

1979 MORE CRUCIAL THAN WE THINK!

NM's Statement on 43rd Anniversary of LSSP

An unprecedented national calamity has hit the country compelling the Party to suspend the celebrations which we originally planned for the LSSP's 43rd anniversary. Only a modest get-together has been arranged for the 18th of December. Since the tickets for the intelligence puzzle have already been sold, this will be completed on that date.

An anniversary is always an occasion for annual stock-taking. The Party Conference was held from the 17th to the 19th March, 1978, which fully endorsed the political resolution that was placed before it. That resolution made no attempt to conceal the shortcomings of the Government in which the Party participated till September, 1975. It drew valuable lessons from the experience of

the Coalition with the SLFP. The analysis of the political resolution made it clear that the UNP had no future. Its blatant failure to honour the pledges it gave during the elections had sealed its doom. But what was far worse was the heartless attacks on the vast mass of poor people in the country by the deprivation of their ration books, while providing all manner of facilities to the affluent. The UNP, true to its history and its ideological attachment to capitalism, has continued to fatten private capitalists at the expense of the poor. The recent budget of Mr. Ronnie de Mel has demonstrated this in ample measure.

But the worsening plight of the poor, more especially of the rural population, has been a constant threat. The SLFP though it has 8 seats in Parliament has been distinguished by its inability

to expose the disastrous policies carried out by the UNP. Though the party is not in Parliament, this task of bringing home the enormity of the crimes committed by the UNP falls upon the LSSP and OP. As in the past, a proper analysis of the budget, exposing its full implications as the true instrument of capitalist exploitation, has been left to the Party.

To carry on this task more effectively the Party Conference carried through a scheme of decentralization. Each district council would be entitled to collect its own resources, plan out the systematic building of youth leagues and locals and disseminate Party propaganda at the village level. Since the conference to put this scheme into execution.

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SOCIALIST
NATION

J. R. JAYEWARDENE — As We Saw Him 28 years ago!

(From "Samasamajist," 28th August, 1950)

Our series ("Lanka's Men of Destiny") begins with J. R. J., for he is the man of the hour. Some are born great and Shakespeare. Our hero indeed had ancestors of distinction but not of the kind that he could emulate, and unsuited, moreover, to our nationalistic age. They could not serve his turn.

Some achieve greatness, continued the Bard. Some imagine it, may invent it, we may add, thinking of J. R.

Neither his ancestors' avocation of the law, nor their faith satisfied him. After a brief briefness, he left Hultsdorp, embraced Buddhism and, fortified by a convert's zeal, turned to the fresh fields of politics.

At first his young political mind broke out in a pale diet of Cole's economics. But he soon began to mature politically when he adopted a militant racialism, offering himself as the saviour of the Sinhalese.

With the ardent support of political Bhikkus (whom no one had yet thought of disrobing) he entered the State Council as Member for Kelaniya. But his political character was as yet undefined. A visit to Gandhi and Nehru in India brought out a new strain—he sponsored the Wardha idea in Ceylon and offered a prize for the best designed National Costume—which he now wears.

Intellectually still a restless Bedouin, he pitched his tent for a time outside the Kremlin gates as a Friend of the Soviets. He even tried out a C.P. — National Congress coalition, believing this the road to greatness. But when D. S. Senanayake showed him a surer way, he terminated the unholy alliance, and the close of World War II saw J. R. sprawled beside his new leader at the feet of a new deny-Anglo American Imperialism. For playing faithful acolyte to the UNP high priests of this God, he was rewarded in the new Parliament with the portfolio of Finance.

It was in his new role as Minister that J. R.'s imagination burgeoned. A Wels y Hall Course on "Economics" introduced him to the idea of Planning and his heart gave a great bound. Ever since, he has soared from Plan to Plan, turning Beveridge himself green with envy.

Reality cannot keep pace with his plans. The time-limit of the Six Year Plan was clearly a mistake. His later plans stand outside time and space in complete vacuity, as the Full Employment Plan and Cost of Living Plan do. The Colombo Plan was subleest of all, being just a Plan to make a Plan. This bold stroke saved the Commonwealth Conference from failure!

J. R. has established himself as the great man of ideas in the Cabinet today.

—Purang Appu

Case for Select Committee Recording of Parliamentary Proceedings

Speaking in parliament on Wednesday, 6th December, the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, denied categorically that there had been a mischievous attempt to smuggle in a new section to the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry (Special Provisions) Bill which was passed by parliament on 20th November.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, said he had no hesitation in accepting the statement of the Prime Minister. But he wished to draw the attention of the House that, not only in the Courts but in general administration too, justice should not only be done but should appear to be done.

As reported in the "Ceylon Daily News", Mr. Amirthalingam said that it was understandable that certain circumstances had created that particular situation. The tapes of the proceedings of

that day were not available and the Hangard did not bear out the moving and passage of the particular amendment. Under Standing Order 10 the minutes of the proceedings of each day were expected to be out the next day. It was curious that the proceedings of November 22, 23 and 24 were available, but not the minutes of the proceedings of November 20. He was certain that the Secretary-General would have performed his tasks correctly, but he wished to ask the Speaker that, at least in the future, the House followed the Standing Orders and attended to matters according to Standing Orders.

The issue that has arisen here is not whether the Prime Minister has made an acceptable explanation. The Leader of the Opposition has made it clear that he accepts that explanation. The issue concerns the failure to follow Standing

Orders that provide clear directions concerning the recording of proceedings in parliament. This is too serious a matter not to demand an enquiry by parliament itself so that the fair name and authority of parliament should not be compromised in the eyes of the public.

If the amendment in question was not recorded in the stenographers' notes as having been moved on the floor of the House, the omission could have been detected from a playing of the tape on which the proceedings of the day had been recorded. This is the very purpose for which the proceedings are taped. It is surely in the Government's own interests to find out how the tape in question came to be erased. It should also find out whether the tapes of proceedings before the 20th of November have also been erased. A Select Committee of the House could well be appointed to conduct this inquiry.

REPRESSION IN IRAN

IN THE BOILING cauldron that is Iranian society to-day, the Shah's regime stands isolated and shunned by virtually the entire people, its chances of survival depending directly on its continuing ability to unleash tanks, guns and the assassin's knife against every stirring of protest. It is difficult precisely to estimate the number of men, women and children who have been mowed down on the streets during the past six months; at the very least, the number would run to a few thousands. Starting from demands for elementary civil liberties and democratic rights, the campaign has developed rapidly into a great tide against the butcher regime of the Shah and its international backers. The monarch, served by a motley succession of executioners (civilian, 'Islamic' and military), has tried every despicable trick and manoeuvre in the book for tyrants in an attempt to stem, or divert, the people's upsurge. Verbal flings against 'conspirators', 'terrorists', the 'foreign hand', and 'Islamic-Marxists'; hopeless attempts to don the garb of a 'clean' regime; and wave upon wave of repression have failed to provide any relief from the remorseless manifestation of

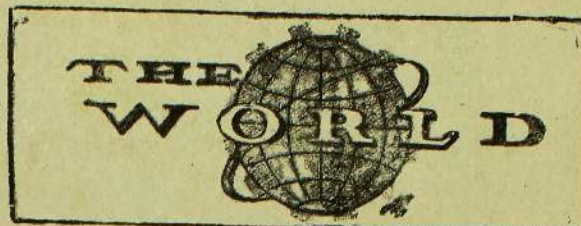
the people's anger and hatred. The Shah's vainglorious schemes for 'modernisation', his grandiose economic and militaristic plans, his grudging and too-late concessions in an attempt to appear liberal—all these lie in a shambles. The policy of keeping the military on the move in order to prevent it from being influenced by the people it is supposed to watch over and of sending soldiers to meet the popular challenge away from their native regions cannot work indefinitely. Instances of mutiny have surfaced sporadically, although it is too soon to say that the Shah cannot rely on the brass hats.

In fact, it is significant that in a situation where the options were naked military rule or abdication, he chose—egged on undoubtedly by his powerful Western backers—the former course. The new Prime Minister, Gen. Gholamreza Azhari, has quite expectedly surpassed his predecessors in the ferocity of repression and in the crimes unleashed, without second thought, against the people. The line of opening fire on groups of two or more after a warning shot is apparently being carried out to the letter. And mean-

while, new sections of the people have been drawn into the battle for democracy and the struggle to uproot the Shah's regime. Whereas previously students and intellectuals appeared to form the backbone of the organised protest movement, now the initiative has clearly passed into the hands of the thousands of workers in Iran's strategic sectors. Oil production has been massively disrupted by a remarkable succession of strikes, and the latest strike of banking employees has brought a top-heavy economy virtually to its knees.

