

**SPECIAL TO THE
LANKA GUARDIAN**

1984 : Towards a spring offensive

— Jan Nederveen Pieterse

LANKA

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**THE
FIRST
ROUND
and
THE
LAST
CHANCE ?**

ETHNIC ISSUE

CRD REPORT — Debate continues

Chandra Fonseka : Focus on Rural Poor

Newton Gunasinghe : Open Economy and Racial Strife

REAGAN : NEXT STOP NICARAGUA ?

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BIG CHIEFS GATHER

The Chief prelates of the main **Nikayas** and more than a dozen **Nayake Theros** have formed a new **SANGHA SABHA**. The meeting which took place at **Asgiriya** is of special significance in view of the increasingly active role recently assumed by the leading ecclesiastical figures of a Buddhist clergy which is not rigidly institutionalised like the Christian Church.

The letter sent to the President by six **Mahanyakes** on the current situation and the President's prompt response in holding regular consultations with these prominent monks marked this new trend.

The other important feature of the **Asgiriya** meeting was the expression of a shared concern to speak with one voice. Lately, individual monks have been issuing statements to the press, granting interviews to the press, publishing memoranda etc.

Closer consultations among them and an agreed view would of course lend even greater moral authority to the voice of the clergy. All statements on behalf of the new **Sangha Sabha**, it was reported, would bear the signature of the **Mahanayake** of the **Asgiriya Chapter**.

One other point deserved special attention. The **ISLAND** report was 'Censored' — a ten line passage, if the black lined space represented the excised paragraph.

TANK FARM

It was neither **Lakshman Jayakody (SLFP)** nor **Sarath Muttetuwegama (CP)** who specialise in talking about **VOA**, **TRINCO**, **Weinberger** etc that brought us news of the **Trinco Tank Farm** deal. It was the **WEEKEND's** well-informed **DON MITHUNA**. "Right now, all eyes "are believed to be set on the **Trinco tank farm**".

While the government is determined, says **DON MUTHUNA**, to see that neither the **US navy** nor some other power could gain access to the oil facilities, the contenders in the running for the contract have been reduced

to three. One of them is the **Singapore-based TRADINAFT Oil Tanking**. The big boss of this **West German-Swiss-Singapore combine**, the **WEEKEND**, notes is (or was) the **Managing Director of the US Coastal Corporation** one of the original bidders.

I. M. F.

Air Lanka, the **Cement Corporation**, the **Shipping Corporation**, **GCEC**, the **Urea project** etc have come under heavy fire in parliament lately. The **ISLAND's** lobby correspondent, **Ajit Samaranayake**, underlined the fact that these bloated, highspending organisations have been regarded in the past as "sacred cows".

What is equally noteworthy surely is that some of the fire comes from no less a person than **Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel**? Perhaps the **IMF-IBRD** loans which have been negotiated account for this turn of events. Both institutions have made persistent demands for restraints in public expenditure particularly by several State corporations which have gone on a spending spree. Strict financial management has been their common demand and the **Finance Minister** has spoken himself hoarse on this matter but his **Cabinet colleagues** appear to have carried on regardless. It is the **Finance Minister** who knows best how much his budget depends on the **World Bank** loan of 210 million dollars and the **IMF's** standby agreement. How else can he finance the imports this country needs when **Sri Lanka's** external income is only half its annual import bill? And servicing old loans, including those obtained in the commercial money markets, is already gobbling up a sizeable piece of that foreign income.

Sri Lanka has had its 6 years of a 'second **Singapore**' but now it's time to pay the bills. If the spending spree is not stopped (or if there is another big blow-up like **July**) it would be **Goodbye to All That**, as the **Minister** himself reminded the government and the country in his budget speech.

TRENDS
+
LETTERS

Ethnic problems

The article (Vol.6 No.13 Nov.1 1983) **Ethnic Problems: Myths and Realities** in **L. G.** provides some of the most important pieces of information that can be used to convince the realities, to the people who dwell on gross misinterpretations and misleading statistics. For the first time I got a chance to read some of the most relevant (to the racial issue) statistics (provided they are accurate) which an open minded person always wanted to see in the media. (e. g. **Time**, **Asia Week**, **FarEastern Economic Review**, **N. Internationalist**, **London Times**, **Times of India**, **Observer (Lon)**, **Washington Post**, **NY Times**, **Globe and Mail (Canada)**. Not to mention "This is the Truth" none of them reported the above figures.)

(Continued on page 2)

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Letters. . .

(Continued from p. 1)

However, it is my feeling that by taking 5% of Indian and Ceylon Tamils together (e.g. Tables II, III and admission figures) and putting Indian Tamils with Sinhalese in zone IV (e.g. Tables VI, VII & X) the injustices perpetrated on Indian Tamils and their grievances are unduly camouflaged. Is my opinion Tables IV and V are misleading. Because, it does not give the corresponding incomes. (We are well aware of the appalling living conditions and incomes of the Indian Tamils.)

L. Samarasekera

University of Alberta,
Canada.

P. S You deserve a word of praise for the way your magazine covered this whole issue (July violence and aftermath).

P. P. S It would have been better if they had done the analysis like this :

(i) Divide in to zones (as they have done now).

(ii) Sub-divide each zone in to urban and rural.

(iii) Give statistics on Sinhalese, Ceylon Tamils, and Indian Tamils in each of this subdivision.

To my knowledge this will show not only how we discriminate just Tamils, but how we discriminate Ceylon Tamils, Indian Tamils, and our rural population (the poor). Therefore this kind of an analysis will give a better picture.

Ethnic Quotas C.R.D. replies to WSM Fernando

We accept the argument that our statistics show that ethnic quotas may benefit the Tamils in some areas and Sinhalese in others. Yet, the CRD, in principle, is against the policy of Ethnic quotas for the following two reasons :

a) Ethnic quotas and the like often serve to conceal the real inequalities which exist in our societies. The percentage difference between the performance of different ethnic groups is insignificant in comparison to the vast discrepancies which exists between rich and poor, backward areas and developed districts. Development efforts should not be obscured by false issues of ethnic rivalry but accept the real challenges of poverty and backwardness which is experienced by a large number of people within each ethnic group.

b) Ethnic Quotas will only serve to freeze existing cleavages — and also help perpetuate a divisive ethnic consciousness at every level of society. Such quota systems will only frustrate the evolution of a Sri Lankan identity and serve to accentuate a narrow racial awareness. In the long-run a strategy of ethnic quotas, even as a short-term policy measure, will create far greater problems than it will resolve. A subsidy granted to an ethnic community by way of ethnic quotas, especially if that community has absolute control of the legislative and executive aims of the government, can never be removed and may perhaps carry with it a "permanent badge of inferiority" which will pervert the workings of a rational and democratic society.

Reply to Sinhaputra

We request Sinhaputra to read our reply to Lotus-Eater again as we feel that it adequately covers most of the points in his (Sinhaputra's) letter.

It is interesting to note that Sinhaputra shares the "deep sense" of communal conspiracy which has motivated much of our politics in recent times. No, there is no deliberate decision to withhold any figures from Land Registries in Sou-

thern Districts. Our Report however only focuses on statistics provided by government publications because the sources are seen as unimpeachable and **easily accessible for verification**. Since Lotus-Eater spoke with such authority, CRD felt that such figures were available in published government documents. We have already invited Lotus-Eater to provide us with the figures if they are indeed available and accessible for verification.

CRD categorically rejects Sinhaputra's suggestion for the imposition of Sinhala as **the medium** of instruction for Tamil children. Far from achieving integration this will only provoke resistance and intensify present ethnic conflict. The contribution of the Indian Tamil population to our national economy should be recognised and their democratic rights to maintain their own culture & language should be protected. Sinhaputra's arguments with regard to Madhya Pradesh is rather baffling since India is a continent full of different ethnic communities, each pursuing their own language and culture.

Comment on Dinesh

Regarding your comment on Dinesh and the new Formations and your 3 points, please add: (d) JRJ or national Sinhala leader backed by mass Sinhala and 80% Muslim support and the postponement of general elections. A scenario which will be backed by the armed forces.

Why do you not wake up to the realisation that the era of parliamentary democracy superimposed by Europe is moving to a close in Sri Lanka? Pakistan, Nepal, Burma, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and India are now in fact Presidential style governments. Sri Lanka will join this group within the next decade.

Saradiel

Kandy.

NO NINE-DAY WONDER

The cover page introduces our political commentary with a question: *THE FIRST ROUND — AND THE LAST CHANCE?*. It reflects, we think, the guarded optimism as well as the poorly concealed pessimism which is the prevailing mood, especially among those Sri Lankans who recommend and support the basic idea of a truly national discussion of our most vexed issue, and the attempt to achieve a national consensus, while remaining anxiously aware that this could well be the last chance to advance towards such goals.

To the question "The Last Chance?", there should be a loud and clear "NO!". For if we keep repeating to ourselves that the possible failure of just ONE conference could close the door permanently to all hopes of a negotiated settlement, then we shall mesmerise ourselves into a condition of absolute helplessness, and slip disastrously from a nervous pessimism to total despair.

The National Question is the bitter and oppressively burdensome legacy of three decades of the cynical opportunism and the sheer myopia that has marked the politics and policies of the National Leadership, all regimes and almost every major party. A nine-day confe-

rence cannot be expected to produce a nine-day wonder. The problem which confronts the conference has such complex dimensions and is of such frightening gravity that only the happiest of optimists will predict a lasting "solution", a final 'settlement' or a magic formula.

The very idea of a national conference and the act itself have helped to defuse tensions to some degree. This itself is a welcome advance.

If it fails... back to the fire, the thunder and the chaos? Intelligent Sri Lankans committed to the ideal of a plural society where equality, justice and communal harmony prevail must not trap themselves in the pitiless logic of desperation and impotence.

This view is also shared by disinterested outsiders who have no particular stake in this country except its general welfare. As a recent visitor from a Commonwealth aid-giving country counselled:

"Hope for the best but don't exaggerate the chances for then the disappointment may be too great. Keep talking freely, frankly and where possible openly, taking your people into confidence.... Good sense, who knows, will prevail...."

1984 and post-summit scenarios

The unanimous decision of the 8 parties invited by President Jayewardene to the December 21st meeting that the TULF should be invited without pre-conditions, made Christmas a little 'whiter' than most observers had expected. "JAW-JAW" as the LG noted sometime ago, quoting Churchill, is indeed always better than "WAR-WAR". And so a huge sigh of relief was heard across the island, especially among thinking Sri Lankans who are usually styled, perhaps too flatteringly, "opinion leaders". At a time when mass emotions run high and old fears, doubts and prejudices have been re-animated, how far these well-intentioned opinion-making groups actually enjoy the influence which is claimed on their behalf is a question that needs the thorough-going investigations of political sociologists. Right now, it may be said that this fairly narrow segment of Sri Lankan society can be divided into two broad groups.

a) those who cling steadfastly

and somewhat bravely to the idea of a pluralist society based on equality, justice and harmony, in spite of the stark, disturbing fact that this concept has been frontally challenged by those present discontents which also threaten to engulf the whole community, and a nation, now at the edge of a precipice.

b) those hard-headed realists who recognise that another conflagration or even a serious disruption could irrecoverably ruin the island's political stability, and thus wreck the present economic order whose preservation is absolutely essential for the protection of the vested interests they have in this economic system, and in the continuation of the policies which are its structural props.

Both have much cause for an apprehension bordering on trepidation and fear. The international scenarios they spin out (not always well-woven), the historical parallels they pursue (not always too know-

NEWS BACKGROUND

ledgeably) and the seemingly smart terminology they trot out (often amateurishly) illustrate their state of mind best: Cyprus, Bangladesh, Uganda, Ulster, Kampuchea, Beirut/Lebanon, Sikkimisation and Finlandisation, and similar hobgoblins.

External Factor

Behind the potted paper-back knowledgeability of the Sri Lankan intelligentsia and its characteristic semi-expertise in world affairs is a recent acquisition of some significance. It is a lately acquired awareness of the 'external factor' in our national politics. However discreet the diplomacy, however low-profile the "presence" and however correct the formal manners, India has taken a hand. India is

involved. The involvement is undeniable.

