

ETHNIC INEQUALITIES : A REPLY TO C. R. D.

— Chandra de Fonseka

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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1883 — 1983

A Century of Communal Conflict

— KUMARI JAYAWARDENA

- * **International Women's Day in Colombo** — Dayan Jayatilleka
- * **The Feminization of Poverty** — Asoka Bandarage
- * **Problems of Western Feminism** — Jenny Bourne

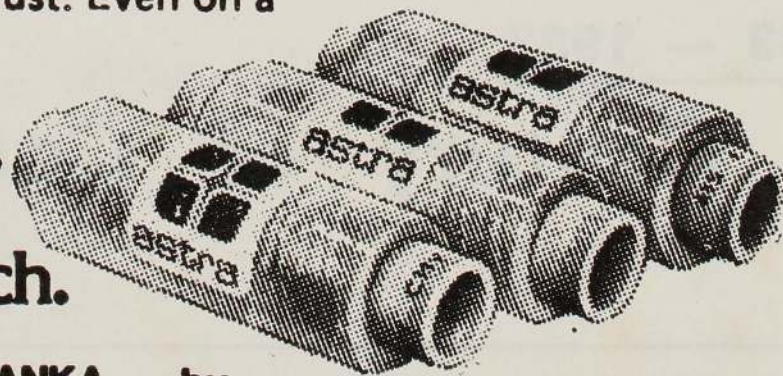


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IMF/IBRD DIKTAT

Even before it begins sensitive negotiations with the IMF and IBRD, the Finance Ministry via the Central Bank has started to obey their diktat. The IMF recommendations included:

"A tight credit policy (including an increase in interest rates to yield a positive rate of return to depositors)."

While the commercial banks have announced a small increase in interest paid on fixed deposits (16% to 18%) the squeeze is certainly going to get tighter on small businesses in particular and all business in general which do not operate in those "vital sectors" identified by the IMF-IBRD.

A new Banking Act has been drafted and parliament will certainly pass it in the current session. The new law is wider in scope than the present Monetary Law Act which empowers the Central Bank to issue general directives and monitor the activities of the commercial banks. Now, the Central Bank will be vested with the power to direct the banks into investment in high priority areas. Basically, these are exports and manufacturing. Together with this shift in emphasis, the credit policies will be so "supervised" by the C.B. that there'll be less financing of imports. "The easy money" deals will no longer be promoted.

JUMBO JAMBOREE

The next target was the Travel Agencies many of whom have encouraged the abuse of prevailing privileges for bona fide business travel. A "paper company" with chairmen, managing directors and directors allowed any Sri Lankan to ask for 90 dollars a day for 30 days without any questions asked. Said one travel agent who has been in the business for half a century: "We could always spot the fakes... some orchids in the back garden and they have an 'orchidarium' which is supposed to be in the export trade". Although reputed travel firms

frowned on such practices, many okayed travellers' cheques on a mere letter.

Now all exchange for expenses incurred on business travel will have to be given by the Bank where the 'company' has its account.

As the L.G. noted in a recent issue, the party's over. Farewell to the travelling circus of the Jumbos, the noble beast (and party symbol) now regularly on the rampage from Kekirawa to Elibank Road.

EXPATRIATE VOICES

The Sri Lankan expatriate view finds three interesting voices on faraway Canadian soil. There is the Sri Lanka Association which made a fool of itself and the Buddhists of this country by writing to Mrs. Gandhi and complaining in its overheated petition about the theft of the Buddha's begging bowl by some unknown Dravidian marauders centuries ago.

There is 'Project Peace' which strives to eschew chauvinism while coming down hard, often with a tetchy belligence, on Terrorism and Separatism. Finally there's the modest LANKA REVIEW, an intelligently edited and imaginatively produced 'little magazine' which examines the complex ethnic issue in the round. While sympathetic to the Tamils in their present plight, the journal published by a Sinhalese and Muslim group selects its material with such care that the ethnic question is placed in the wider context of Sri Lankan politics, economic trends and democratic performance. The following is a fair example from their most recent editorial:

"Tea Prices rise" crows the Ceylon Daily News ecstatically about Sri Lanka's principal export (after cheap labour). One would think that the Sri Lankan people (and those tea pluckers who can't vote) would share in this Jubilation. The truth, as usual, is different. Bread, Rice Flour prices have also skyrocketed. The price of bread is almost a 1/5 of the average daily wage (\$1, though most

(Continued on page 2)

TRENDS + LETTERS

No-pun-ache

I am sorry that the CRD's reply to me falls so short of its usual sophistication and panache. It has compounded its offence by perpetrating a dubious pun — 'buruc-rat' for heaven's sake! The CRD has certainly done better.

Incomprehensibly, it declines to satisfy my 'curiosity' but I have expressed no curiosity on any matter. It has dodged the issue which is that its claim that six out of nine of its 'core members' are Sinhalese means nothing unless the identities of these wunderkinder are known.

Ari Kumaradasa

Colombo 6. (Letters contd. on p.2)

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Trends. . .

(Continued from page 1)

get less), and the Americans are lending U.S \$ 25 million to buy wheat from them plus some military aid to make sure we pay it back). The simple but elusive fact is that the real value of a pound of tea continues to decrease in terms of commodities purchased from abroad.

As the population is further impoverished and Sinhalese and Tamil stomachs (which are amazingly alike) inflate with the poison gas of racial hatred and our rulers arm themselves — some voices of reason are heard.

...Prof. Gananath Obeyesekere, Head of Anthropology at Princeton University was in town and he 'wowed' Sinhalese, Tamil and other Canadians with his systematic and eloquent obliteration of the Aryan myth and the erosion of Justice in Sri Lanka."

Letters. . .

(Continued from page 1)

Monkey Tricks

Is Vijaya Kumaratunge trying to tell us that the alternative to Ruanvelisaya and Sigiriya is racialism? (LG-15th Feb.)

Also may I remind Ari Kumardasa that Dr. Desmond Morris, who has studied "monkey tricks" at the London zoo as well as the human animal, has stated that while some of us have acquired lofty ideals over the years the rest are unable to break away from their genetic past. Now, who is who?

D. Jeyaraman

Jaffna

All in the Family

"The SLMP is not personally opposed by Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike or the SLFP" says Chandrika Bandaranaike (SUN — Tuesday February 21st). Next sentence will come soon: I love Mummy. Follow this up with

a new United Front led by Mummy and the SLFP. Just you work out who will be left out in the cold and who will move into positions of power in the new political formation to come — before the next elections. What suckers the masses can be made to look.

R. B. Meegastenne

Walapane.

New ULF?

1956 is being repeated. The new party formed by Vijaya and Ilangaratne will forge unity with the LEFT parties. Outcome equals a new United Left Front. This will link up with the SLFP before the next elections and TBI, Pieter, Colvin, Dinesh and even Rohana and Vasudeva will speak on SLFP platforms presided over by Sirima and/or Annra. The family reconciliation will follow. Like Maithri, TBI, Pieter and Company will be left out in the cold. SWRD stole Philip's

(Continued on page 5)

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Sri Lankan Tamils in a political trap

Alain Cass

DRIVING across the half-mile-wide strip of sand which separates the Jaffna peninsula from the rest of Sri Lanka like a jugular exposed to a sudden slash it is easy to understand both the temptation and the folly of Tamil separatism.

To the north of the lagoon and Elephant Pass lies the Tamil heartland, less than 100 square miles of habitable country crammed with nearly a million people, their backs to the sea.

A short ferry ride away lies India, haven for Tamil terrorist groups and spiritual home for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority. Cut the causeway at Elephant Pass and you have both a ready-made fortress and a hopeless trap.

It is now just over six months since the historic rivalry between Tamil separatism and the island's Sinhalese majority erupted in the worst violence of its kind, killing at least 400 people and driving 100,000 refugee Tamils to the north.

Intensive mediation by India between the two communities, skilful diplomacy by Mr. J. R. Jayewardene Sri Lanka's President and restraint on both sides have stopped at least temporarily the drift towards racial war.

Tourists are cautiously coming back to Serendib, the island's towns are regaining some of their former bustle while businessmen even those who were burnt-out are rebuilding their shops and factories. The temptation to believe that things are back to normal is almost irresistible.

But this as even the most sanguine Ministers concede is merely a trick of the eye. The recent round-table talks appear to have made little headway.

There has been no new investment (foreign or local) to speak

of since last July's troubles. Virtually every hotel on the island is making a loss. Business profits are down by at least half. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund is pressing hard for painful cuts which may be necessary to cure a stick economy but which at a time of soaring inflation is bound to make a political settlement more difficult.

"If we don't get a political settlement" said a senior official "we can forget about economic recovery and if we don't get an economic recovery, a political solution becomes almost impossible to implement in the long run."

The talks between the Government the Tamil United Liberation Front (TulF) and leaders of the country's increasingly hard-line Buddhist culture are continuing in committees. The fear now is that unless the framework of a solution which bridges the divide between TulF demand for a separate Tamil state and strident Sinhalese nationalism is found soon then the extremists on both sides will intervene.

That in turn has raised for the first time the distant possibility of Indian military intervention on behalf of the Tamils partly to assuage India's own Tamil sentiment and partly to demonstrate that New Delhi's writ runs across the sub-continent.

The lesson of India's intervention in 1971 to carve Bangladesh out of East Pakistan as a home for the Bengalis is lost neither on the Sinhalese who have always feared extinction by their powerful Hindu neighbour to the north nor on the Tamils who see India as their refuge of last resort.

Superimposed on this rift between competing cultures is the complication of superpower interest. Sri Lanka's position astride the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean and in

Asia Editor of The Financial Times, Alain Cass, recently in Jaffna, sees little progress in inter-racial talks.

particular, the deep-water port of Trincomalee (once a major British naval base) gives the country an importance far beyond its size to the U. S. and the Soviet Union as they compete for influence in the area.

None of this is lost on the Tamil leadership which plays the card of separatism with consummate skill. But as its own supporters readily admit, that leadership has also become a prisoner of its own rhetoric.