In this situation, two blunt factors continue to deny millions of the Iranian people a popular and democratic republic. The first, of course, is the Army whose guns, tanks and planes the Shah has mobilised desperately in his war against the people. The second is the unabashed military, economic and political support of the major Western powers, chiefly the United States. President Carter's tirelessly advertised campaign for 'human rights' has naturally fallen well short of recognising the justice behind the

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“Worst Enemy of Non-Aligned”!

Hanoi, November 14:-

“Nhan Dan” today describes Peking as the worst enemy of the non-Aligned movement, in a commentary answering the Chinese attempts to sever Vietnam from non-Aligned states.

“The political degeneration of the Peking authorities has been absolute. Their day to day work is directed at tightening their all-round relations with the imperialist countries and reactionary forces, and co-operating with them to oppose the socialist countries, the international revolutionary movement and peoples now struggling for independence, freedom and socialist progress.

As an ally of the imperialists in the feverish arms race, the Chinese authorities have become unbridled war promoters,

a shock force of counter revolution and the most divisive force today.”

“Nhan Dan” notes that, in the past 10 days, during visits to Southeast Asia, some of the Peking leaders, in concert with their propaganda machine at home, have hurled against the Vietnam-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation. They have branded it a military alliance and concentrated their fire on Vietnam, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

The paper goes on: “Their aim is to disrupt the broadening of friendly ties between Vietnam, and other Southeast Asian countries. However during one of these visits, Peking made at least three

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Plantations are Key to Solving Village Problems in Hill Country

Programme of Worker-Peasant Unity Adopted at LSSP Dist. Conference

[Extracts from a Resolution of the annual District Conference of LSSP Units in the Hill Country which met on 18th November, 1978]

The designation Hill Country for the party at present includes the Kandy, Nuwara-Eliya and Matale Districts. The problems of peasant farming are different, generally speaking, in each of these Districts. In the villages of Kandy District paddy cultivation may be said to be an important occupation, with the system of home-gardens and diverse cash crops also playing a certain role. In the villages of Nuwara-Eliya District the tea plantations would appear to be a much more overpowering factor and the relationship with the plantation the indispensable means of alleviating village problems. In Matale District paddy cultivation is still important, but in large areas, especially on the plains of Damulla, chena cultivation of tobacco and chillies is the principal occupation of the peasant.

Despite this diversity there are many common problems. In the first place, wherever paddy cultivation obtains, tenurial problems (especially the ande system) beset the cultivator and make impossible any increase of the productivity of land. Where round-the-year crops like vegetables, some fruits, flowers etc. are concerned, the absence of organised marketing of this produce subjects the cultivator to the exploitation of the trader and acts as a disincentive to any expansion of production. Where chena crops like tobacco and chillies are concerned, the Government's policy of free imports, the Ceylon Tobacco Company's monopoly of cigarette production and the Pettah ring of chilli traders cheat the producer and deny him even a fair price. Secondly, the villages are hemmed in by the plantations everywhere. So long as the latter were private owned, the villages could neither find house-sites for their expanding population nor make a case for better health and education amenities nor launch new productive ventures like dairy farming. Now, after the Land Reform, and especially the take-over of the foreign owned plantations, the possibility exists of utilising the capital, skills and strategic importance of the plantations for lifting up the quality of village life.

Plantations Are Key

The plantations are the key to the solution of the problems of the Hill Country. Inclusion

of the plantations within the area of jurisdiction of Local Government provides the opening for planning common amenities like schools, hospitals, housing, roads, transport, sanitation etc. for both village and plantation alike. The demand for house sites for village people and for cottage-type housing instead of the old "lines" for plantation workers points to the possibility of planning urban settlements for both. The diversification of plantation agriculture will not only absorb more village labour but will enable organisation of marketing of village crops. Dairy farming can best be organised from plantation centres. Small industry too can best be introduced through the devices of planning from District and Village Committee level centres. Most of all, the supply of water for irrigation and domestic purposes demands the survey of existing water courses and their training and diversion and the storage of water according to plans drawn up for appropriate hill-and-valley units.

Until the nationalisation of the plantations, it was not possible to think in common terms for plantation and village. It was also far-fetched to do so while plantation labour was in its bulk deprived of citizenship rights. In one sense, the village people commenced a process of crashing into the plantations under petty-bourgeois SLFP leadership immediately following the Land Reform. House sites were located for them in the very midst of fertile tea fields. Tea was uprooted in large areas to permit the cultivation of chena crops. Resident workers were dismissed in large numbers and driven out of their "lines". Some plantations were packed with idle hands who were organised into privileged members of bogus cooperatives, under whose weight and destructive influence the plantation was certain to collapse.

But this position has now changed. Three factors stand out in regard to the future:-

- (i) Already nearly 150,000 plantation workers of Indian origin have won citizenship rights and this figure will keep increasing.

- (ii) Greater and greater numbers of labour residing in the villages are now working as regular employees on the plantations and they constitute an average of 25 per cent or more of the work force.

- (iii) As a consequence of nationalisation the ideology of large private property in the plantations has been gravely undermined. The question of to whom the plantations belong has not, for understandable reasons, been adequately answered by either the SLFP or the UNP. The SLFP tried to set up the peasantry against the plantation workers, inducing them to believe that the tea and rubber lands were now their (i.e. peasant) property, for purely damogic considerations. The UNP asserts the ownership of the plantations by an almighty state, despite the intense desire of its leaders to return them to private hands. The UNP leaders but equivocate deliberately on the subject of whom the state represents. An opening exists for mobilisation of the masses behind the proclamation that the nationalised estates belong to the people, both workers and peasants, who live and work on or near them.

Campaign Against Evictions

The opportunity exists today for the first time for campaigning for and bringing about the unity of workers and peasants through united action on the part of plantation workers and village peasants in furtherance of their specific demands. The eviction of vast numbers of villagers who came into occupation of plantation land under the Land Reform during the lifetime of the previous Government has revealed the true face of the UNP as an oppressor and exploiter of the peasantry, despite its pretence of championing their rights. Even where the evictees have

regained their land by legal process, they cannot really protect them against land-grabbers and thugs enjoying the UNP MP's patronage, except with the assistance of the workers on the plantations both Tamil and Sinhala. In one area at least, in Nawalapitiya, the workers of a neighbouring plantation have pledged their support to these evictees. Pursued with foresight and properly organised, the LSSP can not only generate powerful struggles in the Hill Country, but can also unite plantation workers and village cultivators in a tidal wave of class struggles that will engulf the entire country.

The propagation, not to speak of implementation of any programme on the foregoing lines will immediately encounter the all out opposition of the District Ministers and the institutional machinery that they head. These District Ministers do not represent a democratisation of the state apparatus or an attempt to promote the planning of economic activity on regional or local levels or an attempt to associate the people with the management of administrative affairs. These District Ministers constitute a further invasion of the powers of parliament, an appointment of Presidential yes-men as regional governors, the erection of a Party vested interest within the district administrative machine and the legitimisation of an instrument for the distribution of state funds as patronage among the relatives, friends and hangers on of the District bosses of the united National Party. It is organised and legitimised discrimination against those who do not belong to or who oppose the UNP in the arbitrary utilisation of state funds and state services.

Discrimination & Victimisation

The fight against political discrimination and victimisation will, in the immediate period ahead, centre on the following demands in the Hill Country:-

- (1) Immediate halting of the evictions of cultivators from lands which were allotted to them by the previous Government under the Land Reform and the resettlement of all

those who have already been so evicted on their former holdings.

- (2) Immediate halting of the process of dismissal, interdiction without cause and other forms of victimisation of employees of Government Departments, State Corporations and Cooperatives, and the withdrawal of such orders as have already been passed in regard to them.

- (3) Scrapping of the Job Bank system and the filling of all vacancies in Government Departments, State Corporations and Boards and Cooperatives by open and fair recruitment procedures that are free from political bias and based on merit.

- (4) Payment of the Unemployment Allowance of Rs. 50/- per month to all unemployed men and women between the ages of 18 and 55 and not, as at present, to Party supporters on the MP's recommendation.

