

LANKA

# GUARDIAN

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## THE VIJAYA STORY (2)



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## THE CRUNCH IS NOW

Agree with the IMF's terms... Or else. That's the brusque message from the World Bank to Sri Lanka. The IMF has laid down some stiff conditions which Sri Lanka must accept before it releases the second tranche of 50 million SDRs. The first tranche of 50 million SDR was made available to us late last year.

The crunch is here and the squeeze is on. It is not just the 50 million has now become the Finance Minister's nightmare. It is the World Bank's 210 million SDR structural adjustment loan. The huge payments gap and the massive budget deficit are the Minister's main worries. His only hope to continue projects already underway and finance a few new ones, and meet a hefty import program all depend on successful negotiations with these two institutions. In short, both project and commodity aid will come Sri Lanka's via the Bank **only** if we get a clean bill of health from the IMF. It is the Bank which sponsors the Sri Lanka Aid Consortium meeting annually.

Of late, Sri Lanka has also obtained loans at commercial rates from foreign banks. But that option too could be closed if the IMF's "certificate" has not been given. A failure to reach agreement with the IMF could also jeopardise Sri Lanka's chances of attracting more foreign investment from private sources. So the situation is bleak — from an economic point of view.

## BLEAK SCENARIOS

It is also bleak from a political standpoint. Besides the unresolved ethnic issue and all that this portends, the present discontent among the most deprived sections of the poor can expand rapidly to embrace even wider sections of the middle classes, if prices are allowed to rise.

The food riots in Tunisia, and Morocco and the military coup in Nigeria (an oil producing country) are all manifestations of under-developed countries caught in the grip of the global recession

and committed to policies dictated by the IMF-IBRD.

Devaluation, sharp cuts in public expenditure, (particularly in high-spending corporations like Air Lanka, Shipping Corporation and the Cement Corporation), a credit squeeze and abolition of tax exemptions and other concessions are part of the IMF package. The only redeeming features are that the rains have come and the tanks are full, and Indian cuts in tea exports have allowed Sri Lanka tea to fetch a slightly better price. And of course the ayahs (though the flood has become a trickle) are still going to the Gulf, if sometimes on forged passports.

When the post-July propaganda master-minds (fertile but foolish) got busy, they thought up various "conspiracies" and diabolic three-act dramas. One theory visualised 'food riots'. Will it become a self-fulfilling prophecy?

## EXODUS 2

PROFESSOR Daphne Attygalle, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, has told the OBSERVER that a fair number of Tamil medical students have left the campus on receiving threatening letters. The same report said that about 40 students and six lecturers have 'disappeared mysteriously' from Peradeniya.

When the 'displaced' undergraduates started their demos and 'fast to death' in Jaffna, the university authorities pointed out that more than half the Tamil students who had fled in July had returned to their respective campuses. This certainly suggested a renewed confidence in the actual conditions prevailing on our campuses and the personal security ensured.

The UGC must surely inquire why students have started 'Exodus 2'. Is there some specific reason for a new feeling of insecurity, or are any mischief-makers at work?

## JVP/NSSP

EACH TIME the Emergency is extended, we hear Mr. Dinesh  
(Continued on page 17)

## TRENDS + LETTERS

### Ethnic Quotas — Reply to CRD

I wish to make a few observations on the CRD's reply to my letter.

(a) The Sinhalese community clamours for ethnic quotas and there is a general consensus. The leaders of the Muslim community have gone on record both in Parliament and outside supporting this demand one hundred per cent. And when one of the main grievances of the TULF representing the Tamil community, is that they are not adequately represented in the Public Service including the Police and the Armed Services, and the Corporations Sector in keeping with their ethnic percentage, one has to assume that they too are in favour of ethnic quotas. When all three communities are in favour, who are we to oppose

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it, notwithstanding all the shortcomings and weaknesses attributed to it, real or imaginary?

May I pose a simple question: What is more satisfactory? A position where all three communities remain agitated on this score, or, a strategy by which all of them will receive what they are agitating for? So, how in the long run or the short run, is the strategy of ethnic quotas going to create greater problems than it will resolve?

As the CRD seems to imply, I agree the ideal solution is to be found in an unadulterated socialist economy in which everyone will have their needs supplied. It will wipe out "the real inequalities which exist in our society" and "the vast discrepancies which exist between rich and poor."

(b) As I see it, our problem is not so much a political problem as an economic one tied up with the language of the Tamil Community. So long as English remained the official language of the country there was hardly any divisive ethnic consciousness at any level of our society. Ethnic consciousness, ethnic rivalry

narrow racial awareness, ethnic cleavages — call it what you will — all these began to surface with the language of the Sinhala community only being elevated to official status and the language of the Tamil community unjustly relegated to a secondary position and denied its rightful official status.

No amount of shouting "false issues" is going to succeed in sweeping issues under the carpet. Issues have to be faced and not fought shy of, and solutions found. It is not ethnic quotas that could perpetuate divisive ethnic consciousness but the fact that the language of the Sinhala community only continues to enjoy official status increasingly depriving the Tamils of the position they enjoyed prior to 1956, when English was replaced. No one is going to easily give up a longstanding privileged position regardless of how they were able to obtain that privileged position — that is part of the history of Ceylon under the British. That being the case, I am sorry I am unable to agree with the implication in, the CRD's reply that any particular community, as such, is inferior

to another intellectually or in intelligence, provided equal opportunities are made available.

The Muslims who cannot be said to have absolute control of the legislative and executive aims of the government, and the Sinhalese are not asking that their "intellectual inferiority" or the "lack of intelligence" be subsidized by way of ethnic quotas. They are merely asking that a long-standing unduly privileged position gained in circumstances which form part of the history of our colonial past, be removed. I fail to see what is unfair in each community asking for and getting its due share in the killing competition for the limited opportunities that we find ourselves bogged in today.

### Get Smart

Now that Boyd Almeida, Chandra de Fonseka, W. G. Grace Perera et al have amply shown that the C.R.D. has (in Ambassador Corea's felicitous phrase) "divested itself of its credentials", why doesn't it get smart and pipe down.

S. Jayasingha

Colombo 4.

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# SLFP or SLMP — Under which flag, the anti - UNP voter ?

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

“**T**he Third Force is a first-class farce” quipped Mr. Anura Bandaranaike MP, and Leader of the Opposition when he was asked for his views on the formation of the new Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya in which his sister Chandrika is a Vice-President and his brother-in-law Mr. Vijaya Kumaratunge is the General Secretary. Suggesting that the motives were as much personal as political, Mr. Bandaranaike said that his brothers-in-law, Mr. Kumar Rupasingha and Mr. Kumaratunge thought that the SLFP was a ‘part of their dowry’.

Taking a more historical view, the ISLAND editorialised: “Parties may come and parties may go but the people go on, and if any political party cannot grasp the thinking of the people, and if there is no space for a new political force among the people, then forming new parties will only be an exercise in individual heroics.”

As the L. G. reported in its last issue “The DINAKARA Affair”, the S.L.M.P.’s reply is that it is seeking to be a ‘second force’, meaning of course the ousting of the SLFP from its traditional place in the political — electoral system. Perhaps only the first by-election in a Sinhalese constituency will answer the question. (See also ANURA’s COUNTER-BLAST”)

If anti-UNPism is the SLFP’s *raison d’etre*, and the average SLFP supporters allegiance is founded mainly on who challenges the UNP most vigorously from a “democratic-socialist” platform then the S. L. M. P.’s success (or failure) will depend on the relative performance of both parties in these customary roles.

Mr. Anura Bandaranaike is not only concentrating on the personal-family factors (“hatred, jealousy, vengeance” etc) but leading an attack on the S. L. M. P.’s “economic policy” by identifying Trade Minister Illangaratne with the S. L. F. P. regime’s “era of queues”. The S. L. M. P. is appealing to the basic anti-UNPism of the vast majority of S. L. F. P. supporters by trying to portray the present SLFP leadership, particularly Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, as an extension of UNP influence. The poison dart fired by Mr. Ossie Abeygoonesekera at the Sugathadasa Stadium rally made this quite clear: “The S. L. F. P., like the B. C. C. is now a government-owned business undertaking. . . .”

## The Vijaya Phenomenon

Dayan Jayatilleka

**O**f course we have seen it all before. Or have we?

The 1977 inaugural meeting at the New Town Hall of Mahinda Wijesekera’s party — I forget its name just now — was attended by as large, enthusiastic and curious a crowd as was present at the SLMP’s inauguration on Sunday (22nd) morning at the same venue. And the 15,000 strong crowd which packed Sugathadasa Stadium the same evening was visibly less than the gathering at Rohana Wijeweera’s first post-prison rally at the Town Hall grounds. We have also seen leftward moving SLFP’s breakaways before — Nanda Ellawala and Tennyson Edirisuriya’s PDP being

an obvious case in point. And even the enthusiasm of the crowd is not totally unfamiliar. In fact Vijaya does not generate quite that electric excitement as Wijeweera or Vasudeva do when they speak. Indeed the air of expectation among the crowd before Wijeweera speaks is almost identical to the feeling that sweeps the Oval as Duleep Mendis walks to the crease.

If the sense of *deja vu* is so strong, then what’s so hot about Vijaya? The answer is that we really haven’t been here before. In the first place the audience is different. Those I recognised at the Sugathadasa Stadium I could count on the fingers of

### FOOD PRICES UP

**RICE, FLOUR, BREAD.** The Food Commissioner announced new prices for all three items. A loaf of bread will cost 25 cents more, a kilo of flour Rs. 7.75 (93 cents up) and Raw rice Rs. 6.18 (18 cents up) and a kilo of boiled rice 8 cents more. Bread went up from 2/50 to 2/80 in February last and now stands at Rs. 3/05. The price of flour was also raised less than a year ago from Rs. 5/95 to Rs. 6/82.



one hand. The 'A' level students, undergraduates and young, recent recruits to the working class who formed the bulk of what one writer dubbed in this journal, "the JVP constituency", were noticeably absent. This does not mean that the audience was not predominantly youthful, for it was. But these were youths from the long queues lined up outside cinemas showing Bruce Lee movies. The orphaned offspring of the open economy, they whistle rather than applaud. They are, if anything a dissident 'Premadasa constituency'. Just as SWRD offered the anti-UNP masses an alternative other than that of the Marxist Left, so does Vijaya stand between the UNP (and the SLFP which is virtually indistinguishable from it, and an ineffectual opposition to it) and the JVP. For the bulk of the urban and rural youth, the JVP is too far out in 'left field, and the Lenin they know best, is Moraes, not Vladimir Illyich. So Mr. Wijeweera, wherever he is, must be worried. As must all serious leftists. The SLFP appeared in 1951 and gave an embattled system a lease of life. The UNP's Referendum has taken the slack out of the system. Will Vijaya put it back in?

But between the 50's and 1984 there is one massive inescapable fact — the Global Recession, and this means that the social strata that were present at the Stadium on Sunday cannot be co-opted that easily. In fact the Vijaya phenomenon arises precisely in the breach in the Open Economy between promise and fulfilment. He does not represent the antithesis of dependent capitalism, for that, in the present era, can be nothing but genuine, scientific socialism, but his populist rhetoric is in perfect consonance with the vague, unfocussed, yet intense anti-Establishment feelings that are voiced these days in trains and buses. The vast mass of the Sinhala people are getting mad — at the regime, at the Tamils, at the Fat Cats. Dinesh Gunawardene is one spokesman of that feeling. Vijaya Kumaratunga is another, politically healthier (because he seems less chauvinistic, at least right now), expression. Vijaya, the movie star, symbolises the **expectations** and aspirations, the false consciousness, of the post-1977 youth, while his populist punch lines echo

their very real, and deepening economic and social **frustrations**. And he is an exceedingly effective speaker, make no mistake. He lacks the deadly edge of 1970/71 Wijeweera, the acerbic wit of post-'77 Wijeweera, the fire and passion of Vasudeva, the romantic nationalism and historical sweep of Dharmasekera or the circumlocutory and eclectic erudition of Carlo Fonseka. But he has a "down home" "just plain folks" appeal, mixed with a "one-of-the-boys" approach (which Anura simply cannot muster) laced with enough bar-room (and bed-room) 'machismo' to be the biggest youth hero of to day. Placing the mike on the Stadium floor and addressing the audience right from their midst, was pure Vijaya. It was also the kind of thing that Rohana, the 'jefe maximo', who likes to survey his audience from on high, would never do.

