began to be raised about the legality of her continuance as the leader of that party and the government used the situation advantageously to sponsor a split in the party.

(xi) Solid foundation for Lawlessness:

The disruption of the opposition was celebrated as a victory for the ruling party little realising that such public displays can gravely warp the attitudes of men. Nor was it recognised that all the double talk, double standards, and double crossing, by the leaders could damage any respect for all codes of decent behavior and conduct.

The conduct of the people in power influence the thinking of the people at all levels, and therefore they can be accused of being collectively responsible for the 'loose discipline prevailing in the country today'.

(xii) Political psychopaths:

While the exit of the leader of the SLFP enhanced the position of the leader of the opposition (Tamil), the obsession of the ruling party to destroy the SLFP continued relentlessly. The much publicised episode about the acquisition of their headquarters, out of 'sheer concern' for a breach of peace, after in the first instance handing over the keys to the leader of the splinter party, are all actions that puzzled and shocked the ordinary people.

5. THE TIDAL WAVE OF CORRUPTION

(i) The range:

With accelerated development and huge investment programs on all fronts there arose never ending allegations of acceptance of commissions, bribery, malpractices in the award of tenders, smuggling of gold bars, junkets and joy rides abroad for henchmen and relatives, unjust appointments, diplomatic posts for relations of party supporters, appointment of unqualified persons contrary to established terms of recruitment, life styles that cannot be explained by the known earning power and assets originally owned. The politicians and the bureaucrats of the new administration had created an augean stables with no Hercules in sight.

(ii) Glaring acts

Of the many reports of alleged corruption the most glaring and daring is the case of the member of parliament who was allegedly

caught smuggling gold bars. But, how did the government so dedicated to eliminating corruption react? Wasn't democracy made a mockery of when it removed the member, but appointed his sister?

The new device of appointing members of parliament to fill vacancies, and shuttling them from constituency to constituency, has made a joke of the democratic process. If this is how those entrusted with the government of this country react to corruption, what can be expected from the people, the younger generation? In the current wave of lawlessness it is obvious that the people concerned are following the examples given and standards set by their leaders who have thrown honesty, sincerity, and morality to the winds for the sake of money, the all powerful God of Sri Lanka.

(iii) High post for corrupt:

When top-rank politicians are removed from office for alleged connections with tender malpractices and then, after a short period of purgation are given equally high posts, the ideals of integrity in public life are torn down. Can these ideals be inculcated in the minds of the people, particularly the younger generation who perhaps in desperation are taking to drugs. The time has come to purge our political and social systems of all its injustices, dishonesty, hypocrisy and insincerity by having a free and fair general Election so that the people can select their representatives without interference as in the pre-1977 days.

6. POLITICS SANS HONESTY

(i) PR system:

When the government assumed power in 1977 it promised the people a new constitution and amendment of the election laws for conducting elections on the Proportional representation basis. However, before long, faced with the prospect of having to encounter a stronger opposition if elections were held under this very system, elections were abandoned and a referendum to extend the life of the 1977 parliament expiring in August 1983 was conducted in December 1982 on the phony claim of imagined... Naxalites.

(ii) Presidential system and reversal:

One of the reasons advanced for adopting the Gaullist Presidential system was to have a strong Executive head of state. It was argued that since the elections to office of the latter takes place 6 months after the general elections, the transfer of power would be made without post election violence. Accordingly, the general elections were to be held in July 1983 and the Presidential elections in February, 1984.

By 1982 however, the economic conditions in the country began to deteriorate rapidly and inflation increased exponentially. In fact the government's own mentor, the World Bank, predicted severe financial strains by the end of 1983 and the beginning of 1984, the due date for the Presidential elections.

Although the government had a life of one and a half years more, and the incumbent President 2 years, it seemed politically expedient to hold elections in 1982 when the people were still enrapt in the magic of consumerism and the open market economy.

The announcement of 1982 as election year at first shocked the people and led them to suspect a catch. It gave rise to much discussions on the mechanics of

the transfer of power under the presidential system.

Would there be a tussle between parliament and the incumbent President, who may belong to the defeated party? How could the incumbent president chair a meeting of the cabinet of ministers formed by the majority party and not his own? What would happen in case he formed a cabinet drawn exclusively from the minority group of his own party? And, then there was the suggestion that parliament may have to storm President House, if he refused to resign! With all these in the air, like a bolt from the blue came the decision to reverse the sequence and hold the Presidential elections in October 1982, before the General Elections.

In this case parliament is not dissolved and the members of parliament will hold power and will have access to government machinery.

(iii) The Presidential elections:

With that decision, the prolonged sermons from every conceivable platform in defense and in praise of the new PR system was forgotten. The credibility of the government, eroded when they saw the wide gap between preaching and practice.

With the whole opposition in disarray, their party organisations bankrupt. With the members of parliament still in power and wielding that power at the election, the results of the election was a foregone conclusion. There was solid and abundant financial backing for the ruling party and the shared interest groups. All Ministries went into full gear, a total control of mass media played a major role. However, inspite of all the odds against the last minute candidate the opposition candidate put on a valiant fight and barely lost and with him so did the people.

(iv) Referendum or Tribal War:

The referendum was held in December 1982, to decide on the extension of parliament that expired 6 months from that date, for a period of 6 years. The opposition did not get even breathing space to assemble its forces. The masses did not understand the significance of the referendum.

They were puzzled as to why the leader of the SLFP, unable to contest the presidential elections, could canvas at the referendum. They were all confused, but hesitantly surrendered to the assaults on democracy as they were aware that the principle, the end justifies the means was a basic tenet accepted and practiced by the ruling party.

(v) Government Group Silenced:

Just prior to the referendum, undated letters of resignation were given by the elected representatives of parliament including the Prime Minister, to the President. The purpose of these letters ostensibly was to enable the President to remove members wanting in their stewardship. What is significant is that in terms of the law that existed at that time, when an MP resigned his seat no by-election was possible, and the General Secretary of the party to which the MP belonged nominated a person of the party's choice to fill such vacancy. Thus, the MP elected by the majority of the people was to be removed by the hierarchy of his party and another appointed in his place, not by the will of the people.

What a commentary on the quality of the members of parliament who willingly relinquished their powers in exchange for a continued 6 year period.

TULF DEMANDS: STARTING POINT OR BOTTOM LINE?

Romesh Fernando

"More than any other independent state in South Asia, Sri Lanka can claim to be a nation in a more complete sense than a mere geographical expression or an artificial administrative entity."

A. J. Wilson

pp. 281, Sri Lanka: A Survey
(ed) K. M. de Silva, 1977

As a response to the working Paper prepared by H. W. Jayawardane and Romesh Bhandhari last September the TULF has submitted a set of proposals which they hope would form the basis of a final settlement to the National Question. But unfortunately some of their key demands are rather unrealistic and have no likelihood of falling within a Sinhalese consensus on the ethnic issue. A closer examination of these proposals will make clear what is actually at stake.