- (5) District Development Councils, directly elected by the people, to be placed in charge of the drawing up and implementation of Development plans in the District in consultation with organised bodies of workers, cultivators, specialists and academicians.

The implementation of a programme such as has been set out above cannot be effectively done by the Lanka Sama Samaja Party acting by itself. The widest possible mobilisation of all ideological and class forces attuned to such a programme will alone be capable of producing satisfactory results. Immediately, therefore, the entire forces of the United Left Front in the Hill Country must be thrown into the preparation of this platform. The ULF must pay special attention to winning the youth and militants of the CWC and SLFP to its support. Discussion of the political, economic and social implications of this programme must be organised on the widest basis in trade unions, universities, other educational institutions, agricultural research institutions and plantation bodies, engineering institutions etc. The LSSP, for its part, must pay special attention to training an adequately equipped cadre for carrying out this task.

Colonisation or Cooperative Farming?

A Note on Agriculture in the Dry Zone

(This article by the late Prof. Senaka Bibile was originally published in "Samasamaja" of 1st January, 1959.)

Agricultural scientists have repeatedly criticised the present colonisation programme of the MEP which they inherited from the UNP. The criticism stems from the technical problems of agriculture which they have studied in the dry zone. These may be summarised as follows:-

1. The dry zone consists of similar river valleys made up of shallow basins.
2. The nature of the bed rock is such that there are no large supplies of subterranean water, so that the ground water layer that is built up during the intense rainfall from October to January disappears during the subsequent dry season.
3. Within each basin there are three or four defined land classes and soil types, each one suitable for a specific type of crop only. These land classes are distributed in a concentric manner from the crest of the hill to the valley in each basin.

The conclusion is that a diversified pattern of agriculture is necessary within each basin. The bottom of the basin is irrigable and suitable for rice. The topmost part of the basin, which comprises about a third of the unirrigable area, is suitable for arable crops like cotton, maize, ground nut, dhal and chillies. The intermediate part of the basin, which comprises about two-thirds of the unirrigable area, is ideal for pasture. This would leave a narrow strip between the irrigable and unirrigable parts of the basin for siting homesteads.

It is estimated that land available for agricultural development in the dry zone is 930,000 acres as irrigable land, 1.8 million acres for pasture land, 900,000 acres for arable crops and 132,000 acres for homesteads.

What conclusions are to be drawn from the foregoing?

The first is that colonisation schemes have ignored the existence of land classes and practised agriculture

suitable to one land class or another. The result has been a costly failure with great suffering for the colonists.

The second is that this scientific advice must be listened to without delay if we are not to pour further wasteful millions of Government money into colonisation schemes. This would mean that each basin (50 to 200 acres in extent) should be worked as a single unit with the pattern of agriculture determined by the physical characteristics.

measures which must be applied to the basin as a whole if it is going to be successful.

It is obvious that these tasks are possible, not on the basis of alienating land to individual peasant colonists, but on the working of each basin as a unit on the basis of cooperative or collective ownership and a division of labour amongst them. Moreover, this would enable the introduction of mechanisation to agriculture wherever possible and thus bring modern technique to the land. A progressive leap of this nature is impossible so long as colo-

coconut estates. The application of modern technique and higher productivity would not only enable a higher standard of living but would enable them to make their contribution to social services in the course of time.

What is it that holds back the introduction of these progressive measures? The answer is to be found in politics and in the social system that the UNP and MEP perpetuate. The agricultural scientist will have to wait until a Samasamaja Government brings feudalism to an end and with that the primitive methods and poverty of the peasant and the colonist.

by

SENAKE BIBILE

The principal tasks would be the growth of pastures and the maintenance of cattle which would contribute to the most economically productive use of the land, the organised cultivation of arable strips, the working of the entire area and carrying out the tillage operations which have to be completed within a very narrow time interval for the maximum exploitation of the soil and, not least, the adoption of soil conser-

nisation perpetuates primitive techniques and habits.

The peasant colonists, like all peasants, remain poor from the beginning to the end, producing so little that they do not even produce enough food for the peasantry itself. Food must be imported to feed them. Education, health and communications have to be provided for them. Almost all of this financed from the surplus wealth created by the workers on tea, rubber and

The working of large scale farms would be an integral part of Samasamaja planning, without which the modern forces of production would find no application. The link between the agricultural problems discussed here and the Samasamaja programme for nationalisation of the decisive sectors of our economy is that capital necessary for large scale agriculture can come principally from the nationalisations. That is just one example and it is also an example of the manner in which the estate worker and peasant would become allies in building a socialist economy.

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The Second Budget of the UNP Govt.—I

—Christmas for the Capitalists!

BY
N. M. PERERA

On the 15th of November, 1978, Mr. Ronnie de Mel introduced his second budget on behalf of the UNP Government. In the third quarter of the 20th century, few countries in the world would be prepared to pay *pooja* to the capitalists so brazenly and so shamelessly as Ronnie de Mel has done in this budget speech of his. Most Governments have turned their back on *laissez-faire* capitalism that was so fashionable in the early period of industrial expansion. Capitalist enterprises have been hedged in by all manner of controls and restrictions severely limiting the free play of forces which prevailed even in the first quarter of the 20th century.

It is, therefore, an astounding performance for the Finance Minister to attempt a return to the halcyon days for private enterprise. All the more astounding when it comes from a man who as late as 1971 had no compunction in delivering a scathing tirade against the iniquities of capitalist exploitation. He found little comfort in the lack of full-blooded socialism in the proposals of the then Finance Minister. Let us refresh his memory which obviously requires an intensive course in Pelmanism.

RONNIE'S SOMERSAULT

On the 10th of November, 1971, on the second reading of the budget introduced by me, Mr. Ronnie de Mel waxed eloquent:-

"In the interests of society nationalise import and export businesses; take over to the state the gem business; nationalise finance companies and other monopolies. If this is not done what is likely to happen is the building of a new capitalism in the name of socialism."

And again:

"I have no confidence in private enterprise. When we consider the performance of private enterprise during the last 24 years it is not possible to place any confidence in it."

He objected to indiscriminate imports:

"We have all the facilities and opportunities in

the country for the development of agriculture, industry, fisheries or building construction. We can develop these without getting any special help from foreign countries."

A person is entitled to change his opinion, the more so when he becomes the Minister of Finance. But there must be some decency in this. He must forswear his past; confess to the transformation in his thinking brought about as a result of circumstances. But it is not proper to a person who has risen to such eminence to pretend as if he has been a paragon of virtuous consistency throughout his life.

To quote his own words:-

"Distortionary and disruptive policies had brought this economy as a whole to a grinding halt. Tea, Rubber and coconut were in the doldrums. Industries were in ruin. Transport services were in shambles. The proliferation of subsidies and publicised monopolies encouraged a pernicious prodigality. Inefficiency, mismanagement and corruption stalk the land. This is exactly what happened to our economy between 1970-1977."

So says Mr. Ronnie de Mel. He was a member of the Government Party till he crossed the floor in 1976. He was a vociferous member. He was not a silent recluse. He had much to say, as you would have noted above, about the evils of the exploitative capitalist system, and now without so much as an excuse he dons the garment of a Simon Pure. It is the disgusting hypocrisy of a shameless turn-coat that must offend the finer instincts of every man to whom personal probity is more valuable than high office. One is not surprised, therefore, that like all political turn-coats, he has a stock of many hued coats which he sports to match every change of the political wind. Only fools spit looking up towards the sky.

Of course, this budget speech of Ronnie de Mel is a refreshing contrast to the Kattadiya performance of his first budget. He then tried to

exorcise the demon called Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike and expel the devil called Dasa. It is a relief that his proclivity to prance about like a dancing dervish has ceased and he has advanced to political sobriety after 12 months of ministerial life. But his other habits like lack of frankness, the failure to be direct, the utilisation of round-about expressions tantamount to prevarications; these and other blemishes continue. The worst of these blemishes is the attempt to cover the true intent of the taxation proposals by pretending that they are directed towards the amelioration of the lower and middle classes. In this article, therefore, it is proposed to examine the real beneficiaries of these taxation proposals, inclusive of the pre-budget proposals.