Since last July's riots — in which Sinhalese mobs, often encouraged and sometimes led by the Sri Lankan armed forces attacked Tamil communities—more than 5,000 young Tamils are believed to have gone to India to join the feared Tamil Tigers, Sri Lanka's Provos.

There is also a clear drift away from the TULF towards an even more hardline group of separatists. In the refugee camps in Jaffna the fear is palpable. There is no confidence that the national authorities will protect them.

"We know a separate state makes no sense on an island this size," said one refugee who lost a brother and a son-in-law whose eyes were gouged out before he was put to death "but I can never trust the Sinhalese again."

The total breakdown in law and order at the time of the riots and the apparent failure to take any effective punitive action against the units involved by the Government has left the Tamil minority (and some Sinhalese) with a real fear that a new round of violence could lead to civil war.

(Continued on page 4)

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Sinhala, Tamil, worker, peasant, women unite

"Nirmala Nithyanandan nidahas karaw! ('Free Nirmala Nithyanandan!') This oft-repeated slogan shouted by Sinhala working women was the most strikingly new slogan of the International Women's Day celebrations organized by the **Women's Action Committee (WAC)**, an umbrella organization embracing several radical women's groups. While the CMU organized women's demonstration was described by Mr. Tampoe as the first demonstration to be permitted by the police since the Emergency was declared, the WAC is reported to have acted on its own. (See *SUN* report)

"Combat racism!" was, significantly enough, the slogan of the WAC March 8th mobilization, accompanied by other slogans such as **'No night**

Sri Lankan Tamils . . .

(Continued from page 3)

One of the key issues between the Tamil community, Sri Lanka and India are the estimated 200,000 - 300,000 "stateless" Tamils of Indian origin working on the island's tea estates. A final settlement in Tamil eyes, should see them getting full Sri Lankan statehood. "Not if they will stay to encourage a separate state," says the high priest who attends the roundtable talks. "They should go back where they belong."

For the present Mr. Jayewardene is exercising patience and restraint in the hope that, in time both sides will see sense. He believes that there will be a solution because, as one Government official put it the alternative is unthinkable.

But President Jayewardene, who is 76 does not have all the time in the world. There is concern that his patience may be interpreted as drift. Either way the present initiative to resolve the conflict may as another commentator put it be the "first attempt and the last chance."

work for women', 'Bring down the cost of living', "Adequate Legal protection for women migrant workers to the Middle-East", "Abolish the dowry system". "For a political solution to the National Question" etc.

The police tried to prevent the women from demonstrating by blocking them at the Town Hall entrance to Vihara Maha Devi park, but a contingent of women slipped past the Police and suddenly started shouting slogans along Turret Road. The Police then broke the lines of women into separate groups, so as to prevent a unified demonstration, but were unsuccessful in keeping track of and containing the separate contingents, which turned into mini-demonstrations! The women suddenly whisked out posters bearing slogans, which they had carried rolled up, until then, and continued to yell slogans. Some were torn up. (See also *SUN* report). When the women entered the New Town Hall, they had re-converged

Police intercept Women's Day march

A procession of about 300 women carrying posters and walking towards the New Town Hall to participate in the International Women's Day celebrations on Thursday were intercepted by the police.

An eyewitness said that the police tore several of the posters but the group of women marched on shouting slogans to the Women's Day meeting.

The demonstrating women jeered at the police saying — the police have no shame when some of their posters were torn according to eye witness reports.

(*SUN* March 10.)

into a single militant demonstration and were joyously greeted by the crowd that had by then gathered in the precincts of the Hall. After a final round of slogan shouting they went into the Hall, leaving behind a poster, partially torn, which read 'Women against Racism and Facism'.

The most significant women's contingent present in the mobilization was that consisting of workers

(Continued on page 5)

MAITRI'S RETURN

Maitripala Senanayake's return to the SLFP (Bandaranaike) fold coincided with a highly interesting announcement made by S. L. M. P. general secretary, Vijay Kumaratunge. In his statement, Mr. Senanayake, deputy leader under Mrs. B. for more than 15 years, says: "we are agreeable to unite and carry forward the progressive policies of the late Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and defeat the reactionary forces..... we call upon Mrs. B. to spearhead a broad front of all anti-UNP democratic socialist forces....."

So the common bond once again is "Bandaranaike Thought". Ideologically speaking, the SLMP has cut the umbilical cord to take Mr. Kumaratunge's reported speech to the Law Students Union as the new party's official line. While Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, the most senior of the SWRD loyalists, still refers

to Bandaranaike policies — at least the more progressivist aspects of Bandaranaike Thought — Vijaya is plainly a rejectionist. He is not a Marxist, he said, but a socialist. But then we are all socialists now, the cynic would say. Vijaya's answer is that he is "left" of the SLFP.

What is more pertinent in terms of current political realities is the question of who really represents anti-UNPism at a time when the popular mood is decidedly anti-UNP. Mr. Senanayake takes a strong anti-UNP line and is biting critical of recent UNP policies. But that's still only rhetoric.

The swelling anti-UNP ranks will look forward to more than the customary anti-UNP sloganeering. They will look for dynamic leadership, an action-oriented oppositional program. This is the challenge before Mrs. B., Anura and Maitripala.

Sinhala, Tamil . . .

(Continued from page 4)

from the **Polytex Garments Factory**. These women whose strike in Dec. '82 — Jan '83 has become an important part of our recent working class history, are on strike once again. Closely linked to their union is the **Women's Liberation Movement**. (Sthree Vimukthi Viyaparaya).

That worker-peasant solidarity is present in the women's movement could be seen by the active participation of the **Progressive Women's Front** (PWF), a peasant based women's organization out of Kurunegala.

The **Women's Liberation Movement** brought Sinhala women workers thrown out of employment as a result the July anti-Tamil riots, while a Batticaloa Tamil represented the **Displaced Citizen's Committee, Jaffna** and gave the most self assured politically intelligent and very explicit socialist speech of the whole meeting,

Kantha Handa (Voice of Women), the pioneering feminist group in the country, played an important role while keeping a lower profile than the others.

The **Community Education Centre** (Praja Adhyapana Modyathanaya) which works among mothers, presented a song, '**Vanithaveni**' (Women), composed by Anita Fernando, which deserves to be the Internationale of the Sri Lankan women's movement.

One of the most impressive and heartening aspects of the meeting was the quantity of women's liberation literature in Sinhala on display. Especially welcome was the booklet on **Feminist Theory**, published by the **Women and Media Group**, and consisting of two articles, '**Towards an Anti-Racist Feminism**' by Jenny Bourne and '**Women and Social Reproduction**' by Rohini Banaji, translated into Sinhala by **Sunila Abeysekera** (who played the key role in co-ordinating this years mobilization and chaired the meeting.) Another good pamphlet available was '**Lenin on Women's Liberation**', published by the **Peoples Education Circle** (Janatha Adhyapana Kavaya) which is closely linked to the

Progressive Women's Front, which distributed its own militant spirited leaflet calling for the building of a mass women's movement consisting of women of the working classes. Conspicuous however was the absence of any mention of national oppression, self determination of Tamil women. Politically very enlightened though was '**Sthree**' (Woman) a new paper published by the Women's Liberation Movement (Ja-Ela) which dwelt on the problem of Sinhala women workers, Tamil plantation women workers, Tamil women victims of July and the danger of racism in general. **Kantha Handa** had its path-breaking (but now rather staid) journal on sale and distributed a leaflet condemning the barbaric death sentence on the Sri Lankan housemaid **Shahilla** passed by an **Abu Dhabi** court.

The most important single document distributed was perhaps the **Joint Declaration of the Women's Action Committee** which condemned imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy, called for the legalization of abortion, legal safeguards for prostitutes ("why should only the men get off scot-free?" was the pertinent query) and dwelt extensively on racist oppression of Tamil women. Evidently the Joint Declaration was the result of a heated ideological struggle within the Action committee, itself a welcome new development in the Sri Lankan women's movement.

An excellent display of graphics the various women's groups depicting aspects and statistics of women's oppression was slightly marred by a poster showing an inane Arab face set in a map of the Middle East, with its tongue reaching out to Sri Lanka, which fought it off with a pair of brawny (definitely male) arms. This accompanied a PWF slogan which in fact adorned some of its posters around the city, 'stop our women becoming the prey of rapacious Arabs'. ('අරාබි සල්ලාදියන්') "Apart from the fact that this fuels anti-Muslim racism in the present atmosphere, it also compounds the prejudices against women workers returning from the Middle East, who are finding it difficult to get married because they are all suspected of having slept around with Arabs", said a male striker employed at **MIRJE**.

The PWF's distinctly prohibitionist slogan "Down with liquor" also raised some critical comments as did the prominent display on its literature table of an issue of **Goviya**, the newspaper of the **All Lanka Peasants Congress**, shedding tears over the fate of the **Dimbulagala** settlement "The PWF have excellent women and good potential but they should liberate themselves from the ideological tutelage of their male Maoist mentors" said an anti-racist woman activist.

The several hundred strong meeting ended on a rousing note with a playlet and two songs performed by the **Open Arts Circle** (**Vivurtha Kala Kavaya**) led by **Kingsley Loos**, which has now overtaken **Gamini Haththottuwegama's** group as easily the most lively, imaginative, aggressive and activist **Street Drama** group in the country.

The previous evening, the **Old Left** (**LSSP, CPSL**) women plus the **SLMPs** **Chandrika Kumaratunge** held a **Women's Day** meeting at the **Public Library**. **Chandrika** gave a historical-theoretical speech, delivered somewhat haltingly, on the virtues (aptly enough) of matriarchy.

— **Dayan Jayatilleka.**

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 5)

clothes. Dinesh's slogans will be taken over by Anura via Vijaya and TBI. Cynical? Why not?

Lotus Eater

Kandy.

George Orwell's 1922

Now that we have entered the perilous straits of 1984 we are being enjoined on all sides by a variety of interpreters to use the gospel according to St. Orwell as a text for our troubled times. Since the prophet is now in season, an early encounter with Sri Lanka which left its mark may not be out of place.