The 'externalisation' of the ethnic issue has been accompanied by what Professor Kodikara rightly observed the other day was the "internalization" of the same issue in Indian politics. This accounts for the extraordinary complexity of the "politics" of the January 10-20 conference. The local Tamil issue has become a Tamilnadu issue, and Tamilnadu is not an unimportant factor in the Delhi-Madras (electoral) political equation. The parameters of that discussion, whatever the course it takes and the ultimate outcome, have been laid by the JR/Indira talks and H. W./Parthasarathi "formula".

Every participant with a direct stake in the negotiations has evidently pinned his faith in this formula although there may be blurred areas of interpretation, with self-interest conditioning a particular understanding of each item in the 'package' and urging a particular interpretation. The major 'external' powers with a not-so easily definable interest in Sri Lankan developments — and perhaps divergent or conflicting interests — also appear to support the 'formula' and the JR/Indira initiative. Both Sri Lanka's western aid-giving supporters and Delhi's socialist friends appear to consider the "devolution package" the best hope.

Contingency Plans

Naturally, both the principal local participants with a direct, identifiable stake (government and TULF, notably) as well as interested parties outside (India, and the major powers) will anticipate possible failure and prepare contingency plans, based on available options.

(i) The Government (and the Sinhala electorate along with the "Colombo" Tamils) will have to face up to the fact that the mainstream Tamil party is out of parliament, and Tamil opinion is unrepresented in the national legislature. In 50 years of representative government this will be a unique situation and exceptional challenge. As a consequence will the security situation worsen with the TULF or parts of it forced

into extra-parliamentary activism? When he postponed the by-elections for the old TULF seats President JR showed that he had seen this situation and its obvious dangers.

(ii) What choices are open to a TULF which goes back empty-handed to Jaffna? In a recent study, Professor Sivathamby, the Jaffna University scholar, has ably analysed the growing dilemmas of a TULF torn between the Centre (the Sinhala wielders of real power) and the Tamil bourgeoisie in Colombo on the one hand and on the other, the TULF's Jaffna regional base and the burgeoning youth movement.

Success at the talks may help resolve it temporarily but failure will expose them to even more acute pressures. Many top TULF'ers, I suspect, will opt out of active politics while the activists may operate from Madras.

(iii) In the event of failure, would mounting Tamilnadu pressure on Delhi gradually transform 'involvement' to some kind of 'interventionism' and what precise form, if any, will it assume?

Lankan Dilemmas

Here the outlines of a Sri Lankan dilemma emerge. The gut-reaction at the thought or prospect of any interventionist action would be to turn to a western patron and protector, and this in turn may enhance not reduce those interventionist possibilities as India responds to what she sees as an external power-projection into the Indian ocean, an area of India's strategic interest.

An Indian politician who was recently in Colombo described the frequent reports and reactions in the Indian press from the time of the Weinberger and Walters' visits as "journalistic kite-flying" but he did admit that they reflected thinking in certain influential groups within the Delhi policy-making Establishment. Prof. Pran Chopra of the Centre for Policy Research in Delhi wrote of two scenarios: (a) The UNP and the TULF leaders, determined to pre-empt any collapse of civilian government, reaching a settlement and (b) hardliners on both sides get the upper hand, violence

(Continued on page 24)



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Mrs B: Bouncing back

"I have returned, my health restored, to face the challenge . . ." said a statement issued by Mrs. B. on her arrival at what used to be known as the Bandaranaike International Airport.

The invitation to the TULF without pre-conditions was in fact a signal political victory for the SLFP leader. In an exclusive interview with this journal (**'SIRIMA SPEAKS' Oct. 1**), republished by the *SUNDAY ISLAND* (Oct. 2) Mrs. Bandaranaike said that the participation of the TULF was an absolute 'must' if there were to be "serious negotiations". Of course, added the former premier, the TULF must finally renounce separatism but this should not be a condition it has to fulfil **before** coming to the negotiating table.

When the interview became the

main topic of conversation in political, diplomatic and other influential circles, the UNP reacted in a curiously sheepish and sneaky way.

In an emotionally charged political situation, it thought (and hoped) it had Mrs. B. cornered. The monks, the militant Sinhala-Buddhists etc were bound to denounce her. At the same time, the UNP wanted to test the public pulse. How would the country react?

After several days of pregnant silence, the *DAILY NEWS*, a newspaper with a pathological disinclination to refer to the *LANKA GUARDIAN*, its contributors or articles chose to re-publish the interview on a back page, unable alas to suppress the name of this journal or the interviewer's name. This horribly distasteful act of

swallowing its puerile pride had, of course, to be suffered to serve a political purpose which became plain the next day.

Mrs. Bandaranaike was given a stinging retort by an unidentified "authoritative source" which, quite understandably, was given frontpage prominence.

Sorry, no takers! If the *DAILY NEWS* and its 'authoritative source' had expected a public outcry its disappointment must have been monumental. There may have been many who disagreed with Mrs. B. and her line of argument but nobody rose to brand her a "traitor" or as a politician given to unprincipled compromise. The point is that she is trusted by the Sinhala Buddhist public. What is more she is respected.

(Continued on page 23)

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The open economy and its impact on ethnic relations in Sri Lanka

Dr. Newton Gunasinghe

Although the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 stand out for the sheer magnitude of devastation, the recent history of Sri Lanka is not devoid of other instances of mass violence directed against ethnic and religious minorities. The year 1915 witnessed widespread anti-Muslim riots; island-wide anti-Tamil riots and Sinhala-Tamil clashes occurred in 1958; however from 1977 onwards, anti-Tamil riots have become more frequent, with many instances of localised violence and two instances of island-wide rioting, finally culminating in the holocaust of July 1983. Ethno-religious contradictions and rivalries have always been present in the modern body politic of Sri Lanka, with roots spreading back into the historical past; it is only occasionally, however, that these contradictions have erupted into open rioting. Thus, after the 1915 anti-Muslim riots, no ethno-religious riots occur for a period of more than four decades and after the anti-Tamil riots of 1958, there is a period of relative calm for nearly two decades. It is only from the year 1977 that ethno-religious riots have become frequent and incessant with contradictions erupting into open rioting almost every year.

A number of political and ideological factors contributed to the intensification of ethnic tensions during this period.

(i) The government's failure to evolve a political solution to the secessionist demand advanced by the TULF and the consequent emergence of armed militant groups who embarked on the path of armed struggle to achieve a separate state.

(ii) The violent skirmishes between state security personnel and the armed militant youth groups being interpreted by the broad Sinhala masses as a facet of Sinhala/Tamil conflict, under the guidance of chauvinistic elements both within the regime and outside it; the hysterical chauvinistic propaganda carried out by the popular Sinhala press is of cardinal importance in the formation of ideology among the Sinhala masses during this period.

(iii) The general break down of law and order and the rule of law during this phase which witnessed the emergence of goon squads under the patronage of important political personalities which operated with impunity against workers on strike, political dissenters, dissident intellectuals, students boycotting classes and even against independently inclined judges of the Supreme Court. A high point in this rule of the goon squads was the referendum held in December 1982. During the holocaust of July 1983, the rule of goon squads attained its zenith and consummation with the state security forces either being oblivious or actively encouraging the mobs on the rampage:

(iv) Organised attempts on the part of certain chauvinistic elements both within and outside the regime to ignite an anti-Tamil program with the express intention of breaking the economic base of Tamil entrepreneurs, which resulted not only in attacks against small Tamil shop-keepers but also in attacks against major industrial establishments.

While not denying that the general deterioration of political relations between the Sinhala and Tamil ethnic groups has contributed to the frequent occurrence of riots, it is now proposed to concentrate on the **economic** context of these conflicts.

The period 1977-1983, as pointed out earlier, is one of incessant

ethnic rioting; it is simultaneously a period during which the country's economic structure was overhauled with the introduction of an open economic policy. Is it possible to establish a co-relation between the open economic policy and the frequent occurrence of rioting. If such a co-relation could be established, what are its specific forms and manifestations as far as ethnic relations are concerned? Within this context, how far could the open economic policy be implemented without causing irreparable damage to ethnic relations whose deterioration may emerge as a fundamental barrier to any policy of rational economic development at all?

The economy of Sri Lanka during the period 1956 to 1977 could be called a state regulated economic system. There were a number of facets to this process of state regulation. The state, through the establishment of a number of industrial and commercial corporations started performing an important economic role. A number of private enterprises were nationalised, expanding the public sector of the economy, culminating in the nationalisation of the plantations, the foundation of the export-import economy. The private sector basically consisting of light industrial and commercial enterprises, came under strict state regulation; the system of quotas, permits and licenses, a product of the policy of import-substitution made state patronage essential for any industrial or commercial venture in the private sector. Given the elaborate system of political patronage that has grown up within the context of party politics, it can be assumed that the quotas, permits and licenses without which no one could do business, were handed over to favourites of the politicians of the ruling party. And the ruling parties were, of course, Sinhala parties. If a regulated economy exists,

The author is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Colombo University. This paper was read at a recent seminar of the SOCIAL SCIENTISTS ASSOCIATION in cooperation with the Institute of SOCIAL STUDIES, HAGUE.

irrespective of the regime being SLFP or UNP, state patronage becomes essential for the survival and expansion of any private enterprise; as this patronage is exercised not on the basis of rational criteria, but on the basis of political favouritism, it is reasonable to assume that those business groups closer to political circles in power stood to gain most. It is well known that the period of state regulation and import substitution provided the background to the upliftment of a fair section of middle level Sinhala entrepreneurs to the position of captains of industry.

The public sector, consisting of newly established corporations and nationalised enterprises, came under the control of a bureaucracy. Political patronage became a key necessity in the process of recruitment to this bureaucracy. By this time, the universities had started instruction in the national languages, and a fair section of rural, lower middle-class youth had graduated from the higher education institutes with degrees and diplomas. The system of recruitment on political patronage also favoured the Sinhala youth. Irrespective of the regime being UNP or SLFP, opportunities existed for Sinhala youth to build up patron-client linkages with local politicians and press themselves forward. The Tamil youth, especially those of the north and the east, did not enjoy this advantage, as their local politicians represented regional ethnic parties, enjoying no power at the centre. Thus, the expansion of the public sector was not merely an increase in the state regulation of the economy; it was, simultaneously, an area of expansion of job opportunities for Sinhala youth. The emerging Sinhala management stratum in the public sector also established good relations with the Sinhala entrepreneurial groups and this reinforced the advantages that the Sinhala entrepreneurs already enjoyed.

It is possible that this situation did not apply to the large enterprises in the private sector, and in these enterprises, political patronage was probably not an important factor in recruitment and formal criteria would have been more valued. Therefore, it is likely that Tamils would not have suffered

any specific disadvantage in the private sector.

Under the conditions of a state-regulated economy, the private banking sector also came under strict control and their expansion was limited. The local credit market was dominated by the two state banks. The directors of these two banks were also persons appointed on the basis of political patronage and were closely linked to the political parties in power. Given this situation, the same conditions that applied to the issuance of quotas, permits and licenses applied to the granting of bank credit. Here, too, Sinhala entrepreneurs linked to the ruling political party stood to gain, whereas Tamil entrepreneurs, especially the middle-level ones who enjoyed no upper-class social status and lacked political patronage, did not enjoy any specific advantage.

In 1977, with the introduction of the open economic policy, most of the elements of the regulative mechanisms were dismantled. The system of quotas, permits and licenses was abolished. The import-export trade was liberalised. The public sector monopoly in the distribution of some commodities was abolished; some enterprises were de-nationalised, but, more importantly, the management of some public sector enterprises were handed over to the private sector. Foreign private capital was allocated a major role in bringing about export-led growth. Banking in the private and foreign sectors was encouraged and limits to their expansion were removed. A number of sacred cows in the meanwhile were slaughtered. The subsidised rice ration that the people had been used to since the days of the second World War was discontinued; the free health scheme was subverted, with doctors in government hospitals being granted the right to engage in private practice. The free education scheme was affected by teachers in the government schools being permitted to give private tuition. The objective of the government was not merely to remove the bottle-necks of the state-regulated economy, but to ensure the uncontrolled free-play of market forces in all areas.