The TULF wants Sri Lanka to be a Union of States, that is a Federal State. This is a unique demand since the principle of federalism is usually applied to unite separate entities into a single nation. If we consider example from world history there are nations such as Canada, India, Switzerland and Yugoslavia which have achieved unity and integrity by the federal principle to weld together diverse ethnic groups previously separated. What is needed in Sri Lanka is a devolution of power from the Centre to the Provinces to enable the people of the areas and the various communities to enjoy a measure of autonomy.

In order to grant this there is no need for the Unitary nature of the Constitution to be changed. Provincial Councils can be established by an amendment to the Constitution while executive, legislative and judicial powers can be delegated to the Provinces by a simple Act of Parliament. But to withdraw such powers Parliament should be able to enact law

and such measures only by a two thirds majority. By this device (which was suggested to the Sri Lankan government by Indian Constitutional experts) we can have genuine provincial autonomy and yet retain the unitary nature of the State. Also the transition from a Unitary to a Federal State (since it is a fundamental change) would require approval at a nationwide referendum. In such an event it is certain that the majority of the people will reject the idea of a Federal State.

They also want the Northern and Eastern provinces, which are predominantly Tamil speaking to constitute one Tamil linguistic state. But unlike in India, where the demarcation of states on a linguistic basis has achieved unity in diversity, in Sri Lanka it would only encourage further separation. In India there are twenty two linguistic states of which Tamil Nadu is one. But if this principle were applied to Sri Lanka it would result in only two linguistic states; a Sinhalese state and a Tamil state, which would be mutually antagonistic. Also it would lead to the domination of the East by the North (Jaffna domination). Since the Tamils account for only forty percent of the population in the East it would also be an injustice to the Muslims and Sinhalese in that province.

For Sri Lanka, better examples to follow would be Canada (two languages and ten provinces), Switzerland (four languages and twenty two cantons) and Yugoslavia (three languages and six regions). The existing provincial boundaries can be made use of in Sri Lanka, while the port area of Trincomalee should be under a central authority. Since provincial autonomy would be a uniform measure extending through the Island it cannot be used to justify separation at a later date. As the UNP and SLFP have also both indicated their

opposition to the North-East merger this is also the Sinhalese consensus on the issue.

The TULF further advocates that the membership of parliament should reflect the ethnic proportions of the country. They also want special provisions to "ensure the representation of Muslims and Tamils of recent Indian origin who do not occupy contiguous areas." These proposals we may note, are a retrograde step in the development of our political institutions. They have their roots in the reactionary demands for communal representation, by the Tamil leadership during British colonial rule which climaxed in the absurd fifty-fifty demand of G. G. Ponnambalam.

But since the introduction of the second Republican Constitution of 1978 we find that a just method of adequate communal representation has been unconsciously introduced making explicit ethnic quotas in Parliament obsolete and unnecessary. This has been achieved by the system of proportional representation which will be the electoral method at the next general election. By this new system a more balanced representation in interests (communal and political) will be achieved, which was not the case in the earlier "first past the post method". The result would be that Sinhalese and Muslims in Tamil areas as well as Indian Tamils in Kandyan areas (even those who do not occupy contiguous areas) will be given proper parliamentary representation.

Constitutional provisions to make Tamil an official language is yet another of their major demands. Since 1978 Sinhala and Tamil are both national languages while Sinhala is the official language. Lenin in his *Liberals and Democrats on the language Question*, *Severnaya Pravda*, September 5th, 1913 has written: "Tiny Switzerland has not lost anything but has gained

from having not one single official language, but three — German, French and Italian." Thinking on these lines the ideal solution to the language problem in this country would be to have Sinhala, Tamil and English all three as official languages. But on closer examination we find that the language problem here is different from the situation in Switzerland.

The three official languages of Switzerland — German, French and Italian — are also the native languages of three other countries: Germany, France and Italy. But in the case of Sri Lanka, while English is the mother tongue of the United Kingdom and Tamil the mother tongue of Tamil Nadu, Sinhala is confined only to this country. Just as the United Kingdom and Tamil Nadu were the birth places of English and Tamil, Sinhala had its origin and evolution in Sri Lanka. The need for special status for

the Sinhala language in this country can be further demonstrated by the argument from extinction. Even if the English and Tamil languages were to disappear from usage in this country they would still be spoken in the United Kingdom and Tamil Nadu. But if the Sinhala language were to become extinct in Sri Lanka it would mean the end of that language not only in this country but in the whole world.

A more realistic solution would be to have Sinhala, Tamil and English all three as national languages while Sinhala be the official language. On this basis what remains to be done is to make English also a national language. Also we must remember that the TULF was quite willing to accept national language status for Tamil only two years ago. In the abortive Annexure C document drawn up by G. Parathasarathy (which was actually a UNP-TULF deal)

they agreed to this position, provided however that it is properly implemented. In clause 12 of Annexure C (1984) we find: "The Constitution and other laws dealing with the official language Sinhala and the national language Tamil, be accepted and implemented as well as similar laws dealing with the National Flag and Anthem."

Perhaps the TULF has asked for the sky hoping to get a piece of the cloud. If their proposals are merely the starting point for fresh negotiations there is still room for manoeuvre. But on the other hand if their key demands (a Federal Constitution, one Tamil linguistic state, communal representation in Parliament and official language for Tamil) are the bottom line of the Tamil leadership, the prospects solution to the ethnic issue in the near future are very dim indeed.

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Back with the people

Escaped leftist predicts revolution will grow with or without Marcos

On 5 May, 1985 Satur Ocampo, a leading Philippine communist and prominent pre-martial law journalist in detention for nine years, escaped after being allowed a pass to visit the National Press Club in Manila.

Since then he has not been heard of. American freelance photo-journalist **Charles Steiner** is the first person to interview Ocampo since his escape. He talked to him in a town somewhere in the Philippines in the third week of November. The following are extracts from the interview.

What is the state of the revolutionary movement now, what are the immediate goals?

This is a good opportunity to let everybody know that I am all right. I am back with the Pilipino people in struggle, though I am still groping my way through, being overwhelmed by the great changes that have taken place in the revolutionary movement since I was arrested in 1976.

I think what has been made public is that the revolutionary movement of the Left at this period is in what is called the advanced state of the strategic defensive. (This is part of the movement from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate and then to the strategic offensive.) There is no definite schedule or time frame that the revolutionary leadership has placed for the attainment of these precise stages in the revolution. The US Government and President Marcos are worried about what they say is the impending threat of a takeover by the armed forces of the Left. They are providing varying statistics. The United States says that 15,000 is already a worrisome figure.

I am not in a position to say which figure is correct and I think tactically the leadership of the

Is Philippines the next Nicaragua?