On October 27, 1922 **Eric Arthur Blair** sailed in the **S.S. Herefordshire** from **Birkenhead** to **Rangoon** to take up duties as **Probationary Assistant Superintendent of Police** in **Burma**. His ship docked in **Colombo** for a day and he was afforded an insight into the scope of the

(Continued on page 24)



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The Committee for Rational Development — myth or reality?

Chandra de Fonseka

The Committee for Rational Development (CRD) has defined its objective thus: "... The objective of the Committee is to assist in the finding of solutions to contemporary social problems of Sri Lanka, on the basis of strengthening democratic institutions and the rational processes in society." (*Lanka Guardian* 1/11/83 box page 7; and revised CRD pamphlet Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict: Myths and Realities. Report of the Committee for Rational Development, Nov. 1983, box page 1.)

Although I winced a trifle queasily at the somewhat pretentious name of the committee, my initial reaction was, on the whole, one of applause and eager expectation. Here was a group that was at last going to do what badly needed doing, viz: to discuss our ethnic problem in a wider, 'holistic' perspective.

I realised soon enough that the Committee did no such thing. (See *L. G.* 1/11/83). The entire basis of my own critique (*L. G.* 2/1/84) was that the CRD's initial effort had belied its objective. The CRD's reply to me continues to do so. I expected that from such a Committee a background briefing to the ethnic debate would show this background in broader terms that transcend or at least provide a backdrop to the ethnic issue. Instead what I got from the CRD was an impetuous, premature leap into the ethnic mud, in ways not essentially different from most other concerned dab-

blers in the ethnic problem, with less grandiose names and objectives. It is surely disingenuous of the CRD to say in its reply (*L. G.* 1/2/84), that the agenda and contours of the debate were not of its own choosing. It is surely implicit in the CRD's name and objectives that there was a new approach of its own choosing which it had offered to bring to the whole debate.

I do not wish to trivialize this debate by engaging the CRD in a competition for debating points. I trust however that the Editor of the *Lanka Guardian* will publish some part at least of this rejoinder (to CRD's reply *L. G.* 1/2/84) on the assurance that my main purpose now is to recall the CRD to its own high objectives, and once more to try to help strengthen its pursuit of them.

1. Banking and economic activity:

The CRD refers to my material with regard to Banking figures as "absolutely unacceptable". Alarmed by this touch of schoolmarm hysteria, I plead that I did not ask that they be accepted. I submitted this material only as *prima facie* evidence for certain plausible and significant hypotheses, and requested the CRD, which as I said, "does not have my limitations of time, competence, and access to data to have these hypotheses verified.

The CRD does not mention, let alone reply to, this request of mine; nor does it acknowledge the many cautionary qualifications I attached to my own submissions.

In making this request to the CRD, I had in mind an important aspect of CRD's stated objectives viz: "strengthening the rational processes of society" and believed that CRD would be working towards this end if its efforts:

A former Civil Servant, Chandra de Fonseka was Director of the Land Development Dept. and of National Service, in 1958-1965. He was later, the U. N. regional liaison officer of the 'Freedom from Hunger' campaign, and joined the FAO. He recently retired from the FAO after 15 years service in Asia and the Far East, specializing in rural institutions and NGO's. A founder member and the first Chairman of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), he currently edits 'Lok Nithi', which is the journal of the Asian Non Governmental Organizations Coalition (ANGOC), of which he is Vice Chairman. His main concerns are agrarian reform and rural development and he is presently involved in organizing tea small holders and small farmers in the hill country.

Mr. de Fonseka's critique of the CRD appeared in the *L. G.* of January 1st and 15th.

1. could have this data and hypotheses tested with banks, Government and others, and

2. could work towards our (ie. the public) obtaining uniform, reliable statistics more meaningful and more relevant to our problems than we have now.

2. CRD Expertise in Banking and Economics:

In its comments on my banking material, all I received from the CRD (*L. G.* 1/2/84) was a series of inconsequential *ex-cathedra* pronouncements: e. g. "— the clue to Sri Lankan economic life lies in the grant of Head office loans."

— "Mr. de Fonseka has conveniently left out Colombo District. This is particularly disturbing, since all large loans above a certain amount are given by the head office located in Colombo."

— "Mr. de Fonseka's argument... conveys the wrong impression that the three districts Jaffna, Batticaloa and A'pura have a stranglehold on the banking sector."

While we note and appreciate reader de Fonseka's concern over editorial space, we publish his article in full.

— EDITOR

This is a false and dangerous proposition and must be recognised as such."

The CRD has failed almost totally to grasp the point of my argument and data regarding rural banking. What I was trying to say was that the data provided **prima facie** evidence of a consistently neglected phenomenon: viz the expropriation and transfer of the rural surplus through the commercial branch bank system to the urban sector for urban credit creation and disbursement, resulting in the increasing impoverishment of the areas where such surplus is generated. The Central Bank's latest recognition of this on page 43 of the CBC Review of the Economy 1982, (released in December 83) states: "the significant excess of deposits over advances indicated that the transfer of resources from rural to urban areas continued to take place via rural banks despite high demand for credit in the rural sector." My data seemed to show that Jaffna, Batticaloa, and A'pura were less subject to this phenomenon than other districts, and showed high levels of deposit mobilization and loan attraction. The fact that the people of these three districts have apparently resisted, and even reversed this surplus transfer trend is indeed attribute to their credit worthiness, initiative and enterprise.

3. It is curious and ironical that the CRD will not hear a GOOD word said about the Tamils :

The data and hypotheses submitted by me seem to point to the fact that, next to Colombo district, Jaffna district for whatever reasons is the most developed district in the country. But to say so is to invite the CRDs heavy resentment. To say, as I did, that "**in average living conditions of the two communities, the difference is not much more than marginal, and is, if at all, only slightly in favour of the Tamils,**" — provokes the ire of the CRD.

How very odd: To be pro-Tamil in sentiment, one must be anti-Tamil in one's facts; and, conversely, if one is pro-Tamil in one's facts, that proves one anti-Tamil in one's sentiments.

I have said in my earlier letter and I repeat: one appreciates the CRD's attempt to debunk certain popular misconceptions regarding Tamil dominance in certain sectors such as education and public sector employment. However, the CRD should equally be open to, and seek to impartially lay before the public, information relating to those sections of the Tamil community which are doing relatively well, for whatever reason.

A balanced and impartial account would delineate a broader picture, of the respective standards of living and general economic conditions of **all** sections of **both** communities concerned.

In this connection, I note that, despite the fact that one of my major concerns has been to draw attention to two relatively underprivileged and ignored groups **within** the Tamil community, viz. Batticaloa Tamils and Indian Tamils I am said to be guilty of "ethnic bias" and Underlying ethnic perception(s). This again begs the question as to the nature of the CRD's own bias.

Poverty no less than privilege appears to be fairly evenly spread across the board. Ethnic competition and comparisons, by tending to focus on elite achievements, conceal more significant class factors which cut across the communal divide.

Similarly, arriving at a rational solution to social problems would presumably entail a rational (impartial) examination of their genesis and evolution. One wholeheartedly condemns the appalling events of last July and the subsequent suffering and hardship undergone by the Tamil community. Nevertheless, at the risk of sounding inhuman or callous, the point must be made that these events have a history which includes not only indefensible measures by Sinhalese-dominated governments, such as media-wise standardisation and discriminatory recruitment policies, but also manipulation of issues and political expediency practised by Tamil as well as Sinhalese politicians with less than the interests of their constituencies at heart and the complex psychological,

social and political reactions set in motion thereby. The solution to this problem has always been and still is, seen in terms of horsetrading between the elite leadership of the two communities concerned, in disregard of the economic and social interests of the great majority within both communities.

4. The MARGA Paper :

It is appropriate here to call attention to a recent paper of the MARGA Institute entitled "**Inter racial Equity and National Unity**". This has been circulated as a preliminary draft by the Institute to concerned groups and individuals for discussion and comment. (I feel sure the CRD has received copies). Although modestly conceived, factually titled, and limited to the Sri Lanka Tamils and the Sinhalese, the MARGA study holds many lessons for the CRD. It covers, soberly and rationally, in its first few pages, most of the preliminary ground that the CRD (given its broader objectives) should also have covered in even more detail.

In a characteristically objective and balanced manner, the MARGA paper's first two chapters corroborate most of the factual pro-Tamil comments which the CRD resents in my paper; e. g:

—"The average levels of living of the Tamil community are in no way inferior to those of the Sinhala community" (page 12).

—"It would not be correct for the Sinhalese to say that the socio-economic status of the average Tamil household is significantly higher than that of the Sinhala household" (page 7).

—" (Looking at other indicators e. g. ownership of consumer durables such as sewing machines, radios, motor bicycles, etc., at urbanization, housing, etc. in Zone 3 (the predominantly Tamil area) "**percentages of ownership are not significantly different from the highest percentages in the Sinhala zones; if at all they are higher for many items;**" (page 11 and Table 1 continued, my emphasis).

NOTE : Here the MARGA paper is using the same Central Bank Finance Survey 78/79 that the CRD has used for most of its own paper (*L. G.* 1/11/83) but while MARGA has used this particular Table from the Survey, the CRD significantly has **not** — being as I said stubbornly anti-Tamil in its facts! (The Table referred to here is C.F.S. 78/79 Table 30, Page 45 reproduced as Table 1 (cont) in the MARGA paper.)

5. The PQLI data

These figures are valid only up to 1971. I said so in my paper, but from the CRD reply there is no acknowledgement of this. I had hoped that with the CRD's help these figures could be updated for 1981. The CRD however has ignored this second opportunity for furthering the rational processes of society" as stated in its objectives. I have checked with the ARTI Director who tells me that Dr Sumanasekara is currently abroad, but that another officer has been assigned to work on the updating of these figures. Meanwhile on the question of updating these figures, the CRD shows no awareness of the fact that the latest figures of the key components of the PQLI are in fact available in the Census Department publication "Socio-Economic Indicators of Sri Lanka," (February 1983), to which I refer in the next section.

