

**PARLIAMENT MOVES TO B. M. I. C. H.**

— Mervyn de Silva

**LANKA**

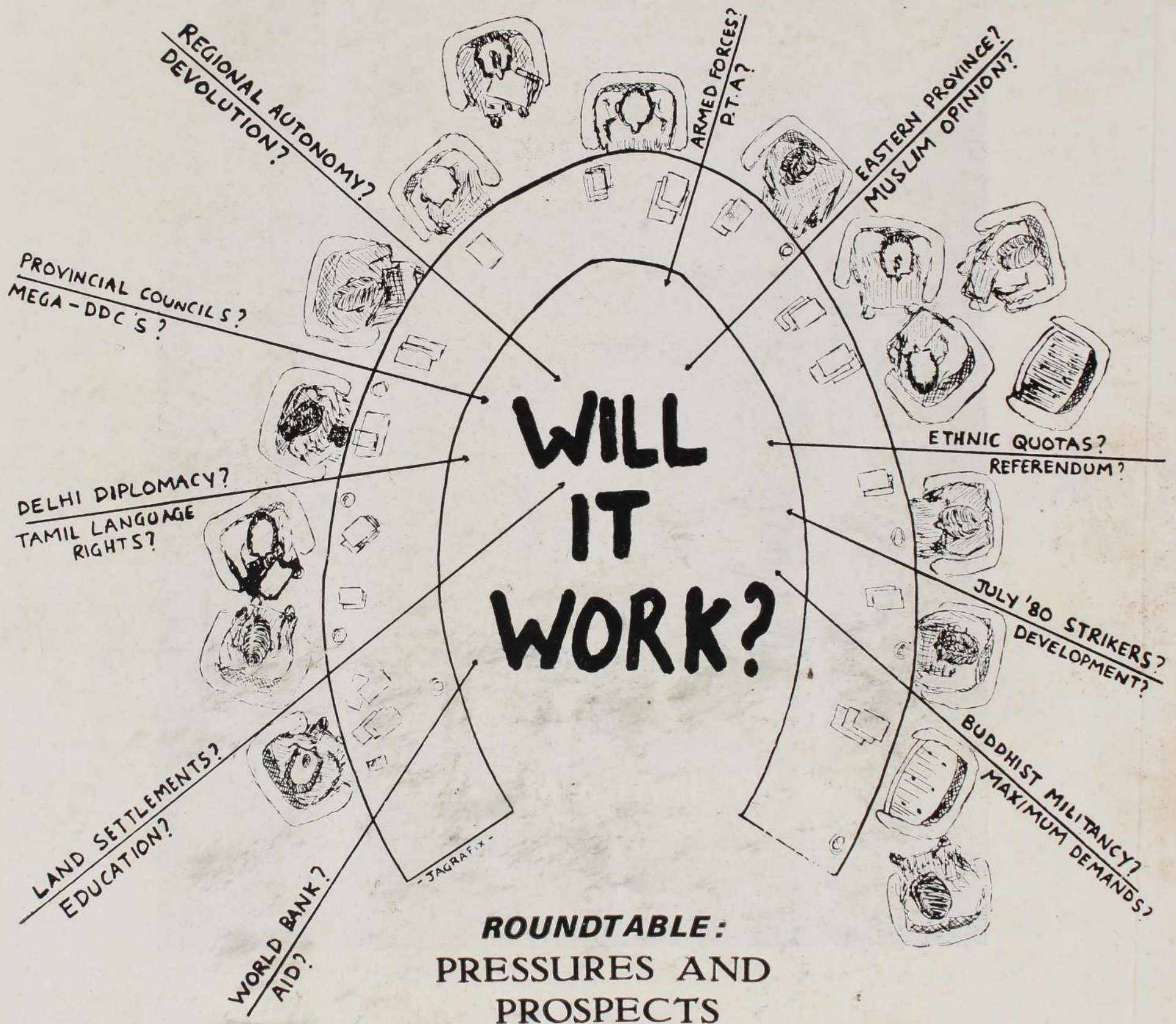
# **GUARDIAN**

Vol. 6 No. 18

January 15, 1984

Price Rs. 3/50

Registered at the GPO, Sri Lanka QJ/75/N/83



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## THE ECONOMICS OF DISCONTENT

WHILE analysts, both conservative and pro-UNP and their counterparts of a Leftist persuasion are now engaged in the interesting exercise of identifying the economic causes of "Black July", the island's economic picture is getting increasingly bleak. "If the Finance Minister has gone to Bangladesh and Burma looking for a little commodity aid then we are really down in the dumps" said one of Colombo's top financiers at a private "rap session" on the present situation.

Mr. de Mel himself chose to be tight-lipped when the ISLAND's special correspondent, V. Dahanayake asked him whether it was correct that a World Bank team had described financial indiscipline in Sri Lanka as "worse than Zaire". Mr. de Mel's polite refusal ("I shall not comment on that") spoke volumes.

In fact, the Finance Minister's thinking on the matter had already become clear in the closing stages of the budget debate when he took on the so-called "sacred cows" — Air Lanka, the Shipping Corporation etc. (A week later, Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali sailed in to the debate with a gusty answer).

The Finance Minister, it is widely recognised, has kept the UNP ship afloat for 6 years by persuading the IMF, the World Bank and the donors to help finance his huge budgetary and payments gap. But how long more?

## THE SQUEEZE

THE SQUEEZE is on, generally and on Sri Lanka. The IMF will soon change its loan policies. In a staggered three-year program, the IMF will raise its interest rates to near market levels in order to accommodate the demands of the rich countries that provide the IMF's funds. So borrowers' servicing burden will be heavier. Secondly, the needy countries will face the

problem of reduced access to loans, especially soft loans.

How Sri Lanka is going to foot its 1984 import bill is anybody's guess. Locally, the World Bank is putting on the heat too. "Financial discipline" is the Bank's battle order of the day!

## PEOPLE'S ARMY

ONLY the SUN had the story. A 160,000 peoples army based on hand-picked volunteers on a district-basis has been planned out by the Defence Ministry. Its purpose will be to assist the law enforcement agencies in times of emergency. "PROJECT HOME GUARDS" will be on the launching pad this week. Who will do the picking? The MP's and District Ministers?

Opposition parties are all quite disturbed by the new project. In their, sometimes divergent, assessment of the near-anarchic situation in July, the Opposition parties (as well as non-partisan observers) are agreed that loose recruitment procedures to the services is one of the main reasons for low morale and indiscipline in the rank-and-file. Political patronage through the "chit system" (the MP's chit) has ruined professionalism in the services. In the meantime 'private armies' and organised goon squads have sprung up.

The Opposition parties are eager to see that this process is not "institutionalised" island-wide by a new Home Guards project.

## LONELY VOICE

The MP for Moneragale may be a lonely voice but what he said during the budget debate must have echoed throughout the island. The still small voice of conscience spoke thus:

"I know that when we speak the truth, others get hurt. As a government MP I cannot come out with many of the happenings... Corruption, contracts, — these things are rampant. Nothing is being done except for tamashas."

## TRENDS + LETTERS

### The Need of the Hour

While the mass-media invites the people to contribute articles, poems and stories to promote the cause of national harmony in the country, politicians too declare that none should utter a word which would disrupt ethnic amity and the progress of the All Party Conference.

Nevertheless, we are constrained to note that all these warnings and appeals do not evoke any response what-so-ever from the "gladiators of peace".

Just after the first round of talks of the All Party Conference, may be, that some of these legislators might have felt the need to warm up their own

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LANKA

## GUARDIAN

Vol. 6 No. 18, January 15, 1984  
Price 3/50

Published fortnightly by  
Lanka Guardian Publishing Co. Ltd.  
No. 246, Union Place,  
COLOMBO-2

Editor: Mervyn de Silva  
Telephone: 5 4 7 5 8 4

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Printed by Ananda Press  
82/5, Wolfendhal Street, Colombo-13.  
Telephone: 3 5 9 7 5



## Letters . . .

(Continued from page 1)

brand of "goodwill" in regard to National Harmony and keep its tempo alive.

Yes. Within the last five days they came out with a volley of attack on the most vulnerable section of the community, declaring

(1) that all stateless should be removed from the North and East.

(2) that the plantations will turn into a pool of blood and the Sinhalese would be the victims.

In addition to these "goodwill gestures", another had come out with the accusing fingers that 50% of the Sinhalese do not possess any land while those who came from "some where" are in possession of lands.

Any sensible person can understand that these tirades are directed against the plantation community. The reason could be perhaps that they are powerless and inarticulate; and are in a weak position.

We appeal to the mass-media and those who are really interested in the cause of ethnic amity not to give priority attention to these saviours.

**C. V. Velupillai**

National Union of Workers.

## Land Alienation

Apart from the wrong and tendentious interpretation of facts and figures by the CRD to which some of your readers have responded convincingly, I wish to point out that its views on colonisation can fool nobody if you read between the lines. "Individual citizens (read: Sri Lanka Tamils, Stateless persons, Illegal immigrants) should have the right protected by our constitution (sic!) to settle anywhere in the country. However state aided colonisation (i. e. TULF jargon for landless Sinhalese peasants) and colonisation using state funds (include: from

Taxes paid by the Sinhalese) of state agencies pose a fundamentally different set of issues".

The conditions laid down by the CRD for land alienation in the East and in the North are such that it would hermetically exclude any Sinhalese from obtaining any land in the North or East.

The CRD is simply reiterating the TULF point of view. Whatever name-board it chooses to put on CRD it is neither rational nor impartial.

**W. G. Grace Perera**

12, Lake Road,  
Maharagama.

## Indian Interest

The danger period for Sri Lanka will be till November 1984 when the Indian elections are due. Indira is not interested in Sri Lanka, Sirima or JRJ. She cannot be. She wants support from Tamil Nadu. She must be guided solely by her own interests and Rajiv's future in dealing with the Indian and Tamil problem in Sri Lanka.

**Saradiel**

Kandy

## From Sinhaputhra to C R D

(re Guardian : 1.1.84. Page 2)

1. Do you not agree that no solution is possible unless you study all the employment figures both in the Public (Government) and Private Sector? If so, will you call for figures? Why have you not commented on this aspect?

2. (a) How many acres do Sinhala people own, lease or rent in (i) the Jaffna Peninsula (ii) the Eastern Province (iii) Colombo and (iv) the Central Provinces — Tea growing area?

(b) How many acres in 2 above are owned by (a) Sri Lanka Tamils, Indian Tamils (c) Foreigners and (d) Government.

3. So, come devolution or whatever you choose to call

it, in fact Tamil will be the sole language in those "devolution" areas and Sinhala and Tamil in all other areas!!! Vide your plans for language in the Estate schools. Parity of status for languages?

4. I was taking as a hypothetical example a Sinhala Buddhist (mainly) population that had migrated to Madhya Pradesh within the last 100 years or more — talking Sinhala. Unlike all other Indian races you refer to the Sinhalese would be alone. How would you ask them to integrate? 10% Sinhala Buddhists in India would be about 60 to 70 million people — aliens in India.

5. The Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka constitute 10% of the population and add up to 1.5 million people. They are concentrated in one area — in the heart land of Sinhale. Are you suggesting that the language of the courts, Government offices etc., be in Tamil and Sinhala? Parity?

6. Can't you see that C R D is asking for 100% Tamil language in the North and East and 100% Tamil language in a huge area in the centre of Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese will be trapped between these two groups of Tamil speaking people. The Sinhalese will then be overpowered by them economically and culturally. Finally they will be overcome politically.

7. C. R. D. says that the Indian Tamils have made a special contribution to our national economy and so their culture and language should be protected. What about the Indians in Burma and Malayasia? How do the Sri Lanka Tamils in Malayasia integrate?

8. Any solution will have to be imposed. Why not impose a solution which will result in the birth of a truly national identity. Inter marriage will flow as a consequence.

9. For whose benefit is Sri Lanka being divided?

**Sinhaputhra**



# CAN THE POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT HOLD?

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

**A**FTER a nervous start and a short pause, the ROUNDTABLE conference got under way on January 11.

Today, the Bandaranaike Memorial Conference Hall is our Parliament; one might even say with the history of other countries in mind, it is our Constituent Assembly. Its purpose is not to draft a Constitution but to seek a political settlement to the National Question or what is more widely termed 'the Tamil problem'. But the fact that there is a Tamil problem is a terse commentary on Sri Lanka's failure to construct an integrated polity, to achieve genuine national integration.

It may be too bold or premature to say that this new 'Constituent Assembly' has been made necessary because the old constitution has failed. It is an idea, nonetheless, that deserves serious reflection but only time can allow us more searching questions on what is a profoundly complex question on the nature of our society and our political system and politics.

This much however can be said more firmly. This is Parliament, an expanded parliament representing almost every shade of opinion in the most dramatic fashion. It might even be said that this convention is representative to the point of being gloriously bizarre.

Consider the delegates there — everybody from the Asgiriya Nayake Thera to Mr. Yogenda Duraiswamy, and Mr. Albert Edirisinghe. One is the spokesman of the all-powerful Supreme Council of the Maha Sangha, the authentic voice of the Buddhist clergy; the others represent a lay Buddhist organisation, and the Hindus.

All the political parties in Sri Lanka, except the proscribed JVP and NSSP, are there. So is the Government and the UNP. One

sweeping glance at the delegations seated at the round table brings home a simple fact — this is a broad spectrum of national opinion.

But Parliament is supposed to be just that, with admittedly some limitations imposed by the eccentricities of an electoral system or on some occasions a specific electoral result.

