

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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Behind the 'baby trade'...

The UGLY face of TOURISM

— *Wayne Ellwood*

INDIA — SRI LANKA

Diplomatic stalemate, military offensive

— *Mervyn de Silva, D. B. S. Jeyaraj*

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ARMS AND THE MAN

Militarisation advances steadily, while militias proliferate, many of them, having 'political bosses'. The result is not more Law and Order but greater violence, more intence, brutal and widespread. The US State Dept. Report, based largely on official information (see N.H.W.S.) puts the 1986 toll at 2,900. (A non government source cited in the same report has given a much higher figure, 2,700).

While body counts are revealing, far more significant is the breakdown of discipline within these law enforcement agencies, and the steady spread of corruption. Three recent incidents can be taken as symptomatic of this menacing trend.

The police in the NCP have arrested two Army officers and several soldiers, said the ISLAND. They were allegedly engaged in a new racket — breaching the Government's fuel embargo by selling petrol to 'contractors' who were running a thriving business in fuel-starved Jaffna. There have been well-known reports of petrol being sold at sea to Tamil rebels.

Nine Home Guards were also taken into custody for a far graver crime in the Welikanda police area. They will be charged of murdering three Tamil passengers in a State-owned bus bound for Trinco. Police say they were dragged out of the bus, taken into the shrub jungle a few hundred yards away and shot dead.

The Police are looking for other 'Home Guards' involved in this incident, the ISLAND reported.

Meanwhile, the Opposition Leader Mr. Aruna Bandaranaike has asked for an inquiry into an incident in the heart of the city where some young lads playing a game of holiday cricket were assaulted by uniformed personnel, who had chosen to enjoy the 'Poya' holiday in the customary manner!

There has been a 70% increase in the armed services between

1985 and 1986, says the State Dept. report, and the number of 'Home Guards' have doubled. No mention is made of hundreds of youths being 'militarised' by the special courses conducted by the Manpower Mobilisation Ministry. And now, the Mahaveli minister has announced a weapons training course for Mahaveli settlers.

"Terrorism" of the separatist groups is taking a deadlier and more enduring revenge from Southern society than anything it inflicts through the barrel of an AK 47.

POLLS FEVER

How come this sudden rash of public statements by VVIP's on elections? There is so much life still left in the UNP's second parliamentary term, isn't there? President JR spoke of course in lighter vein at a "National Management Conference" but the frontpage headline did raise many eyebrows. "President predicts — UNP WILL WIN NEXT ELECTIONS".

If His Excellency was light-hearted, Mrs. B. his chief opponent, was deadly serious — and deeply distrustful too.

President JR, who told a NWP rally, is 'testing, testing', meaning that he is gently feeling the public pulse to see whether the UNP can pull off another 'refe-

(Continued on page 6)

TRENDS
+
LETTERS

POEMS

Thank you for reproducing (even with source unacknowledged) the poem by Mahathi de Alwis, 'To a Tamil Friend: 1983', which originally appeared in the ICES house-magazine, *The Thatched Pithu*, for December 1986. I appreciate the fact that the reprinting of the poem in the *Lanka Guardian* would have brought it to a larger readership than is reached by our minuscule circulation magazine. I regret, however, that your addition of a sub-title, 'For Feb. 4: Independence Day, has to some extent distorted the character of the poem. May I say that it was written by Ms. de Alwis at the time the events occurred, out of deeply-told personal pain, and not as an Independence Day pronouncement (three and a half years later)? There was

(Continued on page 8)

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When will the current stalemate end?

Mervyn de Silva

Delhi-based western correspondents describe the Indian demarche that followed the Sri Lanka government's six-point proposal for a resumption of negotiations with the 'armed separatists' as a "firm note of caution from a friendly country". But senior members of the UNP leadership are far from convinced of the vaunted friendship. Some would dearly love a tougher military line — and have indeed argued openly for it — while others press for an international campaign to expose India as a 'big bully'.

Ideally the "militarists" would like to see Jaffna razed to the ground and the troops marching through the city streets in full command of the separatist stronghold for the first time in three to four years. The only brake on these ambitious plans is the nervous uncertainty about the reaction in Tamil Nadu and its immediate effect, if any, on Delhi, and Delhi's own response. Despite this lurking fear of incalculable risks, the hardliners would have been overjoyed if the operation had been completed quickly and successfully before the Indian parliament met for its budget session on Feb. 23.

What in fact was that the army, using some 5,000 troops, scored many gains but came nowhere near re-capturing Jaffna. It has many more camps encircling Jaffna, much greater control of territory, roads and communications, and have destroyed several LTTE "bases". But the LTTE rebels have vanished into the jungles in typical textbook guerrilla fashion, leaving the army to defend the newly gained territory. By the

same token however the people of Jaffna no longer have the same protective umbrella of the LTTE. That makes the civilian population extremely vulnerable to military operations, land, sea and air. Hence the near-panic situation in Jaffna, and the climate of tension and fear which all visiting correspondents have observed.

But that is precisely the political-diplomatic impingement to the offensive strategy of the hardliners. Tamil Nadu's threshold of tolerance (See LG Feb. 15) is directly related to civilian casualties, civilian hardship and suffering. If Indian President Zail Singh chose to use those very words, it was for the soundest of reasons. The Indian demarche, Prime Minister Gandhi's remarks in his parliamentary group, and Mr. Zail Singh's references to Sri Lanka in his address to Parliament are all of a piece. Having 'suspended' his work as mediator, itself a warning of one kind, Mr. Gandhi has to 'intervene' on the diplomatic front in order to protect the civilian population of Jaffna from any lightning strike by the Sri Lankan forces that is bound to set in motion a train of events that he may not be able to control. In short, it is the Jaffna—Madras—Delhi chain reaction that worries Mr. Gandhi.

Delhi knows that it is as much the actions of LTTE as those of the Sri Lankan government which have pushed the mediator into a corner. For all its many achievements in Tamil eyes as the pioneer 'defender of the people' and the uncompromising champion of the Eelam cause, the LTTE over-

extended itself — territorially, especially in the east, and politically, by trying to convert its day-to-day *de facto* running of Jaffna into *de jure* civil administration, however skeletal its structure. Colombo could not possibly tolerate that defiant move, nor could Delhi condone it.

It was a provocation that gave Colombo just the opportunity and the argument it needed to mount its first major combined operations.

If the army had actually taken Jaffna as the Feb. 11 *DINAMINA* and *DAILY NEWS* boasted it would (the interview with the National Security Minister was later "corrected and clarified") the military balance would have radically shifted, with Colombo decisively regaining the political initiative, both in terms of Sinhala opinion and its negotiating position in the next round.

In a way, the LTTE has unwittingly helped Delhi in the long run. The LTTE was not only imposing its fierce hegemonic will on all other rebel groups but gradually increasing its capacity for autonomous decision-making and action. Mr. Prabhakaran's arrival in Jaffna was more a message to Delhi than a 'warning' to his over-ambitious lieutenants, a happy theory circulated by state-managed media. The LTTE was on the way to attaining the status of an autocratic guerilla movement like the NPA in the Philippines.

By proving that the LTTE's military dominance in the north was not unassailable, the Sri

The U. N. P. Greens and the Red Giants

Lankan army has done Delhi a favour, although in the process the 'hardship, suffering, civilian casualties' came in Delhi's opinion, too perilously close to activating a surprisingly dormant Tamilnadu public opinion. By not recapturing Jaffna — not as yet anyway — the army has exposed Colombo's limited power, which also suits Delhi.

So in the period of 'suspension', animated or otherwise, or the current stalemate, Delhi can give its mind more resolutely to the challenging problem of mapping out a coherent game-plan, an exercise it has signally failed to do, largely because of Mr. Gandhi's other preoccupations, the conflicting pressure-groups and lobbies in Delhi, and his own somewhat individualistic and temperamental style of politics and government.

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Arapprochement with China is one of Mr. Gorbachov's major foreign policy initiatives. But the two Communist giants are only inching their way towards their mutually desired goal. The rightwing pro-US UNP meanwhile has taken a great Leap forward in strengthening relations with China and the Soviet Union.

President JR whose highly successful visit to China was regarded by many diplomats here as a personal triumph was almost gushing in his praise of the Communist leadership in Beijing when he addressed a meeting at the Chinese-built BMICH to mark the 30th anniversary of Sino-Sri Lankan diplomatic relations. China was a country with the world's largest population. It was a powerful nation said the President, underlining the obvious only to give his remarks on that occasion a cutting edge. Big and powerful as it was, China, said His Excellency, was never a bully. He did not demand too much from his audience, especially in the present context of Indo-Sri Lankan relations, in making the true meaning of that compliment clear.

It is in 1956-57 both China and the Soviet Union established embassies in Colombo.

So President JR was back on another "Friendship" platform within weeks. The praise once more was unstinted. But it went beyond the country-to-country boundaries to touch the ideological, the triumph of socialism under "the great Lenin."

"The Sri Lanka Soviet Friendship Society has a record of service to our people and so has the Soviet Union. Never has she interfered with our affairs, never has she hurt us in any way. She has always tendered her friendship and a word of help to us in all international organi-

sations. I pay tribute to her for that reason".

The President also said: "The Soviet Union is not great only in its size, population, and resources. She is great because she is the first example of socialism being put into effect in a country by the great Lenin in its administration, in its constitution, and in its relationship between the state and the worker and its people.

"We therefore once again pay tribute to her for that reason".

Mr. Gorbachev's absence from Moscow during the visit scheduled earlier led to the postponement of President Jayawardene's state visit. It is now known that the visit will take place in the middle of this year with a Gorbachev-Jayawardene encounter the highlight of the program. Yet, the warmth of President JR's remarks about Soviet friendship is not interpreted by western diplomats in Colombo only in terms of the impending visit.

If the Soviet Union has one firm friend among the major Third World states which enjoys the status of a quasi-ally, it is India. That no less a person than Mr. Gorbachev made absolutely plain in his speech in Delhi last year, when he vested the Indo-Soviet Treaty, on its 15th anniversary, with very special significance. The speech also made abundantly clear that Mr. Gorbachev had decided to reassert as strongly as possible, the Soviet Union's role as an Asian power. India was the key factor in Moscow's Asia policy.