(The election 'victory' of Mr. Marcos has thrown US policy into a comic disarray and made President Reagan change his line every other day. The democratic Opposition had a huge victory rally in Manila park while the Marcos family celebration was confined to his cronies in Malacalang Palace. The position of Cardinal Sin, the outspoken leader of the 40 million Catholics, has been supported by the Vatican. President Marcos says only he can save the country, and the US bases, from Communism. Mr. Reagan fears that Marcos will accelerate the advance of the Communists and the guerrilla army, and thus hasten the loss of the two biggest US bases outside the US. What really goes on? What is the future. This interview published in the FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW offers a glimpse into a future that makes Washington and its ASEAN allies nervous).

revolutionary movement would leave it that way, not try to resolve the conflicting statistics of the government and those of the United States. What is very significant at this point is that there is a great upsurge in the political attitude of the Pilipino people, that the New People's Army (NPA) has its hands full in terms of young men and women who want to join, but then the NPA doesn't even have war materiel to admit all of those who want to get into it.

Is there a way that the movement can expand without getting outside help, from other countries?

Since 1980 there has been a very rapid expansion in the manpower and the armed capability of the NPA, and most of the arms that have been collected have been mainly products of operations against the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), meaning internally generated resources. This may go on and intensify in the next few years and, depending on the level of armaments that the AFP, would utilise against the NPA, would determine whether external sources of arms would be necessary.

While the NPA or the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) for

that matter say that the main form of the struggle is the armed struggle, it doesn't leave out the possibility of achieving its ends through political means. Now we are looking more towards the probability of developing a very strong unarmed movement among the people with a moral force that would enable the people's forces, armed and unarmed, to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship with as little bloodshed or blood-letting as possible.

You talk about the overthrow of the Marcos government as a goal, but would you want to see the moderate opposition in its place?

I cannot altogether deny the fact that the continuance of the Marcos dictatorship, its ways of dealing with the people through the use of the armed forces, deception, fanning the revolutionary fire, and that provides fertile ground for recruitment of the NPA and the CPP. But then it is not correct to say that the CPP or NPA anchors its growth and the possibility of success on the continuance of the Marcos dictatorship. The revolutionary leadership is more concerned about sufficiently arousing the people at this point in time

to improve their capability to defend themselves and to cope with the economic crisis and it doesn't necessarily mean that we enjoy seeing Marcos continuing in power. For this reason we would like to see the Marcos dictatorship end as soon as possible.

But would you like to see Corazon Aquino as president in his place?

The problem is now the so-called democratic opposition, or the legal opposition, is in such a disarray and it could not even agree on a common programme that would be responsive to the actual problems pestering Filipino society. The revolutionary leadership would like to see the emergence of a new type of a political leadership in the opposition that would be a departure from the old traditional political spectrum...As far as the electoral process is concerned we don't think that we can achieve thorough going change or reforms by the type of the elections under the Marcos dictatorship which seems is already acceptable to the traditional politicians...The NPA, the CPP and even the National Democratic Front would only be interested in participating in an election that would be leading to the type of government where some basic changes can be attained, but not in a scheme like this, where you just change people.

What do you think of the call for an election in February?

It looks like it's getting to be a big joke, though the opposition seems to be taking it quite seriously. It looks like Marcos was not really sincere or wasn't really prepared to go for it all the way but he got stuck in a situation where he is under pressure both from the US government and from the local opposition forces to get into the snap election. The way he's trying to rig up the conditions or the framework of the electoral process it's getting to be a ridiculous exercise.

How do you envision the next several years?

We expect the next five years to be very volatile politically and

economically I think there is general agreement among economists that there won't be any substantial economic recovery in the next five years. In such a situation we cannot expect the revolutionary ferment among the people, the workers, the peasants and even the middle class to ebb during this period... We think that the Marcos dictatorship is in a very big problem that it will not be able to effect both a recovery of the economy and the recovery of its own credibility. So we foresee a big growth in the revolutionary movement during the next three to five years.

How do you regard the pronouncements coming out of Washington that seem to be putting a lot of pressure on Marcos to make some moves. Is it an actual distancing?

Under President Reagan's administration (the US) seems to be rather unstable in its foreign policy in defining what it wants, except for one thing: it is raising the fundamental issue of the emergence of US power worldwide or the leadership of the US Government in the imagined international anti-communist movement or anti-Soviet struggle. And I think this rising rightist tendency, not only the essential rightist tendency of the Reagan administration, but also some elements of the Right in the US, fans the fears that the situation in the Philippines might follow that of Iran, or Nicaragua unless the US does something

Even in the supposed liberal opposition, while they may disagree with the Reagan administration on the point of support for the Marcos government they are one with the administration in trying to do something, not excluding direct intervention, in order to safeguard US interests.

What is the purpose of the Reagan administration putting public pressures on Marcos?

From their point of view they are convinced that Marcos, regardless of his deep dilemma, still his control of the armed forces and the machinery of government and they don't see any immediate alternative. So I think they are ready to make a gamble, still on

Marcos, but they are open to the possibility of an opposition candidate that might inspire popular support regardless of whether such a candidate would be able to present an alternative government that's responsive to the people's needs. The Americans might shift support, but we don't see any basic change in the type of government that the Americans would support in order to protect the US bases and US investments.

So our point of view is that we do not pin our hopes on the alternatives that are being offered now, but on the type of a political coalition that would have significant representation of the majority of the people, the workers and the peasants as represented by the mass organisations.

Let's go back to the question of getting funds for the NPA; the system of taxation of businesses, is that the main source at this point for cash?

In principle the revolutionary movement hopes to raise funds for its requirements mainly from the support of the people. But in a country or in an economic situation as we have now in the Philippines, however vast the mass support of the revolutionary struggle is, it cannot come up with an ever-increasing cash requirement for running the revolutionary struggle. And so in the various regions of the country the leadership of the movements are devising ways and means by which to raise funds and among these are what we call revolutionary taxation. The basic idea is to impose some taxes on the big corporations, whether foreign or local, that are exploiting the natural resources and human resources of the country, so taxing them means expropriating part of the profits they got for the use of the people. I am not quite sure if the policy has been thoroughly established, that there would be equal application in all areas, but the general principle is that the corporations to be taxed are those whose operations greatly affected the livelihood of the people, like in the mining areas, logging areas that are denuding

the forest, or huge plantations in Mindanao.

Wouldn't it be better to shut down a logging operation that is ruining the entire ecology of an area, as in northern Luzon?

I think the NPA would prefer that. It's one thing (that) they're losing the forest cover, but more basic is that the continued logging operations denude the forest and affect the ecology and the farmers in the lowlands. If the revolutionary movements would have its way it would completely stop these operations. But in the meantime, since they continue to operate under the licence of abetment of the Marcos government, the movement would rather tax them as much as they are capable of giving.

How do you see the support for the Marcos regime from other countries such as Japan and West Germany with investment and financial support? Do you see their role as the US?

Investments from such countries are not so pervasive in their effect on the Philippine economy as that of US investments. The revolutionary movement is not opposed essentially to foreign investments, but opposes investments that over a long period of time are destructive of the development of the Philippines economy. So while at this period the continued support in terms of loans and investments from these countries sort of prop up the Marcos dictatorship, the revolutionary movement gives fair warning that such support must not continue. But it doesn't preclude the possibility of welcoming further investment.

Do you agree with those who see parallels between the current situation in the Philippines and that of Vietnam and also of Nicaragua?