Vijaya is a street-wise town boy, but that's no disadvantage in a country where the urban/rural disparity is nowhere as wide as it is in other 'Third World' societies and many people commute daily to and from the towns. In any case, the voting patterns of the November '82 Presidential elections and the Referendum as well as the explosion of July reveal that the urban/suburban/coastal belt is where the anti-state action is at. This is also what marks off Vijaya from both the traditional SLFP and its several split offs. The PDP for instance never had any urban strength, just as the SLFP never really did.

None of this means that the new party has no rural appeal. Even the government owned *Dinamina* noted (Jan. 23rd) the presence of many party activists from the SLFP's branches and women's and youth organizations. At village and provincial town level it is the middle classes who are divided amongst themselves into UNP and SLFP and constitute the opinion leaders. Of these it is the SLFP segment which, having taken its party's demogogy seriously, that tends to be liberal or more egalitarian minded on social questions (e. g. the 1980 July general strike during and after which some of them joined Support Committees for strikers) than their UNP counterparts. These SLFP'ers have taken repeated batterings — in the

post-1977 election violence, during the 1982 Presidential election and referendum campaigns and the by-election campaigns. Furthermore they have been victimised and generally hassled from '77 onwards. Vijaya, who ran the campaign for a Hector Kobbekaduwa hobbled by his own party leadership, who fought hard and well at the Mahara by-election and who was thrown in jail despite a painful kidney stone, these SLFPers can identify with. He is their champ; their Rocky. Anura is never there, as Vijaya was, on the front lines, fighting their traditional foe the UNP. Indeed they are quite unsure and suspicious as to which side of the barricades he is on.

### Militancy in the Mainstream

What is more important perhaps is that Vijaya is the only leading SLFPer who has demonstrated that he can stand up to the UNP goon squads. The JVP has, when provoked, demonstrated it on several occasions, with or without the full consent of its leadership. Likewise, the CPSL during the Nurses strike. But the SLFP has never been a fighting Party and the average SLFPer has never been a 'militant'. In that sense it is Vijaya who has given in some degree the young SLFPer what "the boys" have given the Tamil nation as a whole: self-respect. He is perhaps the only prominent SLFPer in history to have stood his ground and punched back. In that sense he is the battered SLFP rank-and-file's answer to the UNP juggernaut. He is not only the by-product of the Open Economy, he is also the result of the UNP's tough New Politics. Vijaya then is the first example in recent times, of (physical) militancy in mainstream opposition politics.

Kobbekaduwa, was the absent "presence" at Sunday's inaugural meeting, and Vijaya acknowledged this at Sugathadasa Stadium. Kobbekaduwa was a 'Feudal Socialist', a deeply anti-colonial and chauvinist aristocrat who visited the sins of British imperialism upon one of their most pathetic victims, the plantation proletariat, at the same time that his Finance Minister was drafting a Foreign Investment Guarantee Law and his leader had okayed plans for a Free Trade Zone in Trincomalee. But he was also an imaginative enough politician, or a decent enough man,



to engage in something of a self criticism to representatives of plantation trade unions during the '82 Presidential election campaign. He even acceded to the demands raised by these unions, one of which was a fixed wage for plantation workers, a demand which another Presidential hopeful Dr. Colvin R. de Silva turned down on the grounds that "nowhere in the world was a fixed wage granted to agricultural workers"! These plantation trade unions that included among their demands a call for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, a slogan which Kobbekaduwa took up in his campaign. Despite the UNP's propaganda spotlight on this pledge, 2.5 million people voted for Kobbekaduwa, a clear indication, like Vasudeva's Eheliyagoda performance, of something that needs to be stressed, namely, that there have been and will be moments when ethnic consciousness is not paramount in the minds of the Sinhala masses, and indeed is superceded by anti-UNP consciousness. Such were the paradoxes in the personality of Hector Kobbekaduwa — an aristocrat who dismissed the Bandaranaike's because they were allegedly lower placed in the feudal 'pecking order'. But then, all politics is paradoxical.

### The real test

Minneriya will be the testing ground either way. If the by-election is held soon, Vijaya will have a chance to demonstrate that his support extends from the urban coastal areas to the most rural backwoods — in short that his political popularity is co-extensive with his cinema appeal. But an even tougher test will be if the by-election is **not** held. How will Vijaya keep his party together after, say, May Day? Right now all talk is of winning elections, but elections are at least 5 years away, if they will be held at all. Vijaya can easily wait that long. But can his party's social base? With the economic crunch, the petering out of the Roundtable talks and the prospect of renewed (and expanded) guerilla activity in the North and East, historical time is being speeded up. There is no more 'long term'. We are heading towards Apocalypse, tomorrow. What can an avowedly parliamentary party do when the parliamentary path is closed off. **Either** it has to take the path of non-violent

mass struggle and direct action such as the Pakistani and Phillipine oppositions are doing, **or** Vijaya has to degenerate into Dutugemunu, and the Vijaya Phenomenon has to regress into Dinesh Gunawardena-ism or worse (Elle Gunawansa-ism). Such a regression will be no big step, for Vijaya and Ossie Abeygunesekera (an excellent public speaker and indefatigable organizer) were ticked off by a CPSL organizer and teachers unionist down South, for spouting racist rubbish during the Referendum campaign. But a regression to racism is **not** a foregone conclusion either. There wasn't any evidence of it in Vijay's speeches on Sunday. Nationalist Sinhala populism will always contain racist, clerico-chauvinist aspects and indeed, strong fascist (or Khomeini-ist) potential. But what is crucial is whether this reactionary aspect will be the exclusive, or the primary, aspect, or whether it can be pushed back to a secondary place. Given the development of the secessionist struggle and the absence on the part of the SLMP of a clear, modern and scientific ideology, programme and strategy, can Vijaya focus steadfastly on socioeconomic issues and issues of democracy, thus transcending the communal problem? And can he take protest to the streets, pressuring the Govt. for a restoration of democracy? This is the key question. The presence of V. W. Kularatne, (a founder together with Dr. Seevali Ratwatte, Ratnasiri Wickremanayake and Nath Amarakone, of the Sinhala Tharuna Sanvidanaya,) could tip the scales. This racist organization was the pressure group responsible for District and mediawise standardization — one of the measures that led **directly** to sessionism and Tamil Youth militancy. In a recent (post July!) article in the editorial page of the "Sunday Observer", he displayed an amazing ability to misunderstand the gravity of the National Question, by actually arguing for a **reversion** to this quota system. (Incidentally Ven. Elle Gunawansa was once an activist of the Sinhala Tharuna Sanvidanaya).

Still only the most hopelessly dogmatic Marxist or rootless cosmopolitan can disregard the Vijaya phenomenon or denounce it in an undialectical, fashion. Vijaya represents antisystemic forces, potential allies of the working class. On the other

hand, only the most myopic or opportunist leftist can see him has anything other than a very mixed blessing, for too often in the anti U. N. P. politics of this country, has the tail wagged the dog!

### 'The Right Stuff'?

Who is the authentic representative and the continuator of so called Bandaranaike Thought — Anura or Chandrika/Vijaya? The dichotomy is a false one. Anura is the logical culmination of the historical trajectory of the 'Class of 56' — the national bourgeoisie which has undergone compradorification at the same time that it has matured into a big bourgeoisie. The Janavegaya, the PDP, the Dinakara group and now the SLMP represent the ideological residue of 1956 and the interests of those popular (though non-proletarian) strata of the 56 social bloc who didn't make it, as well as those strata of the middle bourgeoisie affected by the Open Economy and its crisis. The cars outside New Town Hall, the coaches, and lorries and the lavish poster campaign, attested to the presence of this latter strata within the SLMP. In this sense, both Anura and Vijaya are equally authentic representatives of disparate aspects of that appealingly inchoate entity, 'Bandaranaike Thought'. The banners decorating Sugathadasa Stadium contained some of the most uninspiring slogans of recent times. The common place of cliches ("Independence and self sufficiency", "Traditional Culture") could have come from the selected works of A. T. Ariyaratne. Significantly there was not a single slogan or poster in Tamil, while the appeals were addressed to all sectors of the people **except** the working class. Surely a lapsed Bettelheimian like Chandrika, could have done better?

Vijaya, however is the Sri Lankan politician closest to the feelings of the bulk of the country's youth. He is the mirror image, the very incarnation of their (false) consciousness, as it stands now. To them, he is 'El Hombre'. **This make him a major phenomenon in a country whose population is overwhelmingly young.** This does not mean that Vijaya will turn out to be more significant than Rohana, or that his constituency has a more fundamental importance than the JVP's narrower

(Continued on page 24)



# Roundtable and conference diplomacy

**I**s the 'amity summit' in which 16 delegations are now participating, a Constituent Assembly that has come 40 years too late? Constitutions have not always proved permanent safeguards against political pressures, but constitutions that

wisely anticipate the sort of problems likely to emerge in a pluralist society do give a political system a greater resilience.

"Well you now know much of what's going on" said Mr. H. W.

Jayewardene, President Jayewardene's special envoy, after the President had finished his BCIS, Convocation speech which was exclusively devoted to what a 'distinguished reverend gentleman' had described as one of the most important conferences to be held in this country. It is certainly that and more. It is the most unique conference — a parliament-cum-Constituent Assembly.

## ANURA BLASTS NEW PARTY

**O**pposition Leader Anura Bandaranaike making a scathing attack on the new political party formed by a break-away faction of the SLFP said the new party was built on a foundation of hatred and jealousy and thus it would not last long.

In an interview with 'Weekend' Mr. Bandaranaike said there had been a plot within the SLFP for quite some time. This appeared in different forms at different times. The aim was to oust party leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike when the party came into power, he charged.

Speaking on the eve of the founding of the new party, Mr. Bandaranaike said new parties were born when conspirators found that their plots would not work.

"This new party has no future because it is being propped up on a foundation of hatred jealousy and vengeance," he charged.

Mr. Bandaranaike said certain "power — crazy individuals" resented his role in the SLFP. They did not like the moderates and those who were close to the hearts of the people.

This had been demonstrated in the attempt to oust him, Maithripala Senanayake and several others from the SLFP sometime ago he said.

T. B. Illangaratne and Vijaya Kumaratunge had blocked all attempts to reunite the party at that time he charged.

He also recalled how his action to stop the desertion of the party by supporters in Anamaduwu were misinterpreted and he was accused of violating party discipline. Then the "national government" talk was used to attack him.

He said attempts were made by the "heen nul karayas" to deprive the SLFP of the leadership of the opposition in Parliament.

The same people who went on their knees to the President to get personal favours sent charge sheets when he met the President as an old boy of Royal College.

Mr. Bandaranaike said nobody would accept a party formed by men who had been badly defeated in elections.

Mr. Bandaranaike said T. B. Illangaratne whose trade policies were responsible for the SLFP's defeat was the leader of the new party.

"When I think of him I remember the queues of the SLFP era" he quipped.

Mr. Bandaranaike challenged Mr. Illangaratne to defend his trade policies in the 1970 — 77 period.

Mr. Bandaranaike said the invitation by the new party to the SLFP and other parties to form a third force, was the biggest joke of all.

There are complaints (and grieving in some circles) that not much progress has been achieved. Some pundits put this down to our inexperience in what's now called "conference diplomacy".

Even if valid, these are unfair criticisms. Or peripheral. The truth is that President Jayewardene's task became a monumental challenge to diplomacy of the most skilled sort once he expanded the conference to accommodate representatives from bodies other than recognised secular political parties.

First, the 'close focus' which had been achieved by the three mediators (Mr. H. W. Jayewardene, Mr. Thondaman and Mr. Parthasarathi) and the face-to-face encounter in Delhi of the Indian and Sri Lankan leaders, was suddenly broadened. History invaded the conference room — two millennia and more! The government-TULF differences that had been narrowed, now became a controversy over who was right (or wrong) and who was the aggrieved party in the light of 2000 years of history!

One can only hope that once these "grievances" are more closely defined, the discussion in the Committees would be more disciplined.

Neither Sri Lanka nor the government can afford to fail. Certainly not a government which has imposed power cuts and sent food prices up only last week. Failure on the ethnic front can trigger violence, north and south. Add to that the economic grievances of a vast mass of people and you have a situation that must give sleepless nights to even the most sanguine.