Fifty Rupee Increase

The most talked of proposal in the budget has been the salary and wage increase of 10 per cent to government servants, Local Government servants and pensioners, including Widows and Orphans' Pensioners. Nobody is to get less than Rs. 50/-. This increase is on the consolidated salary or wage of a Government servant. Government servants who receive a salary of Rs. 1000/- and more would, therefore, get a much higher increase in salary than the vast majority of the worker and lower grade. This is not, therefore, a progressive relief. The higher the salary the greater the benefit. The proposal is, therefore, regressive in its incidence. It will be remembered that when the previous government granted salary and wage increases, nobody drawing a salary of Rs. 800/- and more benefited by the increase. The increase was confined to those earning below Rs. 800/- a month.

In the background of a sky-rocketing cost of living, the Rs. 50/- increase to which the vast majority of the wage earners would be entitled could scarcely be considered a great boon. When we consider the incidental benefits that follow other wage and salary increases, it will be noted that those earning higher slabs will be the greatest beneficiaries. These include higher travelling, subsistence allowances; so also housing allowances. The higher the salaries the bigger these allowances will be. The vast majority of the wage earners will get a little more or no benefit at all.

There is much loose talk about the application of these increases to employees of the public corporations and those

in the private sector. Ministers like Mr. Athulathmudali do not seem to have followed the speech of his own colleague the Minister of Finance. One would have expected them to have carefully read the speech before they participated in the debate on the budget. But they do not seem to have done Mr. Ronnie de Mel the courtesy of carefully reading his speech and understanding his considered proposals. On page 38 he has made it abundantly clear that there is no automatic increase in salaries for those in public corporations and the private sector. What he has afforded the public servants would form the basic guide lines for wage adjustments in the corporation and the private sectors. He has elaborated this point and has gone on to point out that:-

"different sectors and trades have different wage structures. And there is a variation in the capacity of an employer to pay increased wages. Any across-the-board increase will complicate the wage structure in these sectors. Hence, I propose to leave the determination of wages in these sectors to the existing wage fixing machinery and collective bargaining processes with a guide line that the total wage increase should not exceed an upper limit of 10 per cent."

Therefore, those who glibly talk of increases of wages to millions should be advised to digest carefully the implications of the proposal of the Minister of Finance. This means that Corporations that can afford to pay increases would do so. Others will not be compelled and the private sector will fall back upon collective bargaining and, therefore, existing agreements which provide for the indexation of wages will govern the wage bargaining in this sector.

Generosity to Affluent

The benefits to the salaried class do not terminate with a mere increase of 10 per cent of increased allowances. All those drawing salaries of thousands of rupees and more will obtain a substantial relief. The first Rs. 12,000 or their income will be free of tax and if his wife is earning a commensurate salary of Rs. 1000/- a month, their family income will be Rs. 24,000 a month free of any tax. If they have any children over 18 years of age, it would not be difficult to arrange a family income in such a way as to add another Rs. 12,000/- at least to the

tax free base. It would, therefore, be seen that the beneficiaries are those in the high income brackets. This tax relief covers not merely the employees but all tax payers.

These reliefs have been extended further. Various partial reliefs provided on life insurance and annuities policies approved donations to Government or Local Government institutions have now been lumped together and all payments and investments on approved provident funds, life insurance policies and medical insurance. Full relief will be granted for all these only subject to the over-all limitation that the total of these reductions must not exceed one-third of his or her assessable income. This reduction will include investment relief for housing subject to the over-all limit of one-third of the assessable income. Housing loans can be deducted for income tax purposes. This relief covers also the purchase of a house or one site for the construction of a house. In the case of donations to Government and Local Government institutions and expenditure on approved Government projects there is not even an upper limit of one-third of the assessable income. The full amount is deductible as tax relief.

Mr. Ronnie de Mel has been very generous to the affluent sector. Interest accruing from the savings deposited in the National Savings Bank is exempt from tax to the tune of one-third of the interest received by any individual. The maximum that can be received as exempt income is Rs. 2000/- per individual. It does not require much imagination to visualise who are the depositors of big sums of money in the National Savings Bank.

No Use for Income Tax

The public servants are indeed a very pampered lot. In addition to all the benefits and exemptions that have been granted to them all public servants are to be freed from income tax on their official public service emoluments with effect from the year of assessment 1979-1980. This concession will apply to judges, employees of public corporations, statutory boards, universities, Local Government services and pensioners of any of these employments. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the income tax paying employees belong overwhelmingly to the upper echelons of the public service. One begins to wonder how many income tax payers

(Continued on Page 10)

Human Rights in Sri Lanka

— A Brief Review

(Issued by the Civil Rights Movement)

On the 30th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it is appropriate to take stock soberly of our country's record in this field. Compared to many third world countries we are indeed fortunate. This is however no ground for complacency. The question that should concern us is not how much worse off others are elsewhere, but what room there is for improvement in our own country.

The advent to power of the present Government in July last year was followed by two outbreaks of violence. Post-election violence is no new phenomenon; what is alarming is that it seems worse after each successive election. This could, if unchecked, totally negate the democratic process. Soon after, came the communal disturbances. The Government, whose responsibility it is to ensure that all persons in Sri Lanka can live without fear, irrespective of their political allegiances, ethnic group or religion, took both events seriously and correctly instituted inquiries into their cause. The work of the Commission on the communal troubles is seen to progress with diligence. Little has been heard of the other so far, though it is understood that many thousands of representations were received by the one man committee appointed to look into the post election incidents.

The Government was quick to repeal the Criminal Justice Commissions Act and the Exchange Control (Amendment) Act which had corrupted the administration of justice and led to the ill treatment of suspects. There were also important improvements in the fundamental rights position in the new Constitution of 1978; these include the introduction for the first time of protection against torture or other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to be informed of reason for arrest, the right to production before a Court after arrest, the right to fair trial and legal representation, the presumption of innocence, the prohibition of retro-active penal legislation, and the abolition of the proviso which permitted discrimination on grounds of sex. Another praise-worthy new provision extends the benefit of fundamental rights to stateless persons legally resident in Sri Lanka instead of limiting them to citizens. The new Constitution also grants

certain necessary language rights to the Tamil speaking people.

Old Problems Unabated

However, many obvious further steps remain to be taken while several old problems remain unabated. The Interpretation (Amendment) Act so strongly criticised when it was passed in 1972, remains unrepealed and continues to frustrate the injured subject who seeks legal redress against misuse of Governmental power. The Press Council (now manned by nominees of the present Government) continues functioning under the same, unamended law, which was condemned with equal vehemence when it was passed after several historic and heated battles in 1972 and 1973. The Government controlled mass media — both newspapers and radio — are as sycophantic towards their new masters as they were towards the old, and are as great a travesty of freedom of information and expression, while unprecedented resort has been made to the law of Parliamentary privilege against journalists. Corporal punishment remains on our statute book (though we are glad that the proposal to re-introduce the "cat" was dropped).

Though Parliamentary control of resort to the Public Security Ordinance has been strengthened, no adequate measures have been taken to control the possible content of emergency regulations or to preclude a repetition of the gross abuses that have taken place in the past and could be repeated under such regulations. The "escape clauses" and restrictions on fundamental rights in the Constitution remain wide. The protection of existing laws even if inconsistent, and the perpetuation of the prohibition on challenging a Bill once it has become law, make the provisions on fundamental rights in the new Constitution as ineffective as under the 1972 Constitution. The Present Government regrettably emulates its predecessor in its frequent resort to "urgent" legislation on matters of no apparent urgency, thus precluding public debate on many important Bills. An acceptable long term accord with the Tamil speaking people still remains to be pursued and achieved. The independent machinery long campaigned for by CRM to investigate complaints against the

police has not materialised while police brutality and deaths in police stations continue.

New Problems Created

While these past problems, to whose existence CRM has often drawn attention continue, new problems have also been created. Provisions unacceptable from a civil rights point of view are to be found in much recent legislation; in the Proscription of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Law, the Criminal Procedure (Special Provision) Law, the Local Government (Imposition of Civil Disabilities) Law, the Parliament (Powers and Privileges) (Amendment) Law, the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Law, and the Universities Act. On most of these issues CRM has issued detailed criticisms.