6. Socio Economic Indicators

On this aspect of my paper the CRD begins by saying that "it has gone through the FAO document referred to by Mr de Fonseka." I referred to no FAO document. What I referred to was the document **SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF SRI LANKA** which is an official publication of the Department of Census and Statistics/Ministry of Plan Implementation, issued in February 1983. I made this amply clear in my paper of 2.1.84. It is a document of the kind that the CRD has called "unimpeachable". Ironically the CRD has itself used this document without apparently knowing much more about it than that it furnished some grist to its mill in making its original case. (see *LG* 1.11.83 page 12 column 3 under figures for Batticaloa.)

The CRD faults me severely for my Table 8, another example, I regret to say, of uninformed comment. Since few readers will be interested in a catalogue of the omissions and distortions that the CRD has resorted to, in replying to this section of my paper, I shall mention only 2 points of more general interest:

1. The CRD faults me for "making my own calculations" and "creating my own indicator" of "above average." These are not calculations but simple perceptions resulting from careful scrutiny of each of the relevant Tables. Most of these Tables give district-wise data and include the **National Average**, which is what I have called C. The CRD has failed to notice this.

2. The CRD faults me for not presenting "a system of weightages for the select indicators I have chosen. No understanding of statistics is needed to see that a Table merely listing marks against independent indicators and data items of this kind, calls for no weightages.

7. The CRD's relative neglect of Batticaloa District and the Indian Tamils

The CRD's failure to measure up to its own avowed objectives is most flagrant in its failure to give sufficient weight to the separate development problems of the Batticaloa district and the Indian Tamils. The attention I drew to these two problem areas has been ignored by the CRD in its reply to me except for certain non-sequiturs regarding low Indian Tamil PQLI, and a UNICEF report of 1983 on the needs of children.

Once again let me invite the CRD's attention to the first problem area, in a question which I frame as follows:

What does rational development analysis reveal regarding the prospects for the 330,000 people of the Batticaloa District of whom 230,000 are Sri Lankan Tamils and 80,000 are Sri Lankan Moors; who still comprise the most underdeveloped district; who nevertheless show evidence of significant recent advances, in economic activity and in substantially reduced infant mortality rates; and who seem to

prefer district, or at most provincial, autonomy, to a subordinate association in the even larger regional autonomy originally proposed by the Tamil leadership? Fears regarding Jaffna Tamil hegemony are understandable, when one considers such examples of internal colonialism as the history of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The second problem area comprises the Indian Tamils, of the tea estate sector. At the present time, through a fortunate mix of Indian Tamil wage slavery and neurotic Indian tea consumption, and in spite of the most rampant jobbery and political interference in our Estate sector, the country's annual foreign exchange export earnings from tea are running at record levels of over Rs 10 billion, out of total estimated export income of Rs 25 billion.

On moral, rational, developmental and even ethnic grounds, the ethnic minority of 825,000 Indian Tamil wage slaves who produce this income from tea should command our highest priority in attention. Yet it is tragic that in the current debate on our ethnic problem, their situation and needs find virtually no place at all on the agenda.

It is an even greater pity that an intrepid citizens committee, sworn to bring a perspective of rational development to bear on the ethnic debate should find time and space — in the 7 months of its existence for only brief and incidental reference (column 3 page 11, *LG* 1.11.83), to this most benighted of ethnic groups.

I drew special attention to this group in my paper (*LG* 2.1.84), suggesting (1) that their problem be seen more clearly as one of surplus expropriation and maldistribution, by our own local brand of State Capitalism, and (2) that the solution be conceived not in mere Trade Union terms of piecemeal concessions, but through measures towards progressive political decentralization of control over this surplus, even below district levels, to local level institutions of Worker Self Management (as Kerala has begun to do with some of our Indian Tamil expatriates).

In terms of the current ethnic debate this would imply a second variant to the decentralization theme now being debated, a variant in the direction of smaller-unit sub district decentralization, in contrast to the larger unit supra district decentralization of regional and provincial units, favoured by the Jaffna Tamil leadership.

When, if at all, will the CRD begin to give the rational development of the Indian Tamil minority (now at the bottom of the ethnic heap) their due place on the CRD's own ethnic agenda?

8. Concept and Reality in the Committee for Rational Development

To me, there is undoubted and considerable value in the concept that underlies the CRD. As defined by the CRD itself it offers the concerned public the promise of seeing, and helping to see, the ethnic problem (as well as other social problems) in the light of more basic economic, political and human issues.

If it is to fulfil that promise ideally (or at optimum), it would have to operate like a Non-Governmental or People's Commission as is happening in some Western countries:— i.e., invite evidence from the public; scrutinize it with humility; offer drafts, ideas. Proposals for wide public discussion and comment; pursue issues with public authorities; undertake independent research; activate specialist citizen panels; and even act a people's collective Ombudsman — the Govt. variety being, as we know, blind, deaf and dumb. All this with the ultimate purpose of exerting moral pressure on our leaders to make development (as the CRD objective states) a genuinely rational and democratic process.

Perhaps this will seem an impractical breakdown of activities implied in the CRD's statement of objective. If so, what is the CRD's more practical programme of activities, and how does it propose to go about defining, organising and implementing it?

In the hope that the CRD aims to continue, and to continue in more ways than articles to the

L.G. and revised reprints of these as pamphlets, I wish to make two suggestions:—

(1) Organize a series of informal seminars (without prejudice of course to the current official ethnic debate) on the CRD's objectives, its role and activities. This should be designed to complement and refine the CRD/Public debate going on in the *L.G.*

(2) Give minimal institutional form to the CRD. The CRD's objective with regard to the promotion of democratic institutions surely demands that its members identify themselves before the public as individuals no less than as a group, as every non-Governmental organisation is required to do in every society including ours.

Instead the CRD seems positively to relish remaining (even after seven months of existence) a shadowy, elusive group of nine nameless nobodies! This may be a credit to their selflessness, but is a violation of their social responsibility. To whom are, or should they, be accountable? Should they not "stand up and be counted?"

Postscript to a postscript

A postscript to the CRD's article (*L.G.* 15.2.84) in reply to mine says with a certain coy pride:—

"Since the CRD is being accused of a Tamil bias, we would like to add as a footnote that the following is the ethnic composition of the CRD. Of nine core members, we have at present 6 Sinhalese, one Tamil, one Muslim and one Burgher."

In other words: "We are a mixed CRD; our composition is 77% Sinhalese. So how can we be pro-Tamil?!"

If I were to subscribe to the comforting logic of "Rational Development," then I could claim automatic insurance coverage of a similar kind — viz., I am a Sinhalese; I married a Tamil; so how can I be anti-Tamil?! Perhaps even a bonus is due for my 'Propaganda of the Deed'!!

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Ethnic consciousness in Sri Lanka

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Kumari Jayawardena

Exactly one hundred years ago, in 1883, the Buddhists and Catholics were fighting each other on the streets of Colombo; in July 1983, there occurred the worst ethnic conflagration in the recent history of Sri Lanka, directed, this time, against the Tamils. These events and the experiences of similar outbursts against other minorities, prompt us to enquire into the persistence of such incidents in the colonial and post-colonial periods, and the reasons for both the growth of ethnic consciousness among all classes and the decline of class consciousness among the working people of all ethnic groups.

In Sri Lanka, there are differences between groups of people of a religious, linguistic and ethnic nature. The majority are Buddhist by religion and Sinhala by ethnicity, but the non-Sinhala minorities form 26% and the non-Buddhists 33% of the population. In the last one hundred years, violence has been directed against what have been called the 'un-Sinhala' (asinhala) and 'un-Buddhist' (abaudha) elements in Sri Lanka society. This study is concerned with briefly examining the continuing manifestations of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism in relation to all other minority groups, the form this has taken, in the past, against various religious and ethnic minorities and the hegemony of this ideology to-day among all social classes in Sri Lanka.

Recent Themes

The literature and propaganda directed against the Tamils from the 1970's form an important source of information in analysing the recent phase of Sinhala Buddhist consciousness. I have taken some of the frequent themes of this literature and will show that similar ideas have existed in earlier periods, when the Sinhala Buddhists were in conflict with other non-Tamil, minority groups. The themes can be broadly classified as follows:

1. The doctrine of the primacy and superiority of the Sinhala 'race' as the original, true inhabitants of the island, linked to the myth that the Sinhalese were 'Aryan' migrants from Bengal.

A recent publication states —

"The Sinhalese race has a clearly documented unbroken history of over 2500 years. There is no history older than the history of the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. That Sri Lanka belongs to the Sinhala race is not based on mythology or fables handed down from mouth to mouth. Ancient rock inscriptions, inscriptions in gold, huge vihares and dagobas, huge statues of Lord Buddha sculptured out of rocks, huge tanks and irrigation systems all bear unshakeable witness to the heritage of the Sinhala race and Sinhala country....."

Translated from Kauda Kotiya?
— Who is the Tiger? — undated 1980?

2. Associated with this is another concept based on the idea of a beleaguered island — the feeling that the Sinhalese are really a minority in the region, with no other country except Sri Lanka, unlike the other minority groups which have ethnic links with other countries.

"The Sinhalese have no other motherland other than Sri Lanka. The Indian trade union leaders, the Borah traders, other Indian traders, the Sindhi traders and most Tamil workers use Sri Lanka as a mine from which they obtain money and invest it in large houses and lands which they buy in the names of their children and close relatives, in India. All of them live with one foot in India and the other in Sri Lanka. Their only loyalty to

These articles are based on a paper presented to a seminar of the Social Scientists Association and the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague) by Dr. Kumari Jayawardena, Associate Professor, Colombo University, in December 1983.

Sri Lanka is as a gold-mine. They do not have any sympathy towards the Sinhalese culture, language Buddhism or the traditional Sinhalese people."

From 'Sinhalayage Adisi Hatura' (The unseen Enemy of the Sinhalese) 1970.

3. The concept that the Sinhala race has been placed in a special relationship to Buddhism as its protector. Appeals to save Buddhism from the 'infidels' or non-Buddhists are resorted to and in recent years, calls for a 'dharma yudhaya' (holy war) to protect Buddhist monuments and to preserve the Buddhist religion have been made.