# Behind the Roundtable

WE MUST at the outset state that we do not have much faith in conferences be they "round-table" or "square".

We do not, on the other hand, completely reject them or act in a manner that would be detrimental to them. Let us not forget that all the politicians who are assembled around Jayewardene's table today have been immersed in parliamentary politics. Each and everyone of them has "Communal Skeletons" in his cupboard. At one stage or other, everyone of them has contributed towards the eruption of our communal volcano. If these gentlemen would now volunteer to stop the game of musical-chairs and help to put down the flames of communication, even within this Capitalist framework, we should welcome such a step. The oppressed masses never stand to gain from communal violence.

Do not the 1983 July incidents once again confirm that those who stand to gain from communal violence are the imperialists? Has not the attention of our masses been diverted from their economic problems even temporarily? Which force other than U.S. imperialism, which lies scheming to convert our motherland to a military base, benefits from the "Indian Phobia" which is being systematically propagated?

It must however be appreciated that the January round-table sessions would doubtlessly be more difficult than the December one. The only concrete point of agreement in December was the decision to invite the T. U. L. F. for these discussions without any pre-conditions. We are, of course, not trying to be little this achievement. It was the President himself perhaps in fear of the communal wave, who closed the door on Amirthalingam in July.

The hurdles he now confronts are clearly, more formidable. We would like to pin-point three problematic areas. Firstly, there

is the problem of the geographical limits (centering on the amalgamation of the northern and eastern provinces) of the proposed, "Regional Councils". Secondly, there is the question of the extent of authority to be delegated to them. Thirdly, there is manner in which the assent of the people is to be obtained for the proposals agreed upon. Of course, numerous other problems are bound to crop up as the talks progress.

We should have some assessment of the so called "Sinhala forces" which are likely to stand in the way of a reasonable settlement. Chief amongst these would be Jayewardene's own "Purohithaya" from Kelaniya. The person who is most likely to serve him is the "paper lion — cub" who, due to the short-sightedness of some of our leftists, managed to creep into parliament and having done so, is trying his utmost to base himself upon the Sinhala trading and upper-petty bourgeoisie. There has also emerged two Capitalist newspaper groups bent on blowing-up these "heroes". It is our fervent hope that the radical forces of the S.L.F.P., who are today pulling out in opposition to the Party's "National government leanings" would not get attracted towards communalism, which would appear at first sight to be a short-cut to popularity.

When we turn towards the North a basic question would be as to whether Amirthalingam, who who was "brought" to Colombo with much fanfare, does infact retain a popular base there today. Many in the north look upon these "Leaders" as persons who fled the country when the Tamils faced the most severe crisis in recent times. We can understand why the U.N.P. is taking considerable pains to re-establish these gentlemen, who fled the country with their families, having in some instances even disposed of their properties, in their base areas. Is this not a classic example of class collaboration?

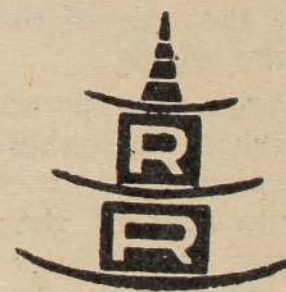
(Continued on page 12)

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# Post 1977 events and the grievances of the Tamils

Prof K. Sivathamby

**T**he actions and activities leading to events in inter-ethnic hostility are interlinked and they came in such quick succession, making it difficult to know which was the cause/effect of which. Acts of the militant youth and the excesses of the army had such a relationship. But whatever the sequence was, the Tamil masses were being subjected to harassment by the army and the police. The fear of the armed forces with increasing difficulties in obtaining legal redress, alienated the people from the government.

The actions and activities relating to the Tamil Question could be seen at two levels.

(I) the parliamentary level at which the UNP tried to solve the question unilaterally and in association with the TULF which had emerged as the main opposition party in parliament.

(II) the extra parliamentary acts of expressing the grievances and the actions taken to contain such acts through the use of the armed forces and the police.

Before discussing the characteristics of the activities at these two levels, it is important to identify the main grievances of the Tamils that arose out of and were getting heightened with the events in and after 1977.

The first one undeniably is the increasing insecurity of Tamilian life and property in both the Sinhalese areas and the Tamil areas. In the Sinhala areas it came from the Sinhala militants and in the Tamil areas it was through the army and the police. This explains the demand made for Home Guards as part of the constitutional provisions. This feeling of insecurity is felt by all Tamils.

Closely connected with this is the real loss of traditional Tamil

areas to Sinhala settlers and colonists. The process of Sinhalization, carried out first in the Negombo and Puttalam district, was being continued in the Gal Oya Project Region, Amparai District, the only district where there was a Muslim majority was subjected to a demographic change. The most crucial change was undertaken in the Trincomalee district, Trincomalee with its strategic harbour was now attracting big power attention. The pattern was the establishment of state sponsored agricultural settlements to which Sinhalese, not already resident in the area, were brought and settled as colonists. Such state sponsored demographic changes were made in Mannar and Vavuniya districts too. The worst was in the Batticaloa district, in the Kalkudah and Padiruppu electorates. This problem began to have new dimension, when plantation labourers, displaced from plantation areas due to the Land Reform measures of 1972 and 1974 began to take up residence in these outlying agricultural areas. Plantation labourers were the worst hit by the ethnic violence of 1977 and 1981. After the constant attacks on them, they migrated mainly to settlements in Trincomalee and Vavuniya districts. Much of the Sinhala fury was directed against them. In fact a closer look at the July events of 1983 would reveal that those were all — island extension of what was going on in Trincomalee in May and June.

The Sinhala colonisation was being done with the full blessings of the administration. The best example is the attempt to make Vavuniya a Sinhala majority district. There were also Sinhala colonisation at Madhu Road. There was also allegation made that migrant Sinhala fisherman were also being used to threaten the traditional residents of the areas.

The use made of the Buddhist symbols of worship — the bo-tree and the stupa in consolidating both legitimate and illegal settlements is significant. These provided a religious-cultural legitimization to the process of Sinhalization. In this connection the emergence of sacred cities in these areas of colonization — Seruvila and Digavapi — deserve close study. The use of the Buddhist symbols of worship to legitimise Sinhalese "intrusion" into Tamil areas could also be seen in the controversy over the Buddha statue in Vavuniya town.

**The significance of the above two grievances is that these exposed the lower strata of the Tamil population to the cruel vicissitudes of ethnic disharmony, which until the sixties were largely confined to the middle classes.**

The full fury of state terrorism was turned against Tamil inhabitants living near these areas of newly established Sinhalese settlements.

The attack on Hindu temples has been a characteristic feature during these ethnic violence and the worst damage occurred in the Trincomalee district. The periodic statements issued by such organizations like the MIRJE (Movement for Inter-racial Justice and Equality) and the CRM (Civil Rights Movement) testify to the damage caused to life and property.

With oppression thus widening and bringing within its vortex hitherto unaffected persons and areas, it cannot be said that the intensity of discrimination in education and employment faced by the middle classes was on the decrease. It was becoming worse.

The Tables I and II provide the percentages relating to employment in state and public sectors in recent



years. The figures provided relate to 1980 —

In the field of education, the main source of irritation has been the number admitted to the Universities. And here again the admission figures for 1981, '82 and '83 reveal the real position relating to the intake. (See Table III)

The District Quota system of Admissions, no doubt, provided an opportunity for a larger number of Tamil medium students from districts like Mannar, Mulaitivu and Batticaloa to enter the University. But this was mainly for the Arts stream and very soon this gave rise to severe disappointments, for

after three to four years, there was graduate unemployment in areas where the social expectations through University education were very high.

The lack of education facilities in the Tamil areas at the secondary education level is something which has not been highlighted. Even in Jaffna district, good number of the schools are understaffed and no proper facilities are provided at the secondary school level.

It is no secret that recruits to the movement of youth militancy came mainly from the G.C.E. (A.L.) students, and now, with graduate unemployment the area seems to be made wider for this recruitment.

The most frightening development in the field of education was the attack on the Tamil students at Peradeniya University (May 1983). The fact that this could take place at Peradeniya, yet the major University in Sri Lanka and the pace-setter of intellectual liberation was seen as a sure indication of the increasing insecurity of Tamil life and property.

The other major grievance of the Tamil is the economic neglect of the Tamil speaking areas in terms of development. There has been no major utilization of the physical resources of these areas and the only economic activity that was doing well — the cultivation of subsidiary crops — in Jaffna was affected badly by the liberal import policies of 1977. Perhaps one of the few favourable aspects of the impact of the open economy on the Sri Lankan Tamil rural population was that it enabled them to go abroad for manual labour. This exodus of manual labour, unheard and in these areas since the days of travel to the federated Malay states helped to ease problems and paved the path for higher earnings at certain lower levels.

A look at these grievances brings out clearly what Thondaman has described as, the common cause that today unites all Tamils as Tamils.

It is against this background the one has to review the political activities taken at the parliamentary and extra parliamentary levels. First, the activities at the parliamentary level.

(To be continued)

## I State Sector (excluding Corporation Sector) (Employment)

Category	Percentage of:	Sinhalese	Tamils	Others
Professional and Technical		82%	12%	6%
Administrative and Managerial		81%	16%	3%
All Categories		84%	12%	4%

## II Public Sector (State and Corporation Sectors Combined) (Employment)

Professional and Technical	82%	13%	5%
Adm. and Managerial	83%	14%	3%
All Categories	85%	11%	4%

## III Admission Figures

### 1981

	Sinhalese	Tamils	Others
	%	%	
Arts	82.8	13.3	3.9
Physical Sciences	63.5	31.8	4.7
Biological Sciences	72.5	24.3	3.2
Engineering	67.2	28.1	4.7
Medicine	72.7	23.1	4.3
Law	73.0	16.2	10.0
Total	76.4	19.2	4.4

### 1982

Arts	79.4	16.3	4.3
Physical Sciences	61.1	33.5	5.5
Biological Sciences	71.7	21.1	2.2
Engineering	66.9	28.5	4.5
Medicine	72.4	25.3	2.3
Law	68.8	24.0	7.3
Total	74.3	22.0	3.9

### 1983

Arts	77.1	14.4	6.6
Physical Sciences	73.4	23.1	3.6
Biological Sciences	70.3	23.1	3.6
Engineering	66.4	28.1	5.5
Medicine	72.8	22.1	5.1
Law	78.5	11.5	10.0
Total	75.0	19.3	5.7



# THE URBAN POOR

Newton Gunasinghe

The recent history of the match making industry demonstrates, in a microcosm, the structural alterations that have taken place in light industrial sector exclusively dependent on the domestic market:

(i) In the period of state regulation, the market was shared by two relatively big firms, and a dozen small manufacturers, who were not necessarily competing against each other as the level of production of each manufacturer was controlled by state quotas;

(ii) With the removal of import controls, superior imported products equivalent in price to the local products reached the domestic market and drove all the local products away from the market;

(iii) The small manufacturers were driven to the wall and were compelled to close down their plants.

(iv) The big manufacturer modernised the process of production, re-entered the market and re-captured a bigger slice of the market than it controlled earlier;

(v) The middle-level manufacturer was compelled to turn into a subsidiary of a major firm in order to continue production in competitive conditions.

The condition of the urban poor during the period of the functioning of the open economic policy is not devoid of contradictions. As evidenced by the moderately high rates of economic growth, economic stagnation came to an end. There was a substantial increase in the job opportunities available. In the informal sector, wages rose, the daily wage of a carpenter or mason, for instance, rising from Rs. 15.00 to Rs. 20.00 in the early 1977 period up to Rs. 60.00 to Rs. 70.00 in early 1983. In the formal sector, too, monetary wages increased, but it is possible that these increases were insufficient to offset inflationary pressures. At the same time, the increase in job

opportunities meant that at the household level, the number of income receivers increased, contributing to a significant increase in the household income, which probably helped to dampen the inflationary pressures. In the meantime, the urban poor were subject to substantial cuts in the social welfare benefits which they had enjoyed for decades. The subsidised rice ration, together with certain other subsidised food items and consumer items which used to be distributed through the network of cooperative stores were discontinued, to be replaced by food stamps, the real value of which progressively declined as inflation increased. The erosion of state welfare facilities, especially in the fields of health and education, probably contributed to the lowering of their quality of life. Although economic opportunities increased for the urban poor, their sense of economic insecurity too increased, as the state was abandoning its self-proclaimed ideological position as the 'provider of the poor folk'.

