

SPECIAL

GORBACHEV: 'Dynamic' is the word

— *Bhabani Sen Gupta*

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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INDO-SRI LANKAN DEBATE

From JAW-JAW to...?

— *Mervyn de Silva*



YOUR WATER PROBLEM

— the funnier side —

— *Vijaya Perera*

JAFFNA: DOES THE TRUTH HURT?

— *Ediriweera Sarachchandra*

Why Sirima can't do a Cory — *Carlo Fonseka*
Indian Law and Muslim Women

Also: Arrests in the South,
U. S. on Human rights **and**
Dons' protest, Marcos

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MASTERS

INDIA AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The anticipated "war" between India and Sri Lanka at Geneva in the UN commission on Human rights did not after all take place. But the spirited defence made by the leader of the Sri Lankan delegation, H.W. Jayawardene Q. C. and his invitation to members of the Commission to visit this country reflected the government's anxious concern over the international pressure that has been building up steadily on this issue.

The most telling evidence of this pressure was the official human rights report of the US State Department to the Congress and the visit of Dame Judith Hart, both authoritative voices recognised by Sri Lanka as sympathetic and concerned friends rather than biased critics. The average Sri Lankan is disturbed by criticism because he believes, and rightly, that it affects the moral prestige of his country abroad. What he does not realise, at least not fully, is that the 'human rights' issue has become a policy question.

Under the Carter administration human rights was institutionalised through Congressional action on U.S. aid. Hence the State Department's annual report. Before Marcos fell, one of the pressure moves of the US Senate was a bi-partisan proposal to cut off all economic and military aid.

It is this aid-human rights equation that operates in most donor countries, from Canada to the Nordic, from Western Europe to Australia. And Sri Lanka is heavily aid-dependent.

ALL-INDIA RADIO

India did not sponsor or find a sponsor to introduce, a formal resolution on Sri Lanka. Thus Sri Lanka did not have to consider the question of a retaliatory response.

However, professional India-watchers, both in government and the pro-government media, pricked up their ears when All-India

radio had two items on Sri Lanka in the morning bulletin of the 7th. The lead item was of course the Indian government Note which Mr. Bhandari handed over to High Commissioner Bernard Tillekeratna.

The second item was based on the protest-cum-appeal, signed by the general secretaries of the four Opposition parties, the Buddhist and Christian clergy, several MP's etc, on the use of the PTA and Emergency regulations to detain Sinhalese opposition activists. (The issue was taken up by Amnesty International which was cited by the State Dept. report).

This was the first time in years that All India radio, a more "official" voice than PTI had taken up a human rights issue involving the majority Sinhalese.

Colombo-based diplomats also noted that the Indian note referred to "minority communities" not just the Tamil minority.

DOCTORS TO DONS

First the docs, then the dental surgeons. And now the dons. One of the recent items in this column was titled 'the revolt of the professionals'. Is it the first sign of a larger revolt of the intelligentsia?

(Continued on page 11)

TRENDS + LETTERS

CAN SIRIMA DO AN AQUINO?

Can Sirima do an Aquino? asks Mervyn de Silva, our astutest political journalist (L.G. 1 March 1986). The potency of this question derives from the extreme readiness of the human mind to be convinced by analogical argument. How else can one explain the incredible ease with which otherwise intelligent people become convinced of highly improbable things?

An analogy, of course, is the assertion that things which resemble each other in some respects will resemble each other in some further respect. Reduced to its bare bones, the hope that Sirima can do an Aquino is based on the faith that because Sirima has certain characteristics which belong to Aquino, she must have certain other characteristics which also belong to Aquino.

But, of course, there are pitfalls in analogy. Every analogy must break down at some point because to say that things are similar is not to imply that they are identical. A whale is like a fish in the shape of its body. Also, a whale is like a fish in that it

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CONTENTS

News Background	3
Arms Control and World Peace	13
U. S. State Dept. on Human Rights in Sri Lanka	15
Gorbachev's First Year	19
Cat's Eye	21
Nat and Mutt	22

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lives in water. Nevertheless, a whale is not a fish; it is a mammal.

Like Aquino, Sirima's principal qualification for her role in history is that she is the widow of a political martyr. Like Aquino, Sirima was just a fertile housewife before she assumed the top political job in her country. Like Aquino, Sirima had only a few weeks of political experience before she began to wield power. Like Aquino, Sirima came from a family which belonged to the political and economic oligarchy of her country. Like Aquino, Sirima attended a private school run by Roman Catholic nuns. Like Aquino, Sirima by professing to preserve "the essence of free enterprise," is making herself highly acceptable to the capitalist world. Like Aquino, Sirima became the ruler of her country, thanks to the chain of emotions generated by the martyrdom of her husband. Finally, as with Aquino, so with Sirima, the price of her fame was the murder of her husband.

For all these similarities, there are also vital differences between the two women.

First: unlike Sirima, Aquino who has earned a degree in French and Mathematics, has a cultivated intelligence.

Second: unlike Sirima, who will be well over three score years and ten at the time of the next scheduled presidential election, Aquino fought her battle as a vigorous, healthy, erect, light-footed, politically fresh woman of 53.

Third: unlike Sirima, who even at the zenith of her vicarious appeal was unable or unwilling to fight even a peaceful election in July 1960. Aquino began her political career by pitting herself against Marcos, knowing full well that Marcos had, as she said, great experience in "cheating, stealing, lying (and) assassinating political opponents."

Fourth: unlike Sirima, who when faced with Marcos-type thuggery and intimidation on her homeground at Attanagalla during the referendum in 1982, reacted only by

ignominiously withdrawing her polling observers and writing a letter to her principal political opponent (Hansard Volume 21, No. 18, December 1982) Aquino took to the streets against tyranny.

Fifth: unlike Sirima's present rump SLFP which is packed with self-seeking, back-biting, throat-cutting, double-crossing, effete mediocrities, Aquino derived her support from millions of self-sacrificing, vigorous, idealistic, young people who were ready to fight for her and if necessary, to die for her.

Sixth: unlike Sirima, Aquino had a realistic appreciation of the value of committed and militant activists, without whom no battle against authoritarianism and social injustice could be successfully fought.

So: Can Sirima do an Aquino? Surely if one has even the ghost of a sense of the absurd, one must burst out laughing at the mere thought of dog-tired Sirima at the fag-end of her career doing an Aquino!

Hegel, it is true, believed that important personages in history occur, as it were, twice. As Karl Marx pointed out, however, whenever that occurs, the first time it occurs as tragedy, the second time as farce. And if the same personage is involved on both occasions, the result must inevitably be a tragic farce. Perish the thought.

Carlo Fonseka

Colombo

Mervyn de Silva writes:

I did not ask "Can Sirima do an Aquino?" My question read: "Can Mrs. B. follow their path?", meaning the path taken by Cory Aquino, the Bhuttos (widow and daughter) Mujib's daughter and Ziaur Rahman's widow, and Winnie Mandela, who is no widow. In asking this question it was my intention to raise the important issue of extra-parliamentary activism in a "closed system" — what Cardinal Sin called 'the parliament of the streets'.

To the question on the L. G. cover "Can Sirima do an Aquino?", Prof. Carlo Fonseka has given a categorical 'No' with several smartly argued reasons to support his reply. Like Karl, Carlo knows all the answers. He gets full marks.

The Fall of Marcos and the Shah of Iran

History, it is said, never repeats itself and this is true enough in the real sense. Events, however, sometimes do unfold with a remarkable resemblance to historic precedent. In this latter sense, the fall of Ferdinand Marcos seemed to follow the scenario scripted by history for the ignominious exit of the last Shah of Iran.

Both men were ruthless tyrants, who sought to defend their despotic and corrupt regimes against the aspirations of their peoples with unvarnished repression, terror, assassination and torture. Both enjoyed the patronage of successive administrations in the United States, which described them as "true friends and reliable allies" and viewed them as rocks of stability against "communist subversion". In the event, the rocks were found to be resting on shifting sands and were swept, away, not by communist subversion, but by the indomitable will of the people.

In the last days of their rule, both cowered timorously in their palaces, surrounded by loyal guards, desperately trying to cling on to the fast vanishing threads of power.

Outside, the people poured into the streets in hundreds of thousands and with gathering momentum, the armed forces went over to their side.

To complete the similarities, each sought to create a legendary background for himself, founded on myth. But the legends and the myths on which they were built melted in the harsh glare of reality.

(Continued on page 24)

DELHI ENTERS THE FINAL PHASE

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS
BACKGROUND

High Commissioner, Bernard Tillekeratne, our man in Delhi who was here last month is back in Colombo. So is Sri Lanka's Deputy high commissioner in Madras, Mr. Jayakody who spends even more time travelling back — and forth, Madras-Colombo. By an interesting coincidence the Indian High Commissioner in Colombo, Mr. Dixit flew back from Delhi in the same plane as his Sri Lankan counterpart.

These comings-and-goings, interspersed at both ends by top-level consultations and confidential exchanges, have marked an unusually eventful three weeks that began with the Rajya Sabha debate on Feb. 25 (See 'An Indian consensus?') and ended with the Sri Lankan reply to the Indian reply to the Sri Lankan note of March 1, itself a reply to External Affairs Minister Bhagat's statement and remarks in the parliamentary debate.

While the public impression here is of an ill-tempered slanging match, it would be a serious mistake to conclude that it is only a war of words. At least on the Indian side, it follows what the LG reported exclusively in its Feb. 15 issue as a "major policy review" on Sri Lanka by India's highest policy-making body, the Political Affairs Committee of the Cabinet. It is on our side of the Palk Straits that the statements, the debates, the formal replies and other high-level responses show the signs of a purely re-active diplomacy and ad hoc assessments and instant-judgments; decidedly not the measured expression of a carefully considered, concerted policy.

