

LANKA

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SUSIL SIRIWARDENA ON "THE CRISIS"

PLANTATIONS

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Tea Estates – *P. Muthulingam***

★ **The only way out
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**Understanding the JVP's Rise
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**The Indian Polls and Tigers
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TRENDS & LETTERS

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UNIVERSITIES: TO RE-OPEN?

Mr Hameed, the Higher Education Minister, told parliament that he proposed to re-open the universities, closed now for two years, in the second half of January. Only the final year students will be taken first, then the others in staggered batches up to April.

Meanwhile, 140,880 candidates are now sitting the GCE Advanced Level examination which is the qualifying test for university entrance, at 875 centres islandwide. Among them are 176 suspected anti-government activists now held in detention.

Those who qualify will have to await their turn. Ten thousand who qualified in 87-88 and 88-89 will have to be admitted first. And of those already in and awaiting the re-opening of the universities, 221 are missing according to the committee monitoring the arrests of university students.

A committee probing student unrest was told by the Mayor of Kandy, Mr Tilak Ratnayake that among the causes of student unrest were: the caste system, economic factors, and unemployment after the completion of university education.

TO GO DEMOCRATIC

The LTTE is shopping for a headquarters in Colombo, to set up a political party and "go

democratic". They are looking for a large house in a residential area. The Tigers have asked for recognition from the Commissioner of Elections.

Meanwhile the EPRLF, arch rival of the Tigers, has told the Government that any attempt to "co-ordinate tactics" with the LTTE will endanger the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. North-East Provincial Council Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal has also told President Premadasa in a letter: "The latest LTTE STF combined attacks on the CVF camps in Thirukkuvil and Thambiluvil are politically suicidal acts on the part of all who do not understand the organic link between national unity and self-determination of national minorities".

And in a letter to foreign missions in Colombo, the EPRLF has said that a reversal by the Sri Lanka government to a pre-Indo Lanka accord position would endanger peace and security in and around the country. The letter urges the missions to advise their governments to persuade the Sri Lanka government to desist from such a course. The EPRLF has said that they laid down arms after the signing of the accord because they were told by both Sri Lanka and India that a viable alternative to Eelam would be provided in the form of a provincial council with at least a minimum of the powers enjoyed by a linguistic state in India.

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Rodney Jonklass

On my return to Colombo recently, I was deeply grieved to learn of the death of Rodney Jonklass. He was my oldest Sri Lankan friend — I met him exactly thirty-five years ago this month, when I first set foot in the island, on my way to the Great Barrier Reef of Australia. He was introduced to me by another remarkable character, the late Major Raven-Hart, who took me to the Dahi-wela Zoo, where Rodney was then Assistant Director.

His sudden death was a great shock, because although I knew he had been ill, the very last letter I received from him said that he was recovering and now felt "a new man".

He accompanied Mike Wilson and myself on most of our early underwater expeditions, culminating in our 1963 visit to the Great Basses Reef, as recorded in *The Treasure of the Great Reef an Indian Ocean Adventure*.

In the late 1950s, he was the star of our first underwater documentary, "Beneath the Seas of Ceylon", which Mike Wilson made for the Tea Propaganda Board and the Ceylon Tourist Bureau. I was glad to see it telecast on Rupavahini in a memorial tribute to Rodney last month.

Even now I cannot believe that he is gone: I still have to stop myself collecting news items that I know would amuse him. . . .

With his passing, Sri Lanka loses someone with a unique knowledge of its flora and fauna, as well as a person of remarkable artistic, literary and musical talents.

The Seas of Ceylon will not be the same without him.

Arthur C Clarke

Colombo 7.

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An Uneasy Passage to India

Mervyn de Silva

They have changed guards at the Viceroy's Palace but are they 'singing' the same tune? Foreign Minister Ranjuna Wijerathne, returned to Colombo after three days of talks in Delhi including a meeting with Prime Minister V. P. Singh. A member of his delegation who did not wish to be identified, summed up the Sri Lankan response as "not overjoyed but not unhappy either". Officially, the visit was described as a "goodwill mission." The composition of the Foreign Minister's delegation suggested otherwise.