But to the degree that this uncontrolled free-play of market forces was assured, the degree to which political patronage could be converted into economic resources too became contracted. Formerly, within the context of the state-regulated economy some sections of Sinhala entrepreneurs could expect to obtain special concessions as a mark of political patronage. With the dismantling of state regulation, the possibility of obtaining such concessions vanished; if import-export trade is un-restricted, what one needs to engage in trade is not a permit, but capital or the availability of credit.

Thus, if, within the open economy, certain sections of Sinhala entrepreneurs were no longer able to enjoy the special concessions to which they had become accustomed during the period of state-regulation, it was not because the government was against Sinhala mercantile interests but as an inevitable consequence of the removal of controls. Non-Sinhalese entrepreneurial sections who had not enjoyed special patronage during the period of controls did not stand to lose when the controls were removed. Thus, something akin to 'fair competition' commenced in the field of business, especially in the middle rungs, those with capital, resources, business contacts and acumen forging ahead of those less endowed with these factors.

The removal of restrictions on the private banking sector also contributed to this atmosphere of 'fair play'. If political patronage was a crucial element in obtaining credit during the period when the credit market was dominated by the two state banks, the expanding private banking sector provided an avenue to those who did not necessarily enjoy political patronage, but who could establish their credit-worthiness on commercial criteria. Thus, the expansion of the private banking sector reduced the importance of political patronage in obtaining loans and in fact provided a sector where politically weak, non-Sinhala entrepreneurial sections could compete equally with the politically dominant Sinhala entrepreneurs.

During the period of state regulation of the economy, a section

of Sinhala merchants who started life as petty traders were able to rise up to the top as industrialists. By the mid-seventies, these groups were well established in business, often exporting their products to the international market. The introduction of the new economy policy did not adversely affect these well-established enterprises; but immediately below this stratum was a fairly widespread stratum of Sinhala entrepreneurs who were adversely affected. Small industrialists who were manufacturing light industrial products for the domestic market, among whom Sinhala businessmen predominated, were badly affected by the liberal import policy which opened up hitherto captive markets to foreign competition; many of these small enterprises were compelled to close down. It is possible that in the field of trade which was subjected to a generalised licensing system, as distinct from the specialised licensing system applicable to industry, non-Sinhala interests predominated. With the introduction of the open economic policy commodity circulation accelerated, and the volume of trade grew together with the profits to be earned in this sector — conversely, many of the small industrial enterprises had become bankrupt. If our assumption relating to the diverse ethnic composition of these two sectors holds, it is possible that Sinhala entrepreneurial groups in the middle-rung suffered, while the non-Sinhala sections in the same social stratum improved their position.

The operation of the open economic policy with its attendant cuts in social welfare and subsidies, assumes as its social base a political system where opposition, dissent strikes etc. are kept at a bare minimum. During the course of the last six years, the state attempted to quell all forms of legitimate protest and create a social system that was exclusively geared to the attainment of high rates of economic growth. The 'safety valves' that were present in the body politic earlier to express frustration and aggression from those sections of society who felt deprived, were deliberately closed. It is possible that within this context, the sense of relative deprivation felt especially

by the urban poor, contributed to anti-Tamil chauvinism.

It is possible to examine the co-relation between the frequent occurrences of anti-Tamil and anti-minority riots and the operation of the open economic policy in relation to a number of hypotheses:

1. The state-regulated economy of the 1956-1977 period, rather than being a 'socialist' phase as is sometimes asserted, is actually a period during which:

a) the state through political patronage helped a stratum of Sinhala entrepreneurs to rise to the level of industrialists;

b) protected a section of predominantly Sinhala entrepreneurs of the middle-level engaged in light industrial production; and

c) created extensive job opportunities mainly for the Sinhala people, through the expansion of the public sector.

By the mid-fifties, a stratum of mainly Sinhala entrepreneurs, who were petty merchants in social origin, but who had undergone a period of initial accumulation in the war years and the Korea war boom, had come to the fore. They had amassed capital primarily through trading and light 'industrial production, and were eager to move into new areas of profit-making. The state, through the import-substitution policy and credit supplied from the state banks, encouraged them to move into industrial production and granted liberal tax-holidays for these new enterprises. Making use of the protected domestic market the Dasa and Piyadasa groups moved into textile manufacturing; the Maliban group moved into confectionaries and food items; the McCallum group moved into brewing and manufacturing beverages; the Sri Ramya group moved into assembling sewing machines and making other consumer durables; the Wetasinghe group moved into the area of plastic-ware and electrical accessories; the Gunasena group moved into large-scale printing and publishing. Some entrepreneurial groups who were well established by the mid-fifties, such as Richard Pieris' and the de Soysa group, too made use of the new opportunities and moved into industry, the former into rubber products and the latter into consumer durables. During the

same period, some Tamil entrepreneurial groups, notably Gnanam and Gunaratnam, also moved into industry, the former into the area of textile and hardware production and the latter into the area of textile and film production. But the proportion of local Tamil entrepreneurs who were successful at making use of the new economic opportunities seem to be smaller when compared to their Sinhala counterparts. Confronted with the import-substitution policy, the big export-import traders among whose ranks Sinhala representation was small, initially reacted with local assembling and packaging of these imported items. But as the pressures of the state to increase the proportion of locally manufactured components in the final product became greater, those firms assembling commodities with prestigious brand named found it harder to comply with these regulations, as there were difficulties in obtaining licenses from the foreign parent companies under these new conditions. The local entrepreneurs, on the other hand, found it easier to comply with the pressures of the state in the absence of any such linkages with foreign firms.¹

Immediately below this level of operation, where the required levels of capital were comparatively high there was the level of the light consumer market. Within the context of a near total ban on the importation of light consumer items soap, edible oil, matches, sweets, pencils, brushes etc. a totally protected domestic market for light consumer items was created. Here an entrepreneur relying on a small quantum of capital could carry on production with reasonable profits, if he had the necessary political patronage to obtain the ubiquitous licenses. It is possible to cite the composition of the match-making industry in this period as an example.

The match-making industry was dominated by two firms, Ceylon Match Company Ltd. and Lanka Lights; the former, a subsidiary of the Don Carolis group, was a substantially larger producer than the latter. However, due to the policy of state regulation the match production in both these firms was controlled by government quotas,

(Continued on page 15)

Glimpses of the whole truth

Chandra de Fonseka

As "a background briefing on the ethnic debate" the CRD document is welcome as a catalyst; it provokes more than it satisfies.

One appreciates the efforts of the CRD in a laudable and necessary cause viz. — to redress the balance in favour of the Tamils. But in doing so, the CRD focus on "levels of social attainment" reflects an elite, urban bias, within the Tamil bias. This focus leaves in greater darkness many critical areas of human concern affecting the rural majority of both communities:— their levels of economic activity, their shares in development benefits and their conditions of social and individual living.

Lack of data? Does the CRD plead that in these areas, there is no authoritative data other than it has used? If so, this shows a regrettable lack of professional awareness in a Committee for Rational Development. For such

data, — still imperfect perhaps, but pertinent and reliable — does in fact exist.

In what follows, this note intends to draw on such data sources (now ignored by the CRD) in a quest for more light on "the ethnic debate" as well as on some relevant aspects at least of "rational development". These sources are:—

1. The records of the major commercial banks on banking activity in the districts, as one index of economic activity;
2. A valuable research paper by Dr H. D. Sumanasekera of the ARTI, applying the Quality of Life Index (PQLI) to Sri Lanka; and
3. The official publication entitled "Socio-Economic indicators of Sri Lanka" by the department of Census and Statistics February 1983, in collaboration with FAO.

Some notes on the report of the Committee for Rational Development. (See Lanka Guardian Nov. 1 1983 and "Island" Nov. 25, 26/1983)

Levels of Economic Activity (as gauged by indicators of banking activity). In the inevitable and expanding process of monetization that our rural economy is experiencing, the branch banks of the two major nationalized commercial banks — the Peoples Bank and the Bank of Ceylon — act as the principal agencies in the mobilisation and deployment of resources in the districts. Widely acknowledged indicators of local economic activity are each district's level of bank deposits, and its level of bank loans, (and their relation to each other).

Neither the Government nor the Central Bank nor the two commercial banks yet publish full annual district-wise branch bank data on commercial Bank performance in respect of deposits and loans. The nearest are the less relevant Tables (Usually 20 and 21) of the Central Banks Annual Review of the Economy. These tables however are limited to:—

- (a) The Peoples Bank transactions with the Rural Banks, District wise; and
- (b) The Bank of Ceylon's transactions with the Agrarian Service Centres, district-wise.

Both (a) and (b) are in relation to the Government's Comprehensive Rural Credit Scheme (CRCS).

These tables now do not reflect the **total** picture of district wise commercial bank activity. Also the Peoples Bank "Regions" and the Bank of Ceylon "Zones" do not now correspond to the Government's Administrative Districts.

With some help from Bank officials I have obtained Bank

Table 1

Combined Bank of Ceylon and Peoples Bank District-wise Deposits (D) & Loans (L) (Rs. Million) 1980 only

		Deposits	Loans	Percent ratio L:D
Jaffna —	P B	222	406	
	B C	339	191	
	Total	561	957	105%
Batticaloa —	P B	103	210	
	B C	91	111	
	Total	194	321	165%
Kandy —	P B	355	183	
	B C	196	144	
	Total	551	327	59%
Galle —	P B	183	64	
	B C	246	66	
	Total	429	130	30%
A'pura —	P B	163	349	
	B C	74	78	
	Total	237	427	180%
Kurunegala —	P B	362	219	
	B C	175	88	
	Total	537	307	57%
Gampaha —	P B	410	163	
	B C	354	144	
	Total	764	307	40%

Source : From Unpublished data in statements supplied by the Banks — (Originals with the Author)

statements that as far as possible adjust and assemble some of the data required, according to administrative districts. Extracts from these statements are presented here in Tables 1 — 4 :

Table 1 :- Combined Bank of Ceylon and Peoples Bank branch deposits and loans for selected districts — 1980.

Table 2 :- Bank of Ceylon branch bank deposits and loans for selected districts for 3 years 1980, 81, 82.

Table 3 :- People's Bank branch bank deposits and loans for selected districts for 3 years 1978, 79, 80.

Table 4 :- District rankings based on table 1, 2, and 3, in terms of key indicators of banking activity (total deposits, total loans, and loan deposit ratios).

For reasons that should be clear from the remarks above, I do not claim comprehensiveness or certified authenticity for the data in these Tables. I do however claim that the data provide adequate evidence

to justify at least some plausible and significant hypothesis (if not firm conclusions). I would request the CRD or other group which does not have my limitations of time, competence and access to data, to verify these data and hypotheses by seeking independent confirmation and/or comment on them, from the two banks, or the Central Bank, as well as from others.

Significant hypothesis justified by Table 1 — 4

1. In general banking and economic activity (i.e. deposits, loans and loan deposit ratios, Jaffna district is clearly among the favoured districts by the commercial (nationalised) banking system, both as a source for deposit "mobilisation" and as a "good bankable proposition";
2. Batticaloa, proportionate to its population (less than 50% of Jaffna) runs a good second, in relation especially to "bank-ability";

3. In relation to ratios of loans to deposits (a particularly important indicator) A'pura ranks first; and is the only Sinhala district to rank higher than Jaffna and Batticaloa;
4. Except for A'pura, most Sinhala districts have relatively very low ratios of loans to deposits (eg. in 1980 Galle 30%, Kegalle 30%, Kalutara 30%, Ratnapura 30%).
5. In every year from 1978 to 82 the districts with the three highest loan deposits ratios were A'pura, Batticaloa, and Jaffna.

It would seem that discrimination against or in favour of certain districts has to be seen as part of a much broader systemic economic problem that transcends the communal problem.