In talking to Delhi, Colombo appears to have only one serious

argument. If only Delhi, says Colombo, cracks down hard on the Madras-based 'eelamists' and the flow of men and material from Tamilnadu stops, then the level of violence will be steadily and greatly reduced. This, by itself, will create the conditions conducive to a more productive round of negotiations on a political settlement, which in our view the TULF undermined by not addressing itself seriously to that basic need.

The rest is "polemics", and India in its latest note, has said just that somewhat haughtily.

Precisely because the Indian responses at each stage seem more clearly the product of patient study and calculation, the Indian approach invites — and merits — close analysis.

In the first instance, the March 6 note, while ignoring Colombo's charge of "logistical training and operational base facilities" (its only reaction is a dismissive 'baseless allegations'), raises the fundamental question of credibility. Is Sri Lanka really committed to a "political settlement"? The Indian view is stated with a surprising bluntness and asperity:

"The military actions of the Government of Sri Lanka and repeated statements by the leadership of the country in regard to seeking a military solution, suggests that the assertion of the Sri Lankan government that it seeks the cooperation and assistance of the Indian government in resolving the crisis which besets them, can only be regarded as an exercise to camouflage its real motivations". The word "alibi" is also used.

This in my opinion is the most crucial paragraph in the Indian statement.

Next in importance is the reference to the security forces and the clever use of the phrase 'out of terror' in describing why India has been forced to bear 'the heavy burden' of 125,000 refugees. Any student of international law, UN principles and resolutions, and the diplomatic experience accumulated from a series of crisis-situations where governments have invoked the principle of 'humanitarian intervention', will recognise its implications.

"It is well known that more than 125,000 Sri Lankan nationals, who have been compelled to flee their homes out of terror at the repeated, indiscriminate and brutal actions of the Sri Lankan security forces have had to take refuge on India's soil. Despite the continuing influx of refugees, which has thrown a heavy burden, on India, the government of India has acted with restraint and attempted to maintain the traditional cordiality and cooperation in bilateral relations. The tone and contents of the Sri Lankan note do not reflect any reciprocations of this attempt".

I am not in anyway suggesting that the option I mentioned will in fact be taken, but the diplomatic groundwork for such an option, if circumstances require its use, should be evident to any professional diplomat or student of international politics. Having underlined the fact of an absence of "reciprocation", the Indian Note then goes on to define its own commitment again with a remarkable tact and precision of language. It re-iterates its commitment to assist Sri Lanka in the resolution of the crisis through a settlement which would enable the minority communities in Sri Lanka to obtain their legitimate aspirations."

(Continued on page 4)

An Indian Consensus ?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to all the honourable members, particularly to the first honourable member, Mr. Bhandare, who raised this question and to all the others who have participated in this discussion today.

Sir, let me, at the outset, say that I share their concern, and I am one with the honourable members and I share their serious concern, grave concern, which they have expressed over this on-going tragic drama...

Shri Thangabalu: Not a drama, but it is a fact.

Shri B. R. Bhagat:... In Sri Lanka where innocent ethnic Tamil's condition are becoming everyday worse and worse off. So, let me assure them that there is no laxity or passivity on the part of the government so far as this question is concerned. We give it the topmost priority. Although I cannot use the same language...

Shri Aladi Aruna Alias V. Arunachalam: You please understand now.

Shri B. R. Bhagat: I have listened to you all patiently. So, kindly listen. Although I cannot use the same language which you used...

Shri S. W. Dhabe: Tell us what you are going to do.

Shri B. R. Bhagat: This is a common issue and there are no two sides to this.

Shri B. R. Bhagat (contd.) that is why I am saying that I cannot use the language that you have expressed. But certainly I can only say that when you say that the statement is very mild, that the statement should have been...

Shri Murasoli Maran: Like Prime Minister Indira Gandhi you can say that... (Interruptions)

Shri B. R. Bhagat: I can appreciate your sentiments and emotions. But you should also see that this is not your private problem or it is not a problem of one section of the country. I appreciate the

Hon. Member who said that they are not one section of the population, they are Indians, meaning thereby that the whole country is exercised. All sections are exercised, over this matter. And when I say "all members, let us take it that it is not a question of Tamil Nadu. It is not a question of one section of the population in the country, it is a question of the entire country."

Now, expressing concern over this the very first sentence of my statement says:

"Government is gravely concerned over the crisis in Sri Lanka..."

Then, about the properties and lives lost, we have said:

"The most serious and distressing result of the continuing crisis is the cycle of violence which has taken a heavy toll of the lives and property of innocent Sri Lankan civilians."

I have a stronger statement... (Interruptions)

Some Hon. Members: We do not want a stronger statement. We want action. (Interruptions)

Shri R. Mohanaragam: Statement alone is not sufficient. What about the action?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: I am coming to that.

Shri Aruna Aladi Alias V. Arunachalam (Tamil Nadu): You have disclosed the state of affairs.

Shri B. R. Bhagat: I am in the hands of the House. Do they want me to answer the points that they have raised? The first point they made that the statement is very disappointing, the statement is weak. I am answering that point. Actions I will come to later. Let us agree that the crisis is grave, serious and it is continuing crisis. It has taken a heavy toll of lives and property, and it is a very tragic situation.

Delhi . . .

(Continued from page 3)

While the use of the plural ("communities") could be an answer to the Sri Lankan charge that India's concern is exclusively focussed on one minority community (the Tamils, not the Muslims — the contentious issue, in other words, of the racially mixed eastern province) it is the Indian conception of the structure that this settlement should ideally possess which merits a closer examination.

The Indian recommendation is "an appropriate political framework which keeps intact the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka".

Since federalism is anathema to the vast majority of Sinhalese, there is a tendency to regard 'unity' and 'united' as synonymous with 'unitary', our own constitutional structure. Of course this

is a simple case of semantic confusion. All Sri Lankan statements resort to the term 'unitary'. Such statements even suggest that this is the common Sri Lankan-Indian position, whereas since August 12, 1983, when Mrs. Indira Gandhi issued the first of her statements on the post-July crisis, the word used is 'unity' or 'united'. At the back of this two-track discussion is what Senator Kennedy calls the American or Indian federal model or what others call quasi-federal solutions.

I asked a veteran Sri Lankan diplomat how he would assess the fast-moving developments of the past fortnight or so. His answer was most interesting. "If you look back to July-August 1983 and Mrs. Gandhi's initial reaction to the influx of refugees — she said at Bombay airport that it was "unacceptable" — then these recent developments suggest that Indian diplomacy vis-a-vis our crisis is moving into the final stage".

Having said that, sir, now I come to the actions part. The Prime Minister has a framework of policy to build friendly relationship with all our neighbours. This is and of the points which has been raised over and over again. One Hon. member even said that we have no good relations with any of our neighbours. But in our foreign policy it is a very high priority item that we are trying to build up friendly and good neighbourly relations.

Shri R. Mohanaragam: Even at the cost of Indian lives?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: Please. In that spirit we said that we assist the Sri Lankan government in bringing about a peaceful solution of this problem. This is the genesis of the whole thing. An hon. member criticised: you have not made any progress. Rightly so. We think the problem is there. It is far worse today. The suggestion that they imply is: What is the alternative? Well, we are engaged in bringing about a peaceful solution to this problem, and we are not unaware of the negative trends in Sri Lanka which adversely affect towards the solution. (Interruptions) Well, let them make all the points they want to make. I do not want to be interrupted like this.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Don't interrupt the minister.

Shri B. R. Bhagat: Otherwise they will say that I have not answered. At the end of my reply, if there are any points, I will answer. But I beg of you not to disturb me. My hon. friend has interrupted. I have to recapture it. (Interruptions) It is a very sensitive matter. It affects the lives of millions of our people, our own kith and kin, who are living there. The real difficulty was the ambivalent and the evasive issues in the minds of the Sri Lankan authorities about this matter. You have quoted many statements and want to join issue with you in this matter. It appears to me that while the Sri Lankan government were professing that they want a political solution, they were in their heart of hearts or in actual fact, opting for a military solution. This is the biggest difficulty. We have been pointing it

out to them. When the ceasefire was initiated, we said that before we pick up the threads of political solution, the ceasefire must honestly be implemented. There should not be a single case. Then they would come and say that there is violation from the militant side and in order to meet it, there is violation from their side. This is not a very categorical statement. But this is wishy-washy and vacillating statement. We have said so in this house and we have told them at every point that there are more violations from the side of Sri Lankan security forces and innocent people, civilians, are being killed. You have asked for numbers. We have given the numbers.

Shri S. W. Dhabe: We have asked about the Indian fishermen being killed.

Shri B. R. Bhagat: I will give you that also. I am dealing with fishermen also. That is also a part of the subject. You have given different figures. Some says 7000 or 8000 have been killed even in the statement, we have stated that they have taken a heavy toll of life and property. It is difficult to verify the exact number. The various papers have published them. We have been trying to verify them. Sri Lankan Government, in parliament and outside, have been making different statements. We have been trying to verify those facts. You know the difficulties. It is difficult to verify the number of all those who have been killed or the amount of property that has been damaged. But I can make this statement without any fear of contradiction that the toll of life has been substantial. Similarly, the damage to property is substantial. Recently, reports have come that a much larger number of people have been killed. These people were working in the fields. Even innocent people and workers who were harvesting their crops have been killed. This is a very serious matter. I used a particular expression. You can use a different expression. I do not have the opportunity of using the expression that you have been using. It was said that there was an element of genocide.