Besides Foreign Secretary Bernard Tilakaratne, who had a long spell as High Commissioner in Delhi before becoming the first career diplomat to assume the Foreign Secretary's post, there was Lt. General Sepala Attigala, the Defence Secretary, and Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, the President's special advisor on international relations. Plainly, the defence issue, specifically the IPKF, was as important as the purely diplomatic. After all, Mr. Wijerathne is also the Minister of State for Defence. The word "goodwill" nonetheless was not 'pro forma'.

Prime Minister V. P. Singh had said that controlling inflation, and improving relations with Sri Lanka and Nepal would be his immediate priorities. President Premadasa was quick to spot the diplomatic opening. His telephone call to Mr. V. P. Singh brought the invitation Mr. Premadasa had expected. And the meetings in Delhi were regarded by the Sri Lankans as "extremely cordial".

"Substance" is another matter. The Sri Lankan delegation would have been smiling all the way to the airport if Mr. V. P. Singh or

Mr. I. K. Gujral had publicly reconfirmed December 31st as the final deadline for the IPKF's total withdrawal. The Sri Lankan government, from President Premadasa downwards, publicly claim that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi had committed his government to this date.

But it has always been argued however that Mr. Gandhi's deadline was flexible, perhaps even conditional. And many diplomats in Colombo who have access to the reports of colleagues in their much bigger embassies in Delhi explain "flexibility" in terms of Mr. Gandhi's electoral considerations (Tamil Nadu in particular) and the logistical problems which the IPKF faced. The latter was known here, or possibly known only, to the Indian High Command. Even Mr. Ranjuna Wijerathne confessed in parliament that he did not know how many Indian troops were on Sri Lankan soil on any given date. A popular Sri Lankan guess was about 95,000.

The pullout was "conditional" because India had to be fully satisfied that the "security of all communities in the north and east was guaranteed" before the final pullout. In the course of his election campaign in Tamil Nadu Mr. Gandhi spoke of "the security of the Tamils". There's the rub.

The devolution of power, including law-and-order responsibilities, to a semi-autonomous north east provincial council, was the essence of the 1987 India-Sri Lanka "peace accord" in terms of "Tamil national rights". The North-east merger however was temporary since in the east the Tamils, the largest community, are not in a majority. The Muslims, Tamil-speaking, consti-

tute a third of the population, with the Sinhalese 25%. A Referendum would be held after one year in the east to decide the fate of the merger. Understandably, the Tamil and the Indian emphasis falls on these provisions of the accord. President Jayewardene's chief motive, once he realised that Delhi would not, for its own domestic reasons, permit a Sri Lankan military victory over the "Tamil Tigers", was to get the IPKF to do what his own army was not allowed to do. In short, to crush the 'Tigers'. That explicit Indian commitment, the IPKF was unable or unwilling to honour. In any case, the 'Tigers' slipped out of the Indian leash and retreated to their old jungle hideouts, to rest, re-group, re-arm and reconsider tactics and strategy.

As the "Tigers" became more and more anti-Indian or rather anti-Rajiv, there were two parallel developments. Delhi's interests coincided increasingly with the assorted anti-LTTE militant groups, mainly the EPRLF and steadily TELO and ENDF with EROS — a reluctant and not so reliable ally. A complementary, perhaps consequential, process saw the LTTE, in a surprising tactical shift, move close to the newly elected Colombo government. The new President was Mr. R. Premadasa.

As President Jayewardene's Prime Minister, he was a forthright critic of Jayewardene's "secret pact" with Gandhi. (on a visit to Japan, he came to learn about the 'accord' from the press) Premadasa was also Jayewardene's reluctant choice as Presidential candidate. Mr. Premadasa's relations with Mr. Gandhi were notoriously unhappy, with

an ugly exchange of words at the Harare Nonaligned summit becoming a minor scandal.