The commercial banking system extracts a considerable surplus from the rural districts through the difference between district deposit mobilisation and district loan

Table 2

Bank of Ceylon (1980, 81, 82) Rs. million District-wise deposits (D) and Loans (L)

Major districts	1980		1981		1982		Total 81/82/83		Present ratio		Rank	
	D	L	D	L	D	L	D	L	D	L	D	L
Jaffna	340	191	439	235	606	318	1385	744	53.7%		3	
Batticaloa	38	33	48	37	71	51	157	121	77.1%		2	
Kandy	196	144	343	192	501	225	1040	561	53.7%		3	
Galle	240	67	183	56	223	58	646	181	28.0%			
A'pura	75	78	87	70	107	89	269	237	88.1%		1	
Kurunegala	175	87	193	104	258	128	626	319	50.9%			
Kalutara	181	54	213	67	266	179	660	200	30.3%			
Gampaha	354	144	406	153	506	164	1266	461	36.4%			

Source : From unpublished data in statement supplied by the Bank — (Original with Author)

Table 3

People Bank (1978, 79, 80) Rs. Million District-wise deposits (D) Loans (L)

Major districts	1978		1979		1980		Total 78/79/80		Percent ratio		Rank	
	D	L	D	L	D	L	D	L	D	L	D	L
Jaffna	126	336	158	343	222	407	505	1086	215%		3	
Batticaloa	58	155	75	177	103	220	236	552	233.8%		1	
Kandy	292	140	269	131	355	183	916	454	49.5%		5	
Galle	n	a	137	43	183	64	320	107	33.9%			
A'pura	109	286	133	283	163	349	407	918	226. %		2	
Kurunegala	219	124	269	146	362	219	850	489	57.5%		4	
Kalutara	n	a	140	34	196	58	336	82	24.4%			
Gampaha	n	a	315	107	410	163	725	280	38.6%			

Source : From unpublished data in statements supplied by the Bank — (Original with Author)

deployment. (A'pura, Batticaloa and Jaffna, being only partial exceptions). This considerable surplus is diverted to the much more profitable or bankable metropolis through the 2 Banks' "International Divisions" to finance import, export and service transactions, and other urban oriented banking activities.

Table 5 (extracted from the data available to us) illustrates the magnitude and systemic consistency of this rural surplus extraction and diversion. Thus in 1980 in which data from both banks are available, this amount so "siphoned" from the rural districts to provide the credit base for the Banks International divisions' activities was

Rs. 4.7 billion. (33% of all Government revenue, or 8% of GNP at current prices in that year.)

A cynical but appropriate description of this "siphoning" process illustrated in Table 5 is "the development of rural underdevelopment". It turns out ironically for a Sinhala Government, that Batticaloa and Jaffna (the 2 major Tamil districts with a combined population of approximately 1.1 million), and A'pura (one Sinhala district with a population of 250,000) are the only (partial) exceptions to this general pro-urban phenomenon. But what the evidence clearly does not support is a deliberate conspiratorial and anti-Tamil Government economic policy.

The Sri Lankan Central Bank is aware of this persistently centrifugal trend in commercial Bank operations — (see page 42 of the Central Banks Review of the Economy 1981) but it has proved helpless to reverse it.

In India where the Reserve Bank of India has wider powers and Government itself an apparently stronger sense of social purpose, a number of corrective institutions and policies have been introduced:— Regional Rural Banks, a National Bank of Rural Development (NABARD), and Reserve bank policies:—

- (a) Of district-wise and branch wise differential rates of interest on deposits and loans; and
- (b) Of "positive discrimination" in favour of the weaker sectors of the rural community in each district.

One of the benign results in Sri Lanka of the continuing communal problem since political independence, has been the constant pressure for decentralisation. We hope that with these pressures now coming to a head, the recently proposed Regional Banks (as Unit rather than Branch Banks) will be functional parts of a more genuinely participatory and equitable rural economy than the present DDCC and Commercial banks have been able to develop.

(To be continued)

Table 5

All districts excess of resources mobilized in districts over resources in the districts deployed by the 2 major commercial banks

Rs. million		PB		PB/BC	BC	
		1978	79	80	81	82
Deposits (all districts)	PB	2636	3905	5242		
	BC			6194	5776	7096
Both Banks				11436		
Loans (all districts)	PB	1716	2135	3007		
	BC			3700	3643	4179
Both Banks				6707		
Excess of district deposits over districts loans used to finance the "International Division" (Imports, Exports etc.) of each/both banks		920	1770	2235 2494 4729	2133	2917

Source : See Tables 1, 2, & 3 of this paper.

Table 4

Summary of Sri Lanka district banking activity District ranking in terms of selected indicators

Indicators				Rankings			
(1) Largest bank deposits both banks	1980	Table 1		1. Gampaha (764)	2. Jaffna (561)	3. Kandy (551)	
(2) Largest bank loans	1980	-do-		1. Jaffna (597)	2. A'pura (427)	3. Kandy (327)	
(3) Largest bank turnover	1980	-do-		1. Jaffna (1158)	2. Gam. (1071)	3. Kandy (878)	
(4) Largest ratio : loans : deposits	1980	-do-		1. A'pura 180%	2. Batt. 165%	3. Jaffna 105%	
(5) Largest deposits B/C	1980, 81, 82	Table 2		1. Jaffna (1385)	2. Gam. (1266)	3. Kandy (1044)	
(6) Largest loans B/C	1980, 81, 82	-do-		1. Jaffna (744)	2. Kandy (561)	3. Gam. (461)	
(7) Largest bank turnover B/C	1980, 81, 82	-do-		1. Jaffna (2129)	2. Kandy (1827)	3. Gam. (1505)	
(8) Largest ratio loans : deposits B/C	1980, 81, 82	-do-		1. A'pura 88%	2. Batt. 77%	3. Jaffna 53.7%	3. Kandy 53.7%
(9) Largest deposits PB	1978, 79, 80	Table 3		1. Kandy (916)	2. Kuru. (850)	3. Gam. 725	4. Jaffna (505)
(10) Largest loans PB	1978, 79, 80	-do-		1. Jaffna (1086)	2. A'pura (918)	3. Batt. 552	4. Kurune. 489
(11) Largest bank turnover PB	1978, 79, 80	-do-		1. Jaffna (1591)	2. Kandy (1370)	3. Kuru. 1339	4. A'pura 1323
(12) Largest ratio loans : deposits	1978, 79, 80	-do-		1. Batt. 233.8%	2. A'pura 226%	3. Jaffna 215%	

Source : See Tables 1, 2, & 3 of this paper.

CRD takes a closer look at history

“THE HUMAN PROBLEMS arising from so-called ‘race’ relations are social in origin rather than biological. A basic problem is racism namely antisocial beliefs and acts which are based on the fallacy that discriminatory inter-group relations are justifiable on biological grounds”.¹ Here we shall discuss the place of the Sinhalese and the Tamil people in the history of Sri Lanka.

1. *Were the ‘Sinhalese’ the first inhabitants of this island?*

No. In the Vijaya story, (whatever its relation to historical fact may be), we have evidence of civilized people living on the island, previous to his arrival in 6th B.C., for it was they that Vijaya and his retinue encountered after they first landed here.²

2. *Was the island not inhabited by nagas and yakkhas, before civilization was established?*

The inhabitants of the island were certainly called **nagas** and **yakkhas** in the Mahavamsa, and they are described as having super-natural powers. However, it would be mistaken to interpret this, as well as other events abounding in fantasy and magic as literally accurate. The mention of Kuveni spinning bears some witness to the degrees of civilization which existed in the country before Vijaya is said to have arrived here.

3. *Are the ‘Sinhalese’ then the descendants of King Vijaya, and his retinue?*

Yes and No. These descendants were called the Sinhalese, but the descendants, so called, were at the same time according to the Mahavamsa, the progeny of Vijaya and his Indian retinue and maidens from Madhura in southern India.³ The Sinhala Kings and noble families in later times too continued to inter-marry with people of South India. Moreover, there was

much immigration to southern areas of Sri Lanka from South India between the 13-18th centuries, and these immigrants though Dravidian in origin adopted the customs of Sri Lanka and also came to be called Sinhalese. This is fairly well established by social historians. Thus it would appear that the Sinhalese today are a mixture of ethnic groups immigrating from India.

4. *Then who are the Aryan people?*

The term ‘Aryan people’ is wrong. It was Max Muller who initially defined ‘Aryan’ as a race. He later withdrew this definition, saying that, ‘Aryan, in scientific language, is utterly inapplicable to race.... It means language and nothing but language, and if we speak of Aryan race at all, we should know that it means no more than X + Aryan speech’.⁴ The sad fact of history is that his original definition was taken seriously, and remembered by proponents of the theory, and this incorrect view was popularly believed. The false notion of an Aryan race and of Aryan racial superiority was one of the myths used by the Nazis in Germany for their ends of power.

5. *One usually refers to ‘Dravidian people’ is this term accurate?*

No. Dravidian does not mean race, although it is often used as a racial term. It is just as wrong to speak of Dravidian people, as it is to speak of Aryan people. Dravidian actually refers to a group of languages.

6. *Would it be wrong to presume that fair skin colour and sharp features are ‘Aryan’ characteristics?*

Yes, it would be wrong because as has already been explained, ‘Aryans’ are not a racial group at all. Further there is plenty of evidence that the Sinhalese were

not a homogenous group in respect of such physical characters as skin colour. It is well known that Duttugamunu’s father was called ‘Kavantissa (Tissa the crow-coloured)’. The different ideals of physical beauty in Medieval Sinhala literature indicate a physically heterogenous society.⁵

7. *Doesn’t language usually imply race?*

Not necessarily. If all races were differentiated by language, the various human types that have been defined by anthropologists would not be related to each other at all. Yet bone structures and other physical characteristics indicate an unmistakable resemblance of people speaking different languages. Language and religion cannot be seen as criteria which differentiate races. On the other hand, there are communities speaking the same language but not descended from the same racial stock.

8. *The Sinhalese⁶ and the Tamils in Sri Lanka are differentiated. If the difference is not race, why are they considered as separate groups?*

There are no genetically inherited characteristics in terms of which we can differentiate Sinhalese from Tamils. There are differences because they generally speak different languages, and the majority follow different religions.

9. *That would indicate that the main difference between the majority of Sinhalese and Tamils is religious and cultural?*

Yes. In accepting this, we also need to acknowledge that Sinhalese culture has borrowed much from both North and South India in the spheres of music, dance and literature. Moreover the main deities respected in Buddhist temples originate from the Hindu Pantheon.

10. *How have these cultural differences been over-emphasised?*

Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus are generally considered to be mutually exclusive groups. As shall be seen by answers to questions 11-19, this concept cannot be accepted.

11. *Why are the Sinhala and Tamil languages so different, if they are spoken by people of similar origin, who have lived in a small island together for so long?*

The languages are actually more similar to each other than one may think. The Sinhalese language — (although its vocabulary is predominantly Sanskritic), has a very close affinity both in grammar and syntax to the Tamil language structure.⁷ However, the differences in language as well as in some other cultural elements, between Sinhalese and Tamils, have become the basis for different national identities as perceived by the mass of the two peoples. In the process the similarities and common elements have been overlooked, and the differences over-emphasized.

12. *The Aryan culture, is claimed to be older, and therefore superior to the Dravidian culture in India. Surely this would be applicable to Sri Lanka?*

It is almost impossible to say which of the two cultures was older in India. If one were to accept that the Indus Valley civilization was evidence of early Dravidian culture, then it would be wrong to assume that Aryan culture is older than Dravidian culture. It is well known that the Indus Valley civilization existed in Northern India before the Aryan speaking peoples established themselves there.