Shri Murasoli Maran: It is genocide.

Shri B. R. Bhagat: You can say so. It is a way of saying, therefore, the situation has deteriorated. At one point we were saying that let the ceasefire be observed in totality. It has not only not been observed, but now it has come to a situation in which Sri Lankan security forces are engaged in killing their own innocent unarmed citizens. This very serious situation, even the Prime Minister has said so. He said: "To tackle or to deal with the extremists is one thing. But to indulge in indiscriminate killing of your own citizens, of your own innocent people and unarmed people, is quite a different matter altogether". And we have come to this stage now. We have condemned it. The whole house has condemned it. It needs condemnation. A question was asked whether we are going to raise this in the human rights commission yes. Mr. Gurdial Singh Dhillon is the leader of the Indian delegation and the Human Rights Commission is meeting in Geneva. And we have asked him to raise this matter in the Human Rights Commission. This meeting is going on.

Shri B. R. Bhagat: He is going to do it. But in that, you should also know that quick solution is not possible — you know UN system — because the Sri Lankan Government will have the right to reply on these matters. But the matter will be raised because it is question of human rights. The difference with us who are dealing with it is that Sri Lanka is not a part of India. It is an independent country.

An Hon. Member: What a profound statement?

Shri R. Mohanaragam: This is the answer we get every time and in the meantime the entire Tamil race will be eliminated from there...

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Let him finish.

Shri B. R. Bhagat: There were two premises here. The first premise was that this is an internal problem of Sri Lanka and any solution has to come within the framework of the unity and integrity of Sri

Lanka. This was the first premise of the political solution. Secondly, this matter cannot be solved through a military solution. And it has to be solved through a political solution. Politically it has to be through peaceful negotiations. So far as we the government of India are concerned, we have a absolutely struck to the international behaviour, civilized behaviour and we want to strengthen it and in no way we want to compromise with the unity or any other forces which want to disintegrate Sri Lanka. But on the other hand we say, it more with sorrow and not in condemnation that the Sri Lankan government have not followed the second premise that this is a political solution. It should be done through negotiations around the table and not through a military solution. They have always been tempted to go towards that. And the result is that the situation has deteriorated and it is worsening.

An Hon. Member: How are you going to solve the problem?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: Therefore, the action now. Now the position is that the time is fast running out. We have no more time to lose. The hon. members have expressed. All of them have expressed that we must solve this question and we must do something. And we have called our High Commissioner. We are formulating our programme of action. We are going to make our position absolutely clear on these things that firstly the Sri Lankan government must enquire or set up immediately in a manner that it gives credibility to the people there an independent enquiry into the killings that have taken place. They seem to have reportedly set up some military committee or something. That is not going to create any confidence in anybody's mind. Therefore, immediately they must enquire into and find out what has happened and take action on their military personnel if they have misbehaved, if they have acted grossly violating all the norms of behaviour of a government or of a military conduct. So, this is the minimum that they have to do because every day the situation is deteriorating. There is no credibility

and there is no confidence among the people, among the Tamilian groups and the leaders in the Sri Lankan government. The members here have also said that the Sri Lankan government were saying one thing and doing another. They were talking about a political solution and preparing for a military action. Members have raised a question about President Zia's visit there. The members have asked why President Zia visited Sri Lanka. Now you want me to answer this. How can I answer this question? (Interruptions) If the President of Pakistan wants to visit, how can I answer this question?

Shri B. R. Bhagat: But what is important, I know what you mean, is the assistance that they are getting. The Sri Lankan Govt. point is that they are getting assistance. From where, I think we know. They have got assistance for training their personnel from Pakistan or even the hated Mossad, which is also involved, we are told. We have got this news and some members have also said that the South African regime is also involved there. The SLG's position is that they want to deal with the terrorist activities. That is the point you are making. If you want to deal with the terrorist activities those people who are engaged in violence and disruption and killings, well that is one thing. But if you have prepared your military might to deal with your own civilian people, unarmed people, that is quite another thing absolutely. There is no doubt about it and therefore, in the present situation the time is fast running out. We still believe that in this situation military solution is no solution. It will only aggravate the problem. It will create untold sufferings for the people of the country in SL itself. You ask how many refugees we have. We have now, at the moment, more than 125 thousand refugees who are living here. In any political solution that is arrived at, conditions must be created so that not only no more refugees come but every one of them who have come here must return to SL in safety and in

dignity. We cannot say that the SLG cannot provide that climate at the moment because the conflict is going on in which a large number of civilian casualties are taking place and this is a condition in which more people are coming away and you see that in order to protect our fishermen we have taken our ships and our navy is there. I said there are two problems in this. Firstly, that there is no attack on our fishermen in their legitimate duties of fishing because it is the source of their livelihood, as long as they are in the Indian waters, internal waters, and the second question is that we should prevent intrusion either from their navy or military boats or their fishermen coming into our waters and this our navy and coast guards are in a position to safeguard. As you know, there is no exact demarcation on the waters as to where the Indian line ends and SL territory begins and there may be inadvertent intrusions into the SL waters and if they take action as I said before we have to deal with this question in a humane manner as we deal with such intrusions, in a humane manner. If it is a deliberate one, certainly action has to be taken. We are quite alert on this and we can assure the hon. member on this that we will safeguard the legitimate interests of all our fishermen who are pursuing their livelihood in Indian waters.

Finally, Sir, I would like to say that we are working on the TULF proposal which was given. We are working on it. And on the SL earlier proposals we are trying to narrow the gap between the two positions. But meanwhile, at the point when our Foreign Sec was on the way to SL and he had actually reached Madras to have talks with the SLG, to have a final round of talks so as to bridge the gap between two positions, the SL official position, a note, came on the TULF proposals which we considered absolutely negative.

They were not agreeing to any point. Therefore, on that point we thought there was no use our Foreign Sec going and talking to

the SL authorities and we called him back. The position is that there are very clear elements of a political solution. SLG has again said that they believe in political solution. I am one with the hon. members that this matter cannot go on drifting any further. We must have a timeframe, a small timeframe, a week or two weeks or three weeks, or a month but not more than a month, in which political solution has to be reached. We cannot allow SLG to drag their feet on this question. Elements of a political solution are very clear that there should be real political devolution.

Some hon members asked whether we are aware of security threats from either the Trincomalee base or because of some of the actions they are taking by trying to shift away the eastern provinces. Yes, we are certain. That is one of the normal legitimate duty of the govt. SL is a non-aligned country although we are aware of certain facilities of

calling on to the ports by certain ships belong to outside powers but we are not aware that they have given away the base to any outside power. They deny it. We are saying that there is another important element in the political devolution. We want to know content of the political devolution in which law and order powers must rest with the provincial assembly, the councils, in order to deal with the law and order so that they are able to take care of the safety and protection of citizens in those areas: that is very important. The important thing is land settlement. Some hon members made this point that through land settlement that is going in during this period, an effort is being made to change demographic character of the eastern provinces by settling more Sinhala population and drifting away Tamils population. This should not be done. This is very important question of land settlement and we are aware of it and this takes care of the population composition

of eastern provinces. As I said, the provincial councils must have real decentralised powers and we are giving concrete shape to it, and this is the way to bridge the gap between the SL position, and since they have now expressed their willingness to talk and discuss and finalise the position on the TULF proposals. We want to achieve a peaceful solution to the problem within a small time-frame. We are discussing this position at the moment. We are engaged in it and we will make it known before negotiations start. We want to make the content of the political solution as considered reasonable by us, also within a time frame. These two points will be communicated to SLG before the negotiations start so that we bring about a peaceful end to this problem so that SL authorities achieve peace and the Tamil population can live with dignity and with a secure future and stability, peace is restored in this region. Thank you.

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Protest against wave of arrests

The general secretaries of the SLFP, SLMP, LSSP and CP, President of the Bar Association, Mr. Nimal Senanayake PC, a representative section of the Buddhist and Christian clergy, members of Parliament and leading academics, artists and intellectuals have signed a statement protesting against the current wave of arrests in the South and asking it "to desist" from the use of the PTA and emergency laws "to persecute political opponents".

The statement says:

Through this repressive course, the State is seeking to resolve the mounting problems created by its political and economic policies.

Where the government is free to arrest and detain persons without the obligation which exists under the normal law to produce them before a court, there is a great danger that these powers can be used against members of opposition parties and other organisations which are viewed with disfavour by the authorities so as to stamp out legitimate democratic rights of dissent and criticism.

We call upon progressive and democratic organisations, political parties and trade unions, students and intellectuals to exert pressure on the government to compel it to desist from the use of these laws to persecute their political opponents and, in connection with these arrests, to act in conformity with the normal process of law.

In the meantime, we call upon the government to make public the names of all those arrested, to give due access to families and lawyers to ensure that they are held in humane conditions and free from harassment, physical coercion, torture and death. We also urge that inquiries and investigations are expeditiously conducted and the detainees either released or produced before the judiciary, under the normal law.

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(Continued on page 12)

The "Foreign" craze

What is the man-in-the street saying?

First Citizen (proudly): "So, now, suddas (white men) are repairing our roads!

Second Citizen (more proudly): "Some more development and we can get them to sweep the streets".

A major city underground repair job may require foreign supervisors but Hultsdorp? Surely the legal profession is not only over-crowded but crowded with luminaries in each branch of the law. Why then "foreign law firms"?

A Bar Council committee comprising its President, Mr. Nimal Senanayake PC, Dr. H. W. Jayewardene, past president, and Mr. Senaka Weeraratne has now drawn the line to recommend that:

(a) No person who has not been enrolled as an attorney-at-law by the Supreme Court can appear as a lawyer in any court or tribunal or board of inquiry.

