CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES
AND
YOUTH UNREST IN SRILANKA, 1971-1982

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A. S, ANULA ATTANAYAKE

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Dissertation titled, **CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND YOUTH UNREST IN SRI LANKA, 1971-1982**, submitted by **A.S. ANULA ATTANAYAKE**, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of this University, is original and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

We recommend that this Dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

PROFESSOR S.D. MUNI
SUPERVISOR

PROFESSOR BALADAS GHOSHAL
CHAIRPERSON

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My last words for Priyantha - for being the Pillar of my Encouragement, and

for my son - for smiling without most of the memories of childhood.

ANULA ATTANAYAKE

PREFACE

The decade of the Seventies has been significant in several ways in the political and socio-economic evolution of independent Sri Lanka.[*1] On the one hand, this decade has been characterized by increasing frequency of constitutional changes and changing attitudes towards parliamentary democratic system. On the other hand, questions of youth and inter-generational cleavage in politics assumed considerable significance in Sri Lanka during this period.

The problem which this study seeks to explore is that whether and to what extent, a highly politicised and electorally powerful youth could influence the agenda of national politics in Sri Lanka; and, to examine whether, how and to what extent, constitutional changes caused and encouraged rise in youth unrest and resulted in violent movements, with special reference to the JVP uprising and rural youth in Sinhalese dominated areas. Issues relating to inter-ethnic conflict, especially origins of Tamil militancy, are treated only as they impinging upon the main topic. This study

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*   Sri Lanka was officially known as Ceylon until 1972. As relevant, both terms are used throughout the study.

attempts to examine the nature of causal relationship be-
tween these two variables, i.e., constitutional changes and
youth unrest, in the parliamentary democracy in Sri Lanka.

The available literature reveals that very little
research has been done in this field. While a number of
studies give detailed accounts of Sri Lankan constitutional
experience and crisis resulting from the `JVP Insurgency',
there is not much academic research devoted to the causal
relations and linkage between constitutional changes and
youth unrest after 1971. This study is an attempt to fill
this gap.

The study adopts descriptive and analytical method. It
is based on published and unpublished primary and secondary
sources.

According to specific features of the Sri Lankan poli-
ty, the scope of the research focusses on a number of major
aspects: namely, land, education and employment related
issues in the broader framework of `constitution as the

supreme law of the country', and affecting directly the youth and their mobilization.

For the purpose, land is analysed under agriculture and irrigation; and, colonization and settlement schemes. Education, being an index of upward social mobility, is examined under colonial and post-colonial education systems. Policies and plans adopted by successive governments after 1970 are critically evaluated. In the employment sector, there are two sub-sections: public and private sector employments and self-employment schemes. An attempt is made to examine the pressure for changes in these sectors, changes that took place after 1971, the nature of changes and their achievements and failures, and, their impact on youth unrest and resulting violent movements in Sri Lanka.

In the study, the conceptual framework and the identification of the problem are discussed in the introductory chapter.

In the second chapter, an attempt is made to outline the relationship between socio-economic background and

patterns of political participation, with special reference
to the period before 1972 constitutional changes.

The third chapter broadly examines the inherited socio-
economic conditions of the country in order to understand
the nature of the problems of youth.

An in-depth analysis of constitutional changes during
the period covered by the study is undertaken in the fourth
chapter.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the analysis of causal
relationship between constitutional changes and youth un-
rest.

While summarising the findings of the study, the
concluding chapter appraises the significance of causal
relationship between the two variables in the context of
socio-economic reality.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Constitutional Changes and Youth Unrest in Sri Lanka seem to be co-related in several ways. One may argue casually, at the first glance that constitutional changes have not themselves affected youth unrest and vice-versa. But, if we analyse specific characteristics of the Sri Lankan politico, socio-economic structures and the major role played by the constitution within these structures, this argument would become untenable.

It is clear that the youth in Sri Lanka have constantly challenged the basic principles of constitutions since 1971. They even made extra-legal attempts to capture state power which has emerged as an important feature of political life since the beginning of the seventies. On the other hand, amidst the growing unrest among social groups, successive governments' promises to change constitutions according to their election pledges underline the relationship between constitutional changes and youth unrest undoubtedly.

Before we proceed to examine the problem, it is useful to clarify the two, basic aspects of the study, i.e., con-

stitutional process and youth unrest, at the outset. With this aim, the explanation in the first section of this chapter focusses upon the growth of constitutionalism and relationship between constitutional process and political legitimacy. The second section seeks to identify problems in socio-economic structure and practical experience of the constitutional processes. The last section is devoted to youth problems in contrast to their expectations in the context of constitutional changes.

I. CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS AND POLITICAL LEGITIMACY:

(a) Conceptual Framework:

In constitutional ideology, `to constitute' means `to make up, order or form; thus, a nation's constitution should pattern a political system'. Further to this definition, a constitution may serve as a binding statement of a people's aspirations for themselves as a nation. So, constitutional process implies that political process with or without a written constitution, is oriented to define and contain the exercise of political authority.[1]

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1. For explanation, see Douglas Greenburg & others, ed., Constitutionalism and Democracy (Oxford University Press, 1993) (hereafter Constitutionalism), p.7.

Theoretically, three central concepts contribute to shaping the values of constitutionalism. The first two - legality and legitimacy - seem to be at the core of the constitutional evolution. The relationship of constitutional process to democracy is the third.

In the broader sense, all these approaches suggest an approximate definition of constitutional process:

> It is a commitment to limitations on ordinary political power; it revolves around a political process, one that overlaps with democracy, in seeking to balance state power and individual and collective rights; it draws on particular cultural and historical contexts from which it emanates; and, it resides in public consciousness.[2]

In this sense, constitutional process stands for a system of governance on the basis of rule of law. Historically, the concept of the `Rule of Law' has been subject to various interpretations. According to earlier definitions, it has three meanings:

(a) The absolute supremacy or predominance of regular law as opposed to the influence of arbitrary power and the exclusion of the existence of arbitrariness;

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2. <u>Ibid</u>., p.xxi.

(b)   Equality before the law or the equal subjection of all

classes to the ordinary law of the land adminstered by

the ordinary law courts; and

(c)   The rights of individuals as defined and reinforced by

the courts.[3]

Although the concept was formulated as a dynamic proc-

ess, one factor does seem to be unchanged in constitutional

values, i.e., opposition to any exercise of arbitrary power

by rulers.

The next component, the relationship of democracy to

constitutional evolution is principal concern at this junc-

ture. In the words of one observer:

> Democracy in a complex society is a political
> system which supplies regular constitutional
> opportunities for changing governing officials,
> and, a social mechanism which permits the largest
> possible part of the population to influence major
> decisions by choosing among candidates for politi-
> cal office.[4]

According to this assumption, the growth of constitu-

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3.   See J.A.L. Cooray, <u>Constitutional</u> <u>and</u> <u>Administrative</u>
     <u>Law</u> <u>in</u> <u>Sri</u> <u>Lanka</u> (Colombo, 1973) (hereafter, Constitu-
     tional and Administrative Law), pp.504-505.

4.   For more details, see ed. Philip Green, ᴇᴅ., <u>Key</u> <u>Con-</u>
     <u>cepts</u> <u>in</u> <u>Critical</u> <u>Theory:</u> <u>Democracy</u> (New Jersey, USA,
     1993), p.6.

tional process is necessarily linked with democracy and a major variant of liberal democratic process has been constitution. Constitution specifies how laws must be made (the `decisional rule') and how the makers are to be chosen. In this context, the representative government is legitimised by the concept of `majority rule'.

The general acceptance of this definition needs a consideration of historical and cultural forces that underlie the creation and maintenance of variety of constitutional orders. Constitutional process, with its constituent concepts of secularization, and limitation of powers, emerged in the West as a part of the `New Age'. With the triumphed political power of the new elite groups, especially against the `Absolute Monarchism', the roots of constitutionalism got institutionalized in the political system. Its main thrust was a stable and limited government which had been the need of that era. It prevented, both, discrimination and arbitrary action. This concept of rule of law reached its apogee in the nineteenth century. As accepted by the time, constitutional process necessarily included institutions such as judicial review, due process of law,

and separation of powers.[5]

(b) <u>Constitutional</u> <u>Evolution</u> <u>in</u> <u>Sri</u> <u>Lanka</u>:

When most of Asian colonies of the Western democracies began to demand independence in early twentieth century, their political pressures became more important than social or economic considerations. The granting of independence was, hence, a matter of negotiation between the nationalist movement and the colonial power. It did not occur to nationalist leaders to advance further, than a constitution which embodied democratic values. As such, the transfer of power - especially in South Asia - saw the transfer of institutions of Western democracy and Sri Lanka also experienced the same in 1948. The political legitimacy, as such, was mainly based on a liberal constitutional order. The Constitution of Sri Lanka became the supreme law of the state.

In many ways, constitution at independence - the Soulbury Constitution - was a product of colonial legislative evolution. It was proceeded by seven other constitutions

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5.   For a detailed account, see <u>Constitutionalism</u>, n.1, Chapter One.

drafted between 1801 an 1947.[6] The path of constitutional evolution in Sri Lanka revealed that internal self-government instituted by the previous Donoughmore Constitution was transformed into total independence in 1948. The Ceylon Independence Act, 1947; and, the Ceylon (Constitution and Independence) Orders in Council, 1946 and 1947, were the major constitutional documents on which Constitution of Ceylon was formed. In addition, three agreements signed on behalf of the United Kingdom and Ceylon, relating to External Affairs, Defence and the Public Service, could also be considered as a part of the Constitution. These documents formed the basis of the government of a liberal democratic nature. It contained all the major characteristics of the `Westminster Model'.[7]

The legislative power of the state was vested in the parliament which consisted of the Queen of British (since Ceylon was a British Dominion), the House of Representatives

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6. See, <u>Ceylon: Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform-1946</u> (Reproduced and printed at the Ceylon Govt. Press, Colombo, 1968), chapters 2 and 3.

7. For details, see, W.A.W. Warnapala, <u>Civil Service Administration in Ceylon</u> (Department of Government Printing, Colombo, 1974), Introduction, and

   Lucy M. Jacob, <u>Sri Lanka: From Dominion to Republic</u> (National Publishing House, Delhi, 1973), pp.20-30.

and the Senate. The Executive power which was vested in the Queen was to be exercised by the Governor-General who was nominated by the Queen. This execute power was to be exercised in accordance of the provisions of the constitution. Since the Governor-General was only the nominal Head of the State, the executive power was in fact exercised by the Cabinet of Ministers.[8]

In the political system, the Cabinet constituted the major decision-making body. Basically, functions of the government were confined to defence, foreign affairs, maintenance of law and order and other similar matters.[9] Separation of power and division of responsibilities had been one of the major aspects of the constitution.

Though independent Sri Lanka was subject to internal socio-economic changes, like all other liberal constitutions, the question of socio-economic development did not receive any reference in the Soulbury Constitution. This was partly in keeping with the colonial heritage. The

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8. See, Ceylon (Constitution) Order in Council - 1946, section 29(1) and 7; sections 11, 45, and 46.

9. For details, see, Sir Ivor Jennings, The Constitution of Ceylon (Oxford University Press, 1953), edn.3, pp.78-86.

colonial economic interests, accordingly, remained undis-
turbed. Furthermore, the dependent and semi-feudal social
order had strong links with that of the preceding period.
So, the thrust of the constitution was on preserving socio-
economic *status quo* and, as such, socio-economic policy did
not guide policy-makers towards bringing about relevant
changes in these fields. Framers of the constitution ac-
cepted that `citizens enjoy equality before the law' and
their rights were protected by constitutional safeguards.
In this context, the Soulbury Constitution was merely a
legislative attempt to reflect the necessary conditions for
the `law and order' in a self-governing state.[10]

II. DIVERSE INTERESTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Over the decades after Independence, Sri Lanka had been
undergoing extensive and fundamental changes. Like most of
the developing countries, she had been engaged in furthering
national progress with the impact of these changes. The
attempts had been especially directed at accelerating eco-

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10. For studies on Soulbury Constitution, see, Jennings,
    op. cit.., pp.14-15.
    S.A. de Smith, The New Commonwealth and Its Constitu-
    tions (Colombo, 1964) and,
    Radhika Coomaraswamy, Sri Lanka: The Crisis of the
    Anglo-American Constitutional Traditions in a Develop-
    ing Society (Vikas Pub. House, New Delhi, 1984), Intro-
    duction and chapter 1.

nomic growth and maintaining political stability. Public

Health, Education, Employment and other social services had

become means to achieve political and economic ends. At the

same time, they were planned and designed on a nation-wide

basis. Each of these elements directly impinged on the

interests and prospects of the youth.

However, by the Seventies, stresses and failures had

become increasingly evident. Besides colonial heritage,

several factors relating to changes in the socio-economic

environment appeared to have had a bearing on the circum-

stances. The first was the far-reaching demographic

changes, which rapidly increased the size of the population,

particularly the cohorts in the young age group.[11] The next

was the expansion of mass education and other social poli-

cies. The Kannangara Report on Education adopted in 1944,

had been considered as a bold and radical approach to social

policy. It was followed by the Jennings Report on Social

Services (1947) and, later, the Cumpston Report on Health

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11. See, ed. Tissa Fernando and Robert N. Kearney, <u>Modern
    Sri Lanka: A Society in Transition</u> (Syracuse University
    Press, 1979), p.71.

Services (1950).[12]

In effect, the first generation of youth, which had
grown under the pace and quality of these changes became a
social force by late fifties. Growing literacy and
communication, compounded with the social impact of univer-
sal franchise sharpened political awareness among them.
From 1948 to 1952 period, however, governmental performance
proved that the political leadership which came to power at
Independence, under the UNP (United National Party), was not
different from that which held power under the 1931 Consti-
tution. On the other hand, due to structural disparities,
the mass of the population remained relatively untouched in
the political process.[13]

In contrast, after 1952, the concept of people's
participation had been a voice of Sri Lankan politics. The

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12. For details, see, Laksiri Jayasuriya, Gamini Fernando
    and Malcolm Allbrook, "Sri Lanka" in ed. John Dixon and
    Hyung Shik Kim, Social Welare in Asia (Australia,
    1985), pp.291-92; and;

    James Warner Bjorkman, "Health Policy and Politics in
    Sri Lanka: Developments in the South Asian Welfare
    State" in Asian Survey, vol.xxv, no.5, May 1985,
    pp.537-552.

13. See, Tissa Fernando, "Elite Plitics in the New States:
    The Case of Sri Lanka" in Pacific Affairs, vol.46, no.3
    (Fall, 1973), pp.361-383.

younger generation with their political awareness were not willing to pay conventional deference to traditional elite and it seemed as if time was ripe for new politics in Sri Lanka. If the emerging party system were to survive, it had to respond to call for change. In 1956, the MEP (Mahajana Eksath Peramuna - People's United Front), a coalition led by the SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) undertook this responsibility. Consequently, the rural masses, reinforced these trends by providing organizational capabilities for radical parties. The rural intelligentsia mobilized the village vote for the first time in 1956.[14] Beginning with new aspirations of the social mobilization, this process culminated in the ousting of the UNP and the landslide victory of the MEP.

This `silent revolution' of 1956 proved to be a turning point in Sri Lanka's mass politics in several ways. The concept of the `Ape Anduwa' (Our Government), a slogan which spread throughout the Sinhalese rural areas immediately

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14. See, D.K. Rangnekar, "The Nationalist Revolution in Ceylon" in Pacific Affairs, vol.xxxiii, no.4, December 1960, pp.361-374; and,

W.A.W. Warnapala, "Sinhala Nationalism in Independent Sri Lanka", in South Asian Studies, vol.13, no.2, July-December 1978, pp.20-37.

after the elections, symbolized the emergence of new aims and aspirations. The shift in political power to rural areas, growth of populist and socialist ideologies, the emergence of both, a new rural elite as well as new party organizations at the grassroots, were evident in actual operation.[15]

The period since 1956, accordingly, saw evidence of increasing politicisation of the mass, a process which had already begun when universal sufferage was granted in 1931. The mass of the population interested in competitive electoral politics because they saw a method of finding solutions to their pressing problems through it. On the other hand, with the emergence of the SLFP, the anti-UNP parties had become less hostile to each other. Consequently, they were better able to co-operate at the electoral and parliamentary levels.[16]

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15. See, C.A. Woodward, The Growth of a Party System in Ceylon (Rhode Island, Brown University Press, 1969), pp.194-203.

16. After the `no-contest' pact with the SLFP in 1956, the LSSP (Lanka Sama Samaja Party) and the CCP (Ceylon Communist Party) became less hostile to the SLFP policies. Since then until mid-seventies, almost in every election, the Marxist parties formed no-contest pacts or coalitions with the SLFP. For details, see, A.J. Wilson, "The Two Party System Wins Through", in Round Table, no.229, January 1968, pp.83-88.

As an indirect result of this context, both, the UNP
and the SLFP, proclaimed themselves `social democrats' by
late sixties. The former spoke of a state based on `demo-
cratic socialism' and the latter of a state based on `so-
cialist democracy'. Concerning this `social democratic'
ideology by the time, various demands put forwarded by the
Marxist parties and the influence of the `popular' sectors
in national politics were significant among them.[17]   In
reality, due to specific nature of problems prevalent within
the socio-economic structure, more especially , increased
socio-economic divisions accentuated even after the 1956
changes, paved the way to make the goal of socialism accept-
ed by almost all the parties.

In 1970, the UNP and the anti-UNP coalition (the United
Front, led by the SLFP) went to the polls against this

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17. For instance, immediately before 1970, Dudley Senana-
     yake drew a distinction between the `democratic social-
     ism' of the UNP with its concept of a mixed economy,
     controlled private enterprise and decentralization of
     power, and the anti-UNP coalition's objective of a
     `socialist democracy' which he insisted was a step in
     the direction of a totalitarian system. Against this,
     the Coalition's socialist democracy, according to them,
     was based on the ideology of a centralized state appa-
     ratus directing for mass benefits. There was agreement
     on the need to regulate economy, to increase government
     control of the economy and to extend the public sector
     considerably.   See, for instance, A.J. Wilson,
     Electoral Politics in an Emergent State (Cambridge
     University Press, 1975), pp.38-39, and 198.

background. The UNP claimed that it was the only party that stood for the maintenance of a democratic system of government and the only one that would protect the political, religious and cultural values of the people.[18] The United Front (UF) raised many issues which may be classified under three headings: economic, political and constitutional and, cultural. In the economic sphere, the UF's remedy for problems was a socialist programme which envisaged nationalization. In the UF's words, under the `capitalist system', economic problems would never be solved.... Only a socialist government could solve the problem'.[19] In the political and constitutional field, they were proud to abolish the `outdated', `imperialistic' constitution and `make Ceylon a Republic'. It was also considered to be the duty of the state to promote economic and social progress.[20]

As such, the problems of underdevelopment, restrained constitutional scope for rapid decisions, the nature of the

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18. See, The United National Party, Election Manifesto-1970 (Colombo, 1970).

19. See, The United Front's Election Manifesto-1970 (Colombo, 1970).

20. See, M.J.A. Cooray, Judicial Role Under the Constitutions of Ceylon (The Lake House, Colombo, 1982), pp.219-222.

gap between ideals and reality and some other emerging trends questioned the validity of the existing constitution by seventies. The UF sought a mandate to draft, adopt and operate a new constitution as the machinery for new government and they won the elections.

The JVP Uprising in 1971, only ten months after the formation of the new government, reflected the potential `back fire' of the day. The major points which most observers[21] of the JVP Uprising agree are that:

(a) The predominant number in the movement were youth aged between 15 and 25;

(b) The majority of them underwent vernacular education;

(c) They came from dominantly Sinhalese Buddhist areas;

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21. For details, see, A.C. Alles, The JVP: 1969-1989 (The Lake House, Colombo, 1990);

     Rohan Gunaratna, Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution? (Colombo, 1990);

     Urmila Phadnis, "Insurgency in Ceylonese Politics", in The Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses Journal, vol.3, no.4, April 1971, pp.582-617;

     Gananath Obeyesekere, "Some Comments on the Social Backgrounds of the April 1971 Insurgency in Sri Lanka", in Journal of Asian Studies, vol.xxxiii, no.3, May 1974, pp.367-383; and

     Mick Moore, "Thoroughly Modern Revolutionaries: The JVP in Sri Lanka", in Modern Asian Studies, vol.27, part 3, July 1993.

(d) They had a rural background; and

(e) A large number of them were unemployed or underem-

     ployed.

With these features, the uprising symbolized a new third

force in Sri Lankan politics.

    Although the government cracked down heavily on the

JVP, there were also several other initiatives through which

the government tried to meet the challenge. The framework of

the 1972 Constitution itself seemed to be a radical

departure from the previous system. Its origin was inter-

preted as an `autochthonous' or as rooted entirely in Sri

Lanka's own native soil.[22] According to the then Minister

of Constitutional Affairs, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva,

> This is not a matter of tinkering with some con-
> stitution. Nor is it a matter of constructing a
> new superstructure on an existing foundation. We
> are engaged in the task of laying a new foundation
> for a new building which the people of this coun-
> try will occupy....[23]

Furthermore, as observed by the authors of the new

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22. For explanation of Autochthonous Constitution, see,
     K.C. Wheare, The Constitutional Structure of the Com-
     monwealth (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1960), p.89.

23. Cited in, Cooray, Judicial Role Under the Constitu-
     tions, no.20, p.217.

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constitution, the Independence Constitution not only limited the sovereignty of Parliament but also acted as a brake on progressive development; and, the country needed a constitution that would be an accelerator and not a brake on progressive development.[24]

Accepting that strong government was necessary to facilitate the passage of socialist measures, they instituted a strong Prime-Ministerial Government. The guiding principle which appeared to motivate these reforms was the search for quick decisional performance with which the political executive could accelerate socio-economic development of the state. Due to problems of underdevelopment, quick decisional performance for the people and for rapid development was the general motto of the day. So, the constitution of 1972 did not embody a concept of separation of powers. The argument was that `independence' and `neutrality' were not possible in a rapidly developing society.[25]

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24. See, Cooray, Ibid., p.222; and,

   Urmila Phadnis and Lucy M. Jacob, "The New Constitution of Sri Lanka", in India Quarterly, vol.xxviii, no.4, 1972, pp.292-93.

25. Radhika Coomaraswamy, The Crisis of the Anglo-American Constitutional Traditions, no.10, pp.25-26.

However, the elections of 1977 saw a nation-wide disapproval of the policies of the UF Government. With the highest voter turn-out to the date, of 87 per cent, it brought the opposition UNP to power with a five-sixth majority. The policies introduced by the new government sought to resolve deep-rooted problems within their own constitutional framework.

The founder of the 1978 Constitution, J.R. Jayewardene, defined it as an attempt to move beyond the contradiction between liberal democracy and stability for national development.[26] The consensus-based Executive Presidential system with Proportional Representation, and, economic liberalization policies were viewed as major ingredients of stability. It ensured immediate transformation of the style of democratic participation and the quality of decision-making. As the first Executive President J.R. Jayewardene saw, it was `a very necessary requirement in a developing

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26. Cited in, W.A.W. Warnapala, "Sri Lanka in 1978: Reversal of Policies and Strategies", in <u>Asian Survey</u>, vol.xix, no.2, February 1979, pp.178-180; and see also, James Manor, "A New Political Order for Sri Lanka", in <u>The World Today</u>, vol.35, no.9, September 1979, pp.377-385.

country faced with grave problems such as we are faced with today'. Further, to him, `the UNP Government intended to fulfil all the promises that it gave to the country in establishing a `Just Society' within a new constitutional framework.[27] As expected, `...after we amend (*sic*) the constitution, it will be possible to set up machinery... to develop the country intensively....'[28]

In this context, it is clear that as in most developing countries, at every stage, constitution in Sri Lanka was expected to carry out a much heavier political burden than in Western liberal democracies. While securing their own power, governments had to fulfil new aspirations of society; promote equitable development and social justice; create a national unity; and, inculcate habits of tolerance and democracy. With these broader aspects, the use of constitutional process could not be confined to the role of a mere `watch dog'.[29]

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27. See, J.R. Jayewardene, A New Path (State Printing Department, 1978), pp.2-3.

28. Ibid., p.2.

29. For details, see, Constitutionalism, no.1, pp.160-64.

III. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND YOUTH:

In contemporary theory, the widely accepted notion is that Constitutionalism is a dynamic political process, rather than a fixed mode of distributing power, rights and duties. Constitutional legitimacy is, thus, more often validated by political and social realities than by formal legal criteria. The constitution gave primacy to law and law-making as the principal vehicle for change and reform.[30]

The Soulbury Constitution had, therefore, set the framework for politics in independent Sri Lanka. Its flexible institutional framework allowed for attempts at any constitutional transformation. Looking back on it, the SLFP and other Marxist parties were committed since 1960s to amending the Soulbury Constitution. The theme `republican status' and, the need to revise the constitution `to suit the needs of the country' were among the pledges made in this regard.[31]

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30. For explanation, see, Constitutionalism, no.1, pp.3-20.

31. See, Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Election Manifesto-1965 (Colombo, 1965), p.7; and,

    Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), vol.63, part II, December 23, 1965, col.4269 and; vol.21, January 22, 1967, col.313.

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However, until 1970, the SLFP led governments lacked the necessary parliamentary majority for changing the Constitution. Against this situation, the strength of the new balance of forces was demonstrated afresh when the UF returned to power in 1970.

Here then, there was something of a paradox. Eventhough the highly politicised and electorally powerful youth had played a major role in making governments, youth unrest and domestic violence became a part of the political life in the state after 1970s. The JVP Uprising has been described as the first large scale revolt against the government by youth in the island. It was after this uprising that the causal linkages between politico-constitutional process and the gradual escalation of political violence began to appear somewhat clearly. In facing this youth challenge, each constitutional change after 1971 was sought to be legitimised as a new framework for progressive path. At the same time, however, constitutions themselves provided necessary instruments of control such as emergency powers.

To understand this paradox, areas of the youth life and their expectations in modern society must also be explored briefly.

The term `youth' is defined as the state of being young.[32] Legislators bracket youth on the basis of age criteria. Economically, youth is a period in the life of the individual in which he develops his occupational capacities. Culturally and politically, youth is a period in which the social values and ideology of the individuals are fused and consolidated. Youth may, therefore, be considered on the social level as a period of investment.[33]

In this study, `Youth' is conceived as the age group of 14 to 35. Such a concept is based on the following considerations and requirements:

In Sri Lanka,

> (a) Compulsory education is upto 14;
>
> (b) Labour Laws consider the age of 14 as the minimum age for work;
>
> (c) Full citizenship rights are accorded at the age of 18;

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32. See, A.P. Cowie, ed., Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (Fourth edition, Oxford University Press, 1989), p.1488.

33. See, prepared by Arieh Levy, Youth in Ceylon (Sessional Paper 111, Government Press of Ceylon, 1967), pp.1-3.

(d) The period of 14 to 35 is the most turbulent in the life of the individual; and

(e) The provisions made by the state for the 14 to 35 years old, in comparison with provisions made for other age groups are far below par.

In this connection, Arieh Levy's study on Youth in Ceylon deserves attention. According to his analysis, the youth in Sri Lanka can be considered in two aspects: firstly, the individual aspect which concerns the psychological and social conditions of the youth; secondly, the social aspect which concerns society as a whole: these are the expectations of society, especially at the levels of economic, cultural and political institutions. In the individual aspect, education and employment are the most urgent needs of the youth; the state of uncertainty leads to anxiety and frustration. Consequently, such youth is exposed to the influence of negative elements.[34]

Concerning expectations of society, as Arieh Levy

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34. See, Arieh Levy, Youth in Ceylon, no.33, pp.28-29.

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stated, those expectations concentrate on state and government in power. In economic expectations, it is the youth which is expected to provide human element for expansion of agriculture and industry. In cultural expectations, the determining factor in the rate of progress of cultural revival is youth. In political expectations, youth political involvement may prove fatal not only to government but also to other institutions and social processes.[35]

The demographic considerations in the seventies called for serious attention to be given to these matters. It was necessary to win over thousands of youth and mobilize them to serve the national cause. The failure to do so could lead to their alienation and consequent rise of any anti-systemic movement. In this context, `Unrest' and its implications may be defined as dissatisfaction and as a form of collective protest action which involves disturbances either against the existing order in its totality or against some aspect of it.

The JVP Uprising provided the most dramatic manifestation of such an unrest within the Sinhalese ethnic

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35. Ibid., pp.29-46.

majority. Then, signs of rising discontent and militancy had also appeared among youths of the Tamil community. So, separate `anti-system' movements, employing violent tactics, appeared in the early seventies within each community. In generational terms, these movements were staged by the generation under 35 years of age while the political leadership of the government may be said to have been composed of the generation over 35 years of age.

The study attempts to test the following hypothesis:

Eventhough all of the constitutional changes that took place after 1971 themselves did not affect youth unrest directly, some of these changes had direct penetration with the youth unrest and expanded the unrest and violent movements in Sri Lanka.

The causal relationship between the two variables, i.e., constitutional changes and youth unrest, is reflected through the following set of prepositions:

(a) The greater the degree of development of the elite social order, the greater are the chances of success in fashioning and operating the constitutional framework in the post-independence period;

(b) The dynamic nature of challenges impinging upon the rulers, create mechanisms facilitating greater politi-

cal control and/or restore their legitimacy by readjusting the constitutional parameters in accordance with the shifts in the balance of forces;

(c) The increasingly contingent changes effecting to the constitution to suit partial/personal ruling interests weaken the ideological consensus created by the constitution in the minds of the ruled;

(d) The greater the injustice of the existing order and the higher the perception of this injustice, the larger is the possibility of unrest or a struggle for destruction/transformation of the existing order;

and

(e) The longer the experience in the working of constitutional democracy, the greater is the likelihood of its survival.

Through an in-depth analysis of the politico-constitutional and socio-economic structures of Sri Lanka, an attempt is made in the following chapters to evaluate these prepositions.

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CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND FORMATION OF LEADERSHIP

To understand the nature of constitutional process in Sri lanka, it is important to explore the context in which the legal framework came into being. The constitutional experience in Sri Lanka during the seventies was determined by both, socio-economic factors and politico-constitutional developments in the preceding period. As such, this chapter outlines the relationship between societal background and patterns of political participation with special reference to the period before 1972 changes.

The following aspects are examined for the purpose:

1. Socio-economic changes and their consequences at Independence;

2. Party system and leadership patterns; and,

3. Concepts of popular participation and Youth.

The aim is to understand the role of youth in national politics during the period.

I. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

(a) Growth of Export-Economy and Emergence of New National Elite:

The post-independence politics of Sri Lanka has been
closely related with the colonial socio-economic evolution.
Growth of modern export-economy and emergence of the new
national elite were significant in shaping this relation-
ship.

The economy of Sri Lanka at the time of independence
provided an example of classical export economy and it had
been dualistic in nature. In the words of a leading
Economist, `the export-economy' is a system in which produc-
tive activity was heavily oriented toward supplying a few
primary commodities to the world market and consumption is
largely made up of imported goods. This is often identified
with colonialism.[1]

Further, according to him, there are two identifying
features of a `dualistic' export economy: close dependence
of national income on foreign trade and operation of economy

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1.   See, Donald R. Snodgrass, <u>Ceylon: An Export Economy in
      Transition</u> (Richard D. Irwin Inc. Homewood, Illinois,
      1966), pp.4-15.

into two sectors: one modern in organizational structure and technology, producing goods for the world market; and, the other traditional in both these regards, producing for the immediate village market.[2]

This modern sector, comprising the plantation economy (first coffee, then tea, rubber and coconut) and its supporting services were well established by 1910. On the other hand, the traditional sector was confined to the village economy and was based on the production of food and handicrafts for domestic consumption. One of the notable features of this dualistic economic change was the emergence of a new national elite based on modern sector and their role in advancement of the internal political process.

