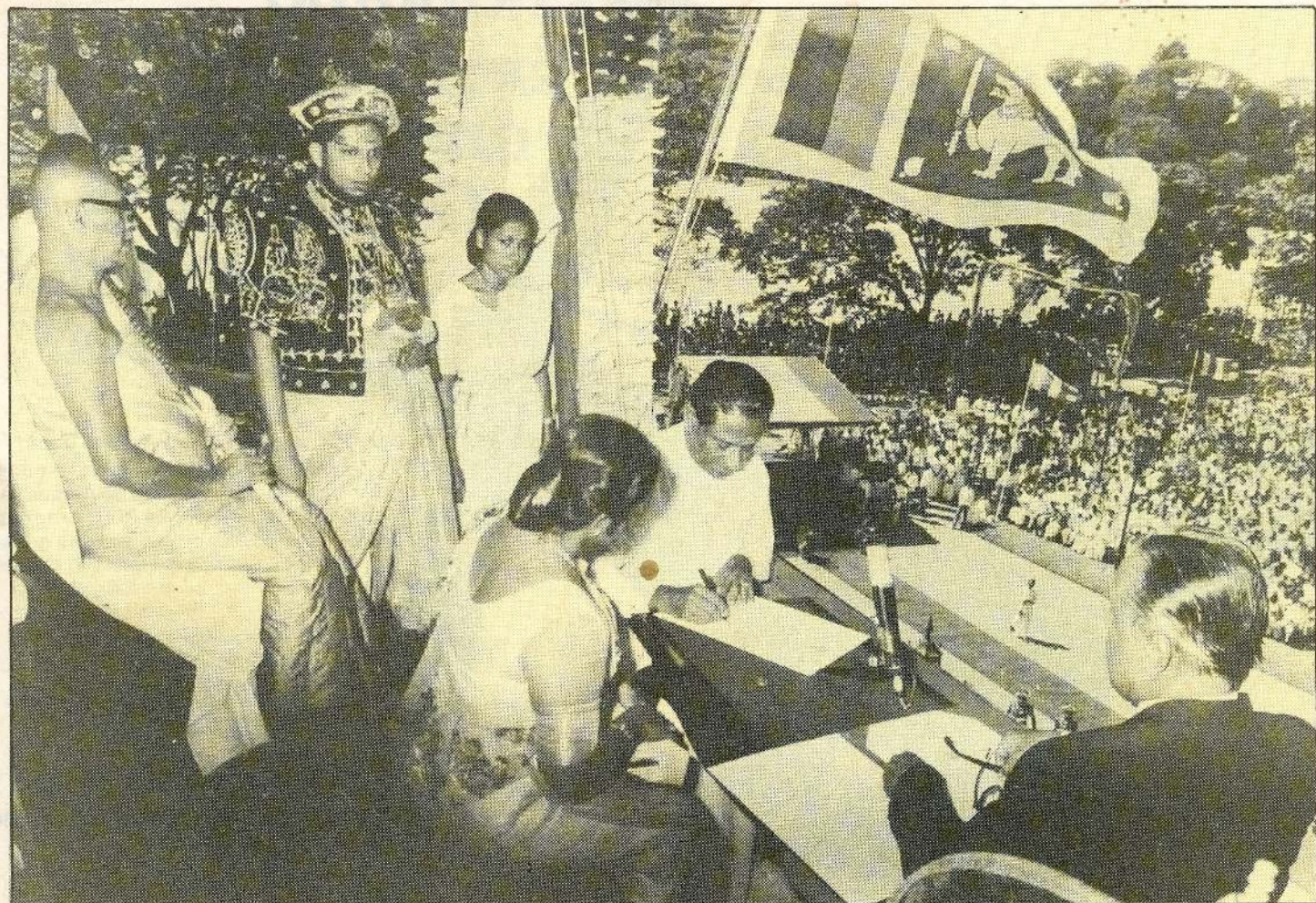


SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT
GENERAL ELECTION

CHRISTIAN

Quarterly of the Christian Workers Fellowship

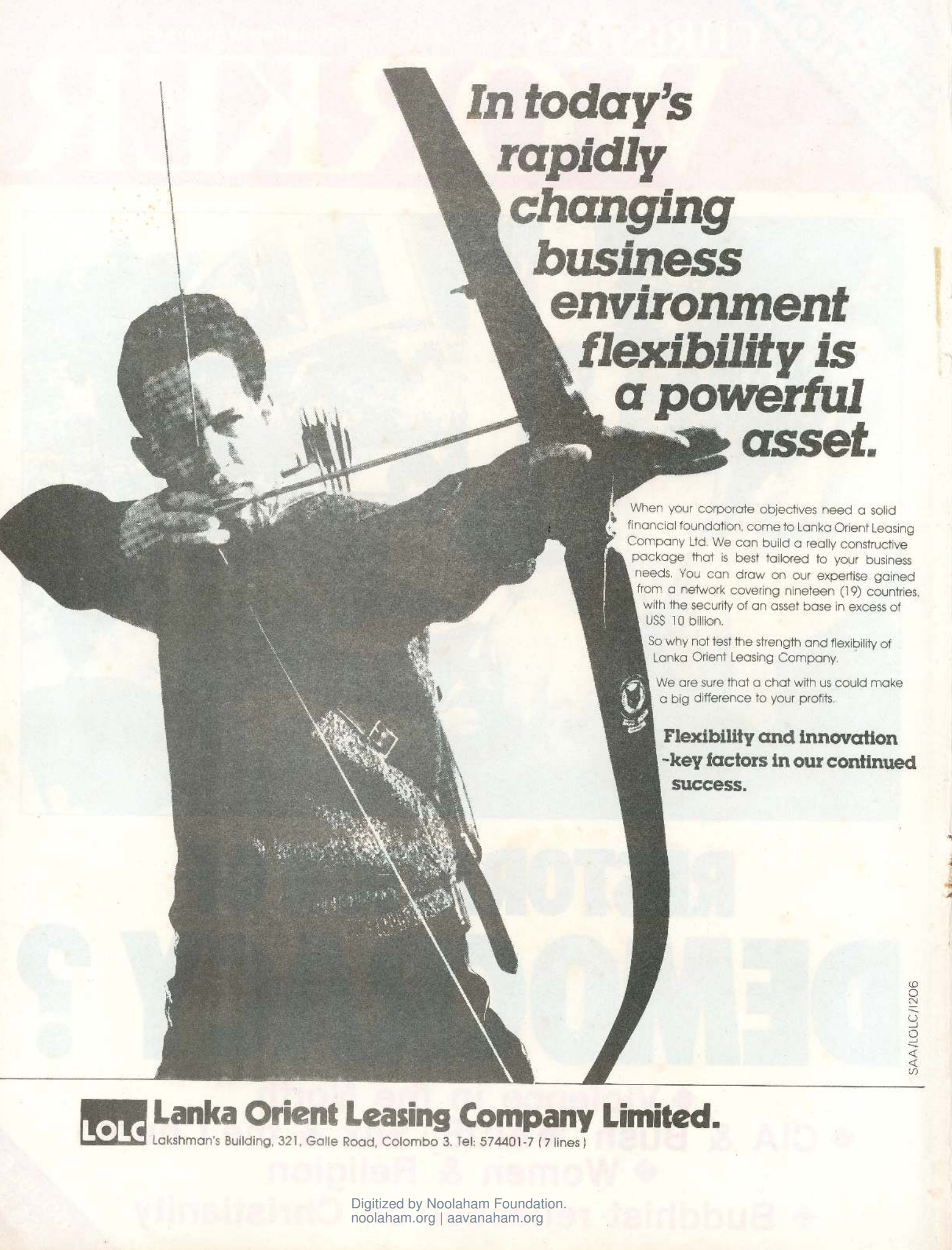
WORKER



RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY ?

- ◆ Violence in the North
- ◆ CIA & Bush ◆ AIDS, Sex & the Church
- ◆ Women & Religion
- ◆ Buddhist Digitized by Noolhan Foundation
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**DOUBLE
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Technical difficulties have prevented this issue of **Christian Worker** from reaching our readers before the Parliamentary General Election of 15th February. We have decided therefore to include a Comment on this Election too in the form of a Special Supplement.

The inauguration of the new President together with other events that preceded the recent General Election have been fully covered in the pages of this issue of **Christian Worker** and provide a useful background in understanding the political climate in which that Election was held.

EDITORIAL BOARD.

1989 GENERAL ELECTION

The Parliamentary General Election of February 15, 1989 has resulted in the UNP securing 125 out of the 225 seats in Parliament.

Under the Proportional Representation system of Elections introduced by the 1978 Constitution and effected for the first time in this General Election, the Opposition parties were able to secure a total of 100 seats among themselves at the polls.

Proportional Representation and Preferential Votes

Proportional Representation (PR) was introduced by the United National Party (UNP) Government with the Constitution of 1978 because it was felt that on the voting figures of the past Elections, the UNP would never have suffered the humiliating defeats it did in 1956 and 1970 if there had been PR. Ironically, this time PR has saved the major Opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) from a similar fate and also enabled the entry into Parliament of a wider range of political opinion that may not in fact have been possible

under the previous constituency based system of representation provided for in the earlier Constitutions. This new system of PR has also provided for voters to cast preferential votes for candidates of their choice on the list of the party they voted for, resulting very often in competition between candidates of the same party for the preference votes as was especially evident among candidates contesting under the UNP lists in the recent Election.

The voting figures showed a 63.6 per cent voter turn-out (5.96 million out of the 9.36 million registered voters), as contrasted with a much higher poll in past General Elections (i.e. 85.2% in 1970 and 86.7% in 1977). It was however an improvement on the last Presidential Election which had a voter turn-out of 55.32%.

Violence and Terror

The reason for this fall in voting numbers was of course the violence and terror tactics employed mainly by the Janata Vimukti Peramuna/Desapremi Janata Viyaparaya (JVP/DJV) in the South and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the North, both of whom had officially declared a boycott of the polls.

Although terror was not as widely evidenced as during the period of the Presidential Election except in certain areas like the deep South, Elections Commissioner Chandrananda de Silva was reported (*Sun* of February 18) as stating that shooting incidents and bomb attacks on polling booths in several districts at this General Election showed an increase in violence when compared with the number of such happenings at the last Presidential Election. Three election officials including a Senior Presiding Officer at Kamburupitiya in the South and two officers on election duty in the Badulla district had been shot dead according to him. Certain polling booths, ballot boxes, vehicles and official election literature too had been torched. Polling had been disrupted at several centres causing cancellation of the poll in 13 Centres according to reports. These included Centres in the Badulla, Anuradhapura, Kegalla, Kurunegala, Polonnaruwa and Kandy districts and approximately 12,000 registered voters were due to have cast their votes at these Centres (*The Sunday Times*).

Parliamentary candidates killed in pre-election violence totalled 14: 7 of them from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), 4 from the United Socialist Alliance (USA) and one each from the United National Party (UNP) and the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC). Apart from the pre-election violence already referred to in this issue of *Christian Worker*, there was even a surprise attack on the military guard post outside the sacred Temple of the Tooth in Kandy on February 8, where 15 automatic assault rifles were removed by the attackers. Some 433 people were reported killed in 6 days of violence from the 11th to the 16th February. According to Security sources 114 people were reported to have been killed within a 24-hour period (*The Sunday Times*) and on election day 84 people were done to death according to *Sun*.

The Voting

Given the background of political violence and the resurgence of intimidation of voters, the response of the voting public was heartening. There were of course allegations of rigging and areas where opposition polling agents were reported to have been driven away by government party supporters and heavy impersonation of voters resorted to, but this was perhaps to be expected going on the experiences of past elections and especially during the Referendum of 1983 when election laws were flouted with impunity. We have already made reference to these dangers in this issue of *Christian Worker*. However, rigging, intimidation and impersonation alone could not have accounted for the results of the recently concluded General Election, so one would have to accept them as the verdict of the electorate. It may be noted however that due to the prevailing terror and violence the voter turn-out in some places especially in the South was very poor, eg. 0.79% in Hakmana, 04.65% in Kamburupitiya, 13.28% in Devinuwara, 14.96% in Akuressa and 11.59% in Deniyaya (Matara district), 6.65% in Tangalla (Hambantota district).

The break-up of the voting figures is as follows:

Party	Votes	Percentage of votes polled
United National Party (UNP)	2,837,961	50.71 %
Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)	1,780,599	31.82 %
Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMP)	202,014	3.61 %
Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF)	188,593	3.37 %
United Socialist Alliance (USA)	160,271	2.86 %
Jaffna Independents (EROS)	150,340	2.69 %
Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP)	95,793	1.21 %
Eksath Lanka Janata Party (ELJP)	67,723	1.71 %
Democratic Peoples Liberation Front (DPLF)	18,504	0.33 %
All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC)	7,610	0.14 %

Other independent groups including EROS in the East accounted for the balance 01.55%

However, the comparatively high proportion of rejected votes at the polls, mostly spoiled deliberately in certain areas, going up to 10.82% in Mihintale (Anuradhapura district), 9.56% in Tissamaharama (Hambantota district), 8.31% in Balapitiya (Galle district), 8.43% in Akuressa (Matara district), 8.74% in Minneriya (Polonnaruwa district), 11.16% in Paddiruppu (Batticaloa district), 14.69% in Kilinochchi (Jaffna district), and 6.90% in Colombo North is also not without significance, indicating perhaps a total rejection of the electoral process itself.

The final party line-up at the end of the Election inclusive of the national seats (in brackets) was:

UNP — 125 (15), SLFP — 67 (09), TULF — 10 (01), Independent Group (EROS) — 13 (01), SLMC — 4 (01), USA — 3 (01), MEP — 3 (01).

North-East Line-up

While the island-wide tussle was predominantly between the two major parties of the UNP and SLFP, the struggle in the North and to a lesser extent in the East was between the Tamil groupings. The Independent Group which won in Jaffna and also got seats in Vanni, Trincomalee and Batticaloa represents in fact the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS) which sought to contest the Election through its political wing the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) but could not because the Commissioner of Elections refused it recognition, resulting in its having to contest as an Independent

Group. This Group was said to also include some LTTE supporters. The final tally of 13 seats for EROS as against 10 for the TULF would appear to be an indication of the reaction of the Tamil people to the conduct of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) which is supportive of the EPRLF and allied militant groups, i.e. TELO and ENDLF all contesting under the TULF name and symbol.

The unenviable position of the people in the North and the need to restore civil administration in that part of the country has been pin-pointed by us already and commented on in the present issue of this journal. It may be noted however that EROS though having links with the LTTE and having been a close associate of it in the past, is also basically supportive of the Indo-Lankan Accord but has pursued a relatively independent path vis-a-vis the role of the LTTE and the IPKF. Significantly it is not identified with the pro-IPKF stance of the EPRLF and allied groups but has also not taken the more sharply critical position of the DPLF — political wing of the Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamileelam (PLOT)—which also contested the North but received only a small vote. The other significant factor in the North-East has been the total rejection of the traditional leadership even by those who voted for candidates contesting under the TULF label. TULF leader A. Amirthalangam lost on the preferential votes cast for the TULF in Batticaloa while Neelan Thiruchelvam and M. Sivasithamparam lost similarly in Jaffna and R. Sampanthan met the same fate in Trincomalee. On the other hand candidates from the EPRLF and allied groups and Citizens' Committee leaders like Prince Casinader and Sam Tambimuttu — all contesting also under the TULF ticket were returned on the preferential votes cast for the TULF at the Election.

The SLMC which as a new political party representative of Muslim interests was expected to make considerable gains in the polls, ended up with 4 seats including one from the national list, the 3 elected for the SLMC coming from the Digamadulla and Batticaloa districts in the East and from the Vanni in the North.

The UNP Victory and Some Surprises

As pointed out already in this issue of **Christian Worker**, the victory of President Premadasa at the Election of December 19, undoubtedly gave the UNP the edge in the General Election of February 15. President Premadasa's projected image of a "People's President" and his Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) entitled 'Janasaviya' on which he concentrated in his campaign (see Comment inside in this issue) was taken so seriously, that the SLFP in its campaign could only seek to imitate him with their own economic offers of Rs. 2,000 a month for food stamp holders and 1 million new jobs for all those employable!

Furthermore, the demoralisation in the SLFP's ranks following its unexpected defeat at the last Presidential polls for which its leadership must take the

blame (see last issue of **Christian Worker** and our Comment in the present issue) and the consequent defection of several SLFP members to the UNP, helped to boost the Government Party's position in no small measure. The availability of apparently unlimited funds for the UNP's election campaign and its vastly superior organization now headed by the newly elected President of the country made the UNP's victory almost a certainty.

What was perhaps quite surprising at this Election was the vote received by Dinesh Gunawardena's MEP and the securing of 3 parliamentary seats by that party (including one on the national list). The MEP and Dinesh Gunawardena especially, received votes mainly from an area (Maharagama, Homagama, Avissawela and Kesbewa) already radicalised by the Left and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) in particular, of which party his (Dinesh's) father, the late Philip Gunawardena had been a founder member and leader until his breakaway in 1950. Dinesh Gunawardena since his becoming MP for Maharagama in the last Parliament at a bye-election, has obviously been able to utilise his position to build a substantial base in this area with his own particular mixture of radical politics and Sinhala chauvinist sentiment not dissimilar to that of the JVP. His association too with the SLFP in the last Presidential Election and his performance in that campaign would also have given him the image of a winning anti-UNP candidate as against some of the SLFP nominees.

The ELJP of Rukman Senanayake advocating the policies of the UNP's Senanayake era and strangely linked with a breakaway group from the SLFP led by S. D. Bandaranayake which claimed the support of the JVP (see Comment in **Christian Worker**) failed however to make any impact in this situation at the polls.

The increasing polarisation of the country in more recent times into UNP and the SLFP as representing the leading anti-UNP force capable of replacing it, has obviously had a disastrous effect on the progress of what was regarded as a Third Force and an alternative to the capitalist politics of these two major parties, namely the United Socialist Alliance (USA) comprising the four Left parties, which too was only able to secure 3 seats in the recent General Election despite fielding candidates of undoubted stature and proven ability in many districts. Which of course would pose the question of the future of Left politics in the country, a matter of special importance to the working people.

Strength and Role of the Left

It was expected that the United Socialist Alliance's showing at this General Election would be an improvement on that of the SLMP candidate at the last Presidential Election specially since the Alliance had received 1,451,164 votes at the Provincial Council polls last year (1988). It turned out however that the USA has now received only what the SLMP candidate got last December less the Tamil votes from the North

and East regions that the USA conceded to the TULF grouping in this General Election (see Comment in this journal).

The two seats won by the USA through the direct vote have come from Sabaragamuwa (Kegalla and Ratnapura districts respectively) generally regarded as a traditional stronghold of the Left since the time of the late LSSP leader Dr. N. M. Perera. (The two MPs now returned are Athauda Seneviratne of the LSSP and Vasudeva Nanayakkara of the NSSP). The Southern Province also regarded as a Left bastion, has since been so undermined by the JVP that with a very low poll, the Communist Party was unable to obtain a single seat in the Matara district held by it earlier during the late Dr. S. A. Wickremesinghe's leadership, although in both the Matara and Galle districts the USA obtained a little more than 5% of the vote. As regards the Kalutara district, also held in the past by the Left, it would appear that with the polarisation of electoral forces between the UNP and SLFP, the traditional Left vote went mainly to the SLFP in this Election. The other traditional Left area, Hewagam Korale (Kelani Valley) has as we have already noted, helped to return Dinesh Gunawardena and his cousin, both from the MEP, to Parliament.

It would appear that the absence of Left MPs in these traditional Left areas for over 11 years, i.e. after the UNP's electoral landslide in the last General Election of 1977, has debilitated the Left in all these areas. The absence of even local government elections during this long period has in fact rendered the Left organizationally inactive and devoid of proper rural cadres especially at the grassroots level. It is no cause for surprise therefore that the Left forces were unable to successfully withstand the ideological capitalist barrage carried out for over 11 years through the mass media, assiduously inculcating consumerist and market economy values — seemingly attractive to a society that was itself predominantly petit-bourgeois in composition and ethos. By these means the enthronement of naked money values over traditional human and religious values in the country became almost complete. Small wonder then that as a result of this "silent revolution," the benefits and glamour of capitalist consumerism could be so successfully contrasted with the shortages and queues of a drab and by-gone "socialist" period, by government spokesmen.

The ever yawning gap between the rich and poor under this open market economy did however provide an opening for the Left to purposefully mobilise the masses and the youth in particular, but the woeful lack of organization on the part of the Left at that level did not enable this and instead made such youth an easy prey to the adventurist politics of the JVP. We have still to recover from the consequences!

It is precisely the awareness of the need to bridge this yawning gap between affluent and the needy that has prompted President Premadasa to so cleverly introduce the "Janasaviya" scheme. But the populist nature of the President's programme could well come into conflict at some stage with the workings of the

present system based on the open market economy, thus creating contradictions which can then provide another opportunity for the Left to push forward towards a break with the system. However the ability to work successfully towards the surfacing of such contradictions will depend on how seriously the Left forces make a proper re-appraisal of their past and purposefully prepare for the future.

A New Stage

With this General Election, Sri Lanka enters a new stage in its Constitutional history. The post-independence period from 1948 was marked by a Westminster style parliamentary system from Whitehall of which the Queen was the symbol of authority. This was followed by the Republican Constitution of 1972 (pledged also to move towards a Socialist democracy) in which power was derived from the people, whose sovereignty in turn was vested in Parliament. This sovereignty of parliament ended in 1978 with the transition to Executive Presidential rule introduced by the Constitution of the same year, under which we have witnessed increasingly authoritarian trends which seemed to take us closer to the dictatorial regimes operated by several of our Asian neighbours. This transitional stage has now given way to the present period with the election of a new President and Parliament in terms of the 1978 Constitution. It would appear that the system of Proportional Representation (PR) provided for under that Constitution has in this instance also resulted in the election of a strong Opposition which hopefully could be a check against further unhealthy authoritarian trends. In any case, the operation of PR in the recent Election has not permitted the 2/3rd majority that the Government hoped for in order to effect further Constitutional changes. (There have been 19 Amendments made within the last ten years to the Constitution of 1978 in marked contrast to the Republican Constitution of 1972 which needed no such amendment).

The existence of numerous groups in the Opposition can however result in some of them ending up with the Government and this could well be the case with a group like the SLMC which preferred to "keep its options open" in order to better strike a bargain for the Muslim Community. It is to be hoped however that the Opposition will nevertheless play the role required of it in this situation so as to help revive the democratic process and work towards eliminating the climate of fear, violence and repression which has so marred our common life and tarnished the good name of our people.

20th February, 1989.

□

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 TELEPHONE: 27701

Quarterly of the Christian Workers Fellowship
**CHRISTIAN
 WORKER**

To Our Readers

Cover photo: President Premadasa signs the Oath taken by him on his inauguration at the Octagon of the Dalada Maligawa before the Chief Justice. (Courtesy: **Daily News**) See Page 4.

We have always endeavoured to keep this journal within the reach of working people. Due to rising costs however we have been compelled to raise its price from 1989 to Rs. 10/-. The annual subscription will therefore be Rs. 40/-, inclusive of postage. We trust our readers will understand

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From our readers

Appreciation

Friends,

We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation of "Christian Worker" and also our admiration for your courageous stand on vital issues of serious consequence for the church and for the world.

I request you to please continue to send us 'Christian Worker', although we are not able to send a subscription, both because of difficulties of sending money outside the country and also of our crippled economic situation created by Church Authorities consequent upon my election to the State Legislative Assembly. We await the day of liberation.

With kind regards,
 Yours sincerely,
Fr. Jacob, S.J.

Good News Welfare Society
 Kalghati P.O. 581 204
 Dharwar Dist, Karnataka, India.

On Free & Fair Elections

Dear Sir,

Please find annexed an article on "FREE & FAIR ELECTIONS AND SAARC OBSERVERS" written by me dated 24th December, 1988, which kindly publish in your esteemed journal.

Subsequently, several southern towns and villages such as Matara, Kamburupitiya, Dikwella, Urapola, Palatuwa, Hunnadeniya, Ratmale etc. were visited on December 26th and 27th and January 06th. Information received from ordinary villagers (farmers, labourers, carpenters, boutique keepers, village elders etc.) confirm that there was a well-planned campaign of terror, particularly in areas known to be anti-government, just before election day. In certain areas it was so intense that people fled from their road-side homes to the interior. Much of this activity is said to have been carried out during curfew hours. One example—

Early in the morning of December 18th two vehicles stopped at the junction of a village 14 miles from Matara. A gun shot was heard. The vehicles sped away. As day dawned a dead body of a man about 30 years old was found by the road-side. Later in the day it transpired that two more dead youth were found along this same road one and a half a mile away and the other about one and a half miles away. The first corpse lay unattended till two days after the election. During this time dogs and other animals had attacked the body and even disembowelled it. The villagers buried it, thereafter.

It would appear that youth abducted in one area were taken 20 or 30 miles away, killed and left in prominent places, ostensibly with the intention of causing fear.

On election day, in two of the villages visited not a single person had gone to vote. Later in the morning, the military arrived, rounded up people in their houses and asked them to cast their votes. In one of the villages, the military were able to get hold of only twelve (12) persons. The rest had fled in fear.

The government is duty-bound to provide facilities and security for every voter to exercise his franchise. Failure in this respect amounts to a gross denial of a fundamental and sacred right to vote for the election of a President of his choice. No law or regulation that enables the election authorities to proceed with a poll when this right is violated can be considered just. The President so elected starts off at a great disadvantage as those who desired to vote but could not do so would naturally be aggrieved.

It is sad to think that a country acknowledged for the fairness of its people has come to such a sorry pass in so short a time.

Yours faithfully,
Nissanka de Silva

39, Gunasekera Gardens, Rajagiriya.
 10th January, 1989.

Editors' Note: We regret that limitations of space especially do not permit us to reproduce the article sent with this letter.

Pro - Poor Image

This is the latest
In the political fashion concept,
In Tamil-Nadu, they say
Congress lacked it
And D.M.K. had it.
The Fashion makers
Over work all the time
Over time,
In most sophisticated styles.
So that the poor
As they see the wearer
Of the image,
Would simply clap.
Rich-look is ugly
They presume :
To make the ugly
Look smart
C.I.A. thinks
Is to be wise,
A necessary price
For their survival.
So embrace
These images
And let poor be poorer
That's the latest alternative.
To be poor in public
To get richer
In private,
Is essential, the rich
Have realized.

—M. Lalith

An Appeal from a Veteran of World War-II and the Sri Lanka Army 1940 - 1969

THE EDITOR

DEAR SIR.,

Warmest Greetings

The Armed Forces have always been the uncles to all Citizens of Sri Lanka scattered over the nine Provinces. They are not politically motivated. They are prohibited from joining political parties!

We all know that uncles care for children much more lovingly than even their parents. The last thing a member of the Armed Forces would do is to kill by choice! They have no choice when called out by the President and the Government, to meet violence with violence, and that too only after the Police Peace officers find it beyond their capacity to overcome that violence. The Armed Forces are there to assist the Civil Power, not to usurp that power!

In connection with Internal Security functions—there is no hatred or hostility towards a foreign enemy. Our own blood have to be disciplined, nay tamed, with head and heart—not with guns!

I enclose two of my efforts for Peace, Harmony and Unity which I hope expresses the view of 95% of the people of Sri Lanka.

No one can disgrace us but ourselves and our leaders!

Colonel Lyn Wickremasuriya
19, Siripa Lane Havelock Town
Colombo—5
16-1-1989

P.S.—You may recall my visit to your office at the YMCA? I think—on my suggestion WORKER has been resorted to express Universality—and Christian—(mellowed!)!! The issue of 3rd Quarter December 1988 is excellent.

Let us say 'Fare-Well to Arms'

Who are the beneficiaries of the use of military hardware, weapons, aircraft, tanks, armoured cars, grenades, mines, bombs and ammunition?

The answer is "The manufacturers of these weapons of destruction in the affluent Capitalist, Communist and Socialist countries!"

These armament manufacturers are laughing their sides out, pleased with the antics of terrorist insurgents who purchase these weapons (and the officials also of National Government!)

Millions of rupees are being drained out of Sri Lanka for these purchases—what for? For destroying our own kith and kin, certainly not for fighting wars against aggressive foreign nations!

Intellectuals, Political leaders both present and up-and-coming, administrators the flower of our youth and our workers are being gradually destroyed by the use of these weapons! The education of our University students and school children is suffering!

Must your voice, be heard only through the muzzle of a gun? Why not press for a Constitutional amendment to have the leaders or their representatives of Political Parties, recognized by the Commissionner of Elections, who are not represented after a General Election, to be nominated by the President to take their place in Parliament, particularly as no small political parties could ever hope to have a majority Government?

If your voices are heard in Parliament, the voices of the gun will not be necessary! Leaders of the South, Leaders of the North, remember that you can be called true leaders only if you can win the hearts and minds of people without resort to the use of weapons.

Lay down your arms friends, and let those peace-loving, duty-conscious members of the Army, Navy and Air Force return to their barracks and to their loved ones. Let the Civil Police carry out its peace-keeping duties and let us live as one family, in Peace and Harmony!

And say thank you for the IPKF for their valuable services.

Colonel Lyn Wickremasuriya

"Our own our native land!"

We who are born in Sri Lanka
This island in the sun, this gem
Set in the mighty Indian Ocean
Born from her womb, nurtured
by her blood

Mother Lanka who set off our
first heart beat

To the beat of our drums:

Who gave us birth in the North,
In the South, in the East, in the West
And in the Central hills of
this verdant land

With her blood running in our veins
Through twenty-five centuries

We brothers and sisters called Sinhalese
Thamils, Muslims, Moors, Malays
Dutch Burghers, Portuguese Burghers,
Parsees, Bhorahs, Schindhis
Are surely One nation, One People!

A house divided cannot stand:
Why do we than, one of the most civilised
Nations in the world with a rich
diverse culture

And diverse heritage
Want to leech on to the blood of
other nations

Abandoning our true Mother?

Let us abhor fragmentation
By the pressures of power crazy politicians
By diverse pressures of caste, creed, race
Wealth and poverty, accidents of birth
All of them detrimental

To the well being and
harmony of one nation

Let there be differences only so far
As they adorn the Garden, this paradise
Like thousands of flowers, birds

Let us save our country for our children:
"Into that Heaven of Freedom, My Father
Let my country awaken" (Tagore)

—Colonel Lyn Wickramasuriya

Noble Hopes

Would that I were the monsoon rains,
Falling mightily upon a thirsty plain.
Would that I were a rice pot steaming,
Unknown, in a hut where hunger's
stalking.