(b) No person who has not been enrolled can file pleadings or issue Letters of Demand or write as a legal representative of any client.

(c) No person who has not been enrolled can interview or make representations to any governmental or semi-governmental authority.



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Integration, not assimilation — cwc

The CWC has recently been challenged to state its views on integration. Our position was set out many years ago and we have repeated the same ever since. The Ceylon Workers Congress is for integration of the population of the island to create a common Sri Lanka nationality, as long as its component parts like the Tamils of recent Indian origin are able to retain their social, cultural, religious and linguistic identities. Integration yes, but no assimilation. This, we think, is the only way that the ideal of national unity in diversity can be secured in a multi-racial, multi-linguistic and multi-religious society such as we have in Sri Lanka. It is for this reason that we accepted the policies of J. R. Jayawardena and the Constitution of 1978 and have co-operated with him and the Government.

The Council, however, is of the view that integration and the building of amity, peace, national reconciliation and unity cannot be achieved without bringing the Citizenship Laws still on the Statute Book in line with the Constitution. The Constitution recognises only one nationality, that of a citizen of Sri Lanka. And there is therefore no need to retain the special citizenship laws enacted in the years 1948 to 1951. It is unfortunate that many governmental authorities are still guided by these outdated laws which divide citizens into several categories. The time has come, in the national interest, to implement the Constitution provisions to recognise only one kind of Sri Lanka citizenship and nationality. This will help to eliminate separatist trends and thinking.

The council also feels that for national integration and unity, it is essential that there should be total political participation of all people who have this country for a home and are qualified to be citizens. But there is bound to be a time lag before a unified system

of Citizenship Laws in consonance with the Constitution can come into operation and there is therefore need to have some interim measure to ensure full participation of the people in local government and national institutions.

As an interim measure we would suggest that the Government should consider placing on the electoral lists all those who were born in the island and have not applied or opted for the citizenship of any other country. With the proportional representation system now in vogue, fears about pwamping by one group or another will not arise.

It is only when there is full political participation of this kind that it will be possible to formulate national, provincial or district plans and programmes that will be acceptable to the people and not be detrimental

to the national interest. It is regrettable that there are attempts to formulate and implement plans under various grandiose names like a Plan for the Hill Country. We will not accept any such plan if it is drawn up without our co-operation and our concurrence, especially when the plan will only serve sectarian, segregationist and divisive interests.

It is a pity that even after so much has happened to bring their country into the present mess with such sharp communal conflicts many people have not learnt the lesson that stares everyone in the face. The C.W.C. will therefore oppose any plan that will tend to divide and not unite the country. The C.W.C. wants integration without assimilation to ensure national unity and will oppose all plans and programmes that run counter to this.

TRENDS

(Continued from page 1)

At the moment, the issue is strictly economic — in fact, nothing less than the monthly pay packet.

Recently the professors of the Colombo University's Science Faculty walked out from the lecture rooms and laboratories and later decided to throw away their high-sounding titles and work sans designations. Their main demand — a 20% salary hike.

Why should highly qualified Sri Lankans who could earn 10 to 15 times their local salary if they worked abroad, flaunt a false status carrying title and live on a salary little better than that of a mid-level executive in a private firm? Better renounce the title than continue the pretence. The cause is material; the gesture is moral.

PISTOL-PACKING POLITICO

Not a week passes without some pious platform sermon by a prominent politician on the moral decline of our society and the lawlessness and violence which ravage this land of Ahimsa. But between moralistic postures and personal and collective conduct the credibility gap keeps widening. Every newspaper in this country put on its frontpage the incident in which a UNP politico pulled out his revolver at the MP's hostel and fired it at some lowly official that had not attended to his request for a phone call. The pistol has been taken by the police, and inquiries instituted. But the number of incidents involving top politicians who have taken the law into their own hands are countless.

No wonder an Opposition MP asked a UNP'er when he rose to speak the other day: "How's Manila?"

Sarachchandra on "Facing the truth"

Reading your journal, the arrival of which I look forward to eagerly, has made me a sadder but a wiser man. It is the misfortune of the human being that, although Truth is an ultimate good, knowledge of the truth does not always bring him happiness. Ignorance is, often, bliss. I wonder how many people in the South realise the extent of the sufferings that our brethren, the Tamil people of this country, have been undergoing for so long and are undergoing at the present moment. People to whom I have spoken do not believe what I say. Or they do not want to. Their senses are dulled by the sound of the tamashas around them, the scores of the cricket matches, the bailas broadcast by the State radio and the Nandana Vindana comedies on T. V. They will not realise anything until they are themselves touched by this Evil that is stalking the country.

But what I feel most difficult to cope with is a feeling of utter helplessness in the face of all this. My friend Dr. Sivathamby

asked me to make an appeal. But to whom? And asking for what? Merely to say, "Stop this senseless killing is not going to be of any avail. How many people, more important than I am, have said this? There must be some formula for peace, and this can be evolved in an atmosphere of sanity. There is, obviously, no sanity now. The Security Forces have lost their balance of mind. Fear of unknown death-traps like landmines and their own impotence before the unseen enemy have driven them to this state. The psychology that has gripped them reminds us of the My-Lai incident in the Vietnam war where, in almost similar circumstances but on a larger scale regular army units were fighting guerillas. Your journal reminds us of the incident, in May last year, in which a soldier going berserk, shot seven Tamil people dead. Now it is Kilinochchi, and you have adduced incontrovertible evidence to show that it is not fabricated: the testimony of a Tamil who was injured by the gun-shots, and of a Sinhalese who was an eye-witness.

I don't presume to be able to propose a solution. Either the militants must lay down their arms, as the President says, and he will withdraw the Security Forces, or the Security Forces must be withdrawn and the militants must agree to lay down their arms. Or, by agreement, these two events must take place simultaneously.

Of course, this is not easily done, as we saw from the fate of the Thimpu talks. While I write, the killing is taking place in the mid-country as well, and members of the Tamil community as well as Sinhalese are suffering, and the economy may be badly hit.

I am raising my feeble voice among thousands of others to say that the Sinhalese do not want this war. We want to live in

peace and amity with the Tamils and all other communities. Therefore, let whoever has the power to stop this war, stop it.

Let him not waver, let him not procrastinate, let him take the bold step that is needed, and in the end the forces of good and the forces of justice will be on his side.

Sincerely,
Ediriwira Sarachchandra

(Courtesy — Saturday Review)

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Protest against...

(Continued from page 9)

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The importance of interdependence

M. de S.

Has Mr. Reagan remained too long at the White House or has Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev arrived too early on the world scene? If leading western Sovietologists are right in detecting a genuinely fresh approach and flexibility, and a conspicuous absence of the dogmatic and the doctrinaire in Mr. Gorbachev's policy statements in this his first year in office, then the familiar rigidities of Reaganite conservatism and the US leader's world outlook, reinforced by the fact of a "lame duck" presidency reduce the chances of compatibility and matching response. Since it is the American approach to history and politics which places a greater emphasis on the role of the individual than on the "objective conditions" stressed by the standard Soviet view, it is the American analyst who is likely to conclude regretfully in ten or fifteen years time that this particular period in Soviet American relations was full of missed opportunities.

Not that Mr. Reagan has been obstinately unresponsive to the new Soviet leader's path-breaking initiatives on the most vitally important of bilateral (and global) issues; nuclear arms agreement. After Geneva, Mr. Reagan said that the superpower dialogue was "heading in the right direction".

When Mr. Gorbachev made his Jan. 15 offer, "We're grateful" exulted the US President. Yet, when Mr. Reagan made a counter-offer (the elimination of all medium-range nuclear missiles world wide in three years, with two different ways to do so) the Soviet Union found it pitifully limited in comparison to Mr. Gorbachev's plan to remove all nuclear weapons by 2000 A.D.

In an editorial titled "New Soviet style in foreign policy", the Financial Times wrote:

"It has been clear, almost since the day Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Kremlin that the Soviet foreign policy machine had moved into higher gear. What is becoming clearer now is that it is also becoming more imaginative and constructive, and in some respects, more conciliatory. The Soviet Union has made the latest and widest ranging of its recent arms control proposals. This centres on a 15 year plan to rid the world of nuclear weapons, with the big and by now constant Soviet caveat that the US first drop the space defence program. But subsumed in it is an important concession that the Soviet Union is ready to take all its mediumrange missiles out of Europe, if the US does the same, while Britain and

France could keep their existing nuclear arms but not modernise them".

Is the offer insincere, unrealistic, fraudulent? Mr. Reagan has only to prove America's greater commitment to world peace and detente by challenging the Soviet position and putting the credibility of the Soviet offer to the severest tests? But that is unlikely, even improbable. Why? In his analysis of Mr. Gorbachev's mammoth 45,000 word speech to the CPSU congress, Ian Davidson, the noted British military and foreign affairs analyst, selected three passages from that speech as the most revealing of the new Gorbachev approach. (See Box).

One of these excerpts refers to the growing tendency of interdependence of the countries of the world community".

Gorbachev speaks

"(This) is a world full of hope... But it is also a world overloaded with dangers and contradictions, prompting the thought that perhaps this is the most alarming period of history".

"The course of history requires ever more insistently that there should be constructive and creative interaction between states and peoples on the scale of the entire world... Such interaction is essential in order to prevent nuclear catastrophe, in order that civilisation, should survive.

"The prevailing dialectics of present-day development consists in a combination of competition and confrontation between the two systems and in a growing tendency towards interdependence of the countries of the world community. This is precisely the way, through the struggle of opposites, through arduous effort

groping in the dark to some extent, as it were, that the controversial but interdependent and in many ways integral world is taking shape".