"The link between the Sinhala race and Buddhism is so close and inseparable that it had led to the maxim, 'There is no Buddhism without the Sinhalese and no Sinhalese without Buddhism'. This is an undeniable fact. The literature of the Sinhalese is Buddhist literature. The history of the Sinhalese is the history of Buddhism. The language of the Sinhalese is enriched by the doctrine of the Buddha. The 'Era' of the Sinhalese is the 'Buddha Era'. The culture of the Sinhalese is Buddhist culture. The flag of the Sinhalese is the Sinhala Buddhist flag".

"With the establishment of Buddhism, the Sinhala culture and civilization took on a new

orientation. The life of the Sinhalese began to be guided by Buddhism... Yet, from a few a few years ago, there has been an organised movement of anti-Sinhala, anti-Buddhist barbarians to destroy our invaluable archeological ruins and Buddhist shrines..."

"It is undoubtable that the future generations, as well as our forefathers who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of their race and for the glory of their religion, shall curse us for our silence. At least, now in the name of our race, in the name of our forefathers and in the name of the unborn generations, let us all direct our attention to this situation."

Translated from 'Sinhalauni, Budu Sasuna Bera Geniw!' (Sinhalese, save the Buddhist Region!) 1981.

It is on these concepts that the Sinhala Buddhist ideology assumes that Sri Lanka is the land of Sinhala Buddhists and that all other groups living in it are 'aliens', who are out to exploit the country and its peoples for their own gain, in the process sully the 'purity' and 'integrity' of the Sinhala Buddhist people. That this charge is now laid against the Tamils is evident from this recent quotation:

"Not only is this non-Sinhala minority group trying to destroy the rights of the Sinhalese people to their motherland in the most unjust manner but they also perpetrated numerous other injustices on the unsuspecting, innocent Sinhala masses."

Translated from Kauda Kotiya? (op cit)

Other 'injustices'

Two of these other 'injustices' have figured largely in the fashioning of the Sinhala-Buddhist consciousness as it exists today.

A. The perception that foreign or minority-owned business ventures have retarded the development of Sinhala business; calls are therefore made for privileges for the Sinhala merchants and for measures against 'alien traders' —

"If this is a genuine national government, it should appoint a Commission to look into the unfortunate situation of the Sinhala traders as a result of the influence of the Indians, and take remedial measures. Also, in order to save the Sinhalese from the dangers created by foreigners Indians controlling trade and large plantations in this country, they should be driven out forthwith."

"In the central market in Colombo, in the Pettah, the local Sinhalese traders today do not own even 5% of the trade. Power is almost entirely in the hands of Indians, Borahs and Sindhis."

"The export-import trade is completely in the hands of foreigners. A person who travels from Colombo Fort to Wellawatte could see how many Sindhi shops there are on either side of the Galle Road. Every single one of these trading establishments was started after an independent government was set up in Sri Lanka in 1948."

Translated from 'Sinhala-yage Adisi Hatura' 1970.

B. There is a very prevalent view that the non-Sinhalese have an unfair share of government jobs, university places, etc. Suggestions are therefore made that recruitment and University should be on a system of ethnic quotas. To cite a popular document suggesting that Tamils entered the university illicitly —

"From the time the Peradeniya University was set up, the ordinary people of this country have lost the opportunity of studying medicine, engineering and the other sciences. Who then were the students of Peradeniya University? They were Tamils."

"The cry that the educational facilities are the natural rights of the Sinhalese was raised by such eminent persons as Messrs. L. H. Methananda, Dr. F. R. Jayasuriya, K. M. P. Rajaratna, who

raised the issue in public. Because of this they were labelled racists. When monks such as Baddegama Wimalawansa, Devamottawe Amarawansa pointed out the injustice which was being perpetrated on the majority community, they were ridiculed and harassed. Today the majority community has realised how they have been deceived."

Translated from 'Visvavidyalayata Hora Para' (Illicit Entry into the University) 1970.

"...the important and serious question whether all the Tamil Medium students who entered the Medical, Engineering, Science and other Faculties did so by the good fortune of receiving improper excess marks comes compellingly into our minds. This is not only a burning question; it is also a question that painfully sears and violently explodes within the hearts of our Sinhala students, parents and teachers."

From 'Diabolical Conspiracy' — undated (1980?)

To understand these recent expressions of Sinhala Buddhist sentiment and to show in what way anti-minority feeling has been expressed over the years, some historical probing is relevant. Such an overview will show that although the ideology has remained more or less constant, the minority groups targetted for attack have been different over the years.

It will also be noted that ethnic and religious hostility has expanded at various periods among different classes in Sri Lanka. Although such animosity has always had a strong petty bourgeois basis, this consciousness has also manifested itself at times among the Sinhala bourgeoisie and the working class. For this purpose, I first examine specific periods of conflict between the Sinhala Buddhists and four different minorities, namely, **Christian, Muslim, Malayali and Tamil**, and will try and relate these events to prevailing class tensions and conflicts.

(To be continued)

Next week The anti-Christian Movement at the turn of the 20th Century.

Western Feminism : A critical look

Jenny Bourne

The tendency to supervene form over the content of struggle is not entirely absent, even in the best of socialist feminist writings — such as *Beyond the fragments*. Here, three white feminists who have all worked both in left parties and in the WM* explain how and why women had to fight against and outside the male left. For the first time in British feminist writings the issue has been tackled as one of politics — the problem, that is, is located not in the sexism of individual men but in the basis on which (male) left politics is organised. As such, the authors have provided some very exciting and influential ideas for the WM. But when they extend that analysis to how (as one of the contributors put it) 'new forms of organising within the women's movement' could become 'part of a larger recovery of a libertarian socialist tradition', they splutter and stop, their promise unfulfilled. It escapes them completely that black people were having to wage a similar struggle to women's against the left and under identical circumstances. Mukti, Samaj, Black Socialist Alliance, Flame, Awaz, OWAAD and so many other organisations bear witness to the battles black people (male and female) were waging in the 1970s against a white left which relegated their struggle and tried to sidetrack their fight. In this book, as in women's politics generally, there has been no genuine recognition that it is the same left which is male towards women's politics that is white towards black politics.

The betrayal of the black cause, however, does not rest here; it has been extended into what amounts to a denial of the inspiration that 'women's liberation' owes to the 1960s black movement. As David Edgar put it, 'The struggle for black rights in America was the first and defining political struggle of the 1960s... Without Black Brotherhood, there would have been no Sisterhood; without Black Power and

* Women's Movement

Black Pride, there would have been no Gay Power and Gay Pride.' In a recently published collection of personal narratives from those involved in the struggles around the Vietnam war, civil rights and women's liberation in the USA in the 1960s — *They should have served that cup of coffee* — American feminists recall this history. 'We were aided in our recognition of cultural domination by the black movement's pointing to the power of the (white) Man's ideology in forming black self perception. The black movement countered this domination in part with the slogan "Black is Beautiful". Could women together, make a similar affirmation about ourselves? The fact that the Civil Rights Movement had torn apart assumptions about equality and freedom in America allowed us the space to question the reality of our own freedom as women.'

Compare this with the history recalled by the authors of *Sweet Freedom*. For them, post-war feminism owed its inspiration to the pill, the ideas of Betty Friedan and the experience of sexism in political movements. It simply 'adapted the terminology of black liberation and anti-imperialism'. Hilary Wainwright in her introduction to *Beyond the fragments* goes a step further and actually denies the legacy of the black struggle. For her, no left organisation 'had any real understanding of the subjectivity of oppression, of the connections between personal relations and public political organisation, or of the emotional components of consciousness, until the Women's Movement had brought these issues to the surface and made them part of political thought and action.' But long before the WM, the protagonists of the black movement (and the Chinese and Cuban revolutionaries before them) had insisted that there could be no dichotomy between one's personal life-style, behaviour, beliefs and the pursuit of liberationist politics, that who you are and what

Ms. Bourne works at the Institute of Race Relations, London, and has been active in the anti-racist movement since the early 1970's. She is on the Editorial Staff of "Race and Class". This article is an abridged version of a piece that appeared in "Race and Class" Vol XXV No. 1.

you do belong to the same continuum. The difference in emphasis between the two types of histories is not solely because one is British and the other American, for earlier British feminists did owe to the influence of black power. Contemporary British feminist history, however, is shifting the debate about the genesis of the WM from its inspirational origins to its organisational formation and, in so doing, is expurgating history — to create a revisionist 'white' history.

Women and the state

But even if white women fail to understand the parallel struggles for autonomy by black people, even if they fail to acknowledge the inspirational debt owed to the black power movement, one could still expect them to find common ground with black people through their common experience of the state. The WM, though, finds it difficult, like the left, to grasp the idea of state racism — not because it is hung up on the orthodoxies of capitalist exploitation, but because it finds it hard to distinguish between the individualised sexism of particular men and the systematic or institutionalised nature of state oppression of women. And there is even now a tendency in the WM to see men (en masse) rather than a system as primarily responsible for the oppression of women. Loosely stated, the extent to which the WM has viewed a system (of patriarchy or whatever) as responsible for oppression is the extent to which it has adhered to socialist-feminist ideas as opposed to radical feminist

ones. A class analysis necessarily underlies an understanding of the state. Where marxist women have analysed the state, it has often been in a very abstract way, bearing little reality to actual or potential struggle. Consciously fighting state power rather than male power has hitherto been alien to the WM. Very often, where women have fought the state, it has been over 'local state' issues around welfare demands such as more nursery provision. Where women have tackled the national state, it has been around strictly feminist demands such as abortion. One can perceive in the WM an ambivalence towards the state. Is it an instrument of oppression or is it a welfare state whence concessions can be won? Often the strong 'reformist' wing of the movement, having confused parliament for the state, has implied that lobbying against laws constitutes the whole fight against the state.