Of crucial importance is the accelerated process of internal social differentiation among the urban poor that sets in with the opening up of the economy. The urban poor, which consisted of certain layers of the working class, the lumpen proletariat, itinerant workers, vendors and carters, which in the earlier period suffered an equality of poverty, were subject to a process of internal economic differentiation, as economic opportunities expanded. The mass exodus to West Asia from the ranks of the urban poor strengthened the economic position of these households from which the migrant workers emerged, as a substantial proportion of their income was repatriated to the country. Certain households boasted of three or four individuals employed in West Asia and the repatriated income, though absolutely insufficient for capital forma-

tion, still was quite sufficient to permit these households to engage in conspicuous consumption to the great dismay of other, less fortunate households from the same social background. This process, which could be termed 'the colour TV in the slum tenement' syndrome, increased the relative sense of deprivation suffered by the majority of the urban poor who had not partaken of the Dubai bonanza.

Increasing economic disparity between the new rich elements of speculators, contractors, bookies, gem merchants and Middle East job recruitment agents who had no qualms in engaging in ostentatious display, further strengthened the sense of relative deprivation felt by the bottom layers of the urban poor. At the level of mass communication, for instance, the TV advertisement for all kinds of consumer items, occurred in a background of vulgar ostentation, which contrasted sharply with the living conditions of the urban poor. During the period of the state-regulated economy, when the conditions of social existence for the urban poor became difficult, the resultant hostility was directed against the state, as the state was regarded as being responsible for all things, good and bad. With the open economic policy, the state abandoned its image as the provider of the poor folk, and, rather than controlling the economy, appeared to be handing over its economic responsibilities to the private sector. Thus, at the level of mass psychology, the perceived 'guilt' of the state for the difficult conditions the urban poor were experiencing substantially lessened. Nevertheless, the frustration and oppression generated by the sense of relative deprivation mounted, and by the latter phase of the open economy, converted the urban poor into inflammatory material.

5. The open economic policy, by removing controls, enabled:



(a) the top entrepreneurial stratum, both Sinhala and Tamil, to link up with foreign capital; ;

(b) the middle-level non-Sinhala entrepreneurial group to expand within trade, commerce and services; they were less affected by the collapse of the domestically oriented light industries; and

(c) though the expansion of the private sector in general, the creation of job opportunities where political patronage was unimportant and, consequently, better opportunities for people from the minority ethnic groups to obtain employment.

The benefits that accrued from the open economic policy to the top industrial entrepreneurial stratum, both Sinhala and Tamil, among whose ranks the Sinhala businessmen predominated, has already been discussed. But at the middle-level, it is possible that the impact of open economic policy was discriminatory. As it was pointed out earlier, in the light industrial sector of the middle-level entrepreneur, it was the Sinhala businessman who was dominant. This implies that the Tamil and Muslim entrepreneurs were basically concentrated in trade, commerce and services. With the opening up of the economy, the light industrial sector was seriously hit. But the converse holds true for the sector which consists of trade, commerce and services. The importation of various consumer items, after a relatively long period of commodity scarcity, pushed up the volume of trade to hitherto unprecedented heights and accelerated the velocity of commodity circulation in the market, both of which resulted in an enormous increase in the volume and rate of trading profits. Numerically vast sections of small and middle-level traders stood to accumulate substantial amounts of profit, among whom the Tamil and Muslim businessmen were over-represented in relation to their proportions in the population. The state sponsored development activities, such as the Mahaweli Development Project, and other river valley development projects, the construction of roads and buildings, and rural integrated development programmes contributed to an enormous expansion in the service sector and

it is precisely the middle-level entrepreneurial stratum that stood to gain from this expansion. The middle and small level industrialists who were being ruined by the operation of the open economy, perceived the profits accruing to the traders as an unduly large slice of the cake.

As the representation of Sinhala businessman in the strata of middle and small level traders is not as high as their population proportion, it was ideologically possible to interpret the rise in commercial profits as 'Tamil entrepreneurs getting rich at the expense of the Sinhala'. This is precisely what was expressed by a number of Sinhala merchants who contributed articles to the Sinhala newspaper, 'DIVAYINA' in August 1983. For instance: "Our merchants rarely had an opportunity to import essential commodities. Uptil now trade in these commodities in Pettah has continued to be a monopoly in the hands of people who are not citizens by descent. Our people had no room in the Pettah market which covers an area of one square mile'. (*Divayina*, 28 August 1983) Further, an editorial comment in the *DIVAYINA* states, "Although it is said that an open economy functioned in this country from 1977, in the Pettah market for a long time a trading monopoly of a limited group has continued. As consumer trade depends on the price levels in the wholesale market, these merchants were able to determine the prices of a large variety of commodities on an island-wide basis". (*Divayina*, 18 September 1983). The President of the Sri Lanka Small Industrialists Association, who was interviewed by the same newspaper said, "As a society which allocates first place to commerce evolved, commercial power got alienated from the majority Sinhala and went to the minority national groups." (*Divayina*, 11, September 1983) All these comments testify to the deep sense of frustration felt by middle level Sinhala entrepreneurs.

As the private sector expanded, the job opportunities in this sector also increased. Unlike in the public sector, these jobs were not allocated on the basis of political patronage. At the level of major

companies, the working language continues to be English. In the public sector, the working language continues to be Sinhala. In addition to political patronage, the Sinhala youth also benefitted from the fact that the public sector required its employees to possess a working knowledge of Sinhala. The youth from other national groups had to learn Sinhala in order to obtain confirmation in their public sector appointment. In the private sector, especially in the major companies, no language hurdle confronted the non-Sinhala employee. Hence, it is possible to assume that the expansion of the private sector did not introduce any specific disadvantages to the non-Sinhala communities as far as job creation is concerned.

6. The frequent and incessant ethnic hostilities and anti-minority riots in the 1977-1983 period are in the last analysis linked to certain unexpected economic results of the operation of the open economic policy, where:

1 — the Sinhala entrepreneurs of the middle level are either adversely affected or find themselves, in the absence of direct political patronage, in a situation of unequal competition with Tamil and Muslim entrepreneurs of the same level.

2. — the dissatisfied sections of the urban poor constituted a volatile social base, capable of being mobilised for their own narrow ends by the ideologists of Sinhala dominance as well as by frustrated sections of Sinhala entrepreneurs.

An entrepreneurial stratum that accumulates and rises up due to state patronage acquires a social and ideological character distinct from an entrepreneurial group that emerges in a society subject to the free play of market forces. Such an entrepreneurial stratum expects state patronage at every operation that it undertakes and expects the state to step in and protect them if it faces a difficult situation. The middle level entrepreneurial stratum which was engaged in industrial production hopes the state would take some steps to protect them from 'unfair' competition, which of course, runs against the principles of the open economic policy.



The dissatisfied sections of the urban poor no longer directed their hostility against the state, as they did during the phase of state-regulation. As the economic role of the state appeared to them to be marginal, some other object of hostility had to be discovered to be held responsible for the current malaise. It is precisely here that the Sinhala chauvinist ideology, which initially emerged from the ranks of the middle level traders, found a fertile ground, engulfing numerous social strata among the Sinhala.

It is necessary once again to reiterate that this is not to underplay the important political and ideological aspects of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Our attempt here was to identify some salient elements relevant to ethnic conflict in general and the July 1983 riots in particular, within the economic infra-structure and especially the transformation of the economy from a state-regulated economy to an open one.

There are many studies of ethnic relations and ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Some of these studies have also attempted to establish linkages between the intensification of ethnic contradictions and economic causes; but almost all of these studies tend to co-relate the tempo of ethnic conflict with the 'boom' and the 'depression' in the business cycle, with the general underlying assumption being that ethnic conflicts are more likely to erupt into open violence during phases of economic depression.

We, however, laid emphasis on the linkages between economic structure and ethnic contradictions, in relation to the discontinuance of a particular model of economic growth — i.e. state-regulated economy bent on import substitution — and the implementation of a radically different model of economic growth — i.e. an open economy, bent on export-led growth. What is important in an analysis of this type is not merely the ups and downs of the business cycle, but the structural alterations that have occurred in an economy and how these alterations affect the ethnic

relations in a multi-ethnic society. We attempted to demonstrate the manner in which different social strata emanating from different ethno-religious communities compete with each other in a social context of differential factor endowment; how this competition occurs within a fabric of ideology, political patronage and state intervention, and how suddenly the rules of competition break down, giving rise to open mod violence. Not only is this line of investigation likely to shed fresh light on the social and economic background to frequent occurrence of ethnic riots during a specific time period, but also to identify social structural limits to the successful operation of an open economic policy within the context of a multi-ethnic and a multi-religious society.

(Concluded)

## Behind the . . .

(Continued from page 7)

A Capitalist newspaper has stated that the round-table without the T.U.L.F. was similar to a wedding without the bride. In reality it is not. Amirthalingam is not the "bride" but the Tamil youth movement. Though it is a fact that their representatives would never be part of the "round-table" we should have an assessment of their attitude towards these talks.

We are of the view that the Prabakaran-group, which is reckoned to be the most formidable of the youth groups, is totally opposed to the round-table conference. On the other hand, the other groups, who we learn have formed a front under the leadership of Uma Maheswaran's group, are likely to lend it critical-support. But one could expect them to maintain this stand only if some result evolves from the talks which would appear to them to be a step towards their ultimate goal.

(A slightly abridged version of the "Desha Vimukthi" editorial, 2nd Jan.)



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# Glimpses and mis-conceptions: CRD replies to Chandra de Fonseka

I. The Committee for Rational Development welcomes the article by Mr. Chandra de Fonseka — "Glimpses of the Whole Truth". However the CRD has serious reservations with regard to the selectivity, methodology and the substance of some of the assertions made in the paper. In addition, we feel that his polemical style not only conveys misleading conclusions about the actual nature of the figures presented but also misrepresents the findings and conclusions of the CRD document.

## Unfair Polemics

In responding to Mr. de Fonseka we will first attempt to answer his polemics before we discuss the substantive aspects, of his article. Given the present climate in Sri Lanka, we feel that the first and final paragraphs of Mr. de Fonseka's contribution are both unfair and unwarranted. Unfair, because Mr. De Fonseka's article in no way challenges any of the figures and conclusions of the CRD report, figures which have now been vindicated in the D.B.I.P.S. Siriwardene report recently released by the government. Secondly, despite the interesting figures presented by Mr. de Fonseka, we are certain that he is aware that the national debate on these ethnic-related issues has always centred around education, employment, land, decentralisation and political violence. The so-called "bias" and "selectivity" of issues were not of the CRD's choosing, but have been on the national political agenda for several decades. The UNP manifesto of 1977 and government publications such as — **This is the Truth**, are ample evidence of the fact that the present parameters for the national debate originated outside the CRD in a country-wide preoccupation with these issues. We agree that once these traditional myths are examined against present-day realities, the CRD and similar researchers should move on to other areas of contention and debate.

But to accuse the CRD of having deliberately chosen these issues on account of "bias" is misleading and perhaps unnecessarily mischievous. The questions asked in the CRD reports are those which are being constantly posed in the political arena especially after the July riots. The CRD did not invent or choose the contours of this debate, we are merely attempting to grapple with issues which have monopolised political discussions between the communities in the latter half of the twentieth century.

## Government Statistics

We must reiterate again that the CRD in arguing its case, chose statistical material from already published government documents. We did this consciously, not out of a "lack of professional awareness" but because these documents are easily accessible and can be verified by both professionals and laymen. To date, nobody has yet questioned the veracity or the methodology behind the statistics revealed in the CRD document. The same cannot be said about all the references forwarded by Mr. de Fonseka. According to him some of the "data is still imperfect" and their authenticity has yet to be certified publicly. Mr. de Fonseka, in his own discretion, finds them to be "pertinent" and "reliable". On the other hand, the sources relied on by the CRD are on their face objectively unimpeachable. Given the controversial nature of these issues, the source is perhaps even more important than the facts.

## Unwarranted Allegation

We also feel that Mr. de Fonseka's polemical style is unwarranted given the fact that the CRD never explicitly stated in its document that the Ceylon Tamils were the "clearly, aggrieved and oppressed community". Firstly, our analysis, only reveals that thirty-five years after independence, perceptions of a Tamil dominated

civil and professional service no longer correspond to reality.