Before we examine this process, it is useful to look at historical background of the social formation in Sri Lanka, with special reference to the emergence of `new national elite' during the British period. Pre-colonial Sri Lankan society was based on kinship and caste which were decided by birth. Immediately prior to the advent of the British,

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2.   Ibid. And also see,

Piayadasa Ratnayake, Towards Self-Reliant Rural Devel-
opment: A Policy Experiment in Sri Lanka (Karunaratne &
Sons Ltd., Colombo, 1992), Chapter One.

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there were three different `traditional elite' groups in Sri

Lanka, namely; the low-country Sinhalese elite, the Ceylon

Tamil elite and the Kandyan Sinhalese elite. Among them,

the former two groups functioned as principal headmen and

local notables under the Dutch rulers. And the latter

shared power with the Kandyan rulers. Physical divisions

and difficulties of communications limited close contact

between them and also accentuated the lines of cultural

distinctiveness.[3]

By the early nineteenth century, the term elite was

referred to a social formation which commanded most of what

others wanted, and, maintained an influential position that

enabled it to provide leaders. It also implied the

prevalence of a system of status evaluation which was based

on the economic power.[4]

Further to Michael Robert's explanation, in the social

hierarchy, at its apex was the British and they functioned

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3.   See, Michael Roberts, "Elite Formation and Elites:
      1832-1931", in University of Ceylon: History of Ceylon,
      vol.3 (The Apothecaries Ltd., Colombo, 1973), pp.263-
      264.

4.   Tissa Fernando, "Elite Politics in New States", in
      Pacific Affairs, vol.46, no.3, (Fall 1973), pp.362-65.

as the ruling or overlord elite. The interstices at the top and the subsidiary levels of influence were largely taken up by some of the Burghers and several indigenous groups. They constituted the traditional elite category. Besides, it was evident that the existence of several levels of influence and wealth: there were several links elements functioning at the intermediate social levels between the masses and the traditional elite groups. They could be distinguish as an intermediate elite or local elite.[5]

Until the establishment of the British power in the Kandyan kingdom, more especially until the Colebrooke-Cameran Reforms in 1833, this basic structure remained undisturbed. The Colebrooke-Cameran Reforms were significant in this context as the first British initiative for internal changes. Abolition of *rajakariya* - the ancient system of compulsory labour to the state, based on caste distinctions; acceptance of Western education; introduction of unified administrative system and uniform legal system; institution of a Legislative Council; and, framework for a *Laissez-Faire* economy, created a new superstructure for

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5. See, Michael Roberts, no.3, pp.264-65.

emerging British necessities in Sri Lanka.[6] The transition from a caste-based social system to achievement oriented system was expected with this integrated set of reforms.

The routes by which various persons and groups - including traditional elite groups - advanced to new elite status and, the social composition of the elite that emerged as a result of this process, are useful to examine further for the purpose of this study. Uneven in its diffusion, the economic and social transformation after the Colebrooke-Cameran Reforms, provided some groups with the opportunity of achieving and consolidating national elite status through two broad avenues: various fields of capital investments and economic enterprises; and, educational acquirements, generally through the English education. These two avenues were closely intertwined.[7] The pioneer native entrepreneurs, therefore, invested their money not only in plantations but also in the education of their sons. So, the second and third generations of these activities were able

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6. For details, see, G.C. Mendis, ed., <u>The Colebrooke-Cameran Papers: Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon, 2 vols.</u> (Oxford University Press, London, 1956).

7. See, L.A. Wickramaratne, "Education and Social Change: 1832 to 1900", in <u>University of Ceylon: History of Ceylon</u>, no.3, pp.165-166.

to employ their education and their social contacts to consolidate their national elite status.[8]

In addition, as Colebrooke could anticipate, the British administrative structure and the changing economy created a body of Sri Lankan administrators and professionals who gained the attributes of national elite status. The civil service was at the top of the administrative structure and provided the most coveted posts. From a variety of factors associated with British policy, only a few Sri Lankans were permitted to enter the ranks of the civil service until the second decade of the twentieth century. In addition, both, the medical and legal professions began to attract `well-to-do - Sri Lankans' from the beginning. In all these activities, English was the language of the administration and it was required for entry into the `liberal professions' of the day. Except for the Burgher community, advancement in government services seemed to have been partially dependent on patronage. The pre-British traditional elites derived great advantage from such patronage.[9]

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8.   See, Laksiri Fernando, <u>Nationalist</u> <u>Movement,</u> <u>Constitu-</u><u>tional</u> <u>Development</u> <u>and</u> <u>Birth</u> <u>of</u> <u>the</u> <u>Left</u> <u>Movement</u> <u>in</u> <u>Sri</u> <u>Lanka</u> (Deepani Publishers, Nugegoda, Colombo, 1976), Chapter One.

9.   See, Laksiri Fernando, <u>Ibid</u>., Chapter Two.

It was clear that education fulfilled a lesser role in the process of new elite formation, in comparison to the role played by the economic enterprise in plantations. However, those who emerged through these two avenues became a privileged group. They were a new national elite in that their power and prestige were based on personal achievements rather than on traditional caste or kinship. The new elite, therefore, was heterogeneous in structure.[10] This new elite encompassed something between five to eighteen per cent of the Sri Lankan adult population in the 1920s - and probably around five to six per cent - of the whole population of Sri Lanka.[11]

(b) Agitations for Constitutional Reforms:

By the late decades of the nineteenth century, the new elite organized themselves into various Associations. Accordingly, the Europeans and Burghers in Sri Lanka founded

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10. However, after Manning Reforms, ethnic, territorial and some other considerations became more important; See, K.M. de Silva, "The Ceylon National Congress in Disarray - 11", in The Ceylon Journal of Historical & Social Studies, n.s., vol.3, pp.16-39.

11. See, Michael Roberts, "Elite Formation and Elites", in ed. Michael Roberts, Collective Identities, Nationalisms and Protest in Sri Lanka (Marga Institute, Colombo, 1979), pp.153-205.

the Ceylon League by 1865. The emergence of an indigenous protest movement was evident in 1882, with the formation of Ceylon Agricultural Association. Its primary aim was to safeguard the interests of the indigenous planters, and, later it was converted into Ceylon National Association. Political activity and agitations for constitutional reforms appeared to advance with this formation and, they were coincided with their own economic interests.[12]

Gradually, they put forward claims for the introduction of territorial representation by election. However, the basic structure of the Legislative Council of 1833 - official and unofficial members nominated by the Governor - did not change until 1910. By the Royal Instructions of 1910, a new departure was made.[13] The principle of election admitted and it was based on a literacy qualification. One of the constituencies was to be composed of `Educated Ceylonese'. Meanwhile in 1916, Ceylon Reform League was formed by a group of lawyers and in 1919, the League and the Ceylon

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12. For details on Ceylon League and Ceylon National Association, see, Laksiri Fernando, no.8, Chapter Two.

13. See, A.J. Wilson, "The Crewe-McCallum Reforms: 1912-1921", in Ceylon Journal of Historical & Social Studies (Peradeniya), 1 January, 1958, pp.73-95.

National Association were merged to form the Ceylon National Congress.[14] Since then, the Ceylon National Congress (CNC) became the symbol of peaceful agitation for constitutional reforms. It had a reform programme with the ultimate objective of self-government, and, a political approach that emphasised gradualism and constitutionalism.[15]

Gradual expansion of the Legislative Council in the direction of a majority of Sri Lankan Unofficial members and, expanded elective element were granted in 1920s as response to agitations. However, the franchise was restrictive, extending to only four per cent of the whole population based on income, property and literacy qualifications. The Donoughmore Reforms in 1931, including the introduction of universal adult franchise, creation of a unicameral legislature (the State Council), and, its division into seven executive committees for internal affairs, were radical in nature comparing with the previous

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14. For CNC, see, ed. Michael Roberts, <u>Documents of the CNC and Nationalist Politics in Ceylon:1929-1950</u> (Colombo, 1978).

15. See, <u>Ceylon: Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform: 1946</u> (Ceylon Govt. Press, Colombo, 1969), Chapter 11.

context.[16]

The Donoughmore Reforms were significant in three ways in the direction of political process of Sri Lanka: acceptance of the representative government through the concept of majority rule; path of constitutional process to achieve self-government; and, emergence of a social welfare policy with the aim of electoral support for representatives. Accordingly, it was the final phase of political training of reform leaders. In 1948, this semi-responsible government was transformed into total independence by the Soulbury Constitution.

In this way, the Sri Lankan varient of Asian nationalist movement had several distinctive features of its own. One of the keynotes was the prominent part played by the peaceful reform movement within the wider theme of nationalist agitation. `Constitutionalist', `moderate' and, `conservative' were some of the terms used to describe the reformers and their political attitudes. What is common to

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16. For an account of government in the Donoughmore period, see, Charles Jeffries, <u>Ceylon</u> - <u>The path to Independence</u> (Pall Mall Press Ltd., London, 1962), pp.66-75.

them all was the emphasis given to constitutional reforms.[17]

In this context, the grant of universal franchise may be seen as the highest achievement to the advantage of the mass. More interestingly, however, several leaders of the CNC did not demand universal franchise and they saw it as putting both, the `knowledge' and `ignorance' on the same level.[18] Furthermore, until 1940s, the CNC leaders did not demand full-responsible government: for it, their agitations were focussed on progressive advance towards expanded representation for themselves.

As such, not only the transfer of power in 1948 with successive constitutional changes, but also post-independence politics of Sri Lanka have to be understood within this framework.

II. **PARTY SYSTEM AND LEADERSHIP PATTERNS**

In general, political parties in parliamentary democracy shape the electoral linkages between citizens and

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17. See, W. Howard Wriggins, Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation (Princeton, 1960), pp.106-109.

18. Cited in, C.A. Woodward, The Growth of a Party System in Ceylon (Brown University Press, Rhode Island, 1969), p.37.

policy-makers; and, party system has been defined as a major variant of liberal democratic process.

There are three distinct explanations of the recent origin of parties: Institutional theories, Historical theories and theories of Modernization and Political Development.[19] While each successive approach seeks to embed parties in theories of social and political change, they all acknowledge a common determining factor in the appearance of parties: social mobilization or the entry of the masses onto the political stage. Once politics could no longer be confined to a small circle of aristocratic elites, parties emerged as the instruments to link the centre of political power with the masses.

In this view, leadership recruitment, formation of governments, and mobilization and integration of the vote, are considered as the key functions of the party system. This general background deserves to be kept in mind in examining political parties in Sri Lanka before and after independence.

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19. See, ed. Mary Hawkesworth & Maurice Kogan, Encyclopaedia of Government & Politics (London, 1992), vol.1, pp.393-409.

(a) **Pre-Independence Party System and the UNP**:

The evolution of indigenous protest movement seemed to be the outcome of an active interest-group formation in Sri Lankan politics. However, by 1920s diverse cultural and racial streams of the elite society created an effort to articulate their separate interests. Accordingly, each group began to unite their own forces for constitutional demands.[20] As such, while various associations provided a sub-organizational base for political party construction, no parties emerged until just prior to the reform hearings of the Donoughmore Commission in 1928.

Several parties had recently been formed, mainly by anticipation of the coming reforms. In 1928, the Unionist Party was founded. The Labour Party was organized in 1927 and the Liberal League was started in 1931. They operated

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20. For detailed accounts on this background, see, The Donoughmore Report-1929, pp.18-24, 31-42, 103;
    G.C. Mendis, "The Causes of Communal Conflict in Ceylon", in University of Ceylon Review, 1, no.1 (April 1943), pp.41-39;
    J.A. Halangoda, "Our Rights for Special Consideration in the Reconstruction of the Empire After the War", in Journal of Kandyan Association, 1, no.3, (May, 1918), pp.94-95.

outside the mainstream politics of the CNC.[21] Against this background, the State Council elections of 1931, held under the universal franchise and on the basis of territorial constituencies, provided the first opportunity for a party contest. However, the election was an affair of personalities, rather than of national, party or social issues. The same situation was evident in the performance of the members in the State Council.[22]

The effect was a further decline of party system by the 1936 election. By 1936, the Liberal League and the Unionist Party had died out, and, the Labour party had declined from hopeful beginnings into little more than a personality party. The CNC was functioning, though it was much more dependent now upon its prominent personalities than were they upon it as a meaningful and popular organization.[23]

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21. In 1928, the Unionist Party was founded by Sir Soloman Dias Banadaranaike, in an attempt to unite minorities for political action. The Labour Party was organized by A.E. Goonesinha as the political extension of his trade unions. Liberal League was started by E.W. Perera in order to press for constitutional reforms: See, for more details, N.S.C. Kuruppu, "A History of the Working Class Movement in Ceylon", in Young Socialist, no.4, January-March, 1962, pp.201-205.

22. See, Woodward, The Growth of a Party System, no.18, pp.36-50.

23. For explanation, see, George Jan Lerski, Origins of Trotskyism in Ceylon (Stanford, California, 1968), pp.1-16.

In addition, several new parties had emerged: the Sinhala Maha Sabha (SMS) of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike counted several members in the State Council.[24] The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) was launched in 1934 and, it elected two of its leaders both of whom were local notables in their constituencies. Among all those parties, the LSSP had a much earlier origin than any other political party in Ceylon. The Marxist movement emerged during the Great Depression in the 1930s, and the roots of Samasamajist movement lay, therefore, in the difficulties which the English-speaking, English-educated, urban intelligentsia in Ceylon had to endure. So, the young, English-educated radicals founded the LSSP in 1935. National independence and moderate socialism were their broad aims at the time. However, the LSSP leaders also lacked intimate contact with the masses who reside in the rural areas of the country. At the same time, it could not assume the sort of `national' role repre-

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24. The SMS was a communal organization, and for details, see, G.E.P. de S. Wickramaratne, <u>Towards a New Era: Selected Speeches of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike</u> (The Department of Information, Government of Ceylon, Colombo, 1961), pp.50-59.

sentative of a wide cross-section of communities.[25]

Thus the second State Council which lasted until 1947, was also in effect a legislature without parties. In effect, the experience in the State Council left a tradition of individualism and independent action by political elite without influence of the mass of the people of the state.

Yet Sri Lanka had had three elections until the first responsible government in 1947, under the universal franchise, general elections fought on competitive party lines came only after political independence. Party organization in Sri Lanka, as such, was not able to keep pace with the rapid growth of electorate and, they did not make any impact on the mass of the population in the state.

According to some observers, the Donoughmore system based on Executive Committee system, was to be blamed for this situation. However, the intrinsic weaknesses of the CNC had more to answer for this situation than the Donoughmore structure itself.[26]

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25. See, Lerski, <u>Origins of Trotskyism</u>, no.23, pp.2-14; and Dilesh Jayantha, <u>Electoral Allegiance in Sri Lanka</u> (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.5.

26. For instance, see, ed. K.M. de Silva, <u>Problems of Governance</u> (Konark Publishers, Delhi, 1993), pp.7-8.

On the eve of independence, the conditions of the Cabinet Government demanded a party system. The political leaders realized that there had to be a party to form the first government under the constitution. Thus, the Ministers who served under the Donoughmore Constitution formed the UNP.[27] So, the task of the UNP was to ensure stability which was urgently needed at independence.[28] Further, for considerable period of time, they remained the single dominant party while continuing to operate within the parliamentary system of government.

(b) Leadership Change in 1956:

Since the organization of the UNP had combined nearly all the elements of the reform movement into one bloc, the emergence of a powerful opposition in the parliament seemed remote. The Marxist parties and several Tamil parties remained in the opposition and they did not have confidence

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27. For instance, see, W.A.W. Warnapala, Civil Service Administration in Ceylon (Colombo, 1974), Introduction.

28. See, House of Representatives, Debates, vol.x, col.698 and, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, Speeches and Writings, (Dept. of Broadcasting & Information, Colombo, 1963), p.117.

in the new political system at the time.[29]

For example, the members of the Marxist parties refused to participate in the ceremonial opening of the Parliament and stated that "25 empty chairs duly protested the independence racket." The Bolshevik-Leninist Party, for instance, wanted to organize a counter-demonstration against what they described `fake independence'. Similar position was adopted in the case of the National flag issue, and the Marxist parties described the proposed flag as a symbol of both communalism and class.[30]

In general, the Marxists considered independence to be a shame because of the British military links[31] and their

29. See, House of Representatives, Debates, vol.1, cols.116, 182, 199, 363-64, 365, and, vol.4, col.1938.

30. See, W.A.W. Warnapala, "Sinhala Nationalism in Independent Sri Lanka", in South Asian Studies, vol.13, no.2, July-December 1978, p.37.

31. During the Second World War, the British had selected Sri Lanka, particularly Trincomalee habour, as Headquarters of the South East Asia Command (SEAC) against the Japanese. With the collapse of the Japanese Empire, the strategic importance of Sri Lanka declined and the British preferred Singapore as the headquarters of their defence in the region. Meantime, decolonization and Cold war necessitated rearrangement of the British defence strategy in the Indian Ocean region and Sri Lanka was persuaded to permit Britain to use its naval and air bases by the Defence Agreements linked to the granting of Independence on 4th February 1948. See, ed. P.V.J. Jayasekara, Security Dilemma of a Small State, Part 1 (South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1992), pp.83-91; and H.S.S. Nissanka, Sri Lanka's

economic interests of the island. Marxists defined Sri
Lanka as a British Colony even after 1948, because of the
British plantation ownerships, Agency Houses, Monetary
interests and other economic activities remained
unchanged.[32] The Tamil view felt dissatisfaction because
they interpreted independence to mean only a change from
British to Sinhalese domination.[33] For the most part, these
opposition parties had no faith either in the ability of the
parliamentary system to operate democratically or in its
capacity as a political institution for solving socio-
economic problems of the state.[34]

On the other hand, the UNP refused to consider these
parties as loyal and serviceable to the parliamentary sys-
tem. In their view, the Marxists were revolutionary and

...Continued...

Foreign Policy: A Study in Non-Alignment (New Delhi,
1984).

32. For explanation, see, Articles by Andrew Roth, Times of
Ceylon, April 27 & 28, 1947, and also see,
Remarks of Pieter Keuneman, House of Representatives,
Debates, vol.1, cols.447-467.

33. See, remarks of S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, ibid., col.479
and ibid., vol.5, col.709, see also the view of the CIC
Ibid., vol.1, col.476.

34. For their views, see, Debates, vol.1, cols.116, 182,
199, and vol.4, col.1938.

anti-democratic.[35]

The break up of the UNP coalition and the formation of the SLFP by S.W. R.D. Bandaranaike, who left the UNP to form his own political organization, was important at this juncture. While UNP had rationalized its formation on the grounds of a need to provide a government for independent Sri Lanka, the SLFP justified its emergence on the basis of a need to provide a democratic alternative to that government. At the first Annual Conference of the SLFP, in December 1952, Bandaranaike stated that:

> "The appearance of our party did a great service to democracy by providing a democratic alternative to the party in power, and, by affording the people who, while being dissatisfied with the policies and programmes of the Government, wished to make a change that was neither revolutionary nor extreme.[36]

The aim of the new party, according to its manifesto, was to achieve a social democratic society through a government dependent upon the widest possible participation of the

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35. For instance, see, Bandaranaike's <u>Towards</u> <u>a</u> <u>New</u> <u>Era</u> no.24, p.42 (and) in 1951, the UNP argued that the main weakness of the parliamentary system of Ceylon was its lack of a 'democratic Opposition', see, U.P. Jayasundara, ed., <u>United</u> <u>National</u> <u>Party</u>(Colombo, 1951), p.162.

36. See, <u>Ceylon</u> <u>Daily</u> <u>News</u>, December 29, 1952.

people.[37]

In this context, only the SLFP was able to challenge the UNP within the context of the established economic, social, and political system without advocating revolutionary changes. Even though the UNP won the elections of 1952 it also confirmed the foundation of the SLFP. Since then, the opposition obtained a much greater unity, than even before. At the same time, both the Government and the Opposition could argue for the survival of a democratic system.

In 1956, two months before the general elections, the MEP came into being. It was composed of the SLFP, the VLSSP (Viplavakari Lanka Sama Samaja Party)[38] and the Samastha

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37. See, <u>Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Manifesto and Constitution</u> (Colombo, 1951), pp.6-8.

38. The first split in the LSSP occured in 1939 when majority of its members decided to pass a motion of no confidence in the Third International (Communist) and expelled the Stalinist minority group. The expelled leaders founded the CCP (Ceylon Communist Party). In 1945, leadership competition led to another split within the LSSP and splinter group formed the Bolshevik-Leninist Party (BLP). The VLSSP resulted from a further splintering of the LSSP in 1950 under the leadership of Philip Gunawardene. After the 1956 coalition, the VLSSP changed its name to Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP); See, Vijaya Samaraweera, "Sri Lankan Marxists in Electoral Politics" in, <u>Commonwealth and Comparative Politics</u>, Vol.XVIII, no.3, Nov.1980, pp.308-323.

Lanka Basha Peramuna (All Ceylon Language Front).[39] In

addition, a group of independents joined the MEP. As the

next step, they succeeded in reaching no-contest pacts with

both the CCP and the LSSP.

To all discontent groups in the society the MEP made an

appeal. Its Marxist base appealed to the leftist intelli-

gentsia and working class. Because of the 'Sinhala Only'

movement in the 'Language Issue', with claims for tradition-

al values, the Sinhalese and Buddhist nationalism incorpo-

rated. The Basha Peramuna, on the other hand, confirmed the

MEP's dedication to 'Sinhala Only' promise. A neutralist

foreign policy, reduction in the price of essential food

items, a reorganization of the education system to meet the

needs of the country, the intensification of land cultiva-

tion and the opening up of uncultivated lands, village

expansion schemes and progressive nationalization schemes

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39. The 'Language Issue' - English which was the official
    language of the state should be replaced by _Swabasha_,
    namely Sinhalese and Tamils - became more militant and
    more of a Sinhalese nationalist thinking after 1952. As
    a result, the demand for 'Sinhala Only' became more
    vocal. Accordingly, in 1955, _Basha Peramunas_ formed to
    agitate for adoption of Sinhalese as the official
    language. These groups combined into the Samastha Lanka
    Basha Peramuna (All Ceylon Language Front) by 1956. For
    details, see, Denzil Pieris, _1956 and After_ (Colombo,
    Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, 1958), pp.1-7.

were important among the MEP pledges.[40]

In fact, this 'progressive' orientation towards the mass was the main reason behind the landslide victory of the MEP in 1956. After formed the new government, the LSSP leader, Dr. N.M. Perera was elected leader of the Opposition. Thus, the Opposition also gave notice of co-operation with the MEP Government. The LSSP, for example, presented an 'Eleven Point Programme' which it hoped the Government would introduce for mass benefit.[41]

With this background, the first year and a half of its rule was MEP Government's most productive period. The implementation of the Official Language Act (Sinhalese), Administrative service reforms, the Paddy Land Act, and several nationalization schemes (schools, public transport and Ports etc.), became evident in this context. However, the Government did not intend to be a radical one that would introduce fundamental changes. Gradually, rulers recognized that 'they had to work within a parliamentary structure and that the

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40. See, Woodward, The Growth of a Party System, no.18, pp.120-22.

41. For details, see, Ceylon Observer, April 17, 1956 and, Morning Times, April 18 & April 20, 1956.

machinery of democracy inevitably slows things up'.[42] For

example, the Minister of Finance, Stanley de Zoysa said that

the MEP had not come into office 'by any kind of

revolutionary upheavals such as the Marxist Opposition

contemplate'. 'The MEP come into power through the free

votes of the people', he continued, 'and our purpose is to

adopt the opportunities that now present themselves to us

within the existing framework and ultimately to alter the

framework by democratic methods'.[43]

With this realization, co-operation between the Govern-

ment and the Marxist parties broke down. By June, 1959, the

LSSP as well as the CCP had withdrawn their support from the

Government.[44] Meantime, the assassination of the Prime-

Minister, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in September 1959, created

further chaotic situation in MEP policies by 1960's.

However, after 1956 election, elections had turned into

a choice between a UNP and anti-UNP government: Ideological-

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42. See, House of Representatives, Debates, Vol.XXV, Cols. 1593 and 1601 for details.

43. See, M. Fernando, "The SLFP : Capitalist or Socialist?" in, Ceylon Economist, (Colombo), Vol.5, 1961, pp.165-177.

44. See, House of Representatives, Debates, Vol.XXVIII, Col.55.

ly, a choice between conservative and progressive socialism.[45] After the SLFP victory in 1960, the new Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, interpreted the victory as a popular vote of confidence in policy of her late husband; and as an expression of the people's aspiration of his dedication to mass interests.[46] The new government followed further nationalization schemes with this aspiration. Nationalization of private and assisted schools; setting up of the People's Bank, State Insurance Corporation and the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, and some other institutions of interest to the voting bloc supported the mass.[47] But, with the course of time, unchanged socio-economic realities of the state had to be faced by every government. Development had to be slow and piecemeal, geared to the economic ability and potential of the island. More especially, the state did not have the capacity to finance many of the enterprises and schemes that the government had wanted to initiate. The result was the growing restlessness in sixties.

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45. Woodward, The Growth of a Party System, no.18, pp.158-59 & 253-56.

46. For statements, see, Ceylon Daily News, July 20, 1960 & Ceylon Observer, July 21, 1960.

47. See, Lucy M. Jacob, Sri Lanka : From Dominion to Republic (Delhi, 1973), pp.82-84 & Woodward, The Growth of a Party System, no.18, p.158.

Concerning the youth participation in politics during this time, institutionally, every party had formed youth leagues of their own. Among them, the LSSP leagues had been the oldest and, especially, radical student population of Colombo and other urban areas took the lead in opposition to the existing social order.[48] In January 1949, the UNP also organized a youth league that the party claimed three thousand members at its inception.[49] Within three years, the League had formed fifty-five branches in thirty electoral districts and, by 1956, according to Weerawardena, the youth leagues appeared to be considerable in their membership.[50] The SLFP had a youth league called the *Tri Sinhale Jathika Peramuna*, which in 1952 claimed seventy branch associations.[51] However, in the broader sense, the place given to youth in national politics (except voting right) was negligible during this period. This was true even in the 1956 changes when the five 'forces' that led the MEP to victory were <u>Sanga</u> (Bhikku), <u>Veda</u> (Ayurvedic doctors), <u>Guru</u>

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48. See, Lerski, <u>Origins of Trotskyism</u>, no.23, p.164.

49. See, U.P. Jayasundara, <u>United National Party - 1949</u>, (Independence Day Souvenir, Colombo, 1949), pp.27, 185.

50. See, I.D.S. Weerawardana, <u>Ceylon General Election : 1956</u> (M.D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., 1960), p.48.

51. See, <u>Ceylon Observer</u>, March 30, 1954.

(Swabasha teachers) <u>Govi</u> (Peasants) and <u>Kamkaru</u> (Labourers), and ; these five social groups were treated as '<u>Pancha Maha Balavegava</u>'.[52] In this context, Howard Wriggings claims that youth leagues "confined their activities to enlisting young men to appear at public celebrations and cheering at political meetings.[53]

Amidst rising socio-economic problems in sixties, however, all the major parties had begun to develop powerful organizations for the success of electoral politics. All the parties had their youth leagues, women's societies, trade unions and branch associations. The UNP had evolved an ideology that was mass oriented and capable of mobilizing the voters. Its main organizational effort was oriented towards the youth, and, I.M.R.A. Iriyagolla was given command of the Youth League. Under his direction a youth training programme was inaugurated for the purpose of disseminating UNP propaganda among the youth. At the youth conferences youths would attend lectures given by leading members of the party, such as Dudley Senanayake and J.R.

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52. See, <u>Ceylon Daily News</u>, April 16, 1956 and, also this has been an ideology in Sinhalese political mind.

53. See, Howard Wrigging, <u>Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation</u>, no.17, p.113.

Jayewardene, and literature would be distributed describing the ideology and programme of the UNP. By 1964, twenty thousand youths had attended these conferences and, the UNP claimed that it had recruited between twenty and three hundred youth leaders in each Sinhalese constituency.[54] The SLFP and Marxist parties further strengthened their youth organizations and Marxists were highly developed. Further to these developments, the voting age had been lowered from 21 to 18 in 1959. It was expected that this would increase the number of votes for radical parties. In addition, the Ceylon Constitution (Amendment) Bill, passed on 7th January, 1959, had increased the number of electoral districts to 145.[55] In this context, the elections of 1965, were most co-ordinated and organized with the aim of winning youth support.

In 1965, as the major organizational novelty, both the UNP and the SLFP, entered the elections with coalitions. The common factor that united the components of the UNP coalition was the antipathy toward the party in power that had led to the organization of anti-UNP coalitions since 1956.

54. See, Woodward, The Growth of a Party System, no.18, pp.165-66.

55. See, Sessional Paper XV of 1959 (Government of Ceylon), p.10.

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However, both the parties declared themselves as socialists. At the election, the vote in the Sinhalese areas was almost equally divided between the UNP and the SLFP.[56] However, the 'National Government' of 1965, led by the UNP, was a coalition of seven parties and it reflected the increasing discontent among electorates, numerically led by youth.

III. **ASPECTS OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH** :

Examining the extent to which the mass of the people were mobilized into politics, as explained earlier, the nationalist movement in colonial Ceylon did not undertake this responsibility. As a result, in independent Sri Lanka, political leadership at higher levels came from a relatively small category of urban elites.[57] About 52 per cent of the population who engaged in agricultural pursuits hardly provided a recruiting base though at the middle and lower levels, a very small part took an active interest. Even at these levels, the rural elite formed the major component of local bodies and the constituency organizations of the

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56. See, election results of 1965, Department of Elections, Results of Parliamentary General Elections in Ceylon: 1947-1970 (Colombo, Govt. Printing, 1971).

57. See, Dilesh Jayantha, no.25, Introduction.

parties.[58] Even the Marxist parties, with their longer history, trade union affiliations and organized blocs of committed voters, depended on the local influence of their elites. The emergence of a competitive party system at the parliamentary level was more important in mass mobilization in this context. As explained earlier, the SLFP was the first party to develop a profitable popular image. For the first time, the 1956 elections brought to power a new leadership with mass mobilizations. The shift of power expected the ruler's response to needs of the mass.

The concepts of popular participation and rural development needed to be given a prominent place in this situation. Since the society is heavily based on the village, programmes for rural development became more important. Its major objective was to facilitate the mass welfare at the village level. It focuses to a rise in the capacity of rural people to control their policies, accompanied by a wider distribution of benefits resulting from such a control.[59]

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58. See, Mick Moore, The State and Peasant Politics in Sri Lanka (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.1-11, 21-26.

59. See, S. Sathananthan, "Rural Development Policy in Sri Lanka : 1935 to 1989" in, Journal of Contemporary Asia, 21(4), 1991, pp.433-454.

However, for this, there was no proper machenism to carry out them at village levels. The failure to integrate the local government system into the package of constitutional reforms meant that it was allowed to operate without change.[60]

The Choksy Commission in 1955 recommended important changes in the structure, powers, and functions of the local government body and this was based on the Regional Council concept.[61] However, no attempt was made to implement them. Two main forces were characterized in marginal reforms of local government structure during this time: extension of the cumulative trends, and the accommodation of crises and problems. The first of these factors, accounted for the setting up of Rural Development Societies in 1948, replacement of Village Headmen by the Grama Sevakas in 1963, and the growth of functional staff at the village level. The second accounted for the setting up of multi-purpose cooperatives in 1956, Cultivation Committees in 1959 and the

60. For a discussion of local government institutions from British period to Seventies, See, Neil Fernando, Regional Administration in Sri Lanka (Colombo, 1973), pp.9-19.

61. See, Report of the Commission on Local Government (Choksy Report), Sessional Paper XXXIII, 1955, pp.34-35 & 204-215.

adoption of them in 1966 as the base unit for planning and implementing the agricultural programme at village level.[62] However, in practice, they were dominated by rural elite and it had been a new avenue to maintain and promote their own interests in rural areas. Thus, they had largely failed to work as participatory bodies of all sections of rural population in development activities.

By Seventies, despite the need to reform the local government structure to accelerate socio-economic change, it remained in the same form that had existed during the British time. The system underwent expansion and democratization, but no structural changes were made and this further impeded the expected development strategy of the government.[63]

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62. See, Neil Fernando, no.60.

63. For explanation, see, W.A.W. Warnapala, <u>Local Politics in Sri Lanka</u> (South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1993), Introduction.

CHAPTER THREE

NATURE OF THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH

This chapter examines the problems of youth in the light of inherited socio-economic conditions. The aim is to offer an explanation as to why a large number of youth, particularly from rural areas, expressed unrest and joined violent movements by seventies.

For this purpose, first an attempt is made to identify pre-colonial social organization and needs of the society. Subsequently, attempt is made to present a classification of social changes during British period and aspects of social mobilization. Impact of the above factors in shaping youth requirements as well as in fuelling youth frustration and unrest is then critically examined under the following themes: demographic changes and challenges; agriculture and land; education and employment; youth labour market and problem; and, services for youth.

I. PRE-COLONIAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN SRI LANKA

Like most other developing countries, Sri Lanka had a traditional society with a dominant role of the village

community and a subsistence agrarian economy.[1] In the village community, before the impact of the Western civilization, one could recognize many of the elements of the organic traditional society. Religion provided the basis for the value system and the ethos of that society. The economy was essentially the subsistence level based upon agriculture with the ancillary crafts and occupations, producing domestic requirements of the community. The society was organized on the basis of occupational castes. It was generally hierarchical in structure with a gradation of several castes.[2]

Within such a system, the socialization of an individual member, his training in a given skill, introduction to an occupation, were all indivisible elements of a single learning system. The various institutions of that society - the temple, the formal educational institution attached to the temple (the *Pirivena* School), the workplace - all combined to provide the individual member with the knowledge he needed to exist as a member in the society. The education

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1. For this background, see Piyadasa Ratnayake, <u>Towards Self-Reliant Rural Development</u> (Karunaratne & Sons, Colombo, 1982), pp.2-4.

2. For a description, see, Ralph Pieris, <u>Sinhalese Social Organization</u> (Ceylon University Press, Colombo, 1956).

consisted of occupational skills, codes of behaviour, initiation into the value system and the understanding of the ultimate purpose of his existence in terms of religion.

The social organization into which the individual was born clearly determined the cycle of his life from childhood to old age. In such a context, the transition from child-hood to adult role contained no definite separation of the learning phase from the participation in adult activities and responsibilities.[3]

The system also contained the elements which provided a continuous interaction among the adult groups themselves so that the leaders, the elders, the master craftsmen, the religious teachers and each occupational group set the standards and imparted the skills as a continuing process of learning. So, learning and work were closely linked.

It is against this integral system that European influ-ences were introduced after Sixteenth century. Whereas Portuguese and Dutch influences were marginal and mostly ephemeral, the societal and cultural consequences of British

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3.   Ibid., pp.170-174.

rule were profound and pervasive.

II. ASPECTS OF SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

(a) The Britsih Period:

As explained in the previous chapter, the Colebrooke-Cameran Reforms were significant in changing the basic structure of traditional social organization in Sri Lanka. The new framework based on the success of individualism was entrusted with the responsibility of leading the individual towards an efficient participation in society. It was a major aspect of `modernization'.[4]

The term `social mobilization' has been applied to one facet of modernization. `Social mobilization refers to a process by which members of a society, as they are brought into new patterns of social and economic interaction and increasingly exposed to education and mass communications, develop new aspirations, and adopted altered outlooks, identifications and commitments'. In this context, `altered productive activities and conditions of life create new needs and aspirations. Increasing education and exposure to

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4.   For an explanation of modernization in Sri Lanka, see, Tissa Fernando and Robert N. Kearney, ed., Modern Sri Lanka: A Society in Transition (Syracuse University Press, 1979) (hereafter Modern Sri Lanka), pp.57-70.

mass communications promote wider awareness and inspires new wants and hopes'.[5]

Looking in this way, a suggestion of the pace of social mobilization in Sri Lanka may be obtained by reference to changes that created by the commercial civilization. Although the country has remained basically an agricultural nation, several shifts in the society can be detected. Especially, education and literacy had been expanding steadily since the late nineteenth century. By 1971, literacy levels reached 70.7 per cent for females and to 85.2 per cent for males.[6]

However, in the broader sense, the competitive struggle for social mobility had also been imported into the country with the impact of modernity. So, at the beginning, only a very small fraction of the whole population was affected by the above attention. The most important aspect of this attention was based on the sector-wise context: despite nearly three-quarters of the population lived in rural

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5.　　Ibid., p.58.

6.　　See, Robert C. Oberst, `Asia' in Mary Hawkesworth & Maurice Kogan, ed., Encyclopaedia of Government & Politics, vol.11 (London, 1992), pp.1208-1210.

areas, they were relatively less affected compared with the urban sector.[7]

Except specific features of the modern plantation economy itself, monopoly of education in the hands of a small minority and its elite nature were responsible in maintaining such a situation until the Forties. During that period, primary education was state responsibility and was provided to a substantial part of the population in native languages and free of charge. It fulfilled the needs of functional literacy and numeracy. Alongside this system was the school system which imparted education in English language from primary to the tertiary levels. This English education was provided in private schools for a small privi-

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7. Sri Lanka is an island of 25,332 square miles with population of a little over 13.5 million people in 1981. The country was divided into nine provinces and 24 administrative districts in 1981. But, for the purpose of socio-economic surveys, the land had been divided into four cultural-ecological zones. In some surveys, Colombo Municipality (which falls within the Zone 1) had been treated as a separate zone. For the purpose of socio-economic studies, the country had also been divided into three sectors: Urban, Estate and Rural. Geographically, however, Wet Zone and Dry Zone were concerned: See, Marga Institute, An Analytical Description of Poverty in Sri Lanka (Marga Publication, Colombo, 1981), pp.1-11 and, 3 Maps of Sri Lanka. Appendix; A-1, A-2, and A-3, pp. 224-26 of the present study.

leged group on a fee-levying basis.[8]

Within this dual system, as explained in the previous
chapter, education protected a privileged position of a
minority and perpetuated the ineuqalities that resulted from
such a system. Accordingly, although vast social and
economic changes had occurred in the name of modernization
during the British period, many of the elements of the
traditional village community continued in rural areas even
in the early forties.[9]

The situation dramatically changed with the introduc-
tion of universal free education from kindergarten to uni-
versity in 1944. It included the openning of Central
Schools in rural areas and the adoption of *Swabasha* (mother
tongue) as the medium of instruction. The guiding principle
of these reforms was the removal of priviledge in education
and the need for equalization of opportunities for all
children in all areas. These steps opened the doors of

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8. For explanation of a number of school categories, each
   serving a particular social class, see, D.D. de Saram,
   "Social Class Differences in Education Under the Cen-
   tral School Commission", in University of Ceylon Review,
   XVII, nos.3-4 (1959).

9. See, J.E. Jayasurya, Education in Ceylon Before and
   After Independence (Associated Educational Publishers,
   Colombo, 1969), pp.66-70.

educational institutions at all levels - primary, secondary and tertiary - to the entire population of school going age.[10]

In effect, elite system was expanded and converted into a mass system of education. However, the curriculum and the objectives of the education which were geared to the small modern sector of economy did not undergo any substantial change to take into account the mass output of the system. The expanded system too, generated expectations which were modelled before the introduction of free education. Secondary and higher education had been demonstrated as the one means of upward social mobility through secure employ- ment, high income and improvement in status.[11] It was therefore inevitable that the same expectations motivated the rapidly increasing school-going population who received an opportunity for secondary and higher education through the free system. So, the expectations of social mobility affected strongly the youth and the opportunities offered by

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10. See, K.H.M. Sumathipala, History of Education in Cey- lon: With Special Reference to the Contribution made by C.W.W. Kannangara to the Educational Development of Ceylon (Dehiwala, Tisara Prakasakayo, Colombo, 1968).

11. See, D. Thenuwara Gamage, "How Did the British Colonial Policy Influenced the Contemporary System of Sri Lankan Education", in Asian Profile, vol.19, no.5, October 1991, pp.473-481.

free education produced very strong motivation at the time of independence.[12]

(b) Youth Expectations After Independence:

To identify the factors relating to development strategies and socialization of youth after independence, it requires an overview of demographic changes, their perceptions and expectations during the last three decades. The analysis attempts to throw light on the disequilibria which had grown as a result of these changes. In this context, it concerns the increasing pressure exerted by youth for social mobilization on the one hand, and, the capacity of the system to cope with this pressure on the other.

Demographic Changes:

The population of Sri Lanka had nearly doubled during the 25 years from 1946 to 1971. It rose from 6.657 million in 1946 to 12.747 million in 1971. Rates of the growth maintained an average of 2.6 per cent in Fifties and 2.3 per

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12. See, Robert N. Kearney, "Educational Expansion and Volatility in Sri Lanka", in <u>Asian Survey</u>, vol.15, no.9, September 1975, pp.727-744.

cent in Seventies.[13] Among the many consequences of this rapid increase, two can be identified which have relevance to this study: The increase in population had a significant effect on the age structure and this in turn increased the dependent segment of the population. These changes affected the size and age structure of the economically active population. The total workforce had risen from 2.9 million in 1953 to 4.4 million in 1971, an increase which was less than that for the population as a whole. The share of the age group 25-49 had declined from 29.47 of population in 1901 to 27.73 in 1971. In contrast, the young age group 15-24 had increased its share from 25 per cent to 31 per cent. Of this age group, the 20-24 year old component had increased its share from 15.4 per cent to 19.6 per cent. According to these changes, in 1971, about 60 per cent of the population was under 25 years age. The increasing proportion of the dependent population was in turn contributing to the processes which were depressing the rates of savings, investment, and growth of output and employment.[14]

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13. See, Gavin W. Jones & S. Selvaratnam, Population Growth & Economic Development in Ceylon (Hansa Publishers, Colombo, 1972), pp.192-93.

14. See, Bikas Sanyal, ed., University Education & Graduate Employment in Sri Lanka (UNESCO/Paris and MARGA/Colombo, 1983) (hereafter, University Education), pp.40-41.

Agriculture and Land:

The dualistic structure of the economy was clearly reflected in the agricultural sector even in the decades after independence. In Seventies, of the 4.6 million acres of total agricultural land, approximately, 2.3 million acres were cultivated with three principal export crops. These agricultural activities constituted the modern or plantation sector of the economy. Their scale of ownership and operations, the form of organization, methods of management, the levels of productivity, all share the characteristics of a modern, large-scale commercial enterprise. In addition, there was a sizable acreage cultivated with major crops which were in small holdings. Among them, the major portion was in coconut. The ownership of these holdings was distributed among persons who were dependent mainly on agriculture for a livelihood as well as others in the middle-class.[15]

When account is taken of small holdings, the traditional agriculture of the small farmers or rural sector

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15. See, Piyadasa Ratnayake, Towards Self-Reliant, no.1, p.57.

of the economy was most important. This sector produced mainly paddy along with various other subsidiary crops like vegetables, fruits, root crops, spices and so forth and, also, as stated earlier, some tea, rubber, coconut and minor export crops; besides, there was also some handicraft, livestock, and poultry production on a small-scale.[16]

In the economy, the rural sector was the largest in terms of people engaged; nearly three-fifths of the population was concentrated in this sector. In terms of its contribution to the national income, however, its share was negligible. Examining the conditions of the economy, there was a growing imbalance between population and resources of which the arable land was the most important. In this context, the land in Sri Lanka can be analysed in terms of two typical situations: one in the Wet zone and other in the Dry zone. The Wet zone included the southwestern coastal plain and the western portion of the central highlands, roughly corresponding to the southwestern quarter of the island. It contained more than two-thirds of the country's population on a land area which was less than one-third of the total, and, resulted in very high population densities.

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16. See, Ibid., p.58.

The Dry Zone, included the northern, north-central and eastern portions of the island and it contained less than one-third of the total population. But the land area was more than two-thirds of the country's total. (see Appendix A-2 Map).

The following two Tables attached contain selected data on land, population, and the structure of peasant holdings. Table I contains data pertaining to population changes and man-land ratios during the period 1946-1971. Table II derives the available information relating to the structure of holdings from two agricultural censuses held in 1952 and 1962. These two Tables provide the framework for an analysis of the agricultural participation during the time.

Table I

Agricultural Land and Population Density

District	Total Land Area Acres	Population		Agricultural Land Area		Desnity of Population per acre of land		Agricultu- ral Area as %age to Total Area		Density of Population per acre of Agricu- ltural	
		1946	1971	1946	1971	1946	1971	1946	1971	1946	1971
SRI LANKA	15,997,904	6,657,339	12,747,755	4,267,398	4,925,268	0.42	0.80	26.67	30.7	1.6	2.6
GROUP A:											
Colombo	506,880	1,420,332	2,699,392	416,725	376,280	2.80	5.32	81.21	74.23	3.4	7.2
Kalutara	396,960	456,572	929,185	255,571	252,352	1.15	1.83	64.38	63.57	1.8	2.9
Galle	413,600	459,785	733,258	233,384	230,670	1.11	1.77	56.43	55.77	2.0	3.2
Matara	308,000	351,947	587,005	216,132	213,446	1.14	1.90	70.17	69.30	1.6	2.7
Total	1,625,440	2,688,636	4,748,840	1,121,812	1,072,748	1.65	2.92	69.02	65.99	2.4	4.4
GROUP B:											
Kandy	584,912	711,449	1,199,977	402,163	402,686	1.22	2.05	68.76	68.84	1.8	3.0
Nuwara Eliya	303,360	268,121	456,086	170,883	176,868	0.88	1.50	56.33	58.30	1.6	2.6
Kegalle	410,880	401,762	656,712	335,712	321,655	0.98	1.59	81.65	78.28	1.2	2.0
Total	1,299,152	1,381,332	2,312,775	908,534	901,209	1.07	1.07	69.93	69.36	1.5	2.6
GROUP C:											
Matale	493,040	155,720	321,669	168,178	156,818	0.32	0.65	34.11	31.80	0.9	2.1
Kurunegala	1,179,360	485,042	1,028,048	584,698	663,214	0.41	0.77	49.58	56.23	0.8	1.5
Ratnapura	800,320	343,620	662,660	305,815	352,317	0.43	0.82	38.21	44.02	1.1	1.9
Puttalam	735,600	182,847	383,597	190,551	239,132	0.25	0.52	25.91	32.51	0.9	1.6
Badulla	696,360	297,046	619,458	227,972	218,965	0.43	0.89	32.74	31.44	1.3	2.8
Total	3,904,680	1,464,275	3,015,432	1,477,214	1,630,446	0.37	0.78	37.83	41.75	1.0	1.8
GROUP D:											
Jaffna	617,280	424,788	701,738	152,908	178,460	0.69	1.14	24.77	28.91	2.8	3.9
GROUP E:											
Hambantota	640,800	149,686	342,181	131,639	176,914	0.23	0.54	20.54	27.61	1.1	1.9
Mannar	612,800	31,538	77,319	37,750	49,350	0.05	0.13	6.16	8.05	0.8	1.6
Vavuniya	916,160	23,246	95,228	31,950	88,526	0.03	0.04	3.49	9.66	0.8	1.1
Batticaloa	609,013	203,186	259,011	92,998	139,442	0.15	0.43	15.27	22.89	1.2	1.9
Amparai	737,707	-	277,181	73,755	123,729	-	0.38	10.00	16.77	-	2.2
Trincomalee	646,960	75,926	188,411	30,866	78,764	0.12	0.29	4.77	12.17	2.5	2.4
Anuradhapura	1,783,760	139,435	388,618	138,535	242,917	0.05	0.22	7.43	13.62	0.8	1.6
Polonnaruwa	841,072	-	150,051	37,497	126,487	-	0.18	4.46	15.03	-	1.2
Moneragala	1,763,080	75,192	190,970	37,940	116,276	0.04	0.11	2.15	6.59	2.0	1.6
Total	8,551,352	698,308	1,968,970	606,930	1,142,405	0.08	0.23	7.10	13.36	1.1	1.7

Source; Compiled by the Marga Institute and reported in Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka (Colombo: Marga Publication, 1974), p.18.

Table II

(A) Agricultural Holdings below and above 50 acres

Size, Class of Agricultural Holding	No. of Holdings		Acreage		Average Extent	
	1946	1962	1946	1962	1946	1962
Holdings under 50 acres	810,877	1,163,929	2,813,126	3,125,961	3.47	2.68
Holdings 50 acres and above	5,048	5,872	1,454,272	1,540,572	288.09	262.36
Total	815,925	1,169,801	4,267.398	4,666,533	5.23	3.99

(B) Structure of Holdings below 10 Acres

	0 to less than 1				1 to less than 2				$2^1/2$ to less than 5			
	1952		1962		1952		1962		1952		1962	
	Avg Extent	%age Share	Avg Extent	%age Share	Avg Extent	%age Share	Avg Extent	%age Share	Avg Extent	%age Share	Avg Extent	%age Share
Ceylon	.59	24.4	.65	20.5	1.49	42.6	1.54	39.5	3.35	21.9	3.45	24.9
Group A	.58	28.3	.64	27.1	1.45	44.5	1.50	43.6	3.30	19.2	3.36	21.0
Group B	.60	26.9	.65	24.4	1.52	39.6	1.56	44.1	3.38	20.5	5.43	21.9
Group C	.58	23.9	.66	16.3	1.47	45.3	1.57	41.5	3.31	21.8	3.43	27.8
Group D	.65	27.9	.69	33.3	1.57	42.2	1.52	35.3	3.30	20.7	3.39	14.8
Group E	.53	14.2	.61	8.3	1.55	37.8	1.57	26.7	3.44	28.8	3.56	32.3

	6 to less than 10				1/2 to less than 10			
	1952		1962		1952		1962	
	Avg Extent	%age Share	Avg Extent	%age Share	Avg Extent	%age Share	Avg Extent	%age Share
Ceylon	5.56	11.1	6.44	5.1	2.23	100	2.56	100
Group A	6.47	8.0	6.46	8.3	1.96	100	2.07	100
Group B	7.01	13.0	6.50	9.6	2.36	100	2.21	100
Group C	6.38	9.0	6.50	14.4	2.10	100	2.63	100
Group D	6.61	9.2	6.17	16.6	2.11	100	2.11	100
Group E	6.47	19.2	6.38	32.7	2.90	100	3.71	100

Source; Census of Agriculture 1952 and 1962.

Group A = Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, matara
Group B = Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Kegalle
Group C = Matale, Kurunegala, Ratnapura, Puttalam, Dadulla
Group D = Jaffna
Group E = Hambantota, Mannar, Vavuniya, Batticaloa, Amparai,
Trincomalee, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Moneragala.

Source: Compiled by Marga Institute and reported in Non-Formal Education in Sri Landa (Colombo: Marga Publication, 1974), p.18.

Examining this land use pattern in the Wet zone, espe-
cially in paddy farming, British land policy during the
nineteenth century was directly responsible for the break-
down in traditional land use pattern: With the progress of
the plantation sector, the colonial rulers neglected the
traditional food crop sector and discriminated against it
under various laws made for the benefit of the
plantations.[17] Accordingly, already before the dramatic
upsurge of population, the agricultural potential of the Wet
Zone land had been almost fully exploited by the plantation
economy.

Accordingly, the most important characteristics of the
Wet Zone were the pressure of population on the limited
resources of the village economy, the increasing
landlessness, the limited or zero potential for the
development of new agricultural land, and, the dual
structure of holdings existed side by side with the large-
scale plantations.

This dual structure of holdings created acute problems

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17. See, Ian Vandendriesen, "Some Trends in the Economic
    History of Ceylon in the Modern Period", in The Ceylon
    Journal of Historical & Social Studies, vol.III (1960),
    pp.1-17.

of land shortage in certain parts of the wet zone. This was
most evident in those parts of the Wet Zone in the South and
Southwest, where the coconut plantations hemmed in the
village communities. A similar situation was found in the
hill country in the Central region: What would have been
forest land therefore available to the village as common
land, as the village expanded, had been appropriated and
developed into large-scale plantations by the British Crown
Lands Ordinances after 1841.[18]

The situation in the Wet Zone was therefore, largely
one of land scarcity. So, it did not provide the growing
young population with ready access to land if they sought a
livelihood in agriculture.[19]

In the Dry Zone, the situation was sharply in contrast

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18. See, Snodgrass, <u>Ceylon: An Export Economy in Transi-
   tion</u>, p.47;
   Piyadas Ratnayake, <u>Towards Self-Reliant</u>, no.1, pp.59-
   60; and
   S. Rajaratnam, "The Growth of Plantation Agriculture in
   Ceylon" in <u>Ceylon Journal of Historical & Social Stud-
   ies</u>, January-June 1961, p.3.

19. The situation, however, was not one of a straight
   'supply and demand' kind. Several factors complicated
   the land-man relationship. The demand for land and
   agriculture themselves, were influenced by the changes
   that brought about through the education and the expec-
   tations that it generated: See, <u>University Education &
   Graduate Employment in Sri Lanka</u>, no.14, Introduction.

to the Wet Zone. The land-man ratio was on an average more than eight times than in the Wet Zone. Only approximately 16 per cent of the total land area had been brought into agricultural use. At the same time, the dry zone economy did not contain the dualistic feature of the plantation and peasant economy which was evident in the Wet Zone.[20]

In a situation where on the one hand population pressures were mounting in the Wet Zone and, land was acutely scarce; and, on the other hand, was plentifully available in the dry zone, and the population thinly distributed; one might have expected a spontaneous migration from the Wet Zone to Dry Zone. However, as proven by the `Hydraulic Civilization' in ancient times,[21] this did not occur and, it

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20. See, Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka (Marga Institute Publication, Colombo, 1974), pp.18-21.

21. According to early settlements of Ceylon, Anuradapura and Polonnaruwa Kingdoms (from sixth century B.C. to thirteenth century) covered the Dry Zone Region of Sri Lanka. During this Ancient period of History, Sri Lankan economic strucure, technology base and culture had developed through a settled agriculture based on irrigation and hydraulic technology. The growth of a centralized state was also associated with the large-scale irrigation development. The provision of irrigation had become principal task and responsibility of rulers. For a detailed account, see, R.A.L.H. Gunawardena, "Social Formation and Political Power: A Case Study of State Formation in Irrigation Society", in Indian Historical Review, vol.4, no.2, 1978, pp.259-273.

had to await the intervention of the State. State had to undertake heavy capital outlays to construct major irrigation systems and develop an infrastructure to establish new agricultural settlements.[22]

Expectations of Education:

There are several developments that occurred with the implementation of free education policy which are relevant to this discussion. Modern education meant a much broader concept than it was in the traditional society. `Primary', `Secondary' and `Higher', `Formal' and `Non-Formal', were some of the terms used to describe facets of this complex domain. Viewed from a perspective of national development needs, this entire field could be seen as consisting of three major sectors: There is the school system at one end and the university system at the other. These two sectors shaped the formal education system in Sri Lanka; The third sector would cover a host of programmes of widely differing types and at various levels, cater to different age-groups, comprised the non-formal education system. Of these three

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22. See, Vijaya Samaraweera, "Land Policy & Peasant Colonization", in K.M. de Silva, ed., University of Ceylon: History of Ceylon, vol.3 (Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries' Ltd., 1973), pp.446-460.

major sectors, the largest is the School System consisting
of the primary and secondary level education. It is recog-
nized as the General Education System in Sri Lanka.[23]

The general educatin system in the Seventies was large-
ly the cumulative outcome of reforms introduced during the
preceding three decades. It controlled the most significant
learning phase in the individuals' life. However, the 1971
population census identified that the system of general
education provided education only to one-third of the
school-going population.[24] Accordingly, despite the avail-
ability of free education facilities, about half-a-million
who belonged to the age-group of compulsory education did
not attend school. It was nearly 15 per cent of the 20-24
age group. Nearly half-a-million out of primary school
meant, on the other hand, half-a-million semi-literate or
even illiterate young people within a decade. In addition,
over one million of the population had been affected by
exclusion from the general education system for the failure

23. See, Education Proposals for Reform (Ministry of
    Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher
    Education and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Employ-
    ment - 1981), Introduction.

24. See, University Education & Graduate Employment, n.14,
    p.80.

to make `grades' at various stages. It was about 30 per cent of the children belonged to the general education system.[25] The nature of selectivity gave rise to this question: There were three selection stages; the first was at the end of the compulsory educaton age: the second at the level of G.C.E. (O'Level) and the third at the G.C.E. (A'Level). It was at these integral selection stages that the future of young persons was determined. The `drop-out' section was expelled by the formal education system. In this context, the system of general education was designed to accomplish its responsibilities as those who made the grade were concerned. However, more important to examine even in this context is the fact that the enrolment in the levels of secondary and higher educations had increased six-fold during the period of 1960-1980.[26]

This rapid expansion had created as many problems as it had solved. Concerning the roots of the problem, two developments that occurred with the free education in Sri Lanka were responsible for it. First, the formal education

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25. Ibid. In addition, see, Arieh Levy, Youth in Ceylon (Ceylon Government Press, 1967), Part I, pp.17-18.

26. See, University Education & Graduate Employment in Sri Lanka, n.14, p.2.

system was imposed on pre-dominantly traditional agrarian community with new aspirations for social mobility. In practice, however, the increasing numbers were frustrated because of the inability to absorb them into the modern economic sector. This sector grew at a rate which was far too slow to receive more than a small fraction of the newly educated generation. The other factor also related to the first. Through the free education system, a large number of students received formal instruction in vernacular languages and knowledge in a range of selected subjects. But these were most often not related to the occupational needs of the economy.

In this context, after Sixties, one of the important policy shifts of the state was the acceptance that the development of the country would be dependent on the speed with which the rural sector could be modernized. Modernizing the rural sector involved, among other things (especially except free allocation of funds for rural development) transfering to it the skills, the technology and the disciplines required for raising the level of productivity. However, in practice, the general education contained little or no orientation towards this aim. Schools had become more

a medium for competition than of sound all-round education. Recommendations for the setting up of vocational and technical streams in schools had gone by default from the beginning of free education. The few attempts made to bring vocational subjects into the school curriculum had also failed.[27] Even at the Higher (University) level, only a small segment provided training for clearly identified professions.

The whole education system had been under attack during the Sixties because of this situation. It focussed the broad framework of the relationship between education and society and education and employment. Principal among them were: the lack of relevance of the content and structure of the education system with respect to the national needs; lack of confidence on behalf of the economy in institutions of educaton; increase in expectations among the students which could not be met; and, the mismatch in quantitative and qualitative terms between the output of the system and its

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27. See, <u>Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka</u>, n.20, p.3; and <u>Educational Proposals for Reform-1981</u>, n.23, Introduction, p.i.

employment ability.[28]

The efforts at a non-formal education system and a re-structured formal education system had therefore to be considered in this setting. The goals of national develop-ment had, accordingly, called for a new and different educa-tional effort in the non-formal sector, and, a transforma-tion of the formal education sector. In short, an effort to educate the whole community for development strategy of the state had to be undertaken through changes in education by Seventies.

III. YOUTH LABOUR MARKET AND PROBLEMS

During the twenty-five years after independence, the Sri Lankan economy was able to create only about one million jobs whereas the workforce increased by about 1.55 million resulting in a massive backlog of unemployment.[29] By the seventies, the general unemployment rate had reached 18 per cent of the workforce. Its incidence among youth was much

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28. See, University Education & Graduate Employment, n.14, p.6; and also
    Education Proposals for Reform-1981, n.23, p.ii.

29. See, Tissa Fernando & Robert N. Kearney, ed., Modern Sri Lanka, n.4, p.73. and also
    Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka, n.20, p.9.

higher than the general figure and was higher among the more educated than among the less educated.[30]

The age composition and the level of educational attainment of the unemployed workforce as in 1970 is shown in the following Table:

Table III

Age Composition of the Unemployed Workforce by Level of Education (`000)

	Age Group	
	15-24	25-35
Number Unemployed	451.0	69.5
Percentage	82.6	7.4
Rate of Unemployment	35.6	7.4
Educational Level (Percentage distribution)		
No Schooling	4.6	2.3
Primary	22.1	18.8
Middle School	46.8	42.2
G.C.E. (O'Level)	23.9	28.5
G.C.E. (A'Level) and over	2.9	8.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: The Department of Census & Statistics, Labour Force & Socio-economic Survey, 1969/70 (Colombo, 1971), p.81.

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30. For details, see, Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka, n.20, p.10, Table 1 and, University Education & Graduate Employment in Sri Lanka, n.14, pp.40-41.

It would be observed that, over 80 per cent of the unemployed were between the ages of 15-24 and that of this group, approximately 22.1 per cent have completed primary education: 46.8 per cent have reached the middle school and another 23.9 per cent have passed the G.C.E. (O'Level).

The distribution of the unemployed in the different sectors in the country is shown in the following Table.

Table IV

Composition of Unemployed Population

Divisions (All ages)	Number unemployed (Both Sexes)		Unemployment Rate			Educational Level Percentage Distribution					
	No. in `000	% of Total	Male	Female	Both Sexes	No School _ing	Primary	Middle School	Passed GCB (OL)	GCE (AL) & Over	Total
All Island	545.9	100.0	10.7	20.5	13.2	5.5	22.5	44.6	24.1	3.3	100.0
Sector											
Urban	115.7	21.1	13.0	31.1	16.9	2.0	18.6	52.0	24.6	2.8	100.0
Rural	379.1	69.4	10.2	27.1	13.7	4.0	19.8	45.6	26.8	3.8	100.0
Estate	51.1	9.4	10.7	3.5	7.4	24.4	52.0	20.8	2.2	0.6	100.0
Zones											
Zone 1	250.7	45.9	13.2	25.9	16.1	1.9	16.4	52.0	26.2	3.5	100.0
Zone 2	33.5	6.1	6.1	20.9	7.8	9.2	27.7	43.8	18.7	0.6	100.0
Zone 3	22.9	4.2	5.8	12.9	6.6		7.2	50.9	21.0	0.9	100.0
Zone 4	238.8	43.8	11.0	17.7	13.2	9.2	27.7	36.6	22.9	3.6	100.0

Zone 1 - Colombo, Kalutara, Galle and Matara Districts.

Zone 2 - Hambantota, Moneraeala, Amparai, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura and Puttalam Districts.

Zone 3 - Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa Districts.

Zone 4 - Kandy, Matale, N'Eliya, Ratnapura, Kegalle and Kurunegala District.

Source: The Department of Census and Statistics, Labour Force & Socio-economic Survey, 1969/70, (Colombo, 1971).

As Table shows, (Table IV) the highest rates of unemployment are recorded in the Rural sector. Concerning the Zone-wise distribution, Zones 1 and 4 - Southwest and Centre, the densely populated regions - have the highest unemployment rates.

In this background, the problem of youth unemployment had to be considered in two major aspects: Firstly, organization of the youth labour market. This was to ensure efficient placement of youth in the already available vacancies. Secondly, mobilization of unemployed youth, both, the educated and semi-educated youth, for the purpose of expediting agricultural expansion and industrial leadership. Both aspects had to be considered in the light of the full social context of the state. These had to, on the one hand, suit the needs of the individual youth but on the other, could not but constitute a contribution to economic, cultural and political progress of the state.

IV. SERVICES FOR YOUTH

The response of the labour market to severe imbalance between the availability and the demand for jobs depend on the organization of youth labour market. Because of the

important linkage of education with the economy and the acute problem of unemployment, there was a major effort in terms of planning, investment and multi-sectoral performance to ensure optimum utilization of both, human and natural resources in Sri Lanka in the late Sixties. In this regard, Arieh Levy's explanation on Youth in Sri Lanka is important. After examining specific characteristics of youth in Sri Lanka in the late Sixties, Levy had recommended several measures for the organization of the youth labour market. In his words, the guiding principle in the introduction of immediate measures had to be "available employment for youth must be distributed *with priority to the most needy of the most suitable.*"[31] In the long-term planning, according to him, a Youth Employment Ordinance was one of the prerequisities for the purpose. It had to lead to the establishment of a `Youth Employment Service'. An Apprenticeship law was another legal enactment: The main purpose was to bring about a sound basis to the `on the job' vocational training system. Institution of a National Youth Organization to achieve the broad aims of employment, vocational training, and leadership qualities was the third.[32]

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31. See, Arieh Levy, <u>Youth in Ceylon</u>, n.25, p.55.

32. See, <u>Ibid</u>., pp.54-58.

In general, all these measures had to be included in the non-formal education and training programmes. They covered a wide-range of aspects from self-reliance to training and education in skills for agricultural expansion and effective industrialization.

According to pressures, several initiatives had been taken by government by the Seventies. For the purpose of this study, they can be divided into three major sections:

(a)   Programmes sponsored and implemented by governmental and non-governmental agencies which *had a vocational content and/or were employment oriented*;

(b)   Programmes which were designed to provide education and training in socio-psychological attributes which were *essential requirements for development*; and,

(c)   Programmes which are *community development oriented*.[33]

These programmes have been classified to one of the sections in terms of their main training programmes. A brief explanation of important programmes seems necessary.

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33.   See, <u>Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka</u>, n.20, pp.57-58.

A.1 Youth Settlement Schemes:

Settlement of farmers on uncultivated lands had been going on for several decades in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka. It was a programme of `Land Alienation', a system of allocating `Crown' or acquired private land to landless peasants. The criteria of selection were mainly landlessness and the size of the family. Accordingly, a large-scale land settlement programmes had been carried out under major irrigation projects as well as on colonization schemes. Among them, the Gal Oya River Valley Development Scheme in the Eastern Province and Uda Walawe Scheme in the Southern Province were important in the Fifties. However, unemployed youth had little chance of this schemes, as the selection gave preference to landless people with large families and agricultrural experience. Provision was made later for selecting 10% of the colonists from among educated youth, but this met with little success.[34]

Against this, the Youth Settlement Scheme, started in 1966, visualized establishment of a colonization scheme purely for youth. It was jointly sponsored by the Ministry

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34. For explanation, see, B.H. Farmer, <u>Pioneer Peasant Colonization in Ceylon</u> (Oxford University Press, 1957).

of Agriculture and the Ministry of Land, Irrigation and Power. The major objectives were to create employment and to increase production at lower cost than in the earlier colonization schemes; and, to maintain economic and social equality between the members. In short, the prime objective was to introduce educated youth to agriculture under the `Green Revolution'.[35]

Among initial proposals, 235 youth schemes were to be started between 1965/66 and 1969/70, at a total cost of Rs.153 million. Each scheme would have an average of 100 members, who would clear and develop the land collectively. Later they would have the option of dividing the farm into family holdings, or continuing to cultivate as a single unit. The schemes were to be managed at district level by the Government Agent or District Land Officers. The youth were to be chosen from families with an agricultural background and members were to be formed into Co-operative Societies, which would participate in various aspects of

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35. See, A.O. Ellman & D. De S. Ratnaweera, New Settlement Schemes in Sri Lanka: A Study of Twenty Selected Youth Schemes, Co-operative Farms, DDC Agricultural Projects, and Land Reform Settlements (Agrarian Research & Training Institute, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1974), pp.ix-xiii.

running the schemes.[36]

Forty-one schemes were started in the first five years of the programme. The progress of schemes, can be considered in the light of the objectives: in the mid-Sixties, there were an estimated 200,000 unemployed youth in the age-range 19-25. However, while the Plan was to provide employment for 23,500 youth in five years, only 2,739 youth were actually absorbed. This was mainly so because only 41 schemes were started against the anticipated 235. Furthermore, some schemes were badly planned and could not take in their full number of allottees; in others, there was a considerable number of `drop-outs'; 13 of the 41 schemes, however, had achieved the income target. On the remaining, the income levels were poor and as a result, many of the youth left the schemes. In the land development, the allottees generally opted for individual holdings after the development stage was over.[37]

A.2. Agricultural Research, Education & Training:

Practical farm schools, the School of Agriculture, and

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36. See, Ibid., pp.8-9.

37. Ibid., pp.15-35.

rural youth programmes were carried out under this category. By 1968, 14 practical farm schools were established to impart training in practical agriculture to school-leaving youth. The School of Agriculture at Kundasale (in Kandy) was opened to selected students for training in the science and practice of Agriculture and Home Economics. In addition, rural youth programmes of the Agriculture Department were notable. These covered both girls and boys who had left the school and were between the ages of 15 to 25 years. It was centred round developing effective Young Farmers' Clubs. The main objectives of this programme were to orient young farmers towards scientific agriculture and the use of modern techniques; and, developing a community approach to agricultural development. In its totality, the purpose was to foster leadership from among the youths themselves. In the late Sixties, the strength of the movement consisted of about 3,000 clubs with a total membership of about 100,000.[38]

Apart from the above, there were several government departments and voluntary organizations which conducted training programmes directly related to the agricultural

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38. See, Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka, n.20, pp.68-74.

sector. Some of the more important ones were the Government Departments of Agriculture, Agrarian Services, Co-operative Department, Forestry, Land Commissioner, Irrigations, Rural Development and the River Valleys Development Board; and, non-government organizations such as the Sarvodaya Organization, the Red-Cross Society and Lanka Mahila Samithi.[39] All these departments, corporations and voluntary organizations conducted a number and variety of training programmes largely concerned with youth. Also they were related to the rural sector in general, and, to the agricultural sector in particular.

There had, however, been a lack of relatedness between these numerous programmes. Such a diversity of education and training programmes which contained different sets of objectives, tended to confuse rather than to help the people for whom they were intended.

B.1. **The National Youth Service Council**:

The National Youth Service Council was first established in early 1969. The first project was inaugurated in

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39. See, Ibid., pp.60-68, 78-82, 87-89, 125-132, 159-171 and 172-173 for detailed accounts.

April of that year. Since then, it was the national level policy making, planning and co-ordinating body on youth services in Sri Lanka.[40]

The range and scope of activities were not confined to a residual group such as the unemployed or the non-schooling. It would perform its role and functions in such a manner as to benefit all youth without exception and devoid of any sort of discrimination. Youth Service Programme focussed attention on three basic processes: namely, involvement in activities beneficial to themselves and to the nation; training and education to equip them for competent and responsible for adulthood; and, integration into economically active society.

By March, 1970, the Programme had progressed according to the planned targets. During the year, about 200 work-centres had been established at which over 40,000 youth were enrolled - with about 27,000 reporting for work on any particular day. This programme during its first year had realized Rs.2.9 million worth of development while the

40. For explanation, see, Arieh Levy, Youth in Ceylon, n.25, Part II, pp.1-20.

expenditure was Rs.2.2 million.[41]

C.1. Department of Rural Development:

The Department was inaugurated in 1947, with independence, for the following objectives: to bring about closer liaison between the people and government officials; to coordinate the activities of government departments at the village level; to harness the enthusiasm and voluntary efforts of the people for their own and for rural development. Under the programme, Rural Development Societies were formed in all rural areas, for men and women, of the island. By Seventies, there were 8,176 Rural Development Societies of which 6,676 had a membership of men only or both sexes and 1,500 had a membership of women only.[42]

V. AN ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES

The greater proportion of youth in the island's population placed a greater burden on the services. After middle-level education, the immediate need was to establish

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41.   See, Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka, n.20, pp.68-75.

42.   See, S. Sathananthan, "Rural Development Policy in Sri Lanka", in Journal of Contemporary Asia, 21(4), 1991, pp.433-454; and, Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka, n.20, pp.153-159.

a senior secondary school system which would be geared to the manpower needs of the island. But it was not effective in the broader sense. Some progress had been made in the direction with the establishment of polytechnics, technical schools and various institutions. But they were not able to meet the most pressing needs of the youth. The scarcity of scientific education facilities in the secondary level and imbalance in education became evident when education was compared with employment.

After Sixties, since the majority of the graduates were in the Liberal Arts and Humanities, the problem of `educated unemployment' was worsened. Results of the unchanged British education model were responsible for this situation. During the British period, the main purpose of expanded English education at secondary level was the training of clerks and other lower level functionaries required by the plantation economy and colonial administration. In this context, the free educational facilities provided after 1945 without restructuring both, the economy and the system of education, failed to meet the aspirations of the youth. At the same time, education was a curriculum oriented and certificate producing system without reference to the economy and its manpower requirements. In addition, while

education is in vernacular (national) languages, the operation of two language syndrome - national languages and English with a preferential position - further marginalised many of the vernacular educated youth. This situation also helped to entrench the continuance of the dual social structure dominated by the elite conversant with English language and Western values. With this background, government policies such as the `Sinhala Only' could not address to the basic problem and they were at `cross-roads' by late Sixties.[43] Ethnic alienation of the Tamil community was significant among them.

In the non-formal secotr, certain amount of ground work in youth labour services had been carried out. Very little, however, had been done to organize the youth labour market properly. For example, in the agricultural expansion schemes, there were three aspects to be considered in ensuing successful results. Firstly, consideration had to be given to the need for social planning of the new schemes; the need to improve the future of the individual farmer was to be considered imperative. Secondly, if the state expect-

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43. See, Thenuwara Gamage, "How Did the British Colonial Policy Influenced the Contemporary System of Sri Lankan Education", n.11, pp.476-78.

ed the new settlers to be instrumental in achieving the tasks ahead in agricultural expansion, it had to secure their cooperation. Cooperation of the new settlers could be secured in several ways, the most effective way was through training. Thirdly, to ensure smooth expansion of agriculture, it was imperative that a new type of agricultural leadership be promoted. The readily available candidates for such roles were the rural youth. However, due to structural disparities, and, bureaucratic influences, these changes had never taken place in youth settlement schemes or other youth services.[44]

The striking facts about the youth services during the time can be classified under three aspects, namely, they reached only a very small fraction of the youth; in most of the cases, they lacked the co-ordination on the national level; and, the lukewarm and marginal care of governments could not meet the rapidly rising needs of the youth.

In conclusion, it is clear that the move from a colonial political and socio-economic structures to the independent, development-oriented variety during the late Fifties

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44. See, A.D. Ellman & D. De S. Ratnaweera, New Settlement Schemes in Sri Lanka, n.35, pp.8-60.

and Sixties was a slow and difficult process. Accordingly, most of the structural characteristics - in economic, political and other related societal sections - of the colonial form continued to exist during the decades after independence. As such, most of the rules governing the economy's potential for development remained unchanged. Further, education soon outpaced economic development, but as in most developing societies, it became dysfunctional in a lagging economy with a high rate of population growth and growing youth unemployment. In this context, rulers were forced to search for new development strategies to meet the challenge by Seventies.

CHAPTER IV

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES FROM 1971 TO 1982

An in-depth analysis of constitutional changes from 1971 to 1982 is undertaken in this chapter. For this purpose, following themes have been discussed, namely: the JVP uprising of 1971 and response of the Government; constitutional changes in 1972 and their initiatives on youth; the change of government in 1977 and declared aims of the 1978 constitutional changes; growing social conflict and practice of the emergency rule; and, advanced Presidential election and the Referendum of 1982.

1. **The JVP Uprising and the Government's Response:**

(a) Balance of Forces and Roots of Uprising

The General Elections of 1956 marked the beginning of SLFP'S primacy in Sri Lanka for two decades. The new demarcation of constituencies, effected in 1959, worked on the principle of counting the total population of a province in computing the number of seats to which it was entitled. As a result, the Sinhalese rural voter became highly politicized and electorally powerful in making or waning governments. At the same time, ever since the rural vote was motivated by

the SLFP in 1956, it had succeeded in retaining its hold on it until the Seventies.

However, the origin and growth of the JVP in the late sixties, and its resort to armed struggle for capturing state power, implied the inability of the prevailing constitutional system to place the youth on the agenda of national politics as well as the incapability of the existing political parties to address themselves to the aspirations of youth. The political and socio-economic crisis that resulted in youth frustration and its loss of faith in the existing system; and, the failure of the traditional left in bringing about revolution or socialism in Sri Lanka were significant factors in this context.[1]

In the economy, the extension of the state control over some sectors after 1956 were not enough to solve basic

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1.   For this background see,

J. Uyangoda, "Socio-Economic Roots of Revolt" in Lanka Guardian (Colombo), Vol.4, no.3, 15 May 1981, p.17.

_____ "Origin and Evolution of the JVP" in Lanka Guardian, Vol.4, no.3, June 1, 1981, p.23.

A.C. Alles, Insurgency - 1971 (Colombo, Colombo Apothecaries' Ltd. 1976), p.28 and,

G.B. Keerawella, "The JVP and the 1971 uprising" in, Social Science Review, No.2, January 1980, pp.11-88.

problems. The change of government in 1965 also did not lead

to any improvement on the economic front. On the contrary,

1966 saw a fall in the production - as well as prices - of

the major export crops. Receipts from exports declined by 12

per cent compared with the previous year.[2]

In rural sector, the most obvious need for the benefit

of the poor was to increase their incomes. The main thrust

of economic planning of the 1965 Government had been in

agricultural reforms built around large-scale colonization

schemes. By 1967, the Government proceeded to launch the Sri

Lanka version of a 'Green Revolution' with a slogan of 'Grow

More Food'. It hoped and believed that 'equity and growth

would go hand in hand; wider dispersal of the distribution

of new assets would lead to higher GNP (Gross National

Product) growth and greater equality in personal income'.[3]

At the end, however, it was only yet another attempt for

progress within the unchanged economic structure.

There were no benefits for the landless and the unem-

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2. For instance, see, H.N. Gunasekara, "Foreign Trade of
    Sri Lanka" in, ed. K.M. de. Silva, Sri Lanka ; A Survey
    (London, 1977), pp.174-82.

3. See, Piyadasa Ratnayake, Towards a Self-Reliant Rural
    Development (Karunaratne & Sons Ltd. Colombo, 1992),
    p.25.

ployed and, other social problems. Estimated unemployment

had climbed from 370,000 in 1959 to 550,000 in 1969-70. This

was about 14 per cent of the work force or one twentieth of

the island's population. More importantly, more than 75 per

cent of the unemployed work force belonged to the rural

areas. 65 per cent of the land holdings were less than one

acre in rural areas. Out of the 72 per cent engaged in

agriculture, 26 per cent were landless and another 26 per

cent owned land, less than half an acre. 54 per cent of the

rural families were in debt.[4]

So, unemployment, decreasing agricultural production,

consequent rural poverty and indebtedness were among burning

problems that confronted the rural mass.

The seed bed of the JVP uprising flourished in this

background. By 1966, Rohana Wijeweera, who later became the

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4.   See, Central Bank of Ceylon, Survey of Ceylon's Consum-
      er Finances, 1969-70 (Colombo 1971), p.22.

      Urmila Phadnis, "Insurgency in Ceylonese Politics" in,
      The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses Journal,
      Vol.3, April 1971, no.4, pp.591-92. and

      M.A. Fernando, "Employment and Unemployment in the
      Rural Sector" in, Central Bank Monthly Bulletin,
      (Central Bank of Ceylon, Colombo, April 1971), pp.226-
      28.

leader of the JVP, had formed a group[5] and they were able to

classify problems of the country in their own theories. By

1967, this emerging movement was joined by several other

youth groups: 'Sanwardanaye Handa' (The Sound of the Devel-

opment), 'Samajawadie Sangamaya' (The Socialist Union), and

'Peradiga Sulang Kalliya' (The Eastern Wind Clique) were

notable among them.[6]

Addressing its appeal to youth, the new movement's

ideology was epitomized in a set of Five Lectures, Educa-

tional Camps and Conferences. The five lectures presented a

new and specific theory based on native problems. In the

first lecture on 'the Economic Crisis', Wijeweera explained

that the crisis was the result of colonial and neo-colonial

capitalist system which was being transformed into a politi-

cal crisis and bound to result in a great national calamity.

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5.   Before 1966, Wijeweera was a member of the CCP (Peking
      Wing). In 1965, Premalal Kumarasiri, the General Secre-
      tary of the Youth League of the Party, left it and
      formed his own party 'the National Objective'. Wijewe-
      era helped this rift and later created dissention
      within both organizations. Many of the cadres who left
      the 'National Objective' and the CCP (Peking Wing)
      joined Wijeweera. For more details; see, Judgement of
      the Criminal Justice Commission - 1976 (Govt. Printing,
      Sri Lanka) (Hereafter CJC Report). and,

      A.C. Alles, The JVP; 1969-1989, (The Lake House, Colom-
      bo, 1990), pp.5-6, 11-12.

6.   Cited in Rohan Gunaratna, Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution
      (Institute of Fundamental Studies, Colombo 1990), p.77.

The only way to escape this calamity was to abolish the system of private ownership and hasten both socialist industrialization and the collectivization of the agro-industry. In addition, Wijeweera highlighted the plight of peasant farmer. These peasants, according to him, had become landless 'as a result of exploitation by the capitalists'.[7]

As explained in the lecture on 'Independence', the country may have achieved some degree of political independence, but the economic stranglehold of foreign rule continued. In Wijeweera's words, the country neither received independence in its own meaning nor political independence, although various parties and groups tried to show so; the political independence without economic independence was merely an empty word.[8]

The next important lecture was on 'the Leftist Movement' and, its violent condemnation of the traditional left in Sri Lanka could whip the enthusiasm of young supporters. The ultimate purpose of this lecture was to draw a lesson from the unpleasant experience of the traditional left

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7.   See, CJC Report, p.118.
8.   Ibid.

movement; to understand the reasons for its failure; to avoid such mistakes and achieve the proletariat aim of building a new left movement. 'In this view, the JVP represented the New Left in Sri Lanka. Wijeweera severely criticised the traditional left, who, he alleged, had betrayed the working class by aligning themselves with the SLFP.[9]

The lectures were only used as a bridge to draw people 'from the capitalist to the Marxist way of thinking'. It was decided that after lectures were held those who showed a political interest and were ready to go ahead, should be provided with an understanding of Marxism to develop their political knowledge further and, that this should be done at Educational Camps. Conferences were to consider the practical difficulties of the movement.[10]

In this context, beginning of the Seventies had become evident that there was enough discontent and frustrations among the youth on the one hand and a strength of over 2000 members of a new youth movement, operating throughout the island, on the other.

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9.   Ibid, p.120.

10.   Ibid., pp.129-30.

When the polling date was announced - May 27, 1970 - Wijeweera issued a notice in the name of the JVP. This was the first time he gave a name to the movement he had created. The notice called the 'anti-imperialistic patriotic people to expel the unpatriotic UNP'. It also appealed to the masses to defeat the UNP by voting for the UF 'despite its being considered a reformist capitalist movement'.[11]

It was at the Second Conference of the movement - held at Dondra, near Matara - that they took these decisions. Meantime, in their Election manifesto, the UF had held out the assurance of purposeful, systematic, and fundamental changes in every sphere of activity.

The UF came into power with a two-thirds majority in the Parliament in this situation. The UF won 115 seats (the SLFP;90, the LSSP:19 and the CP:6) of the 157 elective seats alongside its right to nominate six more. The election recorded the highest percentage of voting at any general election since the introduction of universal franchise. The enfranchised 18 years old among the youth played a major

11.   Ibid. p.129 and see also, Rohan Gunaratna; A Lost Revolution, no.6, p.82.

role in this landslide victory.[12]

In forming the Government, the LSSP was given three key Ministries - Finance; Plantation Industries and Constitutional Affairs; and Communications - and the CP one - Housing and Construction. The two other important portfolios - External and Internal Trade and Industries and Scientific Research - went to radicals in the SLFP.[13]

Furthermore, the UF sought to make the Government as representative as possible in terms of ethnic, religious and social representatives.

Soon after the new Government came into power, one of the first interviews given about the JVP was by the President of the JVP's `Patriotic Students Front'. Motivations of the youth regarding their non-conformist views were highlighted under the title of "Not Guns, But Criticism". As a concluding note to the interview, the JVPer said, 'the people can not be cheated with the memorised theories of

12. For an explanation of youth performance in the 1970 election, See, Urmila Phadnis, "Insurgency in Ceylon" in Economic and Political Weekly, vol.vi, no.19, May 8, 1971, pp.965-66.

13. See, A.J. Wilson, Electoral Politics in an Emergent State; the Ceylon General Election of May 1970 (Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.181.

Marxism and Leninism in the future, and, if the Government

fails to solve the problems, the movement will definitely

bring pure socialism to Ceylon'.[14]

Confronted by the same combination of factors that had

brought down its predecessor - food, jobs, land etc. - the

Government was encouraging the launching of a new programme

to meet them. A few months after, the conviction that the

Government can not provide solutions to the pressing prob-

lems had resulted in creating 'verbal clashes' between the

Government and the JVP. Towards the end of Seventies, the

JVP criticised the new government for its inactiveness and

non-fulfillment of promises.[15]

At this stage, the JVP leaders started coming round the

conclusion that no acceptable change was possible under the

existing constitutional and structural framework.[16] The

'slow-moving' machinery of parliamentary democracy, as it

14. See, Latheef Farook, "Not Guns; But Criticism; Exclu-
     sive Interview with an Insurgent", in <u>Ceylon Observer
     Magazine Section</u>, August 23, 1970.

15. See, Robert N. Kearney and Janis Jiggins, 'The Ceylon
     Insurection of 1971' in, <u>The Journal of Commonwealth
     and Comparative Politics</u> (London), vol.13, no.1, March
     1, 1975, pp.48-51.

16. See, for details, S. Arasaratnam, "The Ceylon Insurrec-
     tion of April 1971" in, <u>Pacific Affairs</u>, Vol.45, no.3,
     February 1972, pp.362-63.

had functioned, proved unsatisfactory to them. Defining the UNP and the SLFP as head and tail of the same coin and, Parliament as a `chatter box', they started working towards a revolutionary seizure of state power.

(b) The Uprising and the Response:

Nearly all of the literature on the JVP Uprising in 1971 had identified it as an insurgent movement. Concerning this view broadly, the insurgent movements in South Asia can be grouped under two heads: the Secessionist and the anti-systemic movements. Anti-systemic movements are those which believe in a revolutionary change in the social and political order. These movements believe that the system has to be transformed by capturing state power by means of armed struggle. The JVP Uprising on April 5, 1971, falls into this category.[17]

As explained in the lecture on 'the Path Revolution Should Take', the JVP rejected the two-stage approach to

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17. See, Urmila Phadnis, "Ethnic conflicts in South Asian States" in ed., Urmila Phadnis and others, <u>Domestic Conflicts in South Asia - II</u> (New Delhi, South Asian Publishers, 1986), pp.100-101. and

    S.D. Muni, 'Dimensions of Domestic Conflicts in South Asia' in ed. Urmila Phadnis and othes, <u>Ibid</u>, pp.58-61.

democratic socialist revolution and planned instead a one-stage socialist revolution in Sri Lanka. This would be a lesson taught to them by the 'silent democratic revolution' in 1956. So, their strategy ruled out a United Front with any other social formation than the workers and peasants. In addition, they had a great faith in the student wing and, it had been named the 'Red Guard' of the revolution. Similarly, the students both from universities and schools, were prepared to sacrifice even their lives.[18]

In this way, the first armed struggle by youth in Sri Lanka was staged on April 5, 1971. In their 'revolution', the leaders had planned attacks on the Police and the Armed Forces outfits in Colombo, taking the Prime Minister, some prominent Ministers, the Chief of Police and the Service Chiefs into custody and then seizing state power. The attack on the Wellawaya police station, in the 'deep south' of Sri Lanka, was the first signal of it.[19]

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18. See, A.C. Alles, The JVP; 1969-1989, no.5, pp.301-302 and, Rohan Gunaratna, A Lost Revolution, no.6, p.94.

19. See, Charles Blackton, "Sri Lanka's Marxists" in Problems of Communism, vol.22, no.1, Jan-February 1973, p.35. and,

   A.C. Alles, The JVP; 1969-1989, no.5, pp.106-109.

On April 29, copies of a four - paged leaflet in Sinhala containing a massage from the Government to 'the young men and women gone astray' was air-dropped. In this leaflet the Prime Minister announced a four day amnesty for all those who surrendered. At the same time, the Emergency (Curfew) order was published in the Gazette Extraordinary No.14952/13 of April 5, 1971, proscribing the JVP. The Gazette Extraordinary No.14954/15 of April 23, contained the order banning the publication of nine papers.[20]

The exact number of deaths caused by the uprising can never be accurately computed. But several estimates suggest that this would range between 8 to 10 thousands. According to the Justice Minister in 1971, 18,000 were in custody in April. According to A.C. Alles, of 10,192 suspects, 92.8 per cent were from Sinhala Buddhist rural sector, between the ages of 16 to 32. The average age of an activist was 20 years. 86 per cent of them had a vernacular education

20. Almost all those Papers had brought the frustrated youth voice of the day. These were, Kamkaru Puvath (Workers' News), Janatha Vimukthi (People's Liberation), Gini Pupura (the Spark), Rathu Balaya (Red Power), Rathu Lanka (Red Lanka), Taruna Satana (Youth Struggle), Virodhaya (Challenge), Rathu Kakula (Red Bloom) and Tholilali Seydi (Worker's News).
For more details, see, Rohan Gunaratna, Lost Revolution, no.6, p.102.

through the schools located in rural areas.[21] In this context, the uprising was the manifestation of serious structural imbalances created in the preceding decades. The JVPers clandestine activities in rural areas could appeal to the rural youth because of this reality. Violent actions such as the destruction of state property during the uprising were a satisfactory and often pleasing way of realizing frustrations and unrest. In the then Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike's words, she was 'really sorry for those misguided youth who are laying down their lives through youthful folly'.[22]

However, the Government responded to it with a dual policy: On the one hand, using the security forces to meet the threat to public order and once this was accomplished, to adopt social and economic reforms in the hope that the successful implementation of these would help to marginalize anti-democratic movements.

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21. See, Gananath Obeysekera, "Some Comments on the Social Backgrounds of the April 1971 Insurgency in Sri Lanka" in, Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.111, no.3, May 1974, and,

   A.C. Alles, The JVP; 1969-1989, no.5, p.250.

22. See, Ceylon Daily News, April 10, 1971.

II. THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN 1972 AND THEIR INITIATIVES ON THE YOUTH

(a) Aspects of Constitutional Changes:

In May 1972, the UF Government got the constitution of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka adopted in which, for the first time, 'Ceylon' became the 'Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka'.

The specifics of the document and its formation were governed by the nature and extent of two events; the landslide victory of the UF in 1970 and the JVP Uprising. Especially, constitutional acceptance of the Principles of State Policy and Declaration of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, provided a clear sign of the impact of the JVP.

Principles of State Policy had been set down for guidance in the making of laws and governance of Sri Lanka. They were in the nature of instructions which the National State Assembly (NSA) or the Parliament and the Executive were expected to follow. The following Principles were important among them;

(1) The Republic was pledged to carry forward the progressive advancement towards the establishment in Sri Lanka of a Socialist Democracy; the objectives of which included,

(a)   full realization of all rights and freedoms of citizens

      including group rights,

(b)   securing full-employment for all citizens of working

      age,

(c)   the rapid development of the country,

(d)   the distribution of social product equitably among

      citizens,

(e)   the development of collective forms of property such as

      state property or co-operative property,

(f)   raising the moral and cultural standards of the people,

      and

(g)   the organization of society to enable the full flower-

      ing of human capacity in the pursuit of the good life;

and,

The state could strengthen and broaden the democratic struc-
ture of government and democratic rights of the people by
creating all possible opportunities to the people to partic-
ipate at every level of national life.[23]

      To facilitate this process, a strong form of government

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23.   See, The 1972 Constitution of Sri Lanka, Chapter V.

was instituted with the effective domination of the Prime Minister. The 'Socialist Form' was associated with the following:

(a) commitment to planned economic development within a mixed economic framework,

(b) national control over important and crucial sectors of the economy,

(c) collective or co-operative forms of ownership over wide areas,

(d) ceilings of land ownership, incomes and ownership of property, and

(e) increased popular participation in the development process through suitable organizational and institutional reforms.[24]

In this framework, socio-economic changes were guided by the Five Year Plan which covered the period from 1972 to 1976.

As stated, objectives of the Plan derived from the Socialist aspirations of the masses which elected the Gov-

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24. For details see, Radhika Coomaraswamy: Sri Lanka; The Crisis of the Anglo-American Constitutional Traditions in a Developing Society, (Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi 1984) Chapter 2, pp.32-35.

ernment into power. While the immediate social objective of the Plan was to provide employment to rural youth, it also aimed to bridge the disparities in income and living standards of the common people. In social terms, it sought to upgrade hitherto neglected strata of society - the unemployed, the urban and rural poor, the landless labourer and the small peasants.[25]

(b) Initiatives on Youth:

In the employment sector, the Government introduced a new system for recruitments. It was concentrated on newly devised District Political Authorities (DPA). A practice of securing letters from government MPs, with respect to the appointment was the most notable outcome of this change.[26]

In the long-term policies, the planned economy targeted the younger generation 'who had been gradually alienated from society'. As it explained,

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25. The Five Year Plan, Ministry of Planning & Employment, Government of Ceylon, November 1971 (Hereafter The Five Year Plan), p.21.

26. For, explanation, See, W.A.W. Warnapala, The Sri Lankan Political Scene (Navrang, New Delhi, 1993), p.15, and, pp.46-56.

over 50 per cent of the population were below twenty-one in 1971. Thus, the economic programme to be formed has to give the highest priority to the needs of this generation, if it is to preserve a social fabric based upon the values of a democratic society'.[27]

Educational changes to suit the 'world of work'; the growth of modern agriculture and industry; the expansion of the small sectors in agriculture and industry; and heavy investments on irrigation schemes; were focussed in this targeted development. In resource distribution, educational changes and land reforms were given priority. Since these were considered as vital to attract youth for the above objectives, it is necessary to examine them briefly;

Educational Reforms of 1972:

Emphasis on educational changes belonged to the overall strategy of the entire economy. Its aim was 'to shift labour from its aimless search for non-existent white collar occupations to economic activities which increase the income of the country'. On the other hand, 'educated unemployed were expected to contribute to the development of country's resources'. In short, as the youth uprising seemed to indi-

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27. See, The Five Year Plan - 1971, p.3.

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cate, education had to be looked upon as an investment in human resources which would contribute to the productivity of the economic system. In one of its documents, the Ministry of Education itself admitted that, 'the country was burdened with a set of frustrated and disillusioned youth. The education system was blamed for this situation', and, it went on to claim that, 'the educational reforms of 1972 aim at creating an education system geared to the needs of an independent sovereign nation'.[28]

Accordingly, the 1972 reforms sought to introduce radical changes in both the structure and the content of education at the primary and secondary levels. This package rested on the aim that, 'at the termination of this programme, the learner would be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are basic to the concept of general education in a modern society.[29]

As implemented, changes in the school system and curricular reforms were more important in the general education section. Abolition of streaming into three sections (Arts,

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28. Cited in, ed. Bikas Sanyal, _University Education and Graduate Employment in Sri Lanka_ (UNESCO/Paris and MARGA/Colombo 1983), p.69.

29. See, _Ibid_., p.73.

Science and Commerce) and introduction of a common curricu-

lum to the Junior Secondary level were the new innovations

of these changes.[30]

According to the reformers, these changes attempted to

remove inter-district imbalance in Science facilities and to

introduce a new Pre-Vocational Studies programme into the

curriculum of the Junior Secondary level. The ultimate

objective of this programme was to tackle the unemployment

problem among the secondary level school leavers.

For the purpose, Pre-Vocational Programme was subdivid-

ed as follows: Pre-Vocational Studies 1 & 11; Country's

natural Resources; and, Elementary Geometrical Drawing. Pre-

Vocational Studies-I, was similar to the programme of Handi-

crafts which was being taught in schools in the previous 15

years. Pre-Vocational-II was accordingly, the new entrant to

the curriculum. Vocations found in the locality of the

school were selected to be studied in the school. Cloth

Printing, Poultry Keeping, Fisheries, Motor Mechanism,

Concrete Grill Work, Fruit Cultivation and Vegetable Culti-

vation were among those Pre-Vocational Studies. In studying

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30. For a detailed account of these changes, See, _Ibid_,
    pp.69-75.

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Pre-Vocations, the student had first to be positively oriented towards the work environment in which he lived. The studies had also to be linked to the occupations having potential for modernization and development. The selection of subjects had then to form part of the whole development effort in the rural and other sectors. However, sufficient emphasis had not been given to this aspect in the design and selection of trades and occupations.

More important fact was the manner in which the nature of the organization of the school affected this programme to its curriculum. Within the outmoded and unchanged structure of conventional teaching, the curriculum itself could not bring radical changes for the expected 'world of work'.[31]

In practice, many of the selected occupations in rural schools were pursued at the time by persons with comparatively low educational attainments at a low level of technology and income. So, new attempt did not prove attractive to young school-leavers. And also, rural youth felt it as a discrimination against them in comparing with previous

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31. For instance see, Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka - A Study undertaken by the Marga Institute (Marga Institute, Colombo, 1974), pp.36-53.

Science streams. In some parents' view, this attempt had been an institutionalization of traditional 'caste-based' occupations in rural areas.

Changes in University Education
Admissions and Standardisation

During the first three decades of university education in Sri Lanka, admissions had been based on total marks gained by the candidate at the relevant examination. By Seventies, however, it proved that there were several contradictions in university education: on the one hand, free education had created a mass expansion of secondary education; on the other hand, the ratio of the university entrants had been one of the lowest in the world. The question of admission to university, especially in Science streams, had become an important issue in this context.

As a response to this demand, the Government adopted a scheme of standardization of marks between different media in 1973 and a district quota system in 1974.[32]

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32. 'Media-wize standardization' was a devise to reduce all marks to a common scale so that in the end the number qualifying from each language medium would be proportionate to the number sitting for the examination in that medium. For aspects of this policy, see,

According to the Minister of Education, standardization was an attempt to help the underprivileged rural child. As stated,

> "..... a good number of rural children who would not have gained admission on the earlier pattern, have now found places in the universities for studies in Science and Engineering....." and

> "the Government is committed to a policy of Socialism and a Socialist system of education.[33]

For the purpose, they set different 'cut off points' to regulate the quota of admissions from each ethnic group. As most of the observers have pointed out, in effect, this meant that students studying in Tamil had to obtain higher marks than their Sinhalese counterparts to enter the Science based faculties in Sri Lankan Universities.[34]

...Continued...

C.R. de Silva, "Weightage in University Admissions: Standardization and District Quotas in Sri Lanka" in Modern Ceylon Studies, Vol.5, No.2, July 1972, pp.152-178, and,

_____, "The Impact of Nationalism on Education: The Schools take-over and the University Admissions Crisis", in, ed. Michael Roberts, Collective Identities, Nationalisms and Protest in Modern Sri Lanka (Marga Institute, Colombo, 1979), pp.475-497.

33. Cited in, V. Satchithanandam, University Admissions and Standardization (Sri Parwathi Press, Jaffna, 1973), p.1.

34. For 'Out Comes' of this policy, See, Chapter V of this study.

Job-Oriented Courses in Universities:

Since 1972, a number of efforts were made by some universities to relate university education to employment. It was basically an attempt to meet the challenge posed by unemployed graduates, especially in Arts. These efforts resulted in the development of 'job-oriented' courses of study in the Arts Faculties.

The 'rationalization' scheme launched under the University of Ceylon Act of 1972, provided facilities for introducing above courses and changing university curricula. Additionally, some job-oriented courses were organized responding to requests from Ministries.

With the re-fashioning of the university curricula, about six 'job-oriented' courses of study were initiated at the Colombo, Vidyalankara (now, the Kelaniya University) and Vidyodaya (now Sri Jayawardena pura University) campuses. Among them, Colombo Campus conducted courses leading to degree in Public Finance and Taxation, Education, Estate Management and Valuation. The Vidyalankara had courses in Mass Communication, and Library Science while Vidyodaya, too, began courses in Estate Management and Valuation.

Furthermore, at the Colombo and Vidyodaya, the Development Studies Course was taught.[35]

All these changes, however, yielded no worthwhile results and, the problem remained intact. Early in 1974 itself, the Planning & Economic Affairs Ministry announced that there was no guarantee of jobs for those reading for the Development Studies Degree.[36]

Meanwhile most of the students became victims of changes in state policies and practices. For example, the Public Finance Course had been devised for meeting the Inland Revenue Department's requirements. But, owing to changes in land reform and taxation, prospects of additional recruitments had decreased, and, later this course was abandoned. Those students admitted to the Education Degree Course were equally in a bad position. The Education Department had to find placements for these students during their terminal year which was not easy as the financial situation was not good. On the whole, nearly all graduates in 'job-oriented Courses' suffered when they sought employment.

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35. See, ed. Bikas Sanyal, University Education and Graduate Employment in Sri Lankas, no.28, Chapter V.

36. See, Ibid., p.162.

In addition, since 1972, a number of efforts were made to recruit graduate teachers. In 1972, for example, under the 'Graduate Training Scheme', Arts Graduates were given teaching appointments in government school.

(c) Agricultural Expansion and Youth:

The Agricultural Plan of the government sought the possibilities of import - substitution while the export targets relied on the increase of productivity in the traditional export sector and the development of other export-oriented crops.

With those objectives, the Government adopted a new policy of `Samupakara Gammana' or co-operative Farming under the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands in 1973. It was conceived as an answer to growing rural unemployment. 'To provide employment and to offer a satisfactory earning to youth' was the main theme of the scheme.[37]

It involved offering land and capital jointly to groups of farmers. Certain Crown Lands, forests no longer needed as

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37. See, A.O. Ellman and D. De. S. Ratnaweera, New Settlement Schemes in Sri Lanka (Agrarian Research and Training Institute, Colombo, 1974), pp.63-64.

reserves, and uncultivated private lands were to be the sites of the new co-operative farms. Participants were to be selected by the Government Agent of the province in consultation with the Member of the Parliament.

At the same time, Divisional Development Councils' (DDCs) Agricultural Projects were proposed by the Ministry of Planning and Employment.[38] Besides their prime objective of employment, they were also conceived as an alternative to the disenchantment with centralized planning. The DDC concept was to be a departure from the macro-level development planning of the past and instead took planning to the villages, the 'grass-roots' level. Two important objectives - decentralization and popular participation - permeated the whole DDC idea. The function of these Councils included the formulation of development projects and the preparation of a development programme for their areas. Subsidiary food crops (chilies, onion, ground nuts etc.), poultry projects, and diary projects were undertaken in those farm projects.

Accordingly, sixty-five co-operative farms covering 14,581 acres were approved between 1971-1974. Work was in

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38. See, Ibid., pp.115-16.

progress on 43 farms by 1973 and on 52 farms in 1974. 3183 of the expected 6193 persons were found employment on these farms - 59 per cent of the target figure.[39]

In DDC Projects, by the end of 1974, 1609 projects had been approved and funds allocated. Of these, 681 were in agriculture; 844 in industry and there were 84 others. Only 1078, however, were already in operation. Their proposed employment potential was 30238.[40]

The Land Reform Law No. 1 of 1972 was another important provision. Its purpose was to fix a new ceiling - 25 acres for paddy land and 50 acres for other agricultural land - on the amount any one person or private company could own.[41] All land in excess was to be nationalized and vested in Land Reform Commission (LRC). Declared objectives of the law were; to increase employment and productivity, to decrease disparities in landholding and wealth, and, to contribute to

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39. See, Ibid., pp.65-66.

40. Ibid., p.116.

41. The Law stated that the land would be alienated by way of sale, exchange, rent purchase or lease, for agricultural development or animal husbandry, or, for a cooperative or collective farm, or for building or public purposes. It might be alienated to eligible persons, institutions or state corporations. It gave two years for alienation. See, Land Reform Law, Section 22.

the restructuring of society towards socialism - As stated in the Constitution, paragraph 16 (2).

Between 1972 and 1974, about 563,411 acres of land were taken over by the LRC.[42] The scheme of Co-operative Settlements or `Janawasa' was initiated with this law. *Janawasa* were established in various parts of south-west and central Sri Lanka. In `Janawasa' land rights, whole estate belonged collectively to members, and, individual homesteads of not less than 1/8 acre would be allocated.

By 1974, 18 Co-operative Settlements or `Janawasa' had been started. However, nor did land reform make an appreciable impact on 'land hunger' or 'youth employment'. During the decade from 1972 to 1982, only 113,950 acres were distributed to the landless.[43]

As a whole, the agrarian programme concentrated primarily on redistribution and nationalization. However, there had been serious shortcomings in the operation. So, their contribution to overall increase in agricultural production

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42.   See, A.O. Ellman and D. De S. Ratnaweera, New Settlement Schemes, no.37, pp.150-151.

43.   See, C.R. de Silva, Sri Lanka (Vikas Publishing House, 1987), p.278.

and employment had been negligible.[44]

The government under the Constitution of 1972 was pledged to radical economic reform; and, the Principles of State Policy were to provide guidelines for such reforms. There were four major pieces of legislation which reflected this new ideology. The first was the extension of the Criminal Justice Commission's power to deal with `currency' offenses and black-marketing. Economic crimes were seen as Acts against the State, akin to treason. The second was the Land Reform Act which attacked the primary basis of privilege-land holdings. It was noted that in 1971, 5500 land owners owned 1.2 million acres. This was augmented by the Land Acquisition Act which permitted the state to utilize private property for public purpose, and the Agricultural Productivity Act which set standards of productivity with the threat of confiscation. Thirdly, the government established a ceiling on disposable incomes, enforced compulsory savings and imposed harsh tax rates (nearly 75%) on the high income brackets. Fourthly, the government enacted the Business Undertaking Acquisition Act of 1972 which empowered the

44.   See, Piyadasa Ratnayake, Towards Self-Reliant Rural Development, no.3, Chapter 2, pp.57-122 for an economic aspect of these shortcomings.

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government to take over any business concern if it was in the public interests.[45]

However, the actual implementation of such policies exposed their limits and practical hurdles. The policies of redistribution were also not matched by economic growth or increased national production. In fact, the period of the 1972 Constitution were years of 'economic decline'. Low growth, lack of production, high unemployment, serious balance of payment deficits, etc, characterized the 'supply-side' of the economic life. The Principles of State Policy were not able to address the question of production and dynamic change within the unchanged economic structure. Yet it was understood that redistribution without growth often led to a general sense of stagnation and decay in a develop-ing society.[46]

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45. See, Satchi Ponnambalam, Dependent Capitalism in Crisis: The Sri Lankan Economy; 1948 to 1980 (Zed Press, London, 1980), pp.135-40.

46. See, P.V. J. Jayasekera, "Sri Lanka in 1976: Changing Strategies and Confrontation" in Asian Survey, Vol.17, no.2, February 1977, pp.208-217.

III. CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT AND THE 1978 CONSTITUTION

(a) General Elections of 1977:

The 1972 Constitution had legitimised the UF Government in power for two more years. Accordingly, after seven years of the Government, on the 20th July 1977, Sri Lanka experienced the next General Elections for a new government.

The size of the electorate had become larger than at the last election and contained 168 seats - an increase of 17 seats. The voting population had also grown by an additional 1,162,557 voters giving a total of 6.3 million voters. The new voters, approximately, 16 per cent of the registered voters, represented the young people, most of whom were unemployed. Demographically, the population itself was relatively young and, consequently, nearly two-fifth of the voting population were under 30 years of age.[47]

The government's main theme of the campaign was to parade its achievements on the domestic and foreign fronts. Especially after the successful conclusion of the Non-Aligned Conference in Colombo in 1976, some Ministers made speeches stating that elections were a waste of time and the

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47. See, Satchi Ponnambalam, Dependent Capitalism in Crisis, no.45, p.129.

people wanted the SLFP to continue in power. On the domestic

issues, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike argued that

she had enhanced the social and material well-being of

peasants and workers by her rural and agricultural policies.

She described economic hardships as temporary and promised

to tackle these more in her next government.[48]

On the other hand, there were five major campaign

issues as highlighted by the opposition UNP. They were the

family nepotism of the Bandaranaike clan, corruption of the

Government, misuse of political power, intractable economic

problems and the problems of the youth.[49]

By this time, of Sri Lanka's population of thirteen and

half a million, more than one million were unemployed and

the majority of these were estimated to be between 18 to 24

years of age. In this context, the reorganization of the

party at grass-roots level and the refurbishing of the party

machinery was carried out with remarkable thoroughness by

the UNP to win this youth. By June 1977, one million persons

had joined the party through the membership drive and there

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48.   See, The SLFP Election Manifesto 1977 (Colombo, 1977).

49.   A Programme of Action to Create A Just and Free Socie-
      ty : UNP Election Manifesto 1977, pp.5-6.

were 1400 active branches of the party spread throughout the island.[50] The youth Leagues were especially well-organized under relatively young leaders such as Gamini Dissanayake and Lalith Athulathmudali. As J.R. Jayewardene himself stated in the election campaign, "The UNP is no longer a party of the treasured gentry or government agents".[51] The party manifesto's effective central slogan was the creation of a `Dharmista Society' (translated by the UNP as 'a just and free society). Apart from changes in the constitution, basic changes in development strategy were promised; namely, decentralization of development, aimed at employing rural youth. The Export-Promotion Zone to be established within six months was expected to create 50,000 new jobs.[52] This Export-Promotion Zone was, in fact, pivotal to the UNP claim that the government would finally resolve the problem of unemployment, especially that of the educated youth. Among other pledges, land redistribution to the landless peasants and a crash economic development programme were important. As succour to radical youth, the UNP promised to release the

50. See, J.R. Jayawardene's Speech at an election meeting, reported in Ceylon Daily News, 3 June 1977.

51. Ibid.

52. See, UNP Election Manifesto, 1977, no.49, pp.5-12.

JVP leaders from prison.

It was in this background that the country went to the polls. The percentage of total votes cast reached the exceptionally high figure of 86% and, it brought a landslide victory to the UNP. In the political scene, it was basically a vote of protest against the government in power by almost all groups of the electorate.

The five-sixth majority of the UNP secured 140 of 168 seats in the Parliament. The TULF won 18 of the 22 seats it contested. The SLFP was reduced to a rump of 8 seats while the traditional left was routed. Furthermore, as a single party, the UNP obtained a clear majority of the popular vote; and, the TULF - who had presented 'Eelam' - emerged as the main parliamentary opposition to the UNP - both for the first time.

In this context, the election results made a turning point in Sri Lankan politics and socio-economic dynamics. It was recognized, the major problem of the day was the difficulty of keeping pace with the material needs and expectations of a rapidly growing population, particularly the youth.

(b) The 1978 Constitutional Changes:

The UNP interpreted the election results as a strong mandate to transform society and this interpretation gave rise to several inter-related experiments by the new Government. Restructuring of the political system to meet challenges; and, radical changes of the economy to solve problems were concerned as basic requirements.

> "I intend to amend the Constitution so that we may start our work on a proper footing..."[53]

was the Prime Minister J. R. jayawardene's first approach to the scene. The Second Amendment to the 1972 Constitution was tabled in the Parliament by the Prime Minister on 22 September 1977. It was treated as an urgent matter so as to enable fulfillment of UNP election pledges to the people. In the Prime Minister's words:

> "By this Amendment, the Executive power of the people will be exercised by the President, who, for the first time, will be the present Prime Minister, succeeding to the office of President. After that in the future, the President will be elected by the whole nation.[54]

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53. See, J.R. Jayewardene, _A_ _New_ _Path_ (State Printing Department, Colombo, 1978), pp.2-3.

54. _Ibid._, p.11.

Accordingly, the Prime Minister, J.R. Jayawardene, was elected as the first Executive President of Sri Lanka by the Parliament with effect from February 4, 1978. The then Deputy leader of the UNP, R. Premadasa, became the Prime Minister. The entire political system was transformed in' August 1978 to suit the Executive Presidency by the adoption of the Constitution of the 'Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka'. It put into effect from 7 September 1978.

"His Excellency" J.R. Jayawardene, the President of Sri Lanka became the Head of the State, the Head of the Executive and of the Government and commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The President holds the seat for a fixed six year term, and, he is not answerable to the elected legislature.[55]

The founder of the Executive Presidency, J.R. Jayawardene, had long argued that the old system, based on the Westminster model, was too responsive to the often shifting winds of opinion which prevented sustained policies neces-

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55. See, The 1978 Constitution of Sri Lanka, Chapter V.

sary for the long-term development of the country.[56] In this respect, he had two basic goals in mind: a search for executive stability and an anxiety to create consensus politics.

In most observers' views, both goals were in General de Gaulle's mind when he was modelling the Fifth French Republic. Further to them, another striking similarity appears on the economic front : having signed the Rome Treaty in 1957, General de Gaulle did not dare to liberalize the economy in order to fulfill its international commitments. Similarly, with his four decades experience of parliamentary democracy, J.R. Jayawardene also took a sharp break from the previous economic policy towards a market-oriented economic system. In addition, like de Gaulle, he brought as much personal authority to the Presidency as he gained from the formal powers of office. In this context, the 1978 Constitution is defined as the Gaullist System in Asia.[57]

The second significant feature of the Constitution was

56.   See, <u>Hansard - National State Assembly</u>, 23rd September 1977, col.1219. and,

      J.R. Jayawardene, "Parliamentary Democracy" in, <u>The Parliamentarian</u>, Vol.LII, no.3, July 1971, p.193.

57.   See, A.J. Wilson, "The Presidential idea of Constitutions in South Asia" in, <u>Contemporary South Asia</u>, vol.1, no.1, 1992, pp.41-55.

the introduction of Proportional Representation for future parliaments and local authorities. According to this system, each party has to draw up lists for each electoral district, individuals being declared elected according to the proportion of votes polled by the party, reading down from the top of the list. This meant that parliament was to be representative of the voters. Political stability and development of the country as a whole were the declared aims of the Proportional Representation (PR) system.

The PR System also abolished the need for by elections. Its justification was that since representatives were elected by their membership of a party, rather than as individuals, if there was a vacancy, this should be filled by the party.

The third major innovation was the provision of Referendum. The Referendum had a three fold role in the new Constitution. In the first place, it was an integral part of the process of constitutional amendment in the case of certain entrenched clauses. In the second place, it was a weapon in the hands of the President in the case of any conflict with parliament. Finally, the Referendum was viewed as a means of testing public opinion. The President could

call for a Referendum on any matter (other than a Bill) which in his opinion was one of national importance.

These dimensions were reinforced by an another institutional change. It was the District Ministry system or the creation of a circle of Ministers at the District level in addition to the Cabinet of Ministers.[58]

(c) **Development Programme After 1977**:

In its Election Manifesto, the UNP had promised jobs in return for votes. However, as the UNP leader had seen, the Five Year Plan of the previous government was a 'blank fire' (`Pus Vedilla') and, it had left 1,200,000 unemployed.[59] Accordingly, the objective of the new Government was to create jobs through an alternative development strategy.

As an immediate measure, a relief payment - Rs.50/- as a dole per month - was introduced for the first time in Sri Lanka to each person who was over 18 and unemployed, until

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58. For more details, see, W.A. W. Warnapala, "Sri Lanka's New Constitution" in, Asian Survey, Vol.XX, no.9, September, 1980. and,

   C.R. de Silva, "The Constitution of the Second Republic of Sri Lanka (1978) and Its Significance" in, Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, Vol.17, no.2, July 1979.

59. See, J.R. Jayawardene, A New Path, no.53, p.59.

he/she found employment. Secondly, the government initiated a 'Job Bank' Scheme in March 1978. It claimed that it would be an impartial system of recruitment for public sector employments. The system provided for the centralized co-ordination of the filling of vacant positions in the middle and lower ranks of employment, in all public sector agencies through out the country, by the Ministry of Plan Implementation. Registration in the Job Bank required a stipulated application forms from the MPs of the respective electorates, each of whom was issued a specified number of such forms.[60]

In long-term policy objectives, the theme of the government was the `employment through development'.

In contrast to its predecessor, the government was committed to the concept of an 'Open Economy' in which the private sector was destined to play a major role in developmental process.

Article 27(2) (f) of the Constitution prepare the ground for it on the basis that, "the establishment of a

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60. See, ed. K.M. de Silva, <u>Sri Lanka; Problems of Governance</u> (Konark Publishers, Delhi, 1993), pp.92-93.

just social order in which the means of production, distribution, and exchange are not concentrated and centralized in the State.... but are dispersed among and owned by all the people of Sri Lanka".[61]

As a preliminary measure of this regard, the first budget in November 1977, revealed the government's desire for economic and financial liberalization. The first Act of the new government was to liberalize imports. With the new strategy of import liberalization and export-oriented industrialization, it guided the economy to a free-market capitalism and, as a corollary to this, to a dependence on foreign sources to aid overall economic development. Free exchange and import controls, devalued and freed rupee, and eliminated export incentives, were directed to open the door for investments.[62]

In this context, development strategies were directed through three major avenues : large-scale development programmes, small-scale development programmes, and integrated agricultural development schemes.

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61. See, The 1978 Constitution.

62. For explanation, See, K.M. de Silva, A History of Sri Lanka (University Press of California, 1983), pp.560-61.

In large-scale programmes, there were four schemes: development of the Municipality of Colombo; the Greater Colombo Expansion Scheme from Muthurajawela to Panadure; Economic Development Zone or Investment Promotion Zone; and, the Accelerated Mahaweli River Development Scheme. As stated, development of the country to suit the 'New Era' and opportunities for youth employment were the objectives of all these schemes. The latter two were more important in this direction.[63]

Economic Development Zone:

According to the President, 'Free Trade Zone is more than a free trade zone: it is going to be an Investment Promotion Zone : Off-Shore International Banking Zone and a miniature Singapore'.[64]

The Free Trade Zone (FTZ) area was an extent of about 200 square miles on the western seaboard. The government tried to achieve two objectives with the FTZ concept: to help bring Sri Lanka into the industrial age; and, to create

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63. See, J.R. Jayawardene, A New Path, no.53, pp.23 and 73.
64. Ibid., p.23.

employment for the ever growing pool of educated youth. The government hoped for the accelerate growth in all segments of the economy with a special focus on industry and commerce.

In the manufacturing sector, there was an accent on the promotion of export-oriented industries with foreign intervention. The initiatives offered to the prospective investors included tax concessions up to ten years, lowered tariffs on imported capital goods and raw-materials, exemption from export duties and certain foreign exchange regulations, guarantees on security of investments, leases of factory sites at concessionary rates, infrastructure services within specially demarcated 'export promotion zones' and, reduction of employer obligations in labour relations.[65]

Concurrently, price-controls were removed from most manufactured products sold in the local market. To allay fears of expropriation by future governments, Article 157 of the Constitution has entrenched investment protection agreements.

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65. For details, see, W.D. Lakshman, "The Free Trade Zone in Sri Lanka" in, Logos (Colombo), Vol.19, no.2, April 19, 1980, rev. edn. October 1980, pp.41-98.

At the time FTZ was planned, it had received investment proposals capable of generating almost 16,000 jobs within a matter of weeks since its inception.[66]

However, in reality, upto 1980, most of the companies investing in the FTZ were garment industries wanting to exploit low-wage rates. Among 36 projects, 22 were for garments manufacturing and they would provide employment for only 17,239 persons. It failed to attract the great multinationals for manufacturing sector.[67]

Accelerated Mahaveli River Development Scheme:

The Mahaveli River Development Project was the largest development scheme undertaken by the government with an eye on the problem of rural development and youth employment. The original scheme was planned in the 1960's to provide irrigation for 900,800 acres of land and double the existing hydro-power capacity. The plan was designed to be completed in thirty years and the initial work had been inaugurated in 1970 during the UF government. The UNP government after 1977

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66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

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adopted the Accelerated Mahaveli Scheme which was launched in 1978. It was claimed that 'the telescoping of the Mahaveli project will make unemployment a thing of the past and the country would become self-sufficient in food and power'.[68]

Its five major projects were started between 1979 and 1982 under a new Ministry of Mahaveli Development. These five projects were designed to provide irrigation twice a year for one million acres of cultivable land 650,000 acres of new land and 350,000 acres of old land. It expected to find employment for one million people and to double the supply of electricity.[69] As such, the project expected to cover 39 per cent of the whole country.

Democratic Socialism and State Economic Activities:

The new economic strategy, in its first three years, however, was not a complete reversal of the old. But, private enterprise was allowed much greater scope. A series of

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68. See, Satchi Ponnambalam, Dependent Capitalism, no.45, Chapter VI.

69. See, J.R. Jayawardene, A New Path, no.53, p.88. and Tissa Fernando, "Political and Economic Development in Sri Lanka" in Current History, Vol.81, No.475, May 1982, pp.211-227.

tax holidays and reliefs were granted on various aspects of production, chiefly through the Inland Revenue (Amendment) Act No.30 of 1978 and, the new Inland Revenue Act No.28 of 1979. They were considered necessary for the development and resurgent of the economy.[70]

The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act No.8 of 1979 and, the Land Grants (Special Provisions) Act No.43 of 1979, gave relief to landed persons against the goals of the Land Reform Law of 1972. The Land Reform (Special Provisions) Act No.39 of 1981, constituted the most blatent reversion of the 1972 Law. Accordingly, the land alienated by the LRC could be replaced by others. Under this amendment, more fertile lands of the LRC were acquired by the former owner or government supporters.[71]

Among other changes, bus transport system was decentralized under the Sri Lanka Central Transport Board. It allowed private bus owners to operate their own bus services after twenty years of State-run services.

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70. See, W.D. Lakshman, no.65.

71. See, Ariya Abeysinghe, Ancient Land Tenure to Modern Land Reform in Sri Lanka, vol.2 (Colombo, 1979), pp.140-144.

IV. IMPACT OF CHANGES ON SOCIETY

In its objectives, 'economic liberalization' was generally taken to mean the transfer of economic functions from the State to the private sector whether directly through the transfer of state enterprises to private ownership, or indirectly, through reduced public expenditure or reduced government regulation.

Accordingly, this policy package brought a major deviation from earlier social welfare system in Sri Lanka, especially in food subsidies, health and education. In food supply, this took the form of restricting the supply of rationed and price subsidized food through a process of selective revalidation. This had the immediate effect of confining the food subsidy to a selected category[72] of the population. This measure was accompanied by a relaxation of certain controls on a range of consumer items in the retail

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72. The rice ration given as a subsidy upto the 1970s was converted into a food stamp scheme in 1979. Food stamp eligibility were limited to households earning Rs.300 or less per month. At the time of its inauguation, however, food stamps were made available to about 7.5 million of the total population (approximately 52 per cent). This meant that half of the population of the country falls into the category of poor as defined under the scheme. For details see, Piyadasa Ratnayake, Towards Self-Reliant Rural Development, no.3, pp.66-67; and foot note 14 in pp.117-118.

market.

In health, education, and other social services, reduced public expenditure and reduced government regulations led to individuals purchasing education, health care and transport from private providers at a free market price. This also meant that the poorer sections of the society were left out by the government responsibility. On the other hand, the new path of development did not focus on long-term state policies such as education in its first years. So, they did not bring changes in educational structure to meet the broad-designs of the free-market economy.

However, because of the social pressure, several steps had been taken to change the educational framework. The Curricular Reforms of 1977 abolished the Junior and Senior secondary level examinations, introduced in 1972. Instead the earlier G.C.E. (O'level and A ' level) examinations were reinstated. However, revised curriculum had retained some essential features and subjects of the 1972 reforms.[73]

In the University Admissions Policy, from 1978, media wise standardization of marks was stopped. The Open

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73. For details, see, <u>University Education and Graduate Employment in Sri Lanka</u>, no.28, pp.74-77.

University was instituted in 1979 with the view to enhance the university education.

For a number of reasons, the government had been successful in the management of political stability and economic situation until 1980's. The first reason among them was the favourable economic conditions based on export economy. Secondly, the opposition was in a total disarray both within parliament as well as out side to challenge the government policies.

Several constitutional changes which followed the Executive Presidency, showed a remarkable relationship to this situation. A key example was the use of the amendment process to the Constitution. The first Amendment in September 1978, allowed for the deprivation of civic liberties of the main opposition leader (Mrs.) Bandaranaike. The second Amendment certified in February 1979, provided for the expulsion of members from a political party: in real terms it meant that Government MPs who cross-over would lose their seats, but opposition would not: they could in fact, cross-

over and strength the government.[74]

In addition, political stability was sought through several control measures. Especially, in labour relations, the government wanted to control strikes. For this purpose, it put out a White Paper on Employment Relations by which it sought to weaken trade unions and replace them with Employees Councils. It had been implemented in the Employees Councils Act of 1979.[75]

Further legislation to control labour, had been enacted in the 1979 Essential Public Services Act, which declared

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74. See, Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka ; First Amendment to the Constitution, certified on 20th November, 1978. Printed on the orders of Government. Published as a supplement to Part II of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka of November 24, 1978; and

   Second Amendment to the Constitution certified on 26th Febrary, 1979. Printed on the orders of government published as a supplement to Part II of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka of March 2, 1979; and also,

   Radhika Commaraswamy, "Uses and Usurpation of Constitutional Ideology" in ed., Douglas Greenburg and others, Constitutionalism and Democracy (Oxford University Press, 1993), pp.159-170.

75. Cited in Satchi Ponnambalam, Dependent Capitalism in Crisis, no.45, and, also see,

   D. Wesumperuma, "Universal Franchise and Organised Labour in Sri Lanka" in, ed. D. Wesumperuma and R.P. Berndt, Forum : Journal of Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Vol.1, no.1, 1982, July-December, Colombo, pp.47-56.

certain services 'essential'. In addition, whenever trade

unions sought to ventilate their grievances by organizing

'go-slows' or demonstrations, these had been broken up by

the Police and government-backed armed groups.[76]

However, in 1980 several factors stood against the

government's stability. On the one hand, the year 1980

turned out to be the year of limits. Price-rises were accel-

erating sharply. Inflation was of the order of 35%. The cost

of essential food items had gone up over 100%. Intensifying

poverty, the widening gap between rich and poor as well as

urban and rural, and other inequitous disbursements of the

benefits of development were among the principal causes for

the instability and unrest in early Eighties.[77]

With this background, the government's first labour

challenge came in July 1980 from the Rail road Workers'

Union. However, with the support of newly adopted Labour

Laws, the Government reacted strongly to the workers' initi-

ative. As the day for a general strike approached, the

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76. For this background, See, Rajiva Wijesinha; _Current_ _Crisis_ _in_ _Sri_ _Lanka_ (Navrang, New Delhi, 1986), p.45.

77. See, _Economic_ _and_ _Social_ _Statistics_ _of_ _Sri_ _Lanka_, Statistics Department, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Colombo, 1981-82, p.56.

government declared an Emergency, which prohibited strikes in 'essential services' such as the railways and government services. It activated army, navy and air force units and prohibited strike meetings unless the organizers agreed in writing to follow highly restrictive picketing practices. Further, the government threatened that any employees who left their posts during the strike would lose their jobs. Employment officers were ordered to ready their lists of job-seekers so that replacements could be hired.[78]

As a result, the general strike collapsed. The Emergency prevailed for a month. In the meantime, the government held to the policy that those who had not shown up for work should not be reinstated. Workers were taken back only on a case by case basis.

The liberalization policies had gradually changed from 'development' to 'stabilization and adjustment' and they had been horrendous in social and human terms. A brief history of social welfare system in Sri Lanka is useful to understand this reality. Since independence, governments' preoccupation had been that political independence would be mean-

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78. See, Rajiva Wijesinha, no.76.

ingful only in the context of social and economic equality. Therefore, it required to invest in human resources as precondition for economic development. Therefore, government allocated the maximum possible funds for social services, principally for the improvement of education and health of the people. In this context, the provision of social services was considered an instrument for the promotion of economic equality and social justice. Especially, in the absence of high growth rates during pre-1977 period, the mechanism of welfare state was used for the maintenance of equity standards. The policies of subsidies, free health and free education, contributed to impressive physical quality of life and human development even at low levels of income.[79] The selectivist approach after 1977 and, structural adjustment policies, accordingly, increased the existing inequalities and affected the groups that were least able to sustain themselves. So, whatever the positive long-term consequences may be, adjustment entailed human cost and

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79. See, K.M. de Silva, <u>Sri Lanka</u> <u>:</u> <u>Problems</u> <u>of</u> <u>Governance</u>, no.60, pp.207, 259.

political risk within the poverty-ridden economy.[80] Further

reduction in the economic role of public sector, more free-

dom to private sector, and closure of sick-units had been

caused for social tensions within this background.

The White Paper on Education in 1981 had created much

concern among the youth in this situation. So, it is useful

to examine it briefly.

Education Proposals for Reform:

The White Paper contained certain reform proposals,

with the view to bring about structural changes in the

system.[81] Under the proposals, the new system, would con-

sist of three distinct segments: viz, the School system, the

University system and the Tertiary Education system.

For the administration and development of schools, they

would be grouped into School Clusters. Schools within cohe-

sive geographical areas would be demarcated as clusters for

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80. See, Laksiri Jayasurya, Gamini Fernando and Malcolm
     Allbrook, "Sri Lanka", in, ed. John Dixon and Hyung
     Shik Kim, _Social Welfare in Asia_ (Australia, 1985),
     pp.288-89.

81. See, _Education Proposals for Reform_ (Ministry of Educa-
     tion in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher
     Education and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Employ-
     ment, 1981) (Hereafter _Education Proposals - 1981)_.

purposes of better management and more rational development of schooling facilities for the areas. Each cluster would function as an administrative whole to meet the educational needs of the entire area it served. The large school which had the best potential to play such a role, would be designated the 'Core School'. The Core School of each cluster would be developed, to have superior laboratory, workshop, library, Audio-visual and co-curricular facilities which would be shared by other schools within the cluster. By this mean, it was intended to reduce educational expenditure of the State.

In some cases, separate provisions had to be made. Unitary Schools, schools in remote areas, and private schools had concerned to provide separate provisions. Accordingly, the larger schools would be left out from the school cluster scheme, on account of their size and the resources they command. They had been grouped as Unitary Schools.

Schools in remote areas which were far apart and were isolated, and therefore could not be grouped around a common focus would continue as separate units. Out side the state

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system, private schools were permitted.[82]

Next important change was in the collegiate level and university entrance (Figures 1 & 2). The university Entrance Examination would be opened only to school candidates. However, other modes of entry to the university would be instituted. In this selection, weightage would be given to work experience etc. A certain number of places might even be reserved for those with in-carrier qualifications. Those holding diplomas might also be admitted to post-graduate studies upon passing certain qualifying examinations.

In the third segment - the tertiary education system - the main focus was the Open School. An island-wide network of 'Open Schools' would be organized to provide further education on a wide-range of courses, for those of all ages who had left the formal education. One important role of the Open School would be to function as a support centre for the large majority who leave school to enter the 'world of work'. Fees might be charged from students.[83]
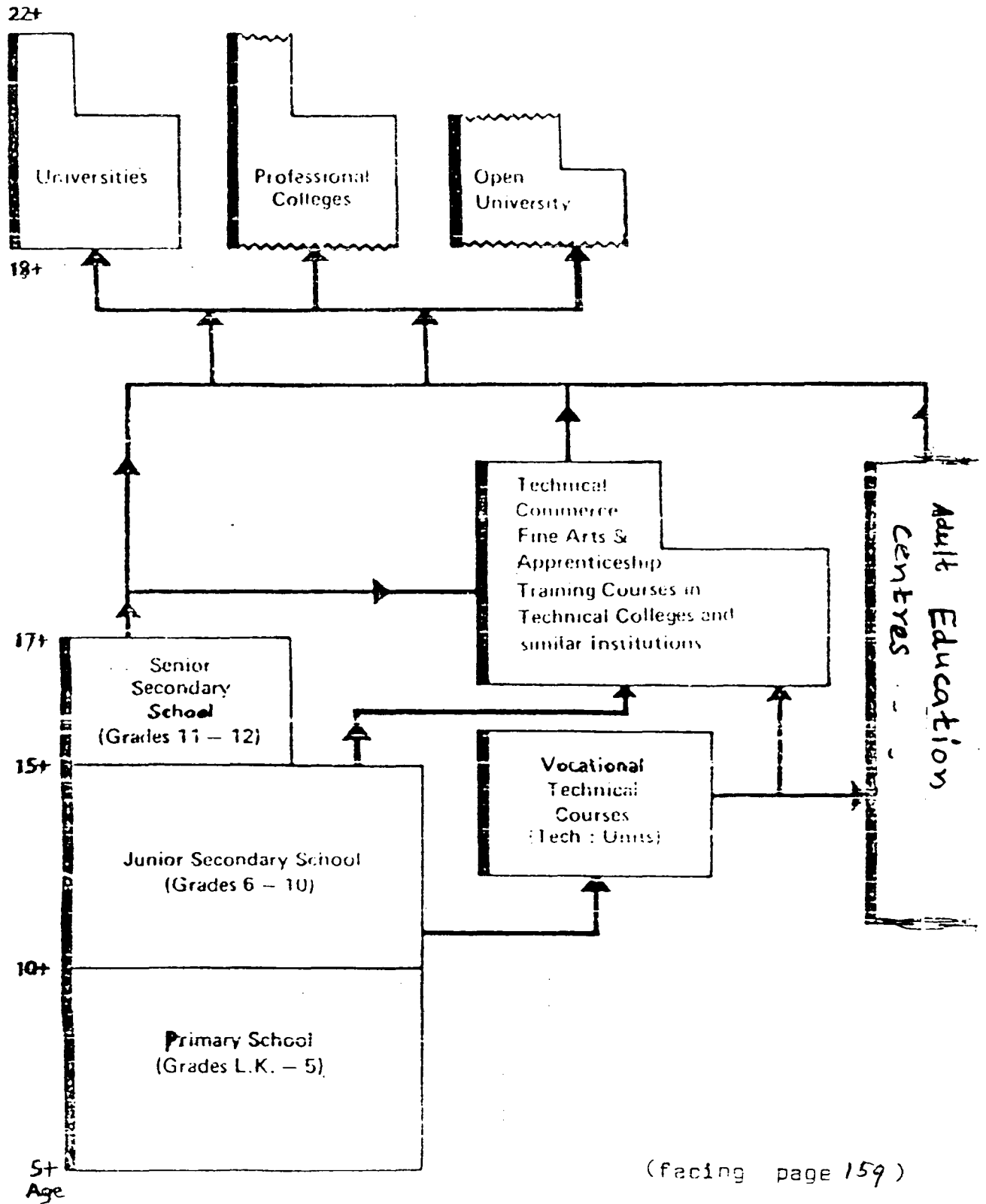
As a whole, the reform proposals had been oriented to

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82. Ibid., p.11.

83. Ibid., p.20.

(Figure .1)
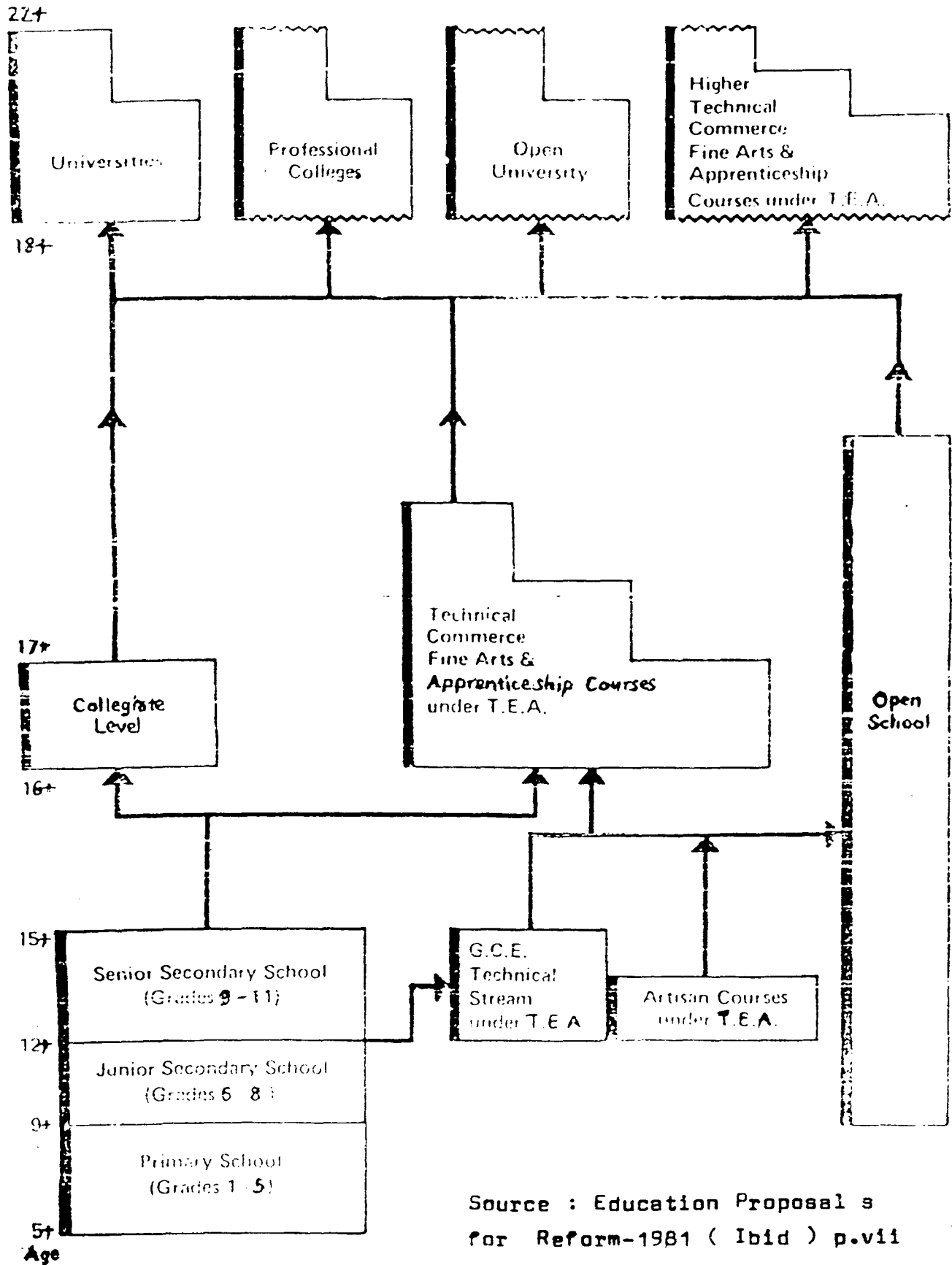
EXISTING SYSTEM OF EDUCATION/TRAINING

(facing page 159)

Source : Education Proposals for Reform (Ministry of
Education in Collaboration with the Ministry of Higher
Education and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and
Employment - 1981) p. vi

(Figure 11.)

PROPOSED SYSTEM OF EDUCATION/TRAINING –
1981

Universities

Professional Colleges

Open University

Higher Technical Commerce Fine Arts & Apprenticeship Courses under T.E.A.

22+

18+

Collegiate Level

Technical Commerce Fine Arts & Apprenticeship Courses under T.E.A.

Open School

17+

16+

Senior Secondary School (Grades 9 – 11)

G.C.E. Technical Stream under T.E.A

Artisan Courses under T.E.A.

15+

Junior Secondary School (Grades 6 – 8)

12+

9+

Primary School (Grades 1 – 5)

5+
Age

Source : Education Proposal s
for Reform-1981 (Ibid) p.vii

suit the needs of state liberalization policies.

Therefore, in the discussion in legislature and in the public debate, it precipitated street agitations by the youth. They interpreted new proposals, especially, the 'School Clusters', 'Private Schools', 'Open Schools' and changes in university admissions as discriminatory against poorer rural youth and backward social groups. Further in their view, this was an attempt to eliminate free education system in Sri Lanka.

In this context, reform proposals could not be implemented on a national scale because of the mass protest. On the other hand, the youth, especially rural youth, began to agitate against new policies. These widespread street agitations against the White Paper on Education were the first signal of youth protest against the government in power after 1977. Beginning from agitations for educational reforms, the youth had gradually changed their voice for a total structural transformation.[84]

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84. See, A.C. Alles, The JVP : 1969-1989, no.5, pp.241-245, 261-269, 344-348.

V. ADVANCED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND THE REFERENDUM

According to the Constitution, the next Presidential election would have been due for a date after December 4, 1983, and parliamentary elections before August 1983. However, amidst rising discontent among various social groups, the President sought an early Presidential election. The third Amendment to the Constitution was approved by the Parliament for the purpose. It amended Articles 31, 38 and 168 of the Constitution. The aim was to give to the President the right to determine the time of the Presidential election. Article 31 was amended as follows:

> "... the President may , at any time, after the expiration of four years from the commencement of his first term of office, by proclamation, declare his intention of appealing to the people for a mandate to hold office by election for a further term...".[85]

So, Presidential Election was advanced to October 1982. Three main political considerations seem to have precipitated this decision. First, according to the PR system, it was unlikely that the UNP would have been able to repeat its five-sixth majority. Second, the sudden decision to hold a

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85. See, The Third Amendment to the 1978 Constitution, Certified on 27th August 1982.

Presidential election took the Opposition (which was anticipating a parliamentary election) by surprise. And third, since the former Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike had been deprived of her civic rights for seven years, the badly divided opposition would find it very difficult to agree on a common candidate in the short time available before nomination.[86]

In the election, UNP candidate, the then President, J.R. Jayawardene was opposed by Hector Kobbekaduwa of the SLFP. The four other candidates were, Rohana Wijeweera of the JVP,[87] Colvin R. de Silva of the LSSP (Lanka Sama Samaja Party) Vasudewa Nanayakkara of the NSSP (Nava Sama Samaja Party) and Kumar Ponnambalam of the T.C. (Tamil Congress). The TULF refrained from participation and the CWC (Ceylon

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86. See, Rajiva Wijesinha, <u>Current Crisis in Sri Lanka</u>, no.76, pp.65-66.

87. As a part of the 'Just Society' concept, the Government abolished the CJC Laws - bacause these were unjust in the UNP view. Accordingly, Rohana Wijeweera and 146 others who were convicted under the CJC were granted a pardon and released from the jail on November 2, 1977. So, the JVP could enter the political mainstream.

    However, the President had double-objectives in mind with the abolition of CJC Laws: to release the prisoners convicted under the Foreign Exchange Control Act (most of whom were imprisoned under this law were UNPers). Secondly, the government hoped to erode the support base of the SLFP by releasing the JVP leaders (to divide anti-UNP vote between the SLFP & the JVP).

Workers Congress) supported the UNP.

More interestingly, J.R. Jayawardene celebrated his 76th birth day on the day of nominations. Colvin R. de Silva was at the age of 75 in 1982. Hector Kobbekaduwa entered the candidature at the age of 66. The other three candidates were young, in their early forties.

The politics of the candidates, however, gave the contest a different dimension and the polarization of forces took place between the UNP and SLFP candidates.

Besides Executive Presidency itself, there were 143 Government Members of Parliament for the support of the UNP, out of whom 90 held some kind of Ministerial rank.[88]

The UNP focussed on the personal qualifications of its candidate, its development programme which needed to be continued to gain the maximum benefits and the economic mismanagement during the 1970-1977 period. It did not think in terms of a new programme.[89]

The SLFP promised to restore Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic

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88. See, W.A.W. Warnapala, Recent Politics in Sri Lanka (New Delhi, 1983), p.17.

89. See, The UNP Election Manifesto - 1977, no.49.

rights, increase food subsidies, increase protection for domestic industry, and reinstate those who were dismissed for striking in July 1980. In the campaign, the SLFP used unemployed youth including university graduates and the members of youth orgnizations.[90]

The JVP aim was to achieve its objective of becoming the most powerful left-wing party in Sri Lanka.[91]

In this context, the UNP proved superior with twin campaigns in different areas led by the President and the Prime Minister. As expected, the results consolidated the executive power of J.R. Jayawardene for another six year term. The results were as follows:[92]

Candidate	Party	Votes Polled	Percentage
J.R. Jayawardene	UNP	3,450,811	52.91
Hector Kobbekaduwa	SLFP	2,548,438	39.07
Rohana Wijeweera	JVP	273,439	4.19
Kumar Ponnambalam	ACTC	173,934	2.67
Colvin R de Silva	LSSP	57,532	0.88
Vasudewa Nanayakkara	NSSP	17,005	0.26

90. See, The SLFP Election Manifesto - 1977, no.48.

91. See, Policy Declaration of the JVP (A *Niyamuwa* Publications, 1977).

92. See, ed. H.B. W. Abenaike, Parliament of Sri Lanka (The Associated News papers of Ceylon Ltd. Colombo, n.d.). The Presidential Election; p.1.

It is significant that this was the first occasion in Sri Lanka since 1952 in which the party in power won an election again. The election established that, notwithstanding the weaknesses in the leadership, the SLFP enjoyed substantial support at the grass-roots level. The JVP secured third place and emerged as a principal leftist party through constitutionalism, although the strength of the party had been overestimated.

More importantly, the polls revealed that in a parliamentary election, under the PR system, the opposition would gain a substantial number of seats. Indeed, the chances of the government securing the then two-thirds majority looked remote.

In this context, on 22 October, the day after the Presidential election results were approved, the President told foreign correspondent that he planned a post-mortem on results before deciding the date of the next parliamentary elections. 'In any case', he added, 'I must have it before July 1983. It is a question of a few months'.[93]

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93. Cited in, ed. James Manor, <u>Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis</u> (London, Croom Helm Ltd., 1984), p.85.

The President declared a state of Emergency soon after the polls were over. In the meantime, on October 27, the President got undated resignation letters from all UNP members in Parliament. After all these preparatory measures, he revealed about an assassination threat to himself and some other members of the Government and Opposition by a `Naxalite' group.[94] He used this 'Naxalite' allegation against Vijaya Kumaratunga, the son-in-law of Mrs. Bandaranaike, and his radical associates of the SLFP. According to the President, this 'Naxalite Group' had taken over the power of the SLFP and that in the circumstances, the holding of parliamentary elections, on the basis of PR system, would allow them to secure a third of the seats in parliament and paralyse democracy of the country.[95]

As a means of overcoming all those problems, the President took immediate action to hold a Referendum. The objective was to extend the life of the Parliament by six years without general election. It sought voter's approval in a

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94. `Naxalie' was a term originally used for rural Marxist Guerillas in West Bengal. During 1971 uprising, the term was used for the JVP. See, Rajiva Wijesinha, Current Crisis in Sri Lanka, no.76, pp.64-65.

95. See, Ibid., and,

   James manor, Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis, no.93, p.84.

Referendum as required by the Constitution. In addition to the so-called `Naxalite threat', the·UNP justified this action on the grounds that the stability was necessary to continue its development programme.[96] The Referendum was held in December, within nine weeks after the Presidential Elections. During the campaign, hundreds of SLFP activists were arrested including the Party General Secretary (Ratna-siri Wickramanayake), one of the Assistant Secretaries (Vijaya Kumaratunga) and Vice - President of the SLFP Youth League (Ossie Abeygunasekera), under the charges of 'Naxa-lite' and 'delivering a fake rice ration book among mass of the people in the country.[97]

Thereafter, the government used all the segments of the state machinery to win the Referendum. In this way, for the first time in parliamentary history of Sri Lanka, the Refer-endum was held to extend the life of the parliament, while a

96. See, Fourth Amendment to the Constitution; certified on 23rd December, 1982. Paragrah 2. (It contains the following sentence; AND WHEREAS it is essential to ensure for a further term, the stability necessary for the continuation of the programme under taken for the advancement and progress of the people of Sri Lanka and the realization of their aspirations;).

97. See, Priya Samarakone, "The conduct of the Referendum" in ed. James Manor, Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis, no.93, pp.90-94.

nationwide state of emergency prevailed.[98] The Fourth Amendment to the Constitution legalized this desire of the ruling party to remain in power for further seven years until 1989.[99]

In this context, the Constitutional changes of Sri Lanka, from 1972 to 1982, have been instrumental in the hands of the rulers for two major purposes; to legitimise their power amidst increasing socio-economic problems; and, to suit their narrow and partisan ruling interests. Accordingly, in 1972 and 1978, state power was centralized through the Parliament and the executive Presidency, on the ground that it was a precondition for political stability and economic development. As declared by the rulers, fulfillment of youth aspirations was among their principal goals. However, in real terms, especially after 1978, the changes meant that the electoral process of Sri Lanka, based on parliamentary democracy, was undermined by rulers due to their inability to meet youth pressures.

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98. See, _Ibid_., p.88 and,

     Report of the First Referendum in Sri Lanka, (Department of Elections, Colombo, 1986).

99. See, _Fourth Amendment to the Constitution_ certified on 23rd December 1982. Published as a Supplement to Part II of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka of December 24, 1982.

The new socio-economic policies which introduced with each constitutional change were also vitiated by political factors by keeping the problems unresolved and worsening. Finally, the Executive was seen as the sole governance of the state to meet challenges arising from this situation.

CHAPTER FIVE

LINKAGES BETWEEN CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES
AND YOUTH UNREST

This Chapter examines causal relationship between constitutional changes and youth unrest, as drawn from the preceding analysis. The 1972 Constitution and its impact of the youth uprising; and, the correlation between constitutional changes and youth unrest and expanded unrest and resulted violent movements are undertaken for the purpose.

I. THE 1972 CONSTITUTION AND YOUTH

(a) Impact of the Uprising:

Even though the UF had pledged for a new constitution in its election manifesto, the text of the 1972 Constitution clearly showed its impact of the JVP Uprising. Independence, Freedom and Sovereignty; and the Socialist form of Economy - the ideology of the JVP lectures - formed the basic aspects of the Constitution in this context. As stated,

> We people of Sri Lanka being resolved in the
> exercise of our freedom and independence as a
> nation to give to ourselves a constitution which
> will declare Sri Lanka a free, sovereign and

independent Republic pledged to realise the objec-
tives of a `Socialist Democracy'.[1]

Accordingly, as against the `*laissez-faire*' model of
the Soulbury Constitution, concepts of economic and social
development were given constitutional acceptance. Unemploy-
ment, poverty, and social inequality were concerned as basic
problems of the state to deal with.

Ultimately, pressures and pulls of the constitution-
making revealed that the use of `socialist' concept appealed
to the economically deprived and backward social groups from
where the youth uprising emanated; `Republican' and `Sri
Lankan' components appealed to `Sinhalese' sentiments that
expanded after 1956; changes such as in educational system
and land ownership sought to accommodate the restive Sinha-
lese youth. At the same time, the strong centre with emer-
gency powers and other organs implied the dynamic nature of
challenges impinging upon the rulers and the mechanisms
created to control such challenges.

(b) Constitution and Ethnic Harmony:

According to some observers, `the 1972 Constitution was

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1.   See, <u>1972 Constitution</u>, p.1.

adopted to articulate the aspirations of a cultural nation-
alism which had become a political norm' and `the government
which introduced the Republican Constitution had its genesis
in the `Sinhala Only' policies of late fifties.' As such
Buddhism was given the `foremost place' in the Constitution
and Sinhalese was made the Official Language with the use of
the Tamil language guaranteed by statute.[2] In this view,
Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, between the Sinhalese and the
Tamils, had a direct bearing on the Constitutional change in
1972.

Before we turn to this, there is need to look briefly
at several policies which had been pursued by successive
governments after independence.

With the adoption of `Mother Tongue' as the medium of
instruction, the provision of education in two separate
streams (Sinhalese and Tamil) isolated the two major ethnic
communities. Especially, Tamil children were educated
without knowing the language of the majority community of
the State and, Sinhalese children without any interaction

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2.   For instance, see, Radhika Coomaraswamy, The Crisis of
      the Anglo-American Constitutional Traditions in a
      Developing Society (Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi,
      1984), Chapter 2.

with their Tamil counterparts. After 1956, the `Sinhala Only' policy of the government further aggravated this situation. The Tamil youth became alienated and could find no public sector role without learning Sinhalese. And, for such learning also, there was no proper arrangements by the government. This background advanced steadily because the main avenues of accumulation and upward social mobility were dependent on public sector employment. The situation degenerated further when the leftist parties also abandoned their stance on language and accepted Sinhala Only as a necessary part of their strategy for political survival. Gradually, the Tamil youth thought that they were discriminated against in education and employment. The polarization of communities, Sinhalese and Tamils, was taking place simultaneously as the ethos of separate ethnic consciousness was emerging as powerful forces.

The standardization policy of university admissions was a fuel to Tamil youth unrest within this background. Examining this briefly, the Sri Lankan Tamils, though they constituted just 11.1 per cent of the population, accounted for about 30 per cent of the Science-based studies in the secondary schools. The (media-wise) scheme of standardiza-

tion ensured that this proportion of places in the university accrued to them. The percentage held by Tamils fell from 35.3 per cent in 1970 to 19 per cent in 1975.[3] The modifications in admissions policy introduced in 1975, brought distinct advantages to Tamils. In their view, however, these gains seemed minor and intrinsically illusory.[4]

Apart from these, successive governments' colonization schemes were viewed by Tamils as an encroachment of their `traditional lands'. Accordingly, by early Seventies, there were five main and often inter-related areas of dispute between governments and the Tamils: namely, language rights, employment, university admissions, access to state land and demands for devolution of power to regional centres.[5]

All these grievances impinged upon relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils and drove the two communities gradually apart. This situation was aggravated by the

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3. For analysis of this policy, see, C.R. de Silva, "The Politics of University Admissions; 1971-78", in The Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences, 1(2), p.90; and, Sunil Bastian, "University Admissions and National Question" [published by Social Scientists' Association] Ethnicity and Social Change in Sri Lanka (Karunaratne and Sons Ltd., Colombo, 1984), pp.166-178.

4. C.R. de Silva, n.3.

5. For explanation, see, Rajiva Wijesinha, Current Crisis in Sri Lanka (Navrang, New Delhi, 1986), pp.49-55.

controversies over the new constitution. `Constitutional acceptance of majority rights and removal of the minority rights section [Section 29(2)] of the Soulbury Constitution' became the Tamils' first complaint against the Republican Constitution.

In 1972, accordingly, the main Tamil representative parties of the day - the Federal Party (FP), the Tamil Congress (TC), the Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC), and the Tamil Students' Organization - and several other Tamil groups joined together and formed the Tamil United Front (TUF) to agitate against the Constitution. As the first step, they took a unanimous stand against the new Constitution and put forward a political programme which came to be known as the "Six Point Formula". It included demands for parity of status for Tamil with Sinhalese language, citizenship rights for all Tamils, concept of a secular state, equal status to all persons living in Sri Lanka, radical social changes to eliminate traditional social barriers and decentralization and popular participation.[6] However, the

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6.   See, A. Sivarajah, "Dravidian Sub-Natinalism and Its
     Regional Implications" in P.V.J. Jayasekara, ed.,
     Security Dilemma of a Small State (South Asian Publish-
     ers, New Delhi, 1992), Part 1 (hereafter Security
     Dilemma), pp.139-40.

government did not give serious consideration to this formula. As a result, the TUF began to talk about the establishment of an Independent Tamil State. In 1975, the TUF leader Chelvanayakam declared secession to be the goal of the Tamil people.[7]

In this context, the adoption of the first Republican Constitution was a critical starting point of a new phase of ethnic relations in Sri Lanka resulting frustrations of the Tamil youth. In this direction, between 1972 and the end of 1976, one can see a shift in the political aspirations of the Tamils, from demands for structural changes and constitutional reforms to an assertion of the right to self-determination on the basis of a separate Tamil State.[8]

The call for this demand increased in 1976 when the TUF formed the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front). At its national convention held at Pannakam on May 14, 1976, the TULF unanimously passed a resolution - popularly known as

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7. Cited in, Satchi Ponnambalam, Sri Lanka: The National Question and the Tamil Liberation Struggle (London, 1983), p.8.

8. See, A. Sivarajah, no.6; and, W.I. Siriweera, "Recent Developments in Sinhala-Tamil Relations" in Asian Survey, vol.XX, no.9, September 1990, pp.903-913.

Vadukkodei Resolution - calling for the establishment of a separate Tamil Eelam. The TULF claimed that the successive Sinhalese governments had discriminated against the Tamils in education, employment, state colonization schemes and the use of Tamil language. After this formation, S.J.V. Chelvanayakam resigned from his parliamentary seat at Kankasanturei and challenged the government to hold a by-election. Consequently, the TULF fought the general elections of 1977 on a platform advocating separatism. According to the TULF election manifesto, "the question to be resolved was whether the Tamils wanted their freedom or continued servitude to the Sinhala-dominated government".[9] However, in that time, the TULF demand was only a political claim meant to ensure the security of the Tamils.

On the other hand, even before the formation of the TULF, an investigation revealed about a military youth organization known as the `Tamil New Tigers' (TNT),[10] and it had formed in 1972. In the initial period, the TNT attracted the youth who believed in armed struggle, ready to fight

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9.　For details see, W.I. Siriweera, n.7, p.903.

10.　See, A. Sivarajah, "Indo-Sri Lanka Relations in the Context of Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis", in P.V.J. Jayasekara, ed., <u>Security</u> <u>Dilemma</u> <u>of</u> <u>a</u> <u>Small</u> <u>State</u>, no.6, p.507.

against oppression, and those who accepted `Socialist Tamil Eelam' as their ultimate goal. However, it was first heard of in July 1975 when Alfred Durayappah, a former Mayor, the MP from Jaffna and a prominent member of the SLFP, was shot as he was coming out of a Hindu Temple. The TNT leader, V. Prabhakaran, renamed the organization as `Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam' (LTTE) on May 5, 1976.[11]

With this background, the TULF Declaration on `Eelam' was a turning point. As it revealed, the Tamils no longer wanted to live in union with the Sinhalese but decided to organize themselves as a separate state - separate from Sinhalese.

The role of young Tamils in the 1977 election is more important to be taken note of in this context. Just as in the 1970 election the JVP had campaigned and secured victory for the UF, principally because of the UF's socialist programme, in the 1977 election, the young Tamil Tigers campaigned and secured victory for the TULF, principally because of the TULF's programme for secession. In 1970, for young JVPers, unemployment, the high cost of living, and

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11. Ibid. See, also W.I. Siriweera, n.7, pp.906-907.

income disparities were predominant issues which needed solution; in 1977, for the `Tigers', national oppression, questions of education, employment, language rights, cultural discrimination and other related aspects were the key issues.[12]

So, there were two parallel developments in Tamil politics by 1977: acceptance of a `separate Tamil State' by parliamentary representatives, and, origin of a military youth movement outside the mainstream politics - both were working towards the same goal.

Examining the general impact on youth of post-1972 policies, the early seventies saw attempts at `Socialist' reform and redistribution of wealth through limited attempts such as land reforms. However, whilst there was correspondingly greater scope for social mobility, there was also increased scope for corruption and malpractice through partisan politics. As a result, by 1975, Sri Lanka witnessed the crystallizaton of the trends that had emerged since the suppression of the 1971 uprising, vitiating the

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12. For explanation, see Satchi Ponnambalam, <u>Sri Lanka: The National Question and the Tamil Liberation Struggle</u>, no.7, p.8.

avowed commitment to `rapid progress towards a socialist democracy' as stated in the UF Election manifesto, the 1971 Five Year Plan and the 1972 Constitution.

The success or failure of the government's objectives depended upon the policy towards the country's economic crisis. The principal strategy declared at the beginning was `to restructure the economy through state-control of the entire economy in such a way that the public sector would be considerably extended'. It was also promised to end the neo-colonialism which characterized the previous government.[13]

However, the ouster of the LSSP - the leading left wing partner of the government - in September 1975, amounted to the rejections of the search for radical solutions to the problems arising from the country's colonial socio-economic structure.[14] After 1975, accordingly, the budgetary policy was directed to a reversal of the original strategy that

13.   See, The UF's Common Programme and Election Manifesto-1970 (Colombo, 1970).

14.   For this background, see, N. Balakrishnan, "Sri Lanka in 1974: Battle for Economic Survival", in Asian Survey, vol.15, no.2, (February, 1975), pp.102-109.

promised by the UF in 1970.[15]

As revealed, the most serious implications of the slow growth of the economy were in the spheres of unemployment and the cost of living. While the annual employment average during 1971-75 was around 114,000, there was an addition of about 54,000 to the unemployed, making the estimated unemployment figure for 1976, 1,060,000 - roughly 24 per cent of the employed population. Moreover, the nature of actual unemployment, particularly of the educated, had in most cases been below the level of their training and status aspirations. For instance, of the 14,000 graduates employed since 1970, 80 per cent were on salaries between 200-300 rupees per month.[16]

In industrialization, the two major approaches - import substitution (inward-looking) and export diversification (outward-looking), too had not been able to provide an adequate solution to the problems of poverty, unemployment

15. See, N. Balakrishnan, "Sri Lanka in 1975: Political Crisis and Split in the Coalition" in Asian Survey, vol.16, no.2 (February, 1976), pp.130-139.

16. See, Ceylon Daily News, July 7, 29, 31 and December 17, 1976.

and inequality.[17]   The new institutions devised for the purpose of `Socialist democracy through popular participation', such as the District Political Authority, Employees' Councils, People's Committees, *Janawasas*, and Divisional Development Councils, could not become the organs of effective popular participation.   Because of the political influence these institutions had created a machinery whereby the politicians in power could effectively control the masses. That marked by a growing `political servitude' imposed upon them.[18]

Meanwhile, the effects of the 1971 uprising and the new trends in politics and economy, had led to the continuous use of emergency regulations (from March 1971), armed forces and censorship of the news media.   Thus, in contrast to the popular aspirations and the commitments of the government in 1970, there had been a rapid alienation of masses from the government.   The break-up of major strikes in government sectors and student unrest were evident within this context

17.   For explanation, see, Piyadasa Ratnayake, Towards Self-Reliant Rural Development (Karunaratna & Sons, Colombo, 1992), pp.9-20.

18.   For details, see, P.V.J. Jayasekara, "Sri Lanka in 1976", in Asian Survey, vol.17, no.2, (February, 1977), p.213.

in late 1976. The use of firearms by the police, killing one student and injuring over fifty others, in quelling a student disturbance at the Peradeniya Campus of the University of Sri Lanka in November 1976 caused widespread reactions of the youth in this situation. Since then, until general elections of 1977, widespread unrest among students, youth population and workers were accompanied by token strikes, closer of educational institutions and the use of armed forces by the government.[19] The 1977 election results revealed a new hope for youth aspirations within this background.

II. DISCONTENTS AFTER 1977

(a) Political Restructuring and its Implications:

By 1977, there were two major problems in Sri Lanka: responding to the material needs and aspirations of a literate and rapidly growing youth population despite limited resources and economic stagnation of the state; and, maintaining `national unity' amid intense suspicion between Sinhalese and Tamils.

The five-sixth majority of the UNP and 18 of the 22

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19. See, ibid., pp.213-215.

seats secured by the TULF may be considered in this context. Restructuring of the political system was one of the major experiments in response to the problems. This was achieved through the 1978 Constitution. However, in practice, constitutional changes created an Executive President with all powers and acting on its own advice.

The important character which emerged out of this situation was the centralization of power by an administration pivoting around the Executive. The two amendments that the government introduced within six months of the promulgation of the 1978 Constitution, further reinforced this situation. After the removal of (Mrs.) Bandaranaike's civic rights for seven years, the main opposition party of the Sinhalese mass, the SLFP, as expected, began to fall apart.[20] And the Marxist Left had already disappeared from the parliamentary scene since all its members were defeated in the 1977 election. Furthermore, the consequence of the second Amendment was the absolute stranglehold of the governing party over members of parliament. Thereafter, hardly

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20.   For instance, see, W.A.W. Warnapala, The Sri Lankan Political Scene (Navrang, New Delhi, 1993), pp.158-163; and W.A.W. Warnapala, "Sri Lanka in 1978; Reversal of Policies and Strategies" in Asian Survey, vol.XIX, no.2 (February, 1979), pp.179-180.

any member of the government was going to risk defiance of the party line.[21]   Thereafter in effect, government meant the President and a few of the "President's men".

The impact of proportional representation had three crucial features: appointing seats between the Districts, cut-off point of one-eighth of the votes cast in any electoral District, and, bonus plan where the party finishing first in the District received one seat not distributed on the basis of PR system.   The winner, accordingly, was the winning party which gained a very large percentage of votes at the expense of the second place party.[22]   Parties finishing lower than second place were seriously hurt by the cut-off points and bonus seat provisions.   So, it would create pressures for a two-party system and the small parties, particularly those of the Left, which have hitherto played a prominent role in governments in association with the major parties, have been excluded from the arena of parliamentary politics: this was one of the objectives of the authors of

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21.   See, Douglas Greenburg and others, ed., Constitutionalism and Democracy (Oxford University Press, 1993), pp.165-169.

22.   See, Robert Oberst, "Proportional Representation and Electoral System Change in Sri Lanka" in James Manor, ed., Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis (Croom Helm, London, 1984), pp.118-31.

the Constitution. But, it was also likely to strengthen the extra-parliamentary role of these left-wing parties, especially led by young politicians.[23]

The effect of the PR system, on the nature of legislator, had a negative impact when comparing with the old system. Under the old system, representation was carried out on a personal basis with legislators meeting with several hundred constituents per week. Basically, it was accepted that strong linkages between the Sri Lankan legislators and their constituents had played an important role in maintaining political stability and democratic process in Sri Lanka.[24] It is in the light of this interest that one can focus attention on three components of a legislators' job; law-making, check on the executive power, and constituency service through the use of government funds for development and public work projects. But, under the new PR system, each legislator would represent a part of the constituency with several other legislators. It reduced the

23. See, W.A.W. Warnapala, "Sri Lanka's New Constitution" in <u>Asian Survey</u>, vol.XX, no.9, September 1980, pp.914-930.

24. See, Robert Oberst, n.22; and, Robert Oberst, <u>Sri Lanka: Legislators and Representation in Sri Lanka</u> (Westview, 1985), pp.28-30.

role of the MP and strengthened the importance of the party leadership at the expense of the individual MP and party member.[25] The new District Ministry system enhanced this situation. The District Minister, appointed by the President, became the President's direct representative at the District level. The consequence of all this was the removal of close relationship between legislator and constituent which acted as a safety value for discontent in rural areas. The possibility of unrest and protest, accordingly, was inherent in the new system. Even though the office of an Ombudsman was created in 1978, it could not handle the volume of demands.[26]

At the local level, the lack of effective institutions gradually led to the alienation of the village communities. While the traditional leadership was losing its authority because of far-reaching changes, there was no new authority to supplant the previous structure and to fill the gap. Politically affiliated organizations, the politicization of

25. Robert Oberst, Sri Lanka [Ibid.], p.29.

26. See, Section 156 of the 1978 Constitution for explanation of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) and W.A.W. Warnapala, n.20, pp.175-76 for a study of this office.

the village councils, and mini vigilante groups - like the Janatha Committees after 1972 and Gramodaya Mandalaya after 1978 - only further politicised the village life. With these dimensions, villagers often lost the ability to change their local leaders since they were also chosen primarily on the basis of political considerations of the party in power.[27]

In addition, the Division or District, not the Village, emerged as the main unit for development planners. This dual process succeeded in creating a vacuum at the village level.[28] It seemed to be one of the reasons for youth alienation at the village level. The rural voter seemed to have no one to turn to. Rural politicians, the rural mass claimed, join the urban elite once elected. In this context, youth became merely the active and vocal proponents of

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27. See, <u>Report of the Presidential Commission on Youth</u>, Sessional Paper No.1 - 1990 (Printed on the orders of the Government, Dept. of Government Printing, Colombo, 1990), pp.8-11.

28. See, <u>Ibid</u>.; and, S. Sathananthan, "Rural Development Policy in Sri Lanka, 1935 to 1989", in <u>Journal of Contemporary Asia</u>, 21(4), 1991, pp.433-454.

the general unrest prevailing in the society.[29]

(b) **Economic** **Liberalization**:

In the economic strategy, the Free Trade Zone was pivotal to the claim that the government would finally resolve the unemployment problem, especially that of the educated youth. The crash economic development programme was expected with the liberalization policies.

However, problems of youth, including unemployment, had increased many fold after 1978. In employment opportunities, clear limitations were placed on those who were not the supporters of the ruling party. A classic incident was the issue of `job cards' in 1977. The government earned rupees one million by selling a card at one rupee but hardly jobs were given. Under the `Job Bank' system after 1978, one thousand employment forms were given to each member of parliament. However, as reported, the total number of jobs given throughout the country were about

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29. See, Report of the Presidential Commission on Youth, no.27, Introduction, and see, also the following for a general explanation of the problem, J. Uyangoda, "Political Crisis: A Consequence of Social and Economic Dilemmas" in Gnana Moonesinghe, ed., Sri Lanka: Towards Nation Building (Shramaya Publications, Colombo, n.d.), pp.37-44.

six hundred for a year.[30]

Workers at the Free Trade Zone, especially limited to the garment factories, had been interpreted as inmates of a slave zone. Their payments, working conditions and other facilities were at a lower-level when comparing with other traditional sectors. However, incentives given to investors at the zone as well as government regulations prevented the workers going ahead for trade union actions.

The giant Mahaweli River Project and colonization schemes were seen as the `White Elephants' by the majority of the youth.[31] Industrialization and mechanization had also limited man power requirements.

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30. For this background, see, Rohan Gunaratna, <u>Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution?</u> (Institute of Fundamental Studies, Colombo, 1990), Chapter 3.

31. This notion of `white elephant' first experienced in Sri Lanka after the Dudley Seers Mission in 1971. The Mission formed the first pilot study in Asia under the World Employment Programme of International Labour Organisation. The purpose was to prepare a long-term strategy for achieving a high-level of productive employment in Ceylon, and also, to recommend problems in the short-term, involving a review of programmes of employment creation currently practiced in Ceylon. According to its Report, most of the expenses in colonization schemes and the state-run-economic ventures had been explained as `White Elephants'. After this reveal, this became a powerful weapon in electoral politics, especially among radicals, in explaining malpractices, corruption and waste of government funds. See, <u>Matching Employment Opportunities and Expectations: A Programme of Action for Ceylon</u> (International Labour Organization, Geneva, 1971), for details.

The policy of widely open economy, to a large extent, had affected the rural areas. On the one hand, since this policy had been `urban oriented', some parts of the country, like `deep south' and `the north east' were believed to have lagged behind these policy changes.[32] On the other hand, self employment, rural cottage industries and small-scale urban manufacturing ventures continued to suffer due to liberalized imports. The handloom industry was an example. It was also seen that some of the changes were, in fact, detrimental to the economic interests of people, living in certain parts of the country. For example, farmers of the Dry Zone and northern peninsula faced difficulty in selling their harvests - onions, chillies, potatoes, etc. - as the government permitted the import of these essentials. These spatial inequalities became more pronounced, intensifying discontent among the people living in less favoured areas, some times alienating them altogether from the economic mainstreams of the country.[33]

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32. See, Warnasena Rasaputra, "Poverty Alleviation", in Lanka Guardian, June 1, 1988; and, NORAD Report, "Growth Strategy and Sri Lanka's Poor" in Lanka Guardian, June 1, 1988.

33. See, K.M. de Silva, Sri Lanka: Problems of Governance (Konark Publishers, Delhi, 1993), pp.250-274.

In this context, on the one hand, there were the gigantic projects, hurriedly implemented, which regardless of the implementational efficiency they represented, gave impressions of extravagant and some times, wasteful public sector spending. On the other hand, the availability of luxury and semi-luxury goods which only the more affluent could buy, brought about, especially in the rural areas, conspicuous changes in consumption patterns. This was likely to have instilled in the minds of those whose aspirations remained unfulfilled, a sense of deprivation.[34]

In addition to all these disparities, unemployment problem had also increased among educated youth. The following Table shows unemployment situation by 1981.

Percentage Unemployed by Age

Age Group (Years)	Source Period	
	Census 1981	Labour Force 1980/81
15 - 20	24.2	27.4
20 - 24	35.7	61.8
25 - 29	19.7	
30 - 39	15.2	8.4
40 - 49	3.8	1.9
> 50	1.4	0.5

Source: R.B.M. Korale, A Statistical Overview of Employment and Unemployment Trends (Table 8), (Dept. of Census and Statistics, Colombo, 1988).

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34. See, ibid., p.269.

The profile of unemployment shows that the vast majority of unemployed belong to the age group 20-29. As educational background had proved, majority of unemployed were secondary school leavers with some general educational qualifications.[35] Therefore, one could argue that there appears to be a correlation between rates of registered unemployment and significant youth unrest.

However, after 1979, recruitments to the armed forces had been increased steadily because of the civil war in northern Sri Lanka and militarization of state power.[36] But, the bulk of rural youths were recruited to the lowest grade and within a very short period, most of them had been `prisoners of a war', in addition to the proportion of killed or disabled.[37]

III. ETHNIC PROBLEM AND DEVOLUTION OF POWER

The UNP Manifesto promised to solve Tamil grievances by

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35. See, Youth Report no.27, Appendix, Chapter 5, Table 11.

36. For evidence, see, K.M. de Silva, Problems of Governance, no.33, Tables 14.1 and 14.2, pp.358-359; Angela S. Burger, "Changing Civil-Military Relations in Sri Lanka" in Asian Survey, vol.XXXII, no.8, August, 1992, pp.744-756; and W.A.W. Warnapala, n.20, pp.297-299.

37. See, Sunday Island, 19 January 1992.

summoning an All-Party Conference and implementing its decisions. Secondly, it promised an effective devolution of power through the District Development Councils and District Ministers.[38] But, they were not evident in the immediate actions of the Government.

In contrast, tensions increased between two communities - as a result of the propagation of separation - and one month after the elections, the country experienced a wave of communal violence between Sinhalese and Tamils. During the troubled period, Prime Minister, J.R. Jayawardene made an undiplomatic statement when he told Amirthalingam, the leader of Opposition and the General Secretary of the TULF, that `if a separatist cause is advocated by the TULF, those opposing it will say, if you want a fight let there be a fight, if you want peace, let there be peace'.[39]

The post-election communal disturbances, according to Amirthalingam, convinced both, the extremists and the moder-ates in the Tamil community of the value of self-determina-tion for the Tamil people.[40]

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38. See, The UNP Election Manifesto-1977 (Colombo, 1977).

39. See, Hansard, August 18, 1977.

40. See, Lanka Guardian, vol.1, June, 1978.

Gradually, the young Tamils began to protest that the TULF leadership was not working fast enough to achieve Eelam. Later some youth, associated with the LTTE, sought asylum abroad, claiming to be refugees fleeing the island from alleged harassment by the Police.[41]

Along with these developments in Tamil politics, acts of Terrorism, including murders and armed robberies took place in the Northern Peninsula. Consequently, the government brought Order No.16 of 1978 under which the LTTE and other similar organizations were proscribed. But, terrorist activities did not end and once the LTTE was proscribed, a similar organization called the Eagle Organization came into the news.[42]

According to the UNP Government's Minister of Justice, K.W. Devanayagam, during the seven years from 1971 upto introduction of the bill proscribing the LTTE in 1978, the total number of crimes in the Jaffna Peninsula attributed to the terrorists came to 75. During the following year, the

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41. For this background, see, Virakesari, September 20, 1978; Ceylon Daily Mirror, April 25, 1979; and Ceylon Daily News, May 18, 1979.

42. See, Dawasa (Sinhala Newspaper), June 11, 1979.

crime figure came to 54, which clearly indicated that Sinhala-Tamil relations had deteriorated rapidly under the UNP Government.[43] In this context, it may be noted that Amirthalingam has on several occasions stated that the Tamils were better off under the previous regime than under the UNP.

To the Government's credit, there is one single achievement during the time: namely, the liberalization of the provisions relating to language and citizenship rights in the 1978 Constitution.[44] But, even these, according to Amirthalingam, had not been properly implemented. He had further stated that the UNP Government had been discrimina-tory against the Tamils in its employment policy, more discriminatory than any other government in the past. And, of the 140,000 jobs that the government claimed to have been made available in 1978, Tamils received less than one thou-sand.[45]

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43. Hansard, July 19, 1979.

44. See, The 1978 Constitution, Sections 19, 21, 22.

45. Letter from Amirthalingam to the President, on July 11, 1979, cited in W.I.Siriweera, n.7, p.909; and, Sun, July 4, 1979.

On the other hand, several incidents may be pointed out in the extremist side. The most important was the time bomb explosion on Air Ceylon's Avro 748 from Jaffna on September 7, 1978, the day the new Constitution was promulgated.[46]

Meantime, the relations between the government and the TULF further deteriorated when the government introduced legislation to redemarcate the boundaries of Vavunia District in the Northern Province. The TULF complaint that this would reduce the Tamils to a minority in that district and as a protest, walked out of the Parliament while the debate on the legislation was going on, starting a boycott of Parliament.[47] On the same day, the President accused Amirthalingam of using his position to criticise the government and the Sinhalese people. The President also announced the government intension to introduce legislation to combat and wipe out terrorism.[48]

With this situation, tension mounted in the country and there were signs of another outbreak of communal riots. The

46. See, Ceylon Daily News reports, September 8 and 28, 1978.

47. See, Sun, Ceylon Daily News and Daily Mirror, July 4, 1979.

48. Ibid.

government declared a state of Emergency in the revenue District of Jaffna effective from July 12, 1979. Any attempt to overthrow the government by illegal means had been made an offense punishable by death under the Emergency Regulations. Some of the ordinary laws such as the requirement to produce an arrested person before a magistrate, restriction of the detention period, had been suspended for the duration of emergency.[49]

Immediately afterward on July 19, the government introduced the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Bill and passed it on the same day by suspending normal procedures in parliament. Within the few hours of the Speaker certifying the new `Anti-Terrorism' Act - and before copies of it were made available to the Opposition MPs - (in fact, they were available to the Opposition MPs only on the morning of the debate), the government declared all the districts of the country `security zones' to which the

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49. W.A.W. Warnapala, n.20, pp.155-56; and W.A.W. Warnapala, Ethnic Strife and Politics in Sri Lanka (Navarang, New Delhi, 1994), p.183.

provisions of the new law would apply.[50] Thus, the whole of

Sri Lanka was once again under a virtual state of emergency

when the UNP began its third year in office.

In the past, the state of emergency was declared under

the Public Security Act, had to be reported to parliament

within ten days of its declaration, and lasted for only a

month. Each reporting and renewal, therefore, gave

parliament the opportunity to review and debate publicly

whether the emergency and the regulations made thereunder

were justified. No such opportunities for monthly scrutiny

exist under the new Prevention of Terrorism Law which lasted

for three years in the first instance. Indeed, it makes a

mockery of the human rights and freedoms that the UNP in-

cluded with so much trumpeting in its new Constitution.

After all, the government announced its intension to

appoint a Presidential Commission to `work out solutions to

Tamil grievances' and, from outside the UNP, invited only

the TULF and the SLFP to participate. The TULF accepted the

offer but the SLFP rejected it. The SLFP's allegation was

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50. See Siriweera, n.7, p.912; and see also, prepared by
     Hector Deheragoda, Legislative Enactments of the Demo-
     cratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, vol.II
     (Vauxhall Investments Ltd., Colombo, 1980), Prevention
     of Terrorism, pp.248-256.

that the government was attempting to make the SLFP `a participant towards the implementation of a unilateral decision taken without the consensus of public opinion.[51]

Accordingly, over two years after the elections, the Commission on Devolution produced its report and recommended the establishment of Development Councils. So, the President used his personal authority to set up District Development Councils (DDCs). The DDCs were authorized by legislation in August 1980.[52]

In June 1981, the first elections were held to choose their members. The UNP, the TULF, the JVP and a number of independent groups entered the field and the `Old Left' and the SLFP refused to participate. Without a contest with major opposition parties, the UNP won control of 18 of the 24 councils, in 7 of which its candidates were returned unopposed. The TULF gained control of six of the predominantly Tamil districts. the JVP won 18 seats in six coun-

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51. See, (Mrs.) Bandaranaike's letter to the President, Ceylon Daily News, August 6, 1979.

52. For full text of DDCs, see, Report of the Presidential Commission on Development Councils, Sessional Paper V, 1980 (Department of Government Printing, Colombo, 1980).

cils, including 4 of the 16 seats in Colombo.[53]

In elections in Jaffna, the situation continued tense but the election went ahead as scheduled. Those conditions had not been known before in Sri Lankan politics. A number of ballot boxes disappeared and others were found to contain more votes than there were eligible voters.[54]

As a consequence, in August, the country experienced the communal violence once again. Accordingly, electoral malpractices by rulers in Jaffna DDC elections, and its performance thereafter strengthened the militancy of the Tamil youths for getting their grievances redressed.

IV. ELECTIONS IN 1982 AND AFTERMATH

Free and fair elections constitute the basic foundation of a democracy. However, after the Presidential elections

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53. For a detailed account of DDC elections and results, see, S.W.R. de, A. Samarasinghe and C.R. de Silva, "The Development Council Elections of 1981: Its Political and Electoral Implications" in Peter Lyon and James Manor, ed., Transfer and Transformation in the New Commonwealth (Leicester University Press, 1983), pp.79-105.

54. "The militants assassinated several candidates and policemen in order to intimidate the moderates. Police reaction was violent. As a result, armed gangs set fire to the market, to the public library and to several houses." For instance, see, W. Howard Wriggins, "Sri Lanka in 1981" in Asian Survey, vol.xxii, no.2, February 1982, pp.171-179.

in 1982, the political culture deteriorated in the country.

The Referendum represented yet another departure from demo-

cratic tradition by a political system whose authoritarian

drift had been discernible since 1977. Far from reinforcing

the government's stability, however, it revealed disaffec-

tion with the party in power: although the government won

the Referendum nationally, with its malpractices, there were

significant regional variations. It lost four electoral

districts in the North and East, and, two in the South.[55]

On the other hand, the main Tamil party, TULF, did not

contest the Presidential elections. This meant that one of

the changes in the electoral rules, which was intended to

draw Tamils more fully into the political process, had

little impact. When the government then decided to prolong

the life of the existing parliament, the other change, which

was in part intended as a concession to Tamils - the PR

system - was nullified.

By the time, many of the frustrated youth had strong

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55. The government lost electoral districts of Jaffna,
     Vanni, Batticaloa and Trincomalee in the North and
     East; and Galle and Hambantota districts in the South
     of Sri Lanka. See, H.B.W. Abeynaike, ed., Parliament
     of Sri Lanka (The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd.,
     Colombo, n.d.), Referendum - 1982, Results, p.64.

perceptions about the abuse of political power in the under-

mining of democratic institutions through constitutional

process. The perceptions were particularly acute with

regard to what they felt was the undermining of the elector-

al process - the only opportunity available in a democratic

political system for the non-violent transfer of political

power. Among the actions perpetuated, the Jaffna DDC Elec-

tions, the collection of undated letters of resignation from

the ruling party members of the parliament, the advanced

Presidential Election, the arrest and intimidation of oppo-

sition politicians, government's harassment of non-political

organizations, the emergency rule, and the Referendum were

important.[56]

The most celebrated anti-democratic case occurred when

a meeting of a multi-religious organization called the

`Voice of the Clergy' was suppressed and the leaflets they

had were confiscated before the Referendum. The Police who

had been responsible were charged before the Supreme Court

with violation of Fundamental Rights. The case, however,

was heard long after the Referendum was over. The trium-

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56. For explanation, see, Paul Sieghart, Sri Lanka: A
    Mounting Tragedy of Errors (International Commission of
    Jurists and Justice, London, 1984), pp.7-14, 41-50.

phant government not only paid the fine, but also immediate-
ly promoted the police officer concerned.[57]

Soon after the judgement of the `Voice of the Clergy',
an organization of women marching for peace on International
Women's Day, found itself handled in by the police and a
leading member, a former member of Parliament (Vivien Goone-
wardena), alleged that she was kicked and abused. The
courts upheld her claim that her basic rights of congress
had been breached, and fined one of the policemen involved.
The government paid the fine and immediately promoted him.[58]
Meanwhile, the three Suprement Court judges who had deliv-
ered the verdict found mass demonstrations outside their
homes. Observation of the streets revealed that most of the
demonstrators had been transported in public buses. The
police did not take actions.[59]

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57. In this incident, the President stated that `public
    officers should do their jobs without fear of conse-
    quences from adverse court decisions', see, James
    Manor, Sri Lanka, no.22, p.164.

58. For a full text, see, Ibid.; and, Rajiva Wijesinha,
    Current Crisis in Sri Lanka, no.5, pp.72-73; and,
    Desmond Fernando, "The Independence of the Judiciary in
    Independent Sri Lanka" in Gnana Moonesinghe, ed., Sri
    Lanka, no.29, pp.159-163 and the Chart followed.

59. See, Ibid.

In this context, the JVP leader, Rohana Wijeweera, filed action on February 2, 1983, against the Commissioner of Elections praying, *inter alia*, that the Referendum held and conducted by the Commissioner was not conducted in compliance with the provisions under the Referendum Act No.7 of 1981.[60]

However, the public was not too surprised at these revelations by the time, the government was not too upset. Meantime, one week before the sixth anniversary of the election of 1977, the President summoned the promised All-Party Conference, but not one opposition party turned up: only the CWC (Ceylon Workers' Congress of Thondaman) supported the government. Ironically, the next day, July 23, brought about the immediate cause for `July Riots'.[61] This was the most severe spate of communal rioting in the island's history. The government maintained that the riots were caused by violent separatist elements within the Tamil

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60. For a summary of Wijeweera's petition, see, cited in Rohan Gunaratna, A Lost Revolution, no.30, pp.181-183.

61. On Saturday, July 23th, thirteen men of the Sri Lankan army, one of them a commissioned officer, were killed in an ambush in Jaffna. It was the immediate cause of the riots. However, there were several disputes about both, its causes and its implications. See, James Manor, Sri Lankan in Change and Crisis, no.22, pp.1-31, 138; and Rajiva Wijesinha, Current Crisis in Sri Lanka, n.5, p.75.

community and by Sinhalese `Marxist Extremists' seeking to overthrow the government. Accordingly, by 29th July, the rumour of `"a Marxist conspiracy' to capture state power through the communal riots" spread in Colombo and surrounding areas.[62] In the light of the information received by the President the government could ultimately lay the whole blame for the `July riots' on three left-wing parties and, the President proscribed these parties from 31st July. These three parties were the JVP, CCP (Ceylon Communist Party) and the NSSP (Nava Sama Samaja Party). However, in the Sinhalese youth view, the UNP was behind the July riots and; the rationale for the proscription of the three parties was the election petition filed by Wijeweera.[63]

Further, in August, the government introduced the Sixth Amendment to the constitution banning separatist movements.

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62. For details of this `Marxist Conspiracy', see, James Manor, Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis, n.22, pp.139-141. Rajiva Wijesinha, Current Crisis in Sri Lanka, no.5, p.81; and S.D. Muni, Pangs of Proximity (Sage Publications, 1993), p.52.

63. Several observers have also accepted this government-sponsored background of July riots. Accordingly, Cyril Mathew, the then Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, led riots with the support of Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Mahaweli Development and Lands. See, James Manor, ed., Sri Lanka, no.22, pp.142, 161; Rajiva Wijesinha, Current Crisis, no.5, Chapter IV and, W.A.W. Warnapala, The Sri Lankan Political Scene, no.20, pp.200-201.

As a result, the TULF was proscribed by the government because of its refusal to make an Oath or Affirmation in the form set out in the Seventh Schedule of the Amendment.[64]

In this context, the TULF lost its status of being the main opposition party in the parliament. The DDCs in the North and East were also rendered defunct by virtue of the enforced dismissal of the TULF.

Since the JVP, the only other party to contest, had also been proscribed, the District Development Councils became absolute rubber stamps for the government. Since then, local as well as central government powers were solely vested in the ruling party headed by the Executive President.

In this background, one can argue about a constitution-

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64. "SEVENTH SCHEDULE
   Article 157A and Article 161(d)(iii)
   I, ...do solemnly declare and affirm
                          SWEAR
   that I will uphold and defend the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and that I will not, directly or indirectly, in or outside Sri Lanka, support, espouse, promote, finance, encourage or advocate the establishment of a separate State within the territory of Sri Lanka".
   See, Sixth Amendment to the Constitution, Certified on 8th August 1983, p.7.

al crisis in Sri Lanka after 1982.[65] In the crisis, the sole aim of the ruling party was to retain power at any cost. Accordingly, after 1983, the militant Tamil separatism surfaced in the North-East and they selected the armed path as the only way for their goal; separate state for the Tamils. They used the term `Colombo Government' to define the activities of the rulers. In the other parts of the country - became popular as `South' - the rural youth used the definition `Colombo' to mark rural-urban disparities as well as their alienation from the mainstream political process. So, fighting the privileges of `Colombo' was seen as a fight for liberation.

So, with the failure of the electoral process to deliver needed strategies for change, the youth sought alternatives for problem solving in the `South' and the `North-East'. However, in the `South', the government's strategy to suppress the tensions in the political system by eliminating the opposition and `popular sectors' such as workers, had been successful for sometime. After 1982, the

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65. `Crisis' represents a state of affairs when members of a society experience the need for critical change but feel unable to initiate or attain these changes. See, for instance, Radhika Coomaraswamy, Sri Lanka: Crisis of the Anglo-American Constitutional Traditions, no.2, p.2.

five-sixth majority of the government itself was also a totally docile.

In this context, as Patricia Hyndman has stated, "the government continued the proscription of the JVP (other two parties' ban was lifted after a short period of time) more through fear of its potential support base than truth in the various charges.[66]

Before the banning of this `extreme left wing', the government had also banned Students Councils of the Universities in 1982. After this banning, there was no way for the students to present their grievances to the authorities. Agitations against the White Paper on Education were led by University students during this period and, unrest in the university became a clear factor in this situation. Two students from Peradeniya University and Colombo University died following a police shooting on June 19 and 20, 1984 respectively, because of these agitations. Thereafter, arrest of undergraduates, continuous closer of universities, opening of a private Medical College at Ragama (near Colombo) were equally important in the increased unrest and

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66. Cited in Rohan Gunartna, A Lost Revolution, no.30, p.199.

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protest movements by the youth. By 1986, the National

Student Centre or the *Jathika Sishya Madyasthanaya* spear-

headed the student efforts within this background and it led

by the JVP.[67]

Apart from the student unrest and protest movements,

until about 1987, there appeared only almost a silent

protest among other social groups in Sinhalese dominated

areas. In some observers' views, it had been a `dark mid-

night' before the Dawn.[68] The 1987-1989 second JVP rebel-

lion proved this reality.

In summary, it is clear that the relationship between

the youth, education, unemployment and political unrest was

a somewhat complex one. What made it politically volatile

was the structural limitations of the polity and economy.

Since Independence, both the economic structure and the

educational policy of the State were not able to change to

suit the changing social needs. During this period, several

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67.   See, Ibid., pp.46-48, 205-206, and W.A.W. Warnapala,
      Ethnic Strife and Politics in Sri Lanka, no.48, pp.174-
      76.

68.   See, for instance, Gunadasa Amarasekera, Ganaduru
      Mediyama Dakinemi Arunalu (meant the Dawn in Dark mid-
      Night) (Piyavi Book Publications, Colombo, 1988).

distinct phases of development had been identified. Social-
ist form of government in 1972 and the open economy of the
1978 have to be seen in this context. The overall impact of
these efforts was neither expected growth nor effective
distribution for equity nor the creation of a strong welfare
state. Contradictions began to sharpen with youth aliena-
tion and ethnic conflict.

To cope with these problems, there was increased
centralization of power, particularly in the 1980s through
constitutional changes and it resulted an erosion of
democracy. Consequently, the emergence of a violent
political culture threatening the foundations of the
democratic society of the State was evident in Sri Lanka in
late Eighties. This violence became a substitute for other
forms of power and was inversely related to legitimacy and
power of the state.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis has devoted itself to two basic areas: The nature of the politico-constitutional process of Sri Lanka and the extent that youth could influence this process; and, analysis of the constitutional changes based on youth unrest and resulted violent movements. Causal relationship between the two variables, i.e., constitutional changes and youth unrest, has been examined according to the main outline of the critical perspectives reflected in the introductory chapter. Parliamentary democracy provided the framework for that analysis. This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study in the context of socio-economic reality of the state.

First, we have examined the economic and social bases of leadership formation in Sri Lanka. We have done this by focussing on three aspects: Colonial socio-economic changes and their consequences at Independence; party system and leadership patterns; and concept of popular participation and youth. As it has shown, pre-Independence Sri Lanka's transformation into an export economy and, its dualistic nature, determined her politico-constitutional development.

The notable feature of this process was the emergence of a new national elite, based on modern sector and their role in advancement of the internal political process. More importantly, this elite encompassed around five to six per cent of the whole population of the country during the time. Similarly, until 1931, the franchise was limited to about four per cent of the whole population. Since it was based on wealth and literacy qualifications, political rights and political participation advanced only through these groups.

The introduction of the universal adult franchise in 1931, and the emergence of parliamentary politics from 1947 onwards, were not able to change this elite dominance. Instead, it provided the basis for electoral process. The landholdings, wealth and administrative offices they monopolized enabled them to emerge as the major decision-makers of the state. Gradually, in this process, a bond developed between the leading elite groups; of the national politics and the local levels. The local elites, in turn, had a hold over the ordinary masses of their localities. This bond provided the basis for electoral support and electoral success after 1931. This was especially true in rural areas and it was determined by structural factors. This system

played the major role in electoral politics between 1931 and 1956.

The grant of Independence in 1948 and the text of the Indepencence Constitution have to be seen in the light of this analysis. The absence of political parties for a long time helped in maintaining this system. The first party to be formed in Sri Lanka - the Marxist-oriented LSSP - could not assume the sort of national role representing a wide cross-section of communities. Rather than the LSSP's revolutionary fervour within an established culture, this failure was due to its incompetence to muster sufficient rural support. From the beginning, the LSSP stood for a Workers' and Peasants' Government. Its strategy, however, was to depend on the small working class, in its attempt at mobilizing the mass of rural peasant. As expected, this did not happen.

The first non-Marxist party, the UNP was only formed on the eve of 1947 general elections. Then too, the strategy had to ensure the victory of more influential candidates. Accordingly, the 1947 and 1952 elections were not fought on party-ideological grounds. During this period, the growth of the state evolved around this background. So, little

happened between 1948 to 1956 to alter the patterns of elite dependence established earlier, and secondly, there was no major extension of the state.

The formation of the SLFP in 1951 and the MEP coalition of 1956 was the first party whose ideology was voter determined. Thus, after 1956, the political party system became a meaningful political unit for the voter, and once this had occurred, all Sinhalese-led parties began to seek an ideological image that reflected more of the aspirations of the Sinhalese masses and more in line with the demands of Sinhalese voters.

However, in the broader sense, the formation of the SLFP also revealed the inter-elite conflict at the national level. Until he crossed the floor to form his own party, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was an active Minister of the UNP Government, and, a forceful speaker, especially against the Marxist parties. Having a strong base in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, and a widespread contacts amongst other local patrons and village elites, he was able to form a new non-Marxist party as an alternative to the UNP. More interestingly, although the MEP victory was seen as a `Silent Revolution' in Sri Lanka's mass politics, Bandaranaike also

emphasised his `charity for mass of the people' when he resigned from the UNP. In other words, it revealed the burden of the elite in fulfilling the neglected mass aspirations in the State. This background provided the bases for political process until the Seventies.

However, as analysed, the MEP victory in 1956 proved to be a turning point in Sri Lankan political development process. With the growth of the state after 1956, the nature of the elite-mass patronage network changed. Nationalization of public services and schools, the Paddy Land Act and several other public-sector institutions eroded the potential for individual patronage channels. Accordingly, the MEP Government, in some way, had gone towards reducing the power of the elite influences. Progressive administrative reforms also helped in this direction. But, newly-emerged, vernacular-educated, rural bases could not overwhelm the Western values. Assassination of Bandaranaike brought an another challenge to this process. So, the rural masses were not absorbed into the system even though several rural elite formations got this opportunity.

On the other hand, the economy exhibited a lopsidedness in structure because the post-independence successive

governments had attempted dealing with the effects rather than the causes and the roots of the problem. In contrast to this, as examined in the third chapter, deep-rooted socio-economic problems of the state demanded structural changes to fulfil growing youth aspirations. This did not happen until the late Sixties.

In this context, political performance of the SLFP showed two tendencies after 1956. Its power base or decision-making began to drift towards the *status quo* with the slogan of their much more work than the UNP for mass benefit in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, the poorer sections and rapidly increased younger generation became radicalized and alienated from mainstream political process. The relatively higher political consciousness of the youth, arising from factors of expanded education and rising unemployment, had developed a potentially explosive situation. The frustrated youth rejected both, the UNP and the SLFP, as conventional elite formations. In contrast, both, the SLFP and the UNP began to talk about socialism as a way to deal with the youth problems.

Meanwhile, successive splits within the Marxist movement meant that it did not provide a nationally account-

able alternative to either the UNP or the SLFP. A vote for them, began to be seen by the younger generation, as a wasted vote. On the other hand, with every successive split, the splinter group became the more radical faction of the youth. It manifested leadership's unwillingness to fulfil youth demands even within the movement itself. As time progressed, the JVP proved to be one of these splinter groups. Yet they had supported the UF Government in 1970. The JVP's shift towards armed struggle to capture state power in 1971, proved two realities: incapability of the constitutional process to place the youth on the agenda of national politics; and inability of the dominant political parties to understand youth problems. So, attempts in governments' hands saw by the JVP as plastering a cancer in the political body. In their revolution, the JVP took up arms to overthrow this political system dominated by `Queen's Government, Colonial Economy, the Roman-Dutch Law and the Imperialist Traditions'.

This powerful youth challenge compelled the rulers to attempt structural changes of the existing system in favour of the youth and mass of the people. At the same time, rulers realized the immediate necessity to create mechanisms facilitating greater political control over the majority

they governed. The text of the 1972 Constitution showed these dual aspects. Independence, freedom and sovereignty of the Republic, and, the Socialist economy, formed the bases of the government within the constitutional parameters. However, the structure of the government it created did not differ basically from the previous Constitution. Particularly, the unitary structure of the state, electoral demarcation and weightage, and citizenship rights remained unchanged. Effective dominance of the Prime Minister and centralization of government power had been the new approaches. The Governor-General, the Cabinet, the Judiciary, the Public and Civil Services and powers of emergency were effectively brought under the purview of the Prime Minister.

Within this strong centre, the UF Government attempted to implement their socialist economic policy. Planned economy involved extensive state monitoring and control. Educational changes to suit the world of work, land reforms in favour of the landless mass, youth-oriented employment schemes, and, targeted agricultural and industrial development, expected radical changes within five years.

Comparing with the policies of previous governments, these initiatives had been progressive in nature. However,

the question of who wielded the effective power of the government proved important in determining the efforts to foster the development through state machinery. As we have analysed, realities of state power, and, remnants and threads of the colonial economy, brought adverse effects to those initiatives, especially within the limited span of time. In these circumstances, frameworks and plans for socio-economic changes themselves were not able to fulfil demands of the electorate, numerically led by the youth.

During this period, emergency powers in the hands of the Prime-Minister maintained the stability of the government. Even though the UF Election Manifesto had denounced the previous UNP-led government for ruling through emergency powers for 1086 of 1825 days in office, the UF government also faced the same reality after March 1971. Since then, until 1977, nearly the entire period of the Government operated under the emergency rule. However, the government's ultimate decision to check its performance through the popular vote in 1977, saved the SLFP's credibility in the parliamentary democracy in Sri Lanka.

Five-sixth majority won by the UNP, `routing best brains' of the UF coalition, was the next turning point in

Sri Lanka's politics. In some ways, the just society concept devised by the UNP, recalled a divine right to rule the problematic state. In the process, the new Executive Presidency undertook the sole responsibility in this regard. At its outset, for the first time in independent Sri Lanka, the Presidency was decorated with the title of His Excellency. Enforced Sinhalese version of this title, depicted its uppermost place over every other secular or religious forms. In its conclusion, it tried to build an image around this powerful post. Secondly, the legislative and judicial power of the state, changed to dependent upon the Presidency and, in turn, the President was not answerable to any other power of the state.

In the first President J.R. Jayawardene's words, the device had been a necessary requirement for the stability and development of the state. The roots of this change, however, went back to 1971. Soon after the JVP Uprising, J.R. Jayawardene's individually-sponsored resolution to the 1972 Constituent Assembly had outlined this necessity. This had been further strengthened by the socialist danger posed to the *status quo* of elitism after 1972. So, by 1974, J.R. Jayawardene had promised substantial changes in the consti-

tution along those lines. The impetus for a new constitution lay on this reality.

As we have examined, youth problem solving machinery of the government - Free Trade Zone, telescoped Mahaweli Development Scheme and other development programmes - were undertaken within those limits. Apart from these, several programmes belonged to the stabilization policy facilitated to go back to the period before 1972, or some times, before 1956 period. Among them, decentralized transport system against nationalization of Public Transport in 1958, legal basis for a new structure for rural institutions against state responsibility after 1956, the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Acts and Special Provisions against Land Reform Law in 1972, compulsory arbitration of worker disputes through bureaucracy against Trade Union rights, and Essential Services Acts against strategic strikes by workers, were significant. At the same time, emergency regulations provided the implementation power for most of these changes.

Weakening of any opposition, within and outside the Parliament, had provided an easy way for the government. The First and Second Amendments to the Constitution facilitated this process. More importantly, because of

their invisible nature, no one could understand what was really said in those documents, without examining the real politics of the state.

However, silent opposition of the electorate towards those changes could not manifest openly and strongly because of the Executive's sudden decision to hold an advanced Presidential election without dissolving its operative power bases. The Third Amendment to the Constitution justified this advanced Presidential election. Consequently, Executive President's desire to mould main Opposition party's (SLFP) power base according to his own preferences, was expressed in the pretext of a Naxalite threat to the state. This so-called threat was used to rationalize the necessity for a Referendum without a general election in extending the five-sixth parliamentary majority for another six year term. This constituted the text of the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution. In this way, by 1983, the infant Executive Presidency of Sri Lanka was able to paralyse the fifty-year old electoral process. So, without considering the role of the Opposition and desires of majority of the people, government was able to go ahead on its own advice. However, constitutional changes could legitimise this process within its boundaries. Thereafter, as Jangseok Kang has explained

in his <u>Conflict Management in Legislatures</u> (1990), `Decorative Legislature' provided the legitimacy for the UNP Government's automatic power.

On the other hand, in contrast to this constitutional legitimacy, as all of the political leaders in the country had repeatedly appealed during their electoral campaigns, youth came forward to assume the responsibility of democracy. So, educated younger generation raised their voice against this legitimacy. At this juncture, politicians neglected their own popular slogans such as `education was the backbone of the state' and `Youth were the veins of the state'. This negligence created a violent political culture in the country. However, by the time, the youth of the State had separated through communal lines demarcated by the electoral politics. Accordingly, whereas both these groups have developed nearly similar grievances, Sinhalese and Tamil youth violence operated through almost different ways by the late Eighties.

APPENDIX

A-1   Map of Sri Lanka :

Provinces
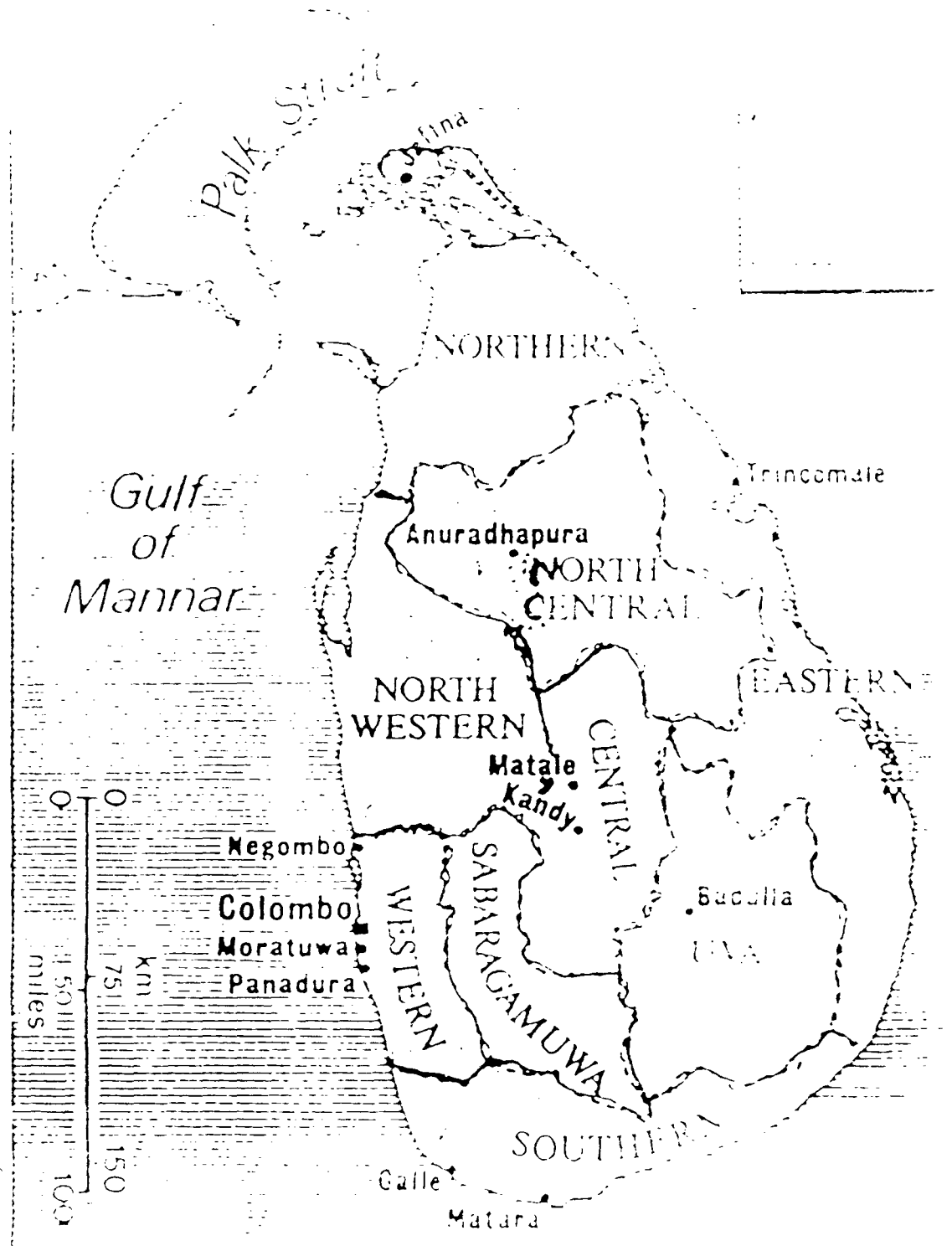
Source : ed. Tissa Fernando & R.N. Kearney, Modern Sri Lanka

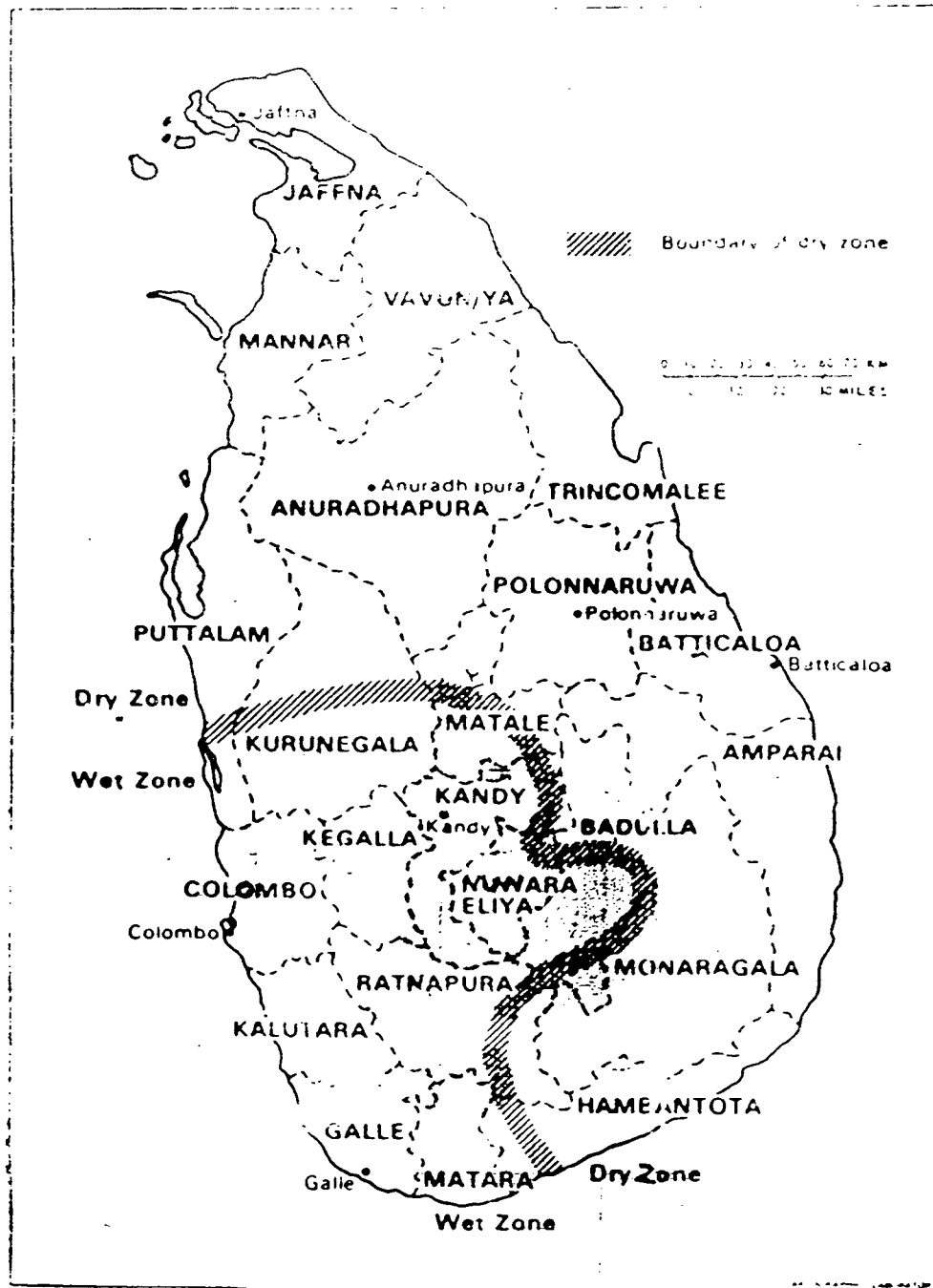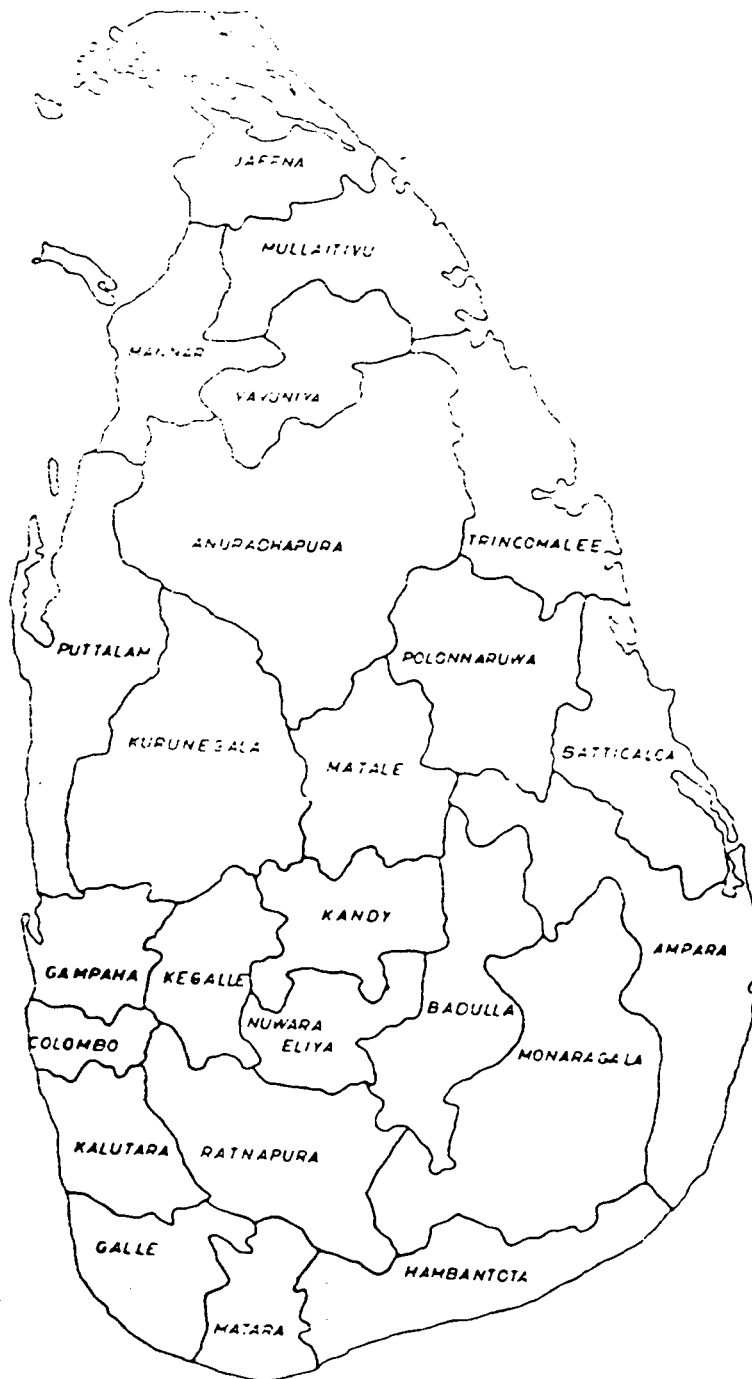(Syracuse University Press, 1979)

A-2   Map of Sri Lanka :

Wet Zone & Dry Zone

Source : ed. Tissa Fernando & R.N. Kearney, Modern SriLanka
         (Syracuse University Press, 1979)

A-3   Map   of   Sri Lanka :

Administrative   Districts

Source : K.M.de Silva, Managing Ethnic Tensions in
Multi-Ethnic Societies: Sri Lanka (University Press
of America, 1986)

SRI LANKA
ELECTORAL DISTRICTS
SCALE 1:750,000

COLOMBO DISTRICT
1. COLOMBO NORTH
2. COLOMBO CENTRAL (3)
3. BORELLA
4. COLOMBO EAST
5. COLOMBO WEST
6. DEHIWALA
7. RATMALANA
8. WATTALA
9. NEGOMBO
10. KATANA
11. DIVULAPITIYA
12. MIRIGAMA
13. MINUWANGODA
14. ATTANAGALLA
15. GAMPAHA
16. JA-ELA
17. MAHARA
18. DOMPE
19. BIYAGAMA
20. KELANIYA
21. KOLONNAWA
22. KOTTE
23. KADUWELA
24. AVISSAWELLA
25. HOMAGAMA
26. MAHARAGAMA
27. KESBEWA
28. MORATUWA

KALUTARA DISTRICT
29. PANADURA
30. BANDARAGAMA
31. HORANA
32. BULATHSINHALA
33. MATUGAMA
34. KALUTARA
35. BERUWELA (2)
36. AGALAWATTA

MATALE DISTRICT
37. DAMBULLA
38. LAGGALA
39. MATALE
40. RATTOTA

KANDY DISTRICT
41. GALAGEDERA
42. HARISPATTUWA (2)
43. PATA DUMBARA
44. UDA DUMBARA
45. TELDENIYA
46. KUNDASALE
47. HEWAHETA
48. SENKADAGALA
49. MAHANUWARA
50. YATINUWARA
51. UDUNUWARA
52. GAMPOLA
53. NAWALAPITIYA

NUWARA ELIYA DISTRICT
54. NUWARA ELIYA-MASKELIYA (3)
55. KOTMALE
56. HANGURANKETA
57. WALAPANE

GALLE DISTRICT
58. BALAPITIYA
59. AMBALANGODA
60. KARANDENIYA
61. BENTARA ELPITIYA
62. HINIDUMA
63. BADDEGAMA
64. RATGAMA
65. GALLE
66. AKMEEMANA
67. HABARADUWA

MATARA DISTRICT
68. DENIYAYA
69. HAKMANA
70. AKURESSA
71. KAMBURUPITIYA
72. DEVINUWARA
73. MATARA
74. WELIGAMA

HAMBANTOTA DISTRICT
75. MULKIRIGALA
76. BELIATTA
77. TANGALLA
78. TISSAMAHARAMA

JAFFNA DISTRICT
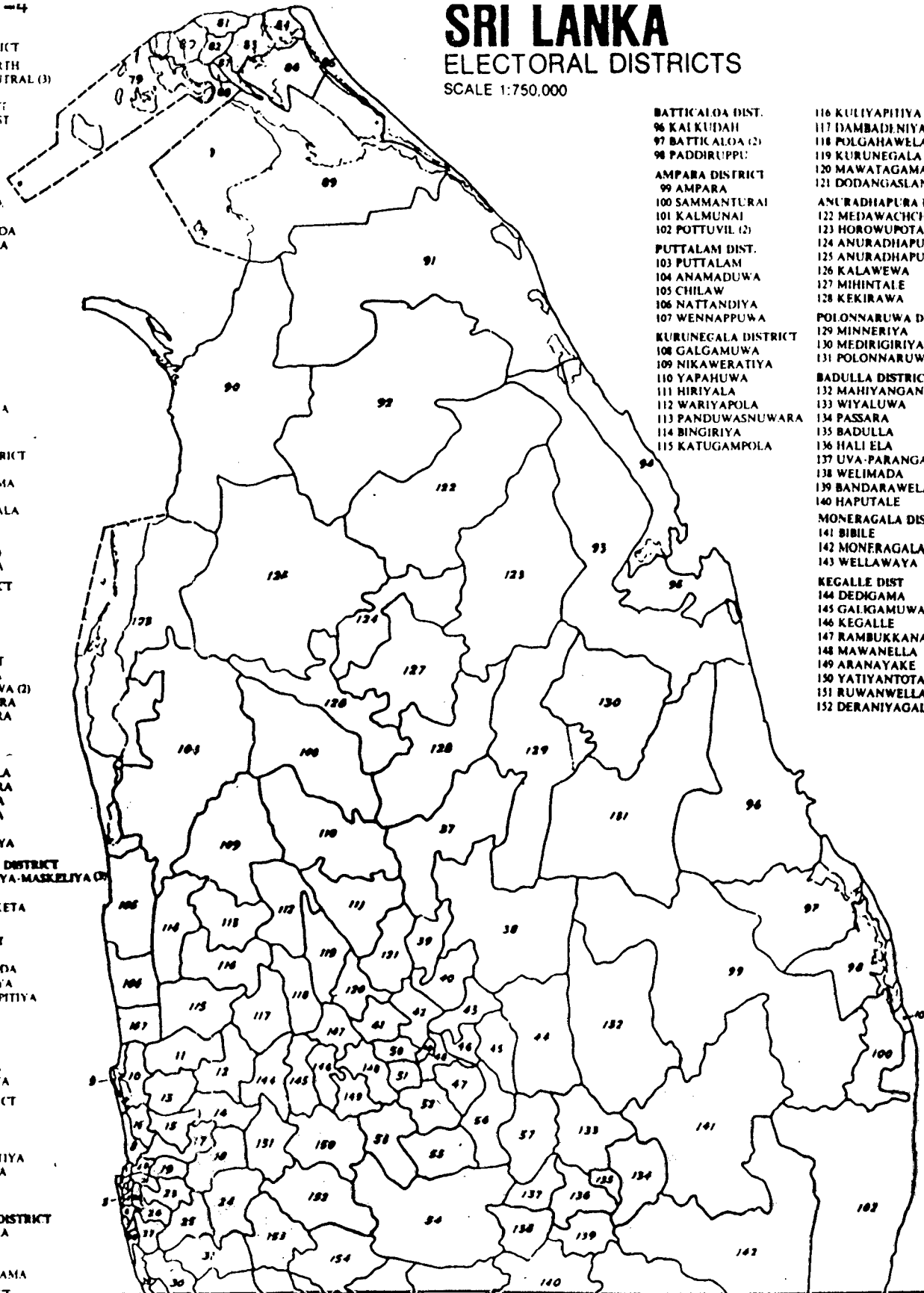
BATTICALOA DIST.
96. KALKUDAH
97. BATTICALOA (2)
98. PADDIRUPPU

AMPARA DISTRICT
99. AMPARA
100. SAMMANTURAI
101. KALMUNAI
102. POTTUVIL (2)

PUTTALAM DIST.
103. PUTTALAM
104. ANAMADUWA
105. CHILAW
106. NATTANDIYA
107. WENNAPPUWA

KURUNEGALA DISTRICT
108. GALGAMUWA
109. NIKAWERATIYA
110. YAPAHUWA
111. HIRIYALA
112. WARIYAPOLA
113. PANDUWASNUWARA
114. BINGIRIYA
115. KATUGAMPOLA

116. KULIYAPITIYA
117. DAMBADENIYA
118. POLGAHAWELA
119. KURUNEGALA
120. MAWATAGAMA
121. DODANGASLANDA

ANURADHAPURA DIST.
122. MEDAWACHCHIYA
123. HOROWUPOTANA
124. ANURADHAPURA EAST
125. ANURADHAPURA WEST
126. KALAWEWA
127. MIHINTALE
128. KEKIRAWA

POLONNARUWA DIST.
129. MINNERIYA
130. MEDIRIGIRIYA
131. POLONNARUWA

BADULLA DISTRICT
132. MAHIYANGANA
133. WIYALUWA
134. PASSARA
135. BADULLA
136. HALI ELA
137. UVA-PARANGAMA
138. WELIMADA
139. BANDARAWELA
140. HAPUTALE

MONERAGALA DIST.
141. BIBILE
142. MONERAGALA
143. WELLAWAYA

KEGALLE DIST
144. DEDIGAMA
145. GALIGAMUWA
146. KEGALLE
147. RAMBUKKANA
148. MAWANELLA
149. ARANAYAKE
150. YATIYANTOTA
151. RUWANWELLA
152. DERANIYAGALA

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