In their failure to understand the state, the women fail to side with the blacks; in failing to side with the blacks, they play into the hands of the state. Take, for example, one aspect of state racism in Britain today. In order to justify police harassment of the black community and the demand for increased police powers, the state is, through the media, highlighting 'mugging' — a term used to criminalise the black community: black youth are all muggers, their victims all white women. If we keep silent, appearing to concur with this view, we become in effect a party to state racism. Furthermore, because as feminists we have been campaigning against male violence on the streets, we can, if we do not consistently attack this type of stereotyping, even as we fight male violence actually give racism credibility. Unfortunately, there are examples to show that women have fallen into the trap of reinforcing racist stereotypes of male violence — their views being promulgated on the women's pages of the national press. Gillian Widdicombe, in the *Observer's* 'Living Page' (1.2.81), wrote on street theft: 'A black skin must be regarded as an advantage for the professional mugger: far more difficult to see in the dark, or describe

and identify afterwards.' Jane Kelly, writing on 'The rape of the liberal conscience' in the *Guardian's* 'Women Page' (5.8.81) during the summer 'riots', analysed her feelings after a rape attempt on her.

My attitude towards black people had received a massive jolt ... I could no longer accept an unself-critical approach from the black community and felt vastly irritated by the idea of people making vociferous demands on society while continually putting themselves above and beyond that society's laws... to my mind it is no part of feminist struggle to put black men above the law.

An aggrieved black woman writing in reply pointed out that though many black women had been attacked by white men, they 'did not make the mistake of thinking that all white men are rapists and therefore that all white people see themselves as above the law'. Jane Kelly, after attaching importance to the race of her attacker, had then generalised her individual experience to the whole black community.

Even when not engaged in this type of stereotyping, women, by failing to understand the parallels between their experience and that of black people, can fall into the trap of supporting the state's racism; by default they allow a wedge to be driven between women's struggle and the black struggle. For example, following closely in the wake of a national expose of how callously the police treat women rape victims, a rapist of twenty-three women in North London was convicted. Immediately, a number of his victims came forward in defence of the police and praised them for their sympathy and support. The fact that in this particular case the rapist was black had no doubt put the police on the side of the women. But in failing to distinguish — however poignant the task — between a rapist who happens to be black and the stereotype (often police) view that all blacks are rapists, the women had inadvertently reinforced the hierarchies of police oppression.

A similar lack of understanding of the state was illustrated recently in the magazine *Outwrite*, when a lead article in issue 13 calling for women's support for black community worker Dorothy Gbebikan and her family, brutally beaten up by police in their home, was headlined, 'Say No to all male violence'. Would it have been all right if the police were all female? If more women were recruited into the police force, would black Dorothy be safer? It is like saying that if you had more blacks in the police force, the police would behave better towards black people.

What feminists should be doing is showing that the state is responsible both for the oppression of black people and of women. It is the same police force that does not protect women from male violence that does not protect black people from racist attack. It is the same media that exaggerates black crimes that portrays women as sex objects. It is the same legal system that humiliates rape victims that sides against black defendants. It is only when we have a clear understanding of the role of the system in our oppression that we can clearly see at what point we have to fight male oppression and at what point the state. And, as anti-racist women, we have to find a way of fighting the violence from men on the streets without at the same time enhancing state racism against black people.

In America, where the question of rape has played a crucial role in the enslavement, lynching and oppression of black people and continues with all its emotive connotations to be used as a method of criminalising black men, feminists have advanced positions from which we could learn. For example, in the January 1981 issue of *Off our backs*, Aimee Sands asks which side she should be on when a white woman is pressing rape charges against a black man who says he has been framed. She concludes: 'We have to create a "new side" an independent feminist presence which offers support to the man and the woman in these cases while maintaining steady and accurate criticisms of the police and courts.'

(To be continued)

Marxist Feminism — an adequate framework ?

Asoka Bandarage

It should also be noted that while sisterhood may be a new discovery for Western, middle-class housewives isolated in their suburban homes, it has long been a reality for women in many sex-segregated societies whether in Asia, the Middle East, in the female-headed, kin networks of the Caribbean and perhaps even in working-class communities in the United States. Of course it could be argued that the sisterhood prevailing in such communities is essentially conservative and directed toward women's survival rather than the overthrow of male dominance. Lesbianism, when it exists in these situations, is not politicized either. Nevertheless it must be recognized that the conjugal role relationship is not the central relationship for women in many of these communities and that their emotional needs are met primarily through their relationships to other women. To this extent, women in these alternative class and cultural contexts may be psychologically freer from men, especially their spouses, than their Western, middle-class counterparts. Women's liberation then cannot be a uniform exportable ideology. It has to be defined and achieved contextually.

My purpose here is not to denigrate either the legitimate concerns of white, middle-class women or their efforts to find freedom from their own particular oppression but rather to begin placing Western feminism and the women's movement in comparative and historical perspective. The contemporary women's movement is of world historic importance. It has the potential to improve the quality of human relations everywhere. But given the tremendous diversity and deepening inequalities among women we must work toward an inductive and comparative

feminist framework within which the concerns of wider groups of women can be adequately addressed. If not, the very legitimacy of feminism and the women's movement is seriously threatened.

Where do we turn then for theoretical direction toward a more inclusive definition of feminism and strategies for broadening the concerns of the women's movement? Few of the alternative theoretical frameworks and women's networks now emerging do carry the potential toward making feminism relevant to wider groups of women.

Socialists have long argued that most women, and men for that matter, cannot find liberation within the unequal and exploitative social relations under capitalism. The prerequisite for the liberation of women, that is nonbourgeois women, they point out, is their absorption into economic production within a socialist economy. The growing body of feminist research on the effects of capitalist development on women, particularly in the Third World, gives much credence to this position.

The processes of capitalist development in the Third World have led to the marginalization of women in the least productive and least remunerative sectors of Third World economies. While a handful of women have gained access to prestigious jobs, most women are confined to either unpaid or underpaid and exploitative work as subsistence producers, maids, prostitutes, etc. The expansion of private property, wage labor, new technology and the cash nexus have disadvantaged women categorically. In many places in Africa for example, these new developments have robbed women of the relative

independence and mobility traditionally associated with their role as the central subsistence producers. In India, the disparity between the sexes with regard to both employment and chances for physical survival have steadily increased with the socio-economic changes of the recent decades.

At the mid-decade conference in 1980 women accounted for half the world's population; two-thirds of the world's work hours; one-tenth of the world's income and less than a hundredth of the world's property. Less than one third of women are literate and in many African and Asian countries only one in ten females even enters school. "Feminization of poverty" is a structural feature of capitalism in the Third World. It is fast becoming so in the United States (and Europe) too where women are pushed into the permanent "under class" in larger and larger numbers as domestic work is subsumed by capitalism and the nuclear family weakens.

The structural analysis of women's oppression and long-term vision toward liberation presented by socialists are highly compelling. But in the absence of practical strategies leading to social revolution, the socialist vision can result merely in an evasion of the daily realities of poor women's lives. In the presence of poverty and massive unemployment most women prefer exploitation on the job to starvation. Those who are able to find regular employment, as a field hand on a plantation or a "hostess" in "sex tourism", often consider themselves relatively privileged. Even many Third World governments that espouse socialist ideologies, including China, have not been able to extricate themselves from the

constraints placed by the world capitalist economy. Their experiences bespeak the tremendous difficulties of realizing a socialist vision within a capitalist world.

Without abandoning the structural analysis and long-term vision of the socialists, it is nevertheless important to implement strategies that are of immediate value in improving women's lives. These should include the provision of literacy, credit and marketable skills for women and the incorporation of women's concerns within the agenda for a new international economic order (including the new world information order). Women's needs in particular must be included in the codes of conduct being devised for regulating the multinational corporations.

It is also important to note that although many poor and Third World women prefer exploitative jobs to starvation, they are ignorant neither of their exploitation nor the necessity for change. The courage and resourcefulness of poor women, both in the Third World and the West have been indispensable historically for the survival of their communities and the world at large. Today we are beginning to hear of isolated but remarkable struggles by such women for higher wages and better working conditions in the multinational-owned factories of South East Asia, against nuclear explosions and the dumping of radioactive waste by Western powers in the islands of Micronesia; and against sterilization abuses in the U.S. and the Third World. A number of women's networks such as the Women and Global Corporations Project of the American Friends Service Committee, the Boston Women's Health Book Collective and feminist journals such as *Isis* and *Connexions* are supporting these women in their struggles around the world.

Reverting our attention now to the socialist position it should be noted that while it provides a most incisive analysis of the politico-economic bases and class dimensions of women's oppression under capitalism, it lacks any real understanding of the cultural and psychological roots of this oppression. This becomes particularly clear in the

light of the experiences of women in "socialist" countries such as the Soviet Union. The persistence of a sexual division of labor and sexual hierarchy at "work" and male resistance to the implementation of the Family Code — the first legislation anywhere toward equalizing domestic work between men and women — in Cuba, are also highly struictive. They point out that the corporation of women into social production and benevolent state legislation are insufficient for radicating sexual inequality either in the public or the private sphere.

The experiences of women in socialist countries and the experiences of middle-class women integrated into the higher echelons of paid employment in capitalist countries (both in the West and the Third World) reveal a basic fact: while material well-being is a prerequisite, it alone will not guarantee the liberation of women as women. This confirms the broad postulate of radical feminism that the concerted struggle of women against sexist attitudes and behaviour in all spheres, pervading the most intimate realms, necessary for liberation. Sexism is not simply sociological but deeply psychological.

The obvious shortcoming of each of the currently available feminist theories — liberal, radical and socialist — have led some women intellectuals in the West to work toward a broad synthesis of Marxist-socialist and radical feminist thinking in conceptualizing the oppression of women. Very briefly, most such attempts toward a Marxist-Feminist synthesis locate women's subordination in the dialectical interaction between social production within market sectors and domestic production (including biological reproduction and the reproduction of labor power) within the family.

But the emergent Marxist-Feminist syntheses, like their liberal and radical feminist counterparts are rooted in the processes of capitalist development in the West and derive their categories of analysis from that experience. The "domestic labor debate" concerned with the patriarchal nuclear family and the housewife role, which are both historically specific class and cultural

phenomena, bears witness to this. These attempts toward a Marxist-Feminist synthesis which are based on the Western capitalist experience have limited relevance to the qualitatively different forms of subordinate or dependent capitalist development and cultural transformations taking place in the Third World today. Moreover, Marxist Feminism, like Marxism and other theories formulated by Westerners is unlikely to provide a coherent analysis of racism and imperialism that speaks to the concerns of women of color in the Third World or the West.