The Parliament which sits at Jayewardenapura does NOT reflect national opinion. If this was true of the House in 1977 it could be argued with conviction that this was the direct consequence of the old first-past-the-post British system and a constituency system which is demonstrably un-democratic in that one vote is not equal to one vote (i.e., the urban rural weightage). However, that situation was not the fault of the UNP government which was the lucky beneficiary of an unbalanced system that had in the past brought similar, if not equal, rewards to the UNP's main electoral rivals, the SLFP and its allies.

In fairness to the UNP, another point has to be made. It decided to introduce P.R. to make the system more democratic, more genuinely reflective of national currents of thinking and organised political opinion.

What happened? No PR, no by-elections more or less, and most of all, no general elections (the Referendum in December) for another 6 years. To put it mildly, the Referendum (its conduct and result) remains highly controversial. But for all that, there is the stark statistic — **the "NO" vote was as high as 44.5% in a relatively low poll.** (There was a significant 10% drop in the voter turnout from the October Presidential poll).

The parliamentary situation of 1977 was frozen. The UNP with its 5/6th majority in July 1977

would enjoy the total dominance of parliament until 1989, robbing nearly a million young voters of a chance to elect their own MP's for that period.

So, a Parliament already devalued by a centralised Executive Presidency now became strikingly unrepresentative of public opinion trends.

This is the reason why 'Parliament' has now gone to the BMICH. A beleaguered administration, its image badly sullied abroad, especially in aid-giving countries, and increasingly under the pressure of the IMF-IBRD, has had to go on the defensive, fully conscious of its growing isolation and the rising tide of popular criticism.

The "Gaullist" system, in Wilsonian terminology, and the actual practice of politics by the UNP combined to serve one objective — to 'close' the 'system'. The crisis caused by 'Black July', itself a manifestation of the sharpening national question in the context of unfavourable domestic, economic and global conditions, has compelled the government to open the windows. It has opened them so wide (even on the 9th and 10th of January, the conference was admitting new participants) that the roundtable talks, regardless of the specific issue, the agenda or the outcome, have created the image of a Constituent Assembly.

Students of political processes in the Third World must watch this event in a Sri Lanka once paraded as a model of pluralist democracy, in that wider perspective.

If this in-gathering of all groups representing what one might call the Political Establishment fails to achieve at least its more limited goals (de-fusing tensions, 'giving peace a chance', "jaw-jaw is better than war-war" etc) then such a

(Continued on page 6)



# DEVOLUTION DIALECTICS, CONFERENCE CONTRADICTIONS

**W**ith the SLFP and the MEP aboard, the BMICH caravan, after a fitful start, began rolling again — a more impressive caravan but with more and bigger roadblocks on the way.

With the entry of the Buddhist prelates, the ACBC, the Moslem elders etc it would be more difficult to reach a consensus; without them, the credibility of the consensus was vulnerable. And such a 'national consensus' was an indispensable prerequisite, for all previous accords were bilateral: the Bandaranaike Chelvanayakam pact of 1958 and the Senanayake-Chelvanayakam pact of 1965. And both proved abortive.

President Jayewardene has drawn the correct lessons from those disillusioning experiences. Hence, the

invitation to almost all political parties which in turn was expanded, under pressure, to non-political religious and lay organisations.

Two main issues will confront the Conference as soon as the discussion turns from the formal, and the procedural to the substantive.

The issues are:

(a) the mechanisms of Devolution, and (b) the modalities of popular endorsement.

The crucial debate will be on (a). The territorial limits of the proposed councils, whatever name they are given, and the powers to be vested in those institutions, will see hard-line Sinhala opinion pitted against the TULF, supported by the 'moderates' in the middle.

Hardline opinion will insist on preserving the present boundaries of the DDC's. This would promptly close the discussion as far as the TULF is concerned. Their negotiating position is a merger of DDC's **within the northern province** and across the border into the Eastern province, with Amparai district excluded in deference to Moslem and Sinhala opinion. Amalgamation (with greater powers for the DDC's) within the northern province **only** may be the TULF's bottom-line.

On (b) the hardliners will canvass an island-wide referendum after the political parties and parliament approve the Roundtable 'package'. Since the TULF can predict the result of an island-wide referendum, it will demand a referendum confined to those councils which seek merger.

## SRI LANKA'S OPEN DOOR — and windows of vulnerability

*THE MANY DIMENSIONS of what is popularly and loosely called 'the National Crisis' is now being slowly grasped by the more thoughtful of our analysts and academics. Seeing the crisis through the smoke of "black July" the great majority of observers tend to give the strongest emphasis to the communal conflict. But others, more clear-sighted now, discern other, probably in the long-term, more fundamental aspects, such as:*

*(a) a socio-economic crisis aggravated by the pressures generated by the global economic crisis — the pressures exerted, in our own situation, via the World Bank, the IMF etc.*

*(b) a political crisis — a crisis of political structures, characterised by the severest strains on the political parties, their leadership, the law-and-order agencies (most recently, Sinhalese soldiers shooting dead a Sinhalese constable) and the relationship between executive and judiciary etc.*

*All this takes place in the wider context of the global economic recession and over-increasing political-military tensions, internationally and regionally.*

*It is in this perspective that the trends in the two major parties should be observed.*

## UNP — the cracks start to show

**O**nly the cementing force of governmental power (and all that this implies) and the austere all-pervasive authority of the Executive Presidency, allowed "SRI KOTHA" to present a facade of near-monolithic unity. But the cracks were there, and fleetingly, on this or that issue, the existence of 'factions', ad hoc alignments, top-level squabbles, jostling for posi-

tions and queue-jumping, became evident. Yet, political power and the pleasures of its daily exercise, together with an impregnable post-referendum authority and the prospect of six more comfortable years, combined to conceal these differences.

Not any more. The 'minority' Ministers are obviously under pres-

sure from their distinctive constituencies — Messrs Devanayagam and Rajadurai, Messrs Mohammed and Hameed, and all-too clearly Mr. Thondaman.

The open warfare between the Lands Minister, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake and Mr. Devanayagam over an issue (Maduru Oya encroachers)

(Continued on page 5)



## UNP...

(Continued from page 4)

that is emotionally-charged (Sinhala-Tamil colonists in the racially mixed Eastern province) was the most visible sign of the emerging conflicts within. And that battle was only a continuation of a fight started by Mr. Thondaman and, again, Mr. Dissanayake was involved. Enter Mr. Paul Perera, an upper echelon activist turned into a party 'enforcer' and elevated to District Minister in faraway Polonnaruwa. The episode of the Dimbulagala monk, bizarre as it was, confirmed these fractious disputes.

Just after July, the cause that Mr. Mathew had championed almost single-handed for over a decade, found late converts and ardent advocates in the ministerial second rung — Messrs Gamini Jayasuriya, Ranil Wickremesinghe — all espousing the Sinhala-Buddhist cause with great fervour.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Premadasa, kept closely to the "amity line" (the equality of all citizens) identified most obviously with President Jayewardene. So strong was the post-July emotional current that even so urbane an internationalist as Finance Minister de Mel was heard to speak about the depredations of two Tamil horse-traders of the 14th century who came to Sri Lanka uninvited — and this was a speech to the staff officers of the National Savings Bank!

On his return from IMF-World Bank meetings and calls at various capitals of donor countries, a more mellowed Mr. de Mel was warning his fellow UNP'ers that any more outbursts, any more threats to political stability and Sri Lanka could say farewell, to the open economy. Obviously a much needed bucket of cold water for the hot-heads. Nothing, Mr. de Mel must have known, would be a more effective therapeutic shock to the UNP politicians, their financial backers and the pro-UNP businessmen (both the mudalali types and the new Credit-card carrying, Executive Club variety) than the bad news that the (free exchange) party was over!

In all this, the most interesting personality is Mr. Mathew himself.

His speeches these days indicate that his own thinking is being reshaped under the pressures of the present crisis. His Sinhala-Buddhism is of course his ideological base but it looks as if he is beginning to understand the economic dimension of what can no longer be simplified as a mere communal issue. And is often forgotten that he is the Minister of Industries.

While everybody takes Mr. Mathew's Sinhala-Buddhism for granted, it is also presumed that this outlook embraces anti-communist, pro-western, pro-open economy ideas, without reservations. The anti-communist remains, although he was heard last week to sing the praises of Communist China, plainly an expression of his anti-Indo-Sovietism. But, and this is what's most noteworthy in "the Mathew phenomenon" is his eager defence of "protectionism", of protecting national interests i.e. the economic interests of the 'national' bourgeoisie (actually Sinhala-Buddhist) against the crippling consequences of the open economy, free imports and foreign capital. Thus, his criticism of the "foreign" investors and the multi-nationals, at Yakkala.

The emergent national bourgeoisie which wore cloth-and-banias in the era of the Bandaranaiques has returned, in a different dress with even more demanding expectations after the UNP victory. Students of the Mathew phenomenon must see whether the post-1956 MEPism is about to find a new champion or at least a natural ally.

## The 'DINAKARA' Affair

A party newspaper is the mouth-piece of the party. Along with the SLFP's one-sentence press release of its decision to keep out of the Roundtable Conference, there was another party statement. The *DINAKARA*, it said, must no longer be regarded as a newspaper reflecting the opinion of the SLFP.

While all SLFP supporters and sympathisers know that the *DINAKARA* is associated with the TBI-Vijaya-  
(Continued on page 6)

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# THE DELHI DIMENSION

IS Mr. Parthasarathi, asked a former Sri Lankan envoy who is now closely identified with the Sinhala-Buddhist movement, a new Kautilya in Kissingerian attire?

Neither the sheer professionalism nor the urbane style of Mrs. Gandhi's personal envoy could be faulted. Indeed his hectic round-the-clock activity which matched President Jayewardene's feverishly energetic diplomacy explains a great deal about the conference. The conference could not have got off the ground but for these two individuals.

But the high-visibility of G.P.'s presence, he must surely have known, could be counter-productive because his activity symbolised in the minds of anti-Indian coteries "Indian interventionism".

That may be one of the reasons why he went to the monks' meeting in Ratmalana. It was a bold stroke and it seemed to have paid dividends.

What the anti-Indian lobby does not realise is that Indian "involvement", in whatever form it reveals itself or in whatever words one chooses to describe it, is now an undeniable political reality. What is more, the diplomatic community, with very few exceptions, has accepted what Mrs. Gandhi called in a reply to the Sri Lanka Association in Canada "good offices in good faith". The international community, particularly the donor countries who are basically pro-UNP policies, wants a political settlement, and since Indian involvement, up to now, is fully focussed on just such an effort, the world at large, supports the Indian initiative and the help that Delhi is giving the Jayewardene government.

It is in such a situation that Mrs. Bandaranaike's non-appearance has surprised, disappointed and dismayed the DPL community in Colombo. If Mrs. Bandaranaike has a special strength not shared by any Sri Lankan politician, it is precisely her

international prestige. And this conference is NOT just a domestic jaw-jaw. It is being watched and studied closely in many world capitals — not the least in the western capitals.

"Her absence marked a lost opportunity" said a West European diplomat. "what is surprising is that it was also politically naive in local terms", said another.

Its true significance is better expressed in a joke that was heard by pressmen "covering" the conference.

"When S. D. said J.R. is no longer 'Yankee Dicky' but 'China Dicky', J. R. replied that he was always 'Lanka Dicky'... but he may end up Delhi Dicky".

'Delhi Dicky' would surely put paid to the Sirima-Indira connection, and Mrs. Bandaranaike's special relationship with the Indian leader has been one of her strongest assets, especially in times of political adversity.

## The Dinakara . . .

(Continued from page 5)

Chandrika group, it is interesting to note how its "line" is shaping.

The general 'line' of the DINAKARA can be explained by reference to an article by Ariyawansa Pathiraja. He argues that the SLFP is now becoming increasingly indistinguishable from the UNP, ideologically speaking. In short, that the SLFP's anti-UNPism, which was traditionally regarded as its *raison d'être*, has been muted, according to the newest rebel group.

Mrs. Bandaranaike's answer to that was that all attempts to establish a "Third Force" has failed. DINAKARA's riposte is most revealing. Its attempt, say the new party, is to form a "second force".

The SLFP has been in a state of turmoil since Mrs. Bandaranaike lost her civic rights. In this its third crisis in three years, it is Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, the newly elected Opposition Leader, who faces the most direct challenge. The DINAKARA says that as the dividing line between UNP and SLFP gets blurred, the Political

Establishment wants to create an extension of the Royal College O.B.U., an obvious allusion to President Jayewardene and the young Opposition leader.

## Can the . . .

(Continued from page 3)

failure will signal a highly weakened System which is unable to assimilate socio-political forces outside it. Then, we have reached a point where the anti-systemic forces, though obviously much weaker at the present time, than the forces gathered in the BMICH, are yet strong enough to announce an imperilled system.



# The Sinhala-Buddhist resurgence

## The Sinhala — Buddhist resurgence

1. *Why was education one of the main fields of activity on which the Buddhist resurgence of the late 19th — early 20th century concentrated?*

Education in this country was at that time strongly dominated by Christian missionary organisations. Since education was a gateway to social advancement, particularly through government service and the professions, Buddhists were handicapped in comparison with Christians in taking to such careers.

2. *Why had Buddhist schools not developed before the revivalist movement actively promoted them?*

In the first phases of British rule the state did not recognise non-Christian denominational schools, and they received no government grants. Although at the end of the 1860s, such schools became eligible for assistance, Christian missionary schools already had a head-start in the field. Further, Government regulations which withheld aid from new schools which were within a stipulated distance (varying at different periods from three miles to a quarter mile of an existing school) made it in practice impossible for non-Christians to start schools in areas where Christian organisations were already functioning.