Would that I were a lasting smile,
Upon the sad lips of a crying child.
Would that I were a wild flower in bloom,
Picked up to brighten someone's gloom.

Would that I were a dream fulfilled,
Someone's broken life to build.
Would that I were the song they are singing,
From home to home, the world
awakening.

*(Adapted from a Sinhala Lyric by
Sunil Ariyaratne Sung by Nanda Malini Gokula
Translated by Kenneth Fernando)*

RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY ?

The restoration of democratic processes after 11 long years of Executive Presidential rule which climaxed in the orgy of violence that preceded the election of the second President, is by all accounts not going to be an easy task. In fact, after an apparent lull in violence immediately after the last Presidential election, the approach of the Parliamentary General Elections on February 15th, saw accelerated activity by gunmen with some 584 persons reported killed throughout the country between the first and twenty-sixth January and 206 of them killed in the last three days. They included Sri Lanka Freedom Party's Assistant Secretary Indrapala Abeyweera with two others. The first three days of February too saw 79 reported killings and up to that time 12 candidates at the Parliamentary General Elections were reported killed, 7 of them from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), 3 from the United Socialist Alliance (USA) and 1 candidate each from the United National Party (UNP) and the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC). Three Colombo Police Stations, 2 of them (Bambalapatiya and Mattakkuliya) within the City and another in Ragama within the Colombo district were reported to have been attacked simultaneously by subversives on January 28th night, leaving 5 policemen and a civilian dead while the attackers made off with a number of weapons.

The approach of the Presidential Election on December 19th last too saw an escalation of violence though on a much bigger scale. A few days before that Election — December 14th night to be exact — there was even a daring jail break attack launched by subversives on Colombo's maximum security Welikada Magazine Prison which resulted in the escape of some 225 prisoners most of them said to be members of the Desapremi Janata Viyaparaya/Janata Vimukti Peramuna (DJV/JVP) including key subversive military leaders among them. The very eve of this Election — December 18th, saw the brutal gunning down in his temple of the Ven. Pohoddaramulla Pemaaloka Nayaka Thera, a well-known Buddhist monk in Waskaduwa and patron of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP), the first monk to become a victim in the more recent political murders effected by subversives.

Continuing Politics of the Gun

Despite the apparent marked lull in violence immediately after the last Presidential Election with the restoration of communications and transport and the revival of normal civic life especially in Colombo city and urban areas, killings have gone on in the more rural areas in portions of the North Western, North Central and Southern Provinces especially. Much of this violence was directed against those who had dared to defy the DJV/JVP directive to refrain from voting at the Presidential polls. In fact 107 killings were reported on the day following the Election. (The total killed for December was said to be 1,200 which figure however also includes those killed prior to the December 19th Presidential Election). Other forms of reprisals, as for example in the Anuradhapura areas, included the tying of the victims to trees in the jungle and their being forced to clear shrubs from the bunds of Wewas (ancient reservoirs) and from cemeteries. So it was abundantly clear from that time too that the politics of the gun had not ended or stopped. It was only not as widespread as it used to be earlier but again gathered momentum with the nearing of the parliamentary general elections. The closing of shops and disruption of schools have however apparently stopped though efforts at the Moratuwa and Peradeniya University Campuses to get the final year Engineering students not to study for their final examination under duress seems to have had results. What the situation would be when the University Campuses re-open this year (1989) remains to be seen. How far then have there been real efforts at a restoration of democracy and of democratic processes?

President's Populist Image

In his Presidential Election campaign Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa was able to successfully project himself as the Candidate of the common people and the under-privileged masses, carefully distancing himself from the sins of the former UNP Government of which he had for over 11 years been the Prime

Minister. His humble social origin in marked contrast to that of his patrician predecessor in office and his chief opponent Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike who came from an aristocratic Kandyan family, gave President Premadasa a populist image of a person who was more down to earth, willing to help the poor and under-privileged and able to carry out his promises.

Mr. Premadasa has also always used the media to good effect as can be seen by the build-up he has received after his election victory both in the State run and in the nominally independent newspapers. Even as regards the troublesome JVP/DJV, President Premadasa has apparently built rapport with this group and been identified as being among the "patriotic sections" of the UNP which opposed the Indo-Lankan Peace Accord. Significantly the JVP's wrath has been directed at former President Jayewardene personally and it is said that even the targets of the DJV terror within the Government Party's ranks were essentially his supporters. It is only in the most recent of the DJV's circulars that President Premadasa is apparently referred to by name, where the DJV says that he is a camp follower of J. R. Jayewardene. However President Premadasa is also reported to have had discussions with Dr. Chandra Fernando, JVP leader Wijeweera's brother-in-law, released from detention recently, with a view to reaching some understanding.

The new President has also cleverly sought to cultivate and win the support of religious dignitaries and of the Maha Sangha in particular as was evident from the very beginning of his election campaign and his inauguration ceremony after religious observances, at the Octagon of the Temple of the Tooth the holiest Buddhist shrine in the country, which itself it may be noted in passing, was an effective answer to those who had questioned the presumption of a commoner to stand in a place formerly reserved for kings and chieftains. (That the common people of the Kandyan provinces, themselves socially under-privileged, had opted strongly for Mr. Premadasa cannot however be questioned on the voting figures of the election). With the Dharmachakra as a back drop and the two Venerable Mahanayakes of Asgiriya and Malwatte seated on either side, the Temple's custodian Diyawadana Nilame Nirnanjan Wijeyeratne standing by in his traditional chieftain's attire, and joined by his wife and children, President Premadasa took his oaths in an impressive ceremony at the auspicious time in the sight of the people at the historic Octagon of the Sri Dalada Maligawa on January 2nd. It ended with a proclamation reminiscent of rulers in Kandy's colourful medieval past read out by the Secretary to the President after the swearing in: "It is hereby proclaimed that His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa having taken refuge in the Triple Gem and observed the Five Precepts in the presence of the Sacred Tooth Relic that had felt the touch of the eighty-four thousand Dharma Skandas . . ." The first official act of the new President soon after this inauguration was to grant 10 hectares of land and make the gift of a young elephant to the Temple of the Tooth.

Partly perhaps as an inducement on the part of the President to "those who have still to join the democratic

process" to do so, the State of Emergency which had been in force for over 5 years was revoked by Presidential Decree from the midnight of January 11th and nearly 1400 youth held in Detention Camps at Boosa, Moratuwa and elsewhere were freed. All emergency regulations including those vesting extraordinary powers in the police and armed forces ceased to operate, notable among them the recent regulations permitting the disposal of dead bodies without inquests and prolonged detention in police custody.

However, on January 25th, Security Forces were placed on the alert and ordered to step up operations after Government declared that "a few subversive elements and disgruntled supporters of political parties are trying to cause violence, disruption and sabotage." The communique issued by the Ministry of Defence stated: "Although Emergency Regulation is now not in operation, the security forces and police are empowered by Part 3 of the Public Security Act to deal firmly with any situation that may arise and afford protection to the public." (The Prevention of Terrorism Act too could be utilised if necessary to deal with subversive elements). This Ministry move came with the increase in violence and the killing and wounding of candidates at the February 15th General Elections. More recently, responding to requests from parliamentary election candidates in the Matara and Hambantota districts for assurances of voter security on election day, the Army was reported to be "planning to launch an operation to ensure that voting in the Southern Province will be free of impediments" (The Sunday Times, 5 February). Already posters are said to have appeared in many Southern Province towns calling for a boycott of the parliamentary elections.



His Excellency President R. Premadasa



N-E Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal

Meanwhile as a part of President Premadasa's offer of a "New Deal" for the country, the Government has announced the setting up of a Presidential Mobile Service to cater to the needs of people in the provinces and to monitor the implementation of Government policies and take follow-up action. The President also announced on January 10th that initially 1.5 million people would benefit when 300,000 families were given the monthly benefits of Rs. 2,500 each under his Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) set to start in April entitled "Jana Saviya." Speaking on February 2nd night to the nation on the significance of Independence Day (February 4th), President Premadasa said: "Half of our population live in extreme poverty. Now our attempt is to transform this poor and weak population numbering 70 to 80 lakhs into a population consisting of individuals with means and capability. Now action is being taken to provide them with nutrition for physical growth and to make them active partners in production. The coming 24 months — the 2 year period ahead of us — could be considered a period during which a silent revolution will take place in this country **The 'haves' in society will be safe only if the 'have-nots' are made persons of some means.**" (our emphasis).

Conscious as he no doubt is of the yawning gulf between rich and poor under the policies of the last UNP Government and mindful too of the votes he received during the Presidential Election from the under-privileged masses of the country and from the plantation workers of recent Indian origin with the grant of Citizenship (which ironically they had been deprived of in 1948 by Citizenship Laws also enacted by a UNP Government) and the support of Mr. S. Thondaman's Ceylon Workers Congress as a partner of the Government, President Premadasa's anxiety to maintain his populist image of a "People's President" and also to convince the capitalist and privileged social layers of the need to alleviate poverty as the leader of the United National Party which is pledged to protect the interests of the ruling class, is understandable.

The new President in his inaugural speech has emphasised the need to mobilise local resources for development: "We must create our own resources. We must build with our own resources. Depending needlessly on foreign assistance is to mortgage both our independence and our future." Brave words. But if he is to continue with the open economic policies of the Jayewardene era which made us so dependent on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), the President will perforce have to accommodate himself to the pressures of these two institutions which as we can see from two articles appearing elsewhere in this issue, have had such disastrous consequences for under-developed countries like our own.

Devolution of Power and Civil Administration

To carry out his programme, President Premadasa's main hope for reviving the economy is to restore peace both in the North-East and in the South for only then can foreign investment and tourism be properly revived again. In so far as the North and East are concerned, the President is committed to the Provincial Council system and he has even now reached a working relationship with the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) administration there headed by Chief Minister A. Varatharaja Perumal. (EPRLF members are known to have even backed President Premadasa at the December 19th Election though officially committed to supporting the SLMP candidate, in order to safeguard the position of Provincial Councils from being threatened in the event of Mrs. Bandaranaike winning that election).

Although a critic of India's role in the "ethnic" conflict and the Indo-Lankan Accord, President Premadasa seems to have quickly built up a working relationship with the Indian diplomats in Colombo and the withdrawal of two battalions of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) on a request made by him is an indication of the goodwill between the Sri Lankan and Indian leaders.

However the restoration of civil administration in the North remains an important and urgent task especially in view of the violence that is evident there even at present, on which recent documentation by the Jaffna University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR-J) is now available (see item on "Violence in the North" inside). The role of the IPKF and EPRLF cadres has been subject to much criticism in the light of events in the North though the position seems to have improved in the East. The shelling by the IPKF into civilian areas in the North, the beating up of civilians and even shooting at them on the remotest shadow of suspicion is now very common — almost without exception after an incident of alleged LTTE violence. In this context, the detention by the IPKF of members of a recognised political party presently contesting parliamentary elections in the North — the Democratic People's Liberation Front (DPLF) and workers of The Relief and Rehabilitation Fund (TRRF) said to be allied to it, would appear to be quite unwarranted

and a violation of fundamental rights especially in the context of the rescinding of the Emergency by President Premadasa. This party is reputed to be the political wing of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil-eelam (PLOT) whose leader is the Uma Maheswaran and which has been critical of the Indian presence and the IPKF. In any case, we obviously cannot have a situation in which two sets of laws (or the absence of normal laws) operate in different parts of the country. Steps should be taken forthwith to correct this situation in the interests of safeguarding the sovereignty and unitary nature of the Sri Lankan State about which all parties except perhaps the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are now agreed. In this context we must recall the firm pledge given by the new President at the historic octagon of the Sri Dalada Maligawa: "Whatever the cost, I will not surrender an inch of Sri Lankan territory. Whatever the cost, I will not surrender a shred of our sovereignty. We should not and will not create situations that provoke or invite interventions." The restoration of civil administration in the North and the placing of the security forces including the IPKF under such civil authority therefore constitutes a vital step towards the restoration of the democratic process in our country. We are happy to note that the Left forces are also supportive of this position (see the LSSP statement inside).

The Parliamentary General Election

While the election of a UNP President would undoubtedly give that party the edge in the February 15th General Election, the narrow victory in the December 19th Election shows that there is a substantial section of the population that does not agree with the policies of the United National Party (see our last issue for an Analysis of the Presidential Election). This position should therefore be reflected in the next Parliament despite the desertions from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) ranks to the UNP after the latter's victory on December 19th. The system of proportional representation too should assist in that process. It is to be hoped that in view of the experience we have already had and suffered from the last 11 years of a massive 5/6 UNP majority, the next parliament would have a strong opposition so as to make democracy a reality in our land. The devaluation of Parliament under the Executive Presidential system and the poor and ineffective opposition for over 11 years by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in the last Parliament, calls in fact for a strong Left, i.e. United Socialist Alliance (USA) presence in the next Parliament. This is demanded too in the interests of the working people since for 11 long years their voice has not been articulated with its accustomed strength within Parliament and through it to the country after the UNP electoral landslide of 1977 and the Referendum of 1983 which forestalled a general election that year.

Furthermore the need for and importance of such principled politics is seen in the present sorry debacle of the SLFP which had a good chance of winning the Presidential Election especially in view of the UNP



Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike

Government's unpopularity on many issues. As we have pointed out in the Analysis of the Presidential Election in our last issue of *Christian Worker*, it was precisely the unprincipled positions of the SLFP leadership and its lack of political foresight that did not make such a victory possible. Even in the present parliamentary election the SLFP has sought to counter the UNP's Rs. 2,500 *Janasaviya* programme (denounced by it earlier as impracticable) with purely vote-catching and opportunist gimmicks, eg. Rs. 2,000 a month for food stamp holders and 1 million new jobs for all those employable, going back also on some progressive measures put forward by it in the manifesto of the "Democratic People's Alliance" though not actually canvassed during Mrs. Bandaranaike's election campaign. One of those progressive measures that remain in the new SLFP election manifesto is the abolition of the Executive Presidential system and restoration of Parliamentary sovereignty but even here one must suspect (in view of Mrs. Bandaranaike's deafening silence on this issue during her presidential election campaign) that this has been retained only because she lost that Election! If as we pointed out in our last issue, Mrs. Bandaranaike came to some principled understanding with the Left on this vital question as her main election plank, she could well have won the election. The stage would then have been set for the election of a parliament that could have functioned also as a Constituent Assembly to devise a new Constitution to restore the parliamentary system of government in which the sovereignty of the people would vest, in place of the present Executive Presidential system under which we have experienced increasingly authoritarian trends and erosion of democratic freedoms. It is to be hoped even now that there will be such a possibility in the future in the interests of reviving genuine parliamentary democracy in our land.

Breakaways and Alignments

As regards the SLFP's Grand Alliance that was sought to be promoted—the "Democratic People's Alliance," it was shortlived and the constituent parties to it have since gone their separate ways. From this Alliance, said to originally consist of 8 parties, the first to break away was the JVP, followed soon after by the Eksath Lanka Jatika Party (ELJP) of Rukman Senanayake which should be closer to President Premadasa by virtue of its avowed loyalty to former Premier Dudley Senanayake's memory. (This party now is in alliance with a group of ex-SLFPers led by S. D. Bandaranayake calling themselves the Sri Lanka People's Progressive Front who claim background support for them by the JVP even though the latter stands for a boycott of the elections). The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) of M. H. M. Ashraff was the next breakaway from the Alliance preferring to "keep its options open" for the sake of striking a bargain for the Muslim community and having at present some sort of no-contest agreement with the ELJP. Two other former constituents of the Alliance—the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) of Dinesh Gunawardena and the Tamil Congress (ACTC) of Kumar Ponnambalam are also now contesting on their own separately, leaving the SLFP with two miniscule hangers on in the Liberal Party of Chanaka Amaratunga and the Democratic Workers Congress (DWC) of A. Aziz.

In the North and East the Tamil Liberation Front (TULF) leads the campaign with the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) The Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF) and the EPRLF contesting under the TULF name and symbol. This grouping has a no-contest-support agreement too with the USA. Ten members of the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) the political wing of EROS also contesting the election separately are said to have withdrawn following LTTE threats that all participants in the General Elections will be killed. (The LTTE has called for a boycott of the Elections) As stated earlier, the DPLF is also contesting the North in view of its inability to come to terms with the alleged pro-Indian stance of Tamil grouping contesting under TULF label, though its movement could be restricted on account of both IPKF and LTTE hostility. The UNP too is fielding a list of candidates in the North and East.

In the Southern province, DJV/JVP posters are reported to have appeared with a parliamentary elections-boycott call. The position of the JVP is reflected in an article by its leader Rohana Wijeweera appearing in *The Lankadeepa/Sunday Times* of February 5th: "None of the country's problems were solved by the presidential elections. Neither will they be. Similarly, none of the problems will be solved by the conspiracy of the general elections. We appeal to fellow citizens to boycott them and join the liberation struggle of the Motherland. Indian imperialists will not go voluntarily. Jayewardenes and Thondamans will not go voluntarily. Tamil Eelam terrorists will not voluntarily give up the privileges they have got. The country

will not escape from slavery. It has to be rescued from slavery" (our emphasis). Hence the messianic role of people's liberators assumed therefore by the JVP/DJV (see the analysis of JVP politics in the past issues of *Christian Worker*). But the use of terror by self-appointed liberators substituting themselves for the masses can only be counter-productive, even suicidal. And as Engels once remarked, terror is not a sign of radicalism, but of fear.

Who Dunit?

While supporters of both major capitalist parties of UNP and SLFP have also indulged in violence, Chief SLFP organizer for the Matara district Mahinda Wijesekera himself a JVP'er during the 1971 insurrection, is bitter about the murder of his supporters. In a statement to *The Sunday Times*, Wijesekera has said: "We must be very frank and we should say who is behind the killings. The UNP and SLFP are trying to put the blame on each other. No one wants to comment about the JVP factor in violence because the politicians fear that people would refrain from voting" he said. Also because they do not want to directly confront the JVP, we may add!

Mahinda Wijesekera however did not absolve the UNP of blame in this regard but has charged the UNP with "towing a line with the JVP." But this is precisely what the SLFP leaders too did and that too at a time when it was taken for granted that the UNP would be roundly trounced at any election and its MPs were unable to even go to their own constituencies! The SLFP too knew who was behind the violence that rocked the country the last few months but were hand in glove then with the JVP, until of course the guns were pointed in their direction later. Then they screamed blue murder! It was clear that by themselves the JVP/DJV were incapable of spreading disruption and terror as they did and it was only the SLFP's alliance with the JVP that made this possible. The SLFP led boycott of the Provincial Council elections too gave the DJV/JVP an excellent chance to have a "dress rehearsal" for the Presidential Election in which the terror used by it at the SLFP-led boycott now boomeranged on the SLFP itself and scared away its voters. Rohana Wijeweera in his recent article referred to already, has stated: "The SLFP was planning to ride to power on the shoulders of the JVP and the patriotic masses through trickery and then to suppress them." Once however with the SLFP's support, terror had taken over the country, the JVP/DJV was able easily to ditch the SLFP and keep away its voters from the polls at the Presidential Elections to the advantage of the UNP.

As was pointed out by us earlier in these columns, it is precisely the unwillingness of the major political parties of the UNP and SLFP to mobilise mass opinion against the terror politics of the DJV/JVP and their efforts instead to win the support of the latter group for their own ends, that contributed greatly to the success of this disruptive terror. (Of the three Presiden-

tial candidates, only the SLMP's Ossie Abeygoonsekera had the courage to directly confront the DJV/JVP and he had to face gunmen at his meetings).

The *Sunday Times* report already referred to states that a number of army officers presently operating in the South are disgusted with the attitude of politicians there. Political interference it said had now heightened with the elections drawing closer. "One officer accused a prominent politician in the area of harbouring a JVP leader in the South known to be directly responsible for the murders of at least 11 persons. 'We have direct evidence against most of the bodyguards recruited by the politicians' the officer complained. 'They keep these chaps under their wings for a very short-lived purpose. If that is the attitude of the politicians when the country is in turmoil, what is the future of the country?' he asked. The officer said he was taken to task by his superiors for fighting with the politicians for what he thought was justice." Meanwhile of course, the hunting down and killing of youth suspected of subversive activity by various armed groups also goes on.

Actor turned politician Gamini Fonseka who heads the UNP list in Matara has said: "pockets of villages with JVP supporters have pledged their support for me," adding that at least 60 JVP youth were working for him. Whether these youth have left the JVP he does not know he said but with the known severity of JVP punishments meted out to 'traitors' this is unlikely. Gamini Fonseka according to the same report has also had talks with JVP leader Wijeweera's brother-in-law Dr. Chandra Fernando who was released a few days earlier and had met President Premadasa in Colombo. According to Mr. Fonseka the President had agreed to "consider legitimate demands made by the JVP." What results such parleys could bring is difficult to say now, but in view of the present serious threat of violence on the eve of the parliamentary general elections, it behoves the President and Government to do all in their power to ensure the peace and security of both candidates and voters. This is the basic task of any good government and on which a government's performance must necessarily be judged. Before going on to the economic questions confronting the country, we will first have to address ourselves to the need to end the campaigns of terror and sabotage and to create conditions in our country in which people can live without constant fear and tension. Allied to this is the need to restore democratic forms, procedures and modes of behaviour which have been seriously undermined after over 11 years of UNP Executive Presidential rule. In fact, the UNP victory at the presidential election (despite its narrow margin) coupled with increasing SLFP desertions to the UNP in consequence, has given a certain 'cock-sureness' to the Government and even tempted its leaders to behave in the same manner as they did during the referendum of 1983 when the Election laws were so openly flouted and governmental power so brazenly misused as to warrant strictures on the part of the Elections Commissioner himself in a Report made by him subsequently. This situation certainly does not speak well for the prospect of free and fair parliamentary

elections. It is to be hoped therefore that history will not be repeated in this respect and public confidence in the democratic electoral process thereby seriously undermined. It is the responsibility of the Government and the President in particular to avert such a tragedy.

5th February, 1989.

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Some Thoughts on the Future

The coming Parliamentary General Election will perhaps settle this country's future for a sizeable — and indeed critical — period of its history. In fact, the period 1989-1990 will not only be decisive for Sri Lanka but for the present world economic system and its future destiny — including its two sectors, the capitalistic and socialistic ones — when the clock strikes to herald the third millenium after Christ. Why do we say this?

International Dependence and Third World Impoverishment

First, though countries are increasingly linked — inter-dependently, in the lexicon of latter day economists — but in fact and truth, dependently, in such a manner that wealth is funnelled from the impoverished periphery (of which Sri Lanka is a part) to the already rich metropolitan centres — Washington, New York, London, Paris, Rome, Bonn, thus draining the Third World of its essential resources and marginalising its people, it follows that micro-events — social, economic and political in each country, readily slot into place in a recognisable and intelligible pattern. Let us examine our recent social, economic and political history in this context.

A Glimpse at the Post-1977 Scenario

To get back to and understand the 'long-run' events, we have to hark back to 1977. In that year,

the representative par-excellence of the capitalist-entrepreneur class of Sri Lanka, as distinct from its feudal-rentier class, took power and heavy-handedly, but effectively, carried out an economic change, for which the country was economically and politically ripe but socially unprepared. This was a transformation into a classical capitalist-type economy with substantial injections of foreign capital, foreign aid and know-how. The change has set in motion foreseeable consequences by way of structural changes economically and socio-cultural changes with explosive potential in the future.

The impact on the economy, income distribution and living standards has been sketched onto with aplomb by one of the leading economists in the last issue of this Journal. Some aspects he highlights are the deep crisis pervading the entire fabric of our body politic, the skewing of the income distribution pattern, making the rich inordinately rich and the poor miserably poorer, the erosion of the social welfare system, the stagnation of expenditure on health and education services, the higher incidence of malnutrition, the attenuation of opportunities for social mobility of the lower strata in a manner unparalleled in the past. These are all developments adverse to the poorer sections of society which stem from the open market economy, which emerged in 1977, heralding a highly import-intensive pattern of development, causing a net deficit in foreign exchange resources which could not release adequate growth impulses within the domestic production sectors for **sustained and self-reliant national development even in the capitalist mode.** These deleterious effects of the open economy policies will take time to work themselves out to their logical outcome. In the meantime, social and cultural impact of this change are more manifestly visible, for the simple reason that they are the earliest signs of the basic malaise that affects our economic life as also the life of related economies in other countries.

We are all familiar with the general situation of lawlessness that prevails in the country. The reference is not made to bank robberies and political killings by whosoever they are, but the more insidious and less apparently lawless activity of assassinations in the guise of maintaining law and order, arrests with no grounds stated, shooting by subversives and shooting down of subversives, both in an equally arbitrary style, reminiscent of the barbaric and inhuman genocide and brutalities preceding and during World War II.

Travails of the Open Market System

What has happened at a micro-level in our country is faithfully mirrored by events in the free market economy countries elsewhere. Let us look at these commonalities and their significance. Politically, almost everywhere, there has been a marked tendency for political parties of the extreme right to hold power repeatedly through the ballot, where it exists, or alternatively through naked military rule. Whether naked or clothed in the threadbare habiliments of Westminster-style Parliamentary democracy or American style rule, this simply means that the capitalist class, conscious of an ever increasing threat to their rule are dropping

the pretence to democracy and tightening their stranglehold on national life — social and political.

Put differently, the attachment of the rich to Parliamentary democracy and the process of law is in inverse proportion to their confidence and ability to continue their outmoded and exploitative apparatus of free enterprise economy without serious challenge.

The glittering gold mask of liberalism and democracy is peeling off revealing the horrendous and evil face of the acquisitive dog-eat-dog society with its blessed accompaniments, the widespread use of narcotics, the increase of sexual exploitation of young boys and women, the bribery of the public by the tantalizing benefits of a one in a thousand chance at a sweep; the escalating murder of political opponents and the mounting death toll has risen to 584 in January alone, despite a euphoria synthetically created about peace after December 19th. This peace is indeed resounding and reverberating throughout the length and breadth of the country.

The Way Ahead

The great lesson from past events is that all progressive forces at the left and centre of the political spectrum should join unitedly to alert the people against the great peril that the fabric of democracy itself faces. As reactionary right-wing forces sharpen the knives for the final plunge into the heart of all freedoms and democracy, it is imperative that the people together ensure that voting should be high and the repetition of an overriding majority as occurred in 1977, be prevented at all costs.

The inept and kaleidoscopic policy changes — “monkey jumps” as the general secretary of the LSSP described it — of the SLFP do not help towards this end. Even at this late stage, with the loss of so many of their candidates by planned murder, the SLFP would do well to shake itself out of its torpor. Otherwise, the entire nation could face one of the darkest periods in its history. The task ahead cannot be carried out by the USA alone. It requires all progressive hands on the decks of political action. The Nation will pay a heavy price for failure.

Many knowledgeable economists, among them, Dr. Ravi Batra, of Southern Methodist University in the United States, predict the worst economic depression in world economic history beginning the second half of 1990 and lasting a long period of six years, within which the world economic systems as we know it, may disappear into limbo. If we create political power in this country, with an overwhelming majority as in 1977, we will be sowing the wind of folly to reap the worldwind of economic disaster. At least that is one good reason why there should not be overwhelming political clout for one party ever again.

7th February 1989

Violence in the North

We reproduce without comment the following information we have received from Jaffna for the benefit of our readers

Incident at St Patrick's College, Jaffna

On the morning of 26th November 1988 started a series of events which led to the tragic death of a 17 year old church organist, Jude Zachcharias, who according to people who knew him well was not involved with any militant group. During and after these events several innocent persons, including two priests and students of St. Patrick's College, were assaulted. These events point out the sad plight of innocent civilians caught in the middle of the internecine warfare between rival militant groups and the undisclosed policies of the IPKF.

It is said that a number of robberies had happened in the vicinity of St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna preceding this date. On the morning in question, it is said, that a group of LTTE cadres were confronted by EPRLF cadres near the Cathedral. There occurred a shoot-out and a chase, with one militant running through the church. In the gun-battle at least one EPRLF cadre and one LTTE cadre are known to have died. Soon the IPKF arrived in the area and cordoned it off. All the male workers in the Bishop's House and adjoining church offices were brought to the compound of the Cathedral along with the priests inside the Bishop's House. During the gun battle the church organist had been inside the church practising on the organ. There had also been several others praying in the Cathedral. He was arrested inside the Cathedral. In the grounds of the Cathedral, the priests were addressed insultingly by Indian officers, while the organist was assaulted severely in front of the gathered people.

Meanwhile some army officers and EPRLF cadres searching the nearby hostel of St. Patrick's College had found fresh blood stains belonging to a student injured by a stray bullet from the shooting. Intensifying their search they had found two empty grenade cases, a few empty cartridges and three live cartridges collected by students. Following this a few students and a priest had been assaulted and were taken to the Cathedral grounds. A few students and the organist were taken to the Railway Station Camp of the IPKF. The parish and other priests from St. Patrick's College

were asked to report to the IPKF camp at 4.00 p.m. At 5.00 p.m., the parish priest and one other priest from the College were released. The mother of the organist who went to the station camp in the evening saw her beaten and battered son being cruelly mis-handled. Two priests from the College were detained overnight and one of them was severely beaten; it is not clear who his custodians were. The two priests have so far refused to talk about what happened to them, presumably due to fear. They were released the next day. The students too were released. People living near the Cathedral heard gun shots during the night of the 26th and in the morning they found the battered dead body of the organist Jude Zachcharias lying on the road in the morning. His body showed signs of torture. Some of his nails were missing, he had a fractured skull and his leg was broken. The official post-mortem report states that his death resulted from ante-mortem brain damage due to gun-shot injury. Also recorded in the report were details of bruises fractures and internal injuries.

Given below are two statements, the first is a compilation of the Eye-witness accounts of several persons and the second the statement of the mother of the deceased organist.

On the morning of the 26th of November, Mass started as usual at the St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna at about 6.15 a.m., and it was over by 7 a.m. Although the Mass was over at least three ladies were praying inside the church and there were one or two men standing behind the church. At this time shots were heard from around the church. A few militants belonging to opposing factions were having a shoot-out; one ran across the breadth of the church leaving a hand grenade behind. The organist was practising on the church organ.