However, very interesting and promising research on women in the Third World is now being done by some Marxist Feminists, mostly women anthropologists. It is their research on the impact of multinational industries (especially textiles and electronics in free trade zones), the Green Revolution, tourism, etc. on women that has helped question strategies to further integrate women into the processes of dependent capitalist development. This Marxist-Feminist research into the Third World is still very much at an incipient stage. Like Marxist-Feminist inquiries in the West, they have focused largely on the effects of the expanding capitalist mode of production on women and have neglected those aspects of women's oppression which lie in culturally specific ideological and familial structures. An integration of the older anthropological tradition of intensive cross-cultural research with the emerging Marxist-Feminist perspective could be highly fruitful in overcoming the inadequacies of current research on Third World women.

Nevertheless, it needs to be reiterated that the psychology of racism and imperialism may inhibit even sensitive Western researchers and activists from understanding some of the complexities of female subordination in the Third World. For this reason Western researchers and activists need to be very careful in their interventions. Take the outcries of Western feminists against the horrors of "female circumcision" in many Muslim (and a few other) communities around the world. Unless interventions

against involuntary sterilization, corporate "dumping" (of dangerous drugs, chemicals, etc.) and other obusive phenomena rooted in Western economic, political and ideological institutions accompany those outcries, the charge of Western imperialism hurled at Christian missionaries and others can easily be evoked against feminists too. This charge comes not only from male supremacists but also from feminists in the Third World.

While there are few, if any, national or international organizations that work explicitly within a Marxist or socialist Feminist framework, there are a number of them which do so implicitly. Some of the international women's health networks involved in the Nestle's boycott and the campaign against the export of Depo-Provera — a dangerous hormonal contraceptive banned in the U. S. — to the Third World, are examples. Groups such as the National Women's Health Network campaigning against Depo-Provera direct their struggles

against both the sexist ideologies of the social and medical sciences and the unethical and exploitative control exercised by capitalist pharmaceutical companies and international population control agencies over women's lives. These multi-pronged efforts have in turn helped forge links of solidarity among many grassroots women's organizations around the world. Similarly the recent feminist actions against militarism in the West could be extended toward a struggle against the politico-economic and ideological roots of the arms race thereby enabling the incorporation of many different groups of women.

But given basic inequalities and conflicts among different groups of women, how likely is it that a single women's movement which could address all the issues of all women everywhere would ever emerge? It seems that culturally specific gender oppression has to be dealt with within alternative movements organized by women experiencing those particular forms of oppression them-

selves. The white, middle-class women's movement in the West, particularly in the U. S., is one and perhaps the first. In the wake of this movement other localized women's movements are now emerging in countries such as India.

This does not mean, however, that the separate women's movements must necessarily be isolated or antagonistic toward each other. Feminism today is an international issue. Women's subordination is a systemic feature of the world political economy and ideology. The struggle against women's subordination must also be international in character. It is in this common struggle against those aspects of women's subordination rooted in the "world system" that different groups of women and their culturally specific movements can come together. If feminism is truly to be internationalized it must have the flexibility to become a distinct but interconnected struggle within a wider and holistic movements toward social change and human freedom.

(Concluded)

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FRESHNESS AND FLAVOUR GOODNESS OF



TEAM

INTERNATIONAL PRODUCERS' AGREEMENT ON TEA

Paul Caspersz S. J.

Rev. Fr. Paul Caspersz is Director, Satyodaya Centre for Social Research, President MIRJE and founder of the Co-ordinating Secretariat for Plantation Areas (CSPA).

With a view to full-fledged international negotiations sometime this year, from August 1983 the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has issued a series of papers on various aspects of the projected international tea agreement. One of these papers, Institutional and Financial Aspects of a International Tea Agreement (17 August 1983), envisages an Agreement in which both tea-exporting countries and tea-importing countries would jointly be members, each with equal total voting rights and equal commitment to meeting the costs of implementing the Agreement.

The UNCTAD paper appears to assume that there are, and will be, basically no serious conflicts of interests between exporters and importers or producer countries and importer countries. In other papers of the series there is the same at least implicit assumption. But what if the assumption is unwarranted or not wholly warranted? Would it then not be necessary to investigate whether an international agreement restricted to producer countries only should not precede parleys between both producers and importers?

Indeed, the Fourth Non-Aligned Conference held at Algiers in September 1973 stated in its Action Programme for Economic Cooperation:

Developing countries should establish and strengthen producers' associations in respect of major commodities of importance to the world economy in order to halt the deterioration in their terms of trade, eliminate unhealthy competition, prevent harmful activities on the part of

multinational corporations and strengthen their bargaining power.

In pursuance of this Programme, and under heavy pressure from the developing countries, the Sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in its own Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order stated in the section on Fundamental Problems of Raw Materials and Primary Commodities as Related to Trade and Development:

All efforts should be made ... to facilitate the functioning and to further the aims of producers' associations, including their joint marketing arrangements, orderly commodity trading, improvement in the export income of producing developing countries and in their terms of trade, and sustained growth of the world economy for the benefit of all ...

The importance, indeed the indispensability, of producer's agreements for the growth of developing countries has therefore been clearly seen and acknowledged. What is now needed is to take the further step to see that more and more of these agreements become a reality. One of these agreements should be an International Producers' Agreement on Tea.

In order that such an Agreement becomes a reality among producer countries, negotiations among them need to satisfy the three following conditions:

(i) the undertaking of a careful analysis of the situation of the international tea trade and resulting conviction that existing structures are inherently unfair to the producer countries;

(ii) readiness to provide one another with a steady and free flow of pertinent data;

(iii) readiness to collaborate and cooperate, even to compromise, on short-term individual national interests, for the sake of the long-term gains both to individual producer countries and to the group of producer countries as a whole.

Such a long-term Agreement on Tea, based on an analysis of the global situation and covering all aspects of the problem, remains a crying need in the context of a restructuring of the world tea economy with a view to just terms of trade for the producer countries.

Negotiations for the Agreement should take place against the clear and forthright formulation of the principal objectives of the Agreement. One of the UNCTAD papers, The Promotion of Consumption under an International Tea Agreement, states that one of these objectives should be "to promote and increase the consumption of tea". This is understandable since the Agreement envisaged by UNCTAD is one between both producer and importer-consumer countries. But, in the hypothesis that joint agreement between producer countries and importer countries should come if at all, after a prior Agreement among producer countries, the objective of increased consumption falls into only third place.

The first objective of a Tea Producers' International Agreement should be the securing of international market prices for tea that are fair and just, that is, prices of equal exchange and hence prices that are indexed to the price of imports of inputs needed for the

The second objective should be to ensure that no country entering into the Agreement loses by it and, to this end, to consider what measures should be adopted if the Agreement in the short term leads to effects less acceptable to one or the other of the producer countries.

Pressures for international commodity agreements that seek, by means of export restriction schemes, to raise the aggregate export earnings of producing countries are increasing. Such pressures reflect (a) the willingness of consumer countries to make income transfers to poorer countries through this politically acceptable medium, (b) the wish of some producing countries to protect their export crop industries from unwanted competition from new producers, and (c) the desire of international civil servants to promote development from developed country bases (G. D. Gwyer, "Three International Commodity Agreements", **Economic Development and Cultural Change**. 1972/3).

Pressure (b) does not reflect the true position of the older and the newer producers in the tea

The strongest argument for the Agreement is that it will enhance the earnings of all producer countries which export tea and that it will be an important step forward towards fair trade in a third world commodity.



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UNDERDEVELOPMENT OR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION ?

Dayan Jayatilleka

As reported in both the Far Eastern Economic Review and Asiaweek magazines, this led Sr. Henares to conclude that:

"Multinationals are a tremendous drain on national resources(they) pose a direct threat to the existence of the nation state..... (they) can subvert and corrupt governments, promote revolutions (sic) and wars and cause the death of democracy..."

According to the European Bureau of the Wall Street Journal, direct foreign investments by US corporations in the 'Third World' in the period 1950 — 1972 amounted to 50 billion US dollars, while the income inflow on this investment was 99 billion US dollars.

UNCTAD statistics state that the flow of direct investments from the US Latin America in the 1950 — 1960 period was 3.8 billion US dollars while the flow of income on this investment consequently transferred to the US in the form of profit, dividends and interests, was 11.3 billion US dollars; the net loss therefore amounting to 7.5 billion US dollars. The Latin American Institute for the study of transnationals (ILET) and the Handbook of International Trade and Development Statistics published by the U. N. in New York, estimate roughly that the outflow of surplus from the 'Third World' is three times the inflow.

Contrary to the assertions of policy planners in the periphery the activity of the transnationals causes no genuine development of the peripheral economy's productive forces, not least since the enterprises set up are largely irrelevant to local development needs. For instance, domestic food production would be overlooked in the interests of culti-

vating for export, since transnational monopoly capital will choose the highest profit-making sectors and those directly geared to the capitalist world market, the TNCs farming out part of the productive process to local capital. Local capital is encouraged in the tertiary sector i. e, distribution, banking, insurance, supply of components, finishing work in manufacturing etc. There are virtually no 'spin-off' benefits either, since technical and administrative personnel are mostly foreign, while technical agreements and various patents prove restraints on local research. The development policy of the ruling bourgeoisie succeeds only in restricting the industrial sector to a highly specialized role in the international capitalist division of labour such as that of a supplier of a single component or model. Even here the peripheral economy is vulnerable since a slight rise in labour costs is enough to make the transnationals utilize their enormous discretionary mobility of capital and switch production from one part of the globe to another.