The Ceylon Tamils en bloc may not be the most "economically" deprived segment of our society, but they are definitely not specially privileged as conceived of in popular impressions — impressions which serve to harden attitudes during times of communal violence and to aggravate current situations of injustice. In the final analysis, we can only agree with Mr. de Fonseka, that the conclusion to all this analysis is "unspectacular", and that the differences between the communities are marginal. Regardless of the polemics, and the myths of politicians, indicators of poverty and backwardness **do not at present** have an "ethnic" correlation. The only exception to this rule is the "Indian" Tamil population. During times of communal disturbances, they are the community which suffers the most. Given this complex scenario and the general areas of consensus, CRD finds Mr. de Fonseka's own brand of "tetchy belligerence" some what baffling even within the Orwellian tradition of political debate. Mr. de Fonseka's statistics neither contradict nor supersede the CRD document. We can therefore only conclude that his statements in the final paragraph assert in opinions what his empirical data cannot convincingly prove.

## Freudian slip

Mr. de Fonseka's article purports to argue for rural-urban correctives but fails to recognize the rural-urban differences **within** districts. This is especially unfair in urbanized districts such as Jaffna, Galle, Matara, Kandy. In addition his argument undergoes a curious transformation from rural vs urban to Sinhalese vs Tamil to Ceylon Tamil vs others to Jaffna District vs the Rest. It is precisely because these distinctions blur into one another — not only in Mr. de Fonseka's article but in the popular mind that his contri-



bution may infact be counterproductive. Instead of heightening rural-urban differences, his figures for the Jaffna district will be seen as representing the welfare of Tamils in general. Mr. de Fonseka himself is guilty of making this traditional equation. He states in the last paragraphs of his article, basing his argument on the Jaffna District that the "Ceylon Tamils are marginally better off" — this just after tables showing Batticaloa — (another Ceylon-Tamil area), with the lowest PQLI index in the country. This psychological slip betrays an underlying ethnic perception which perhaps conditions Mr. de Fonseka's "rural-urban corrective" in this article.

II. As for the substance of Mr. de Fonseka's argument, we would like to make the following observations:

**(a) Banking figures showing high rate of loans utilisation and percent ratio in the Jaffna, Batticaloa and Anuradhapura districts:**

The CRD finds Mr. de Fonseka's material with regard to Banking figures **absolutely unacceptable**. Initially, we must draw the attention of all the readers to the un-published and un-assimilated source for his discussion — "From un-published data in statement supplied by the Bank".

**Selective Analysis**

Nevertheless, despite questions as to the authenticity of the sources, we find these figures in themselves to be misleading and perhaps more confusing than useful. **Firstly** Mr. de Fonseka has conveniently left out the Colombo District. This is particularly disturbing since all large loans above a certain amount are given by the **Head Office** located in Colombo. In fact the loans which matter in terms of the national economy especially those after 1977 are those granted by the Head Offices in Colombo. By leaving Colombo out, Mr. de Fonseka's argument not only ensures that the discussion relates only to secondary levels of economic activity but perhaps, accidentally, conveys the wrong impression that the three provinces — Jaffna, Batticaloa and Anuradhapura have a stranglehold on the

banking sector. **This is a false and dangerous proposition and must be recognised as such.** The clue to Sri Lankan economic life lies in the grants of Head Office Loans; without an analysis of these loans nothing can be said about who benefits or controls loans emanating from the banking sector. The total number of PB loans — 406 million given in the Jaffna District for the whole year of 1980, will be equalled by just one or two loans given by the Head Offices of Banks in relation to Tourist or Hotel Projects in the South! We must therefore realise that Mr. De Fonseka is really dealing with a marginal aspect of the Banking economy though the Tables give the misleading impression of completeness.

**Secondly**, districts look to private banks for resource mobilisation when public funding and central government development projects are not available. As the CRD document points out, central government expenditure in Jaffna is half the national average and none of the government's lead projects are in the North and the East. The North and the East must therefore the government's lead projects are in the North and the East. The North and the East must therefore look to private sources of capital for implementing development projects. Because of the lack of reliance on the central government development aid and since the North and the East have not really been represented in government since 1956, there is a tradition of mobilising private capital which will naturally find some reflection in bank figures.

**Thirdly**, the figures presented by Mr. de Fonseka are not classified as to the **type to loans**. Because of the figures registered for Anuradhapura (higher than Jaffna) the CRD assumes that those figures are really concerned with **rural credit** and would therefore show a high rate of activity in traditional farming areas. The North Central Province and the Jaffna District have more intensive methods of cultivation and rural credit mobilisation and therefore the Bank figures reflect this level of development. In addition, for the figures to be made accurate we must also

be told the nature of loan repayment in districts. If indeed this is merely a reflection of rural credit figures, then it is misleading to speak in terms of "the Jaffna district being clearly among the favoured districts" in the commercial banking sector. Both Anuradhapura and Jaffna have a modern, farming population. The high rate of loan utilisation in rural credit is a result of that socio-economic reality and not its cause. To mistake cause for effect would in this case be to assign subjective motives — benevolent or otherwise — to the national economic system — motives which simply do not exist. The national banking sector of Sri Lanka cannot possibly take the Kudos for the high level of economic activity and thrift displayed by both the North Central and Northern Province farmer. It is in this light that we find the banking figures forwarded by Mr. de Fonseka **not** to be particularly useful in understanding the root cause of ethnic tension of Sri Lanka.

Finally, Mr. de Fonseka accuses CRD of selectivity and then proceeds to handpick eight districts out of twenty-two for analysis. We find this unacceptable. What are the figures for Matara, Pollonaruwa, Colombo Districts known for their high levels of economic activity? What about the poorer Tamil districts of Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Mannar? Mr. de Fonseka argues for a corrective to the Rural-Urban imbalance, we agree with him — but his selectivity in presenting the Banking data does appear to have a paradoxical ethnic bias.

**PQLI and FAO Indicators**

Though we have important reservations about the banking figures, the CRD has even more questions about Mr. de Fonseka's statistics with regard to the PQLI Index and FAO Indicators. We must point out that the PQLI figures of Mr. Sumanasekera reproduced by Mr. de Fonseka are those for 1971. Since 1971, the Northern districts has undergone major political transformations and sociologists such as Professor Sivathamby, have outlined major areas of change. Therefore the 1971 figures should be updated to 1981 to provide the necessary



backdrop for the current ethnic debate.

**Secondly**, these are district level figures and show a district average. Averages are always of a diluted statistical base and do not show the disparities within a district and the magnitude of the problems faced by the depressed castes and "poorer" social classes within a district. There is a tendency to uphold the Jaffna District as the standard bearer for the whole Tamil community. District boundaries are man-made and arbitrary and should not be confused as representing the well-being of the whole community.

**Thirdly**, we would like to point to other conclusions made by Mr. Sumanasekera in his article ignored by Mr. de Fonseka in his reproduction. Mr. Sumanasekera explains the high PQLI Index in the Jaffna District by linking it to the high literacy rate and **not to government welfare programmes.**

Mr. Sumanasekera writes: "In an attempt to explain the magnitude of some of these PQLI, let us begin first by considering the case of Jaffna. Its unique attainment of the highest PQLI is probably due to many factors. The prevalence of relatively very high literacy rate — second only to that of the Colombo district between 1946 — 1963 may have been, to some extent responsible for the Jaffna district to attain this very high PQLI (it has now established that 'literacy has an important impact on life expectancy and infant mortality — Sumanasekera quoting from Paul Isenman — 'Basic Needs: The case of Sri Lanka — World Development' (3) Further the position in Jaffna is unique in some other aspects too as evident from the following — in the pattern of agricultural and demographic change, Jaffna presents a situation different from any other districts. Large portions of the total land area were not available for agricultural use, owing to aridity, salinity, other unsuitable soil conditions and lack of irrigation facilities. The arable land available had been used to develop a highly efficient, intensive system of day farming. The developments in Jaffna illustrate the

way in which interaction between agricultural and demographic factors is influenced by the larger relationships between social, ethnic, agro-climatic, economic and political factors". Mr. Sumanasekera quoting from ESCAP (1975), 'Comparative Study of Population Growth and Agricultural Change' — there is a rational explanation based on a detailed understanding of the socio-economic processes within the Jaffna social-formation which explains the high PQLI of this district, and which has little to do with "the most favoured district" implications arising out of Mr. de Fonseka's article.

**Fourthly**, we have also gone through the FAO document referred to by Mr. de Fonseka. We must point out that Table 8 is not present in the FAO document and is Mr. de Fonseka's own calculations. He has taken twelve indicators out of 0/82 and then on his own, classified the composite figures as  $c =$  average,  $C + =$  better than average and  $C - =$  worse than average. Furthermore he has presented only five out of the twenty-two districts and come to the conclusion that Jaffna has the highest figures. This type of analysis is again misleading. Mr. de Fonseka creates a very imprecise and ambiguous indicator, "above average" goes onto select which indicators are important (12 out of 82) and then chooses five districts out of twenty-two for presentation. He makes a broad conclusion, "Among the rural districts, the Jaffna District with its 90% Tamil population enjoys the highest general living standards", without presenting a system of weightages for the select indicators he's chosen. Given the seriousness of these issues, the CRD finds this type of analysis far more confusing than useful.

We would also highlight the following aspects raised by Mr. de Fonseka in his commentary: —

(a) Tamil Districts have the highest as well as the lowest PQLI figures — (Jaffna PQLI 91.0, Batticaloa 70.3.) The Sinhalese districts fall within those two figures, putting an end to a notion of PQLI on an Ethnic basis. In fact, if we take all the Tamil Districts

mentioned in Mr. Sumanasekera's article, the PQLI average is **81.85** (Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya and Batticaloa) while the Sinhalese districts average at **82.47**—therefore **on an average the Sinhalese Districts do enjoy a better PQLI Index than the traditional, Ceylon Tamil Districts.** If one were to remove the Indian Tamil component of the Sinhalese Districts, the PQLI Index would be even higher.

This must serve to caution those who wish to jump to ethnic related conclusions based on the initial district figures supplied by Mr. de Fonseka.

(b) Nuwara-Eliya, Kandy, Badulla with the Indian Tamil population have very low rates of PQLI. In fact to highlight this point we reproduce some alarming figures from UNICEF (unrevised Report (1983) on the Needs of Children concerning the PQLI of the Indian Estate population.

- infant mortality 79 per 1000 live births in Nuwara-Eliya Estate Region as opposed 37.9 for the rest of the country.

- Chronic malnutrition affected 49.2% of all children under five in the Estate region of Nuwara-Eliya as compared to 22.8% nationally.

In analysing this data, we must also attempt to understand the factors which contribute to high rates of PQLI in certain districts. Are they gifts of central government patronage? Are all districts given grants on rational and fiscal criteria but do certain districts have the capability to maintain and develop the infrastructure? Is the education level of parents the crucial factor? Unless a sociological analysis gives us a background to the discussion, on the PQLI Index, it is difficult to ascertain the actual connection between the central government expenditure and the district, the resources of particular district and the PQLI Index etc... Without such a commentary there can be little understanding of the political issues and the actual remedies needed to rectify imbalances and meet district level aspirations.

(Continued on page 17)



# Pastoral action and a time of grace

Tissa Balasuriya O. M. I.

**W**e have first and fundamentally a spiritual task of assessing our situation, of repentance and forgiveness both personal and collective and from there the pastoral function. I am not discussing now the political aspect of this question; it is very important and we have dealt with it elsewhere. The primary need is a **deep and continuing conversion** of ourselves to the Gospel and the acceptance of the other — as well as of responsibility for the actions of our people, even when we have tried to prevent them. These seem simple, but in practice they are a most difficult, most trying and painful aspect of our mission to ourselves and others.

2. There is a task of instruction of a massive catechesis concerning the basic issues and the fundamentals of the faith: concerning love, service, acceptance of the other as the other, of peace with justice as we have explained earlier.

3. **The liturgy** offers tremendous scope specially during advent when we prepare for the birth of the "Prince of Peace", the "Sun of Justice" who comes to liberate us. The Incarnation of Jesus takes the whole of human flesh — not of one race, class or time. The Christmas and New Year are valuable means of communicating his message of loving kindness. Specific programmes can be drawn up for the parishes and communities, including study session on these issues and liturgies.