3. *Did these disabilities weigh exclusively against Sinhala Buddhists?*

No. On the contrary, they worked also against Hindus and Muslims in the field of education. However, Buddhists would have felt most deprived because they were the majority and because provisions had been made in the Kandyan Convention for the protection of Buddhism were neglected.

4. *What is the evidence for this?*

\* Committee for Rational Development.

The following tables give statistics of the number of schools, classified according to the character of their management in 1939.

Management	No. of schools
Government	1990
Buddhist	300
Hindu	102
Roman Catholic	636
Protestant	547

The next table shows the distribution of Government grants among denominational State aided schools in 1939:

Type of school		Percentage of total:
Buddhist	1,245,830	19.3
Hindu	357,221	5.5
Roman Catholic	2,623,157	40.7
Protestant	2,221,266	34.5

5. *What do these figures show?*

That seventy years after non-Christian schools became eligible for State grants, denominational education was still dominated by Christian organisations, which received 75% of the grants going to assisted schools. Buddhists and Hindus both received a much smaller share of these funds, and Muslims were worst off. The backward state of Muslim education may have been partly due to the fact that the Muslim community was at that time less actively concerned with education. Although the system in force discriminated against them as much as against Buddhists and Hindus, the discrimination may have been less keenly felt by them for this reason.

6. *Was there discrimination by the State between Christians and non-Christians in recruitment to public service?*

Although there was never at any time any formal requirement that those appointed to public service jobs should be Christians, in the early British period this principle was observed in practice. (2) Al-

though colonial policy changed later, Christians continued to enjoy advantages in competition for government jobs because of their access to superior educational facilities. Here again Hindus and Muslims suffered as much as Buddhists.

7. *If Hindus and Muslims were as much handicapped as Buddhists under the colonial regime, why did the revivalist movements among these religious groups not take similar directions?*

There were in fact certain parallels between Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim revivalisms, side by side with the differences. Arumuga Navalar (1822–1879) and his followers campaigned against missionary proselytisation and against westernised life-styles and manners in much the same way as Anagarika Dharmapala, and founded schools where Saivite education could be imparted to children. However, even Arumuga Navalar was keenly concerned that Hindu children should be educated in English and this marked a certain difference from the orientation of the Sinhala Buddhist revival. Similarly, M. C. Sidi Lebbe (1838–1898) working under the inspiration provided by the presence in Ceylon of the exiled Egyptian patriot, Arabi Pasha, founded the Colombo Muslim Educational Society. However, the Hindu and Muslim religious revivals were far less politicised than the corresponding Buddhist movement. This was partly because, as the expression of minority groups, they assumed a less overtly oppositional character in relation to the colonial power. Moreover, Hindus did not have a strong priesthood comparable to the Buddhist Sangha, some of whom played a quasi-political role from the inception of the movement and were obliged to enter into a combative role with Christian missionaries. Both the Hindu and Muslim revivals were consequently much more cultural than political.

8. *Was the Buddhist revival a return to a purer or more pristine Buddhism?*



As has already been stated in the first part of this historical retrospect, Buddhism was not originally identified with any particular race or nationality but professed a universal character. The Buddhist revival of the late 19th — early 20th century was really a revival of the identification of Buddhism with Sinhala ethnicity, which was asserted in the chronicles in opposition to external enemies. Where this assertion was used earlier against South Indian invaders, it was now employed as a weapon against British colonialism. Since the colonial regime tended to use Christianity as a political instrument, Buddhism was now turned into a counter-weapon, and in the process under-went the same politicisation.

9. *Was it only against the British colonial regime that this politicised Buddhism was directed?*

No. At first it would appear to have been so, but later, in the early twentieth century, it became evident that politicised Buddhism was also directed against minorities. It fostered racist and exclusive attitudes towards non-Sinhala and non-Buddhist elements of the Sri Lankan people. Anagarika Dharmapala, for instance, referred to these minority communities as 'infidels of degraded race' and was a strong upholder of the myth of the Aryan race and of its racial superiority. Such prejudiced attitudes are not to be found in any Theravada Buddhist text.

10. *Were there no cultural and social movements in the colonial period which were directed towards a general revival of national culture and mores, transcending sectarian ethnic and religious difference in Sri Lanka?*

Yes, there were. The principal figure in this respect was Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, during his period of work in Ceylon in the early years of this century. He sought to counter the 'denationalisation' and rootlessness of the Western-educated elite and to re-awake a consciousness and understanding of indigenous cultural traditions, both Sinhala and Tamil. Supported by several nationalists among the Sinhalese, he founded the Ceylon Social Reform Society to work towards these aims. He was also active in

conserving and reviving Sinhala arts and crafts, — an activity which culminated in his monumental work, *Sinhalese Medieval Art*.

11. *Why didn't the movement for political reform and, later, for independence, produce a national consciousness which could be a unifying force against divisive ethnic tendencies?*

The political reform movement for independence was led by political elites who maintained a fragile unity among themselves at certain periods. Since their principal means of working towards independence was constitutional bargaining with Whitehall, this did not create any broader national consciousness among the people such as might have been forged through a mass movement for independence. After the transfer of power by the imperial regime, the temporary unity between the political elites of different ethnic groups who were the recipients of political power broke down under pressure.

12. *What was the nature of this process?*

It came from several sources. On the one hand, there was the rivalry and competition between different ethnic groups in trade and business, in which the Sinhalese had been late starters in the colonial era. There were also the antipathies between ethnic and religious groups created by uneven development in education and competition for government jobs. At one time, in the 'fifties' these conflicts expressed themselves in militant Buddhist agitation against Christian 'dominance'. However, this agitation was appeased by the *de facto* (after 1956) and *de jure* (after 1972) privileged position accorded to Buddhism by the state, and the state take-over of schools in 1961. Meanwhile the agitation for the adoption of Sinhala as the official language in 1955-1956 appealed to the new layers of the Sinhala-educated who were seeking opportunities of social advancement. With 1956 began the intensification of ethnic conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils, the

(Continued on page 17)

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# PQLI and district-wide variations

Chandra de Fonseka

**District-wise variations in the Quality of Life in Sri Lanka :—** There is a second valuable source of data which can throw light on the ethnic problem but which has received no mention by the CRD.

This is a scholarly and illuminating paper by Dr. H. D. Sumanasekera entitled "Measuring the Regional Variation in the Quality of Life in Sri Lanka", in the Sri Lanka Journal of Agrarian Studies Vol 2 No 2 (1981) published by ARTI. In this paper, Dr. Sumanasekera has assessed the quality of life in Sri Lanka's districts by applying the PQLI concept and formulae devised by Morris D. Morris in 1979 for the Overseas Development Council.

The PQLI is a composite index based on 3 key indicators viz :—

life expectancy at age one, literacy, and infant mortality. It is the most widely accepted of the indexes generated by the increasing dissatisfaction with the GNP and other macro economic yard sticks as adequate measures of development. The PQLI can be at least "a creative complement to the GNP", reflecting the social welfare impact and distribution of development efforts.

Sri Lanka had already acquired a reputation for a high PQLI which ranked it in 1979, (At 82 on a scale of 0-100), as third highest among the developing countries of Asia. — (after Singapore and Taiwan) in spite of the country's very low ranking by the conventional GNP index.

With due acknowledgement to Dr. Sumanasekera, I reproduce some of his Tables as Tables 6 & 7 of this paper.

Since the tables speak for themselves, I only draw attention to certain highlights relevant to this paper.

1. Jaffna district ranked first among all districts in 1971 in respect of the PQLI for males (91);

2. The lowest male PQLI was found in N'Elia district (68.8) with Batticaloa second lowest (70.3);

3. Jaffna district ranked 6th (85.8) after Kalutara, Colombo, Galle in respect of the female PQLI with N'Elia (59.3) and Batticaloa (66.0) again the two lowest.

TABLE 7

Distribution of the Districts according to Average of and Difference between the female and the male PQLIs-1971

Difference between female & male PQLIs	Average of female and male PQLIs					
	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89
- 10- -9	Nuwara Eliya (64)	—	—	—	—	—
- 8- -7	SRI LANKA : 1953 (64)	—	Badulla (72)	Amparai (79)	—	—
- 6- -5	—	—	—	Ratnapura (77)	Moneragala (80)	Jaffna (88)
					Trincomalee (80)	
- 4- -3	—	Batticaloa (68)	SRI LANKA: 1963 (73)	Kandy (75)	Mannar (80)	Hambantota (85)
				Matale (78)	Anuradhapura (80)	Polonnaruwa (86)
					Kegalle (84)	
- 2- -1	—	—	—	SRI LANKA: 1971 (79)	—	Kurunegala (85)
						Puttalam (86)
0- +1	—	—	—	—	Vavuniya (84)	Matara (86)
						Galle (87)
						Kalutara (87)
+2- +3	—	—	—	—	—	Colombo (85)

Source : Figure 1

Note : (a) Figures in parantheses indicate the average of the female and the male PQLIs.

(b) Correlation between the average of and the difference between the female and the male PQLIs.

(i) for the districts in 1971 -0.7072\*\*

(ii) for Sri Lanka during the period 1953-'71 -0.9991\*\*

\*\* Significant at 1% level of significance.



TABLE 6

## Districtwise PQLIs and Component Indicators — 1971 : Males

District	Life Expectancy at Age One (1) (years)	Infant Mortality Rate (2) (per 1000 live- births)	Literacy Rate (aged 10 & over) (3) (%)	Life Expectancy Age One Index	Infant Mortality Index	PQLI
1. Colombo	67.90	45.45	91.9	76.67	82.68	83.8
2. Kalutara	72.20	38.59	88.6	87.69	85.77	87.4
3. Kandy	66.85	65.30	84.2	73.97	73.74	77.3
4. Matale	68.99	56.18	82.7	79.46	77.85	80.0
5. Nuwara Eliya	65.24	101.27	78.9	89.85	57.54	68.8
6. Galle	72.64	44.93	88.1	88.82	82.91	86.6
7. Matara	73.80	56.18	85.6	91.79	77.85	85.1
8. Hambantota	73.58	38.95	82.7	91.23	85.60	86.5
9. Jaffna	75.44	27.51	86.3	96.00	90.76	91.0
10. Mannar	68.78	42.32	82.4	78.92	84.09	81.8
11. Vavuniya	70.41	33.95	81.8	83.10	87.86	84.3
12. Batticaloa	65.07	62.59	66.4	69.41	74.96	70.3
13. Amparai	71.98	41.93	76.4	87.13	84.27	82.6
14. Trincomalee	70.83	37.58	76.4	84.18	86.23	82.3
15. Kurunegala	71.45	41.64	88.0	85.77	84.40	86.1
16. Puttalam	69.21	36.04	88.0	80.10	86.92	85.0
17. Anuradhapura	68.80	46.45	84.2	78.97	82.23	81.8
18. Polonnaruwa	72.94	31.05	84.2	89.59	89.17	87.7
19. Bndulla	66.86	59.98	78.3	74.00	76.14	76.1
20. Moneragala	73.05	40.45	75.2	89.87	84.93	83.3
21. Ratnapura	69.63	63.61	81.1	81.10	74.50	78.9
22. Kegalle	72.65	49.90	86.1	88.85	80.68	85.2
Sri Lanka	66.39	48.83	85.2	72.79	81.16	79.7

Source : 1. Demographic Training & Research Unit, University of Colombo — Unpublished data.

2. Registrar General's Office — Unpublished data.

3. Department of Census & Statistics *Census of Population — 1971 : General Report : (1978)* Colombo.

TABLE 8

Status of Selected Districts in relation to some major Socio-economic Indicators  
(C = Average, C+ = Better than average, C— = Worse than average)

	Jaffna	Batticaloa	Kandy	N'Eliya	Galle	Kurunegala
1. Infant Mortality	C+	C— *	C—	C—	C	C+
2. Child death rate	C+	C—	C—	C—	C+	C
3. Nutritional levels	C+	C—	C	C—	C+	C
4. Life Expectancy	C+	C—	C—	C—	C+	C+
5. Literacy	C+	C—	C	C	C+	C+
6. Nature of Housing	C+	C—	C—	C—	C+	C
7. Owned Housing	C+	C+	C—	C—	C+	C+
8. Water Supply (Tap and Well)	C—	C—	C+	C+	C	C
9. Electricity	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C—
10. Toilets	C+	n. a.	C+	C+	C	C
11. Primary School enrolment	C+	C—	C+	C+	C+	C+
12. Primary School drop out.	C+	C—	C+	C—	C+	C+

\* Batticaloa's Infant Mortality Rate is recorded at 35.3 in 1979. a significant improvement over 1977 (50.8) and 1978 (45.6).

(Source : Socio-Economic Indicators of Sri Lanka", Dept. of Census and Statistics/FAO, Feb. 1983).



4. Jaffna district ranked first (88) among all districts in terms of the average of male and female PQLI, with N'Elia (64) and Batticaloa (68) the two lowest.

*Sri Lanka's National average PQLI for 1971 was 78.9*

Admittedly all these figures are valid for 1971. We hope that Dr. Sumanasekera could be persuaded to update his valuable research to 1981. Pending such updated authoritative findings, this study would entitle us to believe that in quality of life Jaffna still ranks among the most advanced of Sri Lanka's districts. This seems to complement and confirm the hypothesis reached earlier on the basis of banking and economic data. Batticaloa however presents a more complex problem. In terms of PQLI, it is in fact the worst off, of all districts, because it has no estate sector to drag it down (as N'Elia, Kandy, Badulla have, to account for their low PQLI rankings). Whether it has caught up with some at least of the other districts since 1977, only an 1981 updated PQLI study can tell.