To some extent there are some similarities in conditions and the common denominator of these countries that you mentioned is the state of the economy. The Philippines and Nicaragua are more or

less at the same level of development. The other significant factor that comes into the picture is the pervasive role of the American Government in the running of the countries' political life as well as the economy. I think that to a great extent what happened in Vietnam or say in Nicaragua, might happen here if the Americans get into that act in a direct manner, with the introduction of modern weaponry as well as actual American troops.

In terms of building up a change of government, can you go from feudalism without going through capitalism, as Marx said you must do as an historical process?

There is still a prevalence of feudal practices in the countryside, in the agrarian system, and then there is also the infusion of capital and then the development of capitalism to some degree in the urban centres as well as in the agricultural sector. The programme of the revolutionary struggle strikes both at removing feudalism altogether and achieving democratisation of the ownership of the land, and giving the peasantry democratic rights as all the rest of society... What is foreseen and being developed is the emergence of a type of a society and economic system that would still develop the entrepreneurial capacity of the Filipinos. Let this emerge and dominate over the predominant foreign interests that now take hold of the economy, releasing the capacities and creativity and the energy of the Filipinos.

I think there is sufficient experience to learn from the developments in the Soviet Union, of China, Vietnam and particularly Nicaragua to ensure that the development of the Philippine society of the economy and its political structures would be in conformity with what is required considering the state of the economic and political system prevailing now.

Of those socialist countries you mentioned which one is

the one you can learn most lessons from in a positive sense?

From our point of view we learn both from the positive and negative experiences, so that's the fortune of those who come late to revolutionary struggle. There's a lot of previous experience to learn from. I'm not prepared to say whether it's the Soviet Union or China or which of the socialist countries now are the best examples. Actually looking at how Nicaragua might have evolved had American intervention not taken place, I think we would have seen the evolution of a type of society and economic system that can be replicated in the Philippines. But the very act of intervention now has shifted the priorities of the Sandinista government towards its national defence, because of the Contras and their American support.

U. S. STATE...

(Continued from page 8)

man advisory board which considers the evidence, interviews the police and the detainee, and makes a recommendation. Many of the cases reviewed have led to a recommendation for immediate release, but it frequently takes several months for the process of review and release to be completed.

The Constitution empowers the courts of appeal to issue writs of habeas corpus, and relatives of persons arrested under the PTA or the emergency regulations have brought several habeas corpus suits over the past few years. In no instance where the court inquired into the detention and disappearance while in police custody of a suspect detained under these measures have the results been publicly released.

There is no forced labor in Sri Lanka, other than for criminals sentenced to rigorous imprisonment.

(To be continued)

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How the Arms Race Makes the Poor World Poorer

It is now a commonplace of international economic life that the protectionism of the western industrialised nations, US interest rates, budget deficits and military expenditure have a direct bearing on Third World poverty and debt, and on the bleak future before the underdeveloped nations. The ominous implications of this stark reality are not voiced only by Third World finance and trade ministers but by the spokesmen of the chief economic-financial agencies of the international system — the World Bank, the IMF and UNCTAD, centres as we all know of staid bourgeois conservatism rather than Third World radicalism.

In July, the World Bank's Tom Clausen, addressing the conference of the S.I.D. in Rome (a Brandt Commission-type organisation) issued a clear warning to the West, especially the US, that its policies were driving the Third World to the brink of disaster. Just two days before he spoke, the IMF chief Jacques Larosiere noted that the US reliance on 100 billion dollars a year of capital inflows "cannot continue" since this figure represented one-sixth of the savings of the rest of the world!

In this situation, 'the critical variable' was the ratio of real interest rates to Third World export earnings. If there is a 2.7 percent GDP growth in the next few years, (this is the World Bank's 'low-simulation' projection or worst-case scenario, which the *Financial Times* thought was optimistic), then the Third World's debt burden will rise from 20% to 28% of exports by 1990. Sri Lanka, let us note, has reached 20%, the Finance minister's bottom-line, and 25% may be this year's debt-service ratio, thanks largely to our own military spending.

Budget Deficit

The problem of huge budget deficits became recently a major issue in the U.S. and one direct outcome was the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget-balancing law. Under the law a ceiling of 144 billion dollars was placed for the current year's deficit. Mr. Reagan's latest budget (Jan. 4) did keep the deficit just under the ceiling but nearly touching it — 143.6 billion dollars!

What is significant though is that there are cuts in the spending of non-military agencies but the Defence Department's outlays keep rising from 258 billions in 1986 to 356 billion dollars in 1991. The cuts in the deficit have been made through higher tax receipts (i.e. at the expense of US income tax and business tax paper) rather than through reduced military expenditure.

The mind-boggling billions and billions of dollars, the staggering statistics and figures, should not cloud or confuse our own minds about the fundamental significance of these facts. Reaganism is militarism and it was no less an authoritative American voice than that of the veteran US diplomat George F. Kennan (the architect, by the way, of the doctrine of "containing" Communism) which spoke out plainly to spell out its real meaning. He called it "the militarisation of thought and discourse" in US politics in the post-Reagan era. And that itself was a respectably intellectual translation of the objective bluntly stated by a newly elected President Reagan. To make American No. 1! In short, the central aim of American policy was military superiority and dominance, the anti thesis of the "strategic balance" which had sustained world peace and detente in the post-war decades.

Again, one pauses to ask the question which comes instinctively to the average person, even an educated outward-looking individual, in the Third World. How do these issues debated heatedly and sometimes acrimoniously, in the ratified realms of superpower and Big-power summits, concern us? Commenting on the most recent of UNCTAD reports on protectionism — a protectionism which not only hurts our fledgling export industries but workers in western Europe threatened with lay-offs — the *Financial Times* said:

Even if protectionism can be kept at bay, the curious combination of record unemployment in the industrialised countries, debt-induced austerity in the Third world and an international financial system which is recycling every dollar or available savings into the US budget deficit, justifies UNCTAD's basic contention that it is high time to view debt, trade and international macro-economic management within a single framework".

At the same Society for International Development (CID) conference which Mr. Clausen addressed, the Archbishop of Sao Paulo Brazil, put flesh and blood into these stark facts and figures. Each time, the US raised its interest rate by one percent, "thousands" he said died into the Third World because money that could be used for health care and food is sent out". And it is used for space weapons and 'Star Wars' research! Is this connection between starvation and death in the Third World and high-tech megalomania tenuous or fanciful?

The former Economics Affairs Minister of West Germany, Erhard Eppler argues that 'Star Wars' the project nearest to Mr. Reagan's

heart, means nothing less than "an openended arms race".

Arms Race

Its consequences are explained in these terms. "I omit the unsatisfied needs of the people of the Soviet Union and its allies since this, bad enough in itself, has very little impact on the Southern part of the globe... (the third world)... SDI means that the deficit in the US budget may increase rather than decrease.. anyway there is no room for debt-settlement... for the South this means annual debt-servicing surpasses the total amount of debts in 1974! It means the economies of the South will have no chance to become relatively self-reliant... the higher the debt-service, the more dependent and smaller the chances to satisfy basic needs inside these countries."