The parish priest of St. Mary's Cathedral heard the shots while he was having his breakfast, and he came out of the room and surveyed the Cathedral compound. It was about 8.30 in the morning. He noticed that about 10 army men had cordoned off the area, he attempted to get inside the church but was prevented from doing so by the soldiers. By this time all the workers from the Bishop's House, press and the Cathedral Centre were brought to the compound of the Cathedral. The parish priest was standing in front of his presbytery. Six armed EPRLF men followed by another ten walked into the compound. One of them asked the parish priest to go into the church and open his room. However before he could open it they had broken open the door and entered. The organist Jude Zachcharias (aged 17) who was playing the organ inside the church all this time, along with the others inside were brought out, and Jude was assaulted by the soldiers. Though the parish priest raised objections the assault continued. Then the parish priest left the area and joined the priests who were standing under the margosa tree. Then the army wanted to check the parish priest's rooms, but he refused to give the keys. Half an hour later two EPRLF cadres came and asked Fr. Pilendiran, Prefect of Studies in the College, the whereabouts of the injured LTTE boy. Then two Indian soldiers came to assault Fr. Pilendiran saying "You LTTE Bastard," but the EPRLF boys stopped them. They wanted to search the desks first. They pulled out four hostellers, and while searching the second desk they found a bag containing two empty hand grenades and three live cartridges; there was another empty cartridge in another desk. Then they assaulted Fr. Pilendiran and the hostellers. The EPRLF boys had hit Fr. Pilendiran for the first time. Five hostellers including, Wilson, an A/L student from Navanthurai, to whom the second desk belonged and Fr. Pilendiran were marched out and taken to the Cathedral compound. A soldier hit Fr. Pilendiran while on the road. This was witnessed by people who were standing on the road.

Then one officer approached Fr. Pilendiran and asked him to go and stand with the other priests, but a different officer approached him and said "You bloody bastard this is the last day you see day light. Your bloody Bishop can write to the Prime Minister or Rajiv, I don't care." He wanted to check the boarding again. He brought Fr. Pilendiran back to the college and when he saw a few drops of blood in front of the rector's room (for the injured hosteller had been carried by that way), mistaking it for the blood of the injured LTTE cadre, he caught Fr. Pilendiran by the collar and asked "Where is the pistol of the dead LTTE?" When he replied that he did not know, the officer gave him about ten slaps. It was when they were taken to the lower school building that the Rector came back from the hospital after admitting the injured student. Fr. Pilendiran along with Fr. Rajendram and the parish priest, Fr. Jesunesan, were asked to appear at the Camp at 4.00 p.m. It must have been around 1.00 p.m. when the army and the EPRLF cadres left. They tied Jude Zachcharias with a rope, and took him along with the other hostellers to the railway station army camp.

The Mother's Statement

I was at the EPRLF camp, Hotel Ashok, at 2.00 p.m. They told me, "Come tomorrow because two of us are dead." I went alone to the Railway Station camp at 4.00 p.m. I sat behind the 4 priests who were already there. I introduced myself to the army as the mother of the boy who was arrested at the Cathedral. They asked "Are you the Acca (elder sister)?" I said "No, I am the mother." They said, Santhirakumar had been taken home to get the weapons. He will be back in 20 minutes. At 5.45 the jeep came into the station and they brought my son. His face was covered. He was carried by two soldiers who held him by the shoulders. They threw him from the 1st platform over the railway track to the next platform where his body fell and was hanging from the edge. Another soldier kicked him on the leg. He turned a little so that his face could be seen. He shouted Amma four times. I said "This is my son, Lord save him." An army officer approached me and spoke in Tamil, "There are many accusations against him, we have retrieved arms from the church and from his house, come tomorrow." He then chased me out. I left the camp at 6.00 p.m. When I returned home I found out that he had been brought by jeep (cut) to third compound near my home, and was beaten with sticks and was pricked with pins on his head. This was at about 5.00 p.m. He was also taken to the Cathedral compound where there is a coola tree, and was asked to climb and take the hidden arms from there. But he couldn't for he had not the strength to climb. I was also told by those present that before being taken to the camp, he was asked to pick up a hand grenade that was lying on the ground and a photograph was taken. We came home around 10.00 p.m. We heard some shots, at 5.30 a.m. Someone brought me news that my son's body was lying a few hundred yards from my house. I ran and put him on my lap. I noticed that there was a lot of blood on my lap and found blood oozing out from his head. At 7.30 a.m. we took him to the hospital. The police took charge. From 11 - 11 I faced the inquiry by the coroner Ketheswaran. There were 13 gun shot wounds through the forehead and temple. The rib cage had been smashed. The toe nails were missing and his hand and leg had been broken. There were pin-prick injuries all over his face.

The following is a statement by Rev. (Dr.) G. F. Rajendram of the Department of Zoology, University of Jaffna, who resides at St. Patrick's College.

At about 11.00 a.m. I heard some altercation and came out of my room at St. Patrick's College and saw some IPKF soldiers in the corridor. The leader of the IPKF questioned Fr. Pilendran and slapped him a few times. I was ordered to come to the Cathedral compound.

As soon I entered the compound I pointed out to the leader of the IPKF operation that one of those arrested was a heart patient. He and two other boys were released. I saw Jude Zachcharias being bound

with his hands tied behind the back. After the officer left, the hostel boys and Jude Zachcharias were kicked repeatedly by the IPKF soldiers.

At 4.00 p.m. I went to the IPKF camp along with the other 3 priests. The Commander of the camp berated us for allegedly aiding the terrorists. He then ordered Frs. Pilendran and Jesunesan to go upstairs for further questioning. The mother of the boy Jude Zachcharias was seated behind us. We were allowed to leave the IPKF camp at about 5.00 p.m.

(Sgd.) G. F. Rajendran, S.J.
2.01.89

Note to the Incident at St Patrick's 26 November

Within a week of the incident, details of it were broadcast on the BBC's Tamil service. There is little doubt that this was done with at least the passive approval of the Church in Jaffna. But the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Jaffna has chosen to maintain silence on the matter, much to the chagrin of its flock smarting helplessly under the humiliation. The Cathedral and the surrounding establishments mark the seat of the Bishopric of Jaffna.

This brings to mind two killings attributed to the Sri Lankan forces in late 1984 in which the Christian Church was intimately concerned. There were the killings of the Roman Catholic clergyman, Fr. Mary Bastian and of Rev. George Jeyarajasingam of the Methodist Church, both in the Mannar district. Both these happened during a period of escalation marked by the attempt to settle the Tamil problem by putting into practice a scheme by the National Security Minister Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali. The scheme as stated envisaged settling a large number of Sinhalese from categories such as fishermen and those with criminal records in Tamil areas. Over 80 Sinhalese settled in Kent and Dollar farms, set up for Tamil refugees who had been driven out, were killed by Tamil militants. Over 100 Tamil residents in the farming area of Murunkan were killed by Sri Lankan forces.

Statements by a number of witnesses left little doubt about the identity of the killers of Fr. Mary Bastian. The National Security Minister denied that his forces had killed Fr. Bastian. He said that the Police had spied him getting into a boat and going across to India. The American Cardinal who preached at a memorial service for Fr. Bastian in Boston, promised to pursue the matter and get to the bottom of it.

The matter was then dropped and was lost in a web of silence. Had the Vatican intervened? It is no hard to imagine how the Bishops' conference in Sri Lanka would have advised the Vatican. Its statements left the impression that its perception of the Tamil problem was not too different from that of the Sri Lankan government. Rev. Jeyarajasingam had been in Murunkan during the aforementioned massacre. He was about to leave for England on a year's sabbatical. He is said to have protested strongly to military officials about the incident. About two days later, he is said to have been summoned by the army. There are strong indications that while he was travelling in his vehicle, they were stopped by the army and he and his Sinhalese driver were killed and burnt. As Rev. Jeyarajasingam was to travel to England shortly, he is said to have taken video shots of the army's handiwork. This matter too was not pursued to any conclusion, though many individual Sinhalese Methodist clergy felt deeply about the matter.

However, by the end of 1986, leading representatives from all the main Churches had joined in a Sri Lankan Armed Forces day service to the singing of 'Onward Christian Soldiers' which was given a country-wide airing on national television.

It is understood that the Bishop of Jaffna had been previously pulled up by the Sri Lankan Bishops' Conference for being forthright about his views on the actions of the national army. Since mid-1985 he has seldom spoken out. It is not hard to guess what forces would have been at work in ensuring the Church's silence locally on the recent incident at St. Patrick's.

We cannot comment without knowing the full facts. Whatever the considerations that motivate the local Church to be silent locally there are some inescapable facts:

Ordinary people see the Church in Jaffna as a powerful, highly organized institution with a following of around 300,000 persons. It gives them an identity and represents perhaps the dignity of the larger community which has no comparable organization. When the Church chooses to be seen to remain silent in the face of a public outrage committed at its very institutional centre, ordinary people will conclude that this giant, which is potentially a source of immense moral authority, is in fact effete and cowardly. Lakhs of persons who are driven to helplessness and humiliation, begin to look upon and admire the handful of young men who risk much, perhaps everything, shooting at the symbols of their humiliation. These young men in turn become the symbols of their dignity, quite apart from the consideration that their ultimate tendency may be undemocratic and anarchic. People begin to feel that these young men believe far more sincerely in their guns than the Church in its God.

Such omissions, in the form of silence, in the face of violence, from internal and external causes, will in time cause the Church to lose both its moral authority and its esteem. Standing up for justice and dignity of the common man becomes thus a public duty, inseparable from spiritual office. Failure here means that the Church becomes more and more compromised with time, becoming part of the onset of anarchy.

Many public institutions have collapsed under the weight of moral dilemmas. A reason often given for silence is that they may be too embarrassingly compromised to thrash out matters in public. That is again a form of cowardice. A public airing often restores a necessary sense of direction.

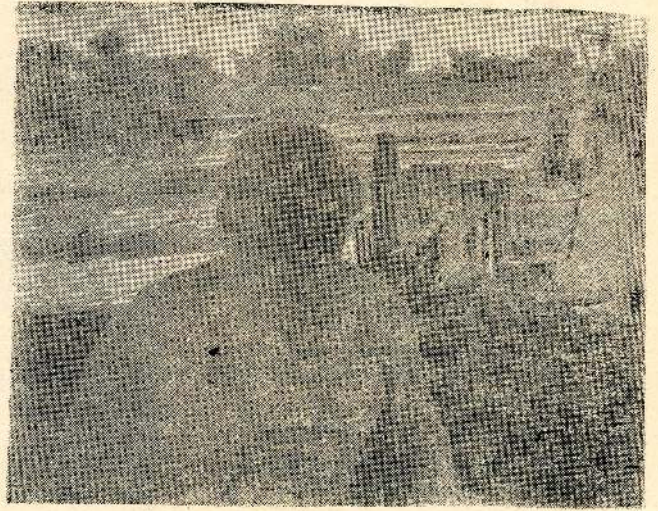
— From Report No. 1, University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) (UTHR (Jaffna)). □

Death of Students-Jaffna University

It is with a deep sense of grief that we observe the deaths of students SATHASIVAM JEGANATHAN (first year Science) and THANABALASINGHAM SATYENDRA (first year, Medicine) who died when the IPKF fired upon student protestors on 2nd February at 11.00 a.m. Ten others were injured in the incident which took place a few yards from the University. The peaceful protestors who included girls were first beaten up by soldiers who then threw stones at retreating protestors.

Soldiers opened fire when a couple of students returned some of the stones. The students had decided on an hour's sit-in to protest the IPKF's firing at students inside the University the previous evening. The soldiers in pursuit of a youth had opened fire at random from the main entrance immediately upon arrival. Several students escaped narrowly while one was injured in the leg. There had been no provocation from inside the University. Of the students who had been about and had narrow escapes, some were using the sports field, and others were after library reference.

The tragedy parallels similar events that occur under the forces of some of the world's most brutal regimes, such as in Palestine (Israel) and South Africa. It is ironical that the world's largest democracy and its peace keeping force could only duplicate the actions of regimes it condemns with verbal gusto. India has been amongst those vocally protesting the deaths caused to Palestinian demonstrators due to shooting by the Israeli army.



The Indian Peace Keeping Force

It is notable that the students had demonstrated peacefully on earlier occasions without incident and this time soldiers had shot to kill without having fired warning shots. It is our routine experience that after such an incident the IPKF comes out with ad hoc technical reasons to explain why unarmed civilians were responsible for their own fate. Proximity to an army camp was given as one this time. We do not wish to discuss technicalities on such a tragic occasion. But we wish to observe three things.

These incidents are part of a pattern of atrocities against civilians by the IPKF and its associates, which besides individual murders and collective beatings, include the incident at the Cathedral at St. Patrick where the 17 year old organist, Jude Zachcharias, was killed after gruesome treatment (26.11.88) and the shooting of a teacher at Jaffna Hindu College during school hours (26.1.89). Two teachers were injured and several others were assaulted.

The use of armed terror against unarmed civilians, whatever the provocation, and the use of institutional force against defenceless individuals, is more than cowardice; it is a form of barbarism contrary to all the ideals of civilised humanity and those of the Indian freedom movement.

We assert that the following are resorted to by the IPKF on a routine basis despite repeated protests:—

1. Undisciplined and unjustified use of weaponry against civilians.

2. Beating of civilians found in the vicinity of an incident without respect for age and sometimes, even of sex.
3. Torture of detainees. The torture is often so gruesome, that a large number of innocent persons have disappeared.
4. Wanton destruction of civilian property after an incident.

In recent times there have also been a number of instances of shelling into civilian areas.

We demand an impartial judicial inquiry into all violence against civilians.

We also demand that the IPKF and the Indian authorities explain:—

1. How these practices accord with the restoration of a democratic process, which must include a restoration of dignity to ordinary civilians, and the lifting of Emergency Rule in this Country?
2. Given the predictable nature of the IPKF and given that they were going to be repeatedly, deliberately, provoked, are they going to justify opening fire at crowds of people getting about their normal work unawares or subject them to any form of degrading treatment?
3. People are often treated as a massive army of the enemy. Minor technicalities are cited as reasons for what they may suffer from the IPKF, as though ordinary people were trained at a military academy—you should have spoken to so and so, you should not have moved like that etc. What action has the IPKF taken to see that its men conform to ordinary military rules?
4. In international eyes, the only justification for the IPKF's presence here is to act as a Peace Keeping Force and restore a democratic process. It also claims to be a friend of the Tamils. After 1 1/2 years what has it done to understand the people and deal humanely with politically sensitive issues such as demonstrations, even violent ones? (The student demonstration was peaceful).
5. What are the measures that have been taken to restore normal civil law and ensure that the IPKF and its associates respect such a law?

Once these questions are answered it will become clear whether the IPKF is there as friends of the Tamils or to further some other ends. It will also become clear whether there is a rationale for an Indian presence in a peace keeping role.

We also demand from those who aspire to be leaders of the Tamils:

1. Some of you are coming to us with charming newspaper advertisements asking for our vote. If you cannot express our real feelings, our real anxieties, and cannot speak out against the atrocities we are subject to; please be honest enough to say that you can only lead us into enslavement.
2. Some of you bear arms in our name and claim that you are doing it for our good. Can you not see that we are becoming weaker and weaker, subject to more insidious manipulation than we had ever imagined? Once we stood to lose some lands, now we stand to lose even our spirit. We respect your sacrifice and do not want to let it be in vain. Do not use methods of terror to make people conform to your wishes. This weakens them more than terror from an outsider. Do not use people as pawns for political ends. You will ultimately be judged, not by your courage. But by whether you served the cause of freedom or of enslavement.

Given the critical state of our community, it is very crucial that the university should discharge its functions without interruptions. It is the only institution that is now in a position to voice the interests, not just those of the students, but of the entire community. We request all those forces which claim to have the interests of the Tamils at heart, not to attempt to use the university for narrow political ends or for any other purposes.

Let the tragic loss of these two students and of many others of our brethren be a time of reflection and renewal.

**Co-ordinating Committee of Teachers,
Employees and Students, University of
Jaffna.**

04th February, 1989.

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The Snares of Violence

**Excerpt from Report No. 1 of the University
Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna)**

The recent spate of human-rights violations cannot be understood without some knowledge of the motivations and mutual relations of the various factions that bear arms. India's sponsorship of Tamil militant groups in 1983 and the manner in which the latter were militarised at the expense of political vision has been written about elsewhere. Help given to Tamil militant groups received widespread approval. In consequence of the 1983 racial violence and the subsequent military action by the Sri Lankan state, the Tamil minority was seen as defenceless. This militarisation reflected itself in the ruthless manner in which internal dissent within militant groups was dealt with. In early

1985 the Indian press came out with sensational revelations about how the PLOTE had killed several of its own cadres on Indian soil. Dissident sources have given figures varying from several tens upwards. Less well known, but well authenticated, are several internal killings within other militant groups.

By the middle of 1986, the LTTE had eliminated the TELO from the militant scene and its bid for sole dominance became evident. The number of TELO cadres killed by the LTTE is put at 90 upwards. Leading EPRLF men in Jaffna told a senior Citizen's Committee figure, that its leadership in Madras had asked the LTTE leadership for terms of co-operation. But no answer had been forthcoming.

It was generally assumed that the LTTE would take on the EPRLF at an opportune moment. In November 1986, the EPRLF confronted the LTTE politically by backing the outcry over the disappeared student Vijitharan. Knowing that the LTTE would respond militarily, the EPRLF was singularly unprepared. By 14th December 1986, the LTTE had taken on the EPRLF. In Jaffna, the EPRLF vacated its camps leaving behind large quantities of weapons. Outside Jaffna, particularly in the Eastern province, fighting between the LTTE and the EPRLF continued sporadically. Perhaps out of deference to a feeling of public horror at events during the LTTE-TELO clash of May, scenes of public outrage were not repeated. But several EPRLF cadres were killed. A number were tortured, particularly for information on hidden weapons.

It is notable that a large number of members of the public, particularly from the lower classes, took great risks in providing shelter and succour for TELO and EPRLF cadres on the run. Many of them are the very same persons who did likewise for LTTE supporters, when they felt hunted after October 1988. The EPRLF, which was then not known for notoriety in dealing with dissent, failed to settle the costly breach between its leader Padmanabha, and the leader of its military wing, Douglas Devananda. This provided the LTTE its opportunity.

It was widely felt that the LTTE's actions had seriously weakened the militancy. This received confirmation when the Sri Lankan armed forces made rapid gains in early 1987. The EPRLF had been becoming increasingly effective in the East in the few months before its disbandment.

At the end of March 1987, the LTTE's Jaffna leader Kittu lost a leg in a bomb attack. The attackers were not identified. Widespread speculation remains that the attack was prompted by internal differences. On the following evening, 18 EPRLF prisoners held at the Brown Rd. LTTE camp were killed. The LTTE described the incident as an escape attempt. The 'Saturday Review' quoting LTTE sources said that in the few days following Kittu's incident, about 50 prisoners held in LTTE camps were killed. The BBC reported a higher figure.

From March 1987 the fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE became increasingly vicious. A large number of Tamil civilians fell victim to aerial bombing and shelling by Sri Lankan forces. Over 200 Sinhalese civilians fell victim to two attacks during the course of the week commencing with the Sinhala-Tamil New-year of April 1987. One was a massacre in Kitulutuwa, near Trincomalee. The other was the car-bomb attack in Colombo.

The feeling of relief with which the IPKF was welcomed by Tamil civilians in July 1987 and the subsequent events have been described elsewhere.

In the face of an increasingly unfavourable balance of forces, the LTTE chose to shore up its position by making rhetorical claims of exclusiveness. Other militants were branded as traitors, who had in addition become agents of India. The last must be viewed in the light of the LTTE itself having received arms and training from India. Its leader was resident in India until early 1987. Also, facilities in India were crucial for the war against the Sri Lankan state. However, while the LTTE opposed the physical presence of Indian forces, in part because of the threat to its claims of exclusiveness, it kept asking for more, and more sophisticated arms from India.

For the other militant groups, given their past political and military failures, an Indian presence provided an expeditious means of re-establishing themselves.

At another level, the LTTE quite successfully carved out an image for itself through extraordinary displays of military prowess and some sensational acts of violence. This was underlined by the suicidal valour of the Black Tigers, the attack on KKS harbour (22 Apr. '87), Miller's suicide attack on Nelliady camp (5 July, '87) and the surprise assault of 12th September '87 in the Eastern province which left a reported 70 militants from other groups dead. The last took place in the relatively relaxed atmosphere soon after the Accord. Many of the dead were unprepared and unarmed. While the LTTE acquired an image, its political objectives in the face of ground realities became more nebulous. Nevertheless it also exposed the political weaknesses of other forces, particularly the Indian and Sri Lankan states. The LTTE could keep up its reputation only at great cost to the civilian population. It too lost the ability to deal diplomatically, particularly with other militant groups.

For the other militant groups, given their past political and military failures, an Indian presence provided an expeditious means of re-establishing themselves. People generally acknowledged the crucial role played by other militant groups in keeping back the Sri Lankan forces. After the arrival of the IPKF, the other militant groups began to be redeployed, often in close proximity of IPKF camps. Within a month internecine killings had started. Instead of making a political approach to win over the people, the message people usually got in dealings with other militant groups was that the people were being blamed for the fate they suffered at the hands of the LTTE. The hatred and thirst for revenge they felt towards the LTTE thus seemed to extend to the people who were classed with the LTTE. This view came to be reflected in the attitudes of the IPKF after the October offensive. All this went towards reinforcing the LTTE's propaganda claim, that the other militants were traitors and anti-social elements, once rejected by the people and now making their appearance under IPKF patronage.

Such a view of the civilians persisted even after the EPRLF became the major party representing the Tamils in the North-East provincial government in November 1988. In day to day dealings with EPRLF cadres, ordinary people were accused of being pro-LTTE or of having stood by idly while the LTTE decimated them in the past. The killings of a large number of LTTE supporters and sympathisers left the feeling that a very crude military approach was being tried, with the complicity of the IPKF.

Perhaps far more serious than blunders of other parties, have been the blunders of India, earlier seen as lacking in principle and now seen to be lacking in objective as well. The readiness by India to descend to forms of expediency with apparently no political or moral scruples, has left the IPKF with an unenviable task. One must remember that the IPKF was welcomed in July 1987 with almost universal approbation. When Indian officials say that several hundred Indian soldiers died for the Tamils of Ceylon, it undoubtedly makes sense to Indian ears. But given the enormity of civilian suffering in the face of Indian military action, this would sound an insult to the average Tamil adding salt to the wound.

True, a number of Indian soldiers died trying to maintain services. The life of an Indian soldier here is as tense, unpleasant and hazardous as it is for many ordinary civilians. But seen from here, the reverses suffered by the Indian army were largely a consequence of a lack of moral and political vision. One does know that many Indian soldiers and officers are often courteous, obliging and do not relish the reputation of their organisation. But faced with a situation, gut instincts seem to takeover.

India has consistently and indignantly denied allegations of torture and inhumane practices by its forces from international organisations, within and without the country. The existence of such practices are so well known here, that privately many Indian officials would defend them on grounds of expediency. That is at least a sure sign that they are aware that what they are doing is wrong — something for which India had rightly taken the Sri Lankan government to task in international fora earlier. India would never dare to argue before the world the need for inhumane practices, nor would it defend its use of such practices. Perhaps the fundamental error is that of trying to accomplish a political task without respect for people. Screams and groans from victims, heard by residents near IPKF camps, remain part of day to day reality.

Even if one grants that the IPKF is faced with an incorrigible adversary, the question remains: Could a country such as India with enormous intellectual, material and spiritual resources, make a plea to be judged at the same level as that of youngsters, whose experience from their early teens has taught them to rely on little besides their gun? Would India defend the practices of some of the worst regimes in the world?

A poignant comment on the current situation comes in a leaflet bearing the title 'We ask forgiveness from the people,' signed 'Those who left the EPRLF.' It is addressed to their former comrades. Such crudely stencilled leaflets from the underground remain the only form of free expression. Some excerpts are quoted below in translation:

"... Because conflicts within our organisation could not be settled in a regular manner, many responsible comrades like Davidson, Chelian, Devananda and Das left with broken hearts. It is because of the resulting weak state of our organisation that the Tigers attacked us, and not because the people instigated the Tigers.

But today you are using your armed might to take revenge on the people who only want peace and democracy. This will only push them once again to the state of accepting that the politics of the Tigers was right. It is not just the former supporters of the Tigers, but even thousands who supported us will be driven by your present conduct to the side of the Tigers.

Instead of trying to show that you are more democratic than the Tigers, you are trying to articulate your politics by showing that you are more brutish than the Tigers. We are greatly distressed by this.

Dear leader Comrade Padmanabha, In your thirst for a rational form of politics and in your desire to build up the EPRLF as an organisation to articulate it, you used to roam Tamil Nadu, suitcase in hand, sleeping on the streets. What are you doing when the very people for whose benefit you built up this organisation, spit upon it? Have you accepted this line, or is it that you have no authority to speak?

Comrades, Posters with beautiful slogans, red flags and sporting of beards cannot alone run a liberation movement. On the contrary, every comrade who bears arms must possess the discipline of loving the people.

Your confounding red flag and revenge politics with liberation politics has belittled and devalued the noble sentiments you uttered in bygone days.

We appeal to you comrades within the EPRLF who love the people, think even at this eleventh hour. The arms of the foreigner which you bear in your hands will one day be taken away. What then will be your state?"

LSSP Statement

The North: Need to Restore Civil Authority

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) welcomes the steps that are presently being taken to establish Provincial Council administration in the Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts. This is the only way open for the expeditious transfer of these areas from military to civil administration.

The LSSP appeals to the public of Jaffna and Vavuniya to a call for and assist in the setting up of Provincial Council administration in their districts too. Despite the fact that the extent of participation of these districts in the Provincial Council elections was low there is no alternative to proceeding with the business of setting up Provincial Council administration for the purpose of quick restoration of lawful civil authority. To the extent that the public of these districts involve themselves in the administration of these areas through the District authorities of the Provincial Council there will be increasingly diminishing need for any intervention by military authority. This will also isolate the terrorist gunmen. Further, it will leave no excuse

for unauthorised groups, however well intentioned, to intervene in the peace keeping process. The LSSP recognises the validity of the public apprehensions in this regard. The Provincial Councils have vested in them all the powers needed for the maintenance of public order. They are obliged to follow regular procedures in establishing the authorities necessary for their tasks in this area. It is only through the setting up of administration by the Councils that the task of maintaining peace and order through legal and regular means can commence.

The Sri Lanka Government is called upon to assess the degree to which the IPKF has succeeded in fulfilling its responsibilities under the Peace Accord. As the LSSP sees it the task of the IPKF today is that of a mopping up operation in the jungles. To the extent that this is achieved the militants will be hindered in engaging in guerilla warfare in the populated areas. A military presence in populated areas is in the given context no substitute for quick and effective military action directed at the jungle hide-outs of the militants. It is now time for the Government of Sri Lanka and India to frankly examine the problems that have arisen in this area of the IPKF's responsibilities. The surrender of arms by the militants and the speedy restoration of civil administration in all the districts involved is the only way of paving the way for the withdrawal of the IPKF.

(25th January, 1989).

Within the Sri Lankan context where the encouragement of tourism forms a prominent part of economic policy, the spread of the dreaded disease AIDS and the resulting adoption of even the most drastic methods of 'self protection' is likely to be seen in the not too distant future. Mandatory AIDS tests that adversely affect the individual's rights have already been adopted in neighbouring India.

Sujit Canaga Retna in his article explores in depth the interests of humankind as a whole and those of the individual, arising out of the issue of mandatory AIDS testing. The writer is in graduate school of Columbia University, NY, U. S. A.

AIDS

Mandatory AIDS testing and Constitutional Rights

Sujit M. CanagaRetna

Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo a much revered member of the United States Supreme Court (1932 - 38) once remarked that "the great tides and currents of man do not turn aside in their course and pass judges by." While this observation reinforces the Judiciary's unequivocal role in interpreting the Constitution amidst new societal developments, it is understood that regardless of the gravity of the emerging crisis the citizen's constitutional rights may not be eroded! The plague of the 1980s—the epidemic of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)—certainly fits into Justice Cardozo's definition of a great tide that threatens to engulf man. This deadly disease for which there is neither an effective vaccine nor the likelihood of a cure being discovered in the near future, has the capacity to threaten the global community. In an attempt to confront this disease, among the measures adopted is the proposal that certain groups submit themselves to mandatory blood tests for the AIDS virus—a trend that portends to seriously undermine certain constitutional rights vested in the citizen.

In this regard a recent Sri Lanka Ministry of Health press release indicated that steps have been taken to commence AIDS tests on such "susceptible" groups as sailors prisoners drug addicts and 'beach boys' (the

cuphemism extended to a sect within Sri Lanka's burgeoning homosexual male prostitute community). It has also been reported that persons holding life insurance policies worth more than Rs. 3 million should subject themselves to AIDS tests as well. Even in the United States, the Reagan Administration in early 1987 called for the mandatory AIDS testing of would-be immigrants; according to President Reagan this procedure would be eventually extended to inmates in local and state prisons, patients at venereal disease clinics and drug abuse centres and couples applying for marriage licenses. In both the Sri Lankan and American cases, the path seems to have been cleared to fritter away certain essential rights enjoyed by the citizenry.

Coercion Involved

Mandatory AIDS tests on arbitrarily selected persons within the "susceptible" groups referred to earlier, entails coercing personal information about the body fluids of the tested person. While being randomly selected for an AIDS test is an embarrassing experience and an invasion of the selected person's privacy, it is also illegal. Despite the fact that the Sri

Lankan Constitution provides no specific protection of a citizen's privacy — unlike the provisions of the United States Constitution's Fourth Amendment — other provisions may be construed to extend a reasonable expectation of privacy to the individual.

As a consequence of the Health Ministry directive, it is likely that legislation will be enacted in Parliament requiring those in the "susceptible" groups to undergo an AIDS test. It is also to be expected that the Health Ministry officials seek the co-operation of the Police in coercing the test. The passage of the legislation and the expected strict enforcement, however, remains a denial of the citizen's fundamental rights.

The following hypothetical case serves to explain this denial of rights. Citizen Silva, while walking along the Wellawatta beach, was hauled up by several Public Health Inspectors of the Ministry of Health and some Police Officers. Citizen Silva was informed that he would have to undergo an AIDS test. Citizen Silva's seizure, in effect an arrest, blatantly contravenes the most essential pre-requisites in initiating an arrest.

It is necessary to establish at this stage that an arrest was indeed being effected. Dr. Glanville L. Williams cited in **B. A. Piyasiri et al v. Nimal Fernando, Assistant Superintendent of Police et al** (SC Application Nos. 221 - 234/86) states:

"An imprisonment or deprivation of liberty, is a necessary element in an arrest; but this does not mean that there need be an actual confinement. If the officer indicates an intention to make an arrest, as for example, by touching the suspect on the shoulder, or by showing him a warrant of arrest, or in any other way by making him understand that an arrest is intended, and if the suspect then submits to the direction of the officer, there is an arrest. The consequence is that an arrest may be made by mere words and the other submits."