No Sri Lankan need to be reminded, particularly during this period of a political-diplomatic stalemate, of the crucial importance of influencing Indian opinion. The other theory favoured by some South Asian diplomats that UNP is slightly disenchanted with the U.S., especially after its substantial aid-cut, strikes me as a bit far-fetched.

M.

President's opening address to parliament

If militants cease military operations blockade will be lifted

"In its endeavour to reach a negotiated political settlement, the government is willing to consider proposals as outlined in relation to these outstanding matters, in the expectation that a final agreement can thereby be achieved.

On Monday the 9th February 1987, the High Commissioner for India, Mr. J. N. Dixit, handed me the following message "from the Prime Minister and Government of India to His Excellency the President and Government of Sri Lanka"

1. "As far as the current military operations against Tamil civilians continue and other discriminatory measures like economic and communications blockade affecting civilians exist, India is not in a position to resume discussions with Tamil militants. While this is so for the present, India will remain willing to resume the peace process if and when these actions are withdrawn.

2. India is firmly of the view that the proposals which emerged on the 19 December after Mr. Natwar Singh and Mr. Chidambaram's visit to Colombo, must clearly be affirmed by the Government of Sri Lanka as a basis and only a beginning point for further negotiations. India is also of the view that the final framework of a solution based on these proposals can only be forged when the Sri Lanka Government and Tamil side come together again for negotiations.

3. If the Government of Sri Lanka continues the economic blockade and military operations against Tamils, prospects of violence will increase. India's assessment is that the conflict will be prolonged and will escalate".

On Friday the 13th February I handed to Mr. Dixit the following reply:

"The response to the Government of India's message, being given below, is predicated on the clear understanding that all further discussions to be held or solution to be evolved shall be within the framework of the independence, territorial integrity and unity of Sri Lanka.

1. If the armed separatists (LTTE) agree to cease armed violent operations and related military preparations and desist from any activity aimed at setting up or interfering with the legal administration of the area and this is announced by them, the government of Sri Lanka will ensure that the armed forces

do not carry out any further military operations in the area during this period.

2. When hostilities cease, in terms of para 1 above, the embargo (on the movement of certain commodities), now in force in the Jaffna peninsula, will be lifted.

If the LTTE is prepared to attend talks with the representatives of the Government of Sri Lanka towards a peaceful solution of the ethnic problem, appropriate talks may be held in New Delhi with the assistance of the representatives of the Indian government. The Government of Sri Lanka expects the

(Continued on page 6)

Dec. 19 proposals

Here are the proposals that emerged on December 19, 1986, following talks between President J. R. Jayewardene and two Indian Ministers:

- * The present territory comprising the eastern province minus the Ampara electoral district may constitute the new eastern province.

- * Provincial Council will be established for the new eastern province.

- * The institutional linkages between the northern province and the eastern province discussed earlier, will be further refined in order to make it more acceptable to the parties concerned.

- * The Sri Lanka Government will be willing to consider a proposal for a second stage of constitutional development providing for the northern province and the new eastern province coming together subject to modalities being agreed upon for ascertaining the wishes of the people comprised in the northern province and the eastern province separately.

- * The Sri Lanka Government is willing to consider the creation of an office of Vice President to be appointed by the President for a specified term.

- * The five (5) Muslim MPs of the eastern province may be invited to visit India and to discuss matters of mutual concern with the Tamil side under the auspices of Government of India.

"Recognise an accused's innocence until proved guilty"

— Lalith to Police

The law presumes the innocence of an accused person until proved guilty. If police officers too recognised this fact it would win for them the public's confidence and facilitate their work, perhaps making them an instrument in the enforcement of human rights, National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali said yesterday.

He was speaking to police officers during a seminar on human rights at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute.

"The work a police officer has to do quite often is protecting human rights. You are protecting the people's rights to property, life and movement. You

do this by seeking to bring to book those who break the law", Mr. Athulathmudali said.

Under the law of this country when an accused person is brought before a court he is presumed to be innocent until proved guilty. How many people brought to the police station of our country are thought of as being entitled to this presumption of innocence? he asked.

"When a citizen is brought to a police station how many of you presume his innocence despite the allegation against him, therefore he must be guilty and should be convicted? That is a wrong attitude".

Police officers have so many things to do. They don't have

time to go into each and every case. Even the ordinary police constable is called upon to do so many things.

Every day 3000 police officers are caught up in court duty. Many of them just waste their time doing nothing, waiting for cases to be taken up, which sometimes never happens.

The government is bringing amendments to the Judicature Act and the Criminal Procedure Code to ensure that the number of police officers who will have to hang around in courts will be sharply reduced. They will then have more time to attend to normal police work, the Minister said.

— Daily News

Trends...

(Continued from page 1)

rendum! Mrs. B. who had six meetings in the NWP, then moved up north to the NCP 'border', to hold five rallies in two days. By the next weekend (Feb. 21—22) the SLFP campaign waggon had rolled deep south to Matara. Interestingly, her main target—the Referendum. Her AK 47; the Election Commissioner's report on that 'scandalous' affair. The CP's "FORWARD", edited by party chief Pieter Keuneman is not troubled by doubts or the idle speculation of other political leaders. "Everything" says the lead item in his paper "indicates that we are running into a spate of elections in 1987.

CORRUPTION

While a few UNP stalwarts still cock-a-hoop over their a record-breaking ten years in office remain sure of a third 6 year term, the former Speaker Mr. Bakeer Marker is much distressed by what he thinks

is the stench of corruption, not the sweet smell of success. Reminding party activists in his constituency that he is a founder member of the UNP, he noted that at its birth the Grand Old Party had a "clean" image. Alas, not so, now, he lamented, in the presence of party Chairmen, Harsha. Mrs. B. spelt it out more bluntly. Same politicians who didn't own a motor cycle now had several limousines in their private garages, she said.

Terrorism is good for business. At least, some people's.

If militants...

(Continued from page 5)

Government of India to underwrite the implementation of any agreement so reached.

3. Upon the armed separatists giving up their arms—a vital step strengthening the civil administration—a general amnesty will be given to them by the President of Sri Lanka.

4. When talks towards a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem commence, the Government of Sri Lanka will release those persons now held in custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, who have no charges against them.

5. In all these proceedings the mediatory role and the good offices of the Government of India are relevant. The Government of Sri Lanka reaffirms that the results of the discussions held so far including the proposals of 19th December, 1986, will be the basis for evolving a durable solution.

6. The Government of Sri Lanka is agreeable to an early date being fixed for the negotiations".

The Sri Lanka government has never carried out military operations against civilians nor ever will.

That closes the chapter up to date".

— Daily News

Sri Lanka forces aim at gaining ground

D. B. S. Jeyaraj

What is the nature of Sri Lanka's current military approach? A fair answer to that question is evolving with more factual information available now. Basically it is a multi-pronged, mutually reinforcing strategy covering different aspects. This analysis is compiled on data acquired from different sources ranging from firsthand accounts from affected areas, to explanations made in the drawing rooms of the Colombo establishment.

At the outset it seems clear that the valid policy at present is a politico-military one. Whether the current policy will remain consistent is a moot point. On the ground, as reported earlier, the aim is to secure as much land as possible in the mainland areas of the Northern Province comprising Vavuniya, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi. On the north-western flank, the troops were to move upwards through Vattakachi and reach Kandawalai along the Chundikulam sanctuary below the peninsula. After entrenching themselves the forces at Pooneryn would turn downwards east and the forces at Kandawalai turn west. Both would link up with Paranthan right in the centre, 6.4 km below Elephant Pass.

People vacate areas: According to latest unconfirmed reports, the forces in the north-west, occupying Nuppaikadavi in Mannar, had progressed to Vellankulam and Mulankavil on either side of the border separating Mannar and Kilinochchi districts respectively. The people of these villages had left the areas. But in the north-east, much headway has not been made and the for-

ces seem to be bogged down in the jungle tracks of Mullaitivu. This is attributed to stiff resistance offered by the Tamil militants. Apart from those Tigers originally positioned in Mullaitivu, other LTTE men, proceeding from the east to north are also augmenting these forces.

According to the security sources the army had interrupted a message from the Jaffna commander "Kittu" to the east requesting cadres to return. These cadres had allegedly gone there to reinforce the eastern cadres for anti-State operations. The returning cadres were cut off by the 36-hour curfew and security operations. Another noteworthy fact is the presence of many members of the LPRLF and TELO and PLOT hiding in these areas when the LTTE turned its wrath on them earlier.

New camps: In the centre, the forces have moved along the trunk road and occupied Paranthan. New detachments are being stationed in almost every area and along the main roads within the northern districts. New camps have been established in Thunakkai, Adampan, Uvilunkulam, Uruthirapuram, Paranthan and Marasumottai. Incidentally, Marasumottai in Kilinochchi will function as the capital of the Kilinochchi district. An important aspect of the security operations is the way the civilian component has been handled. Although there have been civilian deaths, the vast bulk of non-combatants had evacuated before the forces moved in.

Since aerial reconnaissance missions preceded advancing troops on the ground, the villagers were given prior warning.

The militants in a bid to minimise civilian casualties encouraged the villagers to flee. The pattern had been in some places for the villagers to take refuge in specific areas which were then surrounded and cordoned off. Thereafter the civilians were classified in categories of age and sex. Young Tamil males were detained and others released.

Jungle areas not covered: Most militants have now taken cover in the jungle interior. Despite boastful claims made in Colombo that the "security forces are conducting flushing-out operations in the jungles"—there is reliable information that no such moves are on right now. All troop movement is basically along main roads and adjacent areas. But from Colombo's point of view, the militants being in jungles offers an advantage to be pursued if necessary. The traditional urban guerilla tactic of merging with the civilian population like "fish in the ocean" is not possible now.