Or again:

"To ensure security is increasingly seen as a political problem, and it can only be resolved by political means... Needless to say, we attach considerable significance to the state and character of the relations between the Soviet Union and the USA. Our countries have quite a few points of coincidence, and there is the objective need to live in peace with each other, to co-operate on a basis of equality and mutual benefit... The objective — I emphasise, objective — conditions have taken shape in which confrontation between capitalism and socialism can proceed only and exclusively in forms of peaceful competition and peaceful contest."

This clear headed, acceptance of a basic fact of international life known to every informed student of world politics, comes, let us remember, from the head of what conventional western thought defines as "an ideological state", i.e. socialism, as against capitalism, generally presented as "democracy" rather in terms of any 'ism'.

In short, Mr. Gorbachev, the leader of one superpower which is also the citadel of one 'ism', has unambiguously acknowledged an empirical truth, interdependence. Translated into the accepted idiom of military discourse, this means the balance of power, strategic parity, mutual vulnerability — the underpinning of 'detente'.

Does Mr. Reagan and his America (that is, the America which evidently voted him to office to honour his pledge to make America, No. 1) subscribe to these opinions?

Star Wars

The former undersecretary of the US Air Force, Mr. Townsend Hoopes is now a member of the governing board of the American Committee for National Security. He wrote recently that of all the issues that the US would have to face as a nation, no single decision is likely to be more significant than 'Star Wars'. To face up to the challenge he argued is also to recognise what he called 'the fundamental existential condition of our age'. The

phrasing may be a little too airily philosophical for the average reader but what it actually represents is stated in the barest language. "The fact is that Americans and Russians will live together or perish together". (Mr. Hoopes does not spare a thought for the vast majority of mankind who will have to face the same holocaust despite their own total lack of guilt in doomsday superpower follies.

What stops Mr. Reagan and like-minded policy makers and their supportive legions of recognising the "existential condition"? Mr. Hoopes offers us two reasons: (a) a deep division in the Reagan camp on the fact of 'mutual vulnerability' and (b) a deep ambivalence in the American psyche.

"By instinct and heritage" he observes "the US is a nation of 'can-do' unilateralists. Historical experience has made it difficult for Americans to accept the idea of interdependence, and even more difficult to cooperate with nations whose political philosophy Americans despise and whose power they fear. Americans have preferred either to avoid them or destroy them. The trouble is that an attempt to destroy the now would very probably bring about US destruction as well".

Mr. Reagan has had a remarkable string of successes in terms of domestic opinion. He has an almost miraculous gift to recover from every blunder, each local or international misadventure, with his popularity enhanced! He is an ordinary politician, a man of the people, with few pretensions. Emboldened by his triumphs, his self-confidence is such that he feels he can do nothing wrong even in a world he does not quite comprehend. He is convinced that his luck will hold. In any case, the most popular president since Eisenhower, is a simple-minded man who is not ready to leave the White House or go down in History as the American who 'surrendered' to the

(Continued on page 20)

Reagan's P. R. exercise

WASHINGTON

President Reagan has responded to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's Jan. 15 arms-reduction offers by proposing to eliminate all US and Soviet intermediate-range nuclear weapons worldwide within three years, but suggesting two different ways to do it.

Administration sources said on Sunday that a letter from Reagan outlining his proposals has been dispatched to Moscow in time for Gorbachev to receive it before the opening of the Soviet communist party congress on Tuesday.

The new US positions are outlined in general terms in the letter to Gorbachev and conveyed in greater detail in new instructions sent over the weekend to US negotiators in the Geneva Arms talks, officials said.

Reagan adopted his positions in a meeting with top advisers aboard air force one returning from Grenada on Thursday following lengthy discussions within the administration and week-long consultations with US allies in Europe and Asia by senior arms advisers Paul H. Uitz and Edward L. Rowny.

Gorbachev's Jan. 15 offers, which called for elimination of all nuclear weapons of all types by the end of century, caught the administration by surprise.

While Reagan's immediate reaction was positive, there was much internal debate about how to respond, especially to the intermediate-range

nuclear force (INF) offers, which seem to hold the promise of an actual agreement within coming months between the two nuclear superpowers.

Gorbachev's INF offer was taken even more seriously. In Washington after the Soviet leader told Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass. FEB. 6, that an agreement in this area could be made regardless of whether there was any progress toward accord on reducing strategic nuclear weapons or banning an arms race in outer space.

The Soviet leader also told Kennedy that his decision about whether to come to Washington this June or July for another summit meeting with Reagan, as the United States has proposed would depend on whether major progress could be made in the meantime toward an INF agreement or a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons testing.

By calling for elimination of INF missiles both in Europe and Asia within three years, Reagan is outpacing Gorbachev's Jan. 15 proposal that US and Soviet intermediate-range forces be eliminated from Europe within the next five to eight years.

Officials said that by doing so, the administration hopes to regain the public relations initiative, even while proposing a phased process of reductions that takes account of unexpectedly strong misgivings expressed during the recent consultations by Western European allies and Japan.

Part II

U. S. State Dept. on Human Rights in Sri Lanka

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

Generally speaking, an accused person is entitled to a fair trial in open court, is represented by counsel of his choice, and is apprised of the charges and evidence against him. Accused persons tried in the high court are provided an attorney if they need one, but no attorney is provided by the Government for defendants tried in other courts.

Although trial by jury is the custom, juries are not provided in trials under the Prevention of Terrorism Act on the grounds that jury members could be intimidated. Although the PTA has been in effect since 1979¹ and hundreds of people arrested under its terms, there had been only three trials under the act by mid-1985. Of those detained under the PTA who have been released, the large majority were held for a period of months and then set free without charges ever having been brought. The most publicized case of the trial of a PTA detainee, which began in November 1984, involved Father Aparnam Singayyar, who was arrested in November 1982 and charged with two offenses in February 1983. His trial on the first charge, that of withholding information from the police in a bank robbery case, was still under way at the end of 1985.

The independence of the judiciary is constitutionally guaranteed. The Chief Justice and all judges of the Supreme Court, courts of appeal, and high courts are appointed by the President. The Chief Justice and two Supreme Court judges comprise a Judicial Service Commission which appoints, transfers, and dismisses all lower court judges.

The judicial system in the northern Jaffna Peninsula has virtually ceased functioning due to intimidation by the Tamil militants. For most of 1985, police in the area

have not performed their normal law enforcement activities and judges have tried only a few cases.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Government respects individual privacy and the sanctity of the family and the home, and the judiciary has a good record of upholding rights to privacy in those cases which reach a high court. Ordinarily, search and arrest warrants are required in order to enter private premises. Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, however, police officers above a certain rank and less senior officers authorized by them in writing may, without a warrant, enter and search any premises and seize "any document or thing" when there is a presumption or evidence of support for, or involvement with, unlawful activity. Critics claim that police and military personnel often enter the homes of Tamils without cause.

Monitoring of telephones is not known to be a common practice, despite allegations by some critics of the Government that it taps their telephone lines.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Rights, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution guarantees "freedom of speech and expression including publication," but it also permits these guarantees to be restricted "as may be prescribed by law in the interests of national security." Sri Lankans are generally free to express their views in private but may be prosecuted under the emergency regulations for making certain kinds of remarks in public. Press censorship was in effect for five months in 1985 on articles relating to terrorist activities, security operations, and

communal matters. After formal censorship was ended on July 18, the Government asked the media to exercise restraint in publishing information on security-related subjects, and a measure of self-censorship was apparently practiced. In November, restrictions were placed on the publication of press reports on the activities of the Ceasefire Monitoring Committee.

The Government adopted on March 31 a more restrictive policy regarding issuance of press credentials to foreign correspondents. Sri Lankan diplomatic missions were authorized to review a correspondent's past reporting or that of his journal for fairness and accuracy before a visa and press credentials were issued. In practice, however, many foreign journalists entered the country in 1985 on tourist visas.

There also were some instances in 1985 in which individuals were prosecuted for their statements. A Canadian citizen of Sri Lankan descent, who was chairman of the citizens committee of the east coast town of Kalmunai, was charged in May with sedition for making certain statements, principally repeating to a foreign journalist a report he had given to the police about an alleged atrocity by the security forces. The Government accused him of relaying rumors and argued that it was irrelevant whether rumors were true. One person, arrested after distributing leaflets at a demonstration by university students, was held for several days, then released.

Although the Government controls the country's largest newspaper chain and owns the radio and television services, a variety of independent newspapers and journals provide a full range of viewpoints on foreign policy and most domestic matters. Many small circulation periodicals published by opposition political parties operate in an unrestricted manner.

Academic freedom is generally respected. In January 1985, the parliament passed a bill amending the Universities Act of 1978. The amendments, among other things, provided for more government control over the selection of the senior university administrators, the Vice chancellors. Critics charged that the amendments undermined the country's system of free higher education and restricted academic freedom by unduly increasing government influence. There were several, sometimes violent, demonstrations against the amendments in February and March. The Government responded by closing several universities temporarily and arresting or forcibly dispersing protestors in some instances. The Government also temporarily extended press censorship to matters pertaining to post secondary education.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution guarantees freedom of assembly and association and the right to form and join trade unions. Sri Lanka has an abundance of private associations, devoted to the promotion of business, professional, educational, religious, charitable, and humanitarian causes, which are free to maintain ties with international bodies. However, there are a few restrictions on free assembly and association. One leftist political party, the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP), has been proscribed since 1983. Under the emergency regulations, the President (or his designee) is empowered to prohibit public meetings which would be "likely to cause a disturbance to public order or promote disaffection."