Then, the explanation for Section 23 (i) of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act, Number 15 of 1979 notes:

"Keeping a person in confinement or restraint without formally arresting him or under the colourable pretention that an arrest has not been made when to all intents and purposes such person is in custody shall be deemed to be an arrest of such person."

In addition, Chief Justice Sharvananda writing in the case of **Muthuweeran Namasivayam v. H. G. Gunawardene et al** (SC Application No. 166/86) states:

"In my view when the the 3rd Respondent required the Petitioner to accompany him to the Police Station and took him to the Police Station, the Petitioner was in law arrested by the 3rd Respondent. The Petitioner was prevented by the action of the 3rd Respondent from proceeding with his journey in the bus. The Petitioner was deprived of his liberty to go where he pleased. It was not necessary, that there should have been any actual use of force; threat of force used to procure the Petitioner's submission was sufficient. The Petitioner did not go to the Police Station voluntarily."

Therefore, if one applies the general principles laid down above, it is apparent that the involvement of the Police Officers and their subsequent actions in enforcing the test is in reality an arrest.

Other Aspects

There are also several other aspects of this procedure that rest on extremely dubious constitutional ground. For instance the question arises then as to what prompted the arrest to be made. In fact this arbitrary selection amongst the so-called 'high risk' groups, undermines the very concept of "individualized suspicion" considered the pivotal criterion in effecting an arrest. In this regard, it is pertinent to refer to a recent case (SC Application Nos. 221 - 234/86) where the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka allowed the fundamental rights applications of several Customs Officers alleging wrongful arrest by Bribery Department Officials. Justice H. A. G. de Silva writing for the majority noted in his judgement that.

"(W)hat the 1st Respondent (an Assistant Superintendent of Police) sought to do was to arrest them on vague and general suspicion, not knowing the precise crime that they are alleged to have committed but hoping to obtain evidence of the commission of some offence of bribery by searching them after their arrest. This the 1st Respondent has no sanction in law to do. (emphasis added)"

Then Dr. Glanville Williams in his article "Requisites of a Valid Arrest" (Criminal Law Review 1954; page 17) notes:

"The rule of informing a person to be arrested of the reasons for his arrest has the effect of preventing the Police from arresting, on vague general suspicion not knowing the precise crime suspected but hoping to obtain evidence of the commission of some crime for which they have power to arrest."

These opinions very clearly uphold the principle of "individualized suspicion" in initiating an arrest. This notion stresses that the State should not be able to interfere with the liberty and freedom of a citizen, unless the law enforcement officials can demonstrate they have "probable cause" to believe that the particular person is committing, or has committed, a crime.

Moreover Article 13 (1) of our Constitution states:

"No person shall be arrested except according to procedure established by law. Any person arrested shall be informed of the reasons for his arrest."

This clause explicitly states that a person arrested has to be informed of the reasons for his/her arrest. This proviso goes hand in hand with the previously described concept of "individualized suspicion." Article 13 (1) is further consolidated in the precedent established in **Christie v. Leachinsky (1947) A.C. 573** where the House of Lords affirmed the judgement of the Court of Appeal

"... that an arrest without warrant can be justified only if it is an arrest on a charge made known to the person arrested and the pleas of justification failed."

Then Justice De Silva in **B. A. Piyasiri et al v. Nimal Fernando et al** referred to earlier notes:

"The reason why it is incumbent of the Police Officer arresting to inform the person arrested of the nature of the charge against him is that the latter has the opportunity of granting an explanation of any misunderstanding or of calling attention to other persons for whom he may have been mistaken with the result that further inquiries may save him from the consequences of false accusations. It is therefore axiomatic that before one deprives a person of his liberty for whatever the period may be, it must be done in due course and process of law."

It cannot be emphasized enough that as established by the law of the land, these two conditions of "individualized suspicion" and informing the arrested person of the specific charge against him/her must remain paramount in the arrest or confinement of a person. To place these legal bindings alongside the manner by which Citizen Silva was apprehended for the AIDS test highlights the denial of the rights extended to Silva as a citizen of this country.

AIDS Test for Employment

The requirement of an AIDS test in seeking employment also rests on shaky constitutional ground. In this regard the Ceylon Shipping Corporation is supposed to require all prospective sailors to undergo an AIDS test before taking up appointment. A procedure such as this remains illegal from the point of "unconstitutional conditions," which holds that the government may not condition employment (in this case), on the surrender of other constitutional rights. As described extensively earlier enforcing the AIDS test arbitrarily is in fact an arrest which in turn is unconstitutional on account of it failing to reach even the elemental pre-requisites of a lawful arrest. In addition there remains no legal justification to deny a prospective candidate who has satisfied all necessary requirements, employment. To condition this appointment on the outcome of a future AIDS test is a denial of the citizen's fundamental rights for which redress may be sought.

The efficacy of mandatory AIDS tests has also resulted in considerable debate. For instance the AIDS virus may lie dormant in the human system for several years and not reveal itself in an AIDS test. Thus a person testing HIV negative in an AIDS test remains no guarantee that that person is free of the disease. Yet even if there is overwhelming evidence to prove mandatory testing effective, effectiveness alone is insufficient to deny the fundamental rights of a citizen by enforcing an AIDS test. In a case which

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went before the New York State Court of Appeal in 1987 probing the constitutionality of a requirement that all probationary teachers submit themselves to urinalysis the Chief Judge held:

"There is no doubt about it; searches and seizures can yield a wealth of useful information to the searcher. (That is why King George III's men so frequently searched the colonists). That potential, however, does not make (a government search) a constitutionally reasonable one."

In the judgement of Justice De Silva referred to earlier he also notes:

"(E)ven if such evidence comes to light the arrest will be illegal because there will have been no proper communication of the reason for the arrest to the accused at the time of the arrest."

It is therefore evident that mere efficacy alone remains an unpersuasive rationale for enforcing arbitrary AIDS tests. The 'efficacy' argument is akin to carrying out a "blanket" search of all the residents in a high-crime neighbourhood in the expectation that such an operation would reveal evidence of criminal conduct on the part of some residents — as it most likely would.

Ends and Means

The driving motive in initiating these hurried measures i.e. mandatory AIDS tests is to curb the spread of this dreaded disease. The principle invoked here is that the freedom of some have to be impaired or curtailed to safeguard the lives of a much larger group. While this objective is unquestionably the right one, striving towards this aim at the expense of the citizen's constitutional rights cannot be condoned. In this case the means do not justify the ends. Alongside eliminating certain rights society's inherent prejudices against homosexuals and drug users — from whose cadres a high proportion of AIDS patients come — are further solidified. As Walter LaFavre Professor of Law at the University of Illinois at Urbana states with regard to mandatory drug tests:

"The need to detect drug users is important, but hardly more so than the need to search for narcotics dealers, kidnappers, and murderers. Yet we have never demanded 100% enforcement of the criminal law. Instead, we are committed to a philosophy of tolerating a certain level of undetected crime as preferable to an oppressive state."

It is possible for us to apply the reasoning employed here to the imposition of mandatory AIDS tests.

The rationale in writing this piece and establishing the unconstitutionality of the proposed AIDS test is in no way intended to downplay the frightening implications of this disease. AIDS like the common cold, the Bubonic Plague, the Black Death and other debilitating diseases of old must be crushed. Yet, the means to reach this goal is not by eliminating essential constitutional rights vouchered in the citizen. This aim of eradication cannot be reached by spreading fear and panic either. To attempt to curb the disease by imposing mandatory tests would only drive the disease further and further underground. The spread of AIDS should instead be curbed by a massive resource allocation towards education and research in investigating

a possible cure. In the sphere of AIDS education the United States Surgeon General's Office has produced a succinct 8 page booklet to distribute to some 107 million American households. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop was smack on target when he stated that:

" the epidemic of misunderstanding about how AIDS is spread and how it is not spread seems at times as difficult to control as the epidemic itself."

In a less developed country setting such as ours the resources to fund path-breaking research is simply not available. Hence the onus lies in devoting attention to educating Sri Lanka's population about the dangers of AIDS and the means by which one might contract the disease. A booklet of the nature distributed in the US and AIDS awareness campaigns in schools and other public places is more in line with seriously confronting the disease. However great the

danger posed by the AIDS virus, the inalienable rights vested in the citizen may not be trammelled. To protect these essential rights guaranteed to each and every citizen, the Judiciary must adopt an activist role. Former Indian Chief Justice P. N. Bhagwati a strong advocate of an activist judiciary in less developed countries asserts that " the judiciary in its interpretation of the constitution must devise new methods, forge new tools and innovate new strategies" in dispensing justice. Justice Bhagwati specifically advocates this goal-oriented approach to afford social justice to the large masses of deprived discriminated and vulnerable segments of the populace. Such a judicial role would be very welcome in the context of mandatory AIDS tests, a move that unequivocally muzzles the rights of a citizen guaranteed in the Constitution.

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AIDS: Spread and prevention

In the United States, more than 37,000 people have been diagnosed with AIDS. An estimated 1.5 million people carry the virus; 30 to 50% of them will eventually develop AIDS. The percentage may be higher, no one knows. By 1991, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) projects, the number of AIDS victims in the U.S. will surpass 270,000.

Internationally, says the World Health Organization (WHO), between five and ten million people in more than 100 countries have been infected with the virus. WHO predicts that the number of carriers will climb to 100 million over the next ten years. There can be no doubt that AIDS is a global catastrophe demanding immediate international action.

One of the least-discussed facts about AIDS is that we can claim—and learn from—significant victories in halting the spread of this disease. In the U.S., the organized gay male community, predominantly white, has developed and funded its own programs of preventive education, explaining safe sexual practices in detail and advocating the use of condoms as a precaution against the disease. In New York and San Francisco, their efforts have succeeded in stalling, and perhaps even decreasing, the rate of infection in gay men.

Punitive Measures, Mandatory Tests

However, attempts to institute AIDS education on a national scale have been opposed by New Right figures inside and outside the Reagan Administration. Instead, conservatives call for mandatory AIDS testing of various groups, a punitive measure that will only serve to sanction discrimination against seropositive people—those who test positive for the HIV antibody. When health care services become a punitive instrument of the state, people at risk will tend to avoid, rather than seek testing and counseling. Mandatory testing will thus hasten, not halt, the spread of the AIDS epidemic.

In the name of "morality," some Right-wing ideologues have called for the quarantining and tattooing of people at risk for AIDS. Sound familiar? In Nazi Germany, thousands upon thousands of gay men were marked for slaughter by a pink triangle. New Right moralism must be exposed for what it is: a lethal ideology that condones certain death for members of marginalized or stigmatized groups.

Racism and Homophobia

Because of its initial concentration (in

the U.S.A.) among gay men, the response to AIDS has been heavily coloured by homophobic hysteria. Such anti-gay sentiment is still a major factor, even though AIDS is now widely recognized as a threat to heterosexuals as well. Many of us, however, have only slowly come to recognize the role played by racism in the neglect of AIDS by health authorities and the public response to the disease.

It is both racist and homophobic to make the common assumption that only white gays and Black or Latino drug addicts contract AIDS. AIDS victims come in all types, all colour. It's high-risk behaviour, not identity, that makes us vulnerable.

Vaccines and cures for AIDS are a long way off, but preventing AIDS through education is possible right now. While research continues in the world's laboratories, the task of preventive education must be carried forward in our communities and neighbourhoods. Mass media campaigns can help to spread the message, but the necessary changes in behaviour—safe sex, clean needles—can only come about when we begin talking to one another humanly, directly, on the streets, in shooting galleries, and in bedrooms across the country.

AIDS brings all the contradictions of our culture into harsh relief. There is no more compelling illustration that racism kills. Homophobia kills, poverty, moralism, profit-oriented health care—all are fatal.

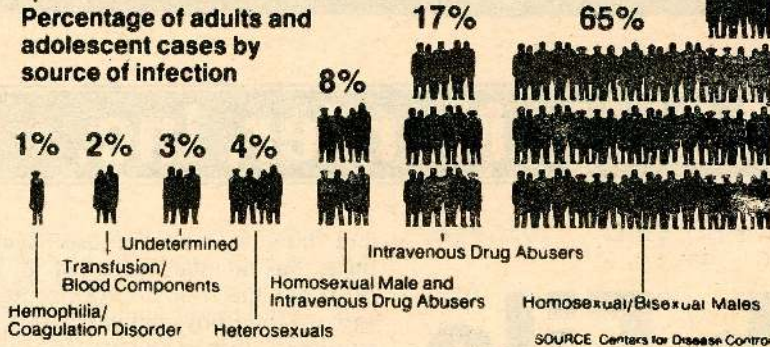
Looking AIDS in the face is very difficult. We see our sisters and brothers, lovers and friends, mothers and fathers. We see gay and bisexual men and IV drug users of all colours—and we watch them die. As AIDS spreads from person to person across every racial and sexual boundary, it's growing harder and harder for any of us to pretend that we ourselves, whoever we are, are some different, separate kind of people who are not involved with AIDS.

—Excerpts from an article in **Listen Real Loud**
(American Friends Service Committee)

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Transmission of AIDS

Percentage of adults and adolescent cases by source of infection



AIDS: Don't Laugh or Cry Just Understand

The problem of AIDS is so complex that no hurried ethical judgment can be made. My reflections here should be seen only as a beginning attempt toward an ethical evaluation. One day, when all aspects of the AIDS question have been classified, society as a whole should pass ethical judgment in this matter.

A wise philosopher once said that in the face of any problem it is important neither to laugh, nor to cry, but to try to understand. Let that be the starting point for this reflection.

First, there are those who are laughing with glee. This is the attitude of the moralizers and those who are prejudiced. They see AIDS as a punishment from nature itself and a scourge from God. They are quick to give out comfortable, easy moral judgments and don't allow a deeper analysis of the question. Furthermore, they run the risk of sinning against the second commandment of taking God's name in vain.

The attitude of those who laugh is a stumbling block to a society seeking ways to solve the problems generated by AIDS. And what is even worse, this attitude increases the suffering of those who are already suffering. It's a real shame that the pastoral approach of some churches is based on such a moralistic attitude.

Those who laugh hold an attitude that contradicts the Gospel. They are bearers of the sad tidings of divine punishment and of nature's revenge. The cures they suggest are usually unrealistic and elitist; total sexual abstinence that supposes spirits highly motivated by a religious mystique; or total isolation from potential AIDS transmitters.

On the other hand, we have those who cry. They show concern and solidarity with AIDS victims. But they tend to dramatize the incurable aspect of the disease and see in it the beginning of the end of the human race. And it isn't unusual to hear them link the AIDS crisis to other diseases that bring about death.

They tell us not to forget that chronic malnutrition claims the lives of some 30 million people each year, that cancer and leprosy claim the lives of 15 million more...

The attitudes of those who cry carries the shrill tone of urgency. But speed has never been a good counsellor. The cures they suggest tend to attack the effects rather than the causes of AIDS. For them, the solution is the massive use of condoms and other sanitary measures. But these are really only halfway solutions that have a certain practicality in the absence of an overall clarity from science or ethics.

Finally, there are those who seek to understand. Here we're speaking of trying to see, as objectively as possible, AIDS as a human, medical, health and social phenomenon. Only with understanding it is possible to arrive at an ethical judgment that has some minimum level of consistency.

Before anything else, it is necessary to clarify the historical question: Was AIDS introduced from outside homosexual circles and groups of intravenous drug addicts? Or is AIDS a derivative of the daily practice of these people? Extremely contradictory versions circulate, but the answer to that question is key in making an ethical evaluation.

If AIDS has been intentionally introduced from outside, we're faced with a crime against humanity. Homosexuals and drug addicts, in this case, would be more victims than the initial cause of the disease's spread. But if this isn't so, and if the second hypothesis is valid, it is society's duty (and that includes the churches) to find humanitarian ways, that are neither prejudicial or exclusive to relate to these high-risk groups.

Today, the disease is not just limited to these groups. A pluralistic, democratic society cannot give priority only to those solutions inspired by one moral view. It must put the protection of life—the supreme gift—as its fundamental objective and as its highest ethical value. All are called to support the search for ways to stop the disease; all are called to reduce the pre-

judices against AIDS victims who desperately need to be surrounded with compassion and human warmth.

The Catholic church, which tries to be a "specialist in humanity" should be the first to show this attitude towards AIDS victims.

The truly pioneering attitude of the Sao Paulo archdiocese gives us hope that Christian faith is better at being human than at moralizing. And that is the sense of all ethics.

—Leonardo Boff, *Latinamerica Press*



'We must make sure that the Church has full knowledge of the facts about AIDS. We must communicate information as a practical way of demonstrating care and concern. The church is well placed to do this by using its network of youth groups, of clergy and laity. I call on all Christians to pray for AIDS sufferers, those who care for them, and those seeking a remedy for the illness.'
Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury

Godfather of CIA's Murder, Inc.

The Bush File

In 1986 the USA was rocked by revelations that the Reagan/Bush administration, in their drive to "roll back Communism" in Central America, was secretly delivering U.S. arms to Khomeini and running a drugs-for-guns operation to finance the cut-throat Nicaraguan contras. It looked like Reagan was down for the count, and Bush's hope of taking the White House likewise. Now, two years later, George Herbert Walker Bush is President of the United States.

How did this come to pass? In order to protect the imperial presidency, the Republicans stonewalled and the Democrat covered up. Liberal Democrats Mario Cuomo said he was "praying that we never learn that he (Reagan) knew all all about this." Walter Mondale "warned that the worst thing for the country and the party would be an all-out attack on the President" (New York Times, 27th November 1986). And in the recent election campaign you couldn't read the word "Contragate" on the lips of either candidate.

The Congressional "investigation" became a forum for contra terror starring anti-communist psychopath Oliver North. And a year later, all the Democrats could say about Bush's role was "Where was George?" Later they whined that the election was "dirty" — but they didn't go after the dirt. They took a few pokes over drugs and the Noriega connection (a popular bumper sticker in California read,

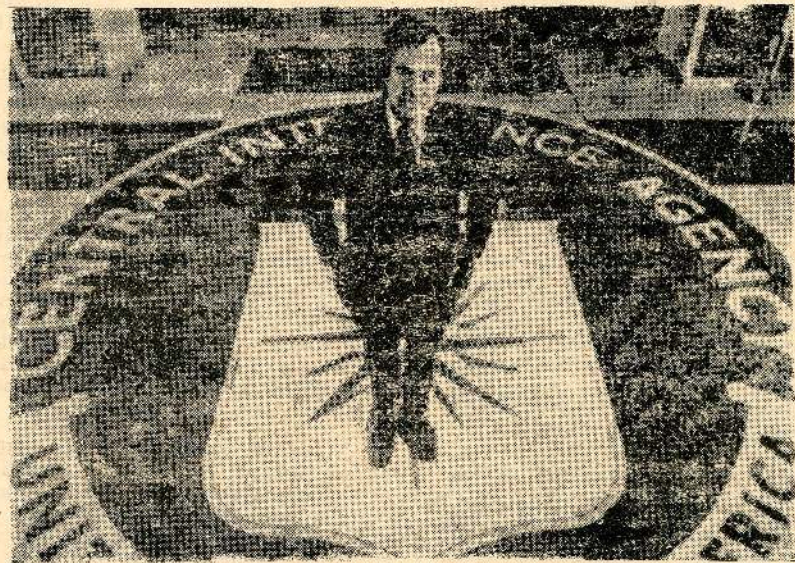
"Bush and Noriega — A Crack Team"). But they steered well clear of the secret armies, the contras' mass murder — the kind of stuff that made Bush's day, every day.

While North has subpoenaed Bush and Reagan to testify, the cover-up held through the elections. They managed to sell the hands-on Vice president, former Director of Central Intelligence, member of the National Security Council as a figurehead who was "out of the loop while Reagan was out to lunch. But if the Tower Commission and Congressional Democrats looked all around the loop and couldn't

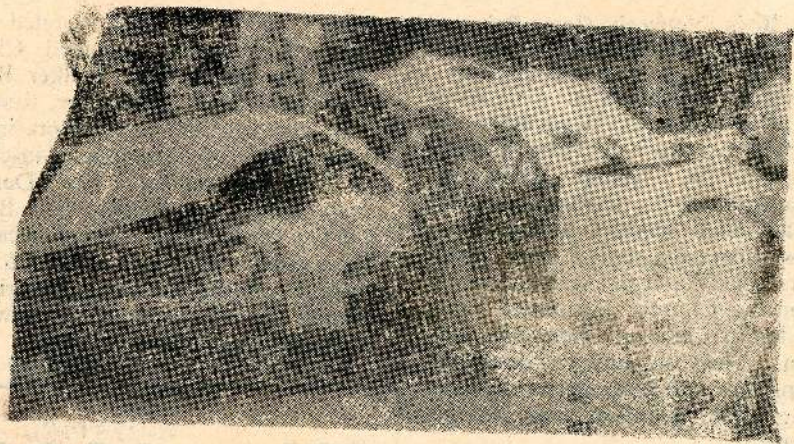
find him, it was because George Bush was at the centre of it all. Bush ran the Iran/Contra operation with an "old boys network" of CIA murderers thieves and big-time drug-runners.

Bush's Baby

In 1984 when the Boland Amendment cut off Congressional money for military supplies to the contras a whole private operation went into action run out of Bush's office. Former CIA Director Bush hired as his security advisor veteran CIA officer Donald Gregg who had worked on "Operation Phoenix" in Vietnam, the now infamous assassination programme which murdered 60 000 people labelled "Viet Cong." Gregg brought in an old CIA friend, Felix Rodriguez a gusano veteran of the Bay of Pigs fiasco (in Cuba) who was part of the hunter-killer squad that got Che Guevara in Bolivia and who still wears Guevara's watch. Jonathan Kwitny outlines the setup:



George Bush, former CIA director, at the centre of murder and mayhem



look
In 1986 v.
Hasenfus was s.
ragua by Sandinista
these contra aid mission.
everybody was supposed to d
up dead. But Hasenfus had rigged
himself a parachute and when he
was captured he started spilling the
beans. From San Salvador, Felix
Rodriguez called Washington with
the news. Who did he call?
Colonel Samuel Watson, Donald
Gregg's assistant in the vice presid-
ent's office. Bush was the first to
know, because it was Bush's baby.

Leslie Cockburn in her well-
researched book **Out of Control**
(1987) which details a lot of the
Contragate scandal that the media
and politicians buried, showed just
where the buck stopped:

"Bush's active involvement with the
covert operation in Central America is more
easily understood in the light of the Byzantine
White House covert organization chart.
North, for example, served on the Inter-
Departmental Group on Terrorism and on
the Terrorist Incident Working Group,
both of which reported to the Crisis Plan-
ning Group and the Special Situation Group,
both of which in turn shared the same chair-
man: Vice President George Bush."

"Out of the loop"? After the
election it was reported that "As
Vice President Mr. Bush was
briefed by the C.I.A. each morning"
(*New York Times*, 13th November
1988). Lt. Col. North, Adm. Poin-
dexter & Co. claimed they didn't
bother to report "details" of their
elaborate Iran/Contra operation to
Reagan but you better believe that
they reported to "Poppy" Bush!

Letelier's Blood on Bush's Hands

It was from his stint as CIA
director in 1976 that Bush had the
connections to preside over all this.

His 350-day term is generally por-
trayed as lacklustre, his time occu-
pied with smoothing down ruffled
feathers on Capitol Hill following
the 1975 Church Committee report
on CIA skullduggery. He "restored
Agency morale" by keeping Con-
gress from snooping into illegal CIA
domestic operations under the
cover of the Drug Enforcement
Agency shielding assets who had
lied about ITT's conniving with the
CIA to prevent Salvador Allende
from taking office in Chile, covering
up for the MKULTRA programme
in which the CIA tested out LSD
on unknowing subjects etc. But
this is small change. For notwith-
standing the "ban" on assassina-
tions, The Company was still
deep into the business of murder
and mayhem.

On 21st September 1976 Orlando
Letelier, former Chilean ambassador
to the U.S. and the key figure holding
together the opposition to the Pino-
chet dictatorship was assassinated
by a car bomb on Embassy Row in
Washington. The bombing was
carried out by fascist American
bomb expert Michael Townley work-
ing with Cuban gusano terrorists
in the pay of Chilean butcher Pino-
chet's secret police organization,
DINA. The CIA vultures were up
to their gizzards in this bloody
murder on the streets of the U.S.
capital. As CIA director, Bush was
informed that a DINA hit squad
was on its way and again when
they entered the U.S. After the
"hit" Bush stonewalled Congress
while the CIA tried to cover the
assassin's tracks with the story that
Letelier was killed by leftists looking
for a martyr.

The Letelier killing was no iso-
lated case. Bush was confirmed as
Director of Central Intelligence
on 27th January 1976 and gusano
terrorists soon began an orgy of
terrorism that ran through the dur-
ation of Bush's term as DCI. In
April, the Cuban embassy in Lisbon
was bombed. In June the Cuban
mission to the UN in New York
was bombed. In August two
Cuban officials were kidnapped in
Buenos Aires. That same month a
Cuban airliner was bombed on the
ground in Lisbon. And On October
6 three weeks after the Letelier
assassination, a bomb blew up a
Cuban jetliner in the air after it left
Barbados, killing 73 innocent people.
The gusano bombers were directly
linked to the murder of Letelier:

' After CORU took credit for the
October 1976 bombing of a Cuban Airlines
jet, which killed all 73 passengers aboard,
Venezuelan authorities arrested Posada and
Bosch for plotting the deed. On Posada's
papers were found a map of Washington,
D.C. with the work route of former Chilean
ambassador Orlando Letelier, murdered
in September 1976 by Cuban exiles working
for the Chilean secret police, DINA."
—JONATHAN MARSHALL, PETER SCOTT,
JANE HUNTER, *The Iran Contra Connection*
(1987)

"Posada" is the same Luis Posada
Carriles who emerges ten years
later as a deputy to Bush's man
Felix Rodriguez in the Nicaraguan
contra supply operation. Posada
was an old pal of Rodriguez from a
1959-60 CIA anti-Castro assassi-
nation operation. In fact Rodri-
guez thought so highly of Posada's
services that he managed to spring
him from a Venezuelan jail where
he was serving time for the '76 air-
plane bombing.

Old Boys Network Goes Private

Bush's "watch" at the CIA came just after U.S. imperialism had been whipped on the battlefield in Indochina and the "Vietnam syndrome" was most intense. Evidence of widespread CIA covert action atrocities, domestic spying and "dirty tricks" like Watergate was cascading. After the Church Committee hearings led to a ban on official assassination. The Company was desperate to find a way to keep covert actions going. The solution was to go private.

"It was in this period that the network began to set up its own proprietaries, as private companies owned by the CIA are called. Some of these were to become famous when the Iran-contra scandal finally burst on America. They included the Stanford Technology Corp., and Energy Resources. Others, such as CSF Investments Ltd., were specifically Central American in their orientation."—COCKBURN, *Out of Control*

Stanford Technology was run by Richard Secord and Albert Hakim; CSF was a money-laundering operation in the Cayman Islands set up by Theodore Shackley. Thomas Clines Secord, Hakim and Edmund Wilson. A Contragate rogues' gallery.

In 1976, Bush's associate DDO (Deputy Director of Operations), No. 2 in covert ops. was Theodore Shackley; Thomas Clines was his sidekick. Back in 1962-65, Shackley was head of CIA operations in Miami where he ran raids into Cuba. In 1966-68, Shackley was CIA chief of station in Laos; in 1969-72 he moved to Saigon, also as station chief. Among his aides were Felix Rodriguez and Donald Gregg. Running cross-border operations into North Vietnam at this time was ex-CIA officer General John Singlaub; his director of air support in Laos was Harry Aderholt, whose successor was Richard Secord; a gun ho Marine officer leading one of his "special operations" teams was Oliver North; and way down at the bottom of the totem pole, working as a cargo handler for the CIA's Air America drugs-and-guns operation was one Eugene Hasenfus. In 1972-73, Shackley ran the "destabilization" of Chile out of CIA headquarters in Langley.

So the gang that brought you Contragate was the same bunch

who "lost" Vietnam, bungled the Bay of Pigs and ravaged Chile. And George Herbert Walker Bush was and is their benefactor, first as CIA director, then as vice president and now as commander-in-chief of U.S. imperialism. The Democrats didn't nail Reagan and Bush on the Iran/Contra affairs because these covert operations are the stock-in-trade of the declining American empire in its desperate worldwide crusade for counter-revolution. The

network Bush brought into play are the hit men for imperialism in its death agony, and it will take world socialist revolution to put this Company out of business for good.

— Courtesy: Workers Vanguard (USA).

January 1989.

The 1988 Struggle for National Unification in Korea.

Seoul in South Korea was the venue of the 1988 Olympic Games and Pyongyang in North Korea is to host the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students in 1989. The article below discusses the widespread struggle for the unification of the two Koreas which involved tens of thousands of students especially in 1988.

I. Development of the Movement

In May 1986, Christian student Kim Sae Jin at the age of 21 lit his gasoline drenched body on fire along with fellow student Lee Jae Ho. Two years later in the same warm Spring month of May, church and campus activist Cho Sung Man followed in their footsteps as he committed "hari-kari" and then jumped off the rooftop of a Myung-dong Cathedral building. In the letters they left behind, these students outlined their common demands for: (1) withdrawal of U.S. forces of imperialism; (2) the reunification of divided north and south Korea; and (3) the dismantling of the military dictatorship.

These last dying demands have been shouted across the nation throughout 1988. On June 10, tens of thousands of students nationwide attempted to march to Panmunjom (the Demilitarized Zone demar-

cating the borders of north and south) in order to meet their north Korean counterparts for a joint conference. Laying their bodies across the hot pavement of the streets leading to Panmunjom, they resisted riot police. In the end, however, they could not overcome the forces of suppression, their tear gas and clubs. Over a thousand students were rounded up that day. But the students persisted and on August 15, they called for even a wider effort by planning a pilgrimage from the most southern tip of Cheju Island to the most northern part of the Korean peninsula, Baekdo Mountain in the north.