A special feast of reconciliation, also giving some hope of meaningful security to these still living in fear, or as refugees in other parts of the country. These are a few suggestions. The liturgy provides abundant opportunities for us. The liturgy of Lent, Holy Week and Easter and the Sinhala Tamil New Year festivities provide similar opportunities for reflection, action and worship.

4. There is a great educational task of **learning** the languages,

appreciating the culture. We can influence public policy concerning these.

5. **The formation of Neighbourhood Groups** in each area with a special concern for the minorities and the underprivileged and the relation between them. Some of the underprivileged also had a share in the looting. Their attitude towards law and order can be that of persons who are permanently deprived by society. In Colombo over 25% of the population or 150,000 are in a permanent situation similar to that in refugee camps. That is why some of them preferred to be in the camps — where they get at least the food. The experiences of these who have tried to form neighbourhood groups can be shared and their efforts co-ordinated and extended. We can thus help to build community and hope in our city of division and brokenness.

6. There is a need of recognition that our action for national harmony can best be undertaken on an **inter-church and inter-faith basis**. This requires a strengthening of our theology of such relations, and an actual building of relationships. The priest can take the initiative in visiting the Temples, Kovils, Mosques in the area and motivating the formation of a neighbourhood group. This can be ecumenism, and interfaith dialogue in action. It may involve some risks, but that is the price of witness to love and caring.

7. Influence political leaders and the media concerning peace with justice to all groups in the North and the South.

8. **Encourage the dialogue with the Presbyteria of other dioceses**. The relationship among priests across the country can be very important and fruitful. All of us have known some of them at seminary level. But unfortunately there is little regular contact among the clergy

of the different dioceses thereafter, except for some ceremonial occasions.

## A time of grace

This is a time of great challenge and trauma, but it is also a time of grace. We can help to save our country — save in the sense of liberate from fear, from insecurity, from anger, from hate, from prejudice, from ignorance. Thus we can contribute to the building of understanding, communion and togetherness in justice and loving service. The Incarnation of Jesus announces and seeks to realise such a community among us — as do all our religions.

For this the Church must live not for itself but for others, and be prepared to face risks and be misunderstood. To be honest and sincere.

"In sinceritate cordis delectaris et in praecordils sapientiam me doces".

'Behold you are pleased with sincerity of heart and in my in most being you teach me wisdom.'

We must be prepared to go out to others, to be open to them. This is a seed time of grace, in the whole history of the Church in this country. There is a pressing need and an opportunity for us to open out to others, to forget our misgivings of the past, our minority consciousness and enter the mainstream of the life of our people, searching for meaning and togetherness.

In this let us not be afraid to die in some way. We must believe in the Cross, and hence in the Resurrection. This is a very difficult choice and path. It is a dilemma for us — in our imperfect world. The call to the Church is to be the Church—a faithful voice of Jesus who gave his life for others.



Responding to this crisis we can really redis cover ourselves among our people; be Sinhala with the Sinhala, Tamil with the Tamil, human with both, and loving each other with a deeper love inspired by Jesus Christ; This may be said also in relation to the other ethnic groups and religions. In other words we need try to actualize the divine spark in each one, listen to the Spirit within each one.

This is the **missionary command of Jesus** "Go and teach all nations whatsoever I have taught you". It is through our own baptism of fire that others will truly see that we are followers of Jesus who gave his life for the others. "If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples". Jo 13. 34.

**As priests** the call for us is to be the **Good Samaritan** of our people. The Good Shepherd knows his sheep and they know him. He leaves the 99 who are safe and goes out look for the one who is lost, for the one who is hunted and when he finds it, he brings it on his shoulders. The Good Shepherd gives his life for his flock.

May we be given the grace, the light and the courage, to be the good shepherds of our people in this time of our gravest national crisis. Then not only will Christian living be meaningful and the Church will grow into a large banyan tree among others providing shelter to many, we ourselves may be blessed to hear the invitation of Jesus to his eternal friendship. "When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, a Stranger and welcome you into our homes ... I tell you whenever you did this to the least of these my brothers you did it to me".

**(Concluded)**

## Glimpses . . .

*(Continued from page 15)*

In any event it is important to consider how relevant are Mr. de Fonseka's figures in really understanding the ethnic problems of Sri Lanka which concerns political issues of power sharing. The PQLI

Index figures are for government planners to implement projects — they are perhaps misplaced as indicators of ethnic competition. Further-more, they only measure indicators such as infant mortality nutrition and have no bearing on issues such as physical security, human rights, and social justice.

In conclusion, we would like to summarise the substantive discussion of Mr. De Fonseka's paper :

### a) The Banking Figures :

1. The sources do not meet minimum levels of professional reliability and are unpublished and un-assimilated.

2. The figures leave out the Colombo District and the major loans granted by the Head Offices giving a mistaken impression that district level rural credit is the most important aspect of banking, when infact it is marginal in comparison to the large loans given by Head Offices since 1977.

3. The figures are selective, only eight of twenty-two districts are analysed in this document.

4. The commentary seeks to convey an impression of "bank activism" in Jaffna, Anuradhapura and Batticaloa, when infact the figures appear to reflect the skill level of the North-East and North Central Farmer in mobilising rural credit.

### b) The PQLI index:

1. Though the Jaffna District has the highest PQLI Index. The Tamil Districts as a whole have a lower PQLI than the Sinhalese districts. The Indian Tamil population appears to be suffering a PQLI reversal.

2. The computations of the FAO document are selective and based on ambiguous criteria.

Given the analysis of the above facts, and given the fact that Mr. De Fonseka does not query any of the CRD figures, we cannot understand how Mr. de Fonseka came to the conclusion that the Tamil population is at present marginally better off than the Sinhalese. We wish to stress that political theorists of both liberal and radical persuasion have generally come to

the conclusion that issues of ethnicity, cannot be reduced mechanistically to statistical and economic phenomena. CRD itself, is also perhaps guilty of this failing in responding to the national debate. Yet though we agree with Mr De Fonseka's point that poverty and backwardness are not ethnically based, the particularities of his argument and the severity of his language only leads us to the conclusion that his polemics is far in excess of the actual evidence presented in his empirical data.

### Postscript :

Since the CRD is being accused of a Tamil bias we would like to add as a footnote that the following is the Ethnic composition of the CRD. Of nine core numbers, we have at present, six Sinhalese, one Tamil, one Muslim and one Burgher. The Ethnic percentages that matter for this debates are:-

77.7% Sinhalese  
11.1% Tamil

As the CRD does not in principle accept a policy of Ethnic quotas, we make no apology for the Ethnic imbalance in our composition!

## Trends. . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

Gunawardena, MP, raise an argument to which the Government has no answer. And it is an argument that gathers greater weight each month. Why keep the JVP and NSSP proscribed when the government has not presented its much-advertised White Paper to offer reasons for its action to a public that has the right to know?

Ironic though it may seem, Mr. Gunawardena the Sinhala champion who walked out of the Roundtable Conference receives support on that issue from the TULF and the Tamil Congress. With the economic situation worsening and the emotionally charged ethnic issue not seriously defused by the "Amity" talks should these two left parties with a sizeable youth / working class continue to stay banned?



# The development of neo-colonial capitalism

Dayan Jayatilleka

**P**arallel to the development of state monopoly capitalism, the post war period also witnessed the proliferation and ascendancy of the **transnational corporations**. International cartels which were formerly limited to monopolistic groups in individual countries now became cartels which embraced monopoly groups in various countries equipped with a hitherto unprecedented global reach, penetrative power and integrative capacity. Transnational monopoly capital took two main forms i. e., that of monopolistic conglomerates directly connected with the production and manufacturing process and secondly, that of monopolistic conglomerates which supply and control 'money capital' indispensable for the production of goods and services. Transnational corporations are also connected to state monopolies in various ways.

The transnational corporation has been correctly described as the most significant economic phenomenon of the post-war period. To sum up.

(a) The emergence and proliferation of transnational corporations and

(b) the development of capitalism in the colonies are the two factors which created the material basis for the replacement of the old colonialism by neo-colonialism as a world system.

In his work '**Economic problem of Socialism in the USSR**' which has been sadly overlooked after the CPSU's 20th Congress, Stalin showed great discernment in identifying what he called 'the basic economic law of modern monopoly capitalism. Lenin for his part had pointed to the drive for super profit as the motive force of imperialism. Stalin, however, says :

"No it is not the average profit, nor yet super profit..... but precisely the maximum profit that is the motor of monopoly capitalism. It is this basic economic law namely, the securing of the maximum profit, that determines all the major phenomenon in the development of the capitalist mode of production as well as the whole process of its contradictory development. **The very fact that Stalin distinguishes 'maximum profit' from 'super profit' implies that he made a distinction between imperialism (which strives for superprofit) and modern (i. e. post World War II) monopoly capitalism (which is driven by the search for maximum profit.)**

Stalin points out three ways in which this maximum profit is secured, namely :

(i) The exploitation, ruin and impoverishment of the majority of the population of the given country.

(ii) The enslavement and systematic robbery of the peoples of other countries, especially backward countries..... the conversion of a number of independent countries into dependent countries.

(iii) The organisation of new wars and the militarization of the national economy. All this, says Stalin, amounts to an attempt to win world economic supremacy.

Clearly, Stalin was wrong concerning (i), or rather, he did not correctly conceptualize the dialectical relationship between (i) and (ii), since it is precisely the systematic plunder of the so-called backward and dependent countries that permitted a **relatively high** standard of living in the metropolis. He was however correct on points

(ii) and (iii). The militarization of the economy which Rosa Luxemburg had been the first to give due weightage to, had become a permanent structural feature of monopoly capitalism in its new post war phase. But it is point (ii) to which we shall devote our attention, for this constitutes, in our view, the main source of maximum profit for modern monopoly capitalism or neocolonialism.

Surplus value is the source, the origin, of capitalist profit. The surplus value pumped out on the basis of the old colonialism was now inadequate for the realization of maximum profit which had become the motor of monopoly capitalism in its new phase. On the one hand, the development of capitalism in the periphery and the acceleration of this development during the War had caused new class forces to grow in the womb of colonialism. Under colonialism, imperialism allied itself with the local pre-capitalist classes and strata (feudal landlords, princes, rajahs', sheiks and chiefs) and the comprador trading bourgeoisie. These traditional classes were content to preserve the old feudal or semi-feudal socio-economic structures and maintain their countries as agrarian hinterlands. Thus, the colonial economies functioned as market/gardens within the world capitalist system; that is, as primary producers supplying agricultural commodities, raw materials and fuel sources on the one hand, while acting as markets for the absorption of 'surplus' commodities produced in the metropolis. It was in accordance with this economic functions that the colonial/semi-colonial/semi-feudal mode of production predominated in the peripheral social formation. Likewise it logically followed that the main internal allies of imperialism during this period should be



the local semi-feudal landlords and the trader class which acted as intermediary between imperialism and the colonial market, i. e. the so-called compradors.

But as a result of the protracted process of a limited capitalist development in the colonies (which Marx and Lenin had predicted, though in a somewhat different manner) was the creation of new social classes and strata such as a merchant petty (or middle) bourgeoisie which aspired to the status of a manufacturing (industrial) bourgeoisie. These new classes (or 'potential classes' as Samir Amin terms them) wanted not only to set up industries but to create nation states, thereby gaining control over the domestic market. Furthermore they wanted to set up universities, towns, governmental institutions and other infrastructures. With this aspirant bourgeoisie, as well as an awakened working class and peasantry, giving expression to their interests and demands, the surplus value realized on the basis of the old pre-capitalist (feudal or tribal) relations became rapidly inadequate. This was one set of factors which undermined colonialism from within.

There was another equally important factor operating 'from within'. Just as the inadequacy of the surplus value pumped out on the basis of the old feudal relations necessitated the freeing of the serf from his ties to the land, so too did the requirement for a higher rate of surplus value in order to realize maximum profit, necessitate the 'freeing' of the colonial countries. The maintenance of colonies tied to a single imperialist country the preservation of spheres of trade and investment exclusively monopolized by a single metropolitan power was proving a fetter on monopoly capitalism in its new phase of development, just as the serf had proved a fetter on the development of capitalism centuries before. What monopoly capitalism in the post war period required were independent countries that opened their doors to the penetration of transnational corporations. An analogy would be the creation of the proletariat, 'freed' from ties to the land; 'free' to sell its

labour power. This is why world capitalism permitted (and indeed, the United States actually encouraged) the emergence of a whole host of politically independent countries in the period after World War II. Thus the model which combined political independence with economic and military dependence was extended from its original Latin American preserve, to almost the entire periphery.