In practice, the police issue permits for outdoor, public meetings or processions and special permission is required for use of a loudspeaker. The question of whether to issue a permit is left to the discretion of the superintendent or assistant superintendent of an area, who may refuse a permit if he anticipates a breach of peace; in 1985 the practice of issuing permits sometimes appeared inconsistent. For example, one group

advocating a peaceful settlement to Sri Lanka's communal conflict had several requests for demonstration permits denied. In contrast, a group of political and religious leaders opposed to continuation of the peace talks with Tamils received a permit for a public meeting.

Worker rights are recognized and protected by law. Any seven workers may form a union, draw up their own procedures, elect their own representatives, and formulate programs. Workers are expressly granted the right to bargain collectively. When workers and employers are not able to resolve a dispute, there is an arbitration system which involves Labor Department officers. These officers are stationed throughout the country to assure that employers fulfill their legal and contractual obligations to workers and to be available for arbitration in minor local disputes.

Excepting public service employees, workers are free to strike in Sri Lanka and have done so frequently. Under the emergency regulations, the President may declare any business to be an essential service, making a strike illegal. During 1985, the Government used this power to terminate strikes or other job actions several times. In the case of public service employees as well as workers in "essential services," the Government generally agreed to discuss grievances with a labor representative. A group of the 8,000 workers who were fired during a strike in 1980 brought a complaint against the Government in 1983 before the International Labor Organization Committee on Freedom of Association. In its session of May-June 1985, the committee urged the Sri Lankan Government to do its utmost to reinstate those workers who had been without employment since 1980 and to conclude as rapidly as possible the trials of five trade union leaders who had been charged in connection with the 1980 strike.

Over 1,000 labor unions and federations together represent about one-third of the 6.9 million

-strong labor force. Workers in the nonplantation agricultural sector and most of those employed in small businesses, as well as workers in the free trade zone, are not represented by unions. Employees in the zone participate in labor-management company associations. Although there are a few independent unions, most of the largest worker organizations are affiliated with political parties, frequently operate as arms of those parties, and play a significant role in the political process. Since worker organization's party affiliations are fixed, their memberships fluctuate depending on which is the governing party. Despite constraints arising from their political affiliations, Sri Lankan unions have been effective in improving conditions for workers. Many unions maintain ties with international labor federations and trade secretariats.

c. Freedom of Religion

Although the Constitution establishes Buddhism as the official religion and requires the Government "to protect and foster" Buddhism, it also guarantees the right of all Hindus, Muslims, and Christians to practice their religions freely. Most members of the majority Sinhalese ethnic group are Buddhists, while most Tamils are Hindu. There are Christians from both groups. Religious differences generally are not a basis for discrimination. Sri Lankans of every faith are free to maintain links with coreligionists in other countries, as well as to undertake religious travel.

Two cabinet ministers are assigned the additional portfolios of Minister of Muslim Affairs and Minister of Hindu Affairs to deal with issues involving those minority religions.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution guarantees every citizen "freedom of movement and of choosing his residence within Sri Lanka" and "freedom

to return to Sri Lanka." "These guarantees are generally honored. The present Government removed exit visa requirements imposed by its predecessor and now permits virtually unimpeded emigration and foreign travel. Many Sri Lankans have taken advantage of this policy to seek jobs abroad. According to some estimates, there were 180,000 Sri Lankans working abroad in 1985.

Some Sri Lankans, predominantly young male Tamils, have sought refugee status or political asylum abroad on the grounds they are members of a persecuted minority. Despite the freedom to return cited in the Constitution, in 1985 there were a few cases of returning Tamils being arrested on arrival and detained for a period of days. Those detained either had traveled on forged passports or were suspected of narcotics offenses. The Government has said it does not take legal action or discriminate against those returning to Sri Lanka when their applications for asylum have been refused.

Refugees or displaced persons from other countries are generally denied entry to Sri Lanka. The Government does not permit refugees to stay in the country even while they are seeking permanent residence elsewhere.

Due to concern that Tamil terrorists were frequently crossing from southern India to northern Sri Lanka via the Palk Straits, the Government adopted a series of measures beginning in April 1984 which progressively restricted freedom of movement in that area. Expanding on the maritime surveillance zone imposed in April 1984, in November of that year the Government announced a prohibited zone along some 200 miles of Sri Lanka's northern coastline. It also imposed a security zone in the entire Jaffna Peninsula. These measures restricted free movement in the area to a considerable extent and made it virtually impossible for the large number of fishermen resident in that area to earn their livelihood. These restrictions as well as nightly curfews in the North

were gradually relaxed during the late spring of 1985. The curfew was terminated in July, but the restrictive zones remain technically in effect under the emergency regulations.

As a result of these various restrictions as well as the threat or fear of becoming involved in the spreading communal violence, large numbers of Sri Lankans were displaced from their homes in 1985. According to some estimates, during the period 1983-1985 more than 100,000 Sri Lankan Tamils sought refuge in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The Government estimates that as of year end some 46,000 persons were housed in refugee camps in Sri Lanka with another 94,000 having sought refuge elsewhere in the country (with friends or relatives). Of the total estimated 140,000 displaced persons, 88,000 are Tamils, 49,000 are Sinhalese, and the remainder Muslim. The continued unsettled security situation has made it difficult for these people to return to their homes.

(To be continued)

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Gorbachev's first year — Acceleration is the catchword

Bhabani Sen Gupta

If for India 1985 was the year of Rajiv Gandhi, for the world it was the Year of Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachov. More than any other world leader, Gorbachov drew the limelight even before he was elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on March 11, 1985. For a whole year he has been striding the worldscape of events as a leader beaconing the third millennium, while others have found it difficult to prevent the ground of leadership from slipping away from under their feet. Ronald Reagan, at 75 the oldest US president in office, is in the twilight of his sunshine occupancy of the White House. In China, Deng Tsiaoping, at 82, is not as powerful as he was even in 1984. The sun of Margaret Thatcher is setting; that of Francois Mitterand has already set. Gorbachov, in contrast, has emerged in an astonishingly short span of time as the world's single most compelling political personality pierced with a passion to change, to move ahead.

He may well usher the Soviet Union into the 21st century as a rejuvenated superpower overcoming the two big lags that have left it significantly behind the United States in world leadership. The lag in economic management, and the lag in high grade technologies.

Americans see him as a Soviet Kennedy — a vision that has been a Western nightmare for many years. Indeed his image in the United States and Western Europe is much higher than it is in the Soviet Union. I have asked six

Soviet scholars in the last four weeks for a description of Gorbachov's leadership. All of them repeated a word used by Gorgi Arbatov: Dynamic. As if the CPSU public relations men have handed down an approved caption to decorate each photograph of Mikhail Gorbachov.

The West has embellished Gorbachov with a garland of glittering adjectives. When, as Chernenko's understudy, he visited Britain in December 1984 with his wife Riasa, he immediately captured the focus of the mass media. His British interlocutors were impressed with his "formidable political skill". The mass media saw in the visiting couple "a sort of John and Jackie Kennedy, Soviet-style". The British-crafted image swiftly travelled to the US. In the first year of his leadership of the USSR, Gorbachov has been described in the US as healthy, urbane, candid, capable, bristling with energy, intelligent, an impatient seeker of change, modest, brisk and astute. Two months after Gorbachov was elected CPSU leader, a correspondent of the *International Herald Tribune* summed up the American vision of the new man in the Kremlin. "Faced with the first Soviet leader in 30 years who is both reform-minded and vigorous, some Reagan administration officials and kindred analysts are insisting that even a partially reformed Soviet system will represent a far greater threat to US interests".

Gorbachov's first year in power has kept Moscow-watchers on their toes. He has sprung one surprise after another on a world that had been used to see the USSR as slow-moving, caught in the inert coils of its two massive bureaucracies, and seemingly for ever destined to be ruled by tired, spent, old revolutionaries. With astonishing

speed, Gorbachov inducted a new political and biological generation in power, retiring, often dismissing veterans of the past. By July, he got a majority of members of the all-powerful politbureau elected from amongst a network of leaders who shared his views and belonged to his age group. By January, only three of the oldguard were left — Vladimir Shcherbitsky, 67, Dinmukhamed Kunayev, 74, and alternate member Boris Ponomarev, 81.

The pace of the generational reshuffle was indeed breath-taking. In 12 months, more than one-third of the ministers were retired or sacked; more than half of the 157 regional party secretaries were replaced with younger men who combined experience of regional leadership with fairly long stints at Moscow, who were cast in the mould of Gorbachov himself. Thousands of heads of factories and collective farms were similarly replaced. With surprising ease, Gorbachov brought the Soviet armed forces under the firm control of the Party. The new politbureau has no Dmitri Ustinov; nor is there likely to be one in the near future. The new defence minister, Marshal Sergei Sokolov, is no political heavyweight. The man who could be, General Aleksei Yepishev, chief political commissar of the armed forces since 1962, was replaced by his deputy, General Aleksei Lizichev, 57. The editor of the army newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), Lt.-Gen. Nikolai Makeyev, a man in his late 70s who had been holding that office for 30 years, was also retired. Pensioned off was the famous Marshal Gorshkov who gave the USSR its bluewater navy. Gorbachov brought back to

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the centre of power Marshal Orgakov, whom Ustinov had banished to an obscure position before his death.

By the 27th CPSU congress held in March, Gorbachov accomplished an astonishing consolidation of power, unprecedented in the history of the Soviet Union. That this huge shuffle of men from their long-entrenched positions could happen without audible rumblings of protest shocked and surprised the West's Kremlin watchers. They never expected a generational change of power to take place in the Soviet Union so peacefully, so smoothly.