This seemingly sudden torrent of struggles for unification is actually the culmination of factors at home and abroad. At home, forces of the national democratic movement began to recognize that national unification is a major task of the move-

ment since 1986. Prior to this, national division was viewed as an inevitable fixture in history even within the forces of the democratic movement. However, as their struggles developed, it became evident that the various contradictions in Korean society were embodied in the fundamental problem of division. Clearly the fate of south Korea could not be determined in isolation by itself. Thus theoretical developments within the movement began to encompass north Korea in their framework reflecting the position that north and south Korea must be considered as one entity irrefutably linked in history.

In the realm of praxis, the anti-war, anti-American, and anti-nuclear struggles of 1986 paved the way for a reassessment of the unification issue. 1987 followed with campaigns to begin to understand the realities of our compatriots in the north which were waged in order to breakdown the irrational hatred for the north which has been built up under the mask of education for national security and anti-communism.

Internationally, as we entered 1988, the traditional cold-war tensions between the U.S. and Soviet Union were slowly being thwarted by economic necessities of the super-powers. With the signing of the INF treaty, the opening of China, changing political and economic conditions, the Soviet *glasnost*, a new atmosphere of *détente* began to spread across the international community. In this scheme, tensions in the Korean peninsula would also have to be reduced in order to maintain the appearance of an uneasy peace between two conflicting economic systems. In fact, the problem of nuclear presence in south Korea was an issue brought up in INF negotiation process.

These changes affect the Korean situation as well in providing positive opportunities to reopen dialogue between the north and south. At the same time, however, if such talks are limited solely to normalization of relationships, it carries with it the danger of solidifying the present division. That is, if negotiations proceed under the assumption of north and south Korea as two

separate national entities, then bringing stability to the region might merely mean the recognition and acceptance of status quo relationships rather than the pursuance of the question of reunification. Recognizing such potential danger, the people's voices for reunification are crying out even louder.

II. Why Unification?

For the past forty years, the Korean people have lived under all manner of exploitation and depravity as a result of being a divided people. Under division, self-sufficient economic development has been impossible. Each year, the south Korean government spends as much as 6% of the GNP or about 35% of the national budget on military spending. Moreover, the tensions of the division have made it necessary to maintain a military force of over 600,000 men through a compulsory draft. These human and economic investments are not only a waste of valuable resources but have also created total militarization of society. Secondly, the division has kept south Korea subservient to the U.S., relying on its economic and military assistance. The Armistice Agreement signed at the time of division granted U.S. not only the right to despatch its weapons and armed forces, but commandship of the military as well. In addition, U.S. support has made possible the rise of dictatorial governments whose legitimacy is dependent on collusion with the U.S. rather than popular support. The people of south Korea, thus, have been unable to achieve nor articulate economic and political self-determination. Third, basic human rights have been threatened and violated as a result of division. Over 10 million separated families are the products of division carried out by foreign powers. These people have been denied the most basic human rights of knowledge concerning family members as the 38th parallel acts as a fortress suspending all communication between brother and sister, between mother and child. Moreover, nuclear weapons despatched and targeted on the peninsula threaten the very existence of the Korean people. Without the removal of these weapons and

the existing tension, the Korean people will live under the constant threat of nuclear annihilation by forces outside the control of the people themselves.

Finally, without reunification, there can never be genuine freedom of thought. The lessons of the '70s clearly taught us that division is the major of ideological back-corning which legitimized all forms of abuse in the name of anti-communism and national security. Blind anti-communism has also embedded an unquestioning hate for our brothers and sisters in the north without realizing that hating those of a common blood is an act of self-depreciation.

Thus, the struggle for reunification embodies the struggles for democracy, human rights, and national self-determination. The struggle for national self-determination is a movement which opposes domination by foreign forces and the democratic struggle opposes domestic forces of oppression who are in collusion with foreign powers. The reunification movement, then, acts together to resist and breakdown the policy of national division enforced to keep alive foreign domination and political oppression by dictatorial governments.

III. Tasks and Goals of the Reunification Movement

Through various exchanges and breakthroughs in ideological barriers, the unification movement seeks to establish a "union of Korean nations." This proposal for a united Korea has been the major thrust adopted by the student movement since 1987 when it was first introduced. This proposal maintains that national identity precedes ideological differences. The fact that the Korean people share a common national identity and history is more important than the differences in political, economic and ideological orientations between north and south.

— Courtesy: **Confession and Praxis**
(Korean Student Christian Federation).
December 1988.



Situation in the Philippines

Interview with Jose Maria Sison,

(Jose Ma. Sison ("Joma") led the re-establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968 and became its first chairman. Imprisoned for almost 10 years by the Marcos dictatorship — during which he was severely tortured — he was released along with other political prisoners following the fall of Marcos in 1986. Together with his wife, Julieta, he is currently based in Europe.

H. Buenviaje, a Filipino journalist based abroad, contributed this piece to BMP (Free Philippines News Service). He interviewed Sison on August 15 in Hamburg, East Germany).

Question: Reports from Manila say that your and your wife's passports have been ordered cancelled and that subversion charges against you will be revived. How do you react to this? What do you plan to do now? Don't these moves virtually tie your hands in view of your activities abroad?

JMS: My wife and I feel honoured when ever the political and military agents of the US and the exploiting classes in the Philippines make malicious charges and threats and undertake foolish actions against us.

We are not bothered a bit by these. We simply do the research, writing and lecturing that we are committed to. We know our political and legal rights in the Philippines and anywhere we are. We understand the options for us and try to adopt the best possible at every given time. We intend to return home in due time and certainly not later than the final offensive of the armed revolution.

Q. The Catholic bishops and a number of cause-oriented organizations have called for renewed peace talks between the government and the revolutionary movement. President Aquino has said she is open to peace talks — provided the movement's leadership formally requests these. What do you say to this?

JMS: It is my personal view that the revolutionary movement is always prepared to negotiate with the Aquino regime if the agenda focuses on the basic anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-fascist demands of the people.

If Aquino would only be faithful to the Declaration of Unity she signed in

1984 and issue an executive proclamation for the dismantling of US military bases, I feel certain that the revolutionary movement would seriously consider negotiating with her government on a comprehensive range of issues. Another incentive for the revolutionary movement is to hold the negotiations abroad so that representatives of the movement will not be subjected to enemy surveillance and other nasty acts.

Q. The Philippines-US talks on the bases have so far been stalled, reportedly on the two issues of the nuclear-free provision in the Constitution and amount of compensation. Are you prepared to say how this impasse will most probably be resolved?

JMS: The line of the Aquino regime is clear. The US can retain its military bases in exchange for a compensation package. There are more than enough indications that the regime is bent on letting the US keep the bases and use these for the positioning and transit of nuclear weapons.

The regime is merely trying to raise the compensation package and is actually collaborating with the US in selling the idea that the bases can be retained by the US in exchange for a certain amount.

Q. How about the multi-billion-dollar "mini-Marshall Plan"? Do you think this will materialize and perhaps have a bearing on the outcome of the bases talks?

JMS: The propaganda about the so-called mini-Marshall Plan of \$ 10 billion is calculated to pave the way for the retention of the US military bases. The plan is nothing but a scheme to dress up as "development aid" the loans

and grants from the US and other capitalist countries. These will actually aggravate the underdevelopment of the Philippines.

Q. Mrs. Aquino said in her state-of-the-nation speech that the back of the revolutionary movement will be broken this year. Also, there have been arrests of a number of allegedly high-ranking CPP and NPA cadres. How do you assess these? How deeply has the movement been affected by these arrests?

JMS: The revolutionary movement will continue to exist and grow in strength long after the US-Aquino regime is finished. The reactionaries can from time to time deliver a serious blow on a part of the revolutionary movement. But the main trend is for the movement to grow larger and stronger.

The economic and political crisis of the ruling system is worse than during the time of Marcos. The objective conditions for making revolution are more favourable. But the organized forces of the revolution must expand and expand and deepen their relations with the people and avoid rightist and ultra-left errors.

I don't think that the US-Aquino regime can break the back of the movement this year. The recent series of arrests is a serious matter and is a source of important lessons. But the movement is well-structured and thousands of cadres are deeply rooted enough among the masses to be able to solve any problems.

Q. Journalists in touch with the movement say that its leadership is now preparing for a transition to the next strategic stage of "stalemate," passing through a phase of "counter-offensive," to be attained in two to three years. Is this accurate? And won't the capture of alleged leaders, together with many documents and diskettes, affect this projection?

JMS: Since the beginning, the movement has had the experience of losing its principal leaders through capture or death. But it has always overcome this and emerged stronger. That's because the movement is correctly following the general line of national democratic revolution.

Whenever a cadre falls, there is someone to replace him. The movement has a deep reservoir of ideologically, politically and organizationally competent cadres who are closely linked with the masses.

The recent capture of cadres and documents is not enough to hold back the revolutionary movement from reaching the stage of strategic stalemate in a few years' time. The movement can rectify its errors, further strengthen itself and deliver harder blows on its enemy.

Q. Why have so many alleged leaders and rank-and-file militants been arrested in the past months? Do you think the AFP is getting stronger? Or maybe the movement has become careless about security?

JMS: Carelessness is a facile expression to account for the arrest of the alleged leaders and rank-and-file militants. The meaning of the expression can range from isolated individual carelessness to carelessness of large and serious proportions.

To consider your question at the highest level, I would say that there are two root causes for the arrests. There has been complacency about security due to an underestimation of the military after the fall of Marcos, especially during the pre-ceasefire and ceasefire periods when underground personnel and their legal connections were exposed to military surveillance.

There has also been a degree of impetuosity that over-estimates the military capabilities of the movement and belittles the need for painstaking mass work over a protracted period of time. This attitude further under-estimates the strength of the adversary.

In the main, the revolutionary movement is correct in its theory and practice. But there are those elements who are carried away by the extremes of complacency and impetuosity; at times they forget the proper combination of prudence and militance, and the distinction between identified and hunted personnel, on the one hand, and viably legal personnel, on the other.

The arrests of progressive people do not mean that the reactionary military is getting stronger. I have already pointed out the fundamental rottenness and weaknesses of the entire ruling system. But revolutionaries in their general course of advance should prevent unnecessary losses through complacency or impetuosity.

Q. *Why does the movement now refer to the "US-Aquino regime"? How do you see the direction of US involvement in the Philippines? Do you expect direct US military intervention in the future?*

JMS: The movement now refers to the US-Aquino regime as such because the Aquino ruling clique of big comprador and landlords has been fully exposed as an instrument of US domination, especially since November 1986.

US military intervention in the Philippines is escalating. The revolutionary movement must be prepared against both the escalated use of puppet mercenaries and, possibly later, an all-out war of aggression.

Since its defeat in Indochina, the US has been unable to launch any war of aggression on a similar scale as the Vietnam War. But the US can decide to focus violence on the Philippines, especially if it succeeds in dousing armed revolutionary movements elsewhere through diplomatic collaboration with other powers. At any rate, I don't think that the US can solve the crisis of capitalism and stop the revolutionary movements.

(BMP). □

Debt Fuelled "Democracies"

Percival Alejandro

At the heart of the struggle for economic Development, the burden of debt service strikes deep among Third World countries. Last year (1988) participating nations in the Manila Conference of Newly-Restored Democracies, "taking into account that the external debt has emerged for many countries as a formidable obstacle to their social and economic development," declared that the "servicing of external debt must be compatible with the responsibility of promoting development." Similar voices of condemnation of the debt crisis and calls for an alternative blueprint for development have been made in the past by likewise indebted African and Latin American countries.

Such an emboldened position is understandable, considering their government's embattled situation vis-a-vis the IMF-WB and other creditor banks and the social costs it entails on the people. Prominent debtor countries which participated in the Manila Conference, namely,

Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and the Philippines are fine examples. Brazil and Argentina are the two largest Third World debtors, owing \$115 billion and \$54 billion respectively. Peru, on the other hand, has an external debt of about \$16.5 billion while Philippine foreign loans amounted to \$27.5 billion.

On the sixth year of the debt crisis, creditor banks are starting to realize the impossibility of collecting all Third World loans in the face of the debtor nations' inability to pay their obligations—a fact too obvious to escape the attention of foreign creditors. Still, "the banks are trying out ways to unload the bad loans without losing their grip on the Third World economies and without letting the countries off the hook. On the other hand, the bank's manoeuvres have provided new openings for debtors, which are moving in to press their demands for relief," comments newsmagazine **Guardian**. And in this context,

every indebted country is looking for a solution to the debt trap.

Peru, for its part, unilaterally declared in 1985 a 10 percent limit of its export earnings as repayment for its debt. President Alan Garcia accused "the IMF and its free-market policy" for the chronic state of the nation's economy. The unilateral move was premised on: its incapacity to pay; ineffectiveness of IMF's prescriptions to an "economy suffering recession accompanied by high inflation"; the excessive social and political costs; and the difficulty in attracting foreign capital, with or without the IMF's stability package.

Two years later, another unilateral act against the IMF and the creditor banks was taken by Brazil. After exporting \$ 55 billion as interest payments over the past five years, Brazil boldly declared February 20th 1987 a moratorium of interest payments on its \$688 commercial debt and further suspended payment of

the \$1.05 principal due to the Paris Club. Its impact was tremendous: US and British banks reserved \$22 billion to cover possible losses; Citicorp of NY, the largest American creditor bank similarly reserved \$3 billion. Thereafter, Bank of Boston declared uncollectable \$200 million of its \$1 billion loans to the Third World.

But before the "moratorium virus" could spread, agreements with other countries such as the Philippines and Argentina were immediately mapped out by the IMF and creditor banks, reportedly showing "Unusual flexibility." However, it was a situation which the two countries failed to maximize.

Several months after Brazil's default, a new Argentine deal with the foreign lenders was effected immediately. Repayment of the \$34 billion, a partial amount of the total debt, was rescheduled over a period of up to 19 years with lower interest rates and a generous grace period. A \$1.95 billion new loan package was also granted.

The Philippines, on the other hand, struck a deal with the commercial banks as its \$13.2 billion commercial loan was rescheduled over a period of 17 to 18 years of reduced interest rates. A \$955 million bilateral agreement was also signed with the Paris Club covering 100 percent of the principal and 60 percent of interest falling due from January 1987 to 1988. The country's chief negotiators, then finance minister Jaime Ongpin and Central Bank governor Jose Fernandez, acknowledged repayment of every loan contracted by Marcos and his minions, regardless of the fraudulent character of some of them.

The agreements with the Philippines and Argentina centred on the spread of payments and not on their capacity or incapacity to pay their obligations to the foreign financial institutions. In effect, it only led them deep into the debt trap as IMF-prescribed remedies on their ailing economy soon became part of their own policy — which only reminded them of the unpopular strategy used by their countries' dictators in the past.

In order to reduce its fiscal deficit, the Argentine government of President Raul Alfonsin pursued on October 1987 a renewed price and wage freeze, sharp tariff increases and a new package of tax reforms necessary for the release of the remaining funds from a \$1.4 billion commercial bank debt refinancing grant. Expected to benefit more the foreign creditors than the Brazilians; the government also undertook a "long-term economic strategy of export-led growth based on industrial expansion and diversification." Since no local finance is available, such policy will only require the continued support of foreign banks and stable interest rates. Hence, the presence of the IMF-WB and other creditor banks will still be greatly felt in the economy.

"It is becoming apparent that Argentina's internal economic policies are increasingly dictated by the US," critics say.

The same charges were hurled against the Philippines present strategy of economic recovery and debt repayment. President Aquino's emphasis on privatization, import liberalization, tax reform via the VAT (Value-Added Tax) scheme, reliance on free market forces in an export-oriented economy is reminiscent of her predecessor.

Moratorium by itself does not solve the problem. Failure to boldly restructure society and economy will lead back to the folds of IMF-WB rules, simply in order to survive

Debt Defying Acts

Debt service payments for 1987 accounted for 41 percent of the Philippine's total expenditures and 55 percent of merchandise exports—a very huge amount that could be used for the country's economic development. Together with the debt servicing the Aquino government is also pursuing a debt-equity swap programme as prescribed by the IMF-WB. "where foreign investors are offered a preferential exchange rate of about P40 to a dollar compared with the standard rate of about 20." The Central Bank has approved \$273 million of applications for debt conversion as of October 1987.

Simply put both Argentina and Philippines have squandered opportunities to lead its people out of the debt trap. Instead of boldly restructuring the society and economy, both governments have proceeded the path of debt-riddled hibernation.

But who says debt-defying acts produce a happy-ending? From the looks of it the tough posture of Brazil and Peru has spelled trouble. And that is returning to the folds of the IMF-WB rules simply because they have to survive both politically and economically.

Peru's dramatic 8.5 percent growth rate in 1986 and an estimated percent for 1987 went for naught as trade credits have dried up and a dollar shortage is now in the offing.

President Garcia's policy of import constraints restrict badly-needed investments as 1988 projected growth rate is pegged at 37 percent. The government is left with no option but to attract foreign funds into new productive ventures to boost exports. Thus IMF's policy of export-led industry is now adopted and the policy of 10 percent limit on export earnings for debt repayment will have to be modified.

Peruvian technocrats plan to use the debt as a "lever for development." Under the scheme, "for every dollar of debt paid with products, the creditor buys in cash in further \$2 of products, giving Peru a foreign exchange gain" according

to the *South* magazine. Normalization of relations with the international banking community were being undertaken as a meeting with creditor banks was reportedly set in January last year. This would mean bending a little the dignity Peru restored to itself in 1985 just to please the financial institutions.

Still a new oil legislation has been enacted "to give better terms to foreign investors" as foreign oil and mining companies are exempted from the ban of profit remittances abroad.

Brazil, on the other hand witnessed the collapse of the government's Bresser plan, considered more popular with the international banking community than with the people. The Bresser plan generally resembles a typical IMF austerity programme such as wage freeze selective price freeze which excludes a number of key goods and a currency devaluation to increase exports and douse off consumer demand.

Restoration of relations with the foreign lenders is now being pursued as Brazil reportedly inked February 1988 a preliminary agreement with its principal commercial creditors while observers forecast an IMF accord is being worked on. Like Peru this signals the loss of the few precious gains they had chalked up.

Lessons

The failure of the civilian governments in these "democracies" tells basically two things:

1. That national leadership of every indebted nation realize that they will not be able to pay all their debts: As soon as they realize this only then will they make realistic approaches to the debt problem. The experiences of Argentina and the Philippines attest to this. On the other hand Brazil and Peru's actions were premised on their incapacity to pay all their financial obligations such that they were able to arrive at a progressive stand.

Besides US creditor banks admit that the foreign debt specifically Latin American foreign debt, is "not only unpayable but also uncollectable." The fact that foreign

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a greater degree of
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for liberation.**

loans are sold at discounted price in the US secondary banking market manifests the admission that they cannot collect all of their borrowings. Thus, they are simply trying to recover as much value as they can and not necessarily the whole amount.

Granma, a Cuban daily, reports that, "the Latin American debt is not in fact the \$410 billion registered in the debtors books. Instead, it fluctuates between \$156 and 168 billion, which is the portion that the banks consider collectible, and that figure will continue to shrink."

And to continue to demand payment with interests on 100 percent of the foreign debt's face value is, therefore, morally unjust. "The most elementary sense of justice would seem to indicate that, given the extraordinary depreciation of the debt's face value, and the fact that the banks themselves are apparently reconciled to the loss of the devalued difference, it would be in order for Latin American countries to pay interest only on the real market value of the debt which is substantially less."

2. The failure of Brazil and Peru does not in anyway prove the futility of any bold action on the the foreign debt. The substantial growth achieved by these countries after pursuing such policy even points to the correctness of their moves. On the other hand, what they failed to consider is that relief

from debt servicing — such as moratorium and limiting of payment to 10 percent of export earnings — is only the first step on the way out of the debt trap. It is not the end itself. Moratorium by itself "does not solve the fundamental problem but just delays the day of reckoning." There may be temporary relief but not for long: the inherent defects of the economy will soon tell and effects felt. And when that time comes, a return to the folds of the law of the international banking community and adoption of IMF-WB "trademark" measures such as austerity programmes and tax reforms will be a painful necessity.

Domination of the foreign creditors in a country's economy has imprinted havoc in the economy such that to be temporarily relieved and then to continue working within the economic framework laid down by the IMF-WB will prove to be an exercise in futility. One will only be going back in circles as what Brazil and Peru went through.

Hand in hand with a self-imposed temporary relief is the restructuring of the economy and society to grow out of the dependence on debt. Any savings incurred by a temporary relief will have a lasting effect only if the funds are used to build a self-reliant economy free from import and debt dependence.

As Argentine Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel said in a NACLA interview: "In terms of real prospects, we need greater awareness, organizational ability and answers which can confront these powerful interests which are not prepared to give up their systems of domination... There are few choices: either we submit to a greater degree of dependence or we fight for liberation. We know the struggle is not easy, nor is the path ahead clearly defined. But we must create alternatives."

—Courtesy: **Philippine Insight,**

(Ecumenical Partnership for International Concerns (EPIC) Philippines).



The IMF: Tightening the Noose

SHIRAZ KASSAM

IMF officials are akin to the ancient proconsuls to Roman governors and exert increasingly centralized control over Third World economies.

An International Monetary Fund loan of US\$26 million to Costa Rica, which had been negotiated in May 1986, was blocked because the Costa Rican government had not stopped subsidizing prices paid to small producers of corn, rice and beans. This happened after Costa Rica had already been forced to lift other food subsidies to producers, reduce tariffs on imported goods and dismiss 4,000 public employees. Meanwhile, the IMF turns a blind eye to the world's biggest debtor, the United States, which in 1986 paid out US \$30 billion in subsidies to its farmers.

The Costa Rican case is an example of how the IMF's hold over a sovereign state can be tightened. Accepting the initial IMF "conditionality" only prepares the way for further and sterner dictates. In other words, a situation is fast approaching where the assets and resources of Third World countries will have been placed in receivership by the IMF, with their governments as the trustees, to guarantee payment of the countries' debt.

Modern Proconsuls

According to C. Fred Bergsten, Director of the Institute for International Economics, "the peripatetic teams of IMF officials are (a modern version of) the proconsuls to the governors of the Roman Empire and represent the world's increasingly centralized economic management."

Under these conditions a military dictatorship would of course be the most "responsible" trustee. Jails often lie at the foundations of the law-and-order state. For the "Chicago Boys"—the American trained economists who practice the deadly fiction of pure economic advice—political and social costs are mere "obstacles" or "externalities" and anyway can be disguised by repression.

"The IMF has overthrown more governments than the military," complained Pepe Figueres, a veteran Costa Rican social democrat. Indeed, IMF interventions have often coincided with military coups. Chile

Debt bondage today is the old colonial dependency in modern attire. What is new is the development of market relations within the third world dominated by U. S. A.

provides a particularly bloody demonstration in the use of international financial power to achieve political ends. The military takeover in Argentina in March 1976, as that in 1962, was closely connected with negotiations for an IMF standby credit.

The civilian government of Isabel Peron could not force through the IMF demands because resistance, especially from the trade unions, was too strong; yet the IMF insisted on its terms and refused to grant an urgently needed loan. The army leadership, with encouragement and support from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), took advantage of the economic crisis and the government's weak position and took power. After popular resistance had been crushed, the IMF mission descended to reach an agreement with the Junta.

Similarly the IMF has been instrumental in the overthrow of "populist" governments like the Busia administration in Ghana. Brazil in 1964, Uruguay in 1973, Turkey in 1960, 1971 and 1980 are other examples. These brutal military regimes came to a remarkably rapid agreement with the IMF, crushing all resistance from the outset. Is the South Korean dictatorship is as much an example as the Chilean one.

Contrary to official platitudes about the immaturity of democracy in the Third World, military coups have overtaken precisely those

nations where voters were relatively sophisticated and conscious, and where elections have been relatively free from corruption. After all, no informed electorate would vote for austerity programmes, and the only "solution" — if the elite hope to maintain their status and imported lifestyle — may be to abolish elections.

The debt crisis has evolved into a political struggle over power. As an IMF official once observed, "The fundamental creditworthiness risk is political, relating to the possibility of a sharp deterioration in the quality of economic management under a different political regime."

Neo-Colonialism

Debt bondage today is the old colonial dependency in modern attire. What is new today is the development of market relations within the Third World and increased absorption of Third World economies by a US-dominated world market. As a result, subjugation to the needs of capital has become more thorough and "efficient" than in colonial times.

Today, even the remotest peasant in the rural heartland of the Third World has lost the freedom to determine his own future. New weapons have been added to the capitalist arsenal, such as the food weapon and economic blockade.

How could the IMF attain such overwhelming power in determining the economic and political destinies of billions of people?

The power is a story of decades of false hopes and unmitigated economic and social disaster. In short, it is the story of the role of the World Bank in the Third World and the pattern of development imposed by it.

The intimate connection between the Bretton Woods twins is often overlooked. Entire books have been devoted to counterposing a Keynesian World Bank to a monetarist IMF. Unlike the IMF and its arrogant dictates, the World Bank is depicted as dealing with the Third World in a gentlemanly sort of way.

Externally induced economic growth and indebtedness are bound together: they are merely two sides of a single process - development peonage.

In fact, however, the World Bank and the IMF are tributaries of the same imperial river. The very essence of the development pattern imposed by the World Bank on the Third World, made balance-of-payment deficits in these countries a "natural" condition, and reliance on the IMF short-term financing became a way of life. This partnership of "development" and debt was in reality a partnership between the World Bank and the IMF.

The subordination of the Third World to priorities and interests set by a distant economic power centre was couched in the technical language of economic growth. Thus what was a highly political project was presented as neutral blueprint designed by non-political experts. While claiming to be immune to political ideologies, the Bank was in fact actively participating in the spread of a specific world view — that of "American free-enterprise."

Development Peonage

The opening up of Third World economies to U.S. capital was ideologically justified by the notion that it should bring a higher development of all productive factors and immediately or eventually lead to a better life for all, including the poorest.

If the Third World countries were simply undeveloped versions of the industrialized countries, they then were considered capable of being "upgraded" and "engineered" through imports of capital and technology — via private foreign investment.

Foreign investment did provide some temporary relief to balance-of-payments, but in the long run it added to the burdens as profits were remitted to the investing country and loans which were required to build the infrastructure (so as to attract foreign investors) has to be repaid with interest.

In the Philippines, which the World Bank sees as a "country of concentration" (that is, a testing ground for Bank projects, programmes and policies), export-oriented industrialization accounted for 70% of all imports by 1979. Thus while export earnings were rising, import payments were rising even faster — leading to a steadily widening balance-of-trade deficit.

A substantial portion of the Philippine "export earnings" was in fact illusory. In the case of garment exports, only 44% was value added by Filipino labour. When repatriated profits (not including royalty and salaries paid to foreign exports) amounting to 30% of value added are deducted, the foreign exchange gained by the country is minimal at best. The situation was even worse in other industries. In electronics, net foreign earnings came to only US \$0.13.

The only way the debtor countries could cover their deficits was by attracting more foreign investment or borrowing from international bankers. But that only contributed to aggravate the problem. Still more had to be paid abroad for interests and profits. Hence externally induced economic growth and indebtedness became inexorably bound together; they were merely two sides of a single process — development peonage.

—Courtesy:

**Third World
No. II (Brazil.)**



Another Singapore Scandal ?

Released and Re-arrested Immediately

In a planned and very cruel piece of political theatre, the Singapore government on 8th December released and re-arrested 4 detainees: Kevin De Souza, Mss. Teo Soh Lung, Wong Souk Yee and Chng Suan Tze.

About mid-day on 8th December, Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin delivered a 107 page judgement on two separate appeals against dismissal of applications for writs of *habeas corpus* on behalf of the 4 detainees.

The detainees were told to ready themselves for release. This was delayed until evening. Their lawyers went to the prison with the necessary papers. Families were also waiting. The detainees were forced into police cars, driven out of the prison gates a few yards and then brought back in to be served with new detention orders.

Political Judgement

This action may appear as gross disrespect for the Rule of Law and for the judiciary. But, regrettably, from the judgement delivered, it is clear that the judiciary is conniving with the government and shares in this display of disrespect.

The joint appeal of Ms. Wong, Ms. Chng and Mr. de Souza was allowed on the technical grounds that the correct procedure for the issuance of their detention orders had not been followed. Ms. Teo's appeal did not include this point and concentrated on points of law. However, in a clever political move, the judges gave a nod to these points

of law without ruling on their implications and ordered the release of Ms. Teo on technical grounds also.

Thus there was no substantive review of the legality of the detentions and it was a simple matter for the government to re-serve the detention orders according to the correct procedure. Naturally, the government did not pass up the opportunity to raise false hopes in the detainees and their families as a lesson to them for daring to resort to the judicial process.

The political purpose of allowing the appeals on the narrowest technical grounds is to prevent further appeal to the Privy Council in London. The Privy Council would consider the substantive points of law which would question executive discretion in cases under the Internal Security Act as well as force the unconditional release of the detainees. The ISA would then become a more limited and less potent weapon for silencing dissent.

Jeyaretnam Vindicated !

On 25th October, the British Privy Council granted the appeal of Workers' Party leader and former MP, J. B. Jeyaretnam, against the decision of a Singapore court to disbar him from the legal profession.

Jeyaretnam, a lawyer and secretary-general of the Workers' Party, was expelled from the Singapore Parliament in November 1986. His expulsion and later disbarment followed his criminal convictions concerning party finances. The Privy Council ruled that those convictions were flawed, based on unsound reasoning by Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin.

The decision is a setback for the government's sustained campaign of political victimisation of Ben Jeyaretnam. He was removed from parliament, imprisoned, fined and disbarred as the result of technical charges brought against him soon after his re-election to parliament in 1984. Although acquitted of 3 out of 4 of these charges initially, the government transferred the judge involved and re-tried the case resulting in conviction of all charges.

The five Law Lords sitting on the case were blunt in slamming the decisions to convict Jeyaretnam and former Workers' Party (WP) chairman Wong Hong Toy of fraudulently diverting party funds and making a false declaration. "Their lordships have to record their deep disquiet that by a series of misjudgements the appellant and his co-accused Wong have suffered a grievous injustice," the judgement stated. "They have been fined, imprisoned and publicly disgraced for offences of which they were not guilty."

The Privy Council ordered that Jeyaretnam, 62, be allowed to resume his legal practice. But the convictions on the criminal charges stand because there is no appeal to the Council from Singapore's District Court where the convictions were recorded. The Lords noted they were powerless to "right the other wrongs which the appellant and Wong have suffered" and pointed out that the only hope of justice for the pair was a presidential pardon.