This development at the global level was in basic consonance with the internal changes in the periphery that we mentioned earlier. The new world wide development of monopoly capitalism, manifested in the phenomenon of the transnational corporation, enabled a link-up with the newly constituted or emergent bourgeoisies in the periphery. The West actively sought now to foster what they call a middle class or entrepreneurial elite in the newly independent countries as well as to utilize the bourgeois or petty bourgeois nationalisms in these countries as an ideological weapon against Marxism-Leninism. Thus, with imperialism being progressively transformed into neo-colonialism, a change takes place in respect of the relations between the metropolitan powers and the satellites or peripheral units of the world capitalist system. Under neo-colonialism it is the indigenous bourgeoisies (together with the administrators, technocrats, military leaders and a section of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia) that become the principal allies of metropolitan capitalism, **displacing or absorbing** the comprador and semi-feudal classes who were the mainstays of the old colonial domination.

Therefore, neo-colonialism entails nothing less than a new alignment and polarization of class forces on a world scale, at the hub which lies the alliance between transnational monopoly capital and the indigenous or 'national' bourgeoisies.

Neo-colonialism is not only an inevitable concession by the metropolitan bourgeoisie to the peripheral bourgeoisie. It also entails a changed role for the metropolis and the periphery in the international capitalist division of labour and therefore involves a change in the relationship between the metropo-

litan and peripheral bourgeoisies. The economic basis of these changes reside in:

(a) The interventionist role of the capitalist state

(b) The dependent industrialization of the periphery

Just as under the old imperialism there was a rapid development of state monopoly capitalism in the metropolitan centres (which was especially striking in the case of Germany and Japan), under neo-colonialism, such a development inevitably takes place in the periphery too, because of the weakness of the indigenous bourgeoisies' capacity for capital formation. Andre Gunder Frank and more especially Samir Amin have identified two broad phases in the development of peripheral capitalism. The first is the stage of import substitution which provided the basic impetus for capitalist industrialization in the periphery and the growth of the so-called national bourgeoisie. State capitalism and the extension of capitalist relations in the sphere of agriculture through land reform are some of the main features of this phase. In actual fact this process was not an anti-imperialist one and what took place was that dependence shifted to the realm of capital goods which were imported, from that of light consumer goods which were now locally manufactured, (or more correctly, assembled.) Import substitution laid the foundation for the second phase in the expansion and consolidation of neo-colonial dependent capitalism, which is characterized by the manufacture in the periphery of goods for export to metropolitan markets. This means nothing less than the creation of a new international capitalist division of labour which involves the internationalization of production and the re-allocation of certain types of capital intensive industries in the so-called Third World under the aegis of the transnational corporations. An 'Open Door' policy succeeds the policy of 'import substitution' in this phase, while private monopoly capital exercises its dominance over the bourgeois state. The local bourgeoisie now ceases to be chiefly interested in producing commodities for

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# Intellectual Arrogance, Big Brother and 1984

Manik Sandrasagra

One of the most interesting developments in European politics during the last few years, has been the surprising rejection of Marxism as a subject of informed conversation. Five years ago in Paris for example, there was no other subject that was discussed among the young and older intelligentsia. Today as we enter 1984 those who seek to discuss Marxism are regarded as naive and out of touch with reality to the extent that anybody who follows that line will find it difficult to meet anyone he can talk to. What has happened?

Studying the situation most closely one became aware of a growing wave of anti-intellectualism aimed at Marxists and neo-marxists theorists. This I predict is going to be the next big political thing, both here and abroad, and is going to force our intellectuals to start thinking.

One of the most influential destroyers of the Marxist myth is Peter L. Berger, Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University. His new book "Pyramids of Sacrifice" — Political ethics and Social change — is well worth reading. In it he comments on the excavation of a huge mound in Mexico which was found to contain pyramids, one encased in another and going back millenia. On top of it all of course was a Catholic church!

This led Berger to think about the various theories that underlay the construction of the monuments. This in turn caused him to think about the theorists who lay behind the exercise. The peasants of course merely built the dam things and quite often finished up on top of them with his heart cut out.

Berger demonstrates that the great pyramid at Cholula provides a vision of a succession of theoretical schemes, each embodied in stone

and superimposed upon successive generations of silent peasants. To see Cholula is to understand the relations between theory, sweat and blood. For, the pyramid was not designed as an exercise of art for arts sake. The meaning of the pyramid was provided by a sacrificial platform, the theory behind which was cogent and implacable: If the Gods were not regularly fed with human blood, the universe would fall apart. The Aztecs distinguished themselves by realising that theory with extreme consistency. Berger then goes on to state that consistent application of theory can have some thoroughly unforeseen circumstances. Would those classify themselves as intellectuals among your readers agree?

Berger continues by stating that is useful to recall that theory is generally the product of professional theorists; that is, of the kind of people called intellectuals today. History is not only a succession of power structures out of theoretical edifices, but every one of the latter was first thought-up by somebody. This is regardless of who conned whom at any given moment; whether it is a case of intellectuals convincing the wielders of power to carry into practise some particular theoretical scheme, or power wielders hiring intellectuals to concoct theories that will legitimate that particular exercise of power ex-post facto. In either case there are intellectuals in the woodpile.

Berger then points to the intellectuals self-proclaimed reason for being — consciousness raising. And whose consciousness is supposed to be raised? The answer is clear wherever the term is used in political rhetoric. It is the consciousness of "the masses" that must be raised. And who will do the job? It is the "vanguard" that will do the job. But who are

these people? "The masses" are of course whatever sociological category that has been assigned the role of the revolutionary proletariat by the ideologists of putative revolution; industrial workers (in countries in which this particular assignment seems plausible), peasants, landless rural labourers, even white collar "wage slaves" or students.

"The vanguard" consists of the aforementioned ideologists — typically intellectuals, who may be defined for our purposes here as individuals whose major pre-occupation in life is the production and distribution of theories. Such individuals have usually passed through a long period of formal education, and usually come from the upper middle or upper classes of their societies. The concretization, therefore, maybe put this way. "Consciousness raising" is a project of higher class individuals directed at lower class population. It is the latter, not the former, whose consciousness is to be raised. **What is more, the consciousness at issue is the consciousness that the lower class population has of its own situation.** Thus a crucial assumption of the concept is that the lower class people do not understand their own situation, that they are in need of enlightenment on the matter, and that this service can be provided by selected higher class individuals.

"They don't understand what is good for them" is the key formula of all "consciousness raising", of whatever ideological or political colouration — and "we do understand" is the inevitable corollary. Put differently, the concept allocates different cognitive levels to "them" and to "us" — and it assigns to "us" the task of raising "them" to the higher level. Coupled with this epistemological arrogance is a

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# THE MILITARY — INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

L. N. T. Mendis

One of the most important statements at this conference was made by Dr. Kinhide Mushakoji Vice-Rector of the UN University. He said "Hibakushas" (or victims of the atomic attack on Hiroshima) and the nuclear strategists represented flatly two opposing points of view. The present situation he said "is viewed as a struggle between the commonsense reason of people and the 'rationality' of decision-makers insensitive to human need. "To support the so-called 'rationalism' of the nuclear strategy, there is a 'huge social institution, mass communications and education promoting the rationalism of the nuclear strategist.'" Obviously, there is no such machinery to promote the point of view of sensitivity towards human suffering. The point of view of the Hibakushas, he said "must be strengthened to promote 'the movement towards the solidarity of the powerless... and a humanly based logic of peace and disarmament...'"

Supporting Dr. Mushakoji, Mr. Rodrigo Carazo Odio stated that Costa Rica has set an example to the world by deciding "to outlaw its army 34 years ago so as to be able to allocate more resources to education and health." He assured his audience that the decades since then have been most secure in the history of Costa Rica. He added that the absence of arms has become a historical, political and social imperative not only in Costa Rica but in the rest of the world. Mr. Carazo added a dire warning, pregnant with meaning. **"The 21st century will either be a peaceful one or it will not come to pass at all."** It was very important to take a decision to transform education and media into instruments of peace. "He added a very useful

comment "education can rid men of the idea that culture, ideology or thought, can be imposed through force. Education and the mass media can help build up world pressure in favour of disarmament." He added that the UN University was established in 1980 "with a view towards mobilising educational resources for peace."

There was also a bright ray of hope in that Mr. Carao undertook to put the resources of the UN University of peace "at the disposal of all NGOs as a place where new methods and forms of education for peace could be developed, and later shared with the rest of the world." He concluded that "inspite of the prevailing barbaric mood, every man will carry within a seed of divinity."

It is now imperative for us to review the possibilities of bringing home to the people at large in all countries the great danger they face of total destruction of the human race and the danger that faces their children and grand children.

Alva Myrdal in her book deplores the abysmal ignorance on the part of most Europeans about the dangers they face. She states that "even in the Non-Aligned countries there has been astonishingly little discussion of the issues or studies examining the consequences of... the use of 1000 of the nuclear weapons deployed in the midst of Europe." She quotes the former Ambassador to NATO Harland Cleveland who has pointed out that while "it is natural for Americans to press for — effective use of nuclear weapons — to stop the enemy in his tracks... this conjures up for Europeans the picture of a Europe devastated, while the US and the Soviet Union

remain intact." Alva Myrdal expresses surprise that the study in which Cleveland was quoted also states that "the use of hundreds of atomic weapons could cause so much collateral damage to the area 'defended' that the inhabitants might prefer surrender as a lesser evil."!

It is quite clear that the proposal to locate more missiles in Europe will result in bringing to the surface "a potential conflict of perceived interest between elements of the attentive publics in Europe and the US" as the time for installation of MX missiles comes closer and closer. Myrdal adds that they would "if they were enlightened participants in a dialogue about the defence of Europe, join with the independent experts and state it clearly... **these tactical nuclear weapons are not needed in Europe, neither for defence.**" The most important, and indeed, what would turn out in retrospect to be the most authoritative and ultimate warning of the futility of arms escalation, has been given to the United States by **President Eisenhower in his famous farewell message.** President Eisenhower who was the earlier Supreme Commander, Allied Force Europe, was one who "more than any other American statesman felt the risk in the drift of military policy in his country." He warned his countrymen against the "unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought by the **Military Industrial Complex.**" and against the "potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power."<sup>15</sup> While he was still in White House he also made an observation which has a deep meaning — "every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed,



from those who are cold and are not clothed." He also said on another occasion that "War in our time has become an anachronism..." "He said nothing in the world is as important and urgent as world disarmament." The alternative is so terrible that any risks there might be in advancing to disarmament which is nothing... compared to the risks of not disarming.....<sup>16</sup>

An important question arises from president Eisenhower's pronouncements which are very farsighted and prophetic. Although it has never been explicitly voiced in the USA, there have been two schools of thought on armaments — one side thinks a de-escalation of arms expenditure will result in economic collapse. The other thinks there will be more prosperity and employment.

Alva Myrdal states that the "myths must be exploded that economic collapse would follow eradication of military procurements..."<sup>17</sup> that this is not the case is being argued by a second school of thought which is now gradually gaining ground, although the pressures for armaments and the armaments lobby, led by arms manufacturers is still very strong. It is, of course no surprise that the Military Industrial Complex (which the Novelist Gore Vidal has suggested should be rechristened Military-Industrial-Academic Complex) a whole host of writers and academic follow this line of thinking which is also supported by those monopolies like Lockheed and General Dynamics whose Boat Division has built the Ohio class Nuclear Submarine.

However, there are many bare facts to the contrary. The US Labour Statistics Bureau has reported that one billion of investments creates: 75,000 jobs in military industry; 100,000 jobs in construction industries; 112,000 jobs in consumer goods industries; 135,000 jobs in public health care; 187,000 jobs in public education;

To make a rather simple-minded calculation on the basis of these figures which are certainly authoritative if \$350 billion (which is

about what the USA and NATO spent in 1982 on military industry) was transferred instead in the following proportions — \$150 billion for construction, \$50 billion for consumer goods, \$50 billion for public health care and \$100 billion for public education. The number of jobs created would be as follows:— 15,000,000 jobs for construction; 5,600,000 jobs for consumer goods industries; 6,750,000 jobs for public health care; 18,700,000 jobs for public education; Total 46,050,000 Jobs.