Meanwhile Dr. Sumanasekera study in PQLI has drawn attention to two other features:— first the feasibility and need for developing both total-count village level statistics as well as the more conventional economic indexes viz. Gross product, (Gross Income), Savings, investment etc, by districts and even by AGA divisions (as India has done for its States) to guide and monitor development processes in a future context of greater decentralisation, whatever specific form the latter may take.

The second is the continuing poverty and depression of those Indian Tamils who live and work in "the Estate Sector." These workers constitute large population segments of at least four districts (N'Elia, Kandy, Badulla, Ratnapura), without being organic parts of them. Clearly unless the surplus value of their production goes to improving their social and economic welfare, instead of to other predatory sectors of the "body politic", these districts and their

workers will remain the most disadvantaged in the country.

Seen in this light, the answer to the Indian Tamil aspect of the communal problem will also have to be conceived, not in mere Trade Union terms of more concessions but in terms of a progressive political decentralisation of the control over the local surplus (its generation, its management and its use) to—primarily—the estate workers and people of each locality. The role of the central Government would be that of Trustee for the workers rather than State Capitalist patron or, — much worse, — the Vanguard of the Proletariat.

**A third Source of relevant data not taken into account** by the CRD is the publication this year with FAO assistance of the Census and Statistics document entitled "Socio-Economic Indicators of Sri Lanka". The work that led to this document is a consequence of the commitment of FAO member governments. (Sri Lanka included), at the World Conference of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) 1979 to maintain regular data on a number of specific indicators relating to agrarian reform and rural development, and to the well being of the rural majorities in the poor countries.

Sri Lanka was one of the countries that agreed to undertake a professional pilot study in the application to itself of a list of 21 primary indicators and 49 supplementary indicators suggested by FAO.

In the Sri Lankan study, data series have been built up from all available data sources for most of the suggested indicators. A special value of the study for our purposes is that for the first time comparative district-wise data have been processed and assembled by a competent professional authority in respect of a number of important socio-economic indicators.

A final table, No 8; extracted from the "Socio-Economic Indicators of Sri Lanka" sets out the status of selected districts in relation to some of the major socio-economic indicators. The 12 indicators selected for this Table are those most revealing of majority

living conditions and standards, and those for which district wise data are available.

Although one should resist the tendency to make too much of these markings (C=national average C+ and C= above and below this, respectively) certain conclusions are justified.

Among the rural districts Jaffna District with its 90% + Tamil Population enjoys the highest general living standards. Checked against the specific Tables in more detail, this ranking is reflected in its infant mortality rate of 17.3% its literacy rate of 92%, its life expectancy of 66.5 years, and its very good nutritional levels, by both the Gomez and Waterlow technical indices.

On the other hand there must be equal recognition of the almost total contrast presented by the picture of the Tamils of Batticaloa District, and the strenuous and fairly successful efforts in recent years to improve their condition. These improvements include the considerable fall in infant mortality rates between 1977 and 1979, the above average levels in rural electricity and owned housing, and the earlier documented high levels of banking loans and loan/deposit ratios. Even at the most general level, making all allowances for current imperfections in district wise data collection and data processing, we are left with the minimal and unspectacular conclusions that in average living conditions — of the 2 communities, the difference is not much more than marginal, and is if at all only slightly in favour of the Ceylon Tamils.

This note is presented as a necessary corrective to the CRD paper; — or if this seems too presumptuous a claim — as a possibly useful complement to it. For at many points, the language, tone and selectivity of the CRD paper betray a bias of rather tetchy belligerence in defence of the Ceylon Tamils as the clearly aggrieved and oppressed community. The CRD has leant over backwards so far as to lose its own "rational" balance.

(Concluded)



# Evolution of the Tamil Question

Prof. Karthigesu Sivathamby

**A**n attempt is made in the paper to describe and analyse the gradual worsening of ethnic relations between the two major groups in Sri Lanka since 1977 culminating in the violence of July 1983 and how the actions and the responses of each of the participant groups have led them to an impasse, so much so that it has become essential for an "external" third party to mediate between them. Each one is finding it difficult to diverge from the lines of approach each has been adopting so far.

The primary aim of this study is to present those actions and responses in a chronological and ideological perspective. So that, at this time when this problem which was once taken to be purely an inter-communal matter (in the sense of being considered just a problem of two communities within a nation and not one between two ethnic groups or nations or nationalities) has turned out to be one of South-Asian geo-politics, it will contribute, at least in a very limited way to an understanding of how it has assumed these gigantic proportions. An effort is made in this paper to delineate and discuss (a) those events, in so far they affected the Tamils and (b) those actions and activities emanating from the Tamil side having a cause and effect relationship with the former.

## Brief Summary of the current situation

The Sri Lankan ethnic holocaust of July 1983 has had such an international response that it is no more a just another internal problem of the country. The relations between the two major communities of the island have worsened to such an extent that it had become essential for another country to mediate between them. It has become an issue involving the security of the South-Asian region, to the extent that it has been accepted in international diplomatic

circles that it calls for Indian mediation.

The most appalling result of the July events has been the political vacuum that has been created among the Tamils living in Sri Lanka. There is no representation of the Sri Lankan Tamils at any institutional level of democratic participation, from parliament to local government institutions. Even the few Tamils who are yet part of the government have expressed their dissent to some of the actions done by the government or done in the name of the government. **The credibility of the government with the Tamils is so low that without a third party standing guarantee there is no possibility of any face-to-face talks, leave alone, a settlement.**

The position of the leading political organization of the Tamils — The Tamils United Liberation Front is such that it found itself unable to continue in parliament; the parliamentarist approach it has been advocating and adopting has collapsed. It has had to face bitter opposition from within.

The youth movement, with the proliferation of mutually opposed groups, also finds itself unable to continue with the type of attacks and actions by which, it always argued, it was exposing the in-built oppressive and anti-Tamil character of the government in power. It also accepts that time has come for different strategies.

The situation therefore is one of a real impasse, with each of the three groups the government, the TULF, the Youth Movement are now engaged in soul searching reassessment. This reassessment of strategies is also being done by the Sinhala forces that determine the anti-Tamil character of the government. But that is something outside the scope of this paper.

**The most important political reality of the post-July '83 Sri Lanka is the getting together of all the Tamils living in Sri Lanka. They feel that a common cause binds them together.**

*A survey of the Tamil political demands and activities in Sri Lanka since 1977, including an analysis of the socio-economic and ideological orientations of the struggle.*

"Whether it is Amirthalingam, or the CWC, or Maheswaran, I told you earlier that an identification has been created by the manner in which all Tamils have been treated in the past. We have different problems but when there is a determined policy to discriminate, to harass, to persecute, to crush, then all the Tamils whether in Tamilnadu or here or anywhere in the world feel that injustice is done".

**S. Thondaman**  
Minister of Rural Industrial Development 1

The Tamils feel that this insecurity is faced also by the Muslims, who, though Tamil-speaking, do not consider themselves as Tamils but as an ethnic group distinct from the Tamils. This could be seen in the recent attempt among the Muslims to form a United group of all Sri Lankan Muslims.

The irony is that this worsening of inter ethnic relations should have happened during the period of (and because of forces within) a government that had (a) allowed one of its members — K. W. Devanayagam — to be one of the founder members of the Tamil United Front (TULF) in 1972 and (b) had accepted the existence of the Tamil problem and had suggested a round table discussion of the problem, underlying thereby the need for the abandonment of entrenched positions in order to arrive at a real solution to the problem.

However, a chronological review of the events since 1977 would reveal that, given the events from 1977 to 1982, the events of June 1983 were not only predictable, but also inescapable.

## Events in Inter-ethnic Hostility and Violence

1977 — Widespread attack on Tamils following an incident at a carnival in

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Jaffna. Police attack on people in Jaffna and Batticaloa. Sinhalese attack on Tamils and their property in the Western coastal towns, Ratnapura and in some plantation areas.

**1978** — The inauguration of the Second Republic; Tamil given the place of a national language without a proper definition of its status; described by N. M. Perera as "too little too late" — Bombing of the Avro aircraft by the Tamil militants. — The dramatic exposure claim by Cyril Mathew of the role of Tamil examiners in the marking the Tamil medium scripts in the G.C.E. (A.L.), Examinations much to the detriment of the Sinhalese students. This charge was never investigated officially inspite of the repeated requests for an impartial and objective investigation.

**1979** — Attempt to transform Vavuniya into Sinhala-majority district by a merger of certain parts of Medawachiya, later given up because of the TULF boycott of parliament. — Emergency 1979, consequent to the murder of Guruswamy, Inspector of Police by the Tamil youth militants. — Police and army excesses in Jaffna. — The Anti-Terrorist Act. — December 31 deadline (given in July) for the eradication of Terrorism in Jaffna. The operation was declared successful—Appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into the powers of the intended District Development Councils (DDCs). — Attack on plantation labour. — Attack on Tamils at Trincomalee.

**1980** — The Development Council Act No. 35 of 1980. — The dissatisfaction of the Youth with the TULF for collaborating with the government for meagre benefits. — Rift within the TULF and the breakaway of the 'Sutantiran' group.

**1981** — Attack on the Peoples Bank at Neervely and the robbery of money; unleashing of army police terror in Jaffna. — Burning down of the Public Library TULF office, and the Eelanadu Press in Jaffna. — The fiasco of the D.D.C. elections in which the loss of a few vote boxes could not be accounted for. — Events in Batticaloa, an inter-school match between a Sinhala and a Tamil school leading to ethnic violence spreading from Amparai. State forces play a prominent role. — Attack on Tamils living in Negombo. — The Killings at Embilipitiya. — Attacks and arson at Ratnapura, Pelmadulla, Kahawatte, Rakwana and Balangoda.

**1982** — Clashes at Trincomalee. — Violence in some villages within Batticaloa District. — Presidential Elections. — D.D.Cs. found ineffective. Deterioration of political relations. TULF decision not to sit in parliament beyond 1983. — Attacks by armed Tamil youth on Anaicoddai, Nelliady and Chavakkacheri Police Stations. — Sinhala-Muslim ethnic clashes — Galle. — Referendum to extend life of Parliament.—Ordinance empowering the police and the army to dispose of bodies without proper post-mortem inquiry.

**1983** — Killing of Police officers at Point-Pedro. — An ambush of the army unit at Paranthan. — Attempt to bomb the Jaffna Secretariat. — Local Govt.

Elections in May 1983. TLUF contested; Sutantriam group and militant youths opposed TULF participation; Violence against the TULF; low turn out at polls. — Election day attack on army by youth militants. — TULF forced to resign from local bodies. — Attack on Tamil student at Peradeniya. — M.P.'s not attending parliament. — Armed Forces attacking Tamils and their property in Trincomalee. The killing of 13 army personnel in Jaffna. — Sixth Amendment to the Constitution outlawing advocacy of separatism: demands that administrative personnel and those connected with the judiciary to sign oath of allegiance to the Constitution against separatism.

The events speak for themselves. When these events are related to the anti-Tamil cry that has been whipped up among the Sinhalese, in a planned manner and to the general worsening of the law and order situation of the country, July 1983 emerges as something not unexpected; it lay in the logic of events.

### The Situation in 1977

These events reveal quite clearly that there was a gradual worsening of the situation, one event leading to another, with greater intensity and more potential for fearful consequences and that the absence of a determined effort to come to grips with the problem was a causative factor in this worsening of the situation. A closer look would reveal that all these trends which assumed frightening proportions after 1977, here present in 1977 itself and it was the manner in which they were allowed to drift that have led to the disastrous consequences.

Firstly it should be noticed that the demand for a separate Tamil Eelam (the demand is for Tamil Eelam not Eelam; Eelam is the ancient Tamil word for Sri Lanka derived from the term "Hela" "Eln"; what is demanded is the "Tamil portion" of Eelam), had already been made in 1977. In fact it was made in 1976 when the TUF transformed itself into the TULF. The political unity forged between the various Tamil parties in 1972 (TULF) during which year the Front called itself the Tamil United Liberation Front. The use of the term "liberation" indicates "the socialist orientation" the front was claiming for itself.

This indicates the emergence of the TULF as the major political

organization among the Tamils. It is true that a section of the Tamil Congress under the nominal leadership of Kumar Ponnambalam, but really manipulated by the diehard anti-Christian, Hindu professional and feudal clique of Jaffna, had been articulating itself. But that was living only on the omissions of the TULF. It had no initiative of its own within Jaffna. It did serve one purpose. When Kumar Ponnambalam contested the Presidential Elections, it was possible for Tamils living outside the traditional Tamil areas to express their solidarity with the Tamils of the East and North by voting for Ponnambalam. With emerging youth militancy and changing styles of political leadership, this group went out of active, cognizable political existence. It must also be noted that the government patronage given to this group was merely to show that the TULF was not the only Tamil party.

Though the TULF was a Union of the Federal Party, one section of the Tamil Congress and the CWC, it differed from the former two in that with Amirthalingam and Sivaithamparam emerging dominant leaders, with actual power in the hands of the former as the leader of the Federal Party, the leadership of the TULF was not as Colombo-based as it had been earlier. This is not to say that these two did not belong to the professional class which had given rise to the earlier leaders. It is only that they were not part of the Colombo establishment. In Amirthalingam one could see the emergence of the Jaffna based party activist. Sivasithamparam, though a Colombo based lawyer, has firm roots in Jaffna. They were more accessible than the previous leaders — G. G. Ponnambalam and S. J. V. Chelvanayagam. It is true that class wise there was no major change but these two men were in behaviour and spirit more typical sons of the soil.