13. *It has been recorded, that the Buddha confirmed that ultimately his doctrine would be established in Sri Lanka and that this country was therefore to be specially protected by the god Sakka. Hence it must be correct to assume a special religious significance for this island?*

This has been recorded in the Mahavamsa by priests who were undoubtedly keen on seeing Buddhism as a national religion which had special relevance to

the island. The standard text of the Mahaparinibbana Sutta makes no mention of Sri Lanka being a chosen country for the Buddhist religion.⁸ In fact it would be wrong to consider that Sri Lanka is the chosen country for the Buddhist religion because Buddhist philosophy has a special importance for the individual, and the individual mind and is not restricted to any specific group or any special race. It has a universal calling.⁹

14. *Was there a Buddhist tradition in South India?*

Yes, the sequel to Silappadigaram, Manimegalai is evidence of strong Buddhist influence. In this the heroine eventually becomes a Buddhist nun. Cordial relations between Buddhists in Sri Lanka and South India can also be traced to a very early period. In the seventeenth century, Buddhist centres were known to be active in South India.¹⁰

15. *Is it not so that the Sinhalese Kings in general have been defenders of the Buddhist teaching throughout history, as opposed to the Tamil Kings?*

No, the latter often took the responsibility of protecting the doctrine in the same way that the Sinhalese Kings did. The Nayakkar rulers who patronised Buddhism were of South Indian descent, and it was under their reign that a religious and literary revival took place in the second half of the 18th century. On the other hand the Sinhalese kings did not always give the first place to Buddhism. Rajasinghe I (1581-93) for example, on embracing Saivism, not only encouraged South Indian mendicant Saivite priests to settle in Sri Lanka, but also liberally gave land grants to Hindu brahmins.¹¹

16. *Did Dutugemunu only fight against Tamil people?*

No, he also fought against Sinhala kings, and there are records in the Mahavamsa of Sinhalese who fought on the side of Elara against Dutugemunu.¹² Dutugemunu as portrayed in this chronicle is more an upholder of Buddhism than of the Sinhalese. Yet, even in the fifth century

A. D. we have evidence of South Indian Buddhist amongst the invading armies of Sri Lanka.¹³

17. *Was Elara anti-Buddhist?*

No. We have no evidence in the Mahavamsa that indicates he was anti-Buddhist. On the contrary, he is recorded as having a love of justice and tradition. It is said that although he did not know Buddhism, he repaired a stupa to which he had accidentally caused damage.¹⁴ We are also told that it was because Elara had renounced evil that the god Sakka favoured him.¹⁵

18. *When did differentiation between Buddhists and Hindus first arise in Sri Lanka?*

Originally there was little differentiation between the two religions, as Hindu gods were recognized and worshipped in Buddhist temples. The differences first arose in about the 7th century in South India when a new militant form of Hinduism appeared, and showed hostility to Jainism and Buddhism. Then only was it possible to connect Sinhala identity with Buddhism, and present the Tamils as enemies of Buddhism. Despite this there has been much influence of Hinduism on Buddhism and vice versa, to this day; and followers of these religions not only have similar customs, but also recognise the same holy places of pilgrimage such as Kataragama and Sri Pada.

19. *The Sinhala Buddhist identity was strengthened, especially in the 10th and 11th centuries. How did this happen?*

Up to this time the Sangha, had tended to be divided on the basis of nikaya affiliations. Now as a result of Chola enmity the Sangha become more loyal to a single political and regional unit. Yet at the same time there were 'great men' who were Saivite.¹⁶

20. *Was there ever one ruler of the entire island?*

Yes, the first king who had control of the entire island was Dutugemunu after him the well known rulers of the entire island included Parakramabahu I (whose

(Continued on page 15)

Christians and liberation for the Sinhala people

Tissa Balasuriya O. M. I.

FOR the Sinhala people the last few years have been a difficult period, particularly with the continuing violence in the North. People are being killed and apparently the Government is unable to control the situation, and on top of these, we have this present outburst. In the world outside we are considered cruel murderers; in our own areas the police are now taking into custody people who have looted property. The police forget that many of them encouraged looting at that stage. Even the burden of being a majority weighs on us. We of this generation feel the responsibility of having to maintain the unity, integrity and independence of this dear country of ours — the only place where Sinhala people can live as in their home.

What is the way out for us from these anxieties? How can we be liberated from them towards a more human life? What is the Christian approach and contribution towards the liberation of the Sinhala people?

In the depths of our being we seek freedom from fear, from insecurity, from violence, from division and from being dominant. Liberation means freedom from these evils to something better. In all this what is the Good News of Liberation for us as Christians that we get principally from Jesus Christ?

On the one hand we have to admit that we have very strong emotional feelings within ourselves. I do not wish to try to analyse as to which ethnic group has more advantage in one line or the other; in employment, in education, in land holdings etc. The religious and Christian approach has not to be one of mere statistics. It is not even the problem of who hit first or who hit most. We as pastors are called to live the Gospel

and give guidance to our people who are with us.

The heart of the problem for the follower of Jesus Christ is to reflect on his Gospel in this situation. As Sinhala Christians we have to identify with the Sinhala people without losing our specificity as Christians; and identify with the Christians without diluting our Sinhaleanness. This is true likewise for the Tamii people, and for any people of any religion in such a situation.

In other words we must have a theology that is incarnate in our situation, in our race, in our culture; but it must be open to total human and to the universality of the love of God — the Father and Mother to all.

Within our situation our theology has to be open to the whole of Sri Lanka. A contextual theology that neglects others and therefore neglects the Transcendent, the Absolute, is basically inadequate. But we must live in our context. We must realize that we are among and part of a people who have given characteristics of culture, history, psychology, myths, prejudices and aspirations and relate to them.

As Christians, therefore our problem is not only one of scientific analysis or of merely working for a political solution — both of which are also necessary and important — but also of responding as persons with faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is not necessarily the same as being born sociologically as Christians. Sometimes the faith is confused with the interests of people who happen to have been born Christians and live together in a Christian area. Faith in Jesus means believing in and trying to live the values of Jesus Christ — which he taught, lived by and died for. A

Christian is one who has been re-born in the spirit in such a faith.

We can only briefly recall here the basic teachings of Jesus. They are the things we have all learnt, meditated on and tried to live. Though they seem well known to us they are very relevant to our situation and hauntingly challenge us in the depths of our being. The teachings of Jesus are that:

- God is Father and Mother of us all.

- What makes for our sanctity and holiness is love. We must love not only our friends but also our enemies. So that even if we think that some are our enemies and are going to destroy us and divide our country we have this fundamental call to love.

- "I have come that you may have life and life abundantly"

At a time like this when life itself is in danger, when many people feel insecure, there is a struggle for life against death, for love against hatred. We must be unmistakably on side of life and love. Our humanity itself demands this.

- "Do good to them that hate you". "Forgive one another". We often pray as we did this morning in the words Jesus taught us. "Our Father forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against". This is the criterion by which Jesus has taught us to ask for and expect God's forgiveness and the grace of his Kingdom.

- Jesus goes further, he says "turn the other cheek" to one who hits you. "Walk another mile" with the one who forces you to walk one mile. This is difficult; but this is the faith. These are the values that Jesus taught.

- "Greater love than this no one hath than to give his life for his friends"

- "And who is my neighbour?" He then gave the story of the Good Samaritan — traditional enemies of the Jews.

● At the solemn moment of his life prior to his arrest and death he says "this is my blood that is given for all . . . Do this in commemoration of me" He invites us to follow him on the way of the Cross.

● He tells us: if you are angry with anyone, then leave the gifts at the altar and be reconciled with your brother before you can offer the sacrifice.

● The call for the Christian is to be non-dominant. Jesus teaches that power is to be a service, a ministry. "I came to serve and not to be served". He washed the feet of his disciples and asked us to do likewise. This is the lesson of Holy Thursday.

● "Blessed are the peacemakers". The road of peace is often the way of the cross."

● "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do unto me."

● "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you."

These are among the basic, core kernal values of the teaching of Jesus Christ. They are the hallmarks of a Christian. We know from the life of the early Christians that they listened to the word of God, they prayed, they broke the bread and shared what they had, so that there was no one in need.

If we live thus as Sinhala Christians we will be helping in the true liberation of the Sinhala people—to be our better selves, to build genuine communities in Sri Lanka. This coincides with the best in our Sinhala culture, in all national cultures, and in the Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic religions. When we are more profoundly Christian we are also in harmony with the best in other religions. The liberation for the Sinhala people is in being truly Sinhala and therefore genuinely accepting persons of all other cultures and races in their otherness.

(To be continued)

CRD takes . . .

(Continued from page 13)

grandfather was South Indian)¹⁷ and Parakramabahu VI. It is worthy of note that amongst the enemies of all these kings were not only Tamil people, but Sinhalese too.¹⁸

21. *Did not being Sinhala or being Buddhist always enhance one's opportunities of claiming the throne?*

No, at one time it was both ritual and devotion to the Buddhist religion that determined Kingship, rather than being Sinhala. The importance of ritual is denied in Buddhist texts, so we see here, in Buddhist ritual, an important Hindu element. Later in the Kandyan kingdom, ritual status became so important in determining kingship, that it actually disqualified the Sinhalese from kingship.¹⁹

22. *Was there ever an independent Tamil Kingdom in the northern part of Sri Lanka?*

Yes, the best known king, Arya Cakravartti was originally from the Pandyan kingdom, but he ruled independently in the North, at the end of the 13th century. His descendants continued ruling the northern kingdom until the early seventeenth century, when the Portuguese arrived.

(NEXT — Modern History)

Notes

1. Paragraph 4 of the Fourth UNESCO Statement on Race, as quoted by A. Montagu, "The Statement on Race" p. 178.
2. *Mahavamsa* (VII. 10-11).
3. *Mah* (VII. 48-50).
4. Max Muller, *Bibliography of words and the Home of the Aryans*, London, 1888 pp 120-1, as quoted by RALH Gunawardene "The People of the Lion", p 27 Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol. 5 Nos. 1 and 2, 1979.
5. "Dharmapradipika" ed. RDS Dharmarama, Paliyagoda, 1951, p. 254 as quoted by RALH Gunawardene, in "The People of the Lion" p. 18.
6. As the answer indicates one should correctly refer to "Sinhalese speaking people" and "Tamil speaking people" since a main distinction between them is one of language and not of race.

7. K. M. De Silva, "A History of Sri Lanka" Delhi, 1981, p. 58 and Siddhanta Pariksanaya, Colombo 1959, Gate Mudaliyar W. F. Gunawardene, pp 19-20.
8. *Last days of the Buddha*, Kandy 1974.
9. *Vasetthasutta*.
10. RALH Gunawardene, *Robe and Plough*, Arizona, 1979, p. 264.
11. L. S. Dewaraja, *The Kandyan Kingdom 1707-1760*, Colombo 1972, p. 49.
12. *Mah*. (XXIII. 4-15).
13. RALH Gunawardene *The People of the Lion*, Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities Vol. 5. Nos. 1 and 2, 1979, p. 16 footnote 62.
14. *Mah*. (XXI. 21-26).
15. *Mah*. (XXI. 27-31)
16. RALH Gunawardene, *The People of the Lion*, pp 20-22.
17. *Culavamsa* (59. 41-44).
18. *Culavamsa* (LXV. 12-14), and *A History of Sri Lanka*, K. M. De Silva Delhi, 1981 p. 88.
19. RALH Gunawardene, *The People of the Lion*, p. 26.

The open . . .

(Continued from page 8)

which allowed enough room for the functioning of small enterprises in the same field as the amount of capital needed to establish a match-making plant based on labour-intensive methods was rather low, more than a dozen small entrepreneurs supplied the market with their products, protected by the government-imposed quota system. The quota, at this level, did not help expansion; indeed, it is possible to argue that it was anti-expansionist in character, and also helped maintain the status quo. However, it ensured the survival of small entrepreneurs who had ventured into the production of light consumer items.

1. For instance, the old established firm of Hunters which graduated from the importation of Raleigh bicycles to the assembling of Raleigh components in the country, found it difficult to go into progressive domestic manufacture due to the limits laid down by the parent company. In contrast, Ceylon Cycle Industries, controlled by the de Soysa group assembled a cycle with a local brand name, 'Monara' using components imported from a variety of sources; they were therefore better placed to comply with state regulations, pertaining to progressive domestic manufacture.

(To be continued)

The Three Fronts of 1984 : Towards a 'Great Spring Offensive'

Jan Nederveen Pieterse

The psycho-political connotations of 1984 are familiar enough. It is striking that the expectations and scenarios of 1984 are all negative. 1984 is also an election year in the United States. The difference between Mondale and Reagan may be short of the difference between heaven and earth, but still it matters whether or not Reaganism and the new cold war programme be rewarded with an extension. It matters not only in the United States but also in the Middle East, Central America, wherever the imperial gunboats may be headed and wherever austerity politics Reagan or Thatcher style are being applied. In fact, for a number of people in a Central America and the Middle East it may well be a matter of heaven or earth. Meanwhile in the northern hemisphere the prime concern are nuclear armaments. In 1984 approximately a third of the Pershing II and Cruise missiles will become operative. **1984 will be a year of greater East-West tensions than anytime in memory.** For a better perspective it may help to take a step back.