So, the arms race and 'star Wars' does affect the poorest of the poor and therefore should not be exclu-

ded from the general discussion of other issues of international politics by the intelligentsia of the Third World, its policy-makers, and opinion-leaders. At a first glance, the intricate questions of arms control negotiations, particularly those wrapped in complex technological problems, may seem matters that cannot possibly influence the material conditions of life in the developing countries, their urgent economic and social demands. But the notion that such a debate is an intellectual luxury that we can ill afford is a false, misleading idea which must be banished from Third World thinking.

As Willy Brandt, a prominent sympathiser of the Third World correctly observe: "The world does not belong to the superpowers alone. One important implication of the results of Geneva is not explicitly mentioned in the joint statement; the tremendous impact that cooperation and detente could have, in economic terms, not

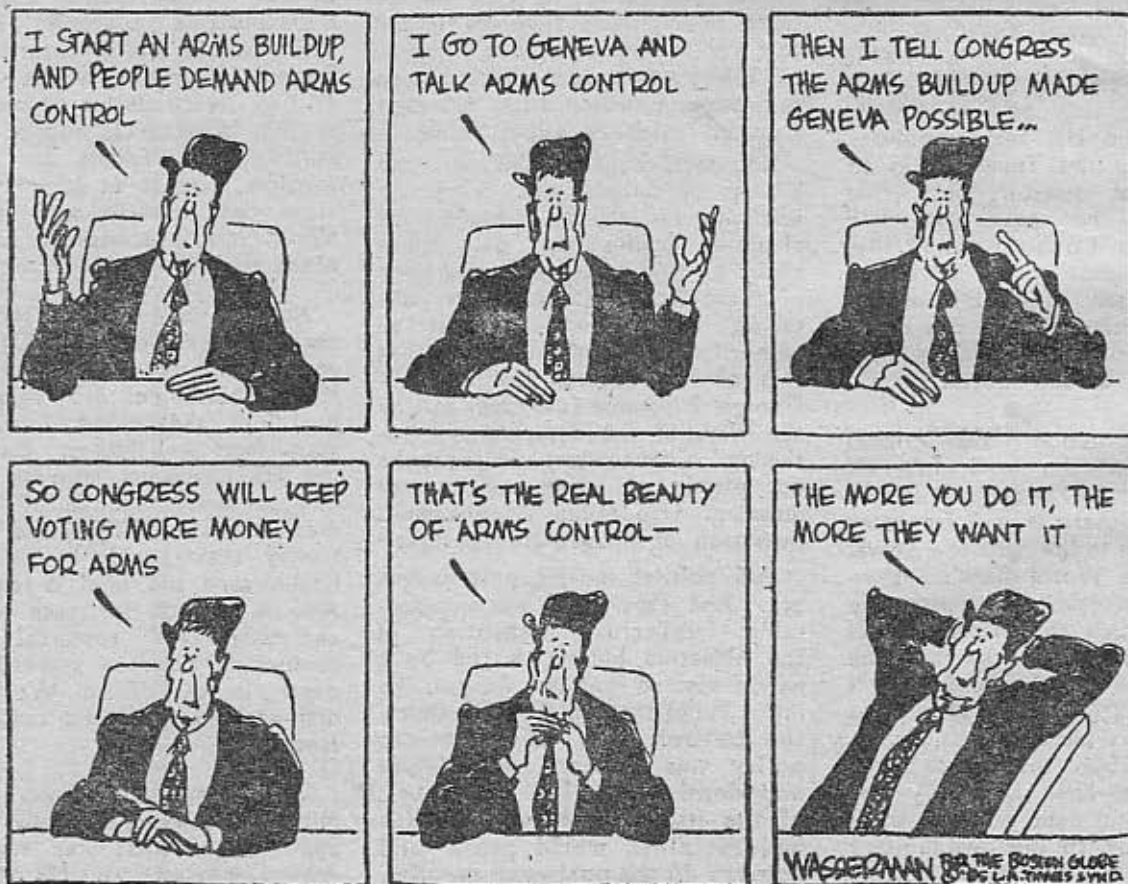
only for the superpowers but also for the rest of the world. The Third World should share in these benefits at least to some extent".

Premier's Proposal

When he addressed the 40th anniversary sessions of the United Nations, a Third world spokesman did in fact place before the World body a definite proposal which not only attracted attention from the international press but won warm praise from fellow Third World delegates. Sri Lanka's Prime Minister R. Premadasa proposed a joint appeal to US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev:

** Recognise the most volatile situation faced by the superpowers and the benefits that will accrue to themselves and the whole of mankind by diverting such military outlays to peaceful and humanitarian efforts.

(Continued on page 23)



Too many pressures, no national consensus

Bhabani Sen Gupta

Each time I visit Pakistan, I keep recalling the lines of a black American poet: "brothers/i/under-stand/the situation." In my recent visit I took two decisions. The one week I had at my disposal I spent in Lahore, without moving, like Jesting Pilate, from one city to another. Second, I asked questions and listened, and as far as possible, refrained from joining in a discussion. Punjab dominates Pakistan; it is to Pakistan what India is to South Asia. The political temper of Punjab is therefore crucial to an understanding of the political frame of the country, present and future.

Pakistan is under strong pressure from several quarters, internal as well as external. I went to Lahore on an invitation to take part in an international seminar on Afghanistan. Convened by the powerful daily *Jang*, the seminar, which turned out actually to be an unruly noisy assembly, showed how deeply cleaved Pakistan was on an Afghan settlement which would require the armed guerrillas to return to an Afghanistan ruled by a Marxist party headed by Babrak Karmal. The mujahedeens and their political supporters mustered in strength at the seminar hall and flexed their muscles; the supporters and opponents of direct talk with Kabul almost came to blows. Presiding over a session, the most fanatically fundamentalist of the guerrilla leaders, Hukmutyar, made it quite clear that the mujahedeens would not return to Afghanistan until it had been liberated from the Soviets and the communists. Leaders of the Jamat-i-Islami, political patron of the mujahedeens, and also dispenser of the funds flowing in from the oil-rich Arab countries for the upkeep of the refugees, repeatedly assured the Afghan spokesmen that they would not "allow" the government of Pakistan to "sell them down" the drain of a comprehensive political settlement that might fall short of "true liberation" of Afghanistan.

A retired Pakistani diplomat, who has been pleading for several years for direct talks with Moscow and Kabul, was almost lynched, while Ghaus Baksh Bizenzo was not allowed to finish his speech. "The Afghan civil war has come to Pakistan," wailed the former diplomat. In Islamabad, the government took alarm, and quickly advised **The Muslim** not to hold a seminar on India-Pakistan relations it had planned for January 3. In Washington, the state department leaked out to the **New York Times** that at the latest round of proximity talks in Geneva, the Soviets had expressed their readiness to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan within one year of the conclusion and implementation of an agreement on comprehensive settlement of the Afghan problem. The Pakistan government is on record that it will talk directly with Kabul when the Soviets give a time-frame for the withdrawal of their troops.