As regards the Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Law, one of the very reasons for CRM's existence is to keep a vigilant eye on the use of governmental power; we wholeheartedly agree that the people have the right to know how those to whom they entrusted power actually used it. At the same time certain basic safeguards must be ac-

corded to any accused persons. C.R.M. therefore especially regrets the existence of several unsatisfactory features of the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Law which must detract from the value of the finding of any Commission appointed under it. It is also regrettable that while the Commission probes past abuses with zest, no provision has been made to investigate the numerous allegations of political victimisation by the present Government — including many claims of poor persons being deprived of their livelihood — that have come to the Movement's notice, and violence used to intimidate workers on strike.

With regard to the University, we have been concerned about infringement of academic freedom such as interdictions, refusal of permission to travel abroad and arbitrary transfers of lecturers as well as political transfers of administrative staff of the University, and violence against students. We regret that certain clauses in the University Act — such as those refusing the Student Union permission to be affiliated to any other organisation, and the arbitrary powers to dissolve the Student Unions granted to the heads of Higher Education Institutions — are against fundamental rights granted under the Constitution. We are also concerned that the Government has recently made, without proper inquiry, allegations of favour-

itism by Tamil examiners and that certain academics have given statements on this issue, which can be used to provoke communal unrest.

Remedy Defects

Mention must also be made of several undemocratic features of the new Constitution, notably those relating to foreign treaties, and guarantees to foreign investment, the abolition of by-elections even as regards the present Parliament, (which was elected on a different representational basis), and the provision that judges were deemed to go out of office automatically with the coming into force of the new Constitution. Security of tenure for judges is the cornerstone of judicial independence. Yet the recent 'reconstitution' of the Courts resulted in eight new faces on the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court, while no less than thirteen former judges were not reappointed.

CRM urges the Government to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a meaningful way by remedying the various defects referred to above, and also by becoming a party to the U.N. Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol. CRM assures the Government of its fullest co-operation in implementing the provisions of this Covenant in Sri Lanka.

"Worst Enemy of Non-Aligned"!

(Continued from page 2)

errors. Lauding the forces disliked by the host countries, lecturing the hosts and grossly insulting the latter's friends.

"The Chinese authorities have also taken divisive and provocative measures against the Non-Aligned countries. Chinese propaganda claims that Vietnam has entered into a military alliance with the Soviet Union and is no longer a Non-Aligned country. To sabotage the national independence movement and divide the non-Aligned nations is a major policy of the Chinese authorities".

"Nhan Dan" points out that Peking's alliance with reactionaries such as Pinochet, Roberto Holden and Mobutu and its hostility to Angola, Vietnam and Cuba, staunch militants of the non-Aligned movement — have met world-wide condemnation.

The paper goes on: "Peking has stopped at nothing in its attempt to alienate Vietnam from the non-Aligned movement. At the recent Belgrade Conference, Peking used Pol-

Pot's agents and other elements in an unsuccessful attempt to turn the meeting into an anti-Vietnam and anti-Cuba forum.

"At present, they are continuing in the same direction with the intention to convince the non-Aligned countries that Viet-Nam is no longer a member of the non-Aligned bloc. But the facts of the matter cannot be disputed. Vietnam has consistently remained a militant in the fight against imperialism and hegemonism of all colours, parti-

cularly Chinese hegemonism. The Chinese rulers have entered into all sorts of alliances with the imperialists and the worst reactionary forces.

"At the same time, they are trying to arouse hostility to the solidarity of revolutionary forces and to woo third-world countries, while styling themselves a member of the third world".

"As far as the non-Aligned countries are concerned, the Chinese leaders — saboteurs and provocateurs — are their worst enemy. But their provocative schemes will fail, just as they did in the past", 'Nhan Dan' says.

REPRESSION IN JAPAN

(Continued from page 2)

popular voices demanding democracy and social justice in Iran; he has in no uncertain manner indicated that U.S. strategic interests demand all-out support to the Shah. Such stances have, over an extended period, been of a piece with American strategic policy in relation to brutal and anti-democratic regimes such as those seen today in Chile, Brazil, Nicaragua, Saudi Arabia and so on — not to mention either the earlier experience with the Kys and Thiens of South Vietnam or the continuing links with the apartheid regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia. And, if any-

thing, the position articulated by the Government of the United Kingdom, notably through its Foreign Secretary Dr. David Owen, has surpassed American policy on Iran in its cynicism. One hopes that at least now, after so much has happened, the Government of India will shed its illusions about profiting from closer connections with the Shah's regime and adjust its political outlook and its economic plans (notably its oil supply plans) to an Iranian reality that is radically different from what it used to be a year ago.

—Editorial in 'HINDU'

HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPLEMENT

Declaration of Human Rights and Reality

by

MIKHAIL STROGOVICH

(Corresponding Member, USSR Academy of Sciences)

Thirty years ago, on December 10, 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That democratic and humane legal document condemned racial, national and religious oppression and said that it was the sacred duty of state to protect the rights of the person.

To see the role and significance of the Universal Declaration of 1948 in true perspective, it should, I think, be compared with other acts on human rights known in history.

English Magna Carta of 1215 sends its feeble light from the hoary past. It is not in fact a declaration of human rights in the full sense of the word, for it contains only concessions to feudal owners, concessions that King John Lackland had to make to them. Although the victory over him was achieved with the help of peasants and the town poor, it was the feudals who reaped the fruits.

The first declaration of rights in the direct sense was the American Declaration of Independence in the USA, adopted in 1776. As Frederick Engels stressed, the USA "was founded by petty bourgeois and peasants who fled from European feudalism." And again the results of the victory won by the colonies, population over the metropolitan country were used not by broad masses of the people, but by the ruling exploiter circles, which fact incidentally, was reflected in the Declaration of Independence. A point to note: the country retained Negro slavery.

Of international repute is the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen adopted on August 26, 1789 by the National Assembly of revolutionary France. It proclaimed the 'natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man' such as 'freedom, property, security and resistance to violence.' This is what it said, for example, about property: 'Since property is an inalienable and sacred right, no one can be deprived of it otherwise than in the event of undoubted public need estab-

lished by law and on condition that a just and prior compensation is given.' (Article 17) At the same time not a word is said in the Declaration about the rights and interests of those who have no property, no financial means and live by their work only.

Although different in time and form, these three national legal acts share one common feature: each of them was the result of struggle by popular masses, while the interests of the working people were not protected by them.

First International Declaration

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the UN in 1948, is of an entirely different nature. It is history's first international document of this kind, one which moreover proclaimed a greater number of personal rights and freedoms than has been done by any of the previous declarations. It appeared as a result of the situation created in the world by the Second World War.

1948. The bloodiest battle in the history of mankind had just ended in the defeat of Nazi Germany and militarist Japan. New socialist countries were appearing on the political map of the world. The working class and all working people in the capitalist countries began stepping up their movement...

The need to adopt an international act of human rights matured in the broadest sections of the popular masses that suffered enormously from fascist atrocities. At the same time the imperialist quarters no longer had the former possibilities of imposing their will on the peoples. Their policy came up against the existence not only of the USSR, but also of other countries that chose the

socialist way of development, against the growing movement of the working class and its vanguard — the Communist and Workers Parties.

Two trends clashed between themselves as the Declaration was drafted. The first was led by the Soviet Union which advocated an international document reflecting the interests of the working people and guaranteeing their rights. The other was represented mainly by the USA which sought to make the new legal act similar to previous declarations. The substance of that side's desire could be summed up as follows: proclamation of rights yes, their guaranteeing, no!

Incidentally, the proclamation proper of rights, especially social and economic ones, was bitterly resisted. The USA, for example, adduced the following argument against including into the Declaration the right to work, to social maintenance and to free medical care: if these duties are shouldered by the state, society will feel free from exercising them. In other words, the idea was to leave the solution of the question concerning granting such rights to the ruling public circles and to an extent to which they would consider it possible.

The world community, however, expressed itself in favour of writing major democratic principles into the Declaration, which records the right of every person to life, freedom and personal inviolability, the equality of all before the law, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to freedom of assembly and association, the right to work, to just and favourable working conditions, to protection against unemployment, etc.

No Guarantees

These are very important rights, aren't they? But unfortunately, the text of the Declaration offers in fact no guarantees for them, either economic or juridical.

When the UN General Assembly discussed the draft the Soviet Union proposed that the final article of the document should read: 'The rights and fundamental liberties of citizens listed in this Declaration are ensured by laws of states. Any violations or restrictions of these rights, direct or indirect, are a bre-

ach of this Declaration and incompatible with the noble principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations.' But due to pressure from the USA and some other Western countries these amendments were not accepted. The Declaration was proclaimed as a 'task to be sought by all peoples and all states.'