The Privy Council appeal had a history stretching back sixteen years. Shortly after the 1972 general election, Jeyaretnam sued former government MP Tay Boon Too for defamation. He lost the case and in 1982 Tay won a High Court order to recover S\$25,488 in costs from the WP. When Tay learned the party was almost penniless he succeeded in having the official receiver seize its assets. Jeyaretnam and Wong were then charged with diverting three donation cheques

for the payment of the costs. They were also charged with falsely declaring that the party accounts were true when the donations had been omitted. The charges alleged that the diversion of the funds blocked creditors from claiming their money.

The first trial in the District Court before Senior District Court Judge Michael Khoo started in December 1983. Both men were acquitted on the false declaration charge as Judge Khoo ruled that their statement on the accounts was not a statutory declaration. They were also acquitted of fraudulently diverting two of the cheques but convicted and fined S \$1,000 for diverting a \$400 dollar donation. In their defence both men argued that the donors had willingly amended their cheques in order that the money go to other recipients, not the WP. The prosecution and the defendants appealed to the High Court. In April 1985 Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin upheld the earlier conviction and reversed the acquittals on diverting the other two cheques. He also ordered a retrial on the false declaration charge.

On broad points or Principles of Law, the Singapore Govt. is in danger. It therefore seeks to restrict Privy Council appeals, specially after Jeyaretnam's Case.

then, in October 1987 a three-judge court ordered that he be struck from the Law Society rolls after the Attorney-General had reported to the Society that he was unfit to practice. But, ironically with this ruling the tide turned for Jeyaretnam. Under Singapore law a lawyer can appeal to the Privy Council on a disciplinary dispute.

The Privy Council decided it should scrutinise the convictions because Jeyaretnam had been denied the opportunity to test important questions of law.

The Privy Council said the WP had only a loose title to the cheques, which could have been annulled if the donor wished. "Before the title was perfected the cheque was in each case lawfully disposed of in accordance with the donor's instructions," ruled the Council.

Government Refuses to Quash Convictions

In a statement on 1st December the Attorney-General announced that the Privy Council's judgement did not have the effect of reversing Jeyaretnam's convictions. This much was stated by the Privy Council itself since there is no appeal from the Singapore District Courts to the Council and thus no jurisdiction. However, the normal practice in the UK would be for the government to request a Queen's pardon. The Singapore government feels no such moral compulsion and has said "the question of a pardon for Jeyaretnam did not arise as he had not asked for one." But if he did request one the government "would consider its merits."

The government has kept the Privy Council as its final court of appeal in order to lend an air of legitimacy to its otherwise politically beholden judiciary. As the Privy Council has to take draconian Singapore law as part of the law it considers when hearing cases, it has been limited in the scope of its judgements on highly technical matters. However, on broad points or principles of law, the Singapore government is in danger. It therefore has sought to restrict appeal to the Privy Council and is likely to do so even more now that Jeyaretnam has won his case.

The tactic being used by the government is to ensure that political cases are dealt with at District Court level where possible and that no points of law are reserved for appeal which would require a High Court hearing. Appeal to the Privy Council is possible only from the High Court and the Court of Appeal and then only with leave from the Court of Appeal.

Francis Seow in Court

Thus the application by senior lawyer, opposition politician and

ex-detainee Francis Seow MP, to have his tax evasion case heard in the High Court was turned down by Mr. Justice Lai Kew Chai on December 2nd. Judge Lai also approved an application by the government to strike out a significant portion of an affidavit by Seow supporting his application. The deleted portion dealt with Seow's statement that the charges against him were politically motivated.

If Seow loses his case, he may be imprisoned and will lose his seat in parliament and will be disbarred from the legal profession.

Harrassing the Family

As part of its harrassment of Francis Seow, the government expelled his fiancée, Ms. Siah Nooi Guat, in September 1986. She is a prominent Malaysian business woman who has lived in Singapore since 1973 and gained permanent residence status in 1980. On 12th September this year, High Court Judge T. S. Sinnathuray dismissed a challenge against the cancellation of her re-entry permit and employment pass. He said the rules of natural justice did not apply to foreigners under the country's immigration laws and that the home affairs minister was not required to provide reasons for his decision. Ms. Siah will appeal. Mr. Sinnathuray is the same judge who has presided at numerous political cases since he first sentenced Singapore University student president Tan Wah Piow to imprisonment on political charges in 1974.

W.C.C. Says: Boycott Singapore Airlines!

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches has expressed its solidarity with the Christian Conference of Asia whose headquarters were expelled from Singapore last December 30th. At its meeting in Hanover, West Germany, August 1988, the WCC decided to recommend to all its member churches around the world not to use Singapore Airlines and to refrain from holding meetings in Singapore as a protest against the actions of the Singapore government.

Malaysia's Human Rights Scene

Government Retaliates Against Hunger Strikers

October 27 marked the anniversary of the mass Internal Security Act (ISA) arrests. As part of the October 27 anniversary of the arrests, 18 ISA detainees, including 2 long term detainees arrested in 1976 and 77, staged a week-long hunger strike to protest against their arbitrary detention. The Mahathir government retaliated by disallowing visits from families and lawyers. It was then announced that only the International Red Cross would be allowed to visit them.

About 35 ALIRAN (a social reform body) members undertook a sunrise to sunset solidarity fast on October 27th. Earlier on, ALIRAN had conferred its annual Outstanding Malaysian Award to "The Innocent ISA Detainee."

Some churches in Kuala Lumpur also urged their congregations at morning services to fast for a day to show solidarity for the detainees.

To mark the anniversary, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) submitted its first memorandum of 50,000 signatures collected during its signature campaign to the PM for the release of the ISA detainees.

The "March for Freedom" from Ipoh to Kamunting which was organised by them on October 30, was stopped by the police. Three marchers were arrested for wearing T-shirts with the word "Freedom" on it. Presumably, the word had so incited the police to unreasonable action that they thought the public may be likewise influenced!

Balloons and Batons

In solidarity with the detainees, more than 200 family members and supporters undertook an 8 am.

to 8 p.m. fast in the Lake Gardens in Kuala Lumpur on October 30th. The peaceful scene quickly became one of an unwarranted scuffle with the police physically attempting to prevent family members from demonstrating their protest by releasing balloons.

The participants at the gathering who came only with empty stomachs and colourful balloons were cordoned off by riot police armed with batons and shields. Tear-gas guns were also pointed menacingly at the group.

There appeared to be a deliberate attempt on the part of the riot police to create chaos and panic. Understandably, the fright of facing such an aggressive posture drove some of the children into crying uncontrollably.

The intimidation did not stop there. Anne Kua, the wife of Dr. Kua Kia Soong, was forcibly pulled away from the group which was encircled by two rings of plain-clothes Special Branch police, and then dragged and pushed up a hill for more than 100 yards.

When confronted by Anne Kua's lawyers, the Police Commissioner said that his officer were "investigating." When asked if Anne Kua was under arrest, he replied that she was not. Anne was finally released after approximately 20 minutes.

Anniversary Forum Receives Capacity Crowd

The forum titled "Reflections: 1987-1988" which was jointly organized by 10 organizations, attracted a capacity crowd of 900 despite heavy rains and traffic jams that evening. The banquet hall at the Federal Hotel in Kuala Lumpur was filled to the brim, with people standing at the sides and at entrances. Solidarity messages from concerned groups and people over

the world were read out. Children of the detainees sang the song "Free the People" and various family members also spoke, expressing their bitter experiences of family separations. The main speakers at the forum were Haji Subky Latiff (PAS), Dr. Tan Seng Glaw (DAP) and Dr. Chandra Muzaffar (ALIRAN); Dr. Tan and Dr. Chandra were themselves detained during the mass arrests and released subsequently.

An appeal was also made by the families to members of the public to go to any lake or garden in their vicinity on Sunday evenings to light a candle at 7 p.m. or to light one outside their homes, as a sign of support to the detainees and their fight for freedom.

Big Brother Strikes Again

On Sunday November 6, some family members and supporters turned up at the Lake Gardens to light candles. Police intimidation reared its ugly head once again when 11 of them, including 7 women, were arrested under the Police Act for illegal assembly. In the preceding 24 hours, the police had issued warnings on television (but not widely publicised in the newspapers), that those taking such "illegal" actions would be prosecuted. How lighting a candle in a public garden in protest against a grave injustice can constitute an offence is beyond comprehension.

However, under Malaysian Law, public gatherings of more than 3 persons are forbidden without a police permit. The Police Act, amended in Nov./Dec. 1987, states that a person found guilty of illegal assembly is liable to be fined a minimum of M\$2,000 or jailed for a term not exceeding a year.

The 11 were held for a few hours and then released on police bail. None of the families of the detainees were among those arrested.

23 More Arrested Under ISA

On November 16th, the police announced that 23 more men have been detained under the ISA between a detained under the ISA between October 14 to November 10. The

men, aged 25 to 62, have been arrested for alleged involvement in the burning of 5 government buildings in the state of Kedah in June this year. The almost-completed buildings were to have been the site for the PM's Semarak ("loyalty with the people") campaign in Kedah. Police also claimed to have seized several weapons, including hand-grenades. It is highly likely that the arson was politically motivated but nevertheless, these people should be charged and tried in a court of law.

It is easy to see why the ISA remains a convenient tool to lock up political rivals without going to the hassle of having to prove them guilty first. However, this convenient shortcut for the government threatens the liberty of innocent persons.

The Deputy Home Affairs Minister was reported as saying that the ISA and the Emergency Act were still needed because if repealed, the communist elements would step up their operations to infiltrate into society. By his estimation, there were about 60 active communist terrorists left in Peninsular Malaysia. Of course, reason would tell anyone that "60 communist terrorists" do not justify keeping the ISA unless the government is terribly insecure. What wasn't mentioned are those tiresome people who keep harping on and on about human rights, civil rights, accountability, poverty, justice and all those other issues that get in the way of a government that "knows what it is doing." The October 87 arrests out of which the government has failed to evidence even a single "communist", shows that "communists" are not the only reason for the ISA.

Judiciary's Future Bleak

The Acting Lord President, Tan Sri Hamid Omar, was finally appointed Lord President with effect from 10 November, after a barely decent interval from his predecessor Tun Salleh's controversial sacking. Tun Salleh became the first judge in Malaysian history to be dismissed. Lawyers and political analysts believe what probably spurred Prime Minister Mahathir to seek Tun Salleh's dismissal was that just days before, he had exercised his prerogative as Lord President to appoint a full 9-member Supreme Court, a panel of unprecedented size, to hear the appeal by the PM's rivals. There was a possibility of unfavourable ruling; i.e. UMNO would be revived which would threaten the very survival of Mahathir's hasty replacement, New UMNO. (See *Christian Worker*, 2nd Quarter). In court documents, Tun Salleh stated that the appeal date was "taken off the hearing list without my knowledge" on 27th May, the day he was notified of his suspension. The case was later heard by 5 judges, presided over by Tan Sri Hamid who rejected an application on 9th August for a full 9-member bench to hear the appeal.

The message is now clear for judges; a legal source quoted that one only had to "to chop off the head" to teach the rest a lesson. "From now on, the judiciary will be cowed." Perhaps recognising that Tun Salleh had been sacked for Mahathir's political gains, the Sultan of Kelantan bestowed the state's highest gallantry award on Tun Salleh.

One might say that Tan Sri Hamid played an outstanding role in Tun Salleh's removal by chairing the tribunal set up to remove Tun Salleh (despite questions of conflicts of interests) and by ordering the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court to lock the doors of the Court so as to block the emergency sitting of the 5 Supreme Court judges. He finally overdid himself by suspending the 5 judges after they issued an Order of Prohibition against the tribunal he was chairing.

The PM Dr. Mahathir, who announced the appointment, said that a new Chief Justice had not yet been appointed to the post vacated by Tan Sri Hamid. He added that Tan Sri Hamid would have to submit his choice for the Chief Justice post through him to the King.

Meanwhile, Tan Sri Hamid's buddy, Supreme Court judge Hashim Yeop Sani has been appointed acting Chief Justice. Justice Hashim will be eternally remembered for his "you're staging a revolution" remark to the 5 judges who convened an emergency hearing of Tun Salleh's appeal. He was also the chair-

person of the second tribunal for the 5 judges before finally stepping down after a storm of protests over him being an "interested party." It doesn't take a lot to guess who will be the next Chief Justice.

Bar Council Attacked

Dr. Mahathir recently attacked the Malaysian Bar Council for being "more preoccupied with politics rather than helping to ease the backlog of court cases." "They have time to take part in politics but no time to devote to their profession," he said. "This is the situation when the Bar Council is headed by an independent lawyer. This is unlike the other countries like Britain where the Bar Council is headed by a Government lawyer."

The PM got his facts embarrassingly wrong.

In reply to the Bar Council's fax Lord Alexander of Weedon, QC a former chairperson of the Bar Council of England and Wales, stated clearly in a letter that in England, "The Chairman of the Bar Council and the President of the Law Society are independent practitioners . . . Neither the Chairman nor the President is a Government appointee, nor a Government lawyer. Both the Bar Council and the Law Society often have to press strongly the claims of the profession against the Government, and it would be impossible for an appointee of the Government to hold either office . . . In this country, the independence of the legal profession has always been regarded as an essential aspect of a democratic and fair society."

The Bar Council, in replying to the PM's attack, said that "It is quite undemocratic to suggest that only the politicians are competent and entitled to comment on such issues . . ." (affecting legislations, human rights and constitutional points) . . . and that anyone commenting on such issues is 'playing politics' . . . It has long been recognised that issues affecting human rights are now no longer the preserves of politicians: they involve principles of basic and fundamental rights of all individuals." □

SEX:

The Church's Greatest Hang up?

Geoffrey Thompson

It is hard to believe society would be free from sexual hang-ups if it weren't for the Church's difficulties, but who can doubt that the tendency of the Church to control, repress and discipline the sexual attitudes and activities of its adherents, lies at the heart of many of the tensions surrounding sexuality throughout the Western/Christianised world? Why is the Church screwed up about sexuality?

Why is the Church alone among the major institutions of the developed world in failing to deal with women, over 50% of the world's population and very well over 50% of its own membership? Why does the Roman Church feel obliged to maintain a destructive and devious code concerning human sexuality and reproduction?

Tragic Misapprehension

Stated briefly the reason is a tragic misapprehension of one of the greatest and best features of Sacramental Christianity. The great "truth" held by the Eastern and Western Church is the holiness and importance of things particularly the human body. Protestant Christianity catches an echo of this through St. Paul's dictum that the body is the temple of the spirit but at its fullest the Christian tradition sees the human body not only as a glorious pinnacle of creation but also as the means of salvation.

Sacramental Christianity recognises God's need and desire to show

Himself to us and to touch us by means of the created world. He comes to us through water, bread, wine, holy oil and laying on of hands. Supremely He has come to humankind in the human form of Jesus Christ. If properly understood the Incarnation is a tremendous vindication of the created world and of human beings; it is an affirmation that this world plays an important, nay, indispensable part in our eternal salvation. Why else are we here?

The process by which the rejection of the world and the body came to influence Christian spirituality is too long and complex to rehearse here, but whether one places the blame at the door of new-Platonism, asceticism gone wrong or the active propounding of heresy, a fine and liberating insight has been taken and transformed into something frequently damaging and sometimes satanic. The belief that the body is sometimes so holy or so corrupt that it can neither play a normal part in human life nor find a role in the life of the truly holy person has ultimately led to the subjugation of natural impulses the creation of an asexual/celibate elite and profound distortion of our perceptions of the role and function of sexuality. The body once subjugated, can either rot or revolt frequently taking the mind and spirit with it. Is this the holiness or wholeness God intended for us when He created us as corporeal beings?

Sex and Sin

Having taken significant steps along this dangerous path, is it any wonder the Church is so obsessive about sex and sexuality? St. Augustine of Hippo (who has a lot to answer for) held that sexual activity was undesirable, since, in the moment of passion the Christian's mind would be removed from God. His formulation of the doctrine of Original Sin is so firmly rooted in a dire view of sexual activity that we can readily understand the Church's subsequent need to promulgate the doctrine of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception to "guarantee" the "sinlessness" of her son. The very notion that in the normal course of events conception is a spotted and stained affair opens up a very murky can of worms indeed.

On the face of it, the need for Mary, her parents and son to be removed from the normal operation of human sexuality is extraordinary and yet it underlies the faith of Catholic and Protestant alike. Perhaps if sexual activity were invariably painful or distressing the story might have been different: the begetting of children and the very "act" itself would be a Christian duty and "joy."

Force of circumstances and the fast dawning realisation that the second coming would be a little later than expected obliged the Church to accommodate sexuality and sexual activity within its embryonic moral code. With the passing centuries sexual activity was corralled ever more securely within what was to become the sacrament of marriage. Inevitably the consequence of this for single men and women and especially homosexual men and women, was to exclude them ever more firmly from the realms of the Church's blessing. Sexual activity was ordained by God solely for the purpose of procreation, very like the brute beasts.

Throughout the centuries this doctrine was built into the very fabric of all Christian traditions, and only in this century has the

assumption been seriously challenged and indeed, overridden. Alas for the Church, the challenge has come from the outside, as an increasingly secular world could recognise the self-serving futility of much of the Church's teaching and the hypocrisy and corruption that it led to. The Church has lost the initiative entirely through its own fault. Many good babies have been thrown out with the oppressive bathwater and that is another tragedy. The Church is now more high and dry on this one issue than it has been since the Enlightenment and the growth of scientific knowledge.

The so-called sexual revolution has enabled some of the mainstream Protestant churches (lacking the drag-effect of a tradition of Tradition) to make steps towards a more comprehensive and mature view of sexuality. The Quakers (not being a church at all) have for a long time been at the forefront of free-thinking. More typically Anglicans and Protestants have fudged the issue and feeling unable to maintain a traditionalist line have preferred to say nothing at all. Issues such as homosexuality are dealt with if at all on a purely pastoral basis. This might be just as well, if a more public approach were to be less progressive.

For Roman Catholic leaders, as for fundamentalists, the position remains clearer. By appealing to the Authority of the Church and the authority of scripture both groupings still have the nerve to propound a sexually obsessive line. Marriage is validated in terms of the sexual activity taking place between man and wife. Homosexuality is defined in terms of an equally specific act (Mr. Ian Paisley's inglorious and unsuccessful campaign to "Save Ulster from Sodomy" is a nasty proof of the point). Sex is only safe if kept under the lock and key of marriage and that marriage is only consummated by sexual activity, specifically the insertion of a penis into a vagina. If we weren't so accustomed to this nit-picking we would regard this insertion fixation as unseemly and impertinent to the mature relationship of love between two people; male and male, female and female, female and male,

Church Discredited: varying prejudices

Of course, all the foregoing can only reflect the official line of various churches. The individual picture is infinitely various and variable, but for the outsider, the innocent inquirer, the image can seem hopelessly black and white. The average opinion that what the Roman Church stands for is the Pope, celibate priests and no contraception is proof of how one denomination's preoccupation with authority and sex is transferred to non-believers.

Sexuality, defined in terms of sexual activity, is a clearly understood target which the Church addresses all too frequently. Sexuality in terms of gender, of what it means to be a woman or man, and the difference between women and men has hardly ever been addressed by the Church at all.

The Church's structures have tended to ape the norms of society in the sense of roles played by men and women. Men lead, women serve. Ironically, one of the Pope's titles, "The Servant of the Servants of God" would not enable a woman to become Pope. The serving role of women in the Church generally stops when any sort of power or authority come along.

The Protestant Churches have found it relatively easy to ordain women ministers, but the Catholic Churches (Roman, Orthodox and Anglican), continue to stumble over their own doctrine that since Christ was a man, and since in first century Palestine he apparently chose no female apostles, it is improper to allow a woman to preside at the Eucharist in the 20th century.

Right or wrong, this is at least a "clean" objection to treating women as equals, but there are more murky motives which strike at the very root of femininity and raise all the old fears of sexuality and bodily function. Within a tradition of priestly celibacy, a woman represents all that must be avoided for the preservation of the celibate state and the upholding of priestly life. Keeping women (unless they are safely un-sexed nuns) out of the sanctuary is a guarantee of the

purity of the place, for the heterosexual priest at least. Menstrual cycles and pregnancy are potent and disturbing factors in many men's minds.

A woman who is not a virgin (preferably in Heaven) a mother, or a motherly housekeeper is a sexual being full of temptations and desire and therefore hopelessly bound up in the inadequacy that the Church has created for itself.

What is the purpose of all this? What is it intended to achieve? In a nutshell, the purpose is the achievement of God's will and the maintenance of God's "laws." What is the result of all this? Centuries of persecution of gay men and women (which continues) the creation and reinforcement of miserable marriages, ignorance and fear, the heresy that the body and our desires are to be hated: corruption, secrecy hypocrisy and suffering.

Somewhere the fulfilment of God's will and laws is falling short. It ill-behoves the Church which has wielded such power and which can influence for good or ill, to point the finger at human frailty, frail though we be. The Church itself has been responsible for defining what some of those frailties are. Women with a vocation to the priesthood, gay men and women, married couples who engage in any other form of sexual activity than "ordinary" intercourse, all people who engage in any form of sexual activity at any age, are officially under the ban.

A wise priest once told the writer that he could not imagine God being very interested in what people do in bed. The Church is fascinated. In its fascination, it is discredited both by its own activity, the contempt which the world rightly shows for it and the flouting of church law by the faithful. We are all the losers for it.

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Buddhist Reflection on Christianity

Sulak Sivaraksa

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When the first missionary went to Tibet to propagate the Gospel, the Tibetan Buddhist monks heard about God, Salvation, Liberation, suffering, Eternal Life and the like. They concluded that the teaching of Christ was similar to that of the Buddha.

The strength and weakness of Buddhism is that it tends to find similarity with other religions.

Hence it finds no difficulty to co-exist with Hinduism and Animism. The differences are not stressed. The argument is that for the majority, if they find any religious rites and rituals helpful to them, they should practice them. For instance, Shrines, Images and Gods could be refuges to those who are in need of spiritual protection or security, at least temporarily. Once one develops oneself more maturely, one will have inner strength to solve one's own difficulty to be really one with oneself, as well as with all beings and with the ultimate reality. For those who wish to develop further towards Selflessness in order to get to the state of Oneness, or Nothingness, then they can take the Buddha's Middle Path seriously. Yet Buddhism does not claim that it is the only one that knows the answer to the problem of suffering and how to overcome it — to reach the final Liberation or Nirvana.

Unlike the Hindus, the Christians found it difficult to admit that Buddhism could also be a true religion. The missionary in Tibet told the Lamas frankly that Buddhism was a false religion or the religion of the demons and only by following Jesus Christ could one be saved or attain a blissful state of the eternal life.

Unfortunately this kind of belief is still widespread in many Christian circles. Despite Vatican Council II, some documents from the Secretariat for the Non-Christians still make many Buddhists believe that the official Vatican policy towards Buddhism is still not clear. There is an implication that now Christians should learn more about Buddhism and show outward sign of respect to Buddhist ceremony in order to understand Buddhist teaching and culture, which will perhaps be easier to convert Buddhists to Christianity or to Christianize Buddhism as St. Thomas Aquinas had Christianized Aristotle.

At least in Siam, the leading Catholic seminary still publishes articles saying that the Buddha was at best a prophet, pointing the way to Jesus Christ, or that Buddhism was dead historically as soon as Christ was born 543 years after the Buddha had passed away.

This kind of assertion or accusation may annoy many uneducated Buddhists. But for those who practise Buddhism seriously, they take no interest in ignorant utterance from anyone: why should one quarrel over misunderstanding or propaganda. Indeed there are so many lofty ideas in Christianity that Buddhism could reflect upon.

God & Nirvana

God is obviously the utmost important issue in Christianity. If the Buddhists look at the word God unsympathetically they will automatically deny His existence. They may even go further as to say that blind faith in the Unknown which equates to the Ultimate Reality is in fact ignorance (AVIJJA) — the root cause of all evils. Especially the incarnation of God the Father, through human history in his begotten Son, would be beyond any Buddhist imagination — not to mention the Holy Spirit or the doctrine of the Trinity.

At best the Buddhists will say God as expressed in Christianity has no role in Buddhism. We are not interested in Monotheism, Polytheism or Atheism. Yet, Buddhism is not Agnosticism. If the Buddhists are concerned about the ultimate reality or Noble Truth (ARIYA SACCA) the righteous law which controls or operates the Universe (SADA DHAMMA) which means that whatever one does, one will reap the fruit of one's action (KAMMA), then we must reflect upon this in the light of the Christian concept of God also.

The Christians explain about God from the Hebraic historical perspective of a tribe, so God becomes so personal to them. He was even conceived as a God of anger. This was purely human interpretation. Only in the New Testament could we conceive HIM as the God of love and he was for all mankind — beyond the Jewish people. As Meister Eckardt said any definition or understanding of God is bound to fail unless you have experienced HIM.

In Buddhism we could not explain or define NIRVANA either.

We can give some negative indications that NIRVANA is not this, is not that and we can give some positive indications that NIRVANA is the perfect state of peace and happiness. Yet, it is also a state beyond happiness.

When Gautama became Buddha he was enlightened. Although he still remained man but he already united with the Ultimate Reality — God so the Buddha is God — not in the personification sense but in a normative sense. Hence the ultimate reality in Buddhism is Buddha Dhamma — not merely Dharma in the traditional Brahministic sense of the word. Indeed in the Mahayana tradition, the concept of Adi Buddha or Dyani Buddha is really the creator of the universe and the universal law.

From the Buddhist perspective, only Sakayamuni Buddha or Gautama Buddha is the only one which could be verified by history as we understand it for he was born about 6th to 7th century B.C. Other Buddhas before him could not be verified by history and Dyani Buddha is even beyond history. Is Dyani Buddha a myth or a reality? Only those who are enlightened or those with religious experience with God or Buddha Dhamma could really answer this.

Need for Understanding

Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikku, a well-known Thai monk helps us, who have no religious experience to understand this problem by pointing out that in any religion, Buddhism included, there are always two kinds of language (1) the religious or Dhammic language and (2) the ordinary or worldly language. We tend to mix these two kinds of language and make so much misunderstanding unnecessarily. If the Christians hear that the Buddhists claim that their Buddha equals to the Christian God, they become angry. The Buddhists likewise feel that his Buddha must be superior to Jesus Christ. This is childish and tribal; it is a misuse of Dhammic language. In fact there is no equality or superiority or inferiority among different religions. We are different but we ought to respect the others and try to under-

stand the essential concept of our friends' religions as sympathetically and as respectfully as we can. Even so we may make mistakes. Then we should ask for forgiveness



Sulak Sivaraksa

It is difficult enough to understand our own religion clearly and thoroughly. Yet in this day and age we must admit the limitation of our own religious traditions and try to understand other religions in the light of our understanding of our own religion. A Buddhist could only reflect on Christianity from a Buddhist perspective if he could do no more. If the Buddhists understand that the Christian love of God makes him love his neighbours his submission to God makes him selfless and is compassionate to all beings — human or otherwise (like St. Francis of Assisi for instance) his understanding will make him reflect that to him the Buddha is indeed the Compassionate One and the Enlightened One. By following the Buddha's foot-steps, could he understand himself and the society as well as the natural phenomena around him. His understanding in fact arises from his non-exploitation of himself and others. The more selfless he is the more compassionate he is.

The more he sees that others are suffering the more he would like to share their suffering and together with them to eliminate the curse of suffering. By so doing he takes a Bodhisattva vow to be compassionate like the past Buddhas or the Buddha-to-be.

If he has encounters with Christianity, he sees the cross as a sign that will strengthen him to share suffering — not only with his Christian friends but also with all God's creatures. Being a Buddhist, he will want to find the cause of suffering in order to get rid of it for his own liberation as well as the liberation of all others.

When the Buddhist reflects on Christian teaching on suffering, salvation and liberation he finds all these meaningful from his Buddhist context. His Christian friends may seek salvation through Jesus Christ, but being Buddhist he finds Christ's teachings especially the sermon on the Mount and Christ's livelihood in obeying God the Father and serving God's people, very meaningful. This meaning he gets through his understanding of the Dhammic language which is obviously different from the Orthodox Christian interpretation. The Buddhist therefore feels that once a Christian fulfills his duty by firmly believing in God as he understands Him and acts according to God's commandments by loving his neighbours, sharing suffering with them and try to overcome the cause of that suffering, he will surely be liberated. For the Buddhist, that state of liberation will be without hatred, greed and delusion — in other words, it is a state of enlightenment.

The Christian may call this an eternal life. The Buddhist would not quarrel with the use of terminology whether there is a permanent soul or not is left to the worldly language to tackle. If eternal life means perfect happiness, beyond word or description, it may also mean NIRVANA.

This is my personal reflection which is not scholarly. We need more serious research than an article of this nature warrants in order to develop deeply into the Buddhist reflection on Christianity — a fascinating subject.

— Courtesy: Seeds of Peace (Thailand).



Twenty years of Liberation Theology

Jon Sobrino

Theologians from all over the world gathered at Maryknoll, New York this past July to pay tribute to Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez, often called the 'the father of liberation theology.' They had come to salute Gutierrez on his 60th birthday and to commemorate the 20th anniversary of liberation theology's birth.

*One of those present was Salvadoran liberation theologian **Jon Sobrino, SJ**, who gave the homily at the Mass honouring Gutierrez. The following is a summary of the reflection by Sobrino on the importance of the Maryknoll celebration that appeared in **Latin-america Press** of 8th September 1988.*

About 150 people were there from Latin America, Africa, Asia and, of course, the United States. Although we were from different denominations and different countries, one key factor united us: how to make our faith fruitful in the midst of so much suffering—the result of poverty and death, of a racism and a colonialism that has tried to rob the poor of their very identity . . .

Among those present were Albert Nolan, a British Dominican who has spent many years in South Africa fighting against the cruel aberration of apartheid; there was a group of Haitians who were appalled by what was happening in their country and were asking themselves how to proceed; there were Indonesians, Pakistanis and Indians wondering how to make faith in Jesus Christ relevant in their own countries and how to make this faith more reflective of Asiatic culture; there was a Japanese trying to write a theology of liberation for his country which is currently immersed in an accelerated process of Westernization; there was a Christian Palestinian who almost begged us to see what we could do to make the churches more present in his tormented homeland so that there

might be Christian support for a solution to the Palestine tragedy; there was an orthodox Jew, a faithful believer in Yahweh and an admirer of the prophets and of Jesus, who is developing a Jewish theology of liberation and is asking Christians to be faithful to the liberating Jesus; and there were also many North Americans with their own problems such as how to live their faith in a meaningful way in a country that is more and more dehumanized and dehumanizing; they were also seeking ways to make reparation for their country's sins against the Third World.

I confess that I was deeply moved to see so many people from such diverse traditions come together in one place. Twenty years ago, this gathering would have been impossible and we must ask why it could happen now.