Now that the Afghan crisis is winding down to a settlement, Pakistan will have to face the well-armed mujahedeens with the unwelcome prospect of sending them back to their homelands. Most people I met in Lahore said that it was a task the military regime could not tackle without the active cooperation of the political parties and the people. This is widely believed to be one of the strongest reasons why General Zia agreed to abolish Martial Law. Reports said that he and Junejo were trying to persuade the Jamat-i-Islami to join the government. The Jamat leaders I spoke to rejected the idea of their participating in the "undemocratic" government. Indeed, the Jamat had joined the MRD to call for mid-term election with the political parties taking part in complete freedom. The political parties seemed to believe that General Zia-ul-Haq would have to yield to a fully representative regime if he were to mobilise public support to disarm the mujahedeens and secure their return to Afghanistan.

The future of the Afghan refugees was not the only factor that, according to politicians in Lahore, was compelling the General to yield to a democratic restoration, however haltingly and reluctantly. The economy had lost its shine; dark days lay ahead. About 500,000 Pakistanis had returned from the Arab countries, more were being laid off every month. The hard currency repatriated by 3 million Pakistanis working in the Gulf region — adding up to \$3 million and more — was keeping the economy of Pakistan afloat. Exports were shrinking. I heard many in Lahore regret the fact that in 35 years Pakistan had done little to build an industrial base. Dr Mubasher Hassan, who was finance minister in Bhutto's government, pointed out, more in sorrow than in anger, that in nearly eight years of his rule, General Zia had not set up a single significant industry.

Pakistanis had seen a number of military regimes in Latin America and Africa handing over political power to elected civilian leaders at times of their nations, economic distress. They therefore argued that General Zia-ul-Haq too would not wish to face an inclement economic weather.

Most Pakistanis suspected that the president was also under considerable American pressure to democratise his regime, to come to terms with India, and even to accept an Afghan settlement. Washington might find worthy of underwriting. Partly because of deeply entrenched anti-Americanism, partly because of the unpopularity of military rule, and also because of the Punjabi Pakistani's gut suspicion and distrust of India, I found, to my surprise, that the General's present policy of offering India cooperation in trade and cultural affairs was not quite popular in Lahore.

Nor did the majority of Lahorites I met had a rosey vision of SAARC. Many cynically described SAARC as "an American shark", and sus-

pected that American capitalists had agreed to "hand over the South Asian markets to Indian capitalists in return of a big slice of the Indian market for themselves". This perception, however bizarre it may seem to Indians, was articulated by politicians and intellectuals of the left as well as the right. The best comment that I could hear on this topic came from two leading industrialists. Both said with an air of resignation that they saw nothing wrong in yielding to Indian capitalists what Pakistan had been yielding for many years to American and West European multinationals. "We will be gainer", said one of them. "We will get Indian capital goods at cheaper prices and we should be able to strike bargains."

Amongst academic intellectuals and newspaper analysts, few spoke in warm support of Zia-ul Haq's

getting-close-to-India policy. The resentment and criticism was provoked by three factors. First, the "haste and the secrecy." As a professor at the Punjab University put it, "Why is he in such a hurry? And why should he beg India for goodwill and friendship? Has India given us anything? Is it ready to initiate bilateral discussions within the framework of the Simla agreement with a view to resolving the Kashmir issue? Has it stopped questioning our sovereign right to buy weapons and pursue our nuclear programme? Hasn't India occupied the Saichin glacier?"

"Why is he keeping everything secret from us?" groaned a PPP cadre, speaking about the government's reluctance to allow the people to participate in the making of foreign policy. "For a whole year, the national assembly was denied an opportunity to debate

foreign policy. It was only at the fag end of the year that a shallow two-day debate was allowed, in which the government hardly divulged any hard information. The people of Pakistan do not know what's happening at the Geneva talks on Afghanistan. They have not been told what's the problem in Saichin. Now there is another hush-hush act going on to strike some accords with India. General Zia has kept complete control of foreign policy and defence. In order to get arms from America, he is willing to pay any price."

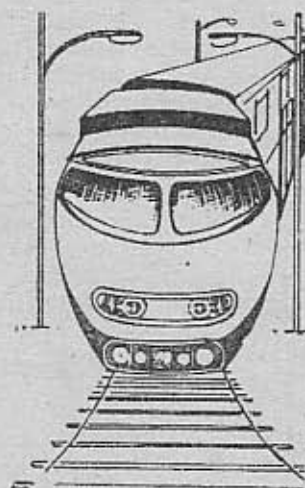
Even Bizenzo was unhappy about SAARC and the Delhi minisummit. "We do not wish to see Rajiv Gandhi rubbing shoulders with military rulers. Indian democracy is our only hope. Whatever India does must help the cause of democracy in Pakistan. Your young prime

(Continued on page 24)

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CAT'S EYE



IBSEN'S DOLL'S HOUSE IN SINHALA

For Women's Day, this year, Vijita Guneratne is producing a Sinhala translation of Ibsen's famous play 'A Dolls House', which created a sensation in Europe when it was first performed in 1879, and also had an impact in Asia in the early 20th century.

Ibsen's understanding of the, role of women in patriarchal society lies behind "A Doll's House", as is evident from some of his notes written in 1878:

There are two kinds of moral law, two kinds of conscience, one for men and one, quite different, for women... The wife in the play ends by having no idea what is right and what is wrong; natural feelings on the one hand and belief in authority on the other lead her to utter distraction... A woman cannot be herself in modern society. It is an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess feminine conduct from a masculine standpoint.

Ibsen actually started writing "A Doll's House" six months later, but his interest in this problem was also practical as is indicated by a proposal that he put before the Scandinavian Club in Rome, (where when he was living at the time) that women should have the right to vote on all club matters. Ibsen is said to have delivered an 'impassioned' speech in support of his proposal, it was however defeated and Ibsen reacted by refusing to speak to those who had voted against his proposal.

The play was completed in August 1879, published in Copenhagen in December, and first performed at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen in December that year. At the plot level, the play is about the plight of a wife — Nora, who has borrowed money without her husband's knowledge even though it is for his benefit. When this comes to the husband's knowledge, he is concerned only with its possible effects on his own status and position and condemns her as profligate and immoral. This forces Nora to rethink her own position and to the conclusion that women are well — thought of only in so far as they subscribe to and abide by rules made for their conduct by men. Nora then decides to leave her husband and children as the only means of achieving her own self — realisation to which, as a human being, she feels entitled.

The play had a tremendous impact: a contemporary critic says that it 'exploded like a bomb into contemporary life. 'The Pillars of Society' (an earlier play), though it attacked social conventions, still retained the traditional theatrical happy ending so that it bit less sharply. But 'A Doll's House' knew no mercy; ending not in reconciliation, but in inexorable calamity, it pronounced a death sentence on accepted social ethics". The impact was acknowledged even by Strindberg, the other great Scandinavian playwright, whose attitude towards women was very traditional; He wrote "marriage was revealed as being a far from divine institution, people stopped regarding it as an automatic provider of absolute bliss and divorce between incompatible parties came at last to be accepted as conceivably justifiable".