A meeting of minds between the 'Tigers' and President Premadasa has inevitably resulted in a mutual accommodation and a tactical re-alignment of the main forces involved in the Tamil conflict, that is the rival armed groups, and the two governments. The Provincial Council and the Parliamentary elections have not made this conflict less of a political-military conflict, partly because the LTTE boycotted both polls. To complicate things, the LTTE not only remains the toughest of the guerrilla movements but the most genuinely popular, certainly in the north, the Tamil heartland, if not so securely in the confused east.

Whether India-imposed or not, more flawed than perfect, the "accord" has nonetheless resulted in a power-sharing exercise between majority-controlled "centre" and the Tamil periphery. Yet, the LTTE, the pioneers, the most powerful and probably the most popular has no share at all. Though many a Sri Lankan, even at the highest levels of government, suspects the LTTE's current moves, the "Tigers" have publicly announced that they would lay down their arms, the basic requirement of the 'accord', once the IPKF leaves. It has applied to the elections commissioner for registration and recognition as a political party. Evidently the "Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam" are ready to drop the word "Eelam", meaning its claim to an independent or separate Tamil 'state'. It can contest the provincial council polls once President Premadasa dissolves the north-east council, which he has the right to do, and needs only a good reason to justify such a move.

The EPRLF and its allies have every reason to suspect the ferocious 'Tigers'. They cannot afford not to. Given past performance (TELO), the LTTE will pounce on them and tear them limb by limb, once the IPKF pulls out. Delhi cannot afford

to see that happen. So the IPKF has trained and equipped a so-called Tamil National Army (TNA). It is a substitute for the Civilian Volunteer force (CVF) which the Sri Lankan government was obliged to help the council set up to perform police duties in the Tamil areas. The Chief Minister, Mr. Varatharaja Perumal of the EPRLF accuses, the Sri Lankan STF of slipping weapons to the "Tigers" and colluding with them. So the peace-keeping operation has become a "secret war" and something of a proxy war, with the Indian intelligence agency RAW playing a bigger role than the diplomats or the IPKF and without the knowledge of the Indian parliament and the Indian people. Mr. V. P. Singh, doubtless, wants to get out of the Sri Lankan morass — that is the international trend. He has asked for time to consult his officials. Will he find himself the prisoner of the past, the captive of officialdom?

Higher private bus fares

Private bus fares will be increased, the Transport Minister announced, but not the cost of

travel in the state owned CTB buses. More entrepreneurs will be encouraged to operate private buses, the Minister said.

New foreign exchange regulations

Beginning January 1, tourists will have to declare a minimum 30 US dollars per day, and an out bound air ticket, for their stay in Sri Lanka. Five star hotels will also be required to charge a minimum 45 US dollars per day, paid in foreign currency.

Land to the landless

Half a million acres of land are to be distributed among the landless poor, the government announced. A presidential task force on land utilisation has already drawn up plans for the distribution.

Principals from list

Prospective school principals will be put on a waiting list. This was to avoid delay in filling vacancies, Education Ministry sources said. Those on the list are to be sent abroad for training.

Lying awake, thinking of dead friends

(Serena Tennakoon, who died of cancer, 2 January 1989;
Rajani Thiranagama, shot dead, 21 September 1989.)

*

*The gunman's hand is as blind as the virus. How strange
that I, smouldering on time's slow pyre,
should live to write this, when your two young lives
are gone — snuffed out, your minds' bright fire!*

Composed in Jaffna,

21 November 1989, at 4 o'clock in the morning.

Reggie Siriwardena

Gandhi: A Psycho-Profile

David Housego reviews a rule which began amid public acclaim and has ended in humiliation

It was Mr. L. K. Advani, president of the radical Hindu BJP party, who raised publicly the question that these days many Indians are voicing to themselves: "How will future historians explain the phenomenon of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi—a man who in so brief a time soared so high in public esteem and sank so low?"