In 1966 General Giap, commander of the armed forces of North Vietnam, wrote an analysis of the war in South Vietnam in the context of the world situation. In doing so he based himself on Lenin's formulations, forty years earlier, of the conditions for the triumph of national liberation wars over imperialism, namely: (1) Joint efforts of large sections of the populations of the oppressed countries. (2) A particularly favourable international situation (resulting from contradictions among the imperialist powers), (3) A simultaneous uprising of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in one of the imperialist powers.

In the late sixties these conditions were all being met. In many countries the Vietnamese struggle did receive broad popular support. Contradictions between the imperialist powers piled up to give rise to the

international monetary crisis of the late sixties. Mounting US balance of payments deficits on account of its war expenditures made for the first cracks in the Bretton Woods financial system; in 1967 France withdrew from the Gold Pool that had sustained the dollar in spite of growing US deficits, and in March 1968 it was abolished. In the words of Che Guevara in his 1967 message to the Tricontinental: "The greatest of the imperialist powers feels in its own heart the drain caused by a poor, backward country; and its fabulous economy feels the effect of the war." Following the assassination of Martin Luther King on April 14, 1968 the ghetto riots broke out. Together with the anti-war demonstrations it made for a massive cry of protest. In China it was the time of the Cultural Revolution. Che had gone to Bolivia in pursuit of "many Vietnams." In Europe student unrest mixed with worker militancy in defense against the erosion of their wages by inflation — inflation partly caused by the echos of the inflated dollar. Thus the war in Southeast Asia echoed in rings of struggles throughout the world. The January 1968 Tet offensive was the turning point in the war in Vietnam. The multiple fronts of 1968 helped to create the conditions for victory in Vietnam while giving the powers that be a shock that cracked the post war order. Without a doubt 1968 was the high point of class struggle in the post-war period. We are now living in the framework of the retrenchment that has followed 1968. How then does 1984 compare to 1968?

Now there is relative concord among the imperialist countries. The framework of "Trilateralism" has superseded the Atlanticism of the sixties. Under the auspices of the IMF world management has become more abstract, the economists' logic obviating the skills of Green Berets. Also France has fallen in line (witness her actions in Chad and

Lebanon). On the other hand we find greater divisions among socialist countries; a level of discord that has contributed to what some consider to be a "crisis of Marxism." **All the same the levels of anti-imperialist struggle and class struggle today are by no means lower than in 1968.** In our reality the "proles" are much stronger than in Orwell's fiction. The three main fronts of struggle of 1984 could be identified as follows: (1) the major areas of anti-imperialist conflict, (2) areas affected by the crisis of neocolonialism, (3) struggles in the imperialist countries. This is not the place to analyze each of these conflicts, but a few remarks may serve to bring them to mind.

(1) **Major areas of anti-imperialist conflict** include the Middle East, Central America and Southern Africa. They coincide with the **resource-rich regions of instability** identified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the **US Military Posture for Fiscal year 1984** (which also mentions Southeast Asia as a region of instability). Since Vietnam a major concern of the US military is to avoid getting bogged down in "quagmires." In this pre-election period foreign policy is focused on producing "successes." But outside Grenada, quick successes are not obtainable. None has materialized in Nicaragua, and now there may be an attempt to construe a truce with Nicaragua as a foreign policy success of the Reagan administration. The dilemma presented by El Salvador is that only a large-scale intervention by US troops could possibly turn the tide, which is a politically costly step prior to elections, while on the other hand the coming year may bring continued advances to the FMLN-FDR. The Middle East is the only area where US forces are being committed to a "quagmire," against growing pressure from Congress. But it is adjoining the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean area that has

been the focus of forward US military build-up since 1979. In southern Africa South African aggression against the frontline states is increasing, conceivably to obtain a better bargaining position on Namibia. France has stepped into the conflict in Chad. In South Sudan a new front is opening up since oil finds in the South (under exploitation by Chevron) have invited an assault on the autonomy of the (non-Moslem) South by the Karthum government, under the guise of "Islamization" and with the backing of Saudi Arabia, the US and Egypt. On the side of South Sudan the Anya Nya II receives support from Ethiopia and Libya. There are many other areas where armed struggle is being conducted on a certain scale, **not** confronting US forces but governments that receive US security assistance, notably in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Oman, the Western Sahara, Peru and Colombia.

2. The crisis of neocolonialism affects to different degrees almost all of the countries of the three continents. In is a crisis rooted in the dilemmas of dependent underdevelopment and dependent development. Dilemmas that are currently being aggravated under the impact of the international debt situation — debts incurred to finance the "new industrialization" and to make up for balance of payments deficits of oil-importing countries. **The whole structure of "mortgaged development" is now coming down on the rocks of world economic depression and rising interest rates. A vast front of class struggles is now opening up between on the one hand the IMF as the treasury police of monopoly capitalist world management and on the other the factor that Che called the PEOPLE'S HUNGER.**

The so-called redemocratization in several countries (Brazil, Argentina, Turkey) may have been designed in part to take the edge off these anticipated troubles, in a framework of class compromise supervised by the IMF. Yet inevitably redemocratization also involves political liberalization and the articulation of new working class demands, In some countries redemocratization

has already lost its cosmetic glamour (Peru, Bolivia). More numerous in fact are those countries where redemocratization is not being adopted, where emergency-type laws are kept in force, or put into effect (South Korea, Indonesia, Bangla Desh, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay). Mass demonstrations and unrest (Philippines, Bangla Desh, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Guyana), mass strikes (Bolivia), expanding guerilla actions (Peru, Colombia), bitter ethnic conflict (Sri Lanka, India) indicate rising levels of global popular anger.

A key factor which, in many places, may decide the difference between urban unrest and armed struggle is the participation of peasants. The worker-peasant alliance therefore appears as a major concern of class struggle politics, although many parties on the bandwagon of redemocratization may be more preoccupied with the divisionary negotiations of the multiple wage system (i. e. pay differentials for workers in old and new industries and agricultural labour).

3. Struggles in the imperialist countries. Here the nuclear arms question has extremely profound implications. It involves a direct popular questioning of the paramount power structure, of the reliability, the very sanity of the powers in charge. At issue are the politics of nuclear civilization. Around the corner is the question of nuclear imperialism. In Western Europe the placement of missiles under single-key American control represents an assault on popular sovereignty unmatched since the the Vienna congress of 1815. Much depends on the interaction of the peace issue with depression management. Rightwing pro-missile governments have come to power — in the FDR, England, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands — on the basis of economic rather than defense platforms. Labour protests and strikes against the inequities of austerity and curbs on unions (as in Belgium, the Netherlands, England in 1983), when converging with discontent over American nuclear imperialism, may weaken rightwing governments

and strengthen left social democratic forces. Next to labour, the inequities of austerity have their greatest impact on all those who are on the receiving end of the welfare state, including the aged, minorities, women and youth — the actual "third world within."

In the eighties many of these groups are well organized, along with the peace movement, "greens", squatters, autoreductionists, solidarity groups. While **Newsweek** c. s. proclaimed the seventies to be a decade of the "me-generation," of apolitical timidity and conformism, the seeds of the sixties quietly grew into solid extended networks of grassroots activists, frequently operating independently of traditional left organizations and little-noticed by national media. From the universities they relocated to the neighbourhoods, small towns and alternative institutions, becoming less ideological than the New Left of the sixties but no less militant and more pragmatic. These "new activists" represent the most dynamic anti-establishment forces in the imperialist rear; their strength is in the streets and the neighbourhoods, their weakness in the gap between "movement" and "party."

Native Americans, blacks, Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics in the United States, Commonwealth citizens in Britain, "guestworkers" on the continent are other components of the "third world within." Basques, Corsican autonomists, Bretons, Sardinians constitute yet another flank. In the US the electoral campaign initiated by Jesse Jackson is a progressive development that, like the mayoral campaign in Chicago, can only result in blacks counting more. In Northern Ireland Sinn Fein has also adopted an electoral approach, with a measure of success that serves as a tacit endorsement of the parallel armed struggle by the IRA.

Along the three fronts of 1984 the forces are more massive and more developed than in 1968. Yet there is one crucial difference: a unitary vision is lacking. In the sixties this was provided by the war in Vietnam

(Continued on page 22)

AFTER GRENADA, NICARAGUA?

(Re-electing Reagan)

FOREIGN
NEWS

During what he had hoped would be a relaxing weekend of golf, President Reagan had to go through "a nightmare" reported the SUNDAY TIMES famed INSIGHT column. An armed drunk took several of his aides hostage at his weekend club. Then a truck bomber on a suicide mission blew up Marine hqrs in Beirut and 200 US marines. Reagan's reactions were reported by a close observer as follows:

"The President felt, whether consciously or unconsciously that America was being kicked around as it had been when Carter was in charge. And at a moment, where perhaps further thought should have been given to what he was going to do, as he struggled mainly to cope with Beirut where he could not react, it crystallised in his

mind that here (Grenada) he bloody well could react — and would. What happened was pure Ronald Reagan".

INSIGHT's politically significant conclusion from the "process" which led to the Grenada invasion was that "most American voters — on the eve of an election year — thought their President had done the right thing by invading".

With Reagan ready to announce his candidature later this month votes and voters must come first. And it is in this connection that MARTHA HONEY's report in the same SUNDAY TIMES (Oct. 30) must be closely studied. According to her, Mr. Reagan "hopes to see a new government established in Marxist Nicaragua by December or January, according to a variety of US and other western diplomatic

sources, as well as informants within the 'contras' (the counter-revolutionary) groups".

The steps then likely to follow:

(a) a 'provisional government' recognised by the US and its allies.

(b) military support to this government.

(c) the CONDECA (US surrogates, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador etc) group will then send in troops to Nicaragua.

(d) US forces in Honduras and ships in the area will provide logistical support.

If this 'operation' succeeds the Sandinista government will fall and Reagan will reap a harvest of votes. If it fails, the dust will settle before the November polls.

'Human shield' for Nicaraguan village

Marjorie Hyer

WASHINGTON

When Phyllis Taylor said goodbye Monday to her three teenage children in Philadelphia, both she and they knew she might not return.

Mrs. Taylor, a Quaker and a nurse, is the coordinator of a team of 21 church members who are leaving Washington on Friday for northern Nicaragua, where they plan to form a "human shield" along the Honduran border. They hope their presence in the area will discourage attacks by U. S. backed rebels seeking to overturn the government.

Organizers of the venture, who have bitterly opposed U. S. policy in Nicaragua, say they hope U. S. military commanders will restrain the "contras" from attacking areas where U. S. citizens would be endangered as they have when church or congressional delegations visited the area.

"Human shield" volunteers will stay in the village of Jalapa. Six will remain in Nicaragua indefinitely supplemented by 15 fresh recruits every two weeks. Mrs. Taylor is in a two-week group.

The unusual experiment in political nonviolence is the work of an ad hoc ecumenical organization, Witness for Peace, whose advisory committee ranges from Catholic bishops to Quakers, Episcopalians and Southern Baptists.

Mrs. Taylor, 42, a longtime activist in human rights causes, says she is aware of the risks but feels called as a Christian "to witness, to stand in the same peril as the Nicaraguans... to say, 'If you are going to lob a mortar, if you are going to shell a village, there will be North Americans who will be hit, as well as Nicaraguans.'"

"Our purpose is to save Nicaraguan lives, said Jim Wallis, an activist evangelical Protestant who

heads the Witness for Peace Advisory Committee. "Our hope is to stop the United States' war against Nicaragua," he added.

This week, the group has undergone rigorous training by Mrs. Taylor's husband, Dick a veteran of civil rights and anti-war demonstrations.

They have rehearsed nonviolent reactions to having a contra enter the village, to a mortar attack and to having one of their number kidnapped or raped. There have been 300 kidnappings in the Jalapa area this year.

Mrs. Taylor, who is a grief counselor working with dying patients and recovering amputees, said her worst fear is of "being tortured and not being very good or being permanently maimed"

She said the Witness for Peace office has been flooded with appli-

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A case for negotiating in El Salvador

Robert E. White

BOSTON

As the military stalemate in El Salvador drags on, many in the United States have begun to wonder what, if anything, can be done to break the impasse. In fact, there may be very little to do.