"A Doll's House" has continued to have much the same effects; the slamming of the front door has echoed not only down the ages in Europe but in other parts of the world as well. It is interesting to note, in this connection, the impact of Nora in the movement towards women's emancipation in Asia. In a speech to women college students in 1928, Nehru referred to the play.

"I wonder if any of you here has read Ibsen's Dolls' House. If so you will perhaps appreciate the word 'doll' when I use it in this connection. The future of India cannot consist of dolls and playthings and if you make half the population of the country the mere playthings of the other half, an encumbrance on others, how will you ever make progress?"

The effect of "A Doll's House" on the emerging consciousness of women in Asia was wide-spread. Nora became a topic of discussion in many countries; she became a symbol not only for women but also for intellectuals struggling against the constraints of the old order. Women activists were dubbed "Noras" in China, Japan and Korea; Jiu Jin, a Chinese woman revolutionary of the Sun-Yat — Sen group, who was executed at the beginning of this century for rebellion, was eulogised by the Chinese leader, Kuo-Mo Jo as "the incarnation of Ibsen's Nora". In a talk given at a Beijing Women's College in 1923, the famous Chinese writer Lu Xun discussed the question "What Happens After Nora Leaves Home?" His point was that, given the social conditions of the day, "she can hardly avoid going to the bad, or returning."

Conditions are now different and there are many other alternatives. But the point that Ibsen makes — that women are "dolls" being manipulated and played with by men — fathers and husbands particularly — remains — valid in our society. It is that which makes a production of this play in Sinhala an event of importance for the women's movement in Sri Lanka, where the patriarchal family is still the dominant cell of social organisation.

However, in spite of this background, one must not treat "A Dolls' House" as a play only about women's rights. Whatever the genesis of the play, Ibsen in writing it, transcends this aspect; it is finally about the need of every individual — male or female — to find out the kind of person he or she really is and wants to be and to attempt to realise that state. It is this theme and the technical mastery with which it is worked out — simplicity and economy of language, a plot structure that avoids any superfluous action — that

makes "A Doll's House" an enduring masterpiece.

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS' DAY IN SRI LANKA

This year International Women's Day — March 8 — is being celebrated by a number of different women's groups and organisations throughout the week of March 4 — March 11.

On March 4 — 5,

the Women's Bureau is holding a seminar on Women and the Media,

On March 7, —

the women of the Left parties (CP, LSSP, & SLMP) and other groups are holding a meeting at the Public Library Hall, 4 pm.

On March 8, —

the Pacific and Asian Women's Forum is holding a series of creative workshops for Women at the Open Air Theatre of the

Vihara Maha Devi Park from 9 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. There will also be an exhibition of women's creative work at the Art Gallery throughout the day. A special display on traditional herbal cures will form a part of the exhibition.

At 2.00 p.m. Women's Action Committee (WAC) is holding a public meeting at the New Town Hall.

On March 9, —

The Gami Kantha Samithi Sammelanaya is holding a public meeting at the Town Hall, Galle.

On March 10 —

The premier performance of the Sinhala production of Ibsen's Dolls House will be at the Lionel Wendt Theatre at 5.00 p.m. This first show will be for women and entrance will be a nominal sum of Rs. 2/- only

On March 11 —

The University Girls choir will hold a concert of Women's songs at the John de Silva Theatre.

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The rage of Rambo

Chris Reed

As the most popular adult-only US film ever screened Rambo grossed over \$100 million in a few weeks, and was cheered in 2,165 cinemas. Time magazine said, "It seems to have perfectly articulated the nation's mood over Vietnam."

Articulate? Hardly. Stallone, co-writer of the film, substitutes oafish muttering for dialogue, making that other hero of the genre, Clint Eastwood, seem almost garrulous. Other than the mass murder of foreigners who don't agree with him, Stallone's only preoccupation in the film is exposing his preposterous body. His enormous breasts loom over the screen like Jane Russell in *The Outlaw*. The acting is performed mostly by his biceps.

The film is racist in its depiction of Vietnamese as perfidious and of Russians as sadistic automatons. In a less reactionary, gung-ho context, Rambo would probably be denounced as blasphemous. The character John Rambo is called "the chosen one" and is twice tortured in the posture of the crucifixion, once in leech-infested sewage.

The several hundred killings are perpetrated almost entirely by Rambo alone, although early on he is assisted by a female Vietnamese agent for the US called Co (who is not even played by an Oriental, but Julia Nickson speaking pidgin).

Rambo stabs, clubs, shoots, strangles, burns, bombs, drowns, and garrottes his victims, using enough knives to equip a meat market and mostly carried in his boots. As well as a high-tech bow with exploding arrows, he also manages to produce three assorted machine guns, all with inexhaustible ammunition clips.

He has no need of a helmet or flak jacket — let alone a shirt — because none of the enemy fire ever hits him, whereas his never misses. Rambo was obviously what the Americans needed before being chased out of Saigon in 1975.

SYLVESTER STALLONE'S Rambo II has become more than just a movie. It opened in American cinemas at the right time to profit from the Beirut hijacking. When the White House was impotent with rage, patriotic Americans could watch the muscle of Rambo destroy the Vietnamese and Russian armies as he rescued GIs from Communist prisons; he won in the cinema the war the United States had lost on the ground. Even President Reagan let it be known he'd watched Rambo in action. Christopher Reed, in San Francisco, looks at the Rambo phenomenon that has released the frustration of a nation.

The B-52s might even have remained in Guam for Rambo is "a human war machine" as his old colonel observes. He becomes Bombo and blows up two dozen bamboo huts, an entire village, a bridge, several vehicles, a monster Russian bomber helicopter, two boats, a rice paddy and about half a battalion.

As an ex-Green Beret, Rambo's task is to find a jungle camp for American MIAs, Missing in Action, photograph any if there, and return "without engaging the enemy". (As this is supposed to be 1985, the incursion is illegal and Vietnam is not an enemy.)

Ignoring his brief from the start, he tells Co that, "orders don't

matter". His first act is to shoot an arrow through a guard's head, impaling him to a tree. This caused a fellow behind me in a T-shirt marked USA" in red, white and blue, to shout gleefully "good arrow!" as if at a Sunday darts match.

Rambo's final words are the nearest he comes to a full sentence. All he wants, he grunts, is "for our country to love us as much as we love it". Howls of approval from audiences, most of whom, like Mr Stallone, did not actually serve in the real Vietnam either.

The revisionist idea that the US did not lose has obvious attractions for an imperial power beaten by a nation of peasants.

How the ...

(Continued from page 18)

- ** Agree to a reduction of military expenditure by ten percent each year for five consecutive years beginning 1985/87.
- ** Apply a significant portion of the resources so conserved towards the reduction of the international debt of the poorer nations.

Last month, the Soviet party chief did precisely that to the 'surprise' and puzzlement of White House officials, according to David Hoffman of the *Washington POST* who quoted Reagan himself as saying "It is just about the first time that anyone has ever proposed actually eliminating nuclear weapons". Talking to the

press later, President Reagan said "we are very grateful".