Prior to 1977, especially during the final years of the SLFP rule (1975-77), the TULF received the support of the Colombo based Tamil professionals and entrepreneurs, who as a class did not do well under the SLFP. With the coming



of the UNP in 1977 the picture changed. The Tamil professionals and entrepreneurs of Colombo gave their support to the UNP and pressurised the TULF to come to some understanding with the government. But the new leadership of the TULF (Amirthalingam) did not belong to the Colombo based establishment they needed someone who comes from the establishment but sufficiently close to those in authority. And this explains the rise of Drs. Jeyaratnam Wilson and Neelan Tiruchelvam within the TULF, thus enabling the dominance once again of the Colombo based Tamils. The hostility towards the Colombo based leadership has been building up within the FP and the TULF looks a half way house between the Colombo based Tamil bourgeoisie and Jaffna-Batticaloa based middle-class Tamilian interests.

Equally important were the total collapse of left activism in Tamil areas. Except in Trade Union matters the left had ceased to attract political attention in the Tamil areas. And there is some organized trade union activity only in Jaffna town — not in other areas. The LSSP was the worst affected; it had lost its local leadership. The Communist Party too was not quite effective, a price it had to pay for its collaboration with the SLFP. It is significant that only those leftist groups which had cut themselves away from the "traditional" left that were able to be active. This is how the NSSP was able to come into prominence.

With the collapse at the national level of the leftist parties, which were the only available political institutions in which Tamil and Sinhalese could be members with a common ideology and equal status and a say within the party, it was inevitable that ethnic division emerged as the basis of polarization.

By 1977, the acts of political violence by militant youths too, had begun. Alfred Thuraiyappah was killed in 1976 and a few bank robberies (Puloly and Puthur) had already taken place.

Equally well established was the pattern of state violence against the people. The action of the

Police during the IV Conference on International Tamil Studies held at Jaffna had led to deaths of innocents.

And the the post-1977 events show that it was these trends that worsened, interacting upon each other, and assuring fearsome proportions until at last they climax in 1983. The trends as they stood in 1977 and worsened consequently demanded a political solution. The absence of such a determined attempt towards a real political solution was all the more tragic, as the UNP had, before coming to power, realized the need for such a solution.

"The United National Party accepts the position that there are numerous problems confronting the Tamil speaking people. The lack of a solution to their problems has made the Tamil speaking people support even a movement for the creation of a separate state. In the interests of national integration and unity so necessary for the economic development of the whole country, the Party feels such problems should be solved without loss of time. The Party, when it comes to power, will take all possible steps to remedy their grievances in such fields as (1) Education (2) Colonization (3) Use of Tamil Language (4) Employment in public and semi-public corporations. We will summon an All-Party Conference as stated earlier and implement all its decisions.

The Manifesto of the United National Party for the General Elections of 1977.

It behooves the student of Sri Lankan politics to identify in clear terms the factors which inhibited the UNP from implementing the remedies suggested by itself, more importantly how sections of UNP took to open campaigning against the Tamils in these very four areas.

(To be continued)

1. In an interview with Lanka Guardian 1.11.1983. For an analysis of the socio-economic formational variations of the Sri Lankan Tamils. See Sivathamby K. The Social Formation Among the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Paper presented to the SSA Seminar on Nationality Question in Sri Lanka 1979.

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# DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT ON ENTREPRENEURS

Newton Gunasinghe

The expansion of the public sector, although perceived as a non-capitalist path of development by certain sections, was actually a process through which the state subordinated a significant proportion of the country's economic resources to itself. These economic resources then could be distributed among the supporters of the regime. on the basis of political patronage. As the Sinhala people, both entrepreneurs, as well as non-entrepreneurs, were better placed to exercise pressure on the UNP and SLFP politicians, they stood to gain most from the expansion of the public sector. The large public sector corporations and their factories thus got located primarily in Sinhala areas, with only a small minority of plants going to the northern and eastern provinces. Once this discriminatory location was accomplished, it was possible to argue for preferential recruitment for the work force from the local area, which automatically assured Sinhala preponderance. Even at the supervisory and administrative levels, jobs were allocated on political patronage. The well-known SLFP supporters,

and their kith and kin, may be denied access to the job-pool during UNP rule, and vice versa, but they had their chance once the SLFP returned to power; but the Tamils, especially those of the north and the east, were more and more permanently excluded from this complex network of Sinhala political patronage. As the table below establishes this discrimination was most pronounced in the middle and lower grades of occupations, where the majority of employees were concentrated.

2. As far as the non-Sinhala ethnic groups are concerned, this was a phase during which :

a) the top entrepreneurial stratum especially the Tamil section within it, found the avenues opened up through import substitution more or less closed to them, as they did not enjoy sufficient political patronage from either ruling party;

b) the middle-level entrepreneurial stratum found itself confined to trade and commerce due to the difficulties encountered in obtaining special licences required for light

industrial production in the absence of political patronage; and

c) the Tamil people in general benefitted much less from the new job opportunities created in the public sector both due to lack of political patronage and the paucity of public sector development activities in the north and in the east.

From a historical perspective, the growth of a top entrepreneurial stratum from the Tamil people of Sri Lanka occurs much later than the growth of a similar stratum from within the Sinhala people. The first generation of Sinhala entrepreneurs accumulated their capital through liquor trade and arrack renting as far back as the mid-nineteenth century, and later invested their capital in graphite mining and coconut plantations. Similar avenues of accumulation were not present in the north and the east where liquor sales were rather low due to the widespread consumption of home-made palmyrah toddy. Further, the absence of plantations in these areas possibly prevented the emergence of a group of entrepreneurs who could earn profits by servicing the plantations. Thus, the Sri Lankan Tamil entrepreneurial stratum, when it made its appearance had to emerge through trading. A parallel professional stratum who were active in Malaya were also able to accumulate a significant amount of capital. It is from these ranks that a local Tamil entrepreneurial stratum emerges. By the mid-fifties, a top Tamil entrepreneurial element had already come into existence and they exercised partial control over the export-import trade. There was a relative absence of middle-level Tamil entrepreneurs involved in light industries. The expansion of the public sector covered export-import trade as well. The founding of the Co-operative Wholesale

TABLE 1

State Personnel Classified by Major Occupational Groups and Ethnicity — 1972

	%				
	<i>Sinhala</i>	<i>Tamil</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Burgher</i>	<i>Others</i>
As a % of population 1971	72.0	20.5	6.5	--	1.0
Administrative, Professional & Technical Grades	67.7	28.5	2.5	0.9	0.35
Middle Grades	81.2	15.3	2.2	0.8	0.4
School Teachers	81.5	11.6	6.6	0.01	0.06
Minor Employees	86.4	10.6	1.9	0.5	0.27
Labour Grades	85.5	11.6	2.0	0.3	0.23
%	82.63	12.93	3.53	0.46	0.47

(Source : Statistics of Personnel in the State Services : 1972)



Establishment and the State Trading Corporation as government-controlled monopolistic institutions in the field of export-import trade severely restricted an area of operation of the top entrepreneurial stratum located in wholesale foreign trade. Trade with India and Pakistan, in particular, was dominated by Indian and Sri Lankan Tamil entrepreneurial groups. The Cooperative Wholesale Establishment gradually established a virtual monopoly over trade, with India and Pakistan exercising an exclusive monopoly over the importation of dried fish lentils, onions etc. This should certainly have reacted adversely on those entrepreneurial groups who formerly controlled import-export trade, among who ranks Tamil entrepreneurs were significantly represented.

The middle-level Tamil entrepreneurs too were mainly involved in trade, transport and services, rather than in light industry. They were scattered all over the island centred in provincial townships as well as in Colombo. The founding of the CWE at the level of foreign wholesale trade was paralleled by the establishment of co-operative stores at village-level, and the entire country was covered by an elaborate network of cooperative stores. These stores were subsequently organised into electorate-level administrative units, on whose director boards nominees of the local Member of Parliament sat. The co-operatives gradually obtained monopolistic control over the distribution on certain commodities, which the private sector was prohibited to trade in. Shop keepers and traders, irrespective of their ethnicity, were badly hit in the process; but the Sinhala trader was better placed to diversify his activities by moving into light industrial production on the basis of political patronage, an avenue more or less closed to the Tamil trader.

As Table I indicates, the Tamil proportion in the administrative, professional and technical grades in the public sector in 1972 was 28.5%. However, this is somewhat misleading, as administrative, professional and technical occupations are grouped together, and as the annual pattern of recruitment is not given. The Tamil proportion in the recruitment to the adminis-

trative services, for instance, progressively declined during the sixties and the seventies. It is possible that Tamils enjoyed an advantageous position in the professions (as doctors, engineers, etc.) due to the availability of better secondary education facilities, especially in the north. At the level of the middle-level occupations as well as that of the workers, it is clear that the Tamil representation is nearly half of their proportion in the population. In terms of employment generation, it is the middle and the lower grades that are of crucial statistical significance, as for every job created at the administrative/professional level, fifteen jobs are created in the middle-level grades, and twenty in the manual grades.

### 3. Within the context:

a) the Sinhala entrepreneurs, those who had graduated to the export market as well as those who remained in the middle-level, manufacturing light industrial products for the domestic market, felt more or less content;

b) the urban poor, covered by the state welfare system to a certain degree, though dissatisfied, were less inclined to direct their aggression against minority ethnic groups.

Hence, ethnic contradictions, although present and even intensifying, did not frequently erupt in the form of widespread anti-minority riots.

By the mid-seventies, the top industrial stratum of entrepreneurs among whom the Sinhala predominated, had already accumulated substantial amounts of capital. They had already discovered overseas markets for their industrial products; the Maliban group exported confectionaries to the Middle East, the Dasa and Piyadasa groups exported garments to the western countries and Richard Peiris found markets for their rubber products in Europe and in Asia. In other words, their exclusive dependence on the protected domestic market came to an end. They were able to compete in the overseas market, especially in those commodities which required labour intensive methods of production, as they could afford

to pay low wages and keep the production costs down. However, in order to expand further, they needed foreign capital, and technical collaboration, which was not encouraged under the policy of a state-regulated economy.

In contrast, the middle and small entrepreneurs who had moved into light industry continued to rely on the protected domestic market which guaranteed their survival, if not expansion. Those entrepreneurs of the same level who had not moved into light industry and who continued their exclusive reliance on trading operations, had to establish various covert and overt links with the state trading agencies and the co-operatives. As the economy was one of utter commodity scarcity, blackmarkets in various scarce items flourished, operated by middle and small level traders who illegally siphoned off the scarce commodities from the public sector to private shops. If it were not for the lucrative trade in the black market, many middle and small level traders would have found it difficult to continue their operations as the public sector was already dominating the vital areas of trade. Thus, the middle and small level industrialists found their niche to be protected by state regulation, while the middle and small level traders found an avenue of operation in the black market; these strata felt more or less content with the status quo.

The conditions of the urban poor by the mid-seventies was characterised by low wages, high rates of unemployment, deterioration of living standards and rather low levels of internal differentiation. They were dissatisfied with the status quo and, within the context of a state-regulated economy, the state seemed to be responsible for all the economic problems. The rate of inflation was low, and so was the annual increase in monetary wages. The essential items distributed through the state and semi-state agencies on the basis of an elaborate system of rationing, were cheap, but due to commodity scarcity, the queues for obtaining them were long. As the state was seen as being responsible for this bad state of affairs, the frustration and aggression felt by the urban poor took an anti-state direction. The



strike wave in late 1976, which primarily broke out in the public sector organisations, was one such occasion when protest was directed against the state. To the degree that protest was directed against the state, it appeared to take a class direction, the urban poor in general and the working class segments within it, in particular, protesting against the state, on economic issues. To that degree, the divisive lines that demarcated the ethnic groups became blurred, people from different social strata and ethnic groups finding a non-ethnic target to direct their aggression against. Hence, the period of state-regulated economy was simultaneously a period during which ethnic contradictions did not erupt in the form of open rioting.

4. The open economic policy, by abolishing controls, also eliminated the system which enabled the Sinhalese entrepreneurs to obtain special concessions.

a) At the level of those who had already graduated to the export market, the removal of controls is unlikely to be adversely felt, while it is possible that some benefits actually accrued to them.

b) Middle-level entrepreneurs, those producing light industrial goods for the domestic market were very badly affected by the liberalisation of import-export trade.

c) The urban poor lost their welfare facilities; the real income of certain layers increased, but within the context of expanding consumerism, their real and imaginary needs grew to an extent which they were unable to satisfy. The sense of relative deprivation they felt was intensified to a level that could be utilised by a different social stratum for violent ends.

The UNP regime that was voted into power with a massive majority in 1977, felt that state-regulated economic policy — which was followed by an earlier UNP regime in the period 1965-1970 — has outgrown its usefulness. The state-regulated economy was seen to be associated with economic stagnation commodity scarcity, high levels of unemployment, and institutional corruption. As private capital, both foreign and local, was allocated the role of the prime mover in the economy, the system of state regula-

tion had to be dismantled as a system, so as to permit the maximum area of operation for the market forces.

The top industrial entrepreneurial stratum that had already graduated to the export market stood to gain from the introduction of the open economy. The open economic policy presented itself as an export-led model of growth in contrast to the state regulated economic policy which was associated with import substitution. The top industrial stratum looked with enthusiasm as the export-led model of growth, as they were already exporters of industrial products. Further the open economic policy gave them all the necessary encouragement to enter into collaboration with foreign capital, which they needed for their next phase of expansion. For this purpose, two new areas of operation, where partnerships between local and foreign capital could take place were established — the Export Promotion Zone under the Greater Colombo Economic Commission (GCEC) and the Foreign Investments Advisory Committee (FIAC). To promote middle-level local entrepreneurship the local Investment Advisory Committee (LIAC) was also created.