The employment contribution of the strategy of growth based on a linkup with the transnationals is scarce as well, since most of the plants are capital intensive. Skilled and semi-skilled labour is not likely to be absorbed and demand is largely for unskilled labour to perform the most routine and repetitive types of operations. Even the professional groups or strata in the given peripheral society tend to be acutely dissatisfied since most of the technical and managerial personnel are foreign. They are paid disproportionately high wages, exempted from tax and foreign exchange restrictions, provided the best urban housing — all of

which permit them to maintain a lifestyle, extravagant by 'Third World' standards. On the other hand there will of course proliferate **a vast non-productive service sector**, of bar-girls, shoe-shine boys, porters, waiters, prostitutes and pimps. (Samir Amin says that peripheral capitalism has, one of its specific characteristics, the 'hypertrophy' of the tertiary sector.) This proliferation of a new type of lumpen proletariat goes hand-in-hand with the over crowding and 'ghettoization' of the 'Third World's' cities. That structural marginalization is a feature of the development of peripheral capitalism is borne out by the fact that 'Third World' unemployment in the year 1972 amounted to 30% and it is Samir Amin once again who has pointed out that the total urban unemployed of the 'Third World' far exceeds the total urban working class populations of the developed countries! Other sources have estimated that 1/3 of the total labour force in the 'Third World' comprises of those who have left their native rural areas and trek to the cities but having no secure urban employment, constitute a marginalized mass/eking out a wretched existence in the barrios, favelas, ghettos and slums which girdle the cities of three continents.

The Puerto Rican case is instructive in this context. Thereto Puerto Rico boasts the highest concentration on a percapita basis of direct US investments outside of Canada and Western Europe. Most of these investments tookplace under Operation Bootstrap, which was intended to be a miniature Marshall Plan. At the end of the 'Operation' however, unemployment on the Island had reached 40%, thereby demonstrating

vice; we who were the first to raise its destructiveness to a new level with the hydrogen bomb; we who introduced multiple warheads; we who have declined every proposal for the renunciation of the principle of first use; and we alone, God help us, who have used the weapons in anger against others, and against tens of thousands of helpless non-combatants at that."

How much time has the world left to draw back from the brink of disaster. Dr. Frank Sommers, M. D., of 'Physicians for Social Responsibility', Canada reports on the recent meetings in Moscow and a television panel of three American and three Russian doctors who explained the medical effects of nuclear war. Dr. Sommers feels that "the earth's people have at best, one or two years left."²⁶

Professor Dr. Bernard Feld of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology says "The world is entering upon perilous times, perhaps the most dangerous in its entire history — it is my judgement that a nuclear weapon will be used in a conflict situation before the year 1984, and that the chances are greater than 50/50 for nuclear war to occur in the years remaining in this century."²⁷ The damage which will be inflicted by nuclear war on the world's land mass is extremely serious. After nuclear bombing, "fine dark particles... spread in the atmosphere will create a dark veil, shutting out sunlight", says Noel Brown, Special Assistant to the Executive Director, United Nations Environmental Programme. Not only men and buildings but vegetation will be obliterated. Those alive in the Aftermath will be 'enveloped in photochemical smog'. Sunlight could be reduced to 1/100th of normal and the phytoplankton and zooplankton in the sea, along with other marine life will die. (Along with this change, there will be a drastic reduction in the oxygen supply — Author)

The United Nations has officially set in motion a "World Disarmament Campaign"...to inform, to educate and to generate public understanding....in all regions of the World in a balanced and factual manner. It is the duty of all men of goodwill to assist this Campaign. All NGOs are invited to join UNESCO which is very active in this field. This organization has inaugurated 'A Disarmament Education Programme'

with syllabuses, text books, teachers guides, readers and audio-visual materials which all governments and NGOs can use.

However, in the West and in many Third World countries open to the same media sources, the bulk of the World's media — press, radio and television and the films — are actively propagating in a subtle way propaganda to glamorize war and making it appealing to the young. Hence the 'Star Wars' programmes over radio and television. The anti-war campaign of the peoples has a tremendous task before it. We have to win the minds of enough men everywhere, before Governments takes us down the abyss to total destruction. This paper could fittingly close with the words of the constitution of UNESCO — "since wars begin in the minds of men it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

(Concluded)

- 23 The Royal Commission on the Private Manufacture of and trading arms, 1953-6, Annex III, p. 742
- 24 Royal Commission, 1935-36, minutes p. 544, Q 3989.
- 25 Spears of Pruning Hooks? UN HQ, New York, 1982.
- 26 From Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists quoted in Jolly 1978 Disarmament and Development, Pergamon.
- 27 G. Kennan, 'The Cloud of Danger', Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1977, pp. 13-14.

Letter

IMF/IBRD and Malnutrition

Thanks indeed for the great service you are doing, by drawing the attention of the public to the "demands" made by the IMF-IBRD.

No sensible person could blame them for their advice to cut down expenditure and increase income before releasing further funds. Due to the Government's uncontrolled expenditure, the Public will suffer due to all those cuts and increases. With the high cost of food, thousands will suffer and malnutrition and disease could follow.

Why is the Government made so top heavy? In the Government's Parliamentary Group there are more Ministers and Deputy Ministers than ordinary Members.

I understand there are over one or two Dozen P.R.OO attached to each Ministry, and innumerable others. Cannot this be contained?

A clerk attends his Office, a teacher attends his School, a judge or Magistrate attends Courts. In the same way a Parliamentarian attends Parliament. Why pay Rs. 200/- a day for attending Parliament. That's his main job. And can this third world poor country afford this expenditure.

This high cost of living affects all the people in this country. It is more serious than the ethnic issue. It could lead one day to food riots and all the people could be involved. Why don't you give all the statistics and pinpoint this issue. I invite you to do so. Can the poor people of this country cushion all this unnecessary top expenditure. Surely the IMF & IBRD should be alive to this position.

M. B. M. Kotuwelle

Rajagiriya.

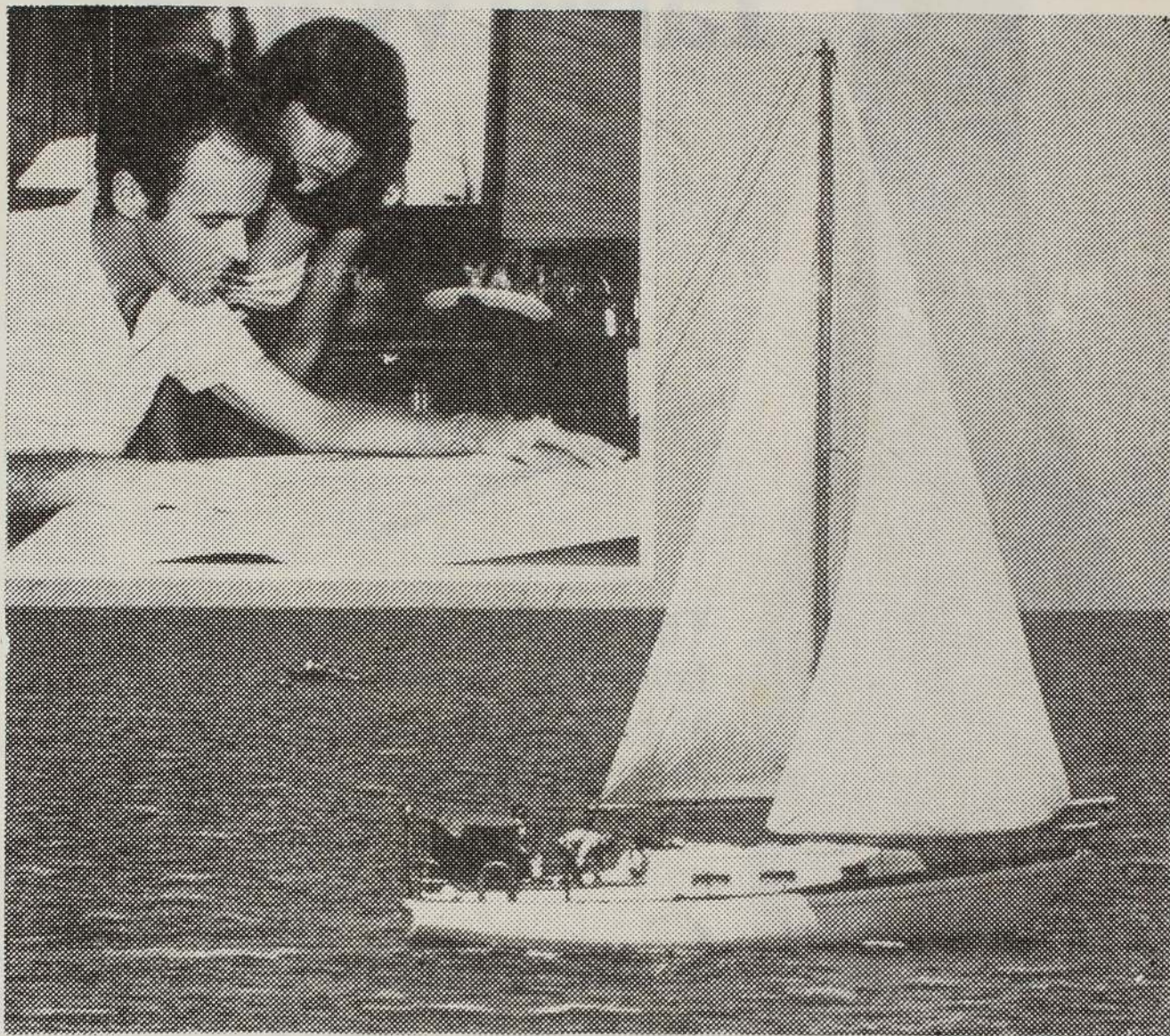
Letter...

(Continued from page 5)

white man's burden or the grand imperial gesture when he saw a native being kicked in his behind by a white sergeant. This episode is described on pp. 149-150 of *The Unknown Orwell* by Peter Stansky and William Abrahams (London, 1974). This Colombo experience, distilled in the memory, provided a handy anti-racist moral when he wrote of it in "Notes by the Way" in *Time and Tide* March 30, 1940. He returned from Burma a convinced anti-imperialist. In Julian Symons "Orwell, a reminiscence" *London Magazine* September 1963, there is an interesting anecdote when he was about to be taken to Switzerland in the month he died (January 1950). "I don't know whether I shall get proper tea in Switzerland", he said. "They have that filthy Chinese stuff, you know. I like Ceylon tea, very strong". Both these episodes are also found in *George Orwell: a life* by Bernard Crick (London, 1981) pp. 79 and 404 respectively.

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