The United States may have pushed the Salvadoran military as far as it is able or willing to go. The time may have come to cut losses and accept the revolutionaries' repeated offers to negotiate.

In spite of hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid and training, the Salvadoran military has proved unwilling to carry the war to the insurgents. With the rainy season now at an end, the revolutionaries will again strike when and where they wish. They will again dominate much of the countryside.

How does the Reagan administration explain why the revolutionaries fight so much better than government troops? It talks about the insurgents' foreign supplies of arms — but does not explain why guns from the United States do not work similar miracles for government forces.

Guns are to a revolution what clay is to brick masonry — useless without kiln, mortar and willing hands. With songs to fire spirit and poems to commemorate the fallen, the revolution is fed with a constant supply of recruits. They prefer to die in battle rather than wait their turn to have the security forces march them off to ignominious death. Each dawn, mutilated bodies of civilians appear in ditches to remind the poor of the barbaric system under which they live — under the jackboot of the Salvadoran military. No wonder the revolutionaries move among the people like fish through the sea. It would be foolish to romanticize the insurgents, but it is stupid and

shortsighted not to recognize their strength.

In 1980, several of the guerrilla groups deserved to be compared with Pol Pot. They kidnapped innocent people and murdered them when ransom demands were not met. They contemptuously brushed aside offers to negotiate a political solution.

That has changed. Abuses still occur, but the insurgents have learned that observance of civilized norms pays dividends, nationally and internationally. For example, the guerrillas treat captured soldiers with such consideration that returned prisoners are considered security risks by the military. Revolutionary leaders regularly call for a negotiated peace and a political solution.

But what of the foot soldier in the Salvadoran military? For him there are no songs, no poems — above all, no leadership. The young officers who led the October 1979 revolution in favour of land reform and human rights have been either sidelined or exiled. As a result, the officer corps is again infected to the bone with the cancers of brutality and corruption.

Nothing that U. S. military advisers can do can instill morale and elan into an army whose leaders routinely torture and murder. Nothing that U. S. Army trainers say can put heart and spirit into soldiers led by officers who battle one another for access to the public purse instead of fighting guerrillas. Nothing that the Pentagon can supply to the army can overcome the contempt that the common soldiers feel for officers who spend nights and weekends in the capital city and funnel official funds into foreign bank accounts.

What can the United States do to end the stalemate? Very little, short of sending in U. S. troops. In June, the then army chief, General Edward C. Meyer, warned the Reagan administration not to send combat forces to El Salvador because "unless you have the commitment of the people, of the indigenous forces, you're not going to solve a guerrilla war."

But in September, the Pentagon's undersecretary for policy, Fred C. Ikle, suggested putting "forward-deployed forces" in Central America, "as in Korea and West Germany."

The security of the United States and the free world depends in great measure on the confidence and self-esteem of the American military. Its morale depends in turn on the American people's perception that their armed forces carry out missions abroad in a manner that does not bring shame on the ideals and traditions of the United States. What kind of madness is it that would identify the good name of the American military with one of the most brutal, corrupt and inefficient armies ever to have disfigured a Western nation?

Human shield . . .

(Continued from page 18)

cants, who will pay their own travel expenses, and has rotation teams filled through 1984. The effort will continue "until the war is over," she said.

The undertaking grew out of a trip by 150 North Americans, including Dick Taylor, to the same area in July. Their visit produced or coincided with, a cessation of attacks by the contras.

Mrs. Taylor said their children whom she describes as "one Salvadoran, one Korean and one home-made," had largely influenced her to join the mission.

"When they go off to school or whatever, I don't have to worry that I may never see them again," she said, in contrast to a Nicaraguan mother who told Dick Taylor of having to identify her son's decapitated body.

Mr. Wallis, acknowledging the mission's risks, noted that "biblical tradition is filled with risky things. Recalling the Christian involvement in the civil rights struggles, he added, "Selma was a risk. Birmingham was a risk. It's the way of peace."

— Washington Post Service

The writer was ambassador to El Salvador during the Carter administration. He contributed this comment to *The New York Times*.

Reagan shelves measure

Charles Mohr

WASHINGTON

President Ronald Reagan has pocket-vetted a bill that made continued aid to El Salvador contingent on his assuring Congress every six months that the country was improving its human rights record.

The bill also specified that Mr. Reagan certify that the Salvadoran government was making progress in redistributing land and in making efforts to try accused killers of U. S. citizens.

By declining to sign it Wednesday, 10 legislative days after Congress sent the bill to the White House, he killed it with what is known as the pocket veto, which is possible when Congress is no longer in session.

The president in vetoing the renewal of the certification procedure, rid himself of a duty that he and his top advisers had said they found onerous and confining. On four occasions, Mr. Reagan and the State Department had certified that El Salvador was making progress on human rights, land redistribution and the control of its own security forces, despite assertions by critics that this progress was more illusory than real.

Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island the ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, called the president's pocket veto of the certification process "a powerful blow against peace and justice in El Salvador." The senator pledged to join in introducing legislation when Congress reconvenes in January. "to improve upon the certification process just ended by the president."

(Other leading Democrats are vowing to revive the bill, The Associated Press reported. Representative Michael Barnes of Maryland, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, said, "Our embassy in San Salvador is struggling to convince the Salvadoran govern-

ment that it must take action to halt the killings by the death squads which we now know are linked to the Salvadoran security forces. How can the embassy be credible when the president refuses to sign even this modest measure?

(Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut charged that Mr. Reagan's "ill-advised veto sends a significant and dangerous message to Salvadoran security and military forces: 'U. S. military aid will continue regardless of human rights abuses or involvement in rightwing death squads activities.'")

Earlier, self assistants to Democratic members of Congress who had favored continuing the certification system said that although it had not curtailed military aid to the Salvadoran authorities, it had value nonetheless.

"A victory without honour"

"THERE IS no legitimacy in depriving a People of their Right to Determine their own Future" — so reads the heading of a paid statement published in *The New York Times*, signed by dozens of noted U. S. figures and organizations, in protest over the illegal occupation of Grenada by U. S. forces.

The statement reads as follows:

"The invasion of Grenada has firmly placed the United States on the path to war. Using guns instead of diplomacy, the president has turned the United States into an outlaw nation violating the obligations of the Western Hemisphere Treaty and the United Nations.

"Even those Americans who do not categorically condemn the use of military force by the United States must realize that the invasion of Grenada is a giant step toward world confrontation and another Vietnam War in Central America and the Caribbean.

"What was evident to the world community but not reported in the U. S. press was the following:

● Visa Denial Seen as Signal

The State Department said Tuesday that Roberto d'Aubuisson, president of El Salvador's Constituent Assembly, had been denied a visa because of concern over rightist death squads, to which he has been linked. John Hughes, the State Department spokesman, qualified this Wednesday by saying that "it would be improper for the United States to ascribe culpability" in the killings.

In a report from San Salvador, The Washington Post quoted Salvadoran political leaders Wednesday as saying that the denial of the visa was a clear signal that Washington opposed his expected bid for the presidency because of his suspected links to death squads.

— New York Times Service

("1) The Grenadian authorities sent repeated messages to the United States guaranteeing the safe evacuation of all U. S. citizens;

("2) On October 22, that is, three days before the invasion the Cuban government sent a diplomatic note to the United States assuring it of its full cooperation in the evacuation of the U. S. and Cuban citizens and expressing its desire to avoid any violent confrontation; and

("3) the United States responded to Cuba's diplomatic offer first with the invasion and later with a note to a Cuba three hours after the invasion started.

"House of Representatives spokesman Tip O'Neill commented on October 31 (*The New York Times*) 'For two years the president has been looking for an opportunity to go into Grenada, since the days when Haig was in the cabinet.'

"It is both cheap and easy for the world's most powerful nation to claim 'victory' over on a tiny island many times smaller. There is no honor in such an act.

Strategy of transition key to our destiny

Immanuel Wallerstein

I shall not review here the mechanisms by which the repeated stagnations of the world-economy lead to discontinuous but necessary (that is, steplike) increases of the purchasing power of some (each time new) sector of the (world) population. I will only say that one of the most important of these mechanisms of increasing real purchasing power is the process we are calling proletarianization. Although proletarianization may serve the short-run interest (the short-run only) of the capitalist as a class it goes against their interest as individual employers, and hence normally proletarianization occurs despite them and not because of them. The demand for proletarianization comes rather from the other side. Workers organize themselves in various ways and thereby achieve some of their demands, which in fact permits them to reach the threshold of a true wage-based minimum income. That is, by their own efforts, workers become proletarianized, and then shout victory!

The true character of bourgeoisification is similarly quite different from what we've been led to believe. The classic Marxist sociological portrait of the epistemological contradictions at the base of Marxism itself. On the one hand, Marxists suggest that the bourgeois-entrepreneur-progressive is the opposite of the aristocrat-rentier-idler. And, among bourgeois, contrast is drawn between the merchant capitalist who buys cheap and sells dear (hence speculator-financial manipulator-idler he too) and the industrialist who "revolutionizes" the relations of production. This contrast is all the sharper if this industrialist has taken the "truly revolutionary" path to capitalism, that is, if this industrialist resembles the hero of liberal legends, a little man who by dint of effort

has become a big man. It is in this incredible but deeply-rooted manner that Marxists have become some of the best purveyors of the celebration of the capitalist system.

This description almost makes one forget the other Marxist thesis on exploitation of the worker which takes the form of the extraction surplus-value from the workers by this very same industrialist who then logically, joins the ranks of the idlers, along with the merchants and the "feudal aristocrat". But if they're all alike in this essential way, why on earth should we spend so much time spelling out the differences, discussing the historical evolution of categories, the presumed regressions (for example the "aristocratization" of bourgeoisies who desire to "vivre noblement") the treason (of some bourgeoisies who refuse, it appears, "to play their historic role")?

But is this a correct sociological portrait? Just like the workers who live in households which merge revenue from multiple sources (only one being wages), the capitalist (especially big ones) live in enterprises which in reality merge revenues from many sources of investment — rents, speculation, trading profits, financial manipulation. Once these revenues are in money form, they're all the same for the capitalist, a means of pursuing that incessant and infernal accumulation to which they are condemned.

At this point the psycho-sociological contradictions of their position enter the picture. A long time ago, Weber noted that the logic of Calvinism contradicts the "psychologic" of man. The logic tells us that it is impossible for man to know the fate of his soul because if he could know the intentions of the Lord, by that very fact he would be limiting His power,

and He would no longer be omnipotent. But psychologically man refuses to accept that he can in no way affect his destiny. This contradiction led to the Calvinist theological "compromise". If one couldn't know the intentions of the Lord, one could at least recognize a negative decision via "external signs," without necessarily drawing the inverse conclusion in the absence of such signs. The moral thus became: leading an upright and and prosperous life is a necessary but not sufficient condition for salvation.

This very same contradiction is still faced by the bourgeois today albeit in more secular garb. Logically, the Lord of the capitalists requires that the bourgeois do nothing but accumulate. And He punishes those who violate this commandment by forcing them sooner or later into bankruptcy. But it's not really all that much fun to do nothing but accumulate. One wants occasionally to taste the fruits of accumulation. The demon of the "feudal-aristocratic" idler, locked up in the bourgeois soul, emerges from the shadows, and the bourgeois seeks to "vivre noblement". But, in order to "vivre noblement", one must be a rentier in a broad sense, that is, have sources of revenue which require little effort to obtain, which are "guaranteed" politically, and which can be "inherited".

Thus, what is "natural", what each privileged participant in this capitalist world "seeks", is not to move from the status of rentier to entrepreneur, but precisely the opposite. Capitalists don't want to become "bourgeois". They infinitely prefer to become "feudal aristocrats".

If nonetheless capitalists are becoming more and more bourgeoisified, it is not because of their will but despite it.

Objectively, as the capitalist system spreads, becomes more rationalized,

brings about greater concentration, competition becomes stiffer and stiffer. Those who neglect the imperative of accumulation suffer even more rapidly, surely, and ferociously the counterattacks of competitors. Thus each lapsus in the directions of "aristocratization" is ever more severely penalized in the world market, requiring an internal rectification of the "enterprise", especially if it is large and (quasi-) nationalized.