The top industrial entrepreneurial stratum is in the process of making use of these new investment opportunities to establish joint ventures with foreign capital. In the GCEC area, the proportion of local capital in joint ventures increased from 33% in 1980 to 39% in 1981. In the FIAC area, the proportion of local capital increased from 44% in 1980 to 58% in 1982.

With the removal of import controls in 1977, the protected market for home-made light industrial products came to an end. Every conceivable item was imported from the industrial centres of the world, as a result of which domestic manufacturing of light industrial products was seriously hit. The middle level entrepreneurial stratum which was engaged in light industrial production for a protected domestic market found it difficult to continue production as they could not successfully compete with the imported products. Due to the specific characteristics of the state-regulated economy and the importance of political patronage in economic enterprise, the over-

whelming majority of the industrial entrepreneurs at this level were Sinhala businessmen.

It is possible to substantiate the ruination of small industries by taking the case of match-making industry. Immediately on the aftermath of the removal of import controls, large quantities of boxes of matches were imported from China and India. The quality of these matches was superior to those manufactured locally, but there was no significant price difference. Consequently, the imported matches captured the domestic market, driving away the local product. The dozen or so small manufacturers had no choice but to close down their workplaces. But the Ceylon Match Company Limited, which was the only firm in this line of business with a substantial capital base and foreign support, was able to fight back. This company re-invested capital, modernised its manufacturing plant and turned out a product which, in terms of quality, compared well with the imported products. This improved box of matches successfully competed with the imported products and re-conquered a substantial area of the market, probably a larger slice than it has had during the period of import-substitution. The second large company in the field of match manufacturing, Lanka Lights Limited, found its capital base insufficient for modernisation. It was obliged to become a subsidiary of a major company, Delmege Forsyth Limited, which provided the necessary capital for modernisation. This company too now turns out a box of matches, the quality of which is superior to its former product, but which has not yet reached the level attained by the products of the Ceylon Match Company Ltd.

(To be continued)

## The Sinhala . . .

(Continued from page 8)

main issues of which have been examined in the first CRD document.

1. Source: J. E. Jayasuriya, *Education in Ceylon before and after Independence*, pp 2-3.
2. J. E. Jayasuriya, *Education Policies and Progress during British rule in Sri Lanka, 1796-1948*, p. 81.



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# REPENTANCE

Tissa Balasuriya O.M.I.

**I**n a sense to retaliate violence with violence — I do not justify violence on any side — is to pave the way for separation and division. Retaliatory violence will be welcome by those who want the division and vivisection of our country. Not only will it result in de facto separation; it will be our common self-destruction. As Gandhiji said if we 'take an eye for an eye', soon the whole world will be blind.

Belief in Jesus Christ means to believe in these values; it is to place the hope for our people in these values — which are also the core values of all our religions. The discipleship of Jesus is not a policy of an eye for an eye, of searching for legitimations, excuses, smokescreens and scapegoats for our misfortunes; it is not even the mere balance of equity which is the minimum necessary; it is the active love of the other unto the folly of the cross.

We have to acknowledge in this situation, and this also true for the Tamil people that we have sinned. Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe says this very clearly in his final and parting message to us. We as a people, may be not ourselves individually, but as a Sinhala people we have sinned. The Islamic people and the Tamil people may also perhaps say the same thing. It is for us to say "Mea Culpa" 'through my fault' rather than "Tua Culpa" 'through your fault'. While we glory in our Sinhala achievement we must also accept our solidarity in our collective sin. This is a demand of our sincerity in our identification with our people even when we may have tried to prevent such happenings.

The events of July 1983: the destruction and murder, the killing of children before their parents, of parents before their children, of husbands before their wives, of

getting hold of anyone and killing them, burning them alive are a grave public moral crime. They may have been done in a moment of accumulated provocation and sudden anger, but they are a serious collective social sin.

The recent Synod of Bishops in Rome has reflected much on the social nature of sin. I would like to recommend that we think together on collective repentance in relation to our collective sin. The elements of penance which we have in individual confession are also relevant and valuable for collective and public penance. In so far as we are also guilty we have to regret our sin. This is what Psalm 51 — Miserere, which we recite often teaches us: *Nam iniquitatem meam ego agnosco* — I acknowledge my offence. (Please excuse the Latin which I use here because of its brevity and beauty). The author (David) may have said this of his personal sin; we can do so of our collective sin also. Confession is an expression of repentance. We can say collectively that we recognise and acknowledge our sin. We can confess our sin in public. It is much more difficult in public than a confession in private.

We have also to make a firm purpose of amendment, specially if such crimes are repeated often and continue for decades. We must seek ways of changing our minds and hearts in order not to do so again. Restitution due compensation, avoiding the occasion of sin — these are important aspects in this connection. As a group we can think over these to overcome the basic prejudices and inimical tendencies in our minds and hearts. We can think of what we owe to those who have been hurt, who have lost their belongings, their houses, and face the irreparable loss of their dear ones.

This Psalm "Miserere" 'Have mercy on me' brings out clearly

that what God desires is the creation of a pure heart and of a new mind in us, and in our people. "*Cor Mundum crea mihi, Deus, et spiritum firmum renova in me.*" 'A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me.' This is part of our task of pastoral guidance. How can we do so? It is extremely difficult, because all types of stories and statistics, of myths and prejudices, are brought up for not accepting the other or for being suspicious of them. But fundamentally it is a task of conversion — to accept the other as the other; to accept even, let us say, the enemy, at the worst.

What God wants is that deep inner conversion; and not mere external prayers and sacrifices without a purity of heart.

"*Neque enim sacrificio delectaris, et holocaustum, si darem, non acceptares*"

'For you are not pleased with sacrifices; should I offer a holocaust, you would not accept it'.

It is a contrite and humble heart that the Lord accepts.

"*Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies*".

Such a contrition of heart can lead to the rebuilding of our country.

"*ut reaedifices muros Jerusalem*". 'to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem'.

Our prayers and sacrifices will then be acceptable to God.

"*Tu acceptabis sacrificia legitima, oblationes et holocausta*".

'Then shall you be pleased with due sacrifices, burnt offerings and holocausts'. This psalm is a prayer of repentance that we recite and sing often; we now can reflect on it in terms of what as a people and as a country we are facing, and ask that

(Continued on page 21)



# NEO-COLONIALISM : THE LAST STAGE OF CAPITALISM ?

Dayan Jayatilleka

**C**ontrary to much of pro-Soviet, pro-Chinese and Trotskyist thinking, neo-colonialism is neither a mere tactic of imperialism nor simply a disguised form of the old colonialism. Rather, it is a new phase of monopoly capitalism which corresponds to:

(a) an important change in the international division of labour which forms the basis of the world capitalist system and

(b) a corollary of this change, namely, a new class alignment on a global scale.

Before 1945, early forms of neo-colonial domination were practised by the United States and Britain in a minority of dependent territories. This took place mainly in Latin America and partially in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. It is to Lenin's credit that he discerned some of the essential characteristics of neo-colonialism when it was still in embryo. In his Report on the International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Comintern, delivered on July 19th 1920 at the Second Congress of the Comintern Lenin said that:

"Apart from direct political and juridical dependence, colonial dependence presumes a number of relations of financial and economic dependence."

Thus, we can infer that direct political and juridical dependence is a characteristic feature of colonialism. But a relationship of dependence and domination is quite possible without such politico-juridical control. In one of the preliminary draft theses on the National and Colonial Question, presented at the self-same Comintern Congress Lenin identifies:

"... the deception systematically practised with the assistance

of the privileged classes of the oppressed countries by the imperialist powers, who under the guise of creating politically independent states, bring into being states that are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily". (My italics D. J)

Earlier in his major work 'Imperialism: The Highest stage of Capitalism' Lenin had understood that:

"... Finance capital is such a great, it may be said, decisive force in all economic and international relations, that it is capable of subordinating to itself, and actually does subordinate to itself even states enjoying complete political independence." (1916)

Then again in his polemic against Luxemburg's and Bukharin's Left Economism Lenin emphasized that:

"Big finance capital of one country can always buy up competitors in another, politically independent country and constantly does so. Economically, this is fully achievable. Economic "annexation" is fully "achievable" without political annexation and is widely practised." (Collected works, Vol 23), Imperialist Economism: (A Caricature of Marxism)

A brief digression is necessary here, to define strictly what is meant by 'political independence.' Engels in a Preface to the 18 edition of the Communist Manifesto stated significantly that:

'The bourgeoisie cannot rule in any country that is not politically independent.' 'Political independence' has meant in most Tricontinental societies in the postwar period bourgeoisie of the nation in question is the ruling class unlike in the context of national or colonial oppression where, the situation is quite different since the ruling class is the bourgeoisie of the oppressor/colonial nation.

Refocussing our attention on Lenin, we may conclude that he discerned three of the main characteristics of a form of imperialist domination and exploitation which was other than that of colonialism. The features that he identified of this new form of dependency (which we have since dubbed neo-colonialism), are as follows:

(i) Political independence i. e., the bourgeoisie of the nation in question is the ruling class.

(ii) Economic, mainly trading and financial, dependence.

(iii) A rapprochement between the imperialist powers and the privileged classes of the dependent country. (In his Theses on the Socialist Revolution and Right of Nations to Self-Determination penned in 1916, Lenin speaks of the 'reactionary agreements' entered into by the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations with the bourgeoisie of the dominant nations. Similarly, in 1920, Lenin pointed to the Zionist enterprise in Palestine as providing a striking example of 'the deception of the working masses brought about jointly by-imperialism and by the bourgeoisie of the nation in question').

Despite these characteristically brilliant insights, it was not possible for Lenin to work out a theory of Neo-colonialism any more than it was possible for Marx and Engels to formulate a theory of Imperialism. This is because neo-colonialism became the dominant form of control by monopoly capital only in the decades following Lenin's death. To put it another way, neo-colonialism became a 'world-system' only in the post World War II period. One implication of this, which is not always realized, is that for a theory of neo-colonialism we will have to go beyond Leninism. While it may be cheaply sensationalistic to speak of the



‘obsolescence of Leninism’ we must recognize the profound conservatism of those whose stated project is a ‘return to Leninism’.

### Monopoly Capitalism in the Post War period

Neo-colonialism is the product of the development and decay of world capitalism. ‘Development’ and ‘decay’ being two contradictory phenomena, this statement may seem illogical, to say the least. To the dialectical imagination however, capable of apprehending the profound contradictoriness inherent in all reality, this statement should prove quite intelligible. That this was Lenin’s own perspective is clearly seen in the thesis expounded by him in the Spring of 1916, namely that in spite of the decay of capitalism, on the whole, capitalism is **growing** far more rapidly than before. (imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism). Notwithstanding Stalin’s edict to the contrary, this is precisely what took place in the post-war period.

On the one hand it is true that the 2nd World War and its consequences, namely, the emergence of a strong socialist bloc, the spreading flames of national liberation movements in the colonies, the defeat of Fascist Germany and Japan, and decline of the old colonial powers, constituted the second stage of the general crisis of the world capitalist system. (The general crisis began in the period of the 1st World War and the victory of the Russian Revolution).

On the other hand, another main outcome, one which is not generally given due weight, is that the development of capitalism in the entire colonial world was accelerated by the War. Following Marx, who, in his writings on colonialism and specifically on India, had predicted the sowing of the seeds of capitalism in the colonies, Lenin repeatedly pointed to the growth of commodity production in the periphery.

“One of the main features of imperialism is that it accelerates the development of capitalism in backward countries”. (‘The Peace Question’ — July-August 1915).

Stalin for his part had also focused on this phenomenon specially in Foundations of Leninism (1924) and in his speeches in 1925.<sup>1</sup> Both Lenin and Stalin had made the additional point that the process of capitalist growth in the periphery was greatly accentuated by World War I. This was even more the case in the period of the 2nd World War.

Lenin, who was not blessed with the apocalyptic visions of certain others who prided themselves on their ‘classical Marxism’ recognised that there was no such thing as an ‘absolute stagnation and disintegration’ or ‘unmistakable breaking points’<sup>2</sup> for capitalism, and stressed that it is precisely in periods of crisis that capitalism makes important re-adjustments, thereby streamlining or rationalizing itself. World capitalism underwent a rationalization of major proportions in the post World War II period, which involved the transition to neo-colonialism. It is precisely the phenomenon referred to earlier, namely, the development of capitalism in the colonies, that provided the material basis for the transition from colonialism to neo-colonialism on a world scale. This is why we have spoken of neo-colonialism as a product of the **development** and decay of world capitalism.

What are the economic features of the new stage of monopoly capitalism which we refer to as neo-colonialism?

The principle forms of monopoly in this new, specific stage of world capitalism are:

- (1) State Monopoly Capitalism.
- (2) Multinational or Transnational Corporations.

**One of the central characteristics of post war capitalism has been a qualitative increase in the economic activities of the bourgeois state.** As a result of the growth of productive forces and the increase in monopolization, the state assumes an evermore important role in the regulation and control of the economy. While state monopolies proliferate in a variety of forms, such as ‘nationalized’ ventures, government depart-

ments, boards, corporations etc the state also intervenes increasingly in the activities of private business. **A shift towards state monopoly capitalism is therefore one of the pre-eminent characteristics of world capitalism in its new stage, neo-colonialism.**

(To be continued)

1. Address to the XIVth conference of the RCP (B) on May 9th 1925 (on the opposition — p. 204) Address to the communist university of the tables of the East — May 14.
2. The first five years of the Communist International Vol. 2 — L. D. Trotsky (p. 199-200 / 306-307)

### Repentance . . .

(Continued from page 19)

“the Lord may deliver as from every evil and grant us peace in our day and protect us from all anxiety” as we pray at the Holy Eucharist. And “May the peace of the Lord be with us”.