And still, for all its limited nature, the Universal Declaration of 1948 is a major progressive international legal act. By proclaiming the noble principles of human rights and calling upon all states to observe them, it helps to democratise the 'status of life' in the world, to facilitate the popular struggle against all forms of tyranny, against economic, social and national oppression.

What is more, in accordance with the Declaration the UN General Assembly passed in 1966 two documents of great practical significance: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The two covenants oblige the countries that have ratified them to bring their internal legislation in line with the international standards.

The Soviet Union was the first among the great powers to ratify these documents. The USA, on the other hand, has to this day not acceded to the covenants, and of other 17 international agreements on human rights adopted under UN aegis has ratified only three.

Revealingly, in order to accede to the international covenants the Soviet Union had to make practically no substantial changes in its own legislation, since the latter grants the citizens of the country far more rights and freedoms than is envisaged by the UN standards.

Fundamental Law of USSR

Let us open, for example, the Constitution of the USSR the Fundamental Law of the Soviet Union. It contains all the political and personal rights and freedoms mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN international covenants, including freedom of conscience speech and the press, of assem-

bly and meetings, the inviolability of the person and the home, the right to participate in management of the state and society etc.

But particularly weighty is the section of the Fundamental Law of the USSR devoted to the social and economic rights of citizens. I will name only the most important of them: the right to work, to leisure and rest, to health protection, to material maintenance in old age in the event of sickness, the right to education, to housing, to enjoyment of cultural benefits, and freedom of scientific, technical and artistic work.

Moreover, all these rights are extended to every Soviet person without any omissions and restrictions. The Constitution simultaneously formalises such important democratic principles as equality of all before the law, women's equal rights with men, equality of nationalities and races.

While proclaiming a large number of human rights and freedoms, the Fundamental Law of the USSR also gives guarantees for their exercise. What are they?

To begin with, these are material guarantees provided by the state. Their content can be illustrated by the example of the right to work. 'This right' reads Article 40 of the Constitution, 'is ensured by the socialist economic system, steady growth of the productive forces, free vocational and professional training, improvement of skills, training in new trades or professions, and development of the systems of vocational guidance and job placement.'

Further Guarantees

In addition, the same article lists further guarantees for the right to work: guaranteed employment and pay in accordance with the quantity and quality of work, the right to choose a trade or profession, type of job and work in accordance with one's inclinations, abilities, training education. The Fundamental Law of USSR also permits individual work "in handicrafts, farming the provision of service of the public, and other forms of activity based exclusively on the personal work of individual citizens and members of their families."

Naturally, in addition to the material guarantees the Constitution of the USSR

(Continued on page 9)

THE SHADY SIDE OF "HUMAN RIGHTS"

Oppression at Home: Intervention Abroad

After the Carter Administration came to power in the USA a campaign was launched in the Western press in "defence of human rights." The champions of this campaign were the American President and the groups which backed him. Under the guise of defence of these rights "on a global scale" the US government is attempting to activate its foreign policy and to find a pretext for open interference in the internal affairs of other countries, primarily the states of the socialist community.

The Belgrade meeting which was held to assess how the Helsinki agreements are working was no exception in this respect. There Goldberg, the head of the American delegation who enjoys the special confidence of Zionist circles and of President Carter, more often than others made accusations against the socialist countries.

Working on their "fixed task", the US representatives at the same time are striving to distract the attention of the world from the situation in their own country where elementary human rights are being trampled upon every day and arbitrary police action and persecution of dissidents have become an ordinary phenomenon in American everyday life.

The Constitution of the USA, or to be more precise the 26 amendments to it which constitute the "Bill of Rights", declare freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, freedom to demonstrate, the inviolability of the person and of the home, equality before the law, etc. But in reality, far from all Americans are able to enjoy these rights. Clarence Darrow, a well-known American socialist, even 75 years ago noticed that the laws in his country exist only for the protection of those who are ruling the world. Neither the USA Constitution nor its corresponding legislation guarantee American citizens such fundamentally important social rights as the right to work, to education, to free medical care, to maintenance in old age or the right to housing.

Outcasts of American Society

The United States is one of the few developed countries in the capitalist world in which women still do not enjoy equal rights with men because the draft of Amendment 27 to the USA Constitution, which will guarantee them this equality, has not been ratified by the required majority of States. It is significant that there are only 18 women in Congress, the country's highest legislative body, even though women account for more than half of the American population. For equivalent work in industry they are paid only 57 per cent of a man's wage and the number of unemployed among them is steadily increasing.

According to even the most modest estimates there were 7 million unemployed in the USA in 1977, which was over 7 per cent of the country's total labour force including 11 per cent unemployment among women and 41 per cent among young blacks. It is significant that even in 1976 over 4 million unemployed lost the right to unemployment benefit, i.e. the right to existence and free choice of work. In its report to the US Congress, the National Commission for Women's Affairs noted that discrimination, limited opportunities and economic hardships continue to remain a daily reality for millions of Americans.

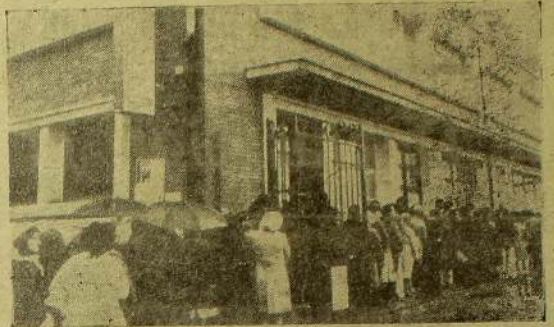
But 30 million 'coloured' American representatives of various ethnic minorities (Indians, Negroes; Puerto Ricans, Chicanos etc.), who are living in the USA with a status of "second-rate citizens", are in a worse situation. Unemployment among this category of American citizens is 2-3 times higher than the country's general average and among the Indians means 80 per cent of the population. Like in the years of colonization the 'coloured' inhabitants are being compelled to settle either in specially allocated reservations (Indians) or in city ghettos where housing conditions do not satisfy even the most basic requirements of modern hygiene and public conveniences. In total over seven million American

families, the absolute majority of whom are 'coloured', are living in such conditions. But even for these hovels they are forced to spend, on average, over 25 per cent of their income. The poor cannot afford to purchase a new home because the average cost of a house in the USA in 1977 was 45 thousand dollars and, at the present rate of inflation by 1980 it is estimated will reach 78 thousand dollars, that is nearly double.

Hunger & Contempt

The words of the former Director for planning state programmes for the US Indians, M. Friedman, who stated that they were continuing to kill the Indians, true not by bullets as formerly, but now by hunger and contempt, are a grave accusation at American reality. Over two thousand laws have been adopted in the USA which trample over the civil rights and human dignity of the Indians, which allow the sale of the land belonging to them, compulsory sterilization of women capable of bearing children, etc. B. Reed, one of the leaders of the "American Indian Movement", which the local authorities are attempting to brand as "subversive", stated bitterly in a San Francisco, California, court, that Indians were not even regarded as people in the USA.

The blacks, the most numerous part of the 'coloured' population of the USA, who number over 20 million, are in a situation hardly less difficult. Usually they are employed in the most low-paid job and in practice are deprived of the right to marry whites and in the Southern States even to travel together with them by means of municipal transport. Only in 1954 did the USA Supreme Court officially permit the blacks to study in general schools, but up till now this ruling is not being carried out in practice. According to a report of the US Civil Service Commission published in Washington in summer 1977, it has become completely evident in recent years that racial segregation exists in schools both in the North and in the South, in violation of the country's Constitution, and that segregation in schools exists not by chance or as a result of segregation in housing, but as a result of intentional discrimination



Though the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights thirty years ago on December 10, 1948, the most basic rights enumerated therein are violated in the Western countries to this day.

Photo shows a queue lined up for what is most necessary for every man—for work.

"Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment," reads article 23 of the Declaration. Nevertheless, there are 17 million unemployed even in the most developed capitalist countries about ten million in the United States, 6.7 per cent of all the able-bodied people in Great Britain, France and Italy, 8.5 per cent in Canada, 12 per cent in Northern Ireland, and 1,250,000 in Japan.

conducted by government officials.