But is this Mr. Reagan serious? Does he still want to make America No. 1 and thus alter the balance of power in such a way that detente becomes impossible? Or by forcing the USSR into a new race in space does Washington plan to implement Defence Secretary Weinberger's strategy of causing serious damage to the Soviet economy by compelling Moscow to divert vital resources from development and consumer spending to high-technology and weapons? Or is the power elite of the US seized by a pathological hatred, distrust and fear of the Soviet Union as reflected best in Mr. Reagan's own favourite campaign phrase 'the Evil Empire'?

M. de S.

(To be concluded)

RETURN FROM THE NORTH

Manhood came suddenly, cathing him
In old lanes that muffled High Road horns
Past familiar patterned gates, old lawns
Now shrinking to new rich houses
Eyes stirred to thrusting bosoms in poster blouses
To demure faces, slightly strange
Of once sprightly little girls who fielded cricket
Ran for Coca-cola, kept the change
Few waste lots left now, less hedgrows for wickets
Turn from the scent of bruised weeds in the Saturday sun
To the tingle of womanly perfume and tickets
To the dance in his officers kit where the lass was won
A choice too sudden for the folks at home, now barred
In the old town he settled for two rooms
In a house that Black July had partly charred
leaving a wild garden where wild moons
Glowed on their love, tangled in white branches
Restless with the myriad wings night launches
Uneasy, sweet, and secret like cicades
The months passed, subdued as in song
In his officers cap and kakhi, polished brass
School boy of yesterday he policed the town
On the beat sometimes he met her
Coming off the bus, from work, eager for home
Soon there was an infant on his shoulder
And Kindly townfolk didn't leave them alone

Until, one day, he naively went to aiding
The Station master against the racketeer
Invading the platform from the broken railing
To pitch booths for the open econware
He couldn't save the poor station master
He was knifed in the booking office
And next week came his own transfer orders
To the North it said, No Appeals.
The chill stabbed in from the cold typescript
His smile twisted in her anxious eyes
He lied, Most of my friends have already done their shift
And returned safe with the throw of the dice
On the train North he met Kandan
College crony of the thosai boutique days
Eyes lit up in manly greeting despite the tainted years
Hand grip and hug was warm.
What was he doing? Applying for jobs as usual!
Ha, ha, the laughter was somewhat forced
Police? So was unemployment mutual?
(In College they were brighter than most)
Kandan got off by the wayside
'Look after yourself', he warned
'This terrible madness we must abide
And into the wind blown jungle was gone
Clean dawn smells, mist in the branches
Never killed a man, when he got off the train
Soon the machine gun smells with the hurried lunches

Another smell too and stain in the brain
(The lieves blasted, the eyes twisted in fear and pain)
Strange he felt he was soon asking
The same questions the dead faces seemed to ask
Why these young lives precious, eager fodder
For the kings (Northern and Southern) in their
counting houses with the sleek groomed masks
Glancing from the pain wrecked faces of his men to theirs
Dying, teeth clenched, flinging the last grenade
He failed, sad eyed to discern the ethnic flare
Of nostril and skin, Aryan or Dravidan shade
Through Northern fields watered by irrigation pools
The labour and brittle joy of folk burnt the same
dark brown

As his grand father and uncles in their far South town
Girls just like his sisters giggled to school
On leave, he found was the whisper
Of leaf fall on the jeep, wind in the creeper curtains
Cat on the engine, still warm with miles covered
Childs prattle, and the wonder of a wife in his arms
Sleep coming with wry October thunder
Rumbling cosy at the window, lightning, no bomb blasts
Only a suburban storm takes the startled trees
No jungle foot falls to break this brief peace.
Too brief, the transports rumble, north, north, east
No bad dream this, dark figures scattering in the dawn
A different thunder tears the world apart
Consecrating blindly his futile sacrifice
Then silence, as the chant of autorifles die
The jungle tide flows back. Kandan kneels
Hot barrel sizzling on the dew, reveals
His mangled College mate. Agonized cry unanswered
By pain locked lips and mercifully unknowing eyes
Merciful too, Death comes without a call
Cruel for Kandan's gun to end the pain
And the silence melts to the sun and birds again
And so he returned from the North
Cap on coffin to his suburban town
Where fat shop keepers put up their front shutters
And the prices of their backdoor barbers
And the thugs who knifed the station master
Put up white flags, white coconut leaves and busters
Fetched the Minister (lay) to make a speech
Monks warm and cosy by the pyre to preach
That all things perish. The sad posse
In brass and kakhi, slip safety catch for the last volley
Scatter in the quiet evening from the cemetery gate
Crooning doves into pyre smoke and sunset
While his wife falls fainting as the bugle sounds
And the baby plays on the grass with the empty shells
Rifles lowered, his brothers sally forth
And get kit bags ready for the next train North.

— U. Karunatilake

Too many...

(Continued from page 20)

minister has no experience of imperialism. I sometime fear that he may not fall into an American trap." Bizenzo, who was in the State People's Congress with Sheikh Abdullah, and who described himself as a colleague of Nehru, called Rajiv Gandhi "Raju" — very fondly, but with sadness softening the otherwise tough timbre of his voice.

Pakistan, then, has taken a hesitant step away from military rule and towards democracy at a time when it must face serious domestic and foreign policy problems without a national consensus on any of them. People of Lahore, however, were

certain about one thing. They said in one voice that it was the political activism in Punjab in 1985 that had spurred Zia-ul-Haq to share power. "Punjab is astir," I was told by groups of youth. "The demonstration in Lahore on 14 August drew a far larger crowd than the official independence day function in Islamabad on the following day. The popular reception given to Benazir Bhutto alarmed the military regime."

"We Punjabis must work out the future political frame of Pakistan — democracy plus federalism," said a cadre of the National Awami party at a group discussion. He was applauded by the entire group.

I was assured by many Lahorites that Punjab was fully aware of its political responsibility as Pakistan's leading province.

Punjab and the NWFP have, however, derived the largest benefits from military rule. Punjab is the principal base of the army, the bureaucracy and the feudal landlords: the three pillars of the power structure in Pakistan. Will Punjab now cast itself in the role of leadership of the forces of positive change? I asked this question of as many Lahorites as I could meet. The best answer I got was from a young woman journalist. "There's no other way," she said, "if Pakistan is to be saved."

INTER-RACIAL EQUITY AND NATIONAL UNITY IN SRI LANKA

(The document was produced by the Marga Institute in October 1983, as part of a programme of work initiated by the Citizens' Committee for National Harmony, immediately after the communal violence in 1983 ...)

Since the document was first released, more up-to-date information and data on some aspects of the problem have become available — for example the data from the socio-economic survey 1980/81 ...

Nevertheless the document is being reproduced essentially in its original form, both because it reflects the state of the discussions at the time it was prepared, and also as the substance of the report including the factual analysis has not been rendered any less relevant or valid by what has taken place. There has also been a continuing demand for the original document locally as well as from abroad. A few clarifications have been included in the present version.)

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