Five years ago he was elected in the largest landslide victory achieved by any Indian Prime Minister and took up office with that sense of excitement, youthful promise and crossing new frontiers that gripped the United States when John Kennedy took over the presidency.

This week he has suffered the second largest defeat in the history of the Congress Party, been rejected across the northern Hindi-speaking belt, which acclaimed him so vociferously in 1984, and had his name besmirched by allegations of "vote-rigging" in his own constituency of Amethi, which many Indians see as degrading to the office of prime minister.

Between these two landmarks lies a sad tale of good intentions that went unfulfilled: of relations with colleagues, state governments and other countries in the region that bred distrust; of growing isolation from public opinion; of a Bofors scandal that eroded Mr. Gandhi's credibility and damaged India's democratic institutions, and of an opportunistic exploitation of Hindu-Muslim divisions in the election campaign that will leave scars on India's secular traditions.

Mr. Gandhi came to power with several factors working in his favour. India in 1984 felt wounded by the brutal

assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi and turned open-hearted to her son for reassurance. Mrs Gandhi had ended her administration a tired woman who had allowed day-to-day political manoeuvres to crowd out longer-term considerations. Mr. Gandhi brought with him enthusiasm, an instinct for reform and for clean government, and a realisation of the need to modernise the Indian economy by opening it up to competition.

As against this, his career of airline pilot had given him no experience of politics or government. He also suffered from another big drawback, namely that the massive security precautions needed to protect a prime minister after Mrs Gandhi's murder inevitably cut him off from the contact with crowds that is the life-blood of an Indian politician.

Mr. Arun Nehru, his cousin and probably closest associate in his early days of power but now an opposition leader, believes that Mr. Gandhi's big weakness as prime minister was his constant shifts in opinion and inability to stick to a decision he had made.

He announced important reforms to bring fresh air into the Congress Party but then abandoned them. He negotiated an agreement for a settlement in the Punjab but went back on his word. He stood out against the Moslems being allowed to practise their own personal law over divorce but then caved in to fundamentalist Moslem pressure.

These constant shifts cost him the confidence of his colleagues. He in turn suspected that they were curving out their own careers and plotting against him. For all the

air of confidence and unflappability Mr. Gandhi projects, he is a man of deep insecurities. A succession of cabinet reshuffles to bring loyalists into the Government left him without colleagues of stature and independence of judgment.

One diplomat compares Mr. Gandhi with the former Shah of Iran. Both had the same commitment to modernisation and drew around them bright technocrats attracted by the possibilities of short cuts to development that seemed to lie in dynastic power. But Mr. Gandhi, like the Shah, was unable to implement his policies because he lost contact with the political process that provides two way communication. He developed no real base in the Congress Party. He stopped meeting the press, except for rare interviews or brief exchanges at an airport.

His growing isolation was symbolised by the fortress-like residence in which he was forced to live in New Delhi for security reasons. It was also increased, many believe, by having a foreign wife. As an Italian, Mrs Sonia Gandhi was unable to bring that feedback from the Indian family network that an Indian wife could provide.

The Bofors scandal played a big part in Mr. Gandhi's undoing. There are still doubts over who benefited from the commissions on the \$1.3bn arms contract. Mrs Indira Gandhi would have certainly have been ruthless enough to have removed members of her inner circle who came under suspicion and thus damaged her image as prime minister.

Mr. Gandhi never did so—which encouraged suspicions that he was involved in a

(Continued on page 26)

Rise of the JVP — A Sociological Perspective (2)

S. Leelananda

A revolutionary party must work out a methodology of capturing State power. The Old Left, while shouting slogans about workers power and mass insurrection, have not worked out such a scenario. This is not chicanery on their part but merely a reflection of the absurdity of planning such a seizure of power with a feeble Sinhala working class which is, as we have seen earlier, small in size when compared with the total strength of estate labour and urban Tamil workers.