Children who seek to inherit the direction of an enterprise must now receive an external, intensive, "universalist" training. Little by little, the role of the technocratic manager has expanded. It is this manager who personifies the bourgeoisification of the capitalist class. A state bureaucracy, provided that it could really monopolize the extraction of surplus-value, would personify it to perfection, making all privilege dependent on current activity rather than partially on individual or class inheritance.

It is quite clear that this process is being pushed forward by the working class. All their efforts to take over the levers of economic life and to eliminate injustice tend to constrain capitalists and make them retreat towards bourgeoisification. Feudal-artistic idleness become too obvious and too politically dangerous.

It is in this fashion that the historiographical prognosis of Karl Marx is working itself out: the polarization into two great classes of bourgeois and proletarians, both materially and socially. But why does this whole distinction matter, between the fruitful and unfruitful historiographical emphases that may be derived from reading Marx? It matters a great deal when one comes to the question of theorizing the "transition" to socialism, in fact of theorizing "transitions" in general. The Marx who spoke of capitalism as "progressive" vis-à-vis what was before also talks of bourgeois revolutions, of the bourgeois revolution, as a sort of keystone of the multiple "national" transitions from feudalism to capitalism.

The very concept of a bourgeois "revolution", leaving aside its doubtful empirical qualities, leads us to

think of a proletarian revolution to which somehow it is tied, both as precedent and prerequisite. Modernity become the sum of these two successive "revolutions". To be sure, the succession is neither painless nor gradual; rather it is violent and disjunctive. But it is nonetheless inevitable, just as had been the succession of capitalism to feudalism. These concepts imply a whole strategy for the struggle of the working classes, a strategy filled with moral blame for bourgeois who neglect their historic roles.

But if there are no bourgeois "revolutions", but merely internecine struggles of rapacious capitalist sectors, there is neither a model to copy, nor sociopolitical "backwardnesses" to overcome. It may even be the case that the whole "bourgeois" strategy is one to shy away from. If the "transition" from feudalism to capitalism was neither progressive nor revolutionary, if instead this transition had been a great rescue of dominant strata which permitted them to reinforce their control over the working masses and increase the level of exploitation (we are now speaking

the language of the other Marx), we might conclude that even if today a transition is inevitable, it is not **inevitably** a transition to socialism (that is, a transition to an egalitarian world in which production is for use-value). We might conclude that the key question today is the direction of the global transition.

That capitalism will in the not too distant future know its demise seems to me both certain and desirable. It is easy to demonstrate this by an analysis of its "objective" endogenous contradictions. That the nature of our future world remains an open question, depending on the outcome of current struggles, seems to me equally certain. The strategy of transition is in fact the key to our destiny. We are not likely to find a good strategy by giving ourselves over to an apologia of the historical progressiveness of capitalism. That kind of historiographical emphasis runs the risk of implying a strategy which will lead us to a "socialism" that is no more progressive than the current system, an avatar so to speak of this system.

(Concluded)

The three...

(Continued on page 17)

a sa global polarising issue. Mao unleashing the Cultural Revolution and calling for global war on imperialism, with the Chinese strategy of rural encirclement as a model, added to the momentum. In 1966 General Giap called for "other Santo Domingos," in 1967 Che Guevara called for "two, three, many Vietnams." But since then the US have avoided other Vietnams, precisely long-lasting engagements of US forces in the face of popular resistance would precipitate the situation predicted by Mao: "The day will come when the US reactionaries find themselves opposed by the people of the whole world." To prevent a coalescing of forces a la 1968 combinations of old and new tactics have been used, different in composition and emphasis for each of the global fronts. On the first front, the flashpoints of

anti-imperialist struggle, tactics used include:

a) counterrevolutionary guerilla war — notably against Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Nicaragua

b) the use of proxies — Israel, South Africa, Argentina, Organization of East Caribbean States

c) operations as part of the UN multinational force — as in Korea in the 50s, the Congo in the 60s, Lebanon in the 80s

d) the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) and new forward bases, notably Diego Garcia, to serve as RDF supply stations

e) shows of force, such as the appearance of AWACS in Egypt, Sudan, and brief operations, as against Libya and in Grenada.

(To be continued)

Why this escalation of arms production?

L. N. T. Mendis

THE Prime Minister of Italy Giovanni Spadolini in his address to the Session stated that "negotiations in which each side is obsessed with the chimera of relative advantage and strives only to retain a maximum of the weaponry for itself, while putting its opponent to the maximum disadvantage are not a way to escape from the weapons race; They are an integral part of it." This formulation is obviously an acceptable and an impartial one.

It is consequently of great interest to note an occasion when, in the words of Alva Myrdal, the ambition referred to by the Italian Prime Minister is "revealed unblushingly." She quotes from a speech by Richard Nixon the U. S. President, addressing a Joint Session of Congress on first June 1972.⁷

"No power on earth is stronger than the United States of America today. None will be stronger than the United States of America in the future. This is the only national defence posture which can ever be acceptable to the US."

The nations of inferiority or superiority and their meaninglessness are clearly demonstrable. Even Alva Myrdal a renowned Swedish specialist on disarmament, who takes a stand of strong neutrality in her researches as between the USA and USSR and is acknowledged to be an impartial observer, states that "Initially the Soviet Union started from a position of inferiority, but it has gradually **advanced towards equality** in the gross kill-effect of nuclear weapons - deployed or in production."⁸ But that is not really the crux of the issue.

The pivotal question is that the two major nuclear powers have for no reason risen to escalate arms production further. More than a decade ago an eminent American scientist Linus Pauling who was also one of the founders of the Pugwash Movement (founded by a Manifesto in 1955 by Bertrand Russel and Albert

Einstein) addressed the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science. In his talk, he informed the organization of scientists that the Soviet Union then possessed atomic weaponry sufficient to completely devastate the whole world 11 times over and the US had the capacity to destroy the earth completely 20 times over. Then he asked his audience — "can anything be destroyed more than once?" This gives in a nutshell the entire question of nuclear superiority and inferiority. Alva Myrdal in her book quotes the expert opinion given at a 1973 conference organised by the Centre for the study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara. Herbert Falk, gave the answer regarding overkill capacities in a punch point. "If the Soviet leadership, for whatever reason or as a result of whatever mistaken information, chose to destroy America as a nation, it is capable of doing so in less than half an hour, and there is literally nothing we could now do to prevent it. The only thing we can do is to wreak on them an equally terrible revenge. And, of course, the situation is the same the other way round. "This is what the Western strategists have dubbed 'MAD' — meaning 'Mutual Assured Destruction.'

In fact, the position has been strikingly shown by Jules Moch — a long time leading French spokesman in favour of disarmament in the world — who calculated that taking into consideration the tons of explosives needed to kill the average number of people on each square kilometer, the stocks of nuclear weapons already then available (1969) were sufficient to annihilate the total world population 690 times over.⁹

In this context, the address of Mrs Inga Thorsson, Under Secretary of State and Head of the Swedish delegation to SSOD II contains many statements of significance. She pointed out that for the first time since

1962, when Herman Khan published his well known book, people are "thinking about the unthinkable." They have to do so because "military and political leaders, by talking about **controlled nuclear counter attacks**" and by making nuclear weapons to be considered as useable **have made the unthinkable thinkable**: She added that "people understand this trend will have to be stopped for the sake of survival." Hence the rise of popular peace movements in Western Europe and North America which "George Kennan recently called the most striking phenomenon of the early 1980's."

(To be continued)

7. Reproduced from Congressional Quarterly 96 Congress 3 Session 1972 XXVIII (Washington, 1972) p 74-A.

8. The Game of Disarmament by Alva Hyrdal 1978 Pantheon Books. New York, Paper back, page 26.

9. Jules Moch Destion de La Paix (Paris Mercure de France. 1969

Mrs. B. . .

(Continued from page 5)

This explains the strong groundswell of pro-Sirima sentiment in the post-July months. That is a universally known fact.

Now she has returned to face the challenges. What are they? The factional crisis in the party seems to be over although she has still to impose a stricter discipline on party spokesmen who are often found to be speaking in different tongues on the major issues of the moment. Obviously, there's the temptation to take up the anti-Tamil cry. But few people in Sri Lanka know the full gravity of the present crisis and its possible repercussions, regionally and internationally than Mrs. B. Statesmanship and a strong hand are the needs of the hour. Her record shows that in both departments she is well-equipped.

Wilfred Burchett: revolutionary writer and activist

THE WORKERS of the world lost a true fighter for their interests and for their right to know the truth when Wilfred Burchett died in Sofia, Bulgaria on Sept. 27. A respected author and journalist of international stature, Burchett was at the forefront of the struggle for peace and social justice for more than forty years.

Wilfred Burchett was born in Australia on Sept. 16, 1911 and grew up there. He subsequently lived and worked in England, Eastern Europe, Korea and the Soviet Union prior to basing himself in northern Vietnam and Kampuchea during much of the Vietnam war. Paris became his home from 1968 to 1982, and from there he continued to write about the progress of revolutionary movements and the struggle for socialism, especially in Africa and Southeast Asia. In 1982 he moved to Sofia.

Wilfred Burchett personally witnessed and chronicled most of the major world events that have shaped our time. He knew and was respected by presidents, foreign ministers, generals and party leaders as well as by workers and peasants, farmers, teachers, doctors, guerrillas and regular soldiers and by many other writers and journalists. What Burchett had to say could be found nowhere else — from his reports on his lengthy discussions with Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap to his descriptions of the efforts of the people of Vietnam to liberate their country from colonial oppression and reunite it under socialism.

Wilfred Burchett wrote nearly three dozen books and innumerable articles and news stories. His first major article, published in the Sydney Sunday Telegraph on Nov. 26, 1939, exposed the fact that the newly built German highway system was composed of strategic military highways designed to carry

tanks and motorized troops to jumping-off points for their invasion of Europe. At the time of his death, he was completing a book on Hiroshima today and had many ideas and plans for other projects. **Whatever the topic, all of Burchett's works were weapons which workers and oppressed peoples around the world were able to use in support of their struggles for national liberation, for socialist revolution and for peace.**

But Wilfred Burchett was much more than an observer and chronicler of world events. Wilfred Burchett did not stand apart from the movements and events about which he wrote. Time and again, he put his own life on the line to do whatever he could to make a contribution to the victory of the struggles on which he reported.

As the first Western correspondent to make his way to Hiroshima after the atomic bomb exploded there at the end of World War II, Burchett discovered that people who had not been injured when the bomb was dropped were subsequently dying of what he described as the atomic plague. When he reported what he had seen to the world, he was called before General Douglas MacArthur in Tokyo and told by a briefing officer that he had fallen victim to Japanese propaganda. Undaunted, he continued to expose the devastating effects of atomic war and radiation poisoning.

Burchett's consistent, objective reporting during the Vietnam War was in sharp contrast to the distortions and outright lies put forward by the U. S. government and its media puppets. His articles on that war had an enormous impact on the people of the United

States and helped to build mass opposition to the war. During this period Burchett also worked to make possible the peace negotiations which resulted in the January 1973 Paris peace treaty formally ending hostilities between the United States government and the Vietnamese revolutionaries.

After the overthrow of the genocidal regime of Pol Pot in Kampuchea in January of 1979, it was Wilfred Burchett who made several trips to Kampuchea and Vietnam to painstakingly research what had happened in Kampuchea in order to write a book exposing the crimes of Pol Pot and his followers to the world.

Wilfred Burchett dedicated himself to the fight for peace, freedom and justice. He waged this battle through his own activity on the frontlines of struggle and by using his books and articles not only to expose what was happening but also to impart to workers throughout the world a clear sense of their class interests and historic task of overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism.

His life and work are well summed up by what the revolutionary South African author Keorapetse Kgositsile wrote about the relationship of writers to the struggle of the working class:

"To be first with the spirit of freedom, to be determined to fight and destroy tyranny, to usher (in) a new chapter of life where there is peace, progress and happiness — this we see as our mission, our duty, our ultimate responsibility".

Wilfred Burchett lived up to this responsibility, and his many contributions will live on long past his death.

— (Peoples Tribune)

1984 and...

(Continued from page 4)

is resumed and rises, and Colombo cries for military assistance, paving the way for "a Central America type of situation" in South Asia, and India reacts. — M. de S.



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a will
there's
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