I think that during these years God's spirit has been acting in the world and has been heard in the cry of the poor—a cry impossible not to hear and yet the source of hope. **For me, this God is the God of Jesus Christ; but I have also seen this God in the faces of men and women from Africa**

and Asia. And I've discovered that God is truly a God of the poor, whether these poor are Christians from Latin America, or Asians with their age-old religions, or Africans with their own religious traditions.

I experienced a great joy as I realized how all of us have been united by these poor—and that they have become the basis for a true religious and theological ecumenism. We can no longer use our concept of God to attack, destroy or subjugate those who believe in God in a different way than we do. Instead, the true God is being revealed through the world's poor. That is what truly moved me.

But I also think that this explosion of the world's poor—and God through them—has been facilitated by liberation theology. At the same time, there must be no theological or Latin American triumphalism here. Discussions are going on throughout the Third World on what should be an adequate theology for each continent and each situation; within Latin American liberation theology there is also a debate going on; we are recognizing our limitations and our errors as well as the need to open ourselves to new perspectives. (Gustavo Gutierrez reminded us of the need to grapple more seriously with the situation of Latin America's indigenous peoples, Afro-Americans and women, of the poor's psychological and cultural situation, of ecology as a fundamental problem of the earth, etc.)

There is no place for triumphalism then; but at the same time theology of liberation expresses something so profound that it continues having great value and power. In the words of Brazilian Bishop Luciano Mendes de Almeida, "liberation theology has put a finger on the wound of reality;" and in the words of Gustavo Gutierrez, liberation theology tries to respond to the question, "how to tell the world's poor that God loves them." To unite God and the poor, to make compassion and justice toward the poor definitive elements for faith in God, to see that the poor's suffering and hope opens our eyes and our hearts to faith—I believe this is liberation theology's most important and irreplaceable contribution.

Gutierrez' 60th Birthday

It is this context that the celebration of Gustavo Gutierrez's 60th birthday should be understood because, in him, many were able to express their gratitude for this new vision of God and the poor.

In the homily, I tried to express what Gustavo Gutierrez' theology and liberation theology in general had meant to me. It is a theology profoundly and decisively based on compassion—a compassion that wants to be truly effective and therefore calls for justice and a change in oppressive structures. It is a conflictive theology because

it necessarily confronts the world's idols. It is a spiritual theology because it drinks from the living waters that is Jesus. And it is a popular theology because this water is found in the well of the poor who are filling it with their own spirit, culture and joy—and with their tears and blood . . .

Gustavo Gutierrez is a symbol of liberation theology and of a liberating faith. His works have been translated into many different languages, including Japanese; the English edition of *Teologia de liberacion* has now sold more than 100,000 copies. A month ago he was in Moscow where he had been invited

to celebrate the first thousand years of Christianity in the Soviet Union. In late July, he was in England to address the Lambeth assembly of the Anglican Church.

But the real Gustavo is found in a different place, close to his people and the poor of his parish in a poor Lima barrio. "My birthday is really in June," he told me. "I celebrated the day in my parish with 400 children. That was the birthday party I enjoyed the most."

—Latinamerica Press

September 8.

□

The World Made History

"Jesus was born in Bethlehem, 'the smallest among the villages of Judah,' surrounded by shepherds and animals. His parents had come to the stable after they fruitlessly knocked on many doors in town. There, in oblivion, the Word was made history in the flesh of the poor.

Jesus was born of Mary in the bosom of a people dominated by the greatest power of that period: If we forget this, the birth of Jesus becomes an abstraction, a mere symbol. Without its historical co-ordinates, the event loses its significance.

For the Christian, Christmas is recognized as the breaking of God into human history: The birth of smallness and service in the face of the power and arrogance of the great of this world. An arrival accompanied by the smell of the manger."

—Gustavo Gutierrez,
Peruvian Theologian

□

El Salvador:

Jon Sobrino's Credo

Jon Sobrino, 53, is one of El Salvador's foremost liberation theologians. The Spanish-born Jesuit was recently interviewed by the Guatemalan press after a bomb exploded outside a university in Guatemala City where Sobrino was scheduled to give a series of talks on liberation theology. The series was cancelled as a result. In answer to the interviewer's question, "what is a Basque priest doing in El Salvador?" Sobrino gave the following response

I arrived in El Salvador in 1957 at the age of 18. It was here that I came face to face with sin, which is simply that which produces death: hunger; the unjust structures that bring about a slow death—this is sin.

And so is violent assassination. More than 60,000 people have been killed in this country in the last few years. Sin brought death to the Son of God, and sin continues to bring death to God's children.

But one also learns the meaning of hope—an all-encompassing drive to live. The refugees now returning to the country have all their worldly belongings slung in a sack over their shoulders, but they have never lost hope.

I have also learned the meaning of grace—which is receiving a gift, something not merited. I have received so much from these people, although it is a great tragedy that their poverty gives meaning to my life and helps me to understand things.

And they have taught me the meaning of forgiveness. These people who have been oppressed and murdered only think of protesting as a last resort. I sense that they forgive us this structural sin that metes out so much death to them.

It is here in El Salvador that I have discovered who Jesus of Nazareth is. It is

amazing to see how those who attack us cite Jesus with such chilling ignorance.

I studied theology for seven years, but it was only here that I finally overcame my illiteracy of the Gospel. The great news of the Gospel is that Jesus is a man of truth, that he defended the poor and is constantly unmasking the oppressors. And that this Jesus has risen from the dead.

I have discovered that the Catholic church is a sacrament in history to continue Jesus' work of preaching the good news to the world's poor. But that good news must be preached to everyone, including the oppressor for whom it must be, above all, a call to conversion.

In the final analysis, what one discovers here in El Salvador is God's mystery present in us, judging us and encouraging us to keep on going, pulling us toward the future. It is not easy to believe in God, but this mystery has been made more visible for me in this country's poor.

I have been in El Salvador 31 years now, and I have learned from these people what it means to be a human being, a Christian. That's why I think of myself as a Salvadoran.

—Crie, No. 71
Mexico City.

—Courtesy: Latinamerica Press,
17th November, 1988.

□

Casaldaliga

"I a Sinner and Bishop Confess . . ."



Bishop Casaldaliga

*In December, Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga of Sao Felix, Brazil wrote an open letter to his friends thanking them for their support during his recent confrontation with the Vatican (see last issue of **CHRISTIAN WORKER**). In the long missive, Casaldaliga details the process by which some members of the Vatican tried to silence him, but affirms that he is not forbidden to exercise his ministry. Excerpts:*

"There must always be the right to express oneself publicly in the church, a community of brothers and sisters who are fundamentally equal through our shared Baptism . . .

Solidarity must be considered not just a right but a duty. Solidarity is love made public, collective and political. Now more than ever, we must assume this solidarity and make it concrete with the peoples and churches of Central America, and especially with the 'forbidden country' Nicaragua. I, for my part, will continue in solidarity according to my possibilities unto death.

Personally, in the midst of this groundswell of discontent, I feel that God and my brothers and sisters call me to fuse, both dialectically and evangelically, fidelity to the church with my own free, adult conscience; fidelity to Latin America, my adopted homeland, in the process of liberation; fidelity to the church, one and universal, as both a Christian and collegially as a bishop; and above all fidelity to Christ and his Reign.

Saying all this, I wrote the following poem:

I, a sinner and bishop, confess
to having gone to Rome with a wild pilgrim's staff;
to surprise the Wind between the colonnades
and to having practiced the Andean flute under
the organ's nose;
to having arrived at Assisi,
fenced in with poppies.

I, a sinner and bishop, confess
to having dreamt of a church
clothed only in the Gospel and in sandals;
to having believed in the church,
sometimes despite the church;
to having believed in the Reign anyway,
journeying with the church.

I, a sinner and bishop, confess
to having seen Jesus of Nazareth
also announcing the Good News
to the poor of Latin America;
to having said to Mary: "Hail comadre"
to having celebrated the blood
of those who have been faithful;
to having walked in pilgrimages . . .

I a sinner and bishop confess
to having loved Nicaragua a girl with a slingshot.

I a sinner and bishop confess
to having opened the window of Time
each morning;
to having spoken as a brother to another brother
to not having lost the power
to dream or sing or laugh;
to having cultivated the flower of Hope
among the wounds of the Risen One.

Courtesy: **Latinamerica Press,**
5th January 1989



Rome's Order to Leave defied!

Haiti: Battle over priest Splits Church

A bitter battle over the continued presence of a Roman Catholic priest has divided the Haitian Church and diluted its moral authority at a critical time in the country's history.

The Rev. Jean Bertrand Aristide, the charismatic pastor of a slum parish here, was ordered to leave the country in October for assignment in Canada. The mandate came from the Rev. Egidio Vigano, the Rome-based general superior of the Salesian order, of which the Haitian-born Aristide is a member.

According to news bulletins published by Haiti Solidarite Internationale, Vigano was pressured by the Haitian bishops and the papal nuncio to Haiti, Archbishop Paolo Romero. The news bulletin quotes Romero as justifying the expulsion because "Aristide is crazy and his social movement is communist."

Class Struggle

Aristide, 35, is an advocate of liberation theology and an outspoken critic of the authoritarian military and civilian regimes that have succeeded the 30-year Duvalier dictatorship. Especially popular with youth, Aristide speaks in terms of class struggle and institutional structures of poverty.

He has disturbed more than the hierarchy, however. On Sept. 11, armed thugs acting with the tacit approval of the military government of Gen. Henri Namphy, attacked

Aristide's St. John Bosco Church as he said Mass. Although Aristide escaped uninjured, 12 of his parishioners were killed and 80 wounded.

The popular outcry that resulted from the massacre helped bring down the Namphy government a week later. A coup led by junior officers installed Lt. Gen. Prosper Avril as president on September 17.

Since the September attack, Aristide has been in hiding. He emerged briefly in early October to deliver a speech on church-run Radio Soleil. He asked the government to make good its promises of democratic reforms, prosecute the Tonton Macoutes (ex-Duvalier goons) and dismantle Fort Dimanche, the infamous Port-au-Prince fortress that is synonymous with illegal detention, torture and summary execution.

Acknowledging the Salesians' order to leave Haiti, Aristide said the bishops and the papal nuncio had unjustly accused him of fomenting violence and undermining their authority.

In a letter published on October 7, the bishops said that they and other church leaders had been the object of a vile campaign of "lies, slander and even death threats" carried out in the name of Christianity.

"In fact, we perceive a wilful effort to sicken, weaken and finally destroy the church," the bishops wrote. Without naming their opponents, the prelates went on to accuse them of being "divisive germs that

would corrode the ecclesial body, pitting lay people, religious, priests and bishops against one another."

Yet 10 days later, 130 priests working in Haiti wrote Vigano, asking that he revoke the order transferring Aristide to Canada. The priests represented parishes throughout the country.

"For the good of the church in Haiti, for the good of its people struggling so hard for independence, liberation and progress, we beg you to permit Father Aristide to remain among the poor," they wrote.

Thousands have turned out for street demonstrations in support of Aristide and against the Avril government. On October 24, the new government used soldiers for the first time to break up a demonstration. Many were injured.

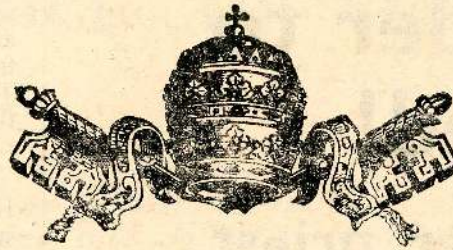
Aristide, who is still in Haiti, has made no public appearances and his situation remains unresolved. A coalition of grassroots labour and political organizations wrote the bishops on November 1st asking them to block Aristide's transfer.

Meanwhile, the political situation is very fluid. Although the government never acknowledged it, Avril apparently survived a coup attempt on October 15th. Sgt. Patrick Boccard and ex-Col. Samuel Jeremie, a Duvalier loyalist, were identified as the principal plotters, according to Haiti Solidarite. They and several other officers were arrested while others were retired without explanation.

The death of retired Col. Jean Claude Paul removed another possible threat to the Avril regime. Paul, former commander of the elite 700-man division of the Dessaline Barracks, was pressured to resign on September 30th because of U.S. drug charges against him. But he remained very popular with his troops.

He was found dead on November 6th in his Port-au-Prince home. His spouse was held on suspicion of poisoning him. □

The Roman Catholic Gynephobia



Aalok Shilaa

The Maleness of the First Priests

Fear of the woman — Gynephobia in Greek — is now a chronic disease affecting the heart of Roman Catholicism. Any disciplinary action however authoritarian, any theological reasoning however baseless, any scriptural quotation however farfetched is desperately resorted to as a means of preventing women from crossing the threshold of the Church's male clerical sanctuary.

The reason advanced for maintaining the tradition of an all-male clergy is quite naive: **the maleness of the first priests.** The biblical theologians of the Roman Church are quite embarrassed by this Roman theory as it leads to absurd conclusions. For, this theory is based on two unproved assumptions: (a) that Jesus ordained the first priests at the last supper and (b) that only males were present at that supper. The absurdity of this reasoning can be gauged if we similarly recall two undisputed facts that (1) Jesus was a Jew and (2) only Jews were present at the last supper, and thus argue for an all-Jewish priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church!

As a matter of fact there was a school of thought that advocated this theory. It was led by Jesus's own brother, James, and therefore carried an immense weight of authority: only Jews could be Christians, and a *fortiori* only Jews could be ministers of the church. They

taught that no one could be admitted to the church without first being obliged to become a Jew by being ceremoniously circumcized. St. Paul fought a relentless battle against these chauvinists whom historians have labeled "Judaizers."

The Maleness of Jesus

Today's church is also misled by a group of hierarchs who are as powerful as St. James was in the early church, and who indulge in a similar type of chauvinism. They are worse than Judaizers; they are "masculinizers." Their sexist reading of the event of the "incarnation" (a Latin word for "enfleshment") misses the point that St. John makes when he says that the Word of God "became flesh": **Sarx egeneto** (John 1: 14). The "flesh" in the Hebrew idiom, here transposed into Greek, means simply the human condition. Incarnation means that God took upon himself/herself our human condition. However, these masculinizers take the word "flesh" so literally and so partially as to direct their attention to one particular part of the human flesh which determines the sex of a person. Their morbid obsession with one tiny corner of the human anatomy and their failure to focus on the human condition which is the main issue here, points not so much to a theological problem as to a psychological discomfort of celibate theologians ailing from gynephobia.

In fact St. Paul uses the word **anthropos** (the human person — Hebrew **adam**) whenever he refers to the humanity of Jesus, e.g. 1 Corinthians 15: 47. If he ever believed that maleness was an absolutely essential dimension of Jesus' earthly ministry, then he would have had to use the word: **aner** (a male human). But he avoids it. Obviously, in taking up the human condition, the Word of God had to assume the condition of a particular race, a particular family and, surely, a particular sex — or else he would be a monster, a hideous hybrid of races and sexes. That would not be incarnation. In other words, incarnation implies a particularization. To be human is to be a particular human being.

But incarnation is only half the story of God's involvement with the limitations of the human condition. In the Christian tradition, the belief in the incarnation is an after-thought based on the Resurrection; it is the resurrection which gives meaning to the incarnation, not the other way about. That is why the Roman theologians uphold that the resurrection of Jesus has blasted these limitations, thus revealing the particular Jesus of history to be the universal Christ. As the English Jesuit John Coventry has averred, Jesus, as the Incarnate Word was a racially and sexually particularized being, but as the Risen Saviour he is the universal Christ who defies racial and sexual particularity.

In fact St. Paul clearly proclaims Jesus as the Christ, i.e. as God's salvific event which challenges any discrimination on grounds of race, class and sex: (Galatians 3: 28). The ministries in the church are a sacramental (symbolic) enactment of Jesus the Christ's continuing ministry to the world. Therefore, there can be no racial (Jew vs. Gentile) nor classist (free vs. slave) nor sexist (male vs. female) discrimination in (the ministry of) Christ. The Roman policy, therefore, contradicts the scriptural basis of its own theology.

Let me cite yet another instance of Rom in inconsistency.

The Roman Catholic Dilemma

In a press interview given in Tillburg in October 1987, during the Roman synod on the Laity, Aloysius Pieris of Sri Lanka has demonstrated how the Roman Catholic Church is caught up in a dilemma: it has either to allow women's ordination or deny the very essence of the Marian dogmas which it imposes on Roman Catholics under pain of excommunication.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception makes Mary not merely the first member of the church before that church was established by Christ officially, but makes her that very church in anticipation; the implication is that she was the church which brought forth the founder of the church (note the title "Mother of Christ") and therefore contained the whole church — head and members — in herself (hence Pope Paul VI's declaration that Mary was also the Mother of the Church).

This Roman belief implies that Mary, by virtue of her Immaculate Conception, sums up in herself the mystery of the whole pilgrim church with all its ministries (just as, by her Assumption, she anticipates the glorious church of the Eschaton). The various functions — of deacons, priests, bishops and even the pope — are a historically conditioned differentiation of the ministerial aspect of the pilgrim church which has been epitomized in a Woman elected by God.

Therefore, Pieris argues, the Roman Catholic church runs counter to its Marian dogmas by denying women their right to participate in the ministries of the church on the flimsy ground that these ministries are incompatible with womanhood. The basis of Roman church's anti-feminism cannot therefore be theological but ideological, concludes Pieris. And the ideology at work here is patriarchalism which dreads the very possibility of women breaking into its all-male power structure; gynophobia, in deed!



Sexism in Hinduism and Islam

Obviously the patriarchal ideology pervades all religions, not only Roman Catholicism. The rites and the myths, and even the Holy Books of most religions are saturated with sexism. Instead of facing facts and purifying religion of sexist ideology, most exponents of religions are over-defensive about it.

Hindus, for instance, boast of their feminist symbolism which can be employed as a religious basis for the emancipation of women in the Hindu society, but most boldly face the fact that their religion is made to justify widow burning, bride burning and the killing of female infants.

Muslims too quite rightly defend the Prophet's injunctions which were, in his own day, a great boon to women (e.g. polygamy which protected women in a society which had fewer males than females), but they indulge in an almost idolatrous reverence towards their legal tradition which in many ways, offends the dignity of women. Though some progressive muslims like Ali Engineer have begun a fearless critique of this patriarchal ideology, the institutional Islam remains as intransigent as the Roman Catholic Church vis-a-vis the right of women to participate in the religious leadership of faith-communities.

The Buddhist Dilemma

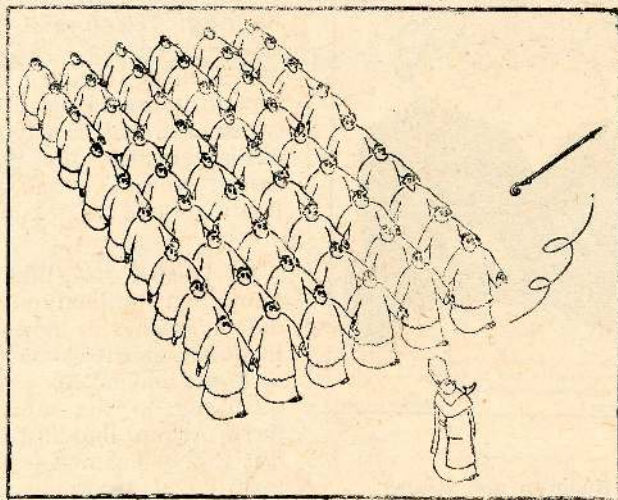
The "holier than thou" attitude some religionists display in their critique of other religions is pathetic,

to say the least. A well known Buddhist clergyman from Sri Lanka, Venerable Piyadassi exemplifies this attitude, Buddhism's superiority over Roman Catholicism is demonstrated in a typically Piyadassian manner: the Buddha "ordained women" while the present Pontiff refused to "ordain women"!!!

Of course, this Bhikshu should know that "ordination" means two different things in the two religions. In Buddhism the woman is ordained as a nun and not as a priest. And according to the same Piyadassi, there are no Buddhist nuns today (the Catholic church is teeming with them!) and according to the Buddhist Constitution, a nun is inferior in dignity to the Monk who alone exercises the spiritual and institutional leadership. Moreover, Piyadassi maintains the rigid Theravada patriarchalistic stance that (a) there are no validly ordained nuns in the world today; (b) therefore, there are no nuns to ordain other nuns, as required by the Buddha's Constitution, and consequently (c) only after a new Buddha appears in a new era can there be a chance of having nuns in Buddhism again.

The Rev. Piyadassi does not know that the "ordination" which the Roman Catholic women as are aspiring for would entitle them to enter the Order of PRIESTS which exercises a leadership-role over the others. If ordained as priests, women would not only be equal to males but would also have authority over males whom they minister to. Thus by seeking ordination, Catholic women are claiming an equality which is not given constitutionally in the Eight Conditions laid down by the Buddha for the ordination of women.

Hence, apologetes like Piyadassi Thera and other Theravada advocates of the Patriarchal ideology, who live in glass houses would do well not to throw stones at other religions but put their own house in order. These conservative monks are no less chauvinist than the Pope whom they criticise. They must face the feminist movement and face it positively and creatively as the Buddha did in his day according to the needs of his times.



In fact, the secular press has carried the sensational news that a progressive Sinhala Monk, now residing in California, has started a precedent in this direction. The Rev. H. Ratnasara Thera from Sri Lanka, was joined in this venture by his other Theravada colleagues from Sri Lanka and Thailand. They ordained a nun *pace* Piyadassi! (Editorial Note: see DAILY NEWS, 23.12.88). We hope these stalwarts will not be swept off the Buddhist map by the typhoon of sexist protests now gathering momentum in the Theravada monasteries of South East Asia.!

Christians can sympathise with the Buddhists who are bound to suffer the tensions of a polarization within the Buddhist fold. For the churches are going through a similar experience since the decision to permit ordination of women-bishops in the Anglican church. The Pope has protested. This is the time of test for every religion. Is religion capable of redeeming itself from an ideology that discriminates against half of human kind? If it is intrinsically **impotent** in this matter, then it has outlived its usefulness as a means of humanization. This is not, therefore, the time for one religion to see the deficiencies of the others rather, it is time that all religion make a concerted effort at purifying themselves of ideologies that blunt their liberative thrust.

Sexism of the Bible

Christians should also be aware that the sexist ideology viciates their

Holy Writ as much as the sacred writings of other religions. The conjugal idiom employed in the Bible is a pernicious imagery which perpetuates the sexist ideology in the minds of Christians. In the Old Testament, Yahweh is a male God who relates to Israel (people of God) as to an unfaithful wife. In the New Testament, Christ is the husband of the Church.

This imagery fails to educate Christians to see Yahweh and Christ as the trans-sexual source of both sexes; rather it implies that redemption is a masculine operation (of Yahweh or Christ) directed towards a feminine recipient (Israel/church). A faithful divine male redeems the faithless human female. The Yahweh-Israel and the Christ-church relationship, conveyed in this patriarchal idiom, lends support to the sexist theology that, in concrete, only the males can represent Yahweh and Christ while females must represent the receiving end of God's liberating action. It is this patriarchal ideology that is at work in Roman Catholic theology of ministry. The mystical traditions of theistic religions have perpetuated this imagery. The soul in search of God is compared to a fickle woman who gradually finds her faithful lover (redeemer) in the male God.

The Vatican and the Woman

Pope John Paul I who could not last even two months in office created a furore in the Vatican when he quite casually referred to God as **Father and Mother**. Even before the secu-

lar press could pick up the Pope's statement, the Vatican Curia issued tortuous arguments couched in circuitous language to salvage the Pope from being "misinterpreted" by the feminists. He died not long after.

The Vatican knows also that the Reformed churches which did away with the law of celibacy (not celibacy as such) are today in the forefront of the feminist movement in the Christian communion. It knows that any loosening of its grip on the law of compulsory celibacy for priests could open the flood gates of feminism in the church. Therefore, it has, at all costs, to prevent the invasion of women into the exclusive domain of celibate males; and for this, it employs two strategies: unconvincing theological arguments that are meant to justify its sexist ideology, and ineffective disciplinary actions which are intended to deny male celibate ministers any access to the feminine dimension of God's creation.

In 1971, "the Synod of Rome was so busy making provisions to keep the woman (marriage) off clerical limits that it hardly noticed that Mammon (God's Number One Enemy) had intruded into the Presbyterianism" (See OUTLOOK, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 9). The same theology that breathes gynophobia (fear of the feminine) quite understandably rejects any theology that struggles against Mammon (money, profit, capital). A well financed male celibate order of priests pampered by Mammon (such as the *Opus Dei* priests and bishops who receive open support from the Pope) is the best antidote against theologies of liberation which articulate the struggle of the oppressed, specially of women who are the oppressed even among the oppressed. In fact, the *Opus Dei* openly works against liberation theology everywhere, obviously with encouragement from the Vatican Curia. **The class struggle and the feminist struggle are aspects of the same liberation movement which has now become strong enough to articulate itself as an alternative theology to the "theo-ideology" of our leaders in Rome.**

On Women Bishops

Anglican Bishops decide

Supporters and opponents of the ordination of women combined at the Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican bishops (16th July - 7th August) to agree on how relationships can continue among the world's Anglicans when women become bishops.

The resolution, passed 423-28 (19 abstentions), offers no collective theological judgement on whether women should be Anglican bishops. It is generally accepted, however, that as communion among Anglicans

has been 'impaired' since women have been ordained priests, it will be further impaired once female bishops are consecrated.

By Anglican law, each of the world's 27 Anglican provinces is free to make its own decisions on the subject. It is widely expected that there will be at least one female Anglican bishop within a year — most likely in North America.

The resolution asks each province to 'respect the decision and attitudes of other provinces', without necessarily agreeing that women can or should be ordained. Bishops are to

'exercise courtesy and maintain communications with bishops who may differ, and with any women bishops.'

It also calls for a commission to examine relationships once women enter the Anglican episcopate. Provinces which consecrate women as bishops are to make 'pastoral provision for . . . clergy and congregations whose opinions differ.'

The resolution concludes by recognising the 'serious hurt which would result from the questioning by some of the validity of the episcopal acts of a women bishop, and likewise the hurt experienced by those whose conscience would be offended by the ordination of a woman to the episcopate.'

— Ecumenical Press Service (EPS)

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First Woman Bishop Consecrated

BOSTON — During a three-hour liturgy (11th February) attended by an estimated 8,500 people, including nearly five dozen bishops, Barbara Harris, a 58-year-old priest, became the first female Anglican bishop in the world.

Harris was elected last September as a suffragan (assisting) bishop by a convention of the Diocese of (Eastern) Massachusetts of the US-based Episcopal Church, one of 27 autonomous Anglican provinces whose roots are in the 16th-century reformation of the Church of England.

During worship, Episcopal Presiding Bishop Edmond Lee Browning made what is a normal invitation in Anglican ordination liturgies: 'If any of you know any reason why we should not proceed, let it now be made known.'

Thereupon, a representative of the unofficial Prayer Book Society went to a microphone to to denounce the consecration as a 'sacriligious imposture.' The congregation jeered and booed; Browning pleaded for silence.

Also objecting was an Episcopal priest from New York. He called the consecration of a woman as a bishop 'contrary to the unbroken tradition of 2000 years of apostolic order.'

Again calming the congregation, Browning said such objections were 'broadly ventilated' since Harris was elected, during which time she received affirming votes by majorities of the Episcopal diocesan bishops and standing committees.

Browning then continued the rite: 'Is it your will that we ordain Barbara a bishop?' 'That is our will,' was the loud response of the congregation.

In 1974, Harris carried a processional cross in an unauthorized liturgy in which 11 women were ordained Episcopal priests. (In 1970, the Episcopal General Convention authorized the ordination of women as deacons; in 1976, it approved their ordination as priests and bishops).

Before becoming a priest in 1980, she was a public-relations executive for an oil company. Black and divorced, Harris has long been active in civil-rights and feminist causes.

The ordination of women as deacons has taken place in much of Anglicanism. Besides in the United States, women have been ordained Anglican priests in Brazil, Cuba, Hong Kong, Uganda, Kenya, Canada, and New Zealand. In the latter two provinces, they are likely to be elected bishops within the next few years.

Among other things, opponents of the ordination of women as priests or bishops cite negative effects that could have on relationships with Roman Catholicism.

English Roman Catholic Bishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor (Arundel and Brighton), who co-chairs the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission, called the Harris consecration a 'great sadness' because 'it will make the task of full communion between the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Church much more difficult.' He said her consecration 'clearly does put in jeopardy what has been achieved so far regarding the reconciliation of ministries.'

The Harris consecration is expected to usher in a period of 'impaired communion' in Anglicanism, as some bishops and dioceses have announced they cannot or will not recognize her as a bishop of the church. (EPS).
26.02.89.

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The following is taken from a talk given at the Department of Religion, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada by Ms. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Thailand.

The Role of Women in Buddhism

Ms. Chatsumarn Kabalsingh

Buddhism is the first religion in the world to establish community of ordained women on the basis that women can achieve equal spiritual salvation as men. From the present context, we tend to under-estimate its significant value. But try to imagine yourself in India at that time when Indian society followed closely to the law of Manu: women were to be under protection of fathers when young, then husbands when married and later on under the protection of their sons. Women were taken as objective possessions to be handed down under the protection of the menfolk. The birth of sons became religious and social compulsory for women, failing of which would entitle their husbands to take new wives. Women could not perform any ritual on their own etc. Within this social context-Buddhism opened up a new horizon. Women under Buddhism stepped out from their expected role to fulfil their ideal role. Not only as wives and mothers but now as propagators of the new religion in the same capacity as their male partners.

Social Pressures

In brief, one can say that the role of ordained women was as at least intended to be equal to the monks. Subjecting to the prevalent social norms, the Buddha still put the nuns under the protection of the monks, as sisters to be protected by elder brothers. But in the past

history we have witnessed numerous incidents revealing that what actually happened was not quite as intended. The Buddha intended that the nuns should be subordinated to the monks like sisters to brothers, not slaves to masters.

The Buddha's Position

This social and spiritual uplift was not a step but a leap ahead of the time. Hence there were many objections from their counterpart—name'y the monks. The Buddha was well aware of this, therefore he was hesitant when his foster mother Queen Maha Pajapati approached him for ordination. The fact that the Buddha was hesitant to admit women to Order was often misinterpreted that he never wanted to accept the Order of nuns. This is clearly a bias and using double standards because the Buddha was hesitant before, yet it was never

The role of ordained women was at least intended to be equal to the monks.

interpreted that the action he chose to take afterwards was unwanted. If I am allowed to repeat the incident: when the Buddha became enlightened, he hesitated whether he should preach or not, because the dharma was so subtle that people might not be able to understand it. He pondered over it for a few days and later only decided to teach dharma to people; he continued to do so for the rest of his life for 45 more years. I have not heard anyone saying that because the Buddha was hesitant, therefore the fact that he decided to preach was unwanted!