In the Soviet Union, however, Gorbachov is not seen as a "reformer". He is not going to change the Soviet system. Or bring about radical structural transformation. In an interview with editors of *L'Humanite*, organ of the French communist party, on February 8, Gorbachov was categorical on this point. Was there to be a "new revolution" in the Soviet Union? he was asked. "Certainly not! he snapped. That was a "wrong question". What he and his colleagues had set out to accomplish was to quicken the pace of economic and technological development. The catchword of the Gorbachov era is "Acceleration". Up until the 70s, the Soviet economy had performed very well. There had been all round improvement in the people's standard of living. With the advent of the 80s, the USSR fell behind. The gap is wide. But it can be narrowed down and then closed quite rapidly if four essential steps are taken. First, a comprehensive managerial overhaul. Second, wiping out inertia and the vested interests of continuity and introduce dynamism and a nationwide appetite for change. Third, top priority for closing the technology gap. And fourth, a vigorous continuing drive against corruption and for a new work ethics for the Soviet people. These four together constitute the essence of the Gorbachov agenda.

Comprehensive managerial overhaul needs what the Gorbachov people call "socialist self-government." That means wholesale decentralisation of power relating to

economic performance. Plant managers must decide, often on their own initiative, on matters of production, wages, inventories, and technology needs. Compartmentalisation of decision making at the government level must end: hence all agriculture-related ministries and committees have been merged in Moscow under a single super-agency for greater efficiency. The new leaders, both at the national and provincial levels, have been cast in the role of doers. Even the veteran of the older generation, Andre Gromyko, 75, was seen recently stamping the streets of Moscow, visiting shops, restaurants and hospitals to see things for himself and listen to the grievances of people. The Gorbachov style of glad-handling with members of the public has become a norm with all leaders, big, medium and small. Particularly touching in the case of Gromyko whose daughter once said that he had not set foot on a Moscow street for 25 years!

The drive against corruption, alcoholism, absenteeism and other manifestations of alienation are being fought on a scale never attempted in the Soviet Union before. Gorbachov has simultaneously mounted a campaign to make the Soviet press more convincing and credible. Following his advice to the press to be "more open and honest about problems of Soviet society" *Pravda* in an editorial on December 20 described Soviet Journalism as "faded" and a "dull pattern of repetitive announcement." One of the stories doing the rounds in Moscow is that a month after he was elected CPSU Secretary-General, Gorbachov phoned the editor of *Pravda*, and said, "Viktor Grigorevich, do you keep the works of Lenin in your office?" "Certainly", replied the *Pravda* editor rather lamely. "Then be so good in future as to quote him and not me," said Gorbachov.

His modesty and his determination to overhaul the Party and the economic system is seen in his decision not to assume the presidency or the prime ministership. Andre Gromyko was made president in July last year. Nikolai Ryzhkova

prime minister, a few months later. No one in Moscow has greater expertise in the kind of overhaul of economic management that Gorbachov wants. Yegor Ligachev, 54, the former Siberian party boss, is now the chief ideologue of the politbureau. A very different man from Suslov, much more aware of the ways the world is changing, and, like Gorbachov, keen on keeping the USSR in step with, even ahead of, international change. The ambitions reach of the economic visions of the Gorbachov team can be seen in the wholesale rejection of the five-year plan covering the period 1985-90, drawn up during the brief regime of Chernenko and the preparation of a new blueprint of the Party's development programme extending to 2000 A.D. The blueprint was published for national debate in October and adopted at the party congress. Only three times before in the CPSU's history — in 1903, 1919 and 1961 — was such a long-term party document prepared.

(To be continued)

The importance...

(Continued from page 14)

Russians or "compromised" with the "evil Empire". His role super-stellar, his world a movie-set, he will ride out into the sun in the final scene, the great American hero.

He can achieve this, his advisers have impressed on him, by two basic means, two connected strategies; firstly, by exploiting the superiority of American technology, and secondly, by punishing the Soviet union, economically.

The history of the superpower relationship and the military balance, the doctrine of parity achieved through the arms race of the 60's and the 70's have already proved him wrong. Both assumptions have been proved illusory.

(To be continued)

CAT'S EYE



RAJIV'S CRISIS AND MUSLIM LAW

Muslim religious law makes no provision for the maintenance of divorced wives, but the Indian Supreme Court recently — in the case of a Muslim woman from Kerala named *Shahbanu* — granted her the right of maintenance. This Law caused a controversy, with liberal Muslims and women's groups welcoming the decision and Muslim fundamentalists opposing the judgement as an interference in religious law. Muslim women in Kerala, Andhra & Maharashtra have held public demonstrations supporting the Supreme Court decision and Muslim women in Gujarat led by Ms Ila Bhatt have organised to demand reforms in laws discriminatory to women.

But the fundamentalists have put pressure on the Indian government and Rajiv Gandhi's government in a bid to keep to Muslim vote has compromised by bringing in a 'Muslim Woman (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill', which in effect overrides the Supreme Court's decision on maintenance. Liberal Muslims are outraged by this move and one of Rajiv's Ministers, Arif Mohammed Khan has resigned in protest. A meeting of eminent jurists including Supreme Court judge V. R. Krishna Iyer has condemned the bill as "immoral & derogatory to the dignity of women and especially of Muslim women who are proud members of the Indian Republic". There has also been a storm of protest from women's organisations making Rajiv Gandhi hesitate again on the Bill, since he does not want to lose the women's vote.

The issue raises two important questions (1) secularism and (2)

women's rights. Writing in *Mainstream* (1 March 1986) Seema Mustafa describes the new Bill as an 'Assault on Secularism' and writes "Rajiv Gandhi has grossly underestimated the fundamentalist forces on whom the policy of appeasement does not act as a sedative, but instead makes them far more aggressive and more difficult to control. The Prime Minister of secular India is playing with communal fire and when it rages he will find that he does not have the equipment to put it out".

The issue has now become one of great importance for women of all communities. As the newsletter of the Research Centre for Women's Studies in Bombay states:

It is high time that we revive the demand for a uniform civil code. The *Shahbanu* case has triggered off so many issues, not only relating to one community but also to women in general. All the forward-looking forces including women's groups can be brought together on the issue of social justice and equality of sexes. A common platform against discriminatory laws of any religion can be effectively raised. Women should be protected from victimisation by guardians of morality. Widespread public pressure should be built up against religious conservatism and fundamentalism.

ARE FEMINISTS ANTI-MALE OPPORTUNISTS?

Cat's Eye's recent feminist critique of *Rana Gi* (Battle Songs) and the patriarchal military ideology it eulogises has evidently

"dumbfounded" a person named *Punya Panadura Archari*. We are unable to reproduce the full text of his three-page rebuttal, titled, "Anti-Male Feminism Breeds Opportunism", due to the lack of space. Nevertheless, I will summarise and examine his main arguments.

According to P. P. Archari, the feminist position exemplified in the *Rana Gi* critique is (a) "anti-male" and (b) ignores class domination. Both are common accusations hurled against feminism by anti-feminist marxists.

Regarding his first allegation, Archari writes,

I was aware of an anti-male fingering going hand-in-glove with a cold resentment for a social change, within the local feminist circle. Yet I was dumbfounded when I read this feminist in all her anti-male glory.

Unfortunately, he fails to elaborate on his exquisite metaphor and enlighten us on the nature of this "anti-male" conspiracy. To a superficial and defensive reading, my exposition of the patriarchal assumptions that underlie the militarisation of our society may seem anti-male. Patriarchy legitimises male domination of women in both the public and private spheres and hence, all critiques of patriarchy must identify and challenge its source. However, my focus was not patriarchy *per se* but the patriarchal links between patriotism and militarism. Beyond this in the context of state militarisation, patriarchy informs the (authoritarian) ideology of oppression which will crush all who dissent, demand political

rights, or challenge the authority of the state.

But, argues, Archari, if such a state is defined as a "male state" (his words), how does one account for those states which are headed by women? Archari's argument confuses "male" state (i. e., a state headed by men) with the patriarchal state (where the fundamental male oppression of women also ramifies into authoritarianism and militarism). Of course, as Archari anticipates, I do not deny the fact that female heads of states have hardly changed the patriarchal power structures they inherited. This does not invalidate the case for patriarchy but only demonstrates that although patriarchal political power has been wielded primarily by men, occasionally women too represent and rule essentially patriarchal systems. However, Archari appears to believe that such exceptional cases discredit the persistence of patriarchy and only strengthens the case for a class-based analysis of political power in capitalist society.

This brings me to Archari's second point. With reference to my critique of Rana Gi, he writes.

Her's is a peculiar breed of Feminism that leaves out all class distinctions in society. The whole world is divided into two distinct categories according to the biological difference, the sex; and nothing else surpasses this according to her philosophy... There are no class distinctions and class interests whatsoever as far as she is concerned.

Clearly for Archari, sexual oppression pales into insignificance besides class oppression. Throughout his rebuttal, he is very careful not to admit the existence of the oppression of women — "if at all women need to liberate themselves." If Archari read my article with greater care, he may have noticed that the Rana Gi lyrics I examined were explicitly macho and male-

chauvinistic; they hardly refer to the class aspects of militarism. Of course, I agree with Archari's conventional marxist wisdom that class is an important factor in the analysis of militarisation in a capitalist context such as ours. However, the pervasive militarisation of our society and the glorification of war expressed in forms ranging from Rana Gi to passing out parades, blood donation campaigns and military toys for children, cuts across classes and reveals a more fundamental truth about militarism that class analysis does not account for: that militarism is a male fantasy (in which some women may also participate) based on the patriarchal values of aggression, possession and domination.