The authorities turn a blind eye to the activities of racists of the "Ku-Klux-Klan" and "John Birch Society" who have thrown aside all restraint and who are organising a real 'man-hunt for the blacks' who have dared to enroll at 'white' schools. At the same time the schools in the Negro districts are overcrowded, poorly equipped and are short of teachers. Failure to be promoted to the next grade and dropping out from school is the fortune of many millions of young Americans from low income families residing in the ghettos. In 1977, due to a shortage of funds, racial discrimination, etc. 5 million children of school age were not able to study and 3 million could not complete at least 5 school grades. It is not surprising that there are 23 million illiterate people, i.e. people completely unadapted for life in modern society, in a country which boasts of its wealth, technical, cultural and economic achievements.

Ethnic Minorities

The absolute majority of these people are representatives of ethnic minorities and are mainly blacks, Indians and Puerto Ricans. It is not accidental that over 31 per cent of the black population and nearly all the Indians are living in conditions which are below the official poverty level. In 1976 the average income of employed Indian was only one quarter of the annual income of white Americans and the average income of a Puerto-Rican family was 60 per cent of the income of a white family. All attempts by

'coloured' Americans to attain better living conditions by using the "equal" opportunities in education are failing. The quota system and conditions of enrolment examinations existing in American higher schools for the 'coloured', according to the magazine "Newsweek" are so stiff that soon in fact very few of them will be admitted to study at universities. The percentage of representatives of the 'coloured minority' among students in American higher schools is minute and, according to the estimates of specialists, barely accounts for one per cent. It is known that less than two per cent of the 320-thousand general practitioners in the USA are black and that the majority of these are receiving permission to practice medicine only in the ghetto districts.

There are many magnificent doctors and excellently equipped private hospitals in the country but in the main only persons with a high annual income can avail themselves of their service because medical care in the USA is extremely expensive. One day's stay in an American hospital costs an average of 150-200 dollars and only one out of ten Americans can afford treatment under such conditions, even with the existence of some or other form of personal health insurance. In short, you must have money if you want to be sick, if not—either die or try to survive! Such is the motto of contemporary America, the country of "genuine" democracy "and equal" opportunities. And so, women, blacks, Indians, Chicanos and the poor, i.e. three quarters of the Americans, are outcasts of American society.

1979 More Crucial Than We Think

(Continued from page 1)

Admittedly, due to the lack of suitable personnel and suitable centres, for bringing varied activities of the Party under a common centre, we have not progressed as much as we should. This will be one of the main tasks of the Party in the coming year. What is required is to take to every home in the rural areas in particular, that the solution to the terrible suffering that the people are undergoing can only be provided by a Government of United Front.

The disgust with the UNP must be channelled to a positive policy of progress along socialist lines. The Party must point out the error of return to power Mrs Bandaranaike and the SLFP because her policies are no better than those of the UNP. They are both wedded to a capitalist society which will continue to exploit the masses as they have always done in the past.

In the urban sector, workers are slowly waking up to the slow erosion of their standard of living that is going on under the UNP regime. On the one hand, they have been cowed down by the thuggery of the UNP self-seekers who are waxing fat by large-scale bribery and corruption. On the other hand, most workers still harbour a lurking hope that this Government will do something with regard to both the cost of living and other problems. Some are of course too shame faced to admit that they have been betrayed by the UNP in a manner more complete than they bargained for.

The year 1979 must see the shaking off of this lethargy. It is important to build and strengthen the Union organizations in order to meet capitalist onslaughts that are bound to come in the year 1979. Widespread attacks on the

standards of living of the workers must be expected in 1979. The increase of petrol prices will jack up the prices of a large number of other commodities. Under the orders of the IMF the prices of flour and bread will be substantially raised. The continuous rumbling and grumbling of discontent must at some stage burst and militant workers must take a lead not merely in compelling the restoring of what they have lost but in making further progress towards a higher standard of living.

1979 may be more crucial than most workers think. The Party and the United Front will make every endeavour to provide the leadership in fighting the efforts of the Government to exploit the working class in the interest of big capitalists in the country as well as the international financiers of the trans-national companies.

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UNP BUDGET...

Continued from Page 5

there will be left when all these exempted people are removed. We seem to be getting to square 1. In the old State Council, the introduction of income tax was the occasion for a major tug-of-war. Mr. D. S. Senanayake, the father of the UNP was the stronger of the protagonist against income tax. A conscious and determined capitalist, he envisaged the prospect that in the years to come, income tax would be the corner-stone of the tax structure of the country. He was not wrong. As time passed,

it not only became the corner-stone, but it also became the instrument of progressive taxation. It became the instrument of shifting the burden of taxation on those sections of the economy that have the capacity to bear them. It became a means of re-distributive justice. And now, nearly 50 years after, the very same UNP that so stoutly fought against income tax are gutting and emasculating the direct tax system to the point of evanescence.

BOOK REVIEW

Defence of Workers

"The Worker in Sri Lanka" Logos Volume 17 No. 1, July 1978. Published by the Centre for Society and Religion, Colombo. 98 pp. Rs 5/-.

The crisis in Christian theology for the last hundred years, has been the apparent contradiction between the social and the spiritual conscience of Christianity. Liberal Theology which abandoned the supernatural and the realm of the spiritual, clung on to a social-gospel to justify its existence. In reaction to it there emerged in this century, particularly in America, a "spiritualism which, while reest-

ing on doctrinal orthodoxy, opposed both Liberal Theology and the Social Gospel.

Within the Roman Church, these contradictory extremes were mitigated by the phenomenon called Social Catholicism which had a strong and practical social conscience. The high water mark of this trend was observed in President Kennedy's election — the victory of the Harvard-trained East Coast Catholics and political liberalism, at the expense of Southern Protestant conservatism.

Fr. Tissa Balasuriya and the Centre for Society and Religion in Sri Lanka are an

important link in this chain of progress. But they are not alone. We have the Jesuit priest, Fr. Paul Caspersz, also committing the conservative Roman Church to a radical programme of social action. Internationally we have the emergence of Evangelical Christian leaders like the writer Carl Henry and the Black Tom Skinner, and World Vision, a massive relief organisation, reconciling the spiritual conscience and the social conscience of the Christian.

No faith, belief or institution has had so decisive an effect on the march of history as Christianity and the Christian Church. The Roman Church unified and made coherent feudal Europe. The Reformation gave birth to the bourgeois revolution. With an Evangelical sitting in the White House, the potential of this faith seems far from exhausted.

These issue of Logos, dedicated to the Sri Lanka Worker is exciting reading. There are two extracts from Dr. Kumari Jayawardene's *The Rise of the Labour Movement in Ceylon*, tracing the history

Declarations of Human Rights...

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have the right and are obliged to protect the rights of citizen.

also contains guarantees provided by courts of law for the exercise of the population's rights. Every citizen has, in particular, the right to protection by the courts against encroachments on his honour and reputation, life and health, and personal freedom and property. He can also appeal in a court against actions by officials that contravene the law or exceed their powers. Supreme power of supervision over the strict observance of all laws is vested by the Constitution in the Procurator-General of the USSR and procurators subordinate to him. As distinct from, say, American attorneys, they both

The establishment of the principles of social equality and justice," L. I. Brezhnev General Secretary of the CP-Union Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, said in one of his addresses, "is one of the greatest achievements of the October Revolution... Soviet citizens do not know the humiliating feeling of uncertainty about the morrow, the fear of being left without work, without medical care and without a roof over their heads. Society safeguards their rights and interests and upholds their civic and human dignity."

Bibile Memorial Scholarship Fund!

To commemorate the life and work of the late Senaka Bibile, Professor of Pharmacology, University of Sri Lanka, and founder and first Chairman of the Sri Lanka State Pharmaceuticals Corporation, the Faculties of Medicine in Colombo and Peradeniya have decided to institute a scholarship in his name.

Contributions should be forwarded to:

THE DEAN,
FACULTY OF MEDICINE,
COLOMBO CAMPUS,
UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA,
COLOMBO 8.

Professor Mikhail Strogovich is a Doctor of Law, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, member of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and doctor of law HONORIS CAUSA of the Jagiellonian University (Cracow). He has been concerned with problems of jurisprudence and also of philosophy for more than 50 years. Author of a number of monographs some of which have been translated into foreign languages.