Therefore, 46,050,000 jobs will be created and 26,250,000 jobs lost by closure of armament industries. Consequently there will be surplus of 19,800,000 new jobs. Since the unemployment in U.S.A. in April 1982 was 11.4 million, we are left with 8,400,000 new jobs after absorbing the unemployed!

This is, of course, is an inaccurate calculation because I have not taken into account the resource availability for these new industries and as well as the consumer demand for them. But the calculation is sufficient to indicate that the argument of the armaments industries and their backers that de-escalation of arms will lead to economic collapse and higher unemployment is far from correct. In fact, on this calculation the 11.4 million American unemployed as of April 1982 will disappear and there will be so many... new jobs...

Unfortunately, it is not possible to carry out a similar exercise for the armament industries of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc because no one either in East or the West has claimed that there is unemployment there. However, the Soviet Union has publicly stated that social and economic relief from disarmament will bring tremendous benefits to their people, although they have no unemployed. In fact, the situation is that these countries are short of labour and are increasingly using labour saving technology.

(To be continued)

15 The 'Game of Disarmament' by Alva Myrdal. p. 150-158. Pantheon books New York, 1978.

16 Quoted by Phillip Noel Baker, the grand old man of disarmament in 'Disarmament and World Development. Ed: Richard Jolly Institute of Development study, University of Sussex. Pergamon Press New York and U.K. — p. 03.

17 Alva Myrdal Ibid p. 157.

## The development...

(Continued from page 19)

the home market, which is no longer able to guarantee the realization of the surplus value necessard for its appetites. Having matured under import substitution and state aegis, local private enterprise now shuffles off those outdated etatist forms and even begins to encroach on sectors previously reserved for state capitalism. Local capitalism seeks access to foreign capital, technology and markets through integration with and subordination to international monopoly capital. These are the tendencies which characterize the second phase of neo-colonial capitalism.

According to Hamza Alavi, this linkup with foreign capital takes place as the indigenous bourgeoisie begins to move from sectors of industry which it previously occupied and which required relatively simple technology (such as food stuffs, oleaginous products, some types of textiles, leather etc) to sectors which require more advanced techniques and forms of organization. The indigenous bourgeoisie now accepts a role as the local agents of international capital (fulfilling sub-contracts formed out by multinational forms or at best, entering into joint ventures with them) in return for a share of the surplus value expropriated from the working masses of the given 'Third World' country. Local bank and finance capital which controls the local capital market, raises capital domestically for the TNC's this wedding local capital to global financial capital. Local industrialists for their part expect a share of the surplus value in the form of a share in the proceeds from sales licencing, royalties etc.

(To be continued)



# CLASS — The Main Factor

S. Sivasegaram (Faculty of Engineering, Peradeniya University)

'SINHAPUTRA' in his letter (LG 15. 12. 83) makes a point about splitting Sinhalese into upcountry and low country and that the Tamils should also be similarly considered as Indian, Colombo, Jaffna, Batticaloa or Trincomalee. It is a valid point but the validity is rather limited. The Sinhalese have traditionally been classified as upcountry and low country in all census figures, and the Tamils as "Indian Tamils" and "Ceylon Tamils,". Regional differences and urban/rural differences exist and do so differences based on caste, race and religion. I do not think that the divisions, in the articles in LG, to which reference is made, are central to the main argument. The fact remains that among Tamils, the upcountry Tamils (Indian Tamils) are a severely underprivileged lot. So are the depressed castes. There are backward caste groups among the Sinhalese, and the Kandyan peasantry has its own problems. **The problems are not simply Sinhala/Tamil or Sinhala/Moor. Nor are the problems based mainly on caste, religion or region. The most important factor is class and that is conveniently forgotten by the champions of the Sinhala and Tamil causes and by those claiming to represent the various sub-groups. The debate based on "race" only masks the real issues and reactionaries on both sides succeed in side-tracking the real issues. The poorer classes have gained nothing out of exercises such as standardization and district quotas.**

The very fact that 'Sinhaputra' claims that only employment figures for the private sector but also voting patterns in institutions such as the Rotary Club, Lions Club and Medical/Law/Accountant associations and even recruitment figures for the This is a weak parallel. The immigrant population in Britain moved in centuries after the Sinhalese established itself as the sole national language. (The exception being a small minority among Welsh Scottish people who still insist on using

Welsh and Gaelic). The up-country Tamils have a long established linguistic tradition rooted in the soil where U. N. agencies and the intake of graduate students to the Asian Institute of Technology (which, like the U. N. is not run by the Tamils, I presume) reveal how the Sinhalese are being discriminated against, **only exposes the class interests which are really in conflict. The poor Sinhala peasant is only a convenient excuse for the exploiting classes among the Sinhalese who are only interested in gaining monopoly of all trade and commerce in Sri Lanka** and are able to capitalize on the frustrations of the educated middle class. It is not possible to discuss the problem of land ownership and population distribution in the Tamil areas in the abstract. Nevertheless, one can be certain that the ethnic distribution in the Tamil areas would have been significantly different, had successive governments only taken the decision to set up a proportionately large number of industries and to encourage investment in these areas. The nature of electoral politics in Sri Lanka militates against development of areas where the ruling party is not likely to win seats.

'Sinhaputra' seems to believe that providing education in the Sinhala medium to the up-country Tamils would make them integrate with the Sinhalese. He is worried about 1.5 million Indians speaking Tamil in the heart of Sinhala and draws a hypothetical parallel of a dangerous situation which may arise if 60 million Sinhalese speaking Sinhala only lived in the Madhya Pradesh in India. (Sinhaputra may be relieved to know that there are barely 0.7 m "Indian Tamils" in the up-country as opposed to his figure of 1.5 million). Knowledge of Sinhala is no guarantee of integration in any way. The Moors in Sinhala speaking areas are very fluent in Sinhala — but the mother tongue is still Tamil, for the vast majority. Sinhaputra's argument for providing education in Sinhala to the plantation Tamil population is based on the

fact that in Britain the Indians and Pakistani's are provided the facilities to learn Hindi or Urdu while the medium of instruction in English. they live. Integration can never be achieved by thrusting a language down somebody's throat, especially when the person has little to benefit out of accepting that language as his main language. What guarantees unity is mutual respect for the culture and traditions of each other. In fact, until recent years, the "Indian Tamils" had no serious conflicts with their Sinhalese neighbours in the up-country. I do not know whether it will be some relief to Sinhaputra to know that, if there were 60 million Sinhalese, speaking Sinhala only, living in Madhya Pradesh, either Sinhala and Hindi would have been made the state languages of Madhya Pradesh or a Sinhala Pradesh would have been carved out of Madhya Pradesh in order to safeguard Sinhala interests. What Sinhaputra seems to forget about the "Indian Tamil" is that it is his sweat and toil which has fattened the local mudalalis — Sinhala and Tamil alike. The "Indian" Tamils have been given a raw deal since independence and Sinhaputra seeks to do is to strip them of their ethnic identity while offering nothing worthwhile in return.

W. S. M. Fernando (LG 15. 12. 83) argues that since the employment pattern in the state and corporate sectors is not favourable to the Tamils, the implementation of a policy of ethnic proportions in education and employment would only benefit the Tamils and that the Tamils should Welcome it. Of course, he seems to anticipate that the Tamils would not. He also refers to some undue advantages which would be eliminated by ethnic quotas. While it is true that all state and corporate employment is heavily weighted against the minorities, the share of the Tamils in the top professions is significantly out of proportion to the national population figures. The classes which compete for these top professional positions are very influential in political circles and WSMF is partly correct in assuming that the Tamils would not like the ethnic quota system. **But the purpose of the CRD is not to propose solutions on the basis of ethnic quotas but to expose the fallacy that the majority community is**



**discriminated against.** The quota system can be extended, as justifiable if not more justifiably, to allocation of places on the basis of caste, race, religion, region, and income group. (An even equitable distribution may demand that at least one member of my family and one of WSMF's should pluck tea or tap rubber). What we should seek is equality of opportunity and recognition of talent. If any section is particularly backward, major concessions should be offered to improve their social condition. Above all, any system for social justice demands basic goodwill and honesty without which nothing can be achieved.

Finally, I wish to point out something about allocation of land in land development schemes. It is only fair that some kind of ethnic proportion is maintained in this matter. The funding is provided mainly by the state and all of us pay taxes (and the up-country Tamils contribute much more than many of us by providing cheap labour). And there should be some fairness in sharing the benefits. However, an even distribution of the settlers over the entire development area, on the basis of ethnic proportions, would in reality mean that the minorities will end up with a very small share of land only in area traditionally occupied by them. There is no sense in allocating land to a people, knowing clearly well that they will not be able to settle there, or even if they do they will not be allowed to stay on. The minorities should be allocated land in areas of their preference while the overall allocation would be based on ethnic proportions.

What the Sinhala extremists fail to realise in that it is their prolonged bullying and oppression which has made separatist terrorism possible in the north. What the Tamil extremist does not recognize is that the unrealistic positions taken by the Tamil leadership has led to more and more suffering for the Tamils at every turn. It is time that the more sensible elements among the Sinhalese and Tamils made sure that they are heard, despite all the noise made by the extremists and their henchmen.

## Letter

### Under - 19 cricket tour of Australia

It is said that the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka, summoned 139 schoolboys to select the final pool. Each boy was asked to bat for 15-20 minutes before the Selectors pruned down the pool to 30 players.

Did the Selectors go into the performances of these school boys in the third term season? If so how did they omit a player of the calibre of Chandana Mahesh of Moratuwa Vidyalyaya who scored 79 runs against the Navy, playing for Moratuwa S.C. last Saturday?

We are surprised that the Selection Committee has ignored a future prospect in C. Mahesh. His performances are given below.

1. In the 1981/82 school season he scored over 1000 runs, was awarded the Best Batsman runner-up prize in the outstations by a newspaper (*Observer*). *Island* awarded a special prize for scoring over 1000 runs. He has 4 centuries to his credit against St. Thomas' College Matale, Ibbagamuwa M.V., Mahanama M. V. and Ananda College.

2. In the 1982/83 season due to an attack of hepatitis he played only in the match against Sri Sumangala, the Big Match where he scored 90 runs.

3. In last years third term school matches he blossomed out to be an outstanding allrounder, being a brilliant fielder. In the 4 matches against Zahira College, Mahanama M.V., Royal College and St. Servatius College, he scored an average of over 50 runs, while capturing 20 wickets.

4. In the Junior Tournaments conducted by the Ceylon Schools Cricket Association he has scored heavily and taken a lot of wickets.

5. In this year's tournaments by the Board of Control for Cricket, begun in Sept. 1983, his performances include:

133 vs Baduraliya S.C.—(Div III), 94 not out vs N.C.C.—(Donovan Andree), 74 vs Navy S.C.—Browns Tropy), 54 not out

Sebastianites S.C.—(Honda Tropy).

6. In a fifty over match against S.S.C. which included all Test Players except Asantha De Mel he batted splendidly.

We therefore appeal to the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka to recall C. Mahesh to the final pool before selecting the team to Australia.

**H. N. Fernando**

General Sec., Ceylon Teachers Union

## The Vijaya . . .

(Continued from page 5)

stratum of educated, radicalized youth, any more than it means that Clint Eastwood is a more powerful — symbol than the Guevara! From the Bolsheviks to the Sandinistas, it is quality that has proved more important than quantity, when things fall apart. But standing on the upper steps of the Sugathadasa Stadium as Nanda Malini's voice coming over the loud speaker began to fill the space left by the departing thousands, and watching Vijaya Kumaratunga, a good humoured and tolerant smile on his face being mobbed and swept along towards one of the exits, it seemed to me, that at least at the present moment, he has 'The Right Stuff'.

## Intellectual . . .

(Continued from page 20)

recurrent irritation with 'those people' who stubbornly refuse the salvation that is so benevolently offered to them: "How can they be so blind?"

This attitude is of course not confined to Marxists. Capitalist theory is equally pernicious. Marxism however claims to know better, because they consider themselves free from the influence of myth.

Again would your esteemed readership care to comment on these points raised by Berger? What has the intellectual community to say in response to this analysis, which is already having far reaching effects especially among the politically aware younger generation in Europe and America?

"If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear".

— George Orwell





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