Finally, Archari accuses feminism of "derailing" the class struggle. He maintains that "it is the accumulation of private wealth that breeds 'male-supremacy.'" According to this logic, the eradication of private property would automatically destroy male-supremacy and liberate women. Unfortunately, socialist revolutions that pursued classless societies have failed to address the oppression of women in their societies and women participate in rebuilding their post-revolutionary societies as the 'second sex.' Therefore, I hasten to reassure Archari that feminists are hardly subverting "opportunistic" forces of "social change" which Archari seems to limit to the economic emancipation of a largely male working class; on the contrary, feminists are radically redefining the meaning of "social change" to include not only class but also sexual oppression, not only the public issues but also the personal.

WOMEN PLANTERS?

A planter calling himself Sepala, writing in the Ceylon Daily News (6 February, 1986) on Women's Lib', in a column 'Why On Why' asks why women are

not appointed to be managers (superintendents) of plantations.

He writes

Some years ago, I attempted to employ my chief clerk's daughter in the estate office as a junior checkroll clerk as she had all the necessary qualifications including her father's blessing.

I referred the subject to my Colombo agents, not by requirement but as a matter too bigoted and couldn't agree.

It took another 14 years before women made a breakthrough in the lower levels of estate management such as clerks and supervisors thanks to the progressive outlook of the two bosses of the plantation corporation.

Why, on why, do not the Janatha Estates Development Board and the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation take the next step and recruit "Sinna Doraisanis"?

After all, the two corporations were gallant enough to initiate equal wages for equal work even at the very bottom rungs of the plantation ladder. I wonder all the more why, oh why women have not pressed hard for the managerial posts on the plantations.

One plausible explanation is that unless their spouses agree to be employed elsewhere and to live separate, the men will be called upon to mind the babies, tend the strawberry patch, arrange the roses and generally wear the apron.

While welcoming this new outlook among the Periya Dorais (one of the last bastions perhaps, of male chauvinism), we would like to ask him if there is anything wrong in men minding babies, growing strawberries, arranging roses and wearing the apron?

Nat and Mutt: A farce

Vijaya Perera

"Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia" (Shak.)

"Water your damned flower-pots, dol!" (Browning)

The National Water Supply and Drainage Board, hereinafter called Nat (Hi, Nat!) has made two very valid points:

1. Though water in stream and river is God's gift to man, water piped to your household involves capital and operational expenditure and therefore has to be paid for. (No one can gainsay this.)

2. Piped water must be metered because this is the only way wastage can be discouraged and the charges for water levied in an equitable way. From each according to his consumption. (Fair enough.)

It is from this point onwards that Nat gets into deep, so to speak, water. First of all Nat, for reasons not revealed to us, has failed to ensure that all water consumers have meters. Those households which are not metered are charged a flat rate of Rs. 30 a month irrespective of the amount of water consumed. They can water their flower-pots and wash their cars and do all manner of things with their piped water at the cost of just one rupee per day all inclusive. The metered households, on the other hand, have to pay Rs. 40 for the first 30 units of water and Rs. 161 for every 30 units thereafter.

Now this looks something very like the denial of the fundamental right to equality of treatment (guaranteed by Article 12 of the constitution) to those consumers who are billed for their water on meter readings. Of course no one would for a moment suggest that Nat favours friends and relations by leaving them alone without meters while fixing meters only at households of those not so

lucky. However, the fact remains that Nat's method of selecting which households to meter and which to leave unmetered is not known to the public.

Nor is this all. If Nat's frequent public statements are to be believed Nat has a lot of statutory clout. A householder whose bill is not promptly paid may find Nat cutting off his supplies of water.

For a household to be deprived of its water supply is a very serious matter — far more crippling than having its electricity disconnected. It can certainly qualify as a cruel and unusual punishment of the kind contemplated in Article 12 of the constitution. Such a householder would find that after first, being denied his fundamental right to equality of treatment under Article 12, he is now even threatened with being denied the possibility of continued existence in his house and home.

Let us call this much abused and harassed householder Mutt, after the cartoon character. Mutt does not relish the fact that thousands of his fellow citizens are billed only Rs. 30 a month for unlimited quantities of water while he is among those who are called upon to pay so much more. But Mutt has neither the money nor the fighting spirit to take a fundamental rights action against Nat. He is content to pay for the water he uses.

But wait a minute, there's something wrong. Mutt finds he is being billed for far more water than he consumes. His is a four-member household, inclusive of a cookperson, and everyone of them is conscious of the high cost of

water. Mutt believes his daily consumption of water does not exceed 150 gallons. For 30 days this should work out to something less than 21 units of water, which according to the published tariff should cost him Rs. 13. He finds his bill comes to Rs. 100.50. The identical bill for exactly 41 units is repeated several months running. He also notices that Nat's meter reader never seems to appear. Convinced now that something is seriously amiss Mutt calls on Nat and the following dialogue takes place:

Mutt: My bills are too high and your meter reader never seems to come.

Nat: If you make a genuine complaint I am prepared to take action against the meter reader.

M: I am not interested in your taking action against your meter reader. I only want my meter read accurately. Are you telling me that you have no independent initiative to ensure that your meter readers do their work properly? You merely wait for complaints from your customers?

N: Perhaps your meter is out of order.

M: It is not my meter. It is yours. What happens when the meter goes out of order?

N: It records your consumption incorrectly.

M: So what do you do in such a case?

N: As water meters are laid below surface level of the ground it is most likely that they will become covered with sand and dirt. However, in all honesty, it

must be stated that it is not possible for me to protect your meter from sand and dirt. If you like to ensure an accurate recording of your meter readings it is up to you to see that the meter is protected from sand and dirt.

M: But I don't know what I should do protect a buried meter from sand and dirt.

N: Isn't that just too bad!

M: It was your decision to bury the meter in sand and dirt. In other tropical cities where water is metered the meter is above ground level like the electricity meters. Why did you decide to bury the meters in dirt and sand where they are likely to go out of order?

N: You see, unless the meter is fixed next to the connection from the main you could illegally tap the water between the connection and the meter. Since the connection is two feet below ground level the meter too has to be buried.

M: But that's absurd! Why must you assume that all your customers are potential thieves? In any case what's to prevent water being tapped direct from the mains?

N: No comment.

M: Look at these bills. You see that for three months running I have been billed for the identical number of units.

N: Have you not noticed this asterisk against the number of units?

M: What does it mean?

N: It means that you are being billed on an estimated consumption, not on the meter reading.

M: On what basis do you make the estimate? According to my estimate I consume only half this quantity. If you are not billing me on the meter reading are you not obliged to bill me on the basis of the non-metered households? Should you not be charging me the flat rate of Rs. 30?

N: No comment.

M: Do you realise that if you are not billing me on the meter I can wash my car and water my damned flower-pots and waste as much water as I like at no extra cost? Like Ophelia I have too much water! What good is it your having a meter at all? How much did you spend on buying and burying all these meters?

N: I must now run away for my lunch. Do feel free to drop in any time for a chat.

M: Before you go just one more question. Why do you charge me for water when I am already paying the CMC for water?

N: Ha, ha, You've got that wrong. What the CMC is charging you for is not water but for the fact that we make water available to you. 'Bye now'.

Note: *Nat's entire dialogue in this sketch is paraphrased from statement published from time to time by the NWS & D Board.*

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 2)

A classified "top secret" document prepared by the US Army Historical Records Department shortly after Marcos assumed power twenty years ago, which was published by the US media recently, described Marcos, claim to have led a guerrilla army against the Japanese occupation forces in the Philippines during World War II as pure fiction.

Shortly after the end of World War I, a former sergeant-major in a Cossack cavalry regiment, Reza Pahlevi, invaded Iran at the head of an army of freebooters, overthrew the regime and proclaimed himself Shah. His son, Reza Pahlevi II, went a step further and proclaimed himself Shah-en-Shah (King of Kings). A few years before his downfall, Reza Pahlevi II staged a fantastic Disney-like extravaganza in a specially constructed tent city in the desert costing hundreds of millions of petro-dollars, which was attended by reigning monarchs and ruling presidents from practically all over

the world, to commemorate the 2500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire by Darius the Great. The upstart Shah projected himself as the successor and living embodiment of a 2500-year old dynasty going back to Emperor Darius.

Now, with the fairy-tale legends demolished by hard fact and the US Army Historical Records Department, the monarchs and presidents departed and the tents folded, Reza Pahlevi II and Ferdinand Marcos, having strutted on stage for their brief moments in history, have softly crept away.

Lionel Jayasinghe

Colombo

Nit-picking

I must thank R. M. Pathirana for the corrections he has made in my article "The Menace of Macarthism" in the L. G. of 15.2.86. Some of the errors mentioned are trivial, such as whether Mrs. Vivienne Goonewardena was Parliamentary Secretary, Deputy or Junior Minister. In fact he even concedes the fact that the post of Parliamentary Secretary was popularly known as Junior Minister (though incorrectly).

He says that "when a clock strikes thirteen one just does not ignore the thirteenth stroke, but one doubts the entirety of the clocks's statement".

It is illogical to compare the mechanism of a clock to the mechanism of a human mind. The clock is mechanical and any apperception on its part should make one think that the entire mechanism is faulty, while in the other case, several trifling mistakes do not invalidate a general argument.

This only shows that Pathirana has missed the wood for the trees, and goes in for nit-picking which puts him in the genotype of Dr. Costain de Vos. Pathirana is biased if he cannot see the creeping menace of Macarthism. He is drawing a red-herring that puts him on the side of the forces of corruption, abuse of power and obscurantism. He is a defender of UNP fascism and Macarthism.

Amaradasa Fernando



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