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Notes & Comments

43 YEARS!

The 43rd anniversary of the LSSP's formation is being observed in the wake of one of the most catastrophic natural disasters within memory in our little island. The annual out price sale, which was to be followed by a torch-light procession this year, had to be put off on account of the prior claim of the cyclone affected areas on resources and energies. Formal observance of the occasion is being confined to a simple get-together of members and their families on the afternoon of 18th December.

43 years in the human life time takes an individual well into his middle age. This is a very long time in the life-cycle of political parties because very few among them survive the challenge of events for more than a couple of decades. Under authoritarian conditions political parties have a very high mortality. But even in conditions of multi-party democracy political parties are identified with the personality of individual leaders and seldom survive them. The exception is where bourgeois society was fortunate enough to evolve a two-party system and thus stabilise its political frame work.

We in Sri Lanka have contrived to administer our society through a system of multi-party democracy for 30 years since we were set free. Even under colonial rule we were permitted the privilege of administering our affairs within certain fixed limits for at least ten years, i.e. until the tutelage of Admiral Layton took over in the early years of the world war. The LSSP was the first real political party to be founded in this process, preceding the Communist Party which grew out of itself and the UNP and SLFP.

For this reason perhaps, we are today regarded as having already attained old age. Whether this be so or not, we are undoubtedly the eldest of the political parties in Sri Lanka. We still enjoy the benefit of having a combination of elders at our helm who were among the principal founding fathers of the party. It is a prospect that our party has to face that its future cannot be permanently at its helm. It is in the face of this that numerous individuals among our critics and opponents have already publicly prepared our obituaries.

Where those who are in such haste to inter us in our graves make a grave error is in their reading of history. The LSSP was not founded as a political party with a finished programme. The LSSP leaders did not bid for political power to enable them to satisfy their personal vanities. The LSSP was founded as the political organiser of the mass struggle against imperialism. It plunged into the work of mobilising the masses for this struggle as the only means of getting the imperialists out.

The LSSP went through several transformations in the course of its 43 years of existence. When it split with the group that subsequently founded the Communist Party it was as part of the essential preparation for continuing the struggle against imperialism in the context of the world war. When it was convulsed with internal disputes and splits in the early post-war years, it was part of the adaptation of the struggle to new conditions of legality that had returned. When it split with the Fourth International in 1964 it was part of the ideological and organisational preparation for the new challenges springing out of the advances of the mass movement following the Hartal of 1953 and MEP victory of 1956.

The path that the LSSP has trod these 43 years has not, of course, been marked by successes alone. It would be foolish even to contemplate the possibility of such a path. There have been many defeats

in this period and nothing has been more severe than the major electoral disaster that was the direct outcome of Mrs. Bandaranaike's ability to throw the LSSP out of the United Front Government in September 1975. What is the consequence of this for the LSSP's future?

If anybody had any illusions that the problems of Sri Lanka could be solved by the success of an act of imposture, such as has been carried out by the UNP under the machiavellian leadership of J. R. Jayewardene, he should be disillusioned by now. To hope that a more innocent political personality, like Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, could find a solution to these problems that was not already in her hand bag is to prepare the way for even further disillusionment. There are no prescriptions for our ailments that can be dispensed at the drug store round the corner.

What the LSSP has always said from the time of its inception is that our ailments have to be overcome by a supreme effort of self-cure. If our society is in pieces today, the task is to put it together. If our people are distracted today by consumerist mirages, they have to be taught to shake themselves alert and focus their efforts on the problems in hand. If greed and envy and petty fears have distorted the vision of our leaders and disintegrated their moral thinking, they have to be kicked out. If there is another political party in Sri Lanka that can lead the country to the achievement of these straightforward, but by no means simple, tasks, then the LSSP would have attained one of its main objectives, even if more indirectly than it has sought. But if it is true that no such other party can as yet be seen on our political horizon, this is surely the explanation of the haste with which certain assorted gentlemen prepare the obituary of the LSSP.

Book Review

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of our labour movement. The prize of the compendium is Fr. Balasuriya's essay on the "Education of Estate Population of Indian Origin." It contains a painstaking account of the estate schools, brilliantly written and well documented.

The Logos articles make no pretensions to political impartiality. They begin on the footing that the worker has inalienable rights in a democratic society, and these rights have been trampled underfoot by the foremen of the present UNP leadership. The conspiracy against labour continues in the moves and

manoeuvres of the Jayawardena Government, which has made no secret of its desire to gag, muffle and chain the labour movement.

The fact that the Centre takes such an unabashed stand in favour of the downtrodden worker is important, important in a situation where in Sri Lanka Christianity as a church and a cultural phenomenon, has been so identified with privilege, exploitation and social injustice. It should go a long way towards provoking serious re-thinking on the future of the working class.

—Jayantha Somasundaram.

2nd UNP Budget...

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One is justified in asking is there a case for continuing the Income Tax Department. In a population of nearly 15 millions, income tax payers are now not more than 50,000 people. What we have said above does not exhaust the list of those who have been allowed to drop out of the tax net. Already by the Inland Revenue Amendment Act No. 30 of 1978, a tax holiday was provided to small and medium sized businesses located outside Municipal limits. This tax holiday was limited to those with a capital of half a million of rupees and less. This budget now increased this limit to one million and the profit exemption has been raised from 100,000 rupees to 200,000 rupees per year and the entirety of the dividends declared by such companies will be exempt from income tax. In addition, companies which manufacture non-traditional products for export will enjoy a tax holiday to a maximum of five years.

More Write offs

In the Budget for 1978, the full cost of plant, machinery and fixtures produced and used in the trades, professions and business was granted a deduction in computing income. Similarly allowance was granted for dwelling houses built for minor employees. In certain cases, all other buildings including warehouses, the allowance was 30 per cent. This is now further extended. After the 31st of March, 1980, the total cost of building and machinery will be written off annually for a period of years. This covers also commercial buildings put up by companies for its own use or for, renting out. If the company will incur any money on research, whatever that may be, that also can be deducted from income tax.

Apart from the concessions already existing on Capital Gains for immovable properties, these concessions are now extended to cover even immovable properties like shares in public and private companies. Similarly, the first sale of a house constructed by an individual is totally exempt from the Capital Gains Tax.

In order to promote company formation, the tax on companies has been reduced to 50 per cent. In the case of small companies, issued capital of which is less than half a million, this tax is further reduced.

The first 50,000 will be taxable at 20 per cent; the next lakh at 30 per cent and the balance at 40 per cent.

These capitalists have been favoured by substantial exemptions from income

Understandably, the pampering of the rich does not end here. The Wealth Tax would also be amended to provide more relief to the capitalists. The value of the house owned and occupied by a tax payer will be entirely free from wealth tax whatever the value of the house. Even if it is a glorious palace put up at the cost of one million or more rupees it will be free of the wealth tax just as it is free of income tax. The lower limit of wealth tax is raised to two lakhs of rupees. So those with an annual wealth of over 2 lakhs of rupees, after all exemptions have been granted alone will pay the wealth tax. In keeping with this trend, the exemption limit for estate duty has been raised from 50,000 to 100,000 rupees. But the Estate duty will have to be paid by an owner resident in the house is worth over three lakhs of rupees. As if all these concessions are not enough, the tax that was levied on cheques drawn by individuals or companies has also been completely taken off.

The final act of largesse bequeathed to the capitalists is a tax amnesty. During the four months beginning 1st December, 1978 and ending 31st March 1979, any persons having undeclared money can deposit the same at the National Savings Bank. No questions will be asked because the Income Tax Department will be unaware of these deposits at the National Savings Bank. The man may have robbed a bank and successfully evaded arrest. That money can now be legalised by the simple process of depositing it within the stipulated time at the National Savings Bank. The only disability the blackmarketeer or the robber will suffer is the payment of tax at the rate of 30 per cent and the obligation to invest in approved investments or if left in the National Savings Bank it will earn an interest rate of 8.4 per cent.

This is the budget of all budgets. Indeed it is the greatest of all budgets that was ever produced to help the capitalist class in a country. One never wonders what further exemptions are still left to be given to the capitalist class in the budget for 1980. Mr Ronnie de Mel seems not only to have exalted himself but even exhausted himself in his anxiety to provide every conceivable benefit to the capitalists and to the so-called private entrepreneur. No man has more rightly earned the sobriquet "Father Christmas" of the capitalist class of the year 1979 and all this has been achieved in the name of a just and free society. Justice to the capitalists and freedom to the poor to starve.