This approach of penitence should not lead us to a meaningless paralysis of guilt and shame. On the contrary it can bring us the activating joy that comes from God’s salvation.

“Redde mihii laetitiam saluistuae et spiritu generoso confirma me”.

‘Give me back the joy of your salvation and a generous spirit sustain in me’.

There is a joy, an inexplicable inner joy in forgiveness, in trying to understand the other; it is a generous spirit that the Lord blesses.

In our sinfulness the path to joy is through the crucible of penance.

“Fac me Audire gaudium et laetitiam; exultent ossa quae contrivisti”.

‘Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness; the bones you have crushed shall rejoice’.

(To be continued)



# A TIME OF DECISION

Jan Pieterse

On the second front, the neo-colonial societies, current imperialist tactics are part of a structural transformation of the world economy, the new international division of labour, and should be understood in that light:

a) continued expansion of operations of multinational corporations

b) commercial multinational loans rather than foreign aid

c) IMF to police the loans and streamline participation in the capitalist world economy

d) support for "moderate alternatives," a strategy concerned with controlling changes that are deemed necessary and inevitable, and to prevent their coming to the advantage of radical forces — e. g. presently in the Philippines, Chile

e) promotion of rightwing religious groups — nb the invasions of evangelical groups in Central and South America, Africa, Asia, serving demobilization and surveillance at grassroots levels and among students.

This does not exclude other, more or less standard tactics such as economic squeeze directed against "deviant" countries, manipulation of regional or continental groupings (DAU, DECS), manipulation of ethnic differences, rumours to create disarray among the population and in leadership circles, the use of underworld circuits, "old boy" networks and established religious institutions.

In the imperialist countries, the manipulation of information plays a paramount role, for people's consciousness is a function of the information they receive and whoever controls the information controls mass consciousness:

a) mass media — in US media the second front is largely "blackened out" and the first papered over with new cold war rhetoric and the label "terrorism"; in Western Europe the three continents are largely dealt with through the rhetoric of "development"; generally, under the guise of entertainment, there is systematic dissemination of fear and violence, and decadence as outlet.

b) economic squeeze against "deviant" countries, circumscribing the room of maneuver of parties and governments — recently applied against France (a "bear raid on the franc," as in 1937 against the Blum government)

c) drugs, crime — cheap heroin to pacify troublespots

d) sects — Baghwan, "new age" groups etc.

e) neofascism — frequently sponsored indirectly by right-centrist forces who then appear more "moderate" and produce a climate which justifies authoritarianism, a climate which enables them to condemn by assimilation all "extremes" and to criminalize radical left forces (Italy, West Germany).

The relative difference in emphasis on each of the fronts — military, economic, ideological — is related to the basic features of the arena; yet each front also carries elements of the other fronts. Everywhere the promotion of "moderate elements" plays a key role, producing phenomena such as the Peace Women in Northern Ireland — supported by the British, the media and the Church and, of course, rigged up with a Nobel Prize, although they were and are devoid of any grassroots support.

Among the rank and file at each of the fronts many of these tactics may be well understood. But what is missing, in the public realm, is a sense of **the unity of the struggles**. This is due to the media that never portray issues and actions in relation to each other but always in a fragmentary way. To present them in a fragmentary way is a way of marginalizing them and restricting their relevance. For to separate the issues is to separate the forces. It is also a matter of the systems of education that each not the integration of global issues and concerns but rather their division into areas of specialization. Moreover this fragmentation tends to be echoed, in the imperialist countries, by many of the movements themselves: they also specialize in particular areas, which is excellent tactics, except when the interrelationship with other arenas and movements is neglected, for fear of losing grassroots support by becoming too diffuse or "too political," for fear of losing one's own group identity. Finally the separation of issues and fragmentation of forces is duly promoted by the powers that be, in view of the evergreen adage: **Divide and rule**.

If it is difficult then to achieve unity, intellectually and politically, among the issues and forces on each front (within each group!), how much more difficult will it be to perceive the unity of all the fronts and act accordingly. Nevertheless it is crucial to be clear about the **Global interaction of issues**. Indeed in the headquarters and think tanks of the powers that be the **Global relationships between forces and issues** are well understood and the object of constant study. 1968 taught them a formidable lesson. It is time that this lesson is taken seriously by the left as well. Now as then it is the logic of empire, of a moribund power structure that is at the root of revolt at all three fronts. The current situation is largely shaped by the efforts at retrenchment following the shock of 1968, and its main outlines can be understood under two headings: the **new international division of labour and military expansion**.



The new international division of labour is the global redistribution of the centers of production, in particular the relocation of monopoly capital to southern hemisphere havens of cheap labour, low taxes and cooperative governments. In the seventies it was accompanied by a proliferation of commercial multinational lending and a veritable explosion of international debt. Relocation had gone on earlier but took shape as a strategy, in 1969/70, in direct response to the high tide of class struggle in the imperialist rear in the late sixties. Consequently, it has brought unemployment in the northern hemisphere, the political effects of which are kept in check by the rhetoric of "crisis" and the politics of austerity. In the southern hemisphere it brought escalating debts and the IMF. The vast economic expansion of the new international division of labour required as its corollary a military expansion to protect the new investments, a projection of power under the heading of keeping socialism at bay. According to 1979 Congressional testimony of Vice-Admiral Gerald E. Miller: "With the increasing need for far-flung economic enterprise, there will be a corresponding need to protect such enterprise." Thus unfolded the new cold war offensive, not of containment but **roll-back** of anti-imperialist gains. **This necessitated a revocation of detente since the Soviet Union — a point habitually missed by the cold war socialists — continues to play an important progressive role in relation to the first front — southern Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean.** Hence ensued the escalation of counter-insurgency in El Salvador and Guatemala, the fortification of Honduras, war on Nicaragua, interventions in Lebanon and Chad, invasion of Grenada, and Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe. By increasing the nuclear threat against the Soviet Union, the new missiles in Europe create room for the use of tactical nuclear weapons in third world theatres. It is to be kept in mind that the Rapid Deployment force is a "dual-capable" force, that is, equipped with weapons systems able to deliver both nuclear and conventional warheads. In the process US military strategy has

come to be concerned with preparing for "two-and-a-half wars" — preparations that are being paid for, to be sure, by every luckless inhabitant of the "free world." For the trillion dollar military budget of the Reagan administration makes for rising interest rates in the United States as private borrowers are crowded out of the credit market, hence a stronger dollar, a squeeze on recovery throughout the capitalist world and a heavier burden for the neocolonies who must pay higher interest rates on their crushing debts.

Thus, in brief, are the struggles along the three fronts connected — the first front paying its tribute in blood, the second in deprivation and starvation, and the third front in relative deprivation. The impact of the trillion-dollar military build-up, centered in the US but echoed amongst the imperial allies, is being transmitted along all fronts. So is the impact of the new international division of labour, disguised under the ideology of crisis. The **Global crackdown** is being felt everywhere — unemployment, cutbacks, give-backs, intimidation, threat and missiles all part of the retrenchment of the seventies and the offensive of the eighties. Thus the anti-imperialist battles, the struggles of workers and peasants in the neocolonial countries, and the movements in the imperialist countries — the peace movement, the struggles of labour, minorities, women, youth — all take place in interconnected trenches, united by the imperial logic imposed on us and by our militancy against it.

Mao once remarked that people's war takes place in the dimension of time rather than space. This referred to the importance of perseverance, of outlasting the enemy, even if territory were lost. From someone who fought for thirty years before victory could be claimed the points are well taken. But the dimension of time also harbours another side.

The hallmark of "1968," in addition to the magnitude of the struggles, was **simultaneity** — the simultaneous rise in the levels of mass struggle on all three fronts. To a significant degree this simultaneity was conditioned by the war in Southeast Asia and its economic political and ideological ripple effect,

throughout the world. It was the **global simultaneity** of struggles that inspired the movements, caught the imperialist powers off guard and made breakthroughs in some places possible.

**1984 — hype aside — is part of a time of decision.** It is an election year in the United States, just as 1968 was. A re-election of Mr Reagan would in all likelihood be taken as a mandate to put the enormous military machine now being built to use. A second term of this presidency might be scheduled as the opportunity to secure US/Trilateral hegemony for into the 21st century. Four years may be deemed a sufficient time to deal with Central America — the Sandinists would be accused of not bending over backwards enough, and US Special Task Forces would come to patrol the highways of El Salvador and Guatemala. Drastic measures in the Middle East might well fit into this programme. Confrontations with Soviet-backed positions in Southwest and Southeast Asia and Africa could be undertaken against the strategic background of Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Western Europe five minutes from Moscow. Already we are witnessing the greatest military build-up in human history. France has provided for a Rapid Action Force in its 1984-88 defense budget, while at the same time in Britain there are voices advocating the creation of a global British RDF. "Two-and-a-half wars" may cover a lot of world — a projection of force unprecedented in human history, compared to which Hitler would be kidstuff and Vietnam a training exercise. Further offensives on welfarism, rebuilding welfare states to warfare states — how else to sustain two-and-a-half wars — would suit this scenario. The fact that the three fronts are communicating vessels acquires added importance in this context. What is here called the first front is the frontline taking the blows for the second and third fronts; that is, any defeat on the first front increases the pressure available to be exercised on the second and third frontlines — on the left, minorities, labour,

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# Why this sudden rise of bellicosity?

L. N. T. Mendis

**T**he breach of binding commitments by the United States Government is justified by the concept of 'limited war,' specially a limited war over Europe. Alva Myrdal states that the position of the Soviet Union "is a categorical disbelief in the possibility of limited nuclear war . . . Limited to a local battlefield such as Europe and limited . . . to tactical nuclear weapons. She quotes A. Yefremov who in a book published in 1972 has stated that the military conflict on European territory . . . would inexorably involve all other states of the world in the orbit of a thermonuclear collision." He characterises the concept of "warning atomic shots" as absurd propaganda. Alva Myrdal goes on to emphasise another important point that, "far from the possibility of limited sparing with deadly atomic weapons, the reality will be quite otherwise." The recent statement by Marshal Ustinov reinforces the point of the unreality of limited atomic war, because it was made clear in his statement that no one should assume that retaliation in the event of an attack on the Soviet Union would be limited to the source of attack, namely Europe. Myrdal quotes Herbert York and his eminent colleague Jerome Wiesner as stating the following:-

"Ever since shortly after World War II the military power of the United States has been steadily increasing. Throughout this same period **the national security of the U. S. has been rapidly and inexorably diminishing . . .**

The military power of the U.S.S.R. has been steadily increasing since it became an atomic power in 1949. **Soviet national security however, has been steadily decreasing.** Hypothetically, the U. S. could unilaterally decide to destroy the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.S.R. would

be absolutely powerless to prevent it. That country could only, at best, seek wreak revenge through whatever retaliatory capability it might then have left. **Both sides in the arms race are thus confronted by the dilemma of steadily increasing military power and steadily decreasing national security. The clearly predictable course of the arms race is a steady open spiral downward into oblivion . . .**"<sup>10</sup>

"In addition, the lives of many millions of people living in the immediate neighborhood of the superpowers would be imperilled by so-called local fallout, and long range or world-wide fallout would endanger those living in even remote countries. . . ."

"Civilization would survive somewhere, but probably not in the United States or the Soviet Union and perhaps not elsewhere in North America or Europe."

She then quotes former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger saying in one of his unguarded moments "what in the name of God is strategic superiority? What is the significance of it politically militarily, operationally at these levels of numbers. What do you do with it?"