Wijeweera, from the time of his break with N. Shanmugasathan of the Pro-Chinese Communist Party, experimented with various methodologies of achieving power. The search for alternative methodologies of capturing power was the hallmark of successful Marxist leaders like Mao-Tse-Tung, Fidel Castro and Ho chi Minh. Each of these leaders for reasons particular to his own country, could not mobilise the working class as the cutting edge against capitalism. This does not mean, of course, that they were antagonistic to the working class. Or that they did not ally themselves with the working class. These leaders worked on the basis that the working class could not propel the revolution in their immediate country context. With the failure of the Shanghai uprising, the Chinese Communist faction led by Mao-Tse-Tung retreated to Yenan and began to work with the peasantry; so much so that he was first identified as an 'agrarian reformer'. Indeed, in the history of the post Russian revolution world there are not many instances of the working class capturing power "from below". After the second World War so called working class regimes were created in

Eastern Europe by force of Soviet arms.

The Sino-Soviet conflict and the polycentric approach to communism form the backdrop of Wijeweera's unorthodox approach to the capture of State power. We can now see why he was compelled in Sri Lanka to go beyond the strategies of the Old Left. The reasons are:

1. The weaknesses and vulnerability of the Sinhala proletariat.
2. The majority of the Sri Lankan proletariat remaining outside the spectrum of radical politics due to communalism.
3. The stranglehold of established political parties on the Sinhala proletariat, through their Trade Unions.
4. The dominance of youth in Sri Lankan population.
5. The inability of the Old Left to penetrate rural areas, which were increasingly populated with alienated youth.
6. The frustration of rural youth who were drawn into processes of urbanisation and modernisation as a result of State policies since independence, particularly the special privileges conferred on them after 1956. The measures included the expansion of education setting up of new Universities, new job opportunities for rural youth, particularly in Government service, Standardisation, Etc.
7. The validation of alternate paths to State power; particularly after the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese experiences.

In fact Wijeweera's first experiment was with the Army. He was the mysterious "Doctor"

who participated in the 'Corporals Coup' aimed at toppling the Dudley Senanayake Government. With its failure, Wijeweera began to build a base for the JVP among Sinhala youth, starting with outstanding cadres from the Universities such as Bopage, Uyangoda, Wijesinghe and Mahinda Wijekera, and outside like Loku and Podi Athula. It was this strategy that he pursued in the pre-1971 period and again in the 1980s, though the tactics of mobilising youth and attacking the State apparatus were changed in the late 80s, as we shall see later in this essay.

For a serious understanding of the JVP we must pay attention to this predominant youth category which is the central demographic and sociological reality in Sri Lanka. We have already noted the "bulge" in the demographic curve. How does it affect social reality?

We are fortunate here because Social Science literature gives us some understanding of this phenomenon. There are valuable contributions by Jayawardena and Wiggins (1973) Arasaratnam (1972) Warnapala (1972) and Fred Halliday (1972) on the 1971 insurrection. But the paper that meets our immediate analytical needs is Gananath Obeyesekere's outstanding contribution (1974) entitled: "Some comments on the Social backgrounds of the April 1971 insurgency in Sri Lanka". Here Obeyesekere gives us statistical information regarding 10,192 prisoners (4492 Arrested: 5700 Surrendered) associated with the 1971 insurrection. Obeyesekere's conclusions are important for an understanding of the latter day JVP. Let me summarise his main findings:

- (a) The (JVP) movement is unequivocally a revolt of the youth and those who actively participated were predominantly males. 92.8% of the

suspected insurgents belonged to the 14-32 yrs category. 77% of the suspected insurgents were from 17-26 yrs category.