During his life time many women from all walks of life joined the Order. Many of them were capable and successful in learning and preaching. Some of them were good propagators, not ordinary ones, but eloquent preachers, among their frequent listeners were the kings and ministers. As you are well aware in the study of history of religions, royal support has always been one among the key factors responsible for the growth of religions. Here we see Buddhist nuns were as good as monks in the role of propagators raising faith from the royal families and the people in general. Some of the nuns received special praise from the Buddha — they were outstanding in remembering past lives, in insight knowledge, in observing vinaya (moral code) in eloquent preaching, etc.

We have to realise, many monks came from a Brahmanical social background. When they joined the Order they often treated the nuns as their servants. The nuns had to wash their robes, their seats, their quarters, etc. until they had no time for their own spiritual practices. When this was brought to the Buddha's attention, he set down rules forbidding the monks to take advantage of the nuns. One particular case was very moving. A young monk was too lazy to go for alms-round, so he took food from an old nun; she was 120 years old, for 3 days continuously. The old nun, having given her share of meal had to go without food; on the third day she collapsed. When the Buddha came to know, again he set down the rule that monks are not to take almsfood from the nuns. These, and many more incidents showed how women, even after having joined the Order were still often taken advantage of. But as long as the Buddha was alive, he was there to rectify the rules and to protect the well-being of the nuns.

He was concerned about the fact that the nuns got lesser support from the society. This was clearly seen in one of the rules set down in regard to the division of offerings between the two communities. If a donor offers 10 robes to both the Sanghas (communities), the robes must be divided equally among the Sanghas. The Buddha was aware that the nuns usually get lesser chance of invitation and offerings than the monks. But when he passed away, the Order was again guided by the community of monks. The first set of incidents against the nuns may be seen as early as the first council, only 3 months after the passing away of the Buddha.

The First Council Onwards

The Council consisted of 500 enlightened monks, no nun was invited in spite of the fact that there were still many learned and enlightened ones. Ananda, the Buddha's attendant and cousin was blamed by the members of council

for many things. One among the blames was that Ananda allowed the nuns to pay respect to the body of the Buddha before the community of the monks! Another one was that Ananda was mediator and helped the women to approach the Buddha for the establishment of the Order of nuns. Ananda did not protest but made it clear to the assembly that he did not think that he was wrong.

We see clearly, that the community of monks were not happy with the existence of nuns by their side. These negative feelings were brought out and displayed in public soon after the Buddha's passing away. Their objections indeed, reflected the mentality of the monks then. And we should not be surprised to find such trend of mentality still persisting through thousands of years into the present age. Egoism is very strong in spite of the fact that the central teaching of Buddhism is egolessness!

The community of nuns continued in India, in the 3rd century B.C. During the time of the King Asoka, an Order of nuns was established in Sri Lanka under royal patronage. Later in 434 A.D. Sri Lankan Nuns in turn established an Order of nuns in China. Through the passage of time, the Order of nuns in India died out after the invasion of Muslims. The Order of monks and nuns in Sri Lanka died out with the invasion of a South Indian ruler in 1017 A.D. The Order of the monks was soon revived but not the nuns. Only the Chinese lineage survived in China, Japan, Korea. When China went through years of suppression during the cultural revolution in 1940s, the majority of nuns escaped and resettled in Taiwan where they are not the strongest hold of the fully ordained Buddhist nuns.



Two Korean bhikkunis prepare an aspirant to the Bhikkuni Sasana

In 434 AD, Sri Lankan Nuns established the order in china which even today belongs to the Dharmagupta school of Theravada

Give the women the place they have been entitled to. What authority do we have to obstruct the religious growth of women as a community—the privilege given to them by the Buddha himself?

In other Buddhist countries, the Order of nuns never existed. Countries like Burma, Thailand, Nepal, Laos Cambodia never had Order of nuns. In Tibet due to geographical limitation they have only ordination of female novices (samneri samanerika).

Contemporary Nuns

We now turn to the situation in this present century. There is a strange religious phenomena which repeats itself in each and every Buddhist country in more or less the same form. That is, Buddhist women have expressed their desire to lead religious lives. In each country there developed a group of 'ordained' women. Not to confuse these women with those fully ordained ones which we have discussed earlier, we shall call the earlier group—the bhikshunis and the latter group—contemporary nuns.

In Nepal they are called Anagarikas, they wear a pink robe with a brown robe folded on the right shoulders, they observe 10 precepts. In Burma, Cambodia and Thailand, they wear white robes with 8 precepts. In Sri Lanka, they are called dasasil matas, wearing yellow robes much like the monks and observe 10 precepts. All of them are with shaven heads, a sign of leaving family life. Among them, the Sri Lankan nuns seem to be holding the highest respect from society. Recently the Sri Lankan government showed signs of interest in them and has so far issued an identity card as a first step of formal recognition. There is also a movement to bring about the revival of bhikshuni order in Sri Lanka.

In order to understand their status, we should first look at the 4 groups of Buddhists as mentioned by the Buddha. They are monks (bhikshus), nuns (bhikshunis), laymen and laywomen. These 4 groups of Buddhists are responsible both for the development and for the decline of Buddhism. Now, where do the contemporary nuns fit in this grouping? They do not really fit anywhere. They are not the bhikshunis as they have no ordination lineage. Generally they are grouped with laywomen. But again we see that they are not laywomen in the full sense for they have left their homes to lead committed religious lives.

Why not Bhikshunis?

The next question you will ask, why can't they become bhikshuni? The Theravada Buddhists insist that the lineage is now extinct. The people who can authorise the ordination are only the community of monks and nuns. The community of monks is not ready to commit themselves, as it is, it seems, they are only too happy about the extinction of their capable counterparts.

What happens then to the existing Chinese lineage I mentioned earlier? The Theravada Sangha does not accept Chinese lineage taking them to belong to Mahayana. I did some study on this objection and found out that the vinaya lineage as practised by the Chinese Sangha belongs to Dharmagupta school. If you look up the Sri Lankan Chronicle you will find a list of 18 schools as prevalent during King Asoka's time around 3rd century B.C. and you will see that Dharmagupta is subset of Theravada. So the objection is again groundless.

We see now that Buddhist women are struggling to achieve the ideal self to play the role of propagators and to have their equal share in bringing about understanding of Buddhism to the world. But they are much obstructed by the role of expected selves. (I mean the kind of role expected of them by society often covered with traditional bias).

There is also some other phenomena which I should mention here. That is the spread of Buddhism to the West within the past few decades. When China took over Tibet 25 years ago, it forced Tibetans to spread to different parts of the world taking with them Buddhism. In North America now, Buddhism is much better known than say, twenty years ago. As a result many Westerners have accepted Buddhism and some of the women wanted to lead more committed lives. They slowly seek full ordination from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea. In 1983 for the first time in Buddhist history, an ordination ceremony for nuns was held in the United States. And here in Halifax, there is a Tibetan centre to train both monks and nuns.

The movements and activities of these Western Buddhist nuns will eventually have a great impact on the revival of nuns in the East.

To let this door open for the benefit of mankind, the monks will have to develop compassion to perceive the genuine religious need and commitment of women, they will have to be broadminded to accept the possibility of capable women who can actually bring much benefit to the womenfolk and society.

Let the door be opened to them so that the 4 groups of Buddhists be completed, so that the spirit of equality prevails. Give the women the place they have been entitled to. What authority do we have to obstruct the religious growth of women as a community—the privilege given to them by the Buddha himself?

—Courtesy: Seeds of Peace
Thailand Excerpts.

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Restoration of the Bhikkhuni Order

A report reaching Colombo from Los Angeles, United States of America, unfolds a story of a Thai woman entering the order of Buddhist nuns at the Dharma Vijaya Viharaya, Los Angeles from a community of bhikkhus led by the Ven. Hevanpola Ratanasara.

Twenty-five Theravada bhikkhus from Sri Lanka and Thailand in their multi-hued saffron robes and eight bhikkhunis from Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese traditions in their yellow and red, grey and brown robes led by the three ordaining Maha Theras, the Ven. Hevanpola Ratanasara, the Ven. Dr. Walpola Piyananda and the Ven. Pannila Ananda ordained a Thai upasika Chutima Vuchravintara as a *dasa sila samaneri* and gave her the spiritual name *Dhammamitta*.

... The solemn ceremony was preceded by eight American men and women taking the three refuges and *pansil* as Buddhists. Upasika Chutima, dressed in white presented herself to Upajjhaya, the presiding elder, Ven. Ratanasara. With the assistance of Chinese bhikkhuni Ven. Hsin Kuang, Chief Nun of Hsi Lai Temple, cut a few strands of Chutima's hair. The three Mahayana Bhikkhuni Dharma Masters of Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese tradition led the aspirant to the nearby Korean Buddhist nunnery where her head was shaved. On return Chutima prostrated before the Sangha and requested in Pali (*"Okasa, Aham Bhante, pabbanjam yacami—Please, Venerable Sir, give me the ordination"*) from the Upajjhaya. Chutima then presented robes to the Upajjhaya.

Ven Ratanasara in turn returned the robes to Bhikkhuni Hsin Kuang to drape Chutima with the robes of a *samaneri*. Dressed in the saffron robe of a Buddhist nun, the aspirant entered the main hall and took the ten vows and requested Ven. Ratanasara to continue as her preceptor.

Among the dignitaries witnessing the ceremony were the Ven. Hedigalle Pannatissa Nayake Thera., Ven. Higgoda Khevananda, Phra Wichien Dhammacharn of Wat Thai, Los Angeles, Phra Maha Rien Dhanalapho of the Natural Buddhist Meditation Temple of La Puente and many Sri Lankan bhikkhus from New York as well.

Ven. Ratanasara addressing the historic occasion said, "We have received numerous requests from female devotees for ordination. The Dharma Vijaya Vihara finds no reason to deny them ordination. We have now decided to open the doors for the restoration of the Bhikkhuni order in America."

He said "The ordination made today, is not guided by rules and regulations or practices maintained by a particular sect of Buddhism. We examined the Buddha's rulings and decisions regarding women entering the order."

Ven. Ratanasara added that he was personally delighted to be the preceptor at the historic occasion. He took on this role with full understanding of the great responsibility of this act.

He hoped the ordination would help the Buddha Sasana to flourish in America with greater maturity and vigour. He appealed to the four-fold community of Sangha and the laity to recognise *Dhammamitta* as a duly ordained *samaneri* (novice) and provide her all support to assure her success for the glory of the Buddha Sasana.

He said in Sri Lanka, the Bhikkhuni Sasana was established by Arhat Theri Sangamitta, the daughter of Emperor Asoka in the third century BC which flourished in the country for nearly sixteen centuries. From Sri Lanka in the 5th century AD, the Bhikkhuni Sasana was taken to China by twenty Sinhala bhikkhunis applying the Dharmagupta Vinaya, a sub branch of the Theravada Vinaya. But by the 13th century the Bhikkhu Sasana disappeared from Sri Lanka. However, the order was well established in China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam maintaining an unbroken lineage. Since that time no serious effort had been made in Sri Lanka to restore the Bhikkhuni Sasana.—*Courtesy DAILY NEWS*

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VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

The Streets of Olongapo

Olongapo City is home to 60,000 prostitutes who provide R & R for thousands of American sailors. The Filipino women are referred to as "Little brown fucking machines." My blood ran cold when I heard this term. I felt humiliated as I watched the women "perform." (I have seen pornography and nudity in films and live in Canada. Sometimes I felt embarrassed by it, but not humiliated). Most of the performers were very young—14 or 15 years of age. They couldn't dance. Some were obese. They were objects to be exploited. It was the only way to survive in "Sin City."

We met with a courageous and dedicated young American woman in Olongapo, at Buklod. She provided a way for the prostitutes to talk together, to organize, and to take action. Listening to her made me feel proud to be a woman. She is empowering the prostitutes to re-affirm their dignity as Women and as human beings. As I walked along the dirty, crowded streets of Olongapo I felt sad, angry, and bewildered. Children were sleeping in the street curbs, in doorways, or propped against fences and dilapidated buildings. The American men were making their "pick-ups." It was a game for them; abusive entertainment. Young boys were selling themselves—brazen and persistent.

Ex-prostitutes, no longer of any use to the system, sat in the streets pathetically holding out their produce and articles for sale. No one was buying. They weren't selling sex. I watched, horrified, as a sailor handed an elderly woman a peso, then picking up a sleeping girl of about four or five years of age, he hurried off to the Subic Naval Base gates. I watched until they were out of sight. My heart sank. The guard at the gate told me to "Move on." His uniform, gun, and tone of voice intimidated me. I felt frightened and did as I was told. "Yes, Sir. Thank you sir."

Walking back, I noticed the Christmas tree lights strung haphazardly along store fronts and across the streets. They looked gaudy and cheap. The godlessness was so real. I felt evil all around me. What hurt the most was that my skin is white. Though I am not an American, I felt responsible in some way, yet helpless. Leaving Olongapo I experienced relief and regret.

— Bonnie Thurber (Philippine Insight EPIC
July-August 1988).

Fellowship in Action

Work Programme for 1989

Our Branches have been busy recently with the drawing up of their work programmes for 1989, after critically evaluating the work done by them in 1988. Branch Secretaries have to present their programmes to the CWF Centre so that there could be a proper co-ordination of CWF activity at the national level.

Meanwhile arrangements are being made by the Centre for the Holy Week programme of study and worship which this year will be from March 23rd morning to March 25th night. On May Day this year we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of our Workers' Mass which we have had regularly without interruption. The Mass this year will be on May 1st morning at St. Michael's Church, Polwatte, Colombo preceded by a procession at 8-30 a.m. The 30th Anniversary of our early beginnings as a group could not be celebrated in November last year due to unsettled conditions in the country, but it is hoped to combine this if possible with our membership Conference this year in April.

Our Sinhala magazine *Sanvada* which has been more recently re-organised has met with a good reception and 10,000 copies of the last issue distributed for sale through our groups and news-stands.

CWF Branches

Although our extension work has suffered a set-back, the last few months of 1988 due to unsettled conditions, work normally done through our main centres have continued, despite certain problems. Needless to say our branches everywhere have played a constructive role amid all the troubles and helped to strengthen people in these very tense and difficult days. We set below a few of the reports we have received since from our branches.

Badulla

Despite being one of the areas badly affected by the unsettled conditions in the latter half of 1988, the regular programmes of the CWF Centre in Badulla were maintained. Worship continued to be offered every morning and evening at the Centre and at times mid-day services too were held. The regular Centre programmes of music, dancing, English, Tamil and sewing classes continued despite interruptions occasioned by curfews both official and unofficial. Bible study too has been done and the Poya day discussions held with urban workers on current issues which is also a regular part of the Centre's programmes to develop workers' consciousness. The regular CWF study classes too have been held although extension work in areas undertaken by the Centre had to be suspended on account of the prevailing tense conditions.

The pre-school for workers' children which is very popular in the area and directed by a dedicated teacher has continued to be held at the Centre. On January 6th 1989 the pre-school had its passing-

out celebration of children with the usual concert and distribution of gifts. Thirty-six children who attended the pre-school last year will now be joining regular schools.

January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany (Manifestation or Revelation of God), being the Christmas of the Eastern Church has regularly been observed at the CWF Badulla Centre and it was the day too of the dedication of its little chapel which itself symbolises inter-religious dialogue. The chapel was dedicated by Bishop Roger Herft (a Sri Lankan who is now a Bishop in New Zealand) in honour of the Epiphany and named *Mettaloka Devalage* (literally meaning Light of Love—God's House)—quite appropriately since Epiphany is popularly associated with the visit of the Magi representing different races and religions at Christ's birth. (In fact Epiphany is one of the oldest Church festivals—older than Christmas or Good Friday and commemorating as it did the Incarnation and Baptism of Jesus was named in the 4th Century as the Day of Holy Lights). The Vicar of St. Mark's Church, Badulla led the celebration of the Workers Mass at the Centre on January 6th evening which was attended by our staff and workers in the vicinity. We are grateful to the Bishop of Colombo for a gift made by him of an 'Assisi' Cross to be installed at the Centre's *Mettaloka Devalage*—(Chapel).

The Badulla Centre co-ordinates CWF work among urban workers, plantation workers and rural folk in the Uva-Vellassa areas. The space afforded by the Centre building has been found to be quite inadequate for on-going programmes and building operations are now in progress to remedy this deficiency.

Galaha—Gami Seva Sevana (Rural Service Centre)

Through its Cultural Section, Gami Seva Sevana staged a Musical Drama on the 6th January, 1989. The Drama was on the "Birth of Christ." It was staged at Scot's Kirk Church at Trincomalee Street, Kandy. The Rev. Soma Perera, Principal of the Theological College of Sri Lanka gave a small message and led the group in prayer before the commencement of the Drama. Dr. Walter Marasinghe thanked everyone for coming and encouraging us. This Drama was an effort of Mr. Siri Gamage, our Music Teacher and Mr. P. D. Ratnapala, our Dance Teacher. The script was written by Dr. Walter Marasinghe Music was directed by Mr. Siri Gamage.

The Annual Organic Farming Workshop was conducted by Gami Seva Sevana from the 8th—18th January, 1989. A special feature at this time's Workshop was the presence of Mr. Terry Gips, Executive Secretary of the International Alliance of Sustainable Agriculture. As in the previous year, Mr. Samuel Smith from the Caretaker Farm, Massachusetts and Mr. G. K. Upawansa were resource people along with the Staff or Gami Seva Sevana. We had three delegates from Asia participating in this Workshop. Two from Sarawak and one from Philippines. These

delegates were sponsored by the SEA-RICE group in the Philippines. We had 27 participants from Sri Lanka. The group that participated decided to put up a Newsletter titled 'Organic Farming' and also to actively work for the promotion of sustainable agriculture in the ensuing year in the various areas which they represented. A steering committee was selected to be co-ordinated by Gami Seva Sevana.

Wattala

The Wattala Branch of the CWF has extended and intensified its work with the poorest fishermen in the area. These fishermen work mostly as hired hands, working in boats belonging to persons who do not themselves go out to sea. They work for a pittance that is paid by way of daily wages and therefore are not paid anything when due to adverse weather conditions they cannot put out to sea. Their families are among the poorest in the area. A continued discussion with these fishermen has been conducted by the CWF group, here with the aim of building up awareness in order to develop a self-help programme for these folk. Meanwhile community awareness was also sought to be promoted with a view to be involved in this work. It was as a part of this work that an organisation called "Deevarayo" was formed sometime back. About two hundred families belong to this organization.

The fishermen, after a long discussion, came out with a programme of their own. They believe that they will benefit most by becoming independent fishermen using the traditional "Teppama" (small boats) and fishing nets; they could generate an income thereby which is much higher than what they earn now.

For this programme the fishermen's families have agreed to somehow raise one-third of the cost per Teppama and net. A further one-third of the cost will be raised by the Wattala CWF Branch by fund raising programmes conducted in the area. Some leading artistes have already agreed to help in such a project. The balance one-third of the cost will be raised from other sources. Our group plans in this way to help, in the first instance, five families (selected by the fishermen themselves) by 31st March, 1989.

Despite the unfavourable and rather hostile psychological climate, the CWF Wattala Branch held their Children's Celebration for Christmas. It was rather a long programme lasting about 4 hours, in which little children sang and danced. They even acted out some small plays which proved very entertaining to the large crowd of parents and well-wishers present.

The Wattala Branch has also continued with their Murthurajawela programme of agitation to obtain land for the landless.

The winning of the CWF Case in the Supreme Court against the Wattala-Mabole Town Council authorities has given the CWF Wattala Branch considerable prestige in the eyes of the people in the area.

Post-Election Scene

The formation of a new Cabinet, the appointment of Finance Minister D. B. Wijetunge as Prime Minister for one year (in view of rival contenders for office) and of Industries Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as Leader of the House for the same period and the assembling of the new Parliament on March 9th are some of the main events that have taken place after the last General Election of 15th February.

Politics of the gun has however continued to take its toll : innocent civilians are being brutally killed and maimed daily and damage caused to their property. A United Socialist Alliance statement notes : " We have reason to believe that armed bands belonging to the JVP and separatist Tamil terrorists as well as armed gangs connected with certain state security units and individual groups supporting the Government are responsible for this situation." People have been killed for the "crime" of voting or for supporting particular candidates at the elections or sometimes because of their ethnic origin or relationship to a supporter of some political party. Villages in parts of the North Central Province and in the Ampara district have been attacked

and subject to gruesome massacres by Tamil terrorist bands : on February 2nd at Boyagamuwa (Ampara district), 11 killed ; on February 12th at Dutuwewa (Anuradhapura district), 35 killed; on February 22nd at Sinhapura (Trincomalee), 6 killed ; and on February 27th at Borawewa (Polonnaruwa district), 38 killed. The repeated failure of the Government to give adequate protection to these villagers is a cause for grave concern. So also the present terror and violence in several parts of the island (mostly unreported in the press) that have kept people in a state of fear and tension and prevented them from effectively exercising their civic rights regardless of their political persuasions.

President Premadasa recently renewed his call to both the JVP and LTTE to come forward for talks but no response has apparently been forthcoming. Meanwhile a major crackdown on Southern and Northern rebels by Sri Lankan and Indian troops has been announced.

9th March, 1989

STOP PRESS

Killings go on with sickening regularity in several parts of the country as also the rounding - up of suspected subversives. In Anuradhapura District, dead bodies are reported to be found daily lying beside roads and by-paths. These include the bodies of those killed by subversive as well as "counter - subversive" forces.

Prominent among those killed recently was the Vice - Chancellor of the Colombo University, Professor Stanley Wijesundara, who was shot in his Office on the campus on March 8 a few days after his retirement: a murder that has also now affected adversely the awaited opening of the Universities.

Meanwhile four more police stations have been attacked by subversives: two on March 15 at Kirulapone in Colombo City and at Narammala, followed by those at Ambanpola and Matugama, and about 40 firearms including automatic weapons, removed during these raids.

A serious eruption of trouble is anticipated over the proposed referendum on the newly formed North - East Province scheduled for July 5th. There is a demand by the Tamil groups for at least a postponement of this referendum until such time as the North - East Provincial Council is able to function effectively, but Sinhala chauvinist groups including the SLFP are equally insistent that the referendum be held on the announced date.

The 13 EDF (Political wing of EROS) MPs still await a settlement of the demands made by their party for a resolution of the North-East problems before they take their seats in the new Parliament.

18th March, 1989.

Post-Election Scene

The formation of a new Cabinet, the appointment of Finance Minister U. R. Wijewardene as Prime Minister and the view of rival contenders for office and of industrial Minister Hans Wijewardene as a leader of the fringe for the same period and the re-opening of the new Parliament on March 23 have some of the main events that have taken place since the last General Election of 1977 February.

Politics of the gun has however continued to take as well human tolls are being gravely inflicted and visited daily and damage caused to our property. A United Socialist Alliance statement notes "We have reason to believe that armed bands belonging to the JVP and separatist Tamil organisations as well as armed gangs connected with separatist security units and underworld groups supporting the Government are exploiting the situation." Reports have been killed for the "burning" of voters or for supporting particular candidates at the election or to undermine interests of their ethnic origin or relationship to a supporter of some political party. Villages in parts of the North Central Province and in the Anuradhapura district have been attacked.

President Premadasa recently renewed his call to both the JVP and UJVP to come forward for talks but no response has apparently been forthcoming. Meanwhile a major breakdown on Southern and Northern roads by Sri Lankan and Indian troops has been announced.

regardless of their political persuasion.

18th March 1982

STOP PRESS

A serious situation of trouble is re-established over the proposed referendum on the newly formed North-Central Province scheduled for July 21st. There is a demand by the Tamil groups for at least a postponement of this referendum until such time as the North-East Province and Jaffna are able to function effectively. The Sinhala Government groups including the SLFP are equally insistent that the referendum be held on the scheduled date.

Thoughts to go with seeking regularly in several parts of the country as also the re-opening - up of un-peaceful situations. In Anuradhapura district dead bodies are reported to be found daily lying beside roads and in paths. These include the bodies of those killed by separatist as well as Government - separatist forces.

The UJVP (Political wing of ERODE) Mrs. M. M. M. with a retirement of the demands made by their party for a resolution of the North-East problem before they take their seats in the new Parliament.

Protestant among those killed recently was the Vice-Chancellor of the Colombo University, Professor Gnanapavantharam who was shot in his Office on the grounds on March 2 a few days after his retirement. A number that has also now informed adversely the re-opening of the Parliament.

18th March 1982

Members that more police stations have been attacked by separatists; two on March 12 at Kumbura in Colombo City and at Marawala followed by those at Ambapola and Marawala and about 40 houses including automatic weapons removed during these attacks.

Keep the Dates Free !

30th Anniversary Celebration

MAY DAY WORKERS' MASS

May 1st (Monday) 8.30 a.m.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Polwatte, Colombo 3

*Clergy from the mainline Churches will concelebrate
the Workers' Mass
Sermon in drama form*

All are Welcome !

CWF Holy Week Services

Drawn up and arranged in a Sri Lankan Cultural Setting at

KAMKARU SEVANA, RATMALANA

10/1, Attidiya Road.

<i>March 23 (Holy Thursday)</i>	<i>5.30 p.m. The Lord's Supper</i>
<i>March 24 (Good Friday)</i>	<i>4.30 p.m. Good Friday Liturgy</i>
<i>March 25 (Easter Eve)</i>	<i>6.00 p.m. Easter Eve Observances followed by the First Mass of Easter</i>

Bible Study and Reflection for CWF members **from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on all three days.** Others interested in joining should write in earlier to CWF Office, 39, Bristol Street, Colombo 1.

Open to all !

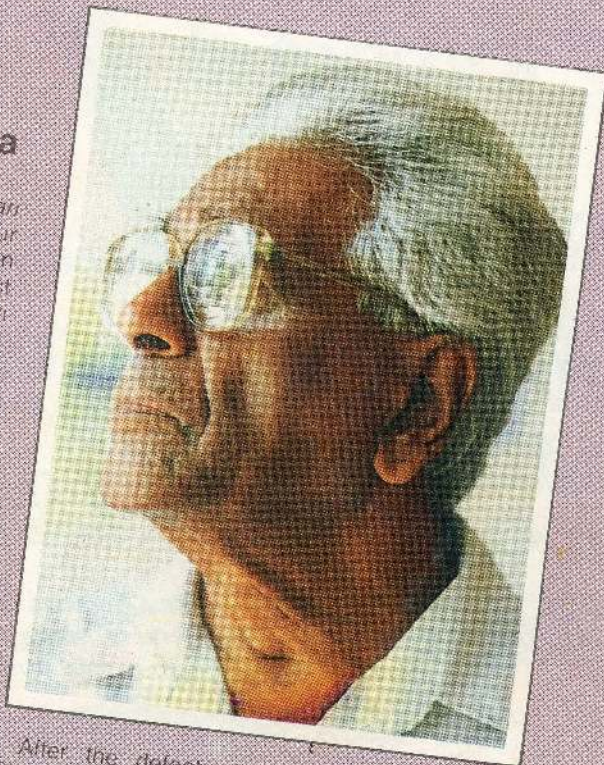
Christian Workers Fellowship



To the Memory of Colvin R. de Silva

It is with deep regret that *Christian Worker* records the passing from our midst on February 27th of Dr. Colvin R. de Silva (82), pioneer Socialist and veteran Marxist leader of Sri Lanka.

A veritable colossus that bestrode the political and legal arenas of our land, Colvin's flamboyant personality, genius and intellectual brilliance found expression in many different ways - as a speaker, writer, historian, lawyer, constitutional expert, trade unionist, Marxist theoretician and party leader. But above all this, Colvin was a warm and sensitive human being, devoid of pettiness and fully committed to the cause of the working class and the oppressed. His death marks the end of an era.



Born in 1907, Colvin was one of the small band of young intellectuals and enthusiasts who in the early thirties launched the anti-imperialist Suriya Mal Movement that led to the formation of Sri Lanka's first Left Party, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, with the aims of achieving independence and Socialism. The first and only President of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party at its inception in 1935 (that office being abolished in later years), Colvin along with other Sama Samajist leaders was arrested and jailed by the British Government in 1940 on account of the LSSP's opposition to the imperialist war. He with the others broke jail in 1942 and crossed over illegally to India where they went underground, participated in the Indian Civil Disobedience Struggle against British rule and even formed the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India. Colvin successfully evaded re-arrest and returned to the island in November 1945 after the conclusion of the War with Japan when the warrant against him was withdrawn.



After the defeat of the General Strike of 1947 where he was the most popular speaker at strike meetings, Colvin was elected to the island's first Parliament the same year as the member for Wellawatte-Galkissa, a constituency he held for alternate periods on the General Elections that followed. He was later elected MP for Agalawatte after a bye-election in the sixties which seat he held until 1977. In the 1970 United Front Government, Colvin served with distinction as Minister of Plantations, Industry and also as Minister of Constitutional Affairs, becoming the chief architect of Sri Lanka's 1972 Republican Constitution, which declared Sri Lanka a Free, Sovereign and Independent Republic, pledged to realise the objectives of a Socialist Democracy. He was defeated in the 1977 General Election and had just been named the national list nominee of the United Socialist Front for the newly elected 9th Parliament this year. It is indeed a pity that his voice could not be heard again in this forum even if for a time. It will be remembered that it was Colvin who in the 'Sinhala Only' Bill Debate of 1956 made the prophetic statement in Parliament that we could either have two official languages and one nation or one official language and two nations. Even during his last illness when battling with cancer, Colvin did not lose his clarity of thought and expression. He was conscious to the end.

Colvin was a good friend of the Christian Workers Fellowship and valued its work. He contributed articles to *Christian Worker* besides being one of its regular readers. In fact the last issue of *Christian Worker* was by his bedside at home during his recent illness.

We will always remember the warm and generous personality that was Colvin, his great mind and the discussions had with him especially at his dinner table when conversation not only stimulated the intellect but was delightfully entertaining. His departure leaves a void in the political life of the country and the Left Movement in particular that will not easily be filled.

A giant among men, Colvin now shines high among the Comrades who have struggled to break the chains of oppression. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

We convey our condolences to the members of Colvin's family and fraternal sympathies to the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of which he was the leader.

28th February 1989