It is the hard facts and figures that have made most European countries suspicious about the concepts of the 'limited war' in Europe. They do not want to be the cockpit and the graveyard of such a war and hence the rise of the peace movement in Europe with many rallies estimated at 500,000 at a time. The European point of view has been put very clearly by **Helmut Schmidt** of the Socialist Democratic Party of the FRG and former Chancellor. He stated **"A war which, though regarded as a limited war by the superpowers would be no less**

**than a war of annihilation for the countries of the battle field.**"<sup>11</sup>

Carl Friedrich V Weizacker has edited the most intensive study to date, devoted to assessing the consequences to west Germany's civilian population of the use of different levels of input of nuclear weapons. The conclusion is that **"even a brief and locally limited war could mean 10 million deaths and cause total destruction of West Germany as an industrial society."**<sup>12</sup> As regards the extent of destruction Herbert F York quoted earlier makes the same shocking revelations about the consequences of tactical nuclear war in Europe. He concludes that **"the approximately 7000 tactical nuclear weapons in Western Europe under the aegis of the US and NATO must be deemed provocative. . .** War plans call for their actual use, in case there is any kind of attack, even conventional, on Western Europe." He finds that, even if fewer than 100 of the one megaton bombs out of the 600 the Soviet Union has deployed in its European network are used they would destroy the west European cities against which they are targeted and kill at least one third of Western Europe's population.<sup>13</sup>

It is perhaps now time to ask a basic question as to why there has been a sudden resurgence of bellicosity and escalation of armaments production. In a UN publication entitled "Spears or Pruning hooks" which is a record of the meeting of non governmental organisations organised by the Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York and held from 8 to 10 September 1982, Ms Inga Thorsson the Swedish delegate and Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden made a presentation where she held that the **"arms race and the development are one problem and not two"**. She made three



points (i) A vigorous arms race and a more sustainable international and political order are mutually exclusive. The first precludes the second. (2) Arms race is costly both to rich and poor nations, regardless of economic form (Market, planned or mixed) — All would benefit it by ending it. (3) A change from the present dangerous situation is technically and economically possible but requires an act of political will by all governments, supported by the people and facilitated by the UN. She made the point that **"national security cannot be equated with military might but requires economic stability and equity."** The two are indivisible. She proceeded to state that **we cannot respond to non-military threats to national security in military ways.** She then went on to describe these non-military threats which included **"wide-spread unemployment, inflation, stagnation, indebtedness, the overarching international monetary crisis and the world-wide economic crisis, including the morally unacceptable polarization of the rich and poor, existing**

**impending ecological stresses, scarcity of resources (including energy) and world population growth."**

At the same Conference, Dr. Robert Jay Lifton of Yale University pointed out the absurdity of the **apathy of most people "who live as though the bomb did not exist,"** with the exception of a few who have marched from the shadows to "a greater perception of real nuclear danger, and a revolution to it." **Most people remain anesthetised** into the belief that the nuclear danger is not really real. They try to avoid thinking of nuclear weapons because it is uncomfortable and there is "a kind of 'psychic numbing' a feeling of resignation and cynicism — a feeling" there is nothing I can do about it" and yet, he said, there is now **"a beginning of universal awareness. The anasthesia is breaking down but not in the military and leadership."** The lethal doctrine of **controlled or limited, nuclear conflict is illusory,** but firmly held by certain military circles. **By the very**

**physics of the nuclear arms, nuclear conflict is not controllable.** In nuclear weapons there can be no national security — **"Only international security or international insecurity" are the real alternatives.** But the addition of more weapons diminishes security and increases the danger. **"More nuclear weapons take us nearer to the conflagration."**<sup>14</sup>

(To be continued)

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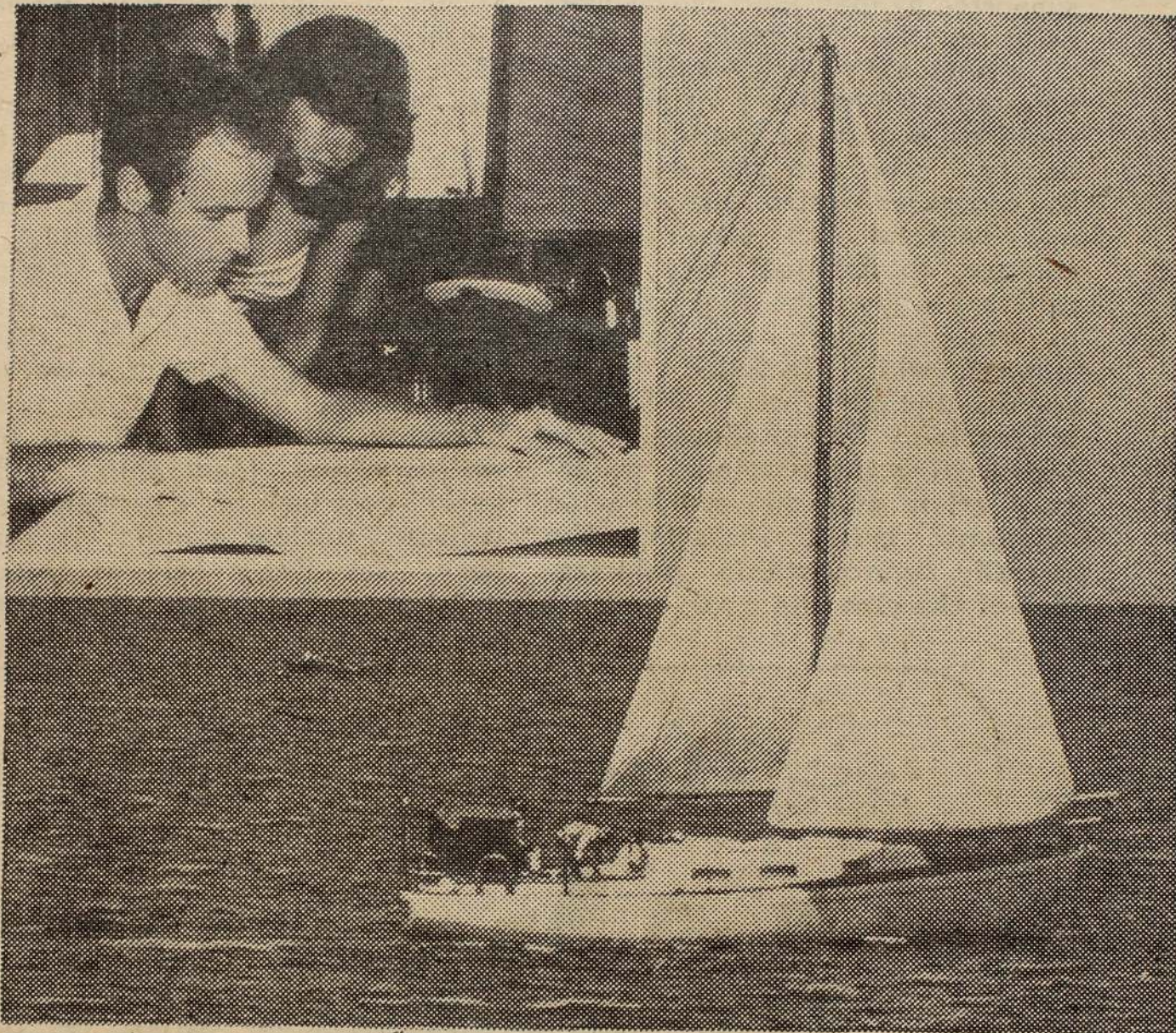
(Continued from page 23)

women, democratic rights, approximately in that order.

1984 also brings possibilities to turn this tide. Among them would be simultaneous actions on all fronts, perhaps not as spontaneous as in 1968 but, to an extent, pre-arranged. The objective conditions for worldwide mass actions are present: the global ramifications of the new international division of labour and the imperialist military build-up. "A single spark can light a prairie fire." A spring offensive on all three fronts, confronting all issues, mobilizing all forces, using every locally available and appropriate means would contribute to shatter the 1984 scenarios of gloom and doom. It could serve to influence the outcome of the US elections by making clear that Reaganism and this administration's war plans are magnifying, not lessening US troubles. Already, in October 1983, with US forces engaged in Lebanon, Grenada, Central America, and troubles on the horizon in the Persian Gulf, Sudanic Africa and the Philippines, voices went up in the United States that US resources were being spread too thin and US power was overextended (*Washington Post/International Herald Tribune* Oct. 25 and Nov. 1, 1983). A three front offensive in early-to-mid 1984 would serve to lessen the pressures on the first front and increase the chances for victory everywhere. It would be a matter of manipulating not only the factor time but the factor space as well: turning the tables on the powers that be, according to the principle of "divide and overcome." For the powers that be to inflict defeat, either politically or militarily, requires a concentration of forces; a three front spring offensive forcing the imperialists to disperse their forces reduces the sites where concentrated force can be applied, thus increasing the chances for victory all along the fronts. It would be a matter of working not just for local victory but, by binding the forces available to the powers that be, for breakthroughs anywhere. It would serve as an exercise of global popular will.

(Concluded)

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# The Cricket Mercenaries : Should they be pardoned?

H. N. Fernando

Several opposition MPs including the Opposition Leader and even the Communist Party daily *ATHTHA*, have urged the Sri Lankan Board of Control for Cricket to 'pardon' the 14 Sri Lankan cricketers who have been penalised for undertaking a tour of South Africa.

At a time when such a campaign has been launched to re-instate these so-called rebel cricketers, it is very important to discuss several matters of principle which arise from this problem.

It is a well-known fact that the world community has carried on a continuous campaign to isolate the South African regime which practises an institutionalised form of racism through apartheid. Even international organisations such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth have signed agreements to impose embargoes on South Africa politically, economically and culturally.

Countries like England, New Zealand and France have encouraged sportsmen in their countries to visit South Africa. When this happened, all independent nations in Africa began a strong campaign against these treacherous acts. Most of the African countries boycotted the Olympic Games in 1972 and 1976, at great cost to themselves and their sportsmen, as a mark of protest against the sports links that New Zealand had established with the racist regime of South Africa.

South African sports bodies have used different tactics to fight the isolation imposed on them by international condemnation. They are prepared to pay vast sums of money in order to tempt sports teams and individual sportsmen to play in South Africa. The United Nations has even prepared a blacklist of sportsmen and women who have visited South Africa, as a

deterrent to others who may be tempted to follow the same path.

South Africa, once a member of the ICC, fought a losing battle to re-enter the International Conference of Cricket a few years ago. When Sri Lanka began its campaign to become a member of the ICC, it was only the Pakistani delegate Mr. A. H. Kardar who supported us. At the beginning, even the delegates from India and the West Indies did not support us, even though many former Indian cricketers and sports fans in India criticised the Indian delegate's action in not supporting Sri Lanka's claim to Test status.

Later, Pakistan, India and the West Indies jointly sponsored Sri Lanka's claim to join the ICC. At this juncture, the white members of the ICC, who have veto power, opposed this move because they wanted to re-admit South Africa before Sri Lanka's claim was re-considered. Pakistan, India and the West Indies fought a grim battle in the ICC against South Africa's entry. India even went so far as to issue an official statement that if the white members in the ICC admitted South Africa into their grouping, India would break away from the ICC and form a separate international body for cricket. It was the concerted effort of these countries that enabled Sri Lanka to gain international Test status.

When Sri Lanka attained Test status, South African racists came to the conclusion that they could never entertain any hopes of re-entering the ICC. Therefore, they launched a campaign to invite cricket teams from countries with Test status, to visit South Africa, on a private basis. It was under these circumstances that 14 Sri Lankan cricket 'mercenaries' visited South Africa. The action of these cricketers was a big blow not only to the world community which has fought against the apartheid regime

in South Africa but also to these nations which fought for our cause in the ICC, namely India, Pakistan and the West Indies. It was a low-down and treacherous move on the part of Bandula Warnapura and his band of mercenaries to defy world opinion and malign Sri Lanka in the eyes of the whole world community, by undertaking this spurious tour of South Africa. Since then, 14 West Indian cricketers have also visited South Africa; they are at this moment engaged in their second tour of that country.

So, under these circumstances, it is very clear that by their arbitrary and selfish act, these 14 cricketers have disgraced Sri Lanka in the eyes of the international community which has launched a relentless campaign against the policies of the South African regime.

Paul Parker, the Sussex opener, once visited South Africa to play cricket. When the anti-apartheid movement condemned his act, Parker, a native of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and the son of a white Rhodesian Member of Parliament who had fought against Ian Smith's racist regime, made an open confession. He said that he felt ashamed of having visited racist South Africa; he swore never to visit that country again and said he was totally opposed to the system of apartheid prevailing in South Africa. Have any of the Sri Lankan players who undertook the tour of South Africa made such a confession, if not to the Board of Control, at least to the people of Sri Lanka who have always extended their support to these sportsmen in the past? Their only excuse has been that they did it for 'the money'. At this rate, even hired killers should be condoned, because they commit murder for money. Not only have these mercenaries proved that they would sell their souls to the devil himself if they were to receive sufficient money, but they have also negated whatever stand Sri Lanka has taken in international fora against apartheid and the South African regime.

*The writer is the President of the Ceylon Teachers' Union.*



Today, the cradle of Sri Lankan cricket is the school system. But of the 9700 schools spread out all over the island, cricket is played only in about 70 schools. Thus, it is very clear that only a minute proportion of the student population, which exceeds 30 lakhs, actually plays cricket. What this means is that in Sri Lanka, the doors of cricket are still closed to the majority of children in this country.

Among the handful of schools that do play cricket, one finds a few 'under-privileged' schools from the provinces, who face great odds, financially and otherwise. The Kalutara District is a typical example. Schools such as Kalutara Vidyalaya, Wadduwa Central, Tissa Central, Sri Palee Horana and a few others, play cricket at a senior level. Recently, a leading sportsman of Kalutara, Mr. Wilson Sooriyarachchi wrote to the "Daily News" that not only Colombo schools, but even Moratuwa schools did not give annual sporting fixtures to the Kalutara schools. And that they were discriminated against, notwithstanding the fact that they already faced many problems in undertaking to play cricket at all.

So it is clear that the way in which the game of cricket is organised in Sri Lanka, it only caters to children of privileged social groups who attend privileged schools. There are thousands of sportsmen in this country who languish in the less privileged areas and schools, with no opportunity to develop their talents. They are ignored by the various sports bodies in this country who claim to represent Sri Lanka at international sports fora. Why then do we exert ourselves so greatly to uphold the privileges of a handful who have violated basic human dignity and international accord through their own selfishness?

Actually, the 14 cricketers in question have had the privilege of playing for well-known schools and clubs; some have even represented Sri Lanka. But there are hundreds of cricketers in this country who have been ignored by the authori-

ties at school level and at national level. Up to date, all those cricketers who have represented Sri Lanka before and after we gained Test status — except for maybe one or two — have emerged from traditional, privileged cricket-playing schools. Even schools like Ananda and Nalanda today fall into this category of privileged schools. It is true that during the colonial period, Buddhist schools such as Ananda were discriminated against; but that is certainly not the case today.

Thus, in arguing the case of the 14 cricketers, we must see that what is raised is not the issue of whether 14 members of a privileged group in our society have been wronged or not; the important issue to be considered is whether we condone the racist apartheid policies of the South African government. If we do not, and if, as all right-thinking people do, we condemn the South African regime, then we must also condemn all those who contribute even a mite towards keeping this racist regime afloat. This is why we should take up this question in terms of a matter of principle, and not a matter of individuals. In these terms, any visit to South Africa by any group of sportsmen, artistes etc. is unpardonable.

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