- (b) The fact that women, even in small numbers, should participate in a revolution is a novel idea and would therefore have had a dramatic effect on public perceptions.
- (c) The overwhelming majority of the suspected insurgents were Sinhala Buddhists (94% of the suspects). The next largest group were Sinhala — Roman Catholics (3.4%).
- (d) Though some analysts tended to interpret the 1971 JVP as a "low caste movement" it was not so. Says Obeyesekere "the statistics show that while some caste factors were operative, it was certainly not a low caste movement at all, and in general cross-cuts the caste issue". The JVP had adherents from every Sinhala caste.
- (e) However, the Vahumpura in the low country and Batgama in the Kandyan area seem over represented in the insurgency sample.
- (f) As regards employment, there were few recruits from elite employment categories (0.2%) and middle-rung administrative positions and other stable occupations (6.1%). Recruitment to JVP cadres came mainly from low positions in Government service or from self employed in not very remunerative positions (21.4%), the obviously underemployed category such as farm labourers (39.6%), totally unemployed (17.5%) and students (12.5%). Thus in the analysis by occupation we find that 6.3% of the sample had secure employment with reasonable remuneration. All others were poorly employed, underemployed or unemployed.
- (g) An analysis of the educational background confirms that the insurgents were over-

whelmingly village, non-elite youth. 80% came from Maha Vidyalayas, 6.4% from Madya Maha Vidyalaya, 2% from Training and Technical Schools and 2% from the Universities.

- (b) The above statistics show that at least 90% of the sample had a reasonable education. They were all the products of the widespread free education and social welfare schemes.

This analysis of JVP prisoners of 1971 provide good pointers to the nature of the JVP in the 1980s. There is no doubt that the JVP base continued to be youth-based, male-oriented, non-elite, Sinhala-Buddhist and tended to cross-cut caste lines, though the Vahumpura and Batgama representation was higher than their respective national population.

All these characters are subsumed by the anti-elite nature of the JVP membership, and should be discussed in some detail.

The rapid growth of population and the provision of a comprehensive welfare package in an educational environment which is inward-looking and non-technological, creates an explosive social situation. The mass of youth become "transitionals" to use Daniel Lerner's phrase, with high aspiration levels which cannot be met within an economy which does not grow fast enough. The blunting of these aspirations lead to "growing frustration" which threatens the social structure. Lerner describes these young people as "all dressed up but nowhere to go." At about the time of the 1971 insurrection Dudley Seers described the Sri Lankan employment dilemma as one which has to match "needs with expectations."

Godfrey Gunatilleke in a recent essay addresses this crucial problem in the following way:

"The experience of Sri Lanka and the disequilibria that emer-

ged contain lessons which then have to be restated somewhat differently from the commonly expressed criticism that social welfare goals were pursued at the cost of economic growth. The development outcome in Sri Lanka also raises some important issues relating to basic needs strategies. There is an implicit assumption in these strategies, focussed as they are on the satisfaction of basic needs, that they would help to reduce social tensions and discontents, and that they would promote an orderly process of socio-economic change. This appeared to be the case in Sri Lanka where for a considerable period it seemed that even the revolutionary ideologies underwent change and accepted the social democratic framework. These assumptions however failed to take into account other more deep-seated processes which the strategies set in motion. Basic needs strategies in fact can be more 'dis-equilibrating' than strategies which are less concerned with social welfare. It brings the latent disequilibria more quickly to the surface. Better chances of survival, longer life expectancy and education, transform the consciousness of people, articulate their expectations more clearly and raise these much faster. With the early satisfaction of basic needs the demand for upward social mobility is higher. As the "basic needs" goods — food education, health shelter are met — households soon aspire for the bundle of modern goods with improved housing, consumer durables, amenities such as electricity and piped water supply. New entrants to the workforce begin to enter the labour market in search of non-traditional occupations outside the economic activities controlled by the family and high open unemployment can manifest itself at an early stage of development. The development strategy which aims at the satisfaction of basic needs must at the same time

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PLANTATIONS : Trouble Brewing

S. Muthulingam

Until the Indo-Sri Lankan accord most of the plantation youths were not involved with any Eelam movement or southern subversive group except for a few who were involved with the EROS & EPRLF.

After the Indo-Sri Lankan accord most of Eelam movements got ample money from India. Then all the Tamil groups started recruiting youths from plantations saying that they would grant training to safeguard the plantations whenever they face threats from the Sinhala villagers.