If the security forces had ever been held back in the past by a political decision to be careful about civilian deaths, that restraint is no longer there. The forces can, if necessary, send small patrols on foot into the jungles to hunt the militants. But the offensive mounted so far has displayed a marked reluctance on the part of the forces to move out in smaller formations. The offensive is characterised by a "juggernaut" type massive convoy movement. Apart from making the troops invulnerable it also affords the forces the classic ratio advantage. In guerilla warfare, the security forces are supposed to outnumber a guerilla by 10 or 15.

Lesson for LTTE: A basic lesson, however bitter, for the LTTE in this regard is the consequence of the action against other groups like TELO, EPRLF and PLOT. Although this is not the time for recrimination, a lesson drawn from past experience is relevant here. Earlier, there had been instances where forces surrounding an LTTE camp found themselves surrounded in turn by militants of other groups. Today that factor is absent. In areas outside the peninsula where even the LTTE was not as strong as in Jaffna, the impact is greater.

In the east: The situation in the east is also grave. Two security manoeuvres have been recorded. One has proceeded from Trincomalee to the south through the Mutur electorate areas. The other has been an upward thrust. Communication from these areas is poor. Yet what has been established so far is proof of heavy fighting.

In Batticaloa, the Special Task Force commandos, who have consolidated themselves in Kokkatacholai, are progressing further into the interior on the Paduvankarai (west coast) area, a homogenous Tamil area hitherto impregnable. In Amparai and Batticaloa, the militant position is weak. The Tamil and Muslim communities were living in inter-twined areas. A third party by aiding and abetting the Muslims exacerbated the tension between the Tamil-speaking traditional homelands. Secondly the landscape is dotted with STF camps along important roads. Thirdly, inter-group rivalry among the militants, particularly the LTTE and EPRLF is rampant. There is strong suspicion that one group is colluding with the State to attack the other. In other words, some Tamil groups seem to have lost sight of who the main "enemy" is. Above all, a scorched earth policy has displaced population and disrupted the economy. Terror as a tactic has been used deliberately.

All this means that the position in the east is very shaky

for the LTTE. Mobility, the key requirement for a guerilla movement, is severely curtailed because of Muslim hostility, security forces operations and inter-group fratricide. All resulting in a weaker Tamil militant presence.

A different situation: The situation inside the peninsula is different. There the militants are relatively stronger. Despite strong propaganda that the army is marching to Jaffna city, the reality has been a perimeter expansion of the Palaly, Jaffna Fort, Point Pedro, Thondamanaru and Velvettiturai camps. Also the forces are able to move in convoy formations between Point Pedro, Velvettiturai and Thondamanaru since militant positions have been abandoned.

The important thing is to realise the implications of the security forces control of the Tamil areas. Control of a large area means that the forces are spreading thin over a widespread range. This would mean that once the LTTE changes its course of avoiding conflict and resumes guerilla attacks, the relatively weaker military posts would be vulnerable. But it appears that Colombo is fully aware of this possibility. Then the point arises why the security forces are expanding rapidly and placing themselves as easy targets for future guerilla attacks?

India's good offices: The answer to that is a view in Colombo that India's good offices could be utilised to consolidate position Colombo seems to be counting on a ceasefire imposed by India soon. If and when that occurs, the LTTE would be constrained to desist from any further action. That would mean the State would be in effective control of a large chunk of territory which it may not have been able to retain under different circumstances.

The second stage of the onslaught would be an invasion of the peninsula. Colombo would encircle the peninsula and weaken it. There is, however, a possibility of a brief lull before an attack is launched.

Again that period would coincide with a suitable diplomatic endeavour with the ostensible purpose of achieving peace.

In retrospect, Colombo seems to be sitting pretty. New Delhi, which had warned Colombo that it was suspending its good offices and that the conflict would escalate, is now in the spotlight. After confiscating the militants' arms suspension of good offices is not a move that would endear India to the Tamils. From here the impression is that New Delhi is in a dilemma. To effect a ceasefire now means freezing the situation at a point disadvantageous to the Tamils. To allow the conflict to escalate after weakening the militants poses another problem. Any qualitative input that New Delhi seeks to prescribe indirectly may come too late for the Tamils. Time is of essence for the Sri Lankan Tamils.

— *Hindu*

LETTERS . . .

(Continued from page 1)

less incongruity in your styling Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy's poem in response (which also appeared in the February issue of our house-magazine simultaneously with your publication) 'Freedom Day Verses', because hers was as its title indicates, offered as a collective utterance. But it seems to me that something of the integrity of Malathi de Alwis's poem is violated by assimilating it to the rhetoric — even the progressive and non-racist rhetoric — of Independence Day. There would have been no objection if it had been made clear that **you** chose to publish the poem for February 4th instead of appearing to attribute this purpose to the author.

Reggie Siriwardena
Editor, *The Thatched Patio*

Note by Editor:

Right you are, if you say so.

2000 Dead in 1986 – U.S. State Dept.

A developing country, Sri Lanka has achieved a high quality of life despite low per capita income which in 1985 was only \$372. Tea exports are Sri Lanka's largest source of foreign exchange earnings. Approximately 60 percent of Sri Lanka's productive capacity is state owned or controlled.

The two largest ethnic groups in Sri Lanka are the Sinhalese (74 percent) and the Tamils (18 percent). A growing conviction among Tamils that they do not enjoy political rights equal to those of the Sinhalese majority led some political leaders and frustrated Tamil youths to conclude, by the mid-1970's, that separation of the Tamil-ma-

jority areas of the island into an independent Tamil state or "Eelam" was the only solution. The political leaders renamed their party the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and contested the 1977 elections on a platform of independence, winning all 14 seats in the heavily Tamil Northern Province and 2 seats in the Eastern Province, which has a sizable Tamil population. A number of Tamil youths formed militant groups which turned to armed struggle and terrorism as a way of attaining Eelam.

TULF members lost their seats in Parliament in 1983 when, rather than comply with a new legal requirement to swear alle-

giance to a unitary Sri Lanka, they left Parliament and did not return within the required 60 days. Since by-election to fill those seats have been postponed due to the unsettled security situation in the North and East, Tamils living in those constituencies are now without representatives in Parliament. Currently three Tamils from the United National Party are members of Parliament, all of them also serving as cabinet ministers.

The TULF has participated in various inconclusive and unsuccessful rounds of Tamil grievances. The militant Tamil groups have refused to enter the negotiations, depending instead on armed insurgency to attain

Needed in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka used to be called pear-shaped. Pear-shaped would be more appropriate now. A democratic government with an army not fully under control is beset by a separatist movement relying on terrorism. Thousands have died. The other night, for instance terrorists killed 28 villagers, including 16 women and children, with axes and other silent weapons so as not to alert guards with gunshots.

No end is in sight to a conflict whose principals acknowledge the resemblance to Northern Ireland.

The trouble arises from a deep sense of grievance that minority Tamils (18 percent) hold against majority Sinhalese. Official hesitation and ineptness contributed to the Tamil movement's shift in the 1980s from a political to a guerrilla phase, although, so common is ethnic groups' use of terrorism on the international scene, the shift might have come anyway.

As the struggle sharpened, the political demands of the terrorists grew. They now ask for a "homeland" virtually a separate state, to include not only the Northern Province, in which they have a large majority, but also the Eastern Province, in which they are a minority.

A government that yielded would be defaulting on the first requirement of sovereignty: to maintain the integrity of the nation.

Negotiations remain the best hope. Here tiny Sri Lanka is painfully dependent on giant India. One narrow strait away, in India's state of Tamil Nadu, live 55 million Tamils. Their support of guerrillas among Sri Lanka's 3 million Tamils kept the military effort alive. The Sri Lankan government counts on India not only to be more energetic about breaking the Tamil terrorist connection — a reasonable request — but also to deliver moderate Tamils to a negotiated

solution, which is not so simple. Some part of Sri Lanka's agony can be diminished by Indian policy; some part cannot.

Meanwhile the war goes on. As in such encounters elsewhere, the guerrillas target uniformed members of the armed forces — although, as the news the other day indicated, they also target civilian villagers; the armed forces target people who are not wearing uniforms. Some of these people, Amnesty International reports, have "disappeared" after being detained. The government answers that this number includes terrorists and people in flights and that the very making of the Amnesty charges encourages terrorism. Even if this is partly so, it is a poor response. Nothing may be harder than for a sorely pressed democratic government to control troops fighting a dirty war. Nothing is more necessary.

— The Washington Post.

their goal of a Tamil homeland. In June 1986, President Jayewardene announced new proposals aimed at restoring communal peace, and a new round of negotiations between the Government and the TULF, with the assistance of the Government of India, commenced soon afterwards. By the end of the year, the negotiations had reached a crucial stage with the Tamil demand for the merger of the Tamil majority areas of the Northern and Eastern Provinces being a principal obstacle to a settlement.

The military conflict between the Government and Tamil militant separatists has steadily spread and intensified since the communal incidents of July 1983, despite efforts to reach a negotiated settlement. There is substantial, credible evidence that both the Tamil militants and the Government security forces have been responsible for human rights abuses, including indiscriminate attacks on civilians. Basic human rights are guaranteed to Sri Lanka citizens by the Constitution and affirmed by the Government. Significant human rights violations continued to be reported during 1986. Critics cited the Government's failure to vigorously prosecute those accused of human rights abuses as a major cause of continuing violations. The Government, in affirming its support for constitutional guarantees, has stated that it has investigated allegations of human rights violations but the absence of evidence has hindered its efforts to prosecute those accused.

As in 1985, critics continued to accuse Government security forces and police of human rights violations. The Government did attempt to improve training and discipline within the reportedly expanding security forces during the past year, but its efforts have proved disappointing. Overall, military personnel reportedly increased by 70 percent from 1985 to 1986 and the number of part-time militiamen, known as "home guards," repor-

tedly doubled. The increasingly Sinhalese composition of the expanded security forces and police has probably contributed to human rights problems. The enlisted ranks of armed services are now virtually 100 percent Sinhalese. A considerable number of Tamils were once found in the police, and as recently as 1984 the senior police officer was a Tamil. By 1985 no more than 5 percent of police personnel were Tamils and the police Special Task Force (STF), which is charged with counter insurgency operations, is now 100 percent Sinhalese. The STF and the home guards, in particular, were both accused of attacks on civilians during 1986, and Government forces, for the first time, resorted to aerial bombing and strafing which resulted in civilian casualties.

In 1986, Tamil militants continued to attack both civilian and military targets. The militants bombed civilian targets in the South and in Colombo and killed Sinhalese villagers in the North and East. Several bombings in May and June resulted in over 250 civilian casualties. Tamil militant groups fought among themselves several times. In the Northern Province where the Tamil militants have largely taken over civil administration, a number of civilians who refused to cooperate have been kidnapped and killed.

During 1986 some traditional rights remained restricted as a result of laws enacted earlier to deal with the continuing insurgency. The Prevention of Terrorism (Act), and the regulations under the state of emergency give the security forces broad powers to arrest and detain. The courts tried and convicted hundreds of detainees held under the PTA and emergency regulations in 1986; two were acquitted.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 — Respect for Integrity of the Person, Including freedom from:

(a) Political Killing

The number of deaths from politically motivated violence arising from the ethnic insurgency rose still higher in 1986. According to the Government, over 2,000 people were killed; of this total, over 200 were members of the security forces, about 1,000 were alleged members of the Tamil militant groups and 700 were noncombatants killed by the militants. Of the 700 civilian deaths, 170 were Tamils, 190 were Sinhalese, and 40 were Muslims; over 300 were unidentified. The Government has acknowledged its difficulties in collecting information in disputed areas due to breakdown of civil administration. One nongovernment source estimated the death toll for 1986 to be nearly 2,700. Most of the deaths occurred in the North and East, the scene of the clashes in 1986 between Government forces and Tamil militants. Civilians were also killed in Colombo and other areas in the South as a result of a series of Tamil militant bombings.

Government and militant forces both appeared responsible for significant numbers of noncombatant deaths. Government security forces opened fire in civilian areas following hit-and-run insurgent attacks or land-mine explosions and launched air strikes or mortar shellings in densely populated areas, particularly in the Jaffna Peninsula. Tamil insurgents bombed and mined transportation facilities and public buildings, attacked Sinhalese villagers living in areas considered by separatists as constituting part of the Tamil homeland, and executed suspected Government informants or sympathizers.

Among the most significant alleged incident in 1986 involving the security forces were the following: on January 25 in the northern Kilinochchi District, following a series of clashes between soldiers and insurgents, an enlisted man reportedly went berserk and killed 10 Tamil civilians at the train station.

According to another, nongovernmental, version of the incident, the train station killings were the work of a group of soldiers, not of a deranged individual. The Government responded by transferring the accused enlisted man to Colombo and keeping him under observation. On February 19 at Lahugala in eastern Sri Lanka, the Government reported that its security forces killed 40 Tamil insurgents. Other reports of the incident alleged that the security forces shot as many as 103 local farmers and burned the remains.

Two separate Government inquiries into the Laugala incident concluded that the security forces had not exceeded their authority. On June 10, military personnel on a small island off the Jaffna Peninsula were shot at and returned fire; 30 Tamil fishermen in the vicinity were reported killed in the cross fire.

Other reports allege that the security forces deliberately killed the fishermen. On July 17, soldiers in a village south of Trincomalee killed 37 people whom the Government identified as terrorists. Other reports of this incident allege that the security forces shot Tamil refugees near the site of an earlier landmine blast which killed more than two dozen soldiers. On September 18, a car bomb in Batticaloa exploded, wounding several policemen. According to a Government press statement, 12 people near the blast were killed in the cross fire between police and the militants, opened fire on nearby civilians.

A new tactic of the security forces in 1986 was the use of air force attacks against insurgents in heavily populated areas. Some reports allege that as many as 50 Tamil civilians may have been killed as a result of these attacks in the first half of the year. Tamil militants and Government security forces sometimes exchanged mortar fire in populated areas, resulting in civilian casualties.

As in previous years, in the few instances in which investigations revealed that the security forces acted improperly, the Government maintained that it was unable to obtain adequate evidence to prosecute. Generally, the Government dealt with misbehavior administratively, a policy which many observers believe does little to deter wrongdoers. The Government has said that there were far fewer reports of misbehavior by the security forces in 1986. Accordingly, whereas 200 members of the security forces were "discharged with ignominy" in 1983 and 4 were similarly discharged in 1985, no members of the security forces were discharged for misbehavior in 1986 and no courts martial were held.

Tamil militants continued their practice of attacking Government security forces and public infrastructure such as rail lines, electric grids, and bridges. The militants also mounted a campaign of bomb and landmine attacks on civilian targets in the Sinhalese-majority South. Included in this campaign, which peaked in May and June, was the May 3 planting of an explosive on an Air Lanka Tristar, resulting in the death of 17 people, including a number of foreign tourists; a May 7 bombing of the Central Telegraph Office in Colombo in which 12 people were killed; a bombing on May 30 at a Colombo bottling plant which killed 11, and bombings on 2 large public buses on June 25, which killed 22 people. In December two bombs believed to have been planted by Tamil militants were discovered at a Colombo power station before they could explode.

The insurgents also attacked Sinhalese farms and villages in an effort to drive residents from what the insurgents consider to be traditional Tamil areas. Almost all of these attacks occurred in the vicinity of Trincomalee on the east coast, an area of relative ethnic heterogeneity. On May 11, and again

on May 18, Tansil guerrillas struck the village of Morewewa, killing 17 Sinhalese civilians.

Insurgents also launched a string of attacks on Sinhalese villages near Trincomalee May 23-25, killing at least 32 Sinhalese civilians. As many as 100 Sinhalese civilians may have been killed in similar attacks.

Another Tamil militant practice in 1986, continued from previous years, was the execution on lamp posts of suspected informers. There were an estimated 80 "lamp-post killings" during 1986. Perhaps the most prominent of the lamp post victims in 1986 was the widely respected Jaffna leader of the Sri Lankan rural, self help development organization, Sarvodaya—himself a Tamil—who was killed by Tamil militants in Jaffna on September 26.

Increasingly in 1986, the various Tamil militant groups fought with each other as they struggled for control over parts of the North and East. This internecine warfare peaked in May, when members of one group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), killed 150-170 members of a rival group, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) in Jaffna. In December the LTTE attacked camps of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), reportedly killing at least 50 EPRLF members.

(b) Disappearance

Amnesty International (AI) published a special report in September on Disappearances in Sri Lanka. Most of the 272 disappearance cases cited in the report date from 1983-1985, and involve persons who were living in the North and North Central part of Sri Lanka when they disappeared. There were more reports of disappearance in 1986, primarily in the Eastern Province.



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Effects of ethnic conflict

N. Ram (Hindu)

Mr. Ronnie de Mel is the longest continuously serving Finance Minister Sri Lanka has had since independence. Since 1977, he has held this post and maintained an active profile in national and international forums — including the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and aid-giving circles. A former civil servant who resigned from his professional career quite early and jumped into politics — he was first with the SLFP and then moved over to the UNP well before it captured power — Mr. de Mel is considered a thorough professional and, in intellectual terms, one of the most capable politicians in Sri Lanka.

In politics, he can be described as a social democrat with a preference for political pluralism and tolerance in a government which has struck several blows at democracy. With respect to fiscal and economic policies, in the setting of which he has a significant role, he can be described perhaps as a liberal capitalist who believes in a balance between an "open economy" and public or social regulation. With respect to democratic and civil rights, he is known for making an enlightened stand — as a dissenter within the party and since 1977, within the Cabinet. On the Tamil question and — a matter which is closely connected — relations with India, Mr. de Mel has quite consistently advocated a non-hawkish, negotiated political settlement "with honour for both sides" and making consistent use of India's good offices.

It is an open secret in Colombo that (as a liberal analyst puts it in an article, "Ronnie and Lalith: A study in Contrasts") "between Mr. Ronnie de Mel, the Minister of Finance, and Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, the Minister of National Security, not a great deal of love is lost. Each has unburdened himself about the other to many persons leaving little doubt about their mutually adverse opinions." The progressive and liberal assessment in Sri Lanka is that Mr. Athulathmudali, "who has been in the forefront of authoritarian manipulation" and on the ethnic conflict, has spearheaded the pursuit of the "military option," and Mr. Ronnie de Mel offer a study in political and personal contrast.

The indications, including media reports, were that at the Cabinet meeting of February 11 which considered the tough Indian message to Colombo, Mr. Athulathmudali and Mr. Ronnie de Mel found themselves on opposite sides — the former reportedly advocating the position that Sri Lanka must refuse to lift the economic embargo on the Jaffna peninsula or suspend the military operations under the present circumstances, the latter arguing that there must be a "positive" response with a specific commitment to all the steps necessary to get India's good offices and mediatory role reinstated and political talks to start early.

Mr Ronnie de Mel began the interview with a tribute to Mr. J. N. Dixit, which he wanted to be put on the record: "I am thankful that India had a High Commissioner like Mr. Dixit at this time, a man sincerely dedicated to the cause of a peaceful settlement of our ethnic problem."

N. Ram: Mr. Finance Minister, if I may ask you some questions about the relationship between economic problems and prospects and the ethnic conflict. . . I believe there is an assessment that unemployment, inflation and the debt service ratio do constitute worrying points in the economy (they do in many of our coun-

tries) and this is directly related to the intensification or continuance of what is known here as the 'ethnic conflict'. Could you give us an assessment of this relationship? How do they interact?

Ronnie de Mel: These things certainly interact. The ethnic conflict has increased our defence budget almost twentyfold in nominal terms, from (Sri Lankan) Rs. 500 millions in 1977 to Rs. 10,000 millions this year. Ten thousand million rupees represents almost 25 per cent of our entire domestic Budget — without taking foreign aid into account. (And, as you know, we don't get any foreign aid for defence in Sri Lanka).

Economy hit

Then, this ethnic conflict has had very serious consequences on our tourist industry which has declined by about 80 per cent. It has also slowed down foreign investment. Rice production has declined by about 30 per cent because some of the very productive rice areas are in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Fish production has declined by about 50 per cent because a good proportion of the fishing grounds are off the Northern and Eastern coast. So all this has had a tremendous effect on our economy.

But still we have managed fairly satisfactorily despite these problems. In fact, the whole world is amazed that our economy has still been able to weather these shocks up to a point. This is entirely due to the very prudent economic and financial policies, and the very prudent economic and financial management which we have had since 1977.

Low Inflation

Despite all these difficulties, we still have inflation in single digits — round about 7 per cent

today. It came down to zero in 1985, but has gone up. Production outside the North and East is still fairly good. Tea, rubber and coconut production has increased slightly last year. Rice production outside the North and the East has increased tremendously as a result of the large irrigation and multi-purpose river valley schemes which we undertook. Industrial production, particularly in the private sector, has shown remarkable growth, in fact, the highest growth in private sector industrial production since independence in 1947 was recorded in the two difficult years, 1984 and 1985 — despite these troubles! In 1984, we had a 25 per cent increase in industrial production in the private sector (not in the public sector). In 1985, we had a further 20 per cent increase and in 1986, we have had a 10 per cent increase. All this is, of course, shall we say, effects of the sound work we did between 1977 and 1982.

We are still reaping the benefits of that period, you know. But the ethnic conflict is now beginning to bite shall we say. And we would certainly face higher unemployment and higher inflation if this conflict were to continue like this. We brought down unemployment from 26 per cent of the workforce in 1977, when we came to power, to 12 per cent of the workforce in 1983 — a very big decline, more than half. But it has now gone up to 14 per cent again and, if violence continues and investment declines, it may go up higher.

So, from the economic standpoint, a speedy political solution to our problems is vitally necessary. And I have always, consistently, against all opposition, over the last several years advocated this peaceful political solution.

I also consider that India's good offices will be extremely useful to arrive at a peaceful political solution. Even in the

most difficult days, I have never questioned the sincerity of the Indian Government or Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. I have been the one person who has never, never questioned the sincerity or the motives of the Indian Government and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

I know that the foreign policy of any country is dictated by the enlightened self-interest of that country. But I think, very logically and rationally speaking, the interests of India and the interests of Sri Lanka converge on several matters. If you want to know that... for example, it is in the interest of India to preserve the independence, unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. It is not in the interest of India to have an economically and politically non-viable *Eelam* in the North and East of Sri Lanka. If such an *Eelam* is created, it will be like a dagger pointed at the heart of India — in two ways. One, it will become the happy hunting ground of various superpowers and surrogates of superpowers. Two, it will lead to similar separatist demands in India itself. If a Marxist type of state is created in the North and the East, it may even lead to Marxist expansion in India itself.

Converging Interests

So, from all these points of view, I have always felt that the interests of India and Sri Lanka converge to a great extent on this problem. And we in Sri Lanka should not consider India as having some type of secret, underhand motives in this matter. But we should consider India as our friendly neighbour who has an equal interest in a peaceful solution to this problem — almost as much as we in Sri Lanka. I have approached this in a very logical and rational manner not in an emotional manner at all.

Of course, I know that there is fellow feeling between the Tamils in Tamil Nadu and the

Tamils here; a lot of sympathy. That is natural. Sometimes this sympathy has exceeded the bounds of reason and moderation but I understand the politics of Tamil Nadu also. I understand the pressures that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has, because there is an interaction of all the internal problems of India — in various diverse ways — with the problem in Sri Lanka. But I think with goodwill, sympathy and understanding — which is not lacking in both countries — reasonable men can get together to bring about a peaceful political solution.

People desire peace

I would also say that more than 95 per cent of the people of Sri Lanka, be they Sinhalese, Tamils or Muslims, fervently desire peace. They are tired of this civil war and violence. They want to go back to their homes, cultivate their fields and carry on with their trade or usual occupations without this fighting. Only a few warmongers and chauvinists, probably the arms dealers and others — only a few elements like that — want this war to continue. So I think we should capitalise on this fervent desire for peace and take a more decisive role in bringing about peace.

Just grievances

I have also felt that probably the Tamils have certain just grievances. They may probably feel that in the last 20 years they have been discriminated against — for example in employment. I think it is the duty of the majority community to always search their hearts and try to redress the grievances of the minority communities. There is no other way. There is no point in harking back to historical wrongs, shall we say, which have certainly taken place in colonial times and so on.

And I also believe that any lasting peace must be peace with

(Continued on page 20)

ARMS SCANDAL AND REAGAN'S SECRET "PROJECT"

FOREIGN
NEWS

Joel Brinkley

New York Times Service

WASHINGTON

The Reagan administration's clandestine dealings with Iran and the Nicaraguan rebels grew out of a well-concocted program established in the White House at least four years ago to conduct a variety of covert foreign policy initiatives, according to many present and former government officials.

The program, called Project Democracy, began as the secret side of an otherwise open, well-publicized initiative that was launched under the same name. Project Democracy's covert side was designed to carry out foreign policy tasks that other government agencies were unable or unwilling to pursue, the officials said.

Although the public arm of Project Democracy, now known as the National Endowment for Democracy, openly gave federal money to democratic institutions abroad and received wide, bipartisan support, officials said the project's secret arm took an entirely different direction after Lieutenant Colonel Oliver L. North, then a National Security Council aide, was appointed to head it about three years ago.

By 1986, Project Democracy had become "what Ollie referred to as the umbrella project for supporting things," a well-placed White House official said.

As a result, it now appears that it was President Ronald Reagan's vision of "cultivating" the "fragile flower of democracy," as he first described Project Democracy in a 1982 speech, that

pulled the National Security Council into the business of running secret operations from the White House. It culminated in the present scandal over the sale of arms to Iran and the diversion of profits to the Nicaraguan rebels, known as contras.

Over the last four years, Project Democracy grew into a parallel foreign policy apparatus — complete with its own communications system, secret envoys, leased ships and airplanes, offshore bank accounts and corporations.

It operated outside the established government decision-making process and beyond the purview of Congress, officials said. They added that it was an expression of the Reagan administration's deep frustration that it could not push the foreign policy bureaucracy or Congress to embrace what administration officials described as the "Reagan doctrine" of supporting anti-communist insurgencies around the world.

Congressional investigators studying the Iran-contras affair say they are finding references to Project Democracy scattered throughout the National Security Council documents they have acquired. The special White House panel investigating the council has been questioning witnesses about Project Democracy, according to sources familiar with the commission's work, and has found that it carried out a wide array of secret activities not yet known to the public.

Still, investigators say they do not know the full scope of the activities that were undertaken

under the name of Project Democracy.

Although the project's open and secret parts were linked at their creation in 1982, the two developed on such divergent tracks that now many officials do not remember that they were ever related.

While the National Endowment for Democracy was openly granting federal money to foreign book publishers, labor unions and other institutions last year, under Colonel North the secret side was sending privately raised covert aid to the contras and carrying out a wide range of other activities, including the arms sales to Iran.

All of that was carried out under such tight secrecy that most officials involved with Project Democracy's public side, and even some of Colonel North's colleagues at the National Security Council, said they were unaware of the secret program.

A senior security council officer directly involved with the project's over side said he did not know the program had a secret component.

Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy, also said he did not know the project had a covert side. But if it did, he said, it was a perversion of the project's original concept.

Much of the early debate over Project Democracy in 1982 centered on the concern that it would

(Continued on page 17)

The Strange Effects of White House Life

John S. D. Eisenhower

WESTCHESTER, Pennsylvania

It is next to impossible, given what we know, to conjecture intelligently whether or not President Reagan could have remained ignorant while White House staff members took liberties regarding arms to Iran and siphoning the proceeds to the contras. But it seems to me that the president could very well have been kept in the dark by staff members who believed they were doing the right thing. For we should not overlook the unpleasant fact that the White House does strange things to people.

My own observations as a junior member of the White House staff in the administrations of my father, Dwight D. Eisenhower, may well be out of date. The atmosphere has changed a great deal. But the conditions are still there: a busy president who cannot keep track of every detail. The difference between then and now, of course, lies in the definition of the word "detail."

But how could people — if they did — so exceed their authority? The answer, is an excessive feeling of security on the part of both the president and his staff — something the White House and the governmental structure provide.

Americans have built their president into a sort of demigod. In drawing up the constitution, the Founding Fathers gave executive power to the president but, by the separation of powers, insulated him from the rough

and tumble of legislative politics. Take the difference between the British and American views of their chief executives. When Churchill, during World War II, dreaded facing Parliament, he knew what he was in for: irate MPs shouting at him from all directions. President Roosevelt, by contrast, could report to the people by radio from the comfort of the White House. Thus, a president today can communicate with the public at his own convenience, under circumstances of his own choosing.

That in itself would be enough to create an exaggerated sense of security in a president so inclined. But that circumstance is multiplied by the physical

atmosphere in which he and his staff operate.

The president lives and breathes behind great white columns, guarded by hordes of Secret Servicemen and police officers. When he attends official functions, he pauses grandly at the entrance, as the Marine Band bursts out with the pompous "Hail to the Chief." Lifelong friends no longer call him by his name: It is always "Mr. President."

My father had been familiar with presidents long before he entered the White House. He literally had walked with kings as supreme commander both in World War II and in the formative years of the North At-



'Here's the deal — you're just a dummy who never knows what's going on or what you're talking about.'

The writer is completing a book on the Mexican-American War of 1846 to 1848. He contributed this comment to The New Times.

lantic Treaty Organization. Yet even he was touched when men of distinction thanked him, with tears in their eyes, for being asked as guests to the White House.

The presidency takes over an individual's being. So much so that a former president is rarely able to look at any viewpoint but his own. He has put so much of himself in every decision he has made, based on what he believed was the best information available, that he becomes impatient, scoffing at the thought that he could have been wrong. It seems that the longer a president is in office, the more headstrong he becomes. If in office long enough, he may approach the omnipotent — in his own mind.

That condition would not be so serious were it not for the fact that the hubris spreads like a disease to the president's associates, both family and staff. The trend seems to be for staff officers to consider themselves powers in their own right.

The staff sometimes takes the president more seriously than does the Great Man himself. One of my most vivid memories of the Eisenhower era actually occurred after its end. My father left the White House in January 1961 with few regrets, secure in the respect of the

of the people and glad to pass on the heavy responsibilities he had carried.

But then during the first few months of the youthful and attractive John F. Kennedy's term, the press and public exuberantly scorned the past. Some delighted in ridiculing "Ike". He did not enjoy this treatment. Who would? But his chagrin was trivial compared to the anguish of his erstwhile administration members who had toiled so hard to serve him.

And we were a selfless staff compared to those who followed us. Before the Kennedy administration, the White House staff consisted, in the Roosevelt phrase, of men with a "passion for anonymity" — no Schlesingers, Bundys or Kissingers.

But loyalty was high; few staff members harbored their own personal agendas. But even then, we may have done a disservice to the boss by being too loyal. For we believed that the critics outside the hallowed walls were either prejudiced or uninformed, sometimes both. We generally assumed that the press was hostile or the public too jumpy. We provided little by way of devil's advocates.

Even worse than our complacency was an occasional temptation to try to "manage" the president, to minimize the im-

portance of irritations (not major, of course), even to keep some of them from him.

President Eisenhower himself was sensitive to this temptation and he did not like it. I can still hear him roaring with barracks blasphemy at any hint that someone was trying to protect, as he put it, "my dainty little ears." We were seldom successful in shielding the boss. But sometimes someone would try.

So, frankly, I can believe that outlandish things could have been done without President Reagan's knowledge. I have no opinion about whether or not they actually occurred. But the potential is there for any president who gives his staff encouragement. Anything can happen in the White House — because it does strange things to people.

Iran-Contra...

(Continued from page 15)

be used as a vehicle for covert activities. Congress agreed to fund it late in 1983 only after William J. Casey, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, promised that his agency would not be involved. As it turned out, the agency did not run the project because officials had decided to run the covert side from the National Security Council.

Officials said the Tower commission, set up to investigate the National Security Council, has been unable to prove that Mr. Reagan directly authorized the secret activities carried out under the project.

But in August 1985, when The New York Times first disclosed that Colonel North had been heavily involved in aiding the contras under the program, the White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, issued this statement.

"The president was fully aware of the extent of the relationship between NSC members and members of the democratic resistance group, and he has been aware of it all along."

STAR AND SLING

*He, the Kings go riding by
In their champagne jets and helipets
To their power games over lunch
On Fort sidewalks, steel railed with Aid
For Big guns with nostalgic sighs
Ah Paris. Peanuts for lunch we crunch
And jackboots hear as sentries clear
Venerable gunmen at low gear
Jerusalem their wailing waltz,
Confused hacks, we stand and stare
As tyco hoodlums raise a cheer
In just one decade, Lebanon's here.*

— U. Karunatilake

The Ugly Side of Third World Tourism

Wayne Ellwood

Two decades ago international tourism seemed an easy route to development for many Third World countries. But times have changed. Critics now charge that pouring resources into a tourist industry may actually do more harm than good in the long run.

PENANG, Malaysia

This once famous resort island on the west coast of Malaysia is feeling the pinch of recession. Postcard perfect Batu Ferringhi beach is choked with new luxury hotels, but the tourists they were built to accommodate are thin on the ground. Many hotels are half empty and the biggest of the luxury giants have been forced to slash prices to attract local customers as foreigners stay at home.

Malaysia's government-run Tourist Development Corporation (TDC) means that occupancy rates may plunge to 29 per cent by 1986 when 20 new hotels are scheduled to open.

The tourist industry's influence on the island is evident as you drive along the winding coastal road. Lorries filled with rock and dirt from the new hotel excavation sites careen crazily around hair-pin curves. Huge tourist complexes are being carved from jungleclad hillsides. Prominent is the 'Pantai Miami' (Miami Beach), a vast hotel-condominium development fronting a narrow stretch of refuse-strewn beach.

Meanwhile, the island's biggest urban centre, Georgetown, is beginning to look a bit frayed at the edges. Sidewalk paving

Wayne Ellwood is co-editor of the New Internationalist a British-based magazine focussing on global development issues.

stones are broken and frequently missing, making a walk around the city core an exercise in terror. The public transport system is totally inadequate. And sewage treatment is basic — most of it flows directly into the sea.

This skewed allocation of resources has not gone unnoticed. In Malaysia, Asia's largest consumer organization, the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP), has criticized the tourist industry as a sponge soaking up scarce investment dollars which could be better used elsewhere. A recent CAP report, *See the Third World While It Lasts*, investigates the social and environmental impact of tourism in Malaysia. The study blasts multi-million dollar tourist projects as a 'wasteful use of local resources.'

'Because tourists can afford to pay more,' the report notes, 'they get better public utilities, transport, shelter and recreational facilities than the majority of the local population.'

Governments also compound the problem by courting private investors with a tempting array of incentives — tax holidays, bonuses and joint ventures. It is common in many developing countries to see plush gilt and marble hotels cheek-by-jowl with clapboard shanty towns lacking electricity, clean water and basic sanitation.

The stark contrast is causing CAP and others to re-evaluate

the economic promises of tourism. A few decades ago the recipe seemed simple. Take a few miles of glistening white beach (preferably lined with swaying palms), add a healthy measure of sun and heat, a sprinkling of exotic local natives and there you have it. The beginning of a tourist industry.

In the early 1970s many Third World nations were attracted by this vision of wealth — here was a development strategy that seemed to combine minimum investment with maximum benefit. The Bahamas, Jamaica, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Kenya, Morocco: one by one they threw in their lot with the tourist industry. Partly it was an attempt to escape the dependency on primary resources which had been built up during the colonial period. But mostly it was seen as a quick boost for modern development.

At first it seemed to work. Thousands of pink-fleshed, winter-weary Westerners flocked to the Third World to frolic in warm southern seas and brown their bodies in the tropical sun. What could be easier — or more profitable?

Now, nearly two decades later the dream has lost much of its appeal. Not that the tourists have packed up their Nikons and bikinis and headed for home. Far from it. In fact the number of international travellers continues to grow yearly. The most recent data from the World Tourist Organization (WTO) shows nearly 286 million tourist arrivals in 1983 alone. Nearly 17 per cent of all international tourists made their way to the Third World, a proportion which has doubled over the last decade.

Despite the overall increase in number many UN agencies and non-government organizations like CAP are beginning to question tourism as a short cut to development.

If all it took was the bounty of nature, then things might be different. Tourists want unsullied natural beauty. But they also want swimming pools, discotheques, steaks and, increasingly, sex. Often these extras have to be imported along with the tourists themselves. And they have to be paid for with hard foreign currency. Economists call these financial outflows 'leakages'. But in some cases they are more like floods.

The Bangkok-based UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) said recently that the contribution of tourism to development was greatly exaggerated. Few countries, the agency warns, bother to calculate net foreign exchange earnings. They take into account only the currency left behind by free-spending visitors, while ignoring the money that flows out to pay for imports to feed the industry. And that includes profits patrolled by foreign-owned hotel chains.

A study by UNESCO, the UN agency which has recently come under sharp attack by the United States, shows the Third World hotel business is mostly in the hands of Western and Japanese multinational corporations. Twelve huge hotel chains control nearly a million hotel rooms in 5,000 hotels. And multinationals also control some 80 per cent of the organized travel and package tour business.

Even the solidly free enterprise International Monetary Fund (IMF) has published figures showing developing countries running a negative balance of payments on the tourist account. Recent IMF tables show Indonesia with a \$160 million tourism deficit in 1980, while neighbouring Malaysia was \$186 million in the red.

Other studies confirm the trend. The Canadian-based International

Development Research Centre (IDRC) found 'leakages' between 25 and 45 per cent of total tourist expenditure in four Caribbean islands — Aruba, St. Lucia, Antigua and the U. S. Virgin Islands. Most of the loss was the result of imported goods, repayment of foreign loans, repatriated profits and management fees.

And the loss is not just limited to the Third World. According to the UNESCO study, Western members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) spent \$4 billion more on tourism than they earned in 1980.

Economics aside, there is also growing concern about the social and environmental damage that can result from an open door policy towards foreign tourism.

The unplanned and chaotic growth of the tourist industry is already threatening marine resources in some Asian countries. In Sri Lanka the tourist coastal strip has grown so quickly in the last decade that the seas have become badly contaminated by human and industrial waste. The pollution poses a threat to the health of tourists and local residents. And small fishermen are forced to go farther out to sea as fish catches decrease in the polluted in-shore waters.

Critics are also agitated about cultural pollution and Western, consumer values which the tourist industry embodies. It's not only temples, monuments, beaches and mountains that make it to the tourist agenda. It's also people.

In Bali, Indonesia, foreigners can now find tour operators who will take them to see a 'genuine' Bali funeral cremation. And on the Malaysian island of Sarawak, villagers complain of squads of tourists loaded with cameras strolling through traditional longhouses clicking away as if the villagers were wax figures in a museum display. According to one angry native, they walk into the longhouse, sit on the verandah, peep into our bedrooms or kit-

chen and even into our "kufit kuyu" (rice storage).

Like the beaches, the hotels and the temples Third World people also become objects to be consumed by the tourist. Many tourists, in fact assume they've bought the right to take photographs along with the price of their ticket.

Reality is not what they experience around them but what they can capture to take back home. Sometimes the local surroundings can even be an inconvenience. Europeans on a 'Club Med' holiday half way around the world want to escape the worries and problems of daily life. Show them some fire-eating, some wild native dancing or some ersatz handicraft. But don't interrupt the reverie by talking about the living standards of the local population. That's not part of the fantasy, that's what they're trying to avoid.

This totally artificial setting reaches its pinnacle in the 'five star' international hotel. With its obvious glamour and wealth, free flowing food and drink and mood of privileged languor, the luxury tourist hotel is a caricature of Western consumer culture.

But the fact that it is a fantasy is known only to the tourist. To the local villagers, it conforms to the clichéd media image of pampered Westerners.

According to UNESCO such pockets of glamour in poor, rural areas of the Third World are doubly dangerous. For one thing, these luxury hotels provide a model of prosperity which is totally inappropriate to local conditions. Villagers begin to ape the tourists and traditional activities and beliefs seem old fashioned, even ridiculous. The lure of cash employment draws the young into a variety of service jobs: waiters, cooks, chamber maids and gardeners. And in their wake come the beachboys, beggars, handicraft hawkers, whores and pimps. Fewer local youths are willing to work farming or fishing. As

economic dependency on the tourist dollar increases the community begins to lose its sense of identity and the slow process of cultural disintegration begins.

But tourism isn't really fair to the tourist either. The poor in developing countries get a one-dimensional view of Western culture. For two or three weeks a year tourists leave their real lives behind and cut themselves adrift to enter a free-floating fantasy devoid of normal daily responsibilities.

Both sides end up with a completely distorted view of the other. So that rather than increasing understanding between different people, international tourism often widens the gap.

In the 1980s, tourism has also come under fire for selling sex. In Asian countries like Thailand and the Philippines, cheap, fast sex has become a magnet for Asian, Arab and European men.

The UN says there are nearly 500,000 prostitutes in Thailand. Sex shows and Thai 'body massages' are now as common as a visit to the Emerald Buddha or the Royal Palace in Bangkok. Some European tour dealers offer guaranteed sex along with the price of the ticket.

Most of the prostitutes, including young boys and girls, are drawn to the trade by poverty. In Thailand they travel to Bangkok, Haadyai and Pattaya from the poverty-stricken northeast to sell their bodies to Malaysian, Japanese and German men.

Women's groups all over Asia have denounced sex tourism as the ultimate exploitation of women, turning sexual favours of Asian women into another consumer item on the tourist shopping list. Meanwhile, prostitution has become such big business on many Asian tourist routes that governments simply turn a blind eye to the growing chorus of opposition.

Perhaps more distressing for countries that pin their hopes on the tourist trade is that tourists are a fickle bunch. They tend to travel widely and spend most freely when the global economy is booming — which seems to be happening with decreasing frequency. Not very secure ground on which to base economic growth.

The other annoying problem is that holiday spots go in and out of fashion. So that just when you've invested millions in a posh, seaside resort and all the 'infrastructure' that goes with it (electricity, roads, water, airport and port facilities) packaged sun'n surf holidays are no longer in vogue.

In fact one of these shifts is taking place right now. According to UNESCO researcher Tony Ascher 'going native' is the new fashion with holidays in Indian reservations and isolated tribal villages all the rage. Tourists are also beginning to focus on specific activities with special holidays organized for theatre lovers, opera fans, tennis buffs or wine drinkers. All in all, not good news for those developing nations trying to market their pristine beaches and limpid azure seas.

But does that mean Third World countries should give up on tourism altogether? Not very likely — not given the amount they've already sunk into the industry. However, developing countries would be wise not to put all their eggs in one basket. Tourism is obviously no short cut to development.

Says researcher Evelyn Hong of the Consumers' Association of Penang, 'Tourism doesn't have to be a disaster for the developing world. But the kind of tourism we choose to develop has a major impact on our own quality of life. It has to be planned carefully and its benefits shared equally.'

— *Third World Network Features*

Effects of . . .

(Continued from page 14)

honour for both sides. One cannot have any lasting peace with honour only for one side.

N. Ram: Mr. Finance Minister, if things go well in the coming period... you know that there has been a deterioration in the overall situation and many of us were worried it would lead to, shall I say, unnecessary things. But if things go right and substantive talks are resumed within a very reasonable or rational framework, involving the main players on both sides or all sides, there is one thing that is not normally talked about I don't mean to ask you at this time for the details, but could you indicate broadly what could lie ahead by way of financing arrangements and economic development for the people of the afflicted areas, the North and the East, on the basis of a political solution?

Reconstruction effort

Mr. Ronnie de Mel: I am glad to inform you that I have already made arrangements with the countries that normally give development assistance to Sri Lanka to have a Special Aid Group meeting under the auspices of the World Bank to evolve a special programme for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of all the areas affected by this ethnic violence. In fact, I made these arrangements more than one year ago when there was a prospect of peace. I am confident that several countries will come forward to give immediate assistance to Sri Lanka for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected areas as soon as peace returns. In fact, as soon as we have peace, I will summon a Special Aid Group meeting for this purpose. Because I also believe that the causes of ethnic violence are not only 'racial' or political, but very often much more deep-seated — socio-economic grievances which have to be redressed.

(Courtesy : HINDU)

Capital and Peasant Production — A Review

S. Sathananthan

I. INTRODUCTION

'Capital and Peasant Production' is a collection of essays on agrarian structure in Sri Lanka and they provide a wealth of data on diverse aspects of structural change. Unlike 'Village Studies' which adopt a static and, therefore, a sterile 'before and after' approach, these essays have sought to grasp the political economy of change. The present review will focus on the question of how the central theme of these essays has been treated.

In his introduction, Newton Gunasinghe explained that the essays 'take a specific theoretical orientation; they are all located in the problematic of the continued prevalence of small peasant production'. They, he said, raise the question of the non-transformation of the peasant economy and discuss and analyse the 'structure that lead to the preservation rather than dissolution of small peasant production in Sri Lanka' (p.vii).

(a) Perspective of structural change

The dominant academic opinion in Sri Lanka has believed that small peasant production has undergone disintegration/dissolution primarily due to the establishment and expansion first of tea and later of rubber plantations. The extension of plantations is said to have (1) displaced many peasant and (2) denied additional land for the growing village population, both of which increased the man/land ratio and led to acute fragmentation of remaining village land and, consequently, to widespread and increasing poverty among

villagers; and money-lenders in particular are said to have taken advantage of impoverishment of peasants to purchase their land. It is generally agreed that the final result of these processes is a 'landless' population.

In contrast, those who advanced the conservation/preservation perspective have argued that plantation and peasant production rarely coincided spatially and, therefore, that plantation production did not lead directly to a significant displacement of peasant producers. This implies that it would be difficult to prove that the expansion of plantation is the principal cause of an increase in man/land ratio. In addition, when 'landless' villagers did emerge due to, for example, distress sale of land or demographic growth, the colonial State is said to have intervened with legislations and programmes to resettle a majority of them on new land.

The disintegration/dissolution perspective supports its position by reference to an emergence of a 'landless' population of considerable proportions in regions of the island where plantations were established. In contrast, the conservation/preservation perspective argues that there is little concrete evidence either to link the establishment of plantations to an emergence of 'landlessness' or to prove a steady growth in the size of a 'landless' population.

Both these perspectives belong within the neo-classical school; because they attempted to prove or disprove that the quantitative growth of a 'landless' population was a consequence of the physical displacement of peasants by the geographical expansion of plantations.

The book is edited by Charles Abaysekere, and published by the Social Scientists Association, Colombo.

The objective of this exercise in statistics remains unclear. It appears that those who support the proposition that a 'landless' population has existed and that its rate of increase has been greater than the rate of demographic expansion argue from a 'nationalistic' position; namely that colonial plantation production has exerted on the whole a negative influence upon village agriculture. In contrast, those who oppose this proposition appear to begin from an 'economic' position and defend the long-held belief, which was first expressed by Governor Gregory in the early 1870s,¹ that plantation production has been the 'engine' of development in Sri Lanka.

What is surprising is that many 'left-oriented' scholars, who invariably claim allegiance to the materialist school, have adopted this debate between the two neo-classical perspectives as their own platform. These scholars seem to have viewed the emergence of a 'landless' population, due to the spread of plantations, to be synonymous with the birth of a class of propertyless workers, due to the penetration of a commodity. This would indicate that these 'left-oriented' scholars appear to have confused the mechanical process of deprivation of land with the dialectical process of dispossession of means of production; and this confusion has been aggravated by their tendency to use the existence of workers, who do not own/control land, as proof that proletarianization had occurred, which is a circular argument.

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Instead what is required is to establish that historically-derived conditions which impel proletarianization have existed from which it follows that proletarianization could have occurred. This conclusion must then be validated with empirical data which show that class differentiation has taken place.

(b) Proletarianization and the development of capitalism

The capitalist mode of production (CMP) was described as 'the appropriation by individuals of the product of social labour organised by commodity economy'.⁴ The CMP begins to unfold with the coming into being of a commodity economy and, under conditions of generalised commodity production, the development of capitalist production in agriculture proceeds through proletarianization.

Capitalism could develop when, for example money rent replaces rent in kind which indicates that bourgeois methods of exploitation are replacing feudal methods. The existence of money rent permits the transformation of bourgeois landlords into capitalist farmers as money rent is progressively replaced by wages, which process also converts tenants into a class of wage labourers. Lenin named this process as the 'Prussian path'⁵ of development of capitalism. Alternatively, capitalism could develop along the 'American path'⁶ when simple commodity producers undergo class differentiation, which is characterised by the dispossession of many direct producers of their means of production whilst a minority of more successful producers accumulate means of production. The end product of this dialectical process is the emergence of two distinct classes of capitalist farmers and agricultural workers.

These two paths of development of capitalism are, of course, not the only models. For example, the landlord-capitalist tenant-wage labourer mode which Marx observed in England is

a variation which includes attributes of both 'Prussian' and 'American' paths. Moreover in his 'Agrarian Question', Kautsky showed that the development of capitalism in agriculture could take complex, contradictory and disguised paths. In particular, proletarianization in agriculture is not necessarily associated, directly and visibly, with a concentration of ownership of land and a physical separation of direct producers from means of production. Instead, proletarianization is characterised more by a change of control over means of production

In addition, the State may intervene to modify the development of capitalism by, for example, shifting the economy from the slower 'Prussian path' to the quicker 'American path' through land reforms: the prohibition of absentee landlordism in Denmark is a case in point.

Moreover, in neo-colonies, underdevelopment of capitalism is evident in a distortion of class differentiation which gave rise to capitalist relations of production often cloaked in pre-capitalist forms.

It is not the intention here to discuss the various paths of development/underdevelopment of capitalism in agriculture.⁸ Nevertheless, it is argued here that proletarianization has little to do with a mere mechanical loss of control over the means of production by direct producers. On the contrary, proletarianization⁹ refers to a dialectical process of class differentiation which, **under conditions of generalised commodity production**, simultaneously gives rise to an agrarian proletariat as well as an agrarian bourgeoisie.

Lastly, it needs to be emphasised that proletarianization or its distorted form occurs only **within** a CMP and influences the development of capitalist production. Therefore, the fact that 'the degree to which the commodity form of labour is developed is an indication of the degree to which capitalism is developed'¹⁰ does not imply

that the lack of free wage labour indicates the absence of a CMP. The growth of commodity form of labour power indicates the evolution of simple commodity production into capitalist production, the former and latter being the lowest and highest forms of commodity production respectively **within** the CMP.

(c) Imperialism and underdevelopment

(i) Foreign capital and social differentiation

Colonial conquest was followed by a dismantling of the then existing State apparatus in the colony and by its replacement with a colonial State. Foreign capital created the colonial State in order, firstly, to consolidate political power in its hands through a control of the new State and secondly, to utilise the colonial State to ensure those conditions which are necessary for its own capital accumulation.

Consolidation of political power also warranted the repression/elimination of patriotic elements in the colony whilst a comprador stratum was deliberately created out of pliant elements of the aristocracy to serve as client intermediaries between the colonial State and the conquered population. To produce an economic surplus, foreign capital utilised the colonial State to acquire control over means of production (e.g. through expropriation of land) and to secure a regular supply of labour.

In order to **create** a pool of labourers, the colonial State often resorted to measures which were designed to force villagers into wage labour; for example labour tax was converted to money tax, the payment of which would necessitate the taking up of wage employment. When such indirect methods failed to generate a sufficient supply of labour, labour was conscripted; and when labour was not available locally, it was 'imported' from foreign lands.

Thus, the comprador stratum which served the colonial State

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Books

Sri Lanka — Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy. S. J. TAMBIAH. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. 184 pp., tables, appendixes, notes, index. \$17.95 (cloth).

MYRON WEINER
Massachusetts Institute
of Technology

The two major adversaries in Sri Lanka's violent ethnic conflict are of migrant origin. The Sinhalese claim to have migrated from northern India in the fifth century B. C. and the Tamils from south India in the beginning of the Christian era. Both the Tamils and the Sinhalese regard Sri Lanka as their homeland but a large part of the Sinhalese community — most especially Sinhalese Buddhist monks, many Sinhalese intellectuals, and much of the Sinhalese leadership in the two major political parties — regard themselves as having a prior and exclusive claim to the island. This claim is enshrined in the doctrine of *bhumi-putra* (Sanskrit for "sons of the soil") under which the Sinhalese regard themselves as the indigenous people with rights and privileges and claims for benefits not given to other citizens of the country. This doctrine was used by Sinhalese political leaders to justify legislation making Sinhalese the exclusive official language of the country though the Sri Lankan Tamils constitute nearly 13 percent of the population, Indian Tamil estate laborers who migrated to the country in the 19th century another 5.6 percent, and the largely Tamil-speaking Muslims 7.4 percent). The 1972 Constitution also decrees that "it shall be the duty of the state to protect and foster Buddhism," the religion of the Sinhalese. And there are various "affirmative action" policies that

give Sinhalese preference in admission into universities and government employment. The result of these policies, with their implied notion of two classes of citizens, has been an acute backlash on the part of the Tamils, first from moderates who sought the end of discriminatory legislation and the establishment of a federal system that would ensure greater equality for the predominantly Tamil-populated areas, and then from more radical Tamils who demanded secession and the creation of an independent Tamil Eelam. Neither demand has been accepted by the present government of Sri Lanka, headed by President J. R. Jayawardene and the conservative United National Party, or by the even more Sinhalese-oriented left-of-center Sri Lanka Freedom Party led by former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The result is a violent conflict between terrorist Tamil militants and a repressive Sinhalese military backed by Sinhalese militants, and the isolation of the moderates in both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities.

Professor Stanley Tambiah of Harvard University, a distinguished social anthropologist known primarily for his studies of Buddhism and kingship in Thailand, and a Sri Lankan Tamil by origin, has written a lively, passionate but rigorous analysis of the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict. Professor Tambiah is concerned with the entire range of determinants of the conflict, including economic and demographic factors, misguided government policies, and the personal ambitions of political leaders seeking popular electoral support, but the most interesting parts of his book deal with the mythologies of the Sinhalese. His central thesis is that there is now "a formulaic Buddhism which says

that to be a Sinhalese is to be automatically a Buddhist and an Aryan, and to be Buddhist is to be able to make a total claim — territorially and politically — over Sri Lanka" (p. 58). This claim rests upon a revival of an ideology set out in the fifth century A. D. *Mahavamsa* chronicle by Buddhist monks; it is found in the popular cult of the god Kataragama (or Skanda) as a kind of national deity, and the transformation of Buddhism from a personal religion to a political religion. Tambiah traces what he calls the "myth-history" of the Sinhalese to sanctify the revivalist exclusivist claims of Sinhalese nationalists and to justify their rejection of the Tamils as historic enemies of the Sinhalese.

Tambiah remains ambivalent as to whether the struggle between the Tamils and Sinhalese is predominantly a matter of religion or language. The revivalist mythohistory, he notes, rests upon a Sinhalese-Buddhist ideology. Seen from this perspective, Sinhalese militancy can be compared with the religious revivalism of Shiism in Iran, Islam in the Arab world and in South and Southeast Asia, Sikhism in India's Punjab, and orthodox Judaism in Israel. But Tambiah chooses not to pursue this comparison. Instead he takes the position that "although the Sinhalese conception of nationalism critically related Buddhism to the polity, and although this formula has been taken by the Tamils as evidence of the 'intolerant militancy' of Sinhalese political religious claims, language has nevertheless been a more important issue than religion in the Sinhalese-Tamil conflicts" (p. 73). Tambiah's ambivalence mirrors the

ambiguities over group identity within the Sinhalese community, but it also reflects the present theoretical confusion over the relationship between language and religion in the dynamics of group identity. If in Sri Lanka language is more salient than religion, it is because it is the more inclusive basis for group identity, bringing together secular modernists and religious revivalists even as religion provides both an historic and moral basis for Sinhalese claims. Similarly for the Tamils religious identity would be divisive, since the Tamils are Hindu, Christian, and Muslim, though it should be noted that the Tamil separatists, their emphasis on linguistic identity notwithstanding, have thus far failed to win support from among Tamil Muslims or among the largely low-caste Indian Tamils working in the tea plantations.

Tambiah argues that the ethnic conflict has not only resulted in the "dismantling" (too strong a word in my judgment for a country that still has an elected parliament, in spite of the many restrictions now placed on dissent) of Sri Lanka's democratic system, but that its dismantling is making a resolution of the ethnic conflict more difficult. In his prescriptive conclusion Tambiah calls for the restoration of the rule of law (and the repeal of the repressive Prevention of Terrorism Act), the recognition by the Sinhalese that Sri Lanka is a plural society, renunciation by the Tamils of both terrorism and separatism, and some form of political devolution for the Tamils. His is the traditional (but still sensible!) liberal formula for the resolution of ethnic group conflict. Alas, in Sri Lanka as in so many other Third World countries, the urge for ethnic hegemony has, so far, superseded the goals of both genuine national integration and of political democracy; only when the one is put aside will the other goals be possible.

Capital and...

(Continued from page 22)

and the labour force employed principally by foreign capital were not the products of a single dialectical process of class differentiation and, therefore, they did not constitute antagonistic classes. Instead, they were the result of social differentiation and they co-existed on the basis of a **gradational** relationship of power within the national social formation. The debate between the neo-classical perspectives of dissolution/disintegration and conservation/preservation is essentially concerned with whether or not a displacement of villagers was integral to social processes which gave rise to this gradational structure.

(ii) Commodity economy and proletarianization

Proletarianization, on the other hand, refers to the emergence of antagonistic social classes due to the operation of social forces which have their origin within the national social formation. A materialist analysis of class differentiation under conditions of imperialism must begin with an assessment of the role of foreign capital in creating the pre-conditions for proletarianization; namely, the growth of a commodity economy.

The more important changes effected by foreign capital, in order to facilitate its own capital accumulation, were to expand the commodity economy and to accelerate the establishment of a corresponding juridical framework for private accumulation. In Sri Lanka, these changes were first initiated not under British rule but, instead, by the Portuguese colonial State.

Monetization of rent in lands under food crops was the beginning of the conversion of land from an object of possession into a commodity, and increases in land dues forced sales of land to meet the taxes due. This initiated a process of class differentiation and led to the emergence of 'a small but growing class of landless peasants'¹¹ in

lands under 'cash crops' in the Wet Zone and the disposal of land by members of the cinnamon peeler caste so damaged the cinnamon industry that such sale was declared illegal.¹² In this manner, a rudimentary notion of 'protected' tenure was introduced to arrest class differentiation to preserve the union between direct producers and their means of production in the cinnamon industry; which enabled them to continue with cultivation and thereby ensured supplies to Portuguese trading capital and revenues for the colonial State.

(To be continued)

Notes

1. The opinions expressed and conclusions reached in this paper are those of the author and they do not necessarily represent the views of the Marga Institute.
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11. de Silva, C. R. 1972. *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*. Colombo: H. W. Cave and Co., p. 56, 223-24.
12. Pieris, P. E. 1914. *Ceylon: The Portuguese Era*, Vol II. Colombo: The Colombo Apothecaries Co., p. 64.



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