

LANKA

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**Also: Thondaman hits out
JVP, Eelam & CIA and**

Gananath Obeyesekere's "Pattini"

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MORE THAN A TEACUP

Sri Lanka may no longer be Lipton's tea garden but tea still dominates our economy. Any ill-wind is more than a storm in a teacup.

Only high tea prices strengthened Finance Minister de Mel's hand when he negotiated terms with the World Bank and IMF last year. He was able to predict quite confidently that Sri Lanka would end 1984 with a balance of payment surplus larger than 200 million SDR. In fact, we did better. The payment surplus was closer to 300 million SDR.

Mr. de Mel left for Washington and Europe with a nervous eye on tumbling tea prices and a far less confident negotiating

hand this time. Sri Lanka's best hope is that prices will start to improve by mid-1985. But remedial and defensive measures are in any case necessary.

TEA, INDIA, USSR

With a possible loss of about 2 billion rupees in revenue from tea, the government's advisers have recommended two basic steps:

(a) joint action with India, the biggest producer and (b) persuading the Soviet Union to be more active at the auctions.

Electoral considerations, in the main, prompted the Indian authorities to fix an export limit. This accounted largely for the steady rise in tea prices throughout 1984. Would India agree to restrict exports in such a way that the present price decline can be arrested?

The Soviet presence at the Colombo auctions, says the trade is always a helpful factor. But the USSR complains that Sri Lanka, despite a very favourable trade balance (about 1.5 billion rupees) has stopped buying Soviet tea chest panels. The government's advisers recommend a bilateral agreement with the USSR on tea and tea chests. (India has such a bilateral pact). Iraq and Egypt are two other countries which help Sri Lanka meet the threat of falling tea prices, at a time when the Finance Ministry anticipates a further drop in tourist earnings and in migrant remittances.

TEA AND THONDAMAN

And then there is always the problem of Mr. Thondaman, too. He pulled a general strike in April last year. He has been complaining that the post-strike arrangement on wages has not been respected. While this is the main economic grievance of the powerful C.W.C. which he has led for the past 30 years, Mr. Thondaman's very special constituency has other reasons for complaint and agitation. (See THONDAMAN LASHES OUT)

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LETTERS

Useful and informative

We find your journal extremely useful and informative both for use in our library and for individuals within the Institute.

Diana Chaane

Institute of Race Relations,
London.

Cause of violence

The root cause of violence in the North is the lack of a political settlement. To say there will be no talk on a political settlement till the violence ceases is like a doctor telling a patient come to see him with a cough due to tuberculosis: get rid of the cough and I will treat the tuberculosis.

Dr. R. W. C. Thambiah
Jaffna.

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NAIVE THEORIZING

I HAVE been a keen reader of your journal ever since the international spotlight turned on Sri Lanka's racial strife. As a citizen of the religious, ethnic and linguistic mosaic that is India, I am naturally interested in the special problems affecting countries with similar diversities. Indeed, all countries in the South Asian region are multi-ethnic to some degree. Communal violence is a uniquely South Asian phenomenon. In the light of this, I am surprised at the naivete of J. R. Roberts' prescriptions for solving the communal problem in his contributions to the issues of March 15 and April 1. According to Roberts, the violence of Sinhalese mobs stems from the collective inferiority complex of the Sinhalese. He thinks the best way to remove the complex is by pandering to it: "the government should stand four-square behind the Sinhalese language and culture and the Buddhist religion." This, he thinks, can be achieved "without oppressing Sri Lanka's minorities" and "without cutting Sri Lanka off from the outside world". This sounds very much like mistaking the symptoms of a disease for its cure. The cycle of communal violence began with minority disaffection issuing in terrorist violence, in turn leading to "majority" mob violence. Without the minority feeling a sense of grievance which lead many of its youth to senseless acts of violence, the whole cycle would not have arisen. Roberts ignores this entirely, choosing instead to harp on the frailties of Sinhalese mob psychology. If he had chosen to write about India, he would probably have suggested that the solution to the terrorism of Sikh

groups in the Punjab would be for India to declare itself a Hindu state.

The few arguments that Roberts hints at in defence of his extraordinary views are easily disposed of. He has no argument at all to offer to show how the minorities would not be oppressed if majority chauvinism was espoused as official philosophy. He appears to have some argument for the view that Sinhalese ought to be the language of the state and this consists not in establishing his own view but in suggesting that the opposite view is mistaken. Why? Because Japan, France and West Germany "are well-integrated internationally yet day-to-day affairs are conducted in their respective native languages". What superb examples to choose to undermine his own thesis! Three mono-ethnic countries which were among the early industrial pioneers! Well the fact is that Roberts would be hard put to find any other examples. Every newly independent country in Asia and Africa faces the problem of national self-definition and modernization. Very often these countries were brought together as political entities through the irresistible power of the imperial gun. Take India, the hapless unwieldy giant of South Asia. English is very much the de facto official language in India: without it things would grind to a halt. Occasionally Hindi zealots of Roberts' persuasion are bitter about the lot of the country's "official language" spoken as a native tongue by about one third of the Indian population. But their siren songs have been resisted in India, simply because it is

the most sane and pragmatic thing to do. One cannot rewrite the history of colonial domination. One cannot gainsay the fact that for over a century English has had a pre-eminent position in the subcontinent and the finest native minds made it their own intellectual vehicle. And what is more, one should not forget the fact that we are part of a commonwealth of the third world, of countries awakening to their identity in a world not wholly of their making. Not to come to terms with history and to indulge in xenophobia and self-doubt would be a sure way to deepen divisions and stunt the growth of our societies. To suggest that inferiority complexes must be fed rather than eliminated, is in my view most irresponsible. In the tightly interlinked global village one cannot be just "comfortably Sinhalese" or "comfortably Tamil" or "comfortably English", one must be open and responsive to the world and always conscious of the fact that our inalienable identity is that of being human.

It is well within the capacities of the Sri Lankan leadership to resolve the communal problem. A federal arrangement and English playing the role of a neutral all-Sri Lankan language seems to be the only humane way out of the tangle, whatever scholars of Roberts' ilk might say.

Ranjit Nair
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Spiritlessness of rallies displayed disarray in political parties

Dayan Jayatileka

It was the most lack-lustre May Day that I could remember, and my impression was confirmed by one of Sri Lanka's foremost academics and labour historians. The contrast with last year was striking. In 1984 the newly formed Four party Opposition bloc and the birth of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party attracted a huge and enthusiastic crowd to Campbell Park. This year government and Opposition rallies displayed a spiritlessness that in turn reflected the disarray, lack of perspective and paralysis of all Establishment and established political parties. The "general crisis" is precisely that: general, all pervasive, encompassing the entire Sri Lankan (Sinhala) political formation.

Government theoreticians must doubtless be analysing why the mix-as-before, the usual politico-musical circus could not attract quite as many lumpens as in previous years. One observer suggests that "security considerations" which are usually utilized to hamstring Opposition May Day mobilization cropped up this time for the UNP, thereby undermining its usual effort to attract as many people as possible to have a "good time". The SLFP for its part has definitely bounced back from last year, but only in terms of numbers. The procession was longer than any other, but then again it was narrow and skimpy in places. Still, the SLFP's organizational reshuffle, presided over by Sirima, has worked, and the newly appointed organizers trying to prove themselves, manage to secure the participation of their supporters. It is interesting to note in passing that some of the traditional SLFP strongholds like

Kandy put up a poor show while the Kelaniya contingent was very strong. It was obvious that the party had loosened its purse strings this time. What has happened since last year seems to be that the anti-UNP masses feel that if the UNP is to be ousted **electorally** then Mrs. B. is the one who can do it. The SLMP is paying the price for not fulfilling its promise of posing an Oppositional alternative qualitatively different from the SLFP. The only way it could have done so was to have inserted itself into incipient struggles such as those of the Bank employees, the hospital workers—the Wellessa peasants and above all the students.

Supporters of the three Party Bloc argue that it was the bomb blast that kept its rank and file away. That does not say much for the capacity of these three parties to motivate their followers. Neither does it explain the attendance at the SLFP rally. I believe that there is a deeper psychological reason for the SLFP 'come-back'. The people perceive that the country is coming apart and blame the government for it. The Three Party bloc has not attempted to present to the people, with any coherence and clarity, an alternative vision of the country: secular, democratic, and genuinely federal. Thus growing sections of the populace are beginning to rally almost instinctively around Mrs. Bandaranaike as a strong matriarchal despot who can keep this place together.

The LSSP demonstration took 30 minutes to pass a single point the CPSL took 40 and the SLMP's less than an hour. Symbolically,

the Lion flag was borne alongside the Party flag at the head of each constituent detachment of the demonstration. What Trotsky would have said at the sight of the LSSP banner, with the figure 4 interwined with the hammer and sickle, being borne aloft together with what Philip called a tribal flag, I do not know. But there it was. As for the CPSL, the large hammer and sickle float at the head of its procession was unable to manoeuvre into the park and had to be kept waiting outside while the Lion flag made its way into the main compound together with the Party's Internationalist banner.

The slogans consisted of the same old list of grievances against the UNP. But as far as perspectives of struggle or rallying cries were concerned, there were really none. True there were repeated calls for a general elections particularly in the SLMP demonstration just as that slogan dominated the SLFP's May Day. But nobody seems to have the foggiest notion as to how to secure one. On the other hand there were slogans calling for "rebellion in the factories, the streets and the University campuses." But a leaflet distributed by the Inter-University Student's Federation rubbed in the fact that when there were incipient student rebellion this year and last year the Opposition Party leadership did their best to throttle them in their crib!

Dr. Colvin R. de Silva's speech was made memorable for its forthright statement that it was only the Tamil people in the North who are standing up to this

(Continued on page 8)

'Eelam militants are all CIA' says JVP

Who would have thought that the Old Left and a break-away from the bourgeois SLFP would take a stand on the National Question in advance of the 'revolutionary JVP'? Who would have imagined that the three Party Block would term the Tamil militants what they are, namely guerillas, while the JVP would call them CIA agents which is what they were called in 1971! But since we are in that interregnum where a whole variety of the most morbid symptoms appear (as the stunted tubercular Italian genius would have it) we must not be too surprised that this was precisely what happened this May Day.

One of the resolutions moved at the United CPSL, SLMP, LSSP rally at Havelock Park read as follows:

"While demanding that the government abandons its policy of seeking a military solution of the ethnic problem and of rejecting any attempt at a political solution until this is achieved, this rally calls for

- (1) a cease fire and negotiations between the government and the representatives of the Tamil people, including the guerilla youth groups, for a political settlement that will ensure both the unity of Sri Lanka and a substantial devolution of central powers and functions to all areas of the country, which will allow the peoples of these areas to manage their own affairs in these areas, while co-operating with others for common purposes;"

That this consciousness has not gripped the mass base of the Three Party Block to the exclusion of racism was revealed in the slogans that were occasionally shouted in

their demonstration "Give us governmental power to eradicate Terrorism!" "Brother soldier, brother policeman, we will join you in going to the North!" were slogans of this sort. But slogans were also repeatedly shouted calling on the soldiers and the Police to throw down their arms and desist from going to the North. Still another slogan called on the comrades in the North to lay down arms and join in a united struggle for Socialism. And as I mentioned in an earlier section of this report the crowd energetically cheered the on-going defeat of the UNP at the hands of the Northern people.

While I leave it to experts in Sinhala ideology and consciousness to make sense of this behaviour the point I wish to make is that the Three Party leadership made no overtly racist statements and the official Three Party Block position on the National Question has now moved to a half-way decent one (only "half way" because in their Sinhala statement they still use the word "unitary"). The same cannot be said of the JVP's official policy. In a four-paged printed leaflet containing its May Day message the Party having referred to the problems the country has in securing foreign loans and aid specially because the ties the Eelamists have with the Imperialist States goes onto denounce the loss of lives and property due to Eelamist terrorist acts. Page 2 of the leaflet contains a sentence underlined for emphasis which reads as follows:

"the bourgeois methodology has been firstly to destroy the socialist movement that is genuinely against Eelam and secondly to make available Eelam, on Imperialist advice."

The official organ of the JVP's Trade Union Federation, the Samastha Lanka Vurchiya Samithi Samme-

lanaya, (under whose auspices the Party held its May Day this year) went further. The main story in the front page of the paper 'Malima' (Compass) denounced the labelling of the Eelam Movement as Marxist and went on to state that "the aim of the Eelam movements, which are overflowing with CIA agents who are acting according to US imperialism's regional strategy to break up India, is not the setting up of a socialist regime but instead the bifurcation of Sri Lanka and the establishment in the North and East of a bourgeois Eelam state. In actual fact the existence of the Eelam movement has so far benefited and will in the future benefit solely the Capitalist System and not the Socialist movement. There are CIA agents who try to label this Marxist and militant, and attempt to convince the struggling people that the Eelamist method of building guerrilla groups and engaging in violent acts is a Marxist method. The revolutionary movement of this country rejects the Eelamist ideology and their violent actions".

The May Day resolutions continued on page 4 of the paper clearly indicate the JVP stand on devolution. Resolution number Seven says that "the pro-yankee Jayawardene ruling clique has dragged the country to the brink of seperation not unwittingly. The white-washing of Amirthalingam, who maintains relations with organisations that are directing violent acts towards the bifurcation of the country, as well as the continued free reign given to Amirthalingam to act contrary to the sixth amendment all take place owing to the JR-Amirthalingam pact. In order to prevent the class unity of the two peoples at this moment when the country is heading speedily towards socialist social transformation, and also

(Continued on page 16)

MUSLIMS — NOT A 'STATIC' FORCE

M de S

It's now seemingly quiet on the eastern front. Rehabilitation and repair, say the damage-assessment experts, are the two basic problems of the immediate future. That is the necessarily narrow view of officialdom, however well-intentioned. But that work has to be done and done quickly to alleviate the suffering of several thousand innocent families who were swept into a conflict which was certainly not of their making. About 2000 houses and shops, according to one report (SUN) have been destroyed or seriously damaged. The cost is estimated at about 75 million rupees. The official casualty figure is 30 but residents in the area have put it much higher, perhaps double. The refugees, Tamil and Moslem but mainly Tamil, reached a peak of 80,000. Thirty schools which did not re-open last week (180 schools in the Eastern province did) are still the temporary living quarters of displaced persons. 'Peace Committees' comprising community leaders Tamil and Moslem, teachers, clergymen and prominent politicians, are active in the area, and what is most evident is the mutual appreciation that little will be gained and much lost if the Tamils and the Tamil-speaking Moslems do not restore the communal harmony which once prevailed.

What have been the consequences of the three-weeks of bloody strife and violence in the E. P?

Pro-UNP observers appeared at first to be encouraged by the notion that there were many gains, political and propagandist, to their cause. The Muslims have become the latest casualty of Tamil separatist attacks, and the island's Muslims (7% of the population) will swing solidly behind the government in its anti-Eelam drive. But reports of opinion trends in the E. P. and even Muslim, opinion in Colombo and the South suggest that this could have been too

optimistic or premature a response. Opinion-makers in the Muslim community have stepped back, as it were from the ugly events, to take a cooler, less hurried look at the whole situation. Evidently, they are not satisfied that this was a simple, straightforward communal clash. They see more complicating factors.

Secondly, there is the question of the Islamic and Arab reaction abroad. An editorial in the *Saudi Gazette* suggested that conservative Arab opinion was outraged by the attack on Muslims by armed Tamil separatists. Again, a second opinion gradually emerged among Arab representatives here. They also stepped back from 'instant judgments'. Any calculation therefore that Arab displeasure and resentment over the Israeli issue would diminish may have been too facile.

Finally, the military aspect. Has the eastern province being 'cauterised'? In any effective counter-insurgency strategy a high priority would have to be given to stop the disease of 'separatism' spreading southwards down the eastern coastline. Would last month's violence, whatever its causes, have contributed to such an objective?

The violence which swept across a relatively peaceful province has raised a far more serious social-political question about the ethno-religious mosaic of Sri Lanka. This journal has been something of a lone voice in speaking about the changing character of the Moslem community under the pressure of both domestic factors (mainly, the new generation's advance via education into professional fields from the closed world of commerce and the patronage system of the extended family) and international currents of opinion, principally the Arab world after the oil boom and the Islamic world, after the Iranian revolution. We challenged the settled Sinhala-Tamil view of the Muslims as a "static community"

and castigated the Sinhala-Tamil elite's cultural snobbery and intellectual superiority vis-a-vis the Muslims. Mercilessly censored, the Frank Jayasinghe report has been published in the ISLAND. One of Dr. Jayasinghe's observations merits special attention. He refers to the emergence of a sharper, more assertive "Muslim ethno-religious identity" over the last few years.

Thondaman lashes out

For thirty years or more, Mr. Thondaman, the unchallenged boss of the CWC and Indian Tamil plantation labour, has been known to most Sinhalese politicians and opinion-makers as "Delhi's man". So when he chose, of all occasions, the farewell reception to the Indian High Commissioner Mr. Chatwal, to lead a bitter attack on India's Sri Lanka policy, there was a stir in both political and diplomatic circles.

He went to what he thought was the root of the matter. The Indian Tamil community he said has been a casualty of "cordial" Indo-Sri Lanka relations. In short, Delhi had placed the interests of diplomacy before the interests of the plantation workers.

Turning to the present situation, he pointed a gun directly at Premier Gandhi himself. He had spoken of a 'light at the end of the tunnel' said Mr. Thondaman was getting darker! His was a two-front attack — on both Delhi and Colombo, that is Mr. Thondaman's own UNP-CWC cabinet! Mr. Alam Khan spoke of the "cruel, inhuman and barbaric" situation but spoke also of keeping "close contact" with Colombo, while the Sri Lanka government spoke of "a strictly internal affair" and even claimed there was "no ethnic problem". Meanwhile, said Mr. Thondaman blood flowed freely....

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Has Zia burnt his bridges to the Kremlin ?

Bhabani Sen Gupta

Who's afraid of Mikhail Gorbachov?

For the moment, at least one head of state. His name is Zia-ul Haq. He is, as we all know, the newly "elected" president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He had gone to the funeral of Leonid Brezhnev and had a somewhat friendly conversation with Yuri Andropov. Then he went to the funeral of Yuri Andropov, and was refused an audience with Konstantin Chernenko or any other member of the CPSU politbureau. Undaunted, Zia-ul Haq made himself present at the funeral of Konstantin Chernenko and was rewarded with a meeting with Mikhail Gorbachov. Upon his return to Islamabad, the Pakistan president told newsmen that it was a "friendly" meeting. But the Soviet news agency Tass queered the pitch. Immediately after the meeting, Tass issued a report on it. What Tass said meant, in effect, that Gorbachov told Zia-ul Haq in plain unequivocal words that if he allowed the Americans to escalate the fighting in Afghanistan, the consequences for Pakistan would be less than pleasant.

General Zia at first tried to pooh-pooh the Tass statement. But the Washington Post now stepped on his toes. In a report, the Post not only confirmed the Tass report but added something even more ominous. Gorbachev was reported to have told the US secretary of State, George Schultz that if the Reagan administration went ahead with its reported plans to overthrow the leftist regime in Nicaragua, well, there was always its own very close and trusted ally, Pakistan, where the Soviets could do a tit-for-tat. Not exactly in those words did the two adversary foreign ministers converse. But this was the real political gist of the Soviet-

American diplomatic exchange that took place on the occasion of the funeral of Konstantin Chernenko.

General Zia could not keep up the pretense of having had a "friendly" talk with the Kremlin's young leader of the age of 54. He confessed to the Financial Times of London that Gorbachov threatened to hit back if the fighting in Afghanistan escalated. Zia said he believed that the Soviets had determined to enforce a military solution of the Afghan problem, and they might increase their troops strength. He seemed genuinely concerned about Pakistan's security.

It is well known that the Americans have been pressing Zia for some time to allow the CIA to supply high-grade weapons to the Afghan rebels. At least four American newspapers or periodicals have confirmed in recent months that not since the Vietnam war have the Americans committed so much money to aid a rebel force fighting a communist state as they have done in Afghanistan. Mr Rajiv Gandhi said the same thing to the New Delhi reporter of the Los Angeles Times in an interview towards the end of February.

Under an agreement concluded between Zia-ul Haq and the US administration in 1980, Zia has complete control over the level of fighting that should go on within Afghanistan. The CIA procures from various sources — Egypt, Somalia, China — weapons of old Soviet vintage, and delivers them to the Pakistani authorities at Pakistani ports. From then on, Pakistan takes over. About 30-40 percent of the weapons, the best ones, are skimmed away by the Pakistani army. About ten percent are smuggled by the Afghan refugees and sold in the international arms super-market. The rest are funneled to the rebels.

The rebel groups have been demanding better and more effective weapons for more than three years. Last year, limited number of SAM missiles was allowed to go in. But the rebels want weapons made in the US, France and Britain.

There is a lot of money lying with the CIA, which the Congress has voted generously. Senators and Congressmen are want to show their anti-Sovietism in Afghanistan rather than closer home in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Mr Reagan gets little money for the operations he would like to carry out against the leftist forces in the two Latin countries, against Nicaragua which is ruled by a coalition of left groups, and against the leftist guerrillas fighting a rightist dictatorship in neighbouring El Salvador. But Congress gives Mr Reagan twice or even thrice the amount he asks for to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. According to the Afghan governments's estimate, the Reagan administration has spent \$ 1 billion in the last four years to keep the resistance on-going. The figure of \$ 600 million would perhaps be closer to the truth.

If General Zia succumbs to US pressure, as he finally does on the Afghan issue, he risks Soviet reprisals as well as a million or two more Afghan refugees pouring into Pakistan. Not that the Soviets would invade Pakistan. They don't have to. More frequent air attacks on refugee camps and civilian villages along the border would create panic in the frontier areas of Pakistan and greatly destabilise the severely strained social and political equilibrium in Pakistan. Limited hot pursuits would further aggravate the crisis.

The Soviets may use Baluchis and Pathans living in Afghanistan to create political problems for General Zia. They may withdraw the aid programme they are running in Pakistan despite all the

cleavages between Islamabad and Moscow. In short, Pakistan's northern border can get really hot. General Zia can hardly risk it.

On the other hand, if he does not allow larger quantities of better quality weapons to go into Afghanistan, General Zia may not have the US aid package extended beyond 1986. He may be required by the Congress to give more convincing proof than he has hitherto done of his will to take on the Soviets in Afghanistan. General Zia put up a brave face during his Financial Times interview and said that Pakistan would fight against the Soviet-Afghan forces, if need be, single-handed. It won't allow Americans to fight for Pakistan. He could have said with a little candour that Americans would not spill their own blood for their dear, ally, and that they would fight the Soviets in Afghanistan only to the last *mujahedan*.

When I was in the United States in February to take part in an international conference on Afghanistan, I heard some talk about a superpower trade-off on Afghanistan. One idea, put forward by Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, president Carter's national security adviser, was that the US should seek a trade off between a Soviet role in the Middle East and pull out of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. An official of the State Department, speaking strictly in his individual capacity, mused about a trade off with a significant lowering of American military strength in the Indian Ocean. Gromyko and Shultz have been discussing "regional issues" along with issues relating to the turtle-pace Geneva talks on arms control. Are they discussing a trade off between Nicaragua and Afghanistan?

Perhaps not. The Soviets will not trade Afghanistan for anything. For them, Afghanistan is "not negotiable". What is negotiable is the "situation around Afghanistan". But the very idea of a superpower trade off on Afghanistan sends a chill down the spine of the regime in Pakistan. The Soviets believe that, like Vietnam, the Reagan administration will lose a war against Nicaragua on American soil because of American opposition. There is no opposition in

the Soviet Union to the Russian military presence in Afghanistan.

Recently, the Washington Post printed an article by an American which categorically admonished the Reagan administration for fueling the civil war in Afghanistan. One

Spiritlessness. . .

(Continued from page 3)

government and waging a consequential struggle for their rights. The crowd applauded lustily. Vijaya Kumaratunga's speech was superb though slightly marred by the kind of snide reference to Messrs Thondaman and Amirthalingam, a temptation he should resist, seeing that he is not V. W. Kularatne. Vijaya's entrance into Havelock Park earlier that evening generated the only strong spontaneous emotion to be seen anywhere on that day. His speech was from the word go a blistering assault on the government, the SLFP leader (his mother-in-law) and what he called "the lick-spittlet Opposition led by his brother-in-law" and those who wish to celebrate International Workers Day as proper Sinhala Buddhists! Vijaya's speech was a piece of strong anti-war and anti-racist oratory. He did not forget the 50,500 refugees in the East and blamed the Mosque shooting explicitly on the MOSSAD. He warned armed forces and police personnel of the possibility that they would return home from Jaffna in a bundle weighing 2lb, albeit with a posthumous promotion. President Jayewardene who once claimed that he was the umpteenth (though uncrowned) king of Sri Lanka reigned only South of Anuradhapura said Vijaya. Of late it may be said that reigns only South of Nika-weratiya. In fact the President now folds the map of Sri Lanka up to Anuradhapura before he looks at it he said. A roar of assent from the crowd made plain that the loss of UNP's authority brought comfort that outweighed the dismay over the

swallow does not a summer make. The American involvement in Afghanistan is not unpopular in the United States. But public interest is edging. Americans do not have

(Continued on page 11)

apparent loss of territory!. The cheers grew still louder when Vijaya proclaimed that the workers and peasants of Sri Lanka would soon limit Jayewardene rule to the narrow stretch that is Ward Place and went on to predict boldly that this May Day the UNP had its last "bajaw" on Galle Face Green. In a move that marked him out as a politician with considerable savy he singled out the students for praise, over and above the peasants and saluted them for having fired the first shot, as it were, of the anti-government struggle.

An SLMP stalwart, asked why the SLMP participation had declined to about half that of the previous year explained that much of their funds had been depleted in fighting three elections and holding their first anniversary celebrations at Sugathadasa Stadium. Thus was evidenced in the much smaller number of private buses that ferried the SLMP demonstrators to Colombo this year. What is also undeniable however is that the Party's poor showing at Mahiyangana, and the suspicion that its very participation in by-elections helped legitimise the UNP (and therefore unwittingly it was acting in the UNP's interests) had taken its toll.

Leaving Havelock Park that night one passed the huge red hammer-and sickle float of the CPSL which had been left forlorn by the roadside. Then three or four Party workers began trundling it along Havelock Road. After a few moments the darkness blotted out the men, and as the giant symbol glistening red made its lonely way, I thought of Peru and the flares lit by Senderos Luminos which formed a giant hammer-and-sickle on the side of a hill overlooking Lima.

SALMAN RUSHDIE : the liberation of the imagination

Reggie Siriwardena

As for me: I, too, like all migrants, am a fantasist. I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist. I, too, face the problem of history: what to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change.

— Salman Rushdie: *Shame*

Let me try to relate this passage to the fictional form that Salman Rushdie deploys in both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, with their extraordinary marriage of fantasy and reality. Of his half-imagined country in *Shame*, he says that it is 'not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional country, exist, like myself, at a slight angle to reality.' The same thing could be said of the India of *Midnight's Children*. It was this quality of his work which led critics, soon after *Midnight's Children* had exploded like a firework in the English literary sky, to make comparisons between Rushdie and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Some of them even constructed a literary category of 'fantastic realism' or 'magical realism' in which to place them: sometimes other Latin American novelists, like Carlos Fuentes, Alejo Carpentier and Jose Donoso, have been mentioned as belonging to the same trend.

Rushdie, in an interview with *South*, said he hadn't read Marquez (or presumably, any of the other Latin American novelists mentioned) until critics started making comparisons; he then read Marquez, and was delighted to find there was a novelist at the other end of the third world who shared with him a similar literary bent. In

the same interview Rushdie said that if he had been influenced by any source for his form, it was by the traditional Indian epics and compendia of tales with their teeming episodic plots and their stories within stories. I suppose it's natural that an expatriate Indian writer giving an interview to a third world magazine should want to stress the Indianness of his forms. (It strikes me that one could equally relate them to the proliferating plots and sub-plots of the Bombay talkies, to which Rushdie refers more than once in *Midnight's children*.) But following D. H. Lawrence's well-known principle, 'Never trust the artist; trust the tale', I want to look, critically at this question of where Rushdie's forms belong.

I'm very wary of the attempt to construct a third world fictional form of 'magical realism' into which to put Rushdie, Marquez and the rest. There is, of course, a school of theorists of fiction (they include the Marxist critic George Lukacs and the British scholar-critic Ian Watt) who have seen the rise of the European novel as a movement towards mimetic realism. I wouldn't agree; for it seems clear to me that from the very emergence of the novel, there has been an alternative tradition, based on modes of fantasy, caricature, parody, and the open avowal of artifice. (What

This article is based on a paper presented at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, in the first of a series of workshops on creative writers who through their work have attempted to explore the complex realities of third world societies and the cultural dilemmas of ethnic minorities. Some of the other writers who are to be discussed in the series are Gabriel Garcia Marquez, V. S. Naipaul, Nadine Gordimer, Anita Desai and T. N. Ngugi.

I mean by this last phrase is that while the mimetic realist wants you to accept his fiction as a direct reflection of reality, the novelist in the alternative tradition makes no bones about the fact that his is a literary construct.) What I have called the alternative tradition goes back to the very beginnings of the novel in Rabelais and Cervantes, is sustained by Sterne and Gogol, and finds its most notable twentieth-century representative in James Joyce (who, as I shall point out later, is a considerable influence on Rushdie). It's true that in the last century the dominant tradition of the novel was that of mimetic realism, but precisely for this reason the striving to break out of its strait-jacket has been a widespread phenomenon in this century. It is in this context that Rushdie's work must be placed.

In *Midnight's Children* Rushdie says, 'What's real and what's true aren't necessarily the same.' Again, in the same novel (talking, in this particular context, of Pakistan), he says: 'In a country where the truth is what it is instructed to be, reality quite literally ceases to exist, so that everything becomes possible except what we are told is the case.' What Rushdie is engaged in is in constructing an imaginative truth as a weapon against the 'reality' of the world created and sustained by power. This is a characteristically modern preoccupation — and not only in the novel (one need only think of the Brechtian enterprise in theatre or the Godardian in cinema). Whatever inspiration Rushdie may have derived in the externals of his form from the *Mahabharata*, the *Kathasaritsagara*, the *Panchatantra* or whatever, there is a fundamental distinction to be made between pre-realist forms of fiction like those and the post-realist modes in which Rushdie belongs. The impulse behind his choice of forms is essentially political: he is asserting his imaginative freedom, his right of myth-making, against the power-created myths on which the nation-states of Indian and Pakistan are founded. Of India on the eve of independence Rushdie writes:

'August in Bombay: a month of festivals, the month of Krishna's birthday and Coconut Day; and this year — fourteen hours to go, thirteen, twelve — there was an extra festival on the calendar, a new myth to celebrate, because a nation which had never previously existed was about to win its freedom, catapulting us into a world which, although it had five thousand years of history, although it had invented the game of chess and traded with Middle Kingdom Egypt, was nevertheless quite imaginary; into a mythical land, a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will — except in a dream we all agreed to dream; it was a mass fantasy shared in varying degrees by Bengali and Punjabi, Madrasi and Jat, and would periodically need the sanctification and renewal which can only be provided by rituals of blood.

India, the new myth — a collective fiction in which anything was possible, a fable rivalled only by the two other mighty fantasies: money and God.'

And of Pakistan Rushdie says in *Shame*:

'It is the true desire of every artist to impose his or her vision on the world; and Pakistan, the peeling, fragmenting palimpsest, increasingly at war with itself, may be described as a failure of the dreaming mind. Perhaps the pigments used were the wrong ones, impermanent, like Leonardo's; or perhaps the place was just *insufficiently imagined*, a picture full of irreconcilable elements, midriff-baring immigrant saris versus demure, indigenous shalwarkurtas, Urdu versus Punjabi, now versus then: a miracle that went wrong.'

Thus Rushdie anticipates Benedict Anderson in regarding India and Pakistan as 'imagined communities', constructs of political myth-making.

It is *Midnight's Children* I want to discuss in some detail because it seems to me a richer novel than *Shame*. I suggest that the clue to the structure of *Midnight's Children* is the perforated sheet through which the narrator's grandfather sees the girl who is later to become his wife: 'So gradually Doctor Aziz came to have a picture of Naseem in his mind, a badly-fitting collage of her severally-inspected parts.' Significantly, Naseem's perforated sheet is echoed later by that other perforated sheet through which the narrator's sister Jamila Singer, makes her appearance on the stage in Pakistan. Saleem Sinai, the narrator, describes himself as 'condemned by a perforated sheet to a life full of fragments.' This suggests that the novel itself is to be taken as a kind of 'collage'. There is another recurrent metaphor in the novel drawn from the pickle-vats of Mrs. Braganza's factory among which Saleem Sinai spends his latter days writing, engaged in what he calls 'the chutnification of history.' Collage or chutney: whichever metaphor you take, it suggests the rich diversity of materials, the seemingly confused accumulation of incidents, episodes, chara-

acters, that goes into the work. What holds it together, what prevents it from collapsing into formlessness and incoherence? The answer is to be found in the elaborate structure of correspondences between Saleem Sinai's life-history and the destinies of India — both born on the midnight of August 15, 1947, so that India is to Saleem Sinai 'my subcontinental twin sister', and Saleem's life is, in the words of Nehru's letter to him, 'the mirror of our own'.

It is here that Rushdie is closest to Joyce — in building a system of correspondences which is at the same time gayed through the comic exuberance of the prose, so that, like *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake*, the book is itself its own parody. I should like to point to two examples of this mode from the novel. One is the episode of Methwold's Estate in Bombay, built by a Britisher who is a descendant of the East India Company officer who first dreamed of a British Bombay, and who sells out on the eve of independence to Indian buyers, but on condition that the entire contents of the houses be retained by the new owners, and that the actual transfer take place on midnight on August 15. In the intervening period the Indian occupants, influenced by their new surroundings, get progressively more anglicised. What happens on Methwold's Estate is a comic parody of the new Indian reality: the Indian ruling class taking over the power-structure as the departing rulers. Saleem Sinai later turns out to be the illegitimate child of Mr. Methwold and therefore the appropriate twin-brother of a nation fathered by mountbatten. The second example I want to refer to is another birth later in the novel — that of Saleem Sinai's son, Aadam (again, not really his) who is born together with the Widow's emergency. In two brilliant pages of Joycean prose (or perhaps Molly Bollm prose, since most of it is one long pulsating sentence) the birth-pangs of the mother, Parvati, are synchronised with those of Mrs. Gandhi giving birth to the emergency:

'...and when the triplets returned to her bedside in the evening of

the thirteenth day they screamed Yes yes she has begun to push, come on Parvati, push push push, and while Parvati pushed in the ghetto, J. P. Narayan and Morarji Desai were also goading Indira Gandhi, while triplets yelled push push push the leaders of the Janata Morcha urged the police and Army to disobey the illegal orders of the disqualified Prime Minister, so in a sense they were forcing Mrs. Gandhi to push, and as the night darkened towards the midnight hour, because nothing ever happens at any other time, triplets began to screech it's coming coming, and elsewhere the Prime Minister was giving birth to a child of her own...

I should now like to address myself to the motif from which the novel takes its title — the children of midnight (born in the hour before midnight on August 15, 1947) with their magical powers and their telepathic communication with each other through the medium of Saleem Sinai's mind. This is a science fiction motif; and considering the fact that Rushdie's first novel, *Grimus*, was an sf novel, I conjecture that he has derived some of the inspiration for the children of midnight from a well-known British work of science fiction, John Wyndham's *The Chrysalids*. In Wyndham's book, the children born with telepathic powers as mutants after a nuclear war, are a fresh start for mankind because, through their total communication with each other they are able to transcend the selfishnesses and hostilities that had brought the human race to disaster. Wyndham's sf utopia is, at bottom, a restatement in modern terms of the Romantic myth of childhood as the embodiment of primal innocence and the source of regeneration — the myth that goes back to Rousseau, Blake and Wordsworth. However, in taking over this motif Rushdie has darkened its meaning. The children of midnight are the image of the promise, the possibilities that are destroyed in the new India. Rushdie, in creating his children of midnight, offers another 'imagined community' to set against the dominant one, but instead of Wyndham's Romantic image of childhood, he gives us the disen-

chanted sense of human possibilities thwarted and blasted. As they grow up, the children of midnight take over 'the prejudices and world-views of adults': 'I found children from Maharashtra loathing Gujaratis, and fairskinned northerners reviling Darvidian "blackies"; there were religious rivalries; and class entered our councils.' Their final destruction — 'the smashing, the pulverising, the irreversible discom-bobulation of the children of midnight' — is the work not just of the Widow, it is made possible by Saleem Sinai's *alter ago*, the other baby with whom he had been switched in his cradle, the dispossessed who grows up in the gutter, who remains throughout the cynical voice of self-interest and expediency and who ultimately sells out to the world of power. He is appropriately enough Shiva — the destroyer with the terrible knees.

The lobotomising of the children of midnight is the destruction of Rushdie's imagined community of what India might have been:

'Ectomy (from, I suppose, the Greek): a cutting out. To which medical science adds a number of prefixes: appendectomy tonsillectomy mastectomy tubectomy vasectomy testectomy hysterectomy. Saleem would like to donate one further item, free gratis and for nothing, to this catalogue of excisions; it is, however, a term which properly belongs to history, although medical science is, was involved: Sperectomy: the draiding-out of hope.'

The draining-out of hope. *Midnight's Children*, in spite of its comic energy, is ultimately a sombre novel, which voices a deep disillusionment with the structures of post-colonial India. (Shame is, probably, an even more pessimistic novel, related to the fact that the Pakistani situation is even darker than the Indian.) Rusddie's fantasy, his humour, the vitality of his prose, are a liberation from institutions, an assertion of human freedom against existing reality; but that liberation, that assertion, take place in the only world in which they seem possible for him — in the imagination. By the end of the novel, another generation of midnight's children has been

born, but one of them, the narrator's son has withdrawn into silence ('he was born with ears which flapped so high and wide that they must have heard the shootings in Bihar and the screams of lathi-charged dock-workers in Bombay...a child who heard too much, and as a result never spoke'), and the others are Shiva's bastards.

The concluding paragraph of the book leaves one with the realisation that the children of midnight — those who differ, those who don't conform — are doomed:

'Yes, they will trample me underfoot, the numbers marching one two three, four hundred million, five hundred six, reducing me to speaks of voiceless dust, just as, in all good time, they will trample my son who is not my son, and his son who will not be his, until the thousand and first generation, until a thousand and one midnights have bestowed their terrible gifts and a thousand and one children have died, because it is the privilege and the curse of midnight's children to be both masters and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in peace'.

Has Zia...

(Continued from page 8)

the patience for a long protracted guerrilla war.

So, Pakistan's Zia-ul Haq is afraid of Mikhail Gorbachov. He seems to have burnt his bridges to the Kremlin. His only chance is the coming round of talks under UN auspices. But his dilemmas are most acute, General Zia has so far proved himself to be a very astute tactician. He has shown extraordinarily skill in maintaining a balance of favourable and adversary forces generally in his favour. However, that happy run of time may be coming to an end. He will probably be seeing the events now closing in on him.

New Delhi
16 April, 1985.

Cultural rights in the process of nation building

T. Mulya Lubis (*Legal Aid Institute, Indonesia*)

There is very little discussion of cultural rights in the literature on human rights which does not seem to have been able to go beyond the better known themes of political rights, legal rights, social economic rights and rights to education. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, however, includes all kinds of rights — social, political, economic, legal and cultural. Furthermore, as the concept of human rights developed in the 1960s there was an elaboration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights especially in two international covenants, namely the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

But these elaborations did little to stimulate human rights writers and activists to pay more attention to cultural rights. This was perhaps due to political, economic and legal rights being so dominant in society that most attention was directed to them. It is also possible that cultural rights were not felt to be that important because, like the economic technocrats, we have been brainwashed about the importance of economic development above everything else, and the development of other areas was subordinated. Another reason is that human rights writers and activists have an urban background and therefore, have a sort of urban bias. Or was it because the government put too much stress on security and stability?

There might be truth in all of these explanations, but looking at

the problem in a wider perspective, we see that discussions of human rights are heavily coloured by Western standards. Cultural rights too are based on Western standards which often do not match with Eastern realities. Chinese society has an old and rich cultural tradition, as does India, Persia and Indonesia. Western standards are often not suitable because of differences in philosophical values. Collectivity, exclusiveness and non-publicity are often encountered as characteristics of Eastern societies and these are quite opposite to the characteristics of Western society. Under these conditions, forcing Western standards will very likely give rise to not just cultural collision but possibly the negation or destruction of cultures.

Another matter which we have to consider is a scale of priorities for human rights. In the East, or the Third World, the first priority is survival, and it is often assumed that cultural rights are not threatened. Development planners consciously ignore the fate and future of cultural rights. They forget the most common victim which is culture. The forcing of new values from above, and from us, has given rise to a vertical cultural integration which slowly is eliminating the rich cultural specificity of the Third World.

With the current stage of technological advancement the mutual interchange and influence between cultures cannot be avoided. As we have witnessed in China and Burma, even countries which declare themselves closed cannot escape penetration by foreign cultures. Slowly these cultural

explosure create changes in current values.

In our country, the entry of foreign culture is virtually uncontrolled. It can be seen in the foreign investment (transnational enterprises), the transfer of technology, the increasingly liberal economic traffic and finally, the video cassette revolution and three months stay for tourists without visas. All this is supported by liberal economic development policies which see advanced industrial countries as the final goal, and have consciously integrated the economies of our cities into the world economy.

Clashes of culture cannot be avoided because development has now touched the farthest reaches of Indonesia, from Sabang to Merauke. Consequently, local cultural life is threatened and in some places looks like being defeated. Our economic integration seems to be followed by a complete cultural integration with all the attendant dangers. But many people are not aware of the dangers in this unhealthy cultural integration, because their thinking is so dominated by the need for economic development. A new saying has developed: If it's good for economic development, it's also good for development in other fields (including culture). Our question is: To what extent is this true?

Development: the Trap of Modernization

In the Broad Outlines of State Policy it is said that the Main target of Long Term Development is the creation of a strong foundation which will enable the Indo-

nesian people to grow and develop on the basis of their own strength towards a just and prosperous society based on Pancasila. Meanwhile the emphasis in Long Term Development is on economics with the aim of achieving a balance between agriculture and industry, and fulfilling the basic needs of the populace. Accordingly, most development efforts are directed to economic development, while development in other areas is of a supporting and complementary character. The Broad Outlines of State Policy clearly makes economic development the central point of development, or more accurately puts economics in command. The official policy of almost all governments is to implement the Broad Outlines of State Policy and this is supported by the legislative process.

Thus we have the laws on Foreign Investment and Domestic Investment, one share one vote etc, and now we see preparations being made for laws about patents, technology transfer, limited companies, taxation and so on. Official explanations from the Department of Justice give us the impression that this Department's main aim in the fourth Five Year Plan is to bring about a legislative infrastructure which can support economic development, or more succinctly, which supports "take-off" in the fourth Five Year Plan.

The concept of development now being implemented is the Western economic development model, Rostow's theory of stages. It seems that we have wholeheartedly adopted this concept although it is not necessarily suitable for Indonesia. Another American economist has said that there is no empirical example which can prove that Rostow's theory is valid for the Third World. The problems we face are very varied and demand a concept which is both more comprehensive and specific. Development in a particular country often requires steps which don't fit with Rostow's theory. In other words, it is not impossible that a country has its own specific problems and because of that

demands its own specific solutions as well.

If we assume that the take-off theory can be implemented, then the question arises: What is the aim of this development model? The answer is not too difficult, because all preparations for take-off are aimed at modernization and industrialization. Development is a process of leaving behind the traditional patterns of life for modern life, un-mechanized agricultural economy for a mechanized fully industrial economy. This is the meaning of the development being pursued by the underdeveloped countries.

Development here is clearly oriented to economic growth in the sense of increasing production as much as possible by all available means. In popular language, it is often described as increasing the size of the national cake, the GDP. Thinking about more equitable income distribution is considered absolutely inappropriate, and thinking about social justice even more so. Social justice, it is thought, is a situation which will arrive of itself once economic development has succeeded. The problem of when and if economic development will succeed is a still unanswered riddle, so social justice is not realised. Even more painfully, social justice has ceased to be an agreed upon and constitutional ideal. In reality, it has never been acted upon except for its being included in the official program of the government the often quoted Trilogy of Development.

Thus development momentum must be maintained, if necessary new and more incentives must be provided for the business world. All facilities must be prepared and these should be neater and simpler. This is important because we face competition from other countries in the ASEAN region.

Because economic development is everything we must be able to provide guarantees, the most important of which is the guarantee of stability and security. All threats to stability were eliminated at an early stage and control and supervision through official institu-

tions has increased. In this connection repressive laws have been maintained and even increased.

Everyone wants stable security, but a security that does not kill creativity, freedom and change. Unfortunately, the stability and security approach often extinguishes freedom and creativity. In reality, the obsession with stable security is often a bogeyman which dehumanizes the machinery authority. The result is the birth of a culture of fear which, on closer examination, has a role in the stagnation of economic development. This culture of fear will change and become a destabilizing factor.

If this is the case then our economic development does not produce change, let alone structural change. Soedjatmoko writes that Economic growth without structural reform would only serve further to aggravate existing disparities. Freedom under such circumstances would only serve the strong in the urban, modern domestic and foreign sectors at the expense of the weak

The machinery of development will dismantle cultural rights. Economic development always tends to integrate social-economic and cultural life into a uniformity which is very urban in character because the economic products are from large cities which are controlled by transnational corporations operating in the metropolitan cities. The cultural defeat of small cities and kampungs in the Third World is only a matter of time.

Unity in Diversity

Perhaps we are one of the few people of the world who have a diversity of ethnic groups languages, religions, customs and traditions. We are so wonderfully rich. Even more remarkably, this diversity is able to co-exist on the basis of the national motto *bhineka tunggal ika*, which translates as Unity in Diversity. There is an overriding spirit of national unity bound together by the Pancasila and the constitutional of 1945.

Compared to other countries with similar problems we can be proud of the fact that long before we were independent there was already a strong spirit of national unity as is shown in the Youth Pledge of 28th October 1928. This was the zenith of and became the historical basis for the spirit of national unity.

In our history, the diversity of customs, ethnic groups, language, religion and culture was allowed to grow. Youths who associated in the Jong Java, Jong Ampon, Jong Sumatera and so on continued to maintain their cultural identity, but the spirit of one people, one land and one language continued above it. The spirit of diversity was accompanied by the spirit of national unity. This is what is referred to as unity in diversity.

Until the end of the 1950s there were few problems, but the problem of injustice in economic development began to become serious. Some areas outside Java felt that the allocation of funds was uneven and unjust. Development was uneven from area to another; some areas developed and others didn't. In addition some minority groups felt that discriminatory behaviour had begun in social-political life. This created irritations which developed into wounds. This is also what helped bring local oppositionary movements like PRRI and Permesta into being.

The concept of a united country above the cultural diversity began to be criticized. Cultural harmony began to be destroyed and Bhineka Tunggal Ika was threatened with becoming just a slogan. But thankfully all threats were successfully eliminated and the diversity was successfully re-united, although at the very high cost of civil war.

Nevertheless there is a lesson to be learnt if we are to bring our people closer to justice and if we are to allow them to genuinely develop. Unfortunately this lesson has not been followed well. In some cases the concept of unity began to be misunderstood as uniformity, and there was less

attention to local specificities. In economics, there is the penetration of the business world which thrust aside the informal sector which is specifically local. In politics, there is a centralistic pattern of management thrusting aside local dynamics. And in law, there are tendencies toward a unified law which denies adat, the customary legal system.

There has not been enough effort to strive for harmony between progress and unity, between diversity and unity. The result is that authority has become increasingly centralistic and local dynamics have diminished. What has happened is what is called vertical cultural integration as happened in Latin America and Suriname. Clearly this is not very healthy for our people's growth. We have to ponder once more the spirit of the Pledge of Youth which put a high value on the cultural complexity within the unity. There must be creative efforts to continuously increase unity while maintaining cultural diversity. This is the greatest challenge of our future.

In this context we have to discuss the rights of groups which are minorities in respect of ethnicity, language, custom and religion. There must be a constitutional guarantee that all minority groups have the right to exist and that no majority group can dominate and diminish the future rights of minorities. If majority rights threaten minority rights it is possible that restlessness will arise. This restlessness will be very expensive and difficult to overcome. It will result in a permanent feeling of insecurity. This happened, for example, to Hispanic communities in the USA. The American government finally responded by implementing a bilingual educational system because forcing English onto backward Hispanic communities was always felt to be repressive. The Hispanic people could not express their attitudes and demands in English. Therefore they had to be allowed their language complete with the symbols they knew. Nevertheless the spirit of togetherness could continue to be maintained.

The Hispanic community is not the only one; they are accompanied by Negroes, Chinese, Indians and refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia. In England there is an Indian minority; in Holland there is a Moluccan minority; in Thailand there is an Islamic minority who live in South Thailand. We also have Chinese and Arab minority groups. To varying extents, they all have to live with an anxiety and insecurity in regard to their rights as minorities.

There are ethnic groups in Indonesia facing violent clashes with development and urban culture, groups like the Mentawai, Kubu, Badui, Marind, Asmat and so on. They are incapable of opposing this current from the outside. They are like people who have already been defeated. Increasingly they are driven into the jungle and their numbers are declining. Their cultural identity is slowly disappearing as they integrate their lives with urban styles of living. This is an unhealthy process because these lifestyles are often pervaded with externalities without there being any understanding of basic philosophies. Ironically those who try to be loyal to their cultural identity and to stay in their region are often referred to as isolated tribes (*suku terasing*: a term which is basically cultural insult which places no value at all on the validity of cultural diversity).

There is a tendency for a spirit of uniformity to develop on top of the spirit of unity. This means that anything which is strange and doesn't meet the standards of uniformity must be done away with. Minority rights are defined as the effort to unite them into the reality of the majority. Politically this can be legitimised but from the point of view of history and human rights these infringements of minority rights can be understood as insults to Bhineka Tunggal Ika and the Pledge of Youth.

From a juridical point of view these cultural rights have long been recognised although not in

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The Democratic Revolution

Alexander R. Magno

The basic line of confrontation is understood as that which divides government and all opposes to it, in bourgeois consciousness, there is no cognition of 'progressive' and 'regressive' forces identifiable through some theory of qualitative historical motion. This is the basis of the criticism against its 'myopic' character. The essence of the 'democratic revolution' and the declared objective of the martial law regime, is merely to make government work. This is made explicit in the following:

'Since 1649 even as the nation was trying to rehabilitate and recover from the ravages of the Second World War, the government had to contend with a communist movement intent on wresting political power. Thus, during the early years of the Republic, efforts to bring about national development were hindered by the covert and overt acts of the subversive Communist elements. Consequently, the government had to respond to the threats—the clear and present danger to the National Security.

The ebbs and flow of the virulence of the leftist rebellion dependent as much upon the state of health of the Philippine government as on the unity of the Filipino people. Because the government has had to concentrate a great part of its time and resources to the imperatives of survival, the larger task of nation-building consequently suffered, and the transformation of Philippine society was hindered. **Of the many possible hindrances to societal transformation the political system is the single most important factor** because it reflects the capability of the state to determine the direction, of social development or, conversely, to manifest the lack of that development. The political culture,

which is characterized as **Personalist, individualist, and populist**, left no room for civic and social responsibility either on the part of leaders or on the part of followers.

By the turn of the century, the political system had so deteriorated that it had become the major instrument for counterrevolution. The state of severe decay and disintegration of the **political system was fueled in part by the growing feeling among the mass of population that the system was becoming powerless and ineffectual to propel the needed societal changes.** A segment of the political and economic elite—the oligarchs—saw in the situation an opportunity for **wresting political and economic power** by resorting to unconstitutional methods.' (Underscoring supplied).

Consistent with the liberal understanding of the state, government is taken as an abstract objective hovering over and above the real forces at work in society and not partisan to any of the opposed forces. Government is the neutral arbiter of conflicting forces. The social forces in opposition are necessarily considered 'aberrations' and mere 'disturbances'. Social conflict must be 'considered' rather than resolved to give way to a state without 'politics.' The martial law state specifically represents itself as the embodiment of some **interest-of-the-whole** whose realization is retarded by 'partisan' contests.

Here is the crucial link which unites the bourgeois-liberal view with the 'fascist'. Underdevelopment does not exist from this ideological standpoint in the same way that exploitation does not exist in the theoretical construction of bourgeois economics. What does exist is a political cancer that eats up the polity and inhibits it from responding effectively

to the crisis. It is the political cancer that is itself the crisis. The 'effective' political order is not merely opposed to the crisis, it is also its resolution. This conceptual sleight-of-the-hand using the inherent 19th century world-view is made to appear as a sophisticated and novel political process raised for the emulation of all 'developing' societies.

'The decadence of political life,' Marcos emphasizes further, 'and the incapacity of the government to institute the much needed societal reforms were attributed partly to the fact that much of governmental power was lodged in the very vested interest groups that needed reforms and uprooting.' The obvious implication here is that the regime is the only instrumentality that is conscious of the will of the whole: the crucial ideological mandate for the political dominance of the technocracy. This point is clinched in the view that 'the masses must be informed with the wisdom of the few.'¹²

'Anyone who believes in violence as a means to an end is not entitled to participate in the general efforts of society because only the government is authorized to use superior violence in the social contract entered into by the people.'

The regime in general and Marcos in particular has been consistently exerting effort to appropriate the characteristic 'revolutionary' for itself. The general consensus had been that the social crisis required a revolutionary response. Thus the regime, in presenting itself as the solution to this crisis and in order to appear credible, had to take on a 'revolutionary' stance. The substantial restructuring of the mechanism of law and the governmental process to eliminate opposition necessitated a centralization of power in order to assure its

own political survival and to convince sections of the opposition that it was intent on resolving the political **immobilism** that had developed in the years preceding the declaration of martial law. It thus needed at least the rhetorics of revolution. It also had to retain the constitutionality required to sustain its legitimacy specially in the eyes of the old forces on which it relied for immediate support. Moreover, it was not equipped with a historical, long-range program for a revolutionary social overhaul. This combination of both 'revolutionary' and 'constitutionality' claims was essential because the regime had to appeal to the broadest sections of a decidedly polarized society.

The reconciliation of these two aspects found fertile ground in bourgeois-liberal political theory and hospitable quarters in the bourgeois legalism of the old Republic. This ideological synthesis is referred to as the 'Democratic Revolution.' Its central argument was not the establishment of a revolutionary regime in place of the old state, but rather a revolution coursed through the existing institutional processes. The idea was first introduced in Marcos' work, **Today's Revolution: Democracy**. He reviews this more than five years later:

'That the course outlined by that work **Today's Revolution: Democracy** — which called for the radicalization of society through the active exercise of power and leadership by the democratic system and the government — did not rally the political leadership to action was perhaps foretold by the fact that so much governmental power was lodged in the very interests that needed reform and uprooting. In any event, the deepening of crisis continued, and by September 1972, no less than the survival of the nation was endangered. And by then, even the reforms I proposed in **The Democratic Revolution** could not suffice to arrest the tide of crisis. Martial law — the ultimate recourse of government — had become the necessity of the hour.

Yet the closeness with which I apprehend the rapid descent of the society into crisis itself helped to shape the thrust of my exercise of emergency power. While the pressing challenge before government was to ensure its survival in the face of insurgency and rebellion, there was no mistaking the fact that the crisis was rooted in social and economic conditions throughout the country, and only a **concerted effort towards development** and social change could ensure the country against collapse.

Thus it was, that when I proclaimed martial law, I declared that our fundamental objectives must be addressed to: first the checking of the insurgency and rebellion, and second, the start of a truly determined effort of building a **New Society**. For an effort aimed merely at meeting the immediate dangers to the authority of government, while potentially capable of checking the tide of insurgency, would not suffice to arrest the drift and decay of national life.¹⁴ (Underscoring supplied)

The intention here is to draw revolutionary legitimacy away from those who would politically confront the regime by denying the validity of revolutionary movements outside the state apparatus. Thus it becomes necessary for the regime to appropriate for itself revolutionary legitimacy. He further argues:

'The process of radical change, although constitutional, is a convulsive one. The force of law is no less violent for being legal. Violence must be controlled in a revolution by constitutional means, and only a strong democratic government can give any such assurance. And in this endeavor, the **clearest** and **deepest** consent of the people is imperative.

Only at his own risk, however, may the reader construct my words as an advocacy of welfare statism or some form of socialism. My deepest concern is with the political system that goes by the name of **democracy and not in any social or**

economicism which may or may not postulate a certain political order to realize its aims. I am interested in those economic and social issues which affect the exercise of freedom in society, and which, in effect, encourage and hinder free men in making the most of themselves. Mine, finally, is an anxiety over a political society that is imperilled by the fatal social disease of elevating the few over the degradation of the many, caused in turn, by deep economic and social inequalities. (Underscoring supplied)

(To be continued)

Eelam. . .

(Continued from page 4)

because Eelam can be utilized as a giant fortress of the counter-revolution, the JR Jayawardene government which is not acting to defeat the Eelam movement politically is in a very subtle way attempting to create a federal system. We call upon the oppressed people headed by the working class to take the forefront to defeat this effort. Our organisations are opposed to the bifurcation of the country and a federal system which lays the foundation for such splitting up."

In the course of the New Town Hall meeting itself which was attended by several hundred people, roughly the same number as last year, the Tamil speaker Thangaraja, a leader of the All Lanka Estate Workers' Union, quoted Umamaheswaran to the effect that EPRLF, — EROS, — TELO combine had links with the CIA. He then quoted someone else saying much the same thing of Umamaheswaran. In short, he said, they are all CIA-linked. He reminded his listeners that not every armed movement is a revolutionary one. Take the Nicaraguan Contras he said. That prompted the speculation on the part of an observer as to whether President Jayawardene rather than Mr. Prabhakaran or Maheswaran were being cast by the JVP in the role of Commandante Ortega!

D. J.

Indiana Jones, the Third World and American foreign policy

Cedric Robinson

'There is sin and evil in the world, and we are enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might.'

Ronald Reagan (8 March 1984)

'Asked what his invention [the Neutron Bomb] was good for, (Samuel) Cohen scratched his head and said it might be useful in the Third World.'

Alexander Cockburn

(26 May, 1984)

The premise of this essay is that the film, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, is a crystallisation of the ideology which drives American foreign policy with respect to the Third World, the non-European world. This ideology is shared by policy-makers like George Shultz, Secretary of State, William Casey, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Jeane Kirkpatrick, American Ambassador to the United Nations, and Ronald Reagan, current US president. Through them and other ideologues who have come to positions of power in the American government (Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State, Roger Fontaine at the National Security Council, Constantine Menges at the CIA, Otto Reich at AID, Chester Crocker of the State Department, etc.), this ideology has framed involvement in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Central America and the West Indies. And given the canons which govern the relationship between the state and media, its appearance in film is no less remarkable than elsewhere in American media: its daily exposure in our newspapers, our television evening news broadcasts, and in the varied forms of popular entertainment (comic books, situation comedies, adventure series, 'docu-dramas' and the like) is routine.

Spielberg and Lucas

J. Hoberman, in a review of *Indiana*, observed: 'George Lucas and Steven Spielberg are the most successful filmmakers who ever lived, with the six top grossing movies in American history. Millionaires many times over, they can do whatever they want.' ('White Boys' *Village Voice*, 5 June 1984) Spielberg was the director and producer of *Indiana* (his other films have included *E.T.*, *Jaws*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Poltergeist* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*), while Lucas (*Star Wars*) invented the story. In the 'Official Collectors Edition', Spielberg recalled the beginnings of the project:

George told me the story of what became *Raiders of the Lost Ark* back in 1977 in Hawaii... He came to me with elements of a finished idea. A character named Indiana who would be an archaeologist/adventurer and the film would be a throwback to some of the 1950s Republic serials like *Spy Smasher* and *Tailspin Tommy* and Don Winslow in *The Navy*...

...the mid-Thirties (the time period of the films) was a very masculine period, but it was also one of high adventure and exotic romance...

We have lost it. It seems we have discovered most everything there is to discover. You know, we can carbon test and pinpoint a date within a million, a thousand years or so and there are many new relics seeping from the bowels of the Earth today... It's much simpler and more logical and more believable to create a romantic adventure when romance was romance and adventure was as hard as nails. Like in 1935.

The Indiana legend thus evokes two distinct but related periods;

the Cold War era, which was the setting for the youth of Spielberg and Lucas, and the pre-Second World War era. The adventure serials which framed the young lives of Lucas (in Los Angeles) and Spielberg (in Phoenix or Scottsdale, Arizona) were B-movies impacted by a national hysteria around communism. They were the products of a Hollywood in which politically active actors, directors, writers, technicians, etc. had been purged by the infamous anti-communist Black List. It was a time when the surviving, politically-conservative Hollywood filmmakers sought security in 'politically neutral' Westerns, musicals, comedies, and sex-idols (Marilyn Monroe), and emphasised their loyalties to Christian beliefs with anti-communist films. 'Politically neutral', at the time, meant films which glorified the rule of the gun, the destruction and domination of savages (native Americans and others,) films that hyped the racial and sexual superiority of the American male (of European extraction). Women, in these genres, were divided between the good (the submissive and domestic) and the bad (the aggressive and independent). This era's ideology has now returned to haunt the American conscience. Writing of the advent of Jeane Kirkpatrick, one reporter would comment: 'Her political evolution may also foreshadow a resurrection of the cold war consensus politics which governed this country for over 20 years before Vietnam'. (Christine Doudna, 'Jeane Kirkpatrick: the making of a guru', *Village Voice*, 12 June 1984)

The previous era which Spielberg and Lucas feel nostalgia for — the 1930s — had similar characteristics, but not identical ones. Instead of native Americans, one had the Orient (Charlie Chan, Flash Gordon's Emperor Ming, etc.), Hindus and Africans, Spielberg and Lucas are forcing themselves to use me-

CINEMA

terial which has already been used, exploited and invented. What is of interest, of course, is why these stereotypic devices retain their volatility. It is certainly not nostalgia. The audiences to which Spielberg and Lucas are addressing themselves are too young to have independently discovered the 1930s as a remedy to loss of self. Less mature than the filmmakers, this young audience has barely constructed a nostalgia for the 1950s. The idea must be transmitted to them, they must first be persuaded and convinced that this era holds something of value. They possess in themselves no intuition, no feeling, no memory of the 1930s and 1940. They have not acquired these images from history texts. Instead, these images are transmitted by the largest communications industry the world has ever known. They are not happenstance, not the simple result of imaginative brain-storming. These images are culled from the encoded cultural text of the society. They are drawn from the past in the mistaken hope that the past has been replicated in the present. It has not and, moreover, the past did not work. But still, as one critic notes of the present film:

Indiana Jones...is inordinately racist and sexist, even by Hollywood standards...The film's only humanized nonwhite is necessarily 10 years old. Indeed, when not pathetically downtrodden, the denizens of the third world theme-park where Indiana seeks his fortune and glory are all duplicitous, evil scum whose favored cuisine is a suitably yucky repast of raw snakes, giant beetles, and chilled monkey brains. (J. Hoberman, *ibid.*)

In Spielberg and Lucas, however, the Third World is not merely a place of the exotic. Indeed, it is a site of poverty and supplication. The upraised hands of the Indian villagers greeting Indiana Jones and Willi Scott (the hero and heroine) are a familiar image to the western eye, evoking starving refugees and the general cry for help. A world of beggars and a world of need to be contrasted with the world from which the filmmakers have come and in which the film audience is comfortably situated.

The film and American culture

Let us begin with Indiana Jones' most immediate predecessor in the genre of the adventure-hero, James Bond. Jones and Bond are in stark contrast to each other as images. The instruments with which Jones impacts his world are the sword (machete) and the whip. The sword suggests an almost medieval weapon of Christian honour, adventure and retribution. One puts one's enemy 'to the sword'. It is the weapon of the Crusades: Christianity against the anti-Christ (the Ayatollah Khomeini — the Suleiman, the Saracen, an image identical with that which one would expect to find in medieval texts). The whip, the other instrument, is a weapon of domination and training of sub-species. Jones is armed for the confrontation with the subhuman pagan, an animal. And how is Jones dressed? His 'bush' dress contrasts sharply with the resplendent, sartorially correct Bond. Their social context is evidently dramatically different. The environment within which Indiana Jones is prepared to survive is not that of Bond.

The Bond films came out of that era which we know as the Cold War. It was the height of that era and its conceptualisation of evil, of the opposition, was fundamentally different from that which would succeed it in the Indiana Jones films. Bond dealt with a world which was geometric in form, brightly illuminated, aseptic, technologically advanced. It situated evil in an arena of civility. Evil was never reduced to brute force. It was intellectual, technically advanced and imaginative, scientifically, architecturally innovative and capable of a global presence. Its phenomenology was the paraphernalia of the modern world. This is not Jones' world.

So, between the era which produced James Bond as a popular image of the western mission and the era twenty years later which produces Indiana Jones, a fundamental change occurs in the conceptualisation of who the opposition is, of what the problem is.

The problem for Indiana Jones is 'no longer' the Soviet's KGB (the organisational proto-type for Spectre) — a menace of sophisti-

cation in technological and scientific terms. Indiana Jones, like Ronald Reagan, has to deal with an evil which resides in the jungles of Vietnam and El Salvador, and the religious fanatics of Iran and Lebanon. These are people who are not advanced and with whom one cannot deal except in terms of revenge and domination, the sword and the whip. This is the contemporary dilemma of the West. In consequence, then, we see a correspondence between the imaginations of Spielberg and Lucas as filmmakers and the reigning American ideology of our times.

Out of the stock of images from the Hollywood past, Spielberg and Lucas have constructed a post-Cold War apparatus, situating it for their audience's comfort in the past, the 'romantic' past of the mid-1930s. Moreover, they open their film with a disclaimer from reality: Willi Scott sings 'Anything Goes' as if to warn us that this is a movie game, an evocation of the adventure film of a simpler age. The sexism, racism and primitive politicality of this film are just for our amusement. This gives Spielberg and Lucas the licence to employ and parade ideas which are no longer in vogue (some would have us believe), which were the possessions of a simpler, innocently abusive generation of filmmakers. They evoke an older order, a world where men and women knew their places in the rightful order of things. (A striking image in the film is the elephant trek taken by Indiana, Willi and Short Round; each riding an elephant whose size requisitions power, responsibility, etc.)

Paradoxically, the re-circulation of these images is the consequence of a changing world. And when this film reflects official American foreign policy, its filmmakers are choosing an inventory of cinematic images which matches the stock of images in the sentiment, feeling, foreboding and consciousness of moment in the American conscience. The political leaders of America believe that the evil in the world is diffuse, savage and hysterical. Such forces cannot be negotiated with. Their adherents are beyond compromise and discussion. The co-

lonial mission which really ended with the Second World War — the mission to civilise and Christianise (to make good Frenchmen of those Vietnamese, good Englishmen of those Hindds) — is portrayed in the film in a jaundiced fashion through the impotence of British imperialist bureaucrats and military officers. The newer leapership of the West has now decided that that mission was never possible, that such a purpose was naive and fantastic. In the practical world of the present, western ideologues and governmental leaders realise that the peoples of the non-western world are going to remain poor, primitive and simpleminded; subject for the foreseeable future to the perverse enthusiasms and ecstasies of nationalism, revolutionary liberationist ideologies and communism. In such a human universe, one's first duty is to one's own: to defend the western 'centre' from the fanaticism of the hordes.

The film and American foreign policy

The degree to which *Indiana Jones* corresponds with the beliefs of US foreign policy-makers can be demonstrated by matching the film's images with the declarations of government leaders. An area of immediate concern is Central America. In a *US News and World Report* interview, William Casey had this to say about the death squads in El Salvador:

I think it is a cultural problem. It's a violent society like most of the societies down there... But basically what we're talking about is whether our primary purpose is to establish a better society in El Salvador, which isn't likely to happen quickly under present circumstances, or to protect the security interests of the United States and give Salvadorean democracy a chance to develop. (23 April 1984)

Casey, the Director of the bureaucracy which invented and organised the death squads beginning in the mid-1950s,² now, thirty years later, was attributing their existence to 'culture'.

Casey's pseudo-anthropology is not merely official deception. It is a residue of a racial and cultural

arrogance which has commanded North American policy in Central and Latin America for nearly two centuries. That arrogance was behind the Monroe Doctrine (1823) and the Spanish-American War (1898), behind Theodore Roosevelt's assertion of a North American obligation to 'police' the western hemisphere (1904), and the basis for Under-secretary of State Robert Olds' declaration in 1927 that: 'Our ministets accredited to the five little republics... have been advisers whose advice has been accepted virtually as law... (that) Central America has always understood that governments which we recognise and support stay in power, while those we do not recognise and support fall'. (Jenny Pearce, *Under the Eagle* (1981), p. 19) The deep assumptions transmitted over the decades from Monroe to Casey could be summarised no more succinctly than in Seymour Hersh's account of a conversation in June 1969 between Henry Kissinger and Gabriel Valdes, then Chilean Foreign Minister:

As Valdes describes it, Kissinger began by declaring, 'Mr. Minister, you made a strange speech. You come here speaking of Latin America, but this is not important. Nothing important can come from the South. History has never been produced in the South. The axis of history starts in Moscow, goes to Bonn, crosses over to Washington, and then goes to Tokyo. What happens in the South is of no importance. You're wasting your time'.

'I said,' Valdes recalls, 'Mr Kissinger, you know nothing of the South.' 'No', Kissinger answered, 'and I don't care'. (Seymour Hersh, *The Price of Power* (1983), p. 273)

Those may be violent societies 'down there', but, like so many other aspects of Central American politics, the death squads are neither traditional nor sacrosanct:

Early in the 1960s, during the Kennedy Administration, agents of the U. S. Government in El Salvador set up two official security organizations that killed thousands of peasants and suspected leftists over the next

fifteen years. These organisations, guided by American operatives, developed into the paramilitary apparatus that came to be known as the Salvadorean Death Squads.

Today, even as the Reagan Administration publicly condemns the Death Squads, the CIA — in violation of U. S. law — continues to provide training, support and intelligence to security forces directly involved in Death Squad activity.

... U. S. complicity in the dark and brutal work of El Salvador's Death Squads is not in aberration. Rather, it represents a basic, bipartisan, institutional commitment on the part of six American administrations — a commitment to guard the Salvadorean regime against the prospect that its people might organize in ways unfriendly to that regime or to the United States.³

The death squads were not cultural instruments to be found in the historical bowels of Guatemala, El Salvador or Nicaragua. They were brought into being as instruments of American foreign policy. And now Casey would rationalise legitimise and excuse their existence through a resort to a putative history of violence down there. We have even seen the spectacle this year of an American vice-president appealing to the Salvadorean government to end its calumny. The absurdity of it all was brought home to Dennis Volman, the *Christian Science Monitor* reporter, by one of his Salvadorean informants: How absurd you Americans are, this civilian source remarked bitterly. 'With the one hand you send your vice-president here to control the death squads, and with the other you participate in them'.

The 'cultural violence' to which Casey referred is, of course, reiterated in the Spielberg/Lucas film. Like the staffs of *US News and World Report*, *time*, *Newsweek*, our daily newspapers and television newscasters, Spielberg and Lucas confirm our shared consciousness of Third World peoples.⁴ The depiction of the 'thugges' in *Indiana Jones* fits neatly into this worldview: a violence which is endemic, cultural, traditional, enduring and fanatical. And Jeane Kirkpatrick,

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another American activity in Central America, concurs:

In a speech called 'The Hobbes Problem' (given) on the eve of Reagan's inauguration, she made the sweeping generalisation that 'violence or the threat of violence is an integral, regular, predictable part of Latin political systems', equated that phenomenon with Hobbes' 'state of nature' (a 'state of war' where life is that proverbial, 'nasty, brutish, and short'), and evoked the Hobbesian solution: order at all costs. (Christine Doudna, op. cit.)

And that is what the death squads are about. A year earlier, in an article which appeared in *Commentary* (subsequently led to her being invited to join the present administration), Kirkpatrick had been even more explicit on the policy consequence of her beliefs. Writing during the summer of 1979, with the then recent revolutions of Iran and Nicaragua as the centre-pieces of her critique of the Carter administration, Kirkpatrick concentrated on the formulation of a policy for the support of 'non-democratic governments ... threatened by Soviet-sponsored subversion'. She concluded:

Generally speaking, traditional autocrats tolerate social inequities, brutality, and poverty while revolutionary autocracies create them ...

Traditional autocrats leave in place existing allocations of wealth, power, status, and other resources ... worship traditional gods and observe traditional taboos. They do not disturb the habitual rhythms of work and leisure ... places of residence ... patterns of family and personal relations. Because the traditional life are familiar, they are bearable to ordinary people who ... learn to cope, as children born to untouchable to India ... Such societies create no refugees.

Precisely the opposite is true of revolutionary Communist regimes. They create refugees by the million ...

Since many traditional autocracies permit limited contestation and participation, it is not impossi-

ble that U.S. policy could effectively encourage ... Liberalization and democratization, provided that the effort is not made at a time when the incumbent government is fighting for its life against violent adversaries ... (Commentary, November 1979)

The essay, a superior example of historical invention ('traditional autocrats') and sheer nonsense ('traditional autocracies permit limited contestation ...'), would eventually be translated into state policy. And less imaginative intellects, like William Casey, only found it necessary to remove certain ambiguities:

I think that people in the long run are less concerned about reports of mining Nicaraguan harbors than they are about the danger of creating a wave of immigration into this country if Central America or any part of it should fall under Soviet-Cuban domination ...

So what you're looking at for your children and your grandchildren is a long term prospect of a hundred million hostile people immediately south of our border if we fail to give democracy a chance to develop in Central America. (*US News and World Report*, loc. cit.)

So these are the images: irreducible poverty, endemic hatreds, massive immigration. And as Andrew Kopkind reminds us, these images migrate through *Indiana Jones*, eventually appearing as a caricature of anti-imperialist ideology: 'The Hebrew God will fall', intones Thuggee high priest Mola Ram ... made up to look like Bombay television's version of Louis Farrakhan. 'The Christian god will be cast down. Kali will rule the world'. (*The Nation* 9 June 1984) Mola Ram (the Ayatollah?) commands a loyalty, a fanaticism of spirit and soul, with which none of the murderous gimmickry of James Bond can contend. Mola Ram's world is one in which the sword and whip are necessary. To defeat such forces, the West requires all the mean-spirited resolve it can muster. *Indiana Jones*, as western hero, evokes that closed ideological system which is appropriate to such a world; the necessary armour of

de-humanisation; the instinctually-secured survival of expedient action. Casey and Kirkpatrick have warned the American people: moral questions, questions of international law are as nothing when compared with these issues. If 'they' are not controlled where they are, they will one day be on our doorsteps.

Indiana Jones is, of course, a fantasy. Some might argue that it is an innocent one, merely a recreation. Others, like J. Hoberman, might largely concur: '... everyone knows most artists are engaged in working through the junk of their childhood ...' But Kopkind sees even here something a bit more sinister: 'Filmmakers used to fear that (children's) movies turn out to be merely about children but for adults ... But with Spielberg, it's the other way around: the danger is that he is making movies about adult neuroses and selling them to kids as their own.' Spielberg and Lucas are not simply two filmmakers who set out or were driven to be racist, sexist and cold war warriors. The point is the political and moral culture from which they have extracted their fantasies. The attitudes they exploit were among us long before either Spielberg or Lucas was born. Neither are they responsible for an administration which feasts on such carrion. What Spielberg and Lucas have provided is the cinematic canvas. They have not invented these images, but are merely transmitting them to successive generations. This is what one does with things one values.

— Courtesy "Race and Class"

References

1. See Larry Ceplair and Steven England, *The Inquisition in Hollywood* (1980); and Barnouw, op. cit.
2. See Dennis Volman, 'Salvador death squads, a CIA Connection?', *Christian Science Monitor* (8 May 1984); Allen Narain, 'Behind the death squads', *The Progressive* (May 1984); Ralph McGeehee, *Deadly Deceits* (1983), pp. 27-8.
3. Narain, op. cit.
4. In a detailed study of reporting in American newspapers on a revolt of an American-trained mercenary army in Zaire in May 1978, David Paletz and Robert Entman noted the sensational imagery employed:

(Continued on page 24)

Topical book — from the head

By Desmond Mpilo Tutu. Compiled by Mthobisi Mutloatse and edited by John Webster 189 pp. \$10.95. Eerdmans, 259 Jefferson Avenue, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503.

WHO have we been applauding in Desmond Tutu these past months? Except among close watchers of the South African scene, not much was known about the career and convictions of the former bishop of Lesotho and current general secretary of the South African Council of churches. A few years ago, the congressional Black Caucus asked Tutu in for a lecture. The turnout was slight. For many, he was only another passing-through pleader asking Americans to pay attention.

Now that Tutu has won the Nobel Peace Prize, it is different. But he is not. "Hope and Suffering", a collection of sermons, lectures and letters from the past decade, shows the stairs on which he was steadily climbing to world acclaim. Whether or not he had won a Nobel prize, Tutu, by the evidence in this small but stunning volume, would still have been a force that no regime could stop or silence. Still, he trips and nearly falls a few times on those stairs.

On the two recent occasions I heard Tutu preach — at the Washington Cathedral, with informal exchanges afterward — I had the impression that his new role as South African prophet is one he would personally prefer to be without. He seemed to be more the parish priest than the public activist. Prayer, liturgy, theology and the sacraments are where his heart is. Racial justice and the politics of freedom are genuine commitments but not the essential vocation.

My hunch was confirmed. Tutu writes that "for me the most important — the most cardinal —

fact about our life is the spiritual: that encounter with God in prayer, in worship, in meditation". Of his opposition to the South African government — which includes opposition to the Reagan administration — Tutu writes that "I do not do it because I like doing it. I do it because I am under what I believe to be the influence of God's hand. I cannot help it: when I see injustice I cannot keep quiet. I will not keep quiet, for, as Jeremiah says, when I try to keep quiet, God's word burns like a fire in my breast. But what is it that they can ultimately do? The most awful thing that they can do is to kill me, and death is not the worst thing that could happen to a Christian".

He doesn't say what it is, except by implication: the unwillingness to risk for the faith. Tutu the risk-taker is more to be honored than Tutu the political theorist. He is dead wrong when discussing racial alliances. "We have been deeply hurt," he writes. "We have seen that when it comes to the matter of Black freedom then we Blacks are really expendable in the view of the mighty U.S. It was a case of blood being thicker than water. You can't really trust Whites. When it comes to the crunch, whatever the morality involved, Whites will stick by their fellow Whites." That isn't fiery rhetoric, it's inflammatory falsity. What, for example, of the numberless white missionaries in Africa in the past decade who stayed with the blacks they were serving only to be martyred by marauding black soldiers?

In an essay on the population removals of South Africa, Tutu forcefully describes the suffering endured by blacks. "People are

starving in most of these resettlement camps. I know, for I have seen it. They are starving not because of an accident or a misfortune. No, they are starving because of a deliberate Government policy made in the name of White Christian civilization." What's needed right there is a balancing sentence or two, a few words on the starvation caused by the ineptitude and violence-based policies of some Africa's black governments.

There is probably little hope for it now, but Desmond Tutu ought to take the time — perhaps an hour a day in his study — and write a book that goes into his own deepnesses. What's offered here is useful, but it is too much a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. It is not held together by a prose style of any kind. Only now and again, does a line leap from the page, and the leaps aren't that high.

Perhaps it is too much to ask that men of God and peace be also men of literature. I recall an answer Tutu gave to a reporter's poignant question at the Washington Cathedral: How do you manage to be so cheerful a person amid such suffering in South Africa? He explained that the tears of joy and the tears of pain come from the same place — the human heart.

That, too, might be an answer for Tutu to think about when he wonders whether it is time to write a truly memorable from-the-heart book, not merely, as this is a topical one from the head.

(Colman McCarthy, a Washington columnist, wrote this review, which appeared in *The Washington Post*.)

**BOOK
REVIEW**

Colman Mc Carthy

MONUMENTAL WORK

The Cult of the Goddess Pattini
by GANANATH OBEYESEKERE.
Chicago: University of Chicago
Press, 1984, 629 pp. NPL
cloth.

THE interplay between myth and what passes as history has been a problematic issue in the social sciences. In the first flush of functionalist confidence, myths — or at least the “oral” tradition of a people — were dismissed as conjectural history by Radcliffe-Brown. Malinowski was to correct this somewhat and treat myths as a “charter” for the culture in question. It took years for the study of myth to recover from this early treatment.

Structuralist attention to myths once again slighted the chronology of a society and its stories and focused on the transcendental and hidden meaning of myths. But myths are told and retold and some of their elements are enacted and re-enacted by members of a culture, as rituals and dramas. While these enactments and tellings of myths maintain a continuity over time, the society that contain them is subject to the vagaries and vicissitudes of events: war, conquest, migration, change of climate, religious conversion, change of ruler or of economic system. While anthropologists and historians consult written records, on the one hand, or dig underground, on the others, to find the records with which to reconstruct these developments, it is possible to find a great deal of evidence represented in the myths and rituals of the society in question. The underlying structure of the myth may remain the same over time and place, but myths develop specific historical encrustations that can be related to other known events and processes in order to substantiate (or otherwise) certain accepted interpretations of the history and culture of a society. Records of these events and processes can be found in the written documents of the society, epigraphic and dug-out

evidence, or even the mythic, traditions of an adjacent religion or society.

The Cult of the Goddess Pattini is a veritable tour de force, at once history, interpretation of myth, commentary on the psychological significance of certain persistent symbols, and anthropology of the formation of the Sinhala people and culture. The cult is studied exhaustively and is then used as a key to solve many of the problems and puzzles of Lankan society and historiography. The Sinhalese culture of Sri Lanka, an overtly and self-consciously Buddhist one, nevertheless contains practices and beliefs that are anything but Buddhist. The most pervasive of these beliefs and practices is the cult of Pattini, a female deity with a wide provenance in the South of India and indeed with a myth of origin that situates her in Southern Indian culture and polity. While the deity has in many ways been given a Buddhist coloration, it nevertheless unites the Tamil-speaking and Malayalam-speaking people of Southern India with the Sinhala-speaking people of Sri Lanka into a coherent cultural, and by implication ethnic, homogeneity.

Obeysesekere adopts a powerful methodological tool for hauling this complex relationship: he conceives, indeed discovers, the mythic and ritual forms of the Sinhalese people to be stratified, thus leading him to unravel a “mythic stratigraphy”. Archaeologists are wont to discover such strata laid more or less neatly underground. Obeysesekere, however, finds strata in the mythic, ritual, and social structure of the people of Sinhala Sri Lanka and some sections of the Tamils as well, and unravels them while at the same time

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establishing the validity of his conclusions by means of comparative analysis with not only Lankan material but also Southern Indian. It is in every way a virtuoso display of the method of stratigraphic analysis of myths and history. Thus, he is able to do an archaeology of materials lying above ground, enabling him to make connections between known events from the past and mythic representations and ritual practices, and to give each layer of the mythic/ritual system a historical specificity, and historical events a sociocultural context.

The particular findings that emerge from this archaeology of myth and ritual challenge certain hasty conclusions regarding the historical formation of Sri Lankan society and culture. Indeed, a fundamental dialectic has been animating Sri Lankan society almost from the first reflections on its origins in mythopoietic documents: how to reconcile its cultural roots in Asokan Buddhism and its partial ethnic roots in Indian coastal regions with the massive cultural, political, and ethnic infusion from Southern India. The vitality and evangelical zeal of Buddhism was always seeking to gain dominance in this dialectical tension, but there were always the Hindu elements to encompass and incorporate. This process involved the transformations and suppressions of some practices and the ascendancy of others, the assimilation and religious conversion of immigrants, and so on.

It has always been difficult for some people in Sri Lanka to accept the integration of these stands, and typically they have sought to claim exclusivity for the former — sometimes straining historical and archaeological evidence to the breaking point. Sri Lankan culture

was however simultaneously Buddhist and Hindu, Sanskritic and Dravidian, metropolitan and folk — indeed the Sinhalese people achieved a creative synthesis of Indian and local motifs. In this process everyone seems to have played a part: shamans, mythicists, kings, and counselors from the very beginning of Sinhalese social formation. Nevertheless, in recent years many others have taken their turn in trying to create a picture of a homogeneous Buddhist culture that was bodily transported from Northern India, borne by “Aryans” who heroically kept their cultural authenticity and ethnic purity! Contemporary Sri Lankan society has sought to construct a polity as well as a nation with these views — often with the help of some archeologists and historians, in addition to the half-educated politicians and the lesser journalists — with disastrous consequences. Obeyesekere’s work, carefully researched and soberly argued, demystifies many of these new myths in such a fundamental way that many a chauvinist in Sri Lanka, literate and semiliterate, is going to be profoundly irritated.

It is not possible to detail the variety of issues this monumental work handles, but it is a major achievement that will reverberate in any future studies of mythic traditions and in inquiries into the interplay between historical and anthropological approaches to the study of a society. It will also have far-reaching influence on the study of Sri Lankan and South Indian society and history. Many of the major assumptions and conclusions of Sri Lankan political and social history will never be the same again.

— Courtesy — *Contemporary Sociology*, March 1985, Volume 14, Number 2.

Cultural . . .

(Continued from page 14)

very clear language. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights deals with this matter only briefly. But in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, we can read that All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of the right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic social and cultural development. The understanding of cultural development is the preservation of of cultural identity as it is expressed in customs language, religion and so on. It is not cultural destruction, oppression or murder. In looking after a wider cultural development which includes all layers of society our task is to link social economic and political change with care for local cultural life. When conflicts arise we must find intelligent solutions which don't require people to be losers.

In the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights there is a clause with a similar import. So we are still dealing with a very general provision. In these two covenants there are no more specific provisions. In recent years, however, the concept of “the right to development” has emerged which is more based on fulfilling human rights in a comprehensive sense. The International Commission of Jurists says in one of its reports that the right to development, must, therefore, emphasize that respect for all human rights, economic, social and cultural, as well as civil and political, is an essential ingredient of the development process, and that all these rights are interdependent and inseparable. A development strategy based on repression and the denial of either civil and political rights or economic, social and cultural rights, or both, not only violates International human rights standards but is a negation of the concept of development.

This formulation gives cultural rights a legitimate right to existence in the development process. Actually this formulation is also a critique of the concept of development which excessively favours

the economic field. There is no clause about cultural rights in the Constitution of 1945 but this does not mean that the Constitution doesn't guarantee cultural rights. The preamble to the Constitution which includes the Pancasila is itself a recognition of cultural rights. The principle of Just and Civilized Humanitarianism also is a recognition of the validity of the right to exist for each ethnic group no matter how small together with its own language, customs and religion. This is the very essence and the principle of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*.

This historical and constitutional acknowledgement of cultural rights, is not, however, enjoyed by all minority ethnic groups, especially those who live in distant regions. Their civilizations are already teetering and unless they are protected they will probably slowly be destroyed and that would be a tragedy for human civilization.

(To be continued)

Indiana . . .

(Continued from page 21)

The *Chronicle* wrote of ‘a frenzy of killing and looting by rebel forces.’ (An AP story we came across began similarly: ‘Rebel tribesmen slaughtered as many as 200 persons in a ‘hunt for the white man’ during the weeklong Kolwezi siege.’) The *Chronicle* report of the number of black casualties (far in excess of those suffered by whites) came four days after the white death stories. *Time* claimed that drunken guerrillas ran amuck, shooting, killing, wounding maiming and raping’. It also referred to the retreating FLNC force as the ‘largest and best organized stolen-car ring in history.’ *Newsweek* wrote that the rebels ‘went berserk’ and that round their leader’s neck ‘hung at radio-cassette player loaded with a Ray Coniff tape.’ (Pietz and Entman, *Media, Power, Politics* (1891), pp. 277–8)

Not entirely unexpectedly Paletz and Entman concluded that “...some coverage may have been attributable to the residue of racism to which reporters, like most other Americans are susceptible.” (Page 229)

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