Owing to this thousands of youths joined with the Eelam movements. EROS, EPRLF, PLOT, ENDLF are the movements which recruited teen age youths from the plantations. All recruits are between the ages of 14 and 20.

There are more than five hundred plantation youths trained under the C.V.F. Some are doing 'party work'. These youths have joined because they are being paid salaries.

During the latter part of 1986, the J.V.P. was able to recruit some plantation youths from the Kandy region in which the estates are surrounded by the Sinhala colonies and also from the Uva Province, which has the same problem as Kandy. Now the J. V. P. is able to enter the heart of the plantation. That means Kottagala and Talawakelle. Very recently they moved to the Kegalle District.

What are the causes which motivate these youths to join such subversive forces?

1. Unemployment
2. Insecurity
3. Slave-like living conditions, unhygienic dilapidated houses, no sanitary facilities etc.

The author is with the Workers-Peasants Institute, (WPI) Kandy

4. No place in the land distribution.
5. Planned settlement among the estates — this leads to suspicion among the workers that the Govt. is planning to disestablish the Tamil working class.
6. Non-representation in the plantation management category (clerical and supervisory).
7. Appointing Sinhala teachers to the plantation primary schools without appointing a single Tamil teacher in some schools.
8. Closing down of estate schools.
9. Mishandling of the estates' teaching appointments — that means that during the last few years plantation teaching appointments most of the vacancies were filled by Tamils from other provinces.
10. Most of the plantation school Principals posts were filled by Muslims and non-plantation Tamils. (This also happened in other categories of vacancies in the education field).
11. Appointing outsiders as Home Guards in the estates.
12. The problem of the 84,000 Indian passport holders.

In addition, the working class has the following grievances and demands.

- 1) A monthly salary
- 2) A better housing scheme and
- 3) Change of the old Plantation Acts.

Due to these problems even the workers have developed some sympathy for the J.V.P.

These factors lead the plantation youths to take up other (militant and violent) political options. The Northern groups exploited this situation.

But at the same time some of the youths who had a bitter experience with the Northern Tamils feel that they are separate from other Tamils; have also joined with the Sinhalese JVP movement. From the point of view of the youth the present CWC-UNP Union Leaders have become a hate symbol for the plantation people.

To reverse these trends and to avoid greater violence, the following steps should be considered:

- 1) Summon a mini-APC for the plantation sector. This should involve all the trade unions, small groups and NGO's in that sector. **Through this the Tamil plantation youths would feel that they too are being granted recognition by the President.**
- 2) Openly recognise and constitutionally declare that the plantation people constitute a separate national minority, that is a community with a culture different from North-Eastern Tamils and announce that the plantation people shall be known as 'Hill Country Tamils'.
- 3) Amend the Birth Certificate Act so as to change the word 'Indian Tamil' into 'Hill Country Tamil'.
- 4) Grant a separate ethnic quota in proportion to the Hill Country population.
- 5) Immediately stop the settlement programme in the estates and the adjoining towns as it affects the security and in the long term the parliamentary representation of the plantation Tamils.
- 6) In the land distribution scheme, go according to the population ratios and grant priority to the Hill Country Tamils.
- 7) Launch a special housing programme for the plantations and grant the entitlement.

(Continued on page 14)

New Thinking for Plantations

Peria Dorai

The so called Land Reform Act brought the plantation economy under state control and ownership. Prior to Nationalisation the Plantations contributed its share to the National exchequer as its main source of income by way of income tax and other duties although the Plantations were owned by a few individuals, and Plantation companies.

The Social Changes Which Were Expected From Land Reforms:

What have we achieved after 15 years of state ownership and state control? What has the average citizen of this country benefited as a result of land reforms? Do we as citizens get even a decent cup of tea or a coconut from a state-owned plantation at a reasonable price apart from the packeted tea extracted from the refuse tea. Have We Achieved the Objectives of Land Reforms?

What are the socio-economic changes brought about by land reforms? Were the landless given land? The majority of the resident labour on estates still live in barrack type line rooms and village labour in mud hovel without any amenities.

Estate Village Integration was household word during the Kobbekaduwa era started by the former Minister of Agriculture & Lands soon after the Land Reforms. What is the impact we can see after 15 years of state ownership? What is the explanation the present rulers of state-owned lands can offer.

Today the plantation is being systematically destroyed by certain powers who are opposed to the democratic system. The burning of tea and rubber factories, damage to estate property is the order of the day. Periodical stoppage of work

and disrupted production is a day to day occurrence. Deployment of home guards to protect estate property and security of estate personnel have been a total failure. Can security forces provide all the security needed for the plantations? Most of the estate Superintendents do not live on the estates, either because their bungalows have been burnt down or are scared to live in them.

Management Agencies are Helpless to Combat the Situation:

The most recent incident is the burning of the regional office complex in Badulla, the operational headquarters for the entire Uva District and burning of several tea and rubber factories in the southern province and in the Kegalle district. In short the present system of state management of Plantations have proved to be an absolute failure.

Then What is the Alternative?

How do we remedy this grave situation? Should we still think of politics or take the "bull by the horns". As in the good old days, can we expect the superintendent alone to look after the estate, or do we seek the support of the estate worker and still further, the support of the villages surrounding the plantation areas.

In return, what do we offer him for protecting our national wealth? The answer to the problem lies in the hands of the Minister of Plantation Industries. The initiative taken by Hon. Gamini Disanayake to restructure the management system of the JEDB and SLSPC is a step in the right direction. It appears that the Minister is concerned about estate-village integration. It is also heartening to note his intentions to remedy the injustice meted out several years ago to the Simbula villager in the plantation areas where their ancestors who

lost land to the British Planters to open coffee and tea plantations during the last century.

It will be suicidal to the economy if the lands are now parcelled and re-distributed among the villagers. The only way this injustice can now be corrected even to a small extent is by converting the plantations into joint stock companies and give the people their due share in order that at least they will benefit by way of dividend income and other benefits which they will derive from integration.

On the other hand one can imagine the impact that will be seen as a result of ownership being vested in the plantation workers and the people of the area? The present security problem on plantations will be solved.

To begin with, the 82 clusters (or groups of estates) which be formed under the re-structuring programme should be converted into people's companies with the participation of estate workers, trade unions, people of the area and the general public. In the alternative the private sector who is prepared to work with the people and take the challenge should be invited to form broad-based management agencies in collaboration with the plantation workers, trade unions and the people of the area to take over the management of these clusters.

For both schemes funds under the Janasaviya programme or bank credit will have to be made available to help people of the area to purchase shares in the proposed companies. With the creation of a "Share Trust Scheme" plantation workers could be given their share holdings in individual companies which could be contributed monthly through a check-off over a period of time.

(Continued on page 24)

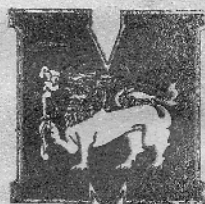
Peria Dorai is the pen-name of a well-known planter associated with the tea industry for almost 25 years.

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Sri Lanka: Rebuilding the System

Susil Siriwardena*

The Crisis — From within

The Sri Lankan Crisis is a generalised one, spreading throughout the political, economic, social & cultural systems, engulfing the whole country, i.e. the North the South and the central hills.

Manifestations of Crisis have been protracted and expanding civil war from 1983, a progressively contracting and collapsing economy and a generalised mood of distrust and disillusionment.

Perhaps, the national malaise is best characterised by pervasive distrust of persons and systems, whether they be in the established formal system — e.g. political parties, trade unions, sections of the intelligentsia — or among the newly emerging forces — e.g. militant political groups, NGO groups, and miniscule issue-based animator groups.

Are the vicissitudes and the zig-zags of the All Party Conference Process not the most stark and provocative expression of this corrosive distrust-building process? (there is a process within the APC Process, namely the yet-to-commence North-East Peace Committee Process.)

How rapidly the potentially stabilizing and confidence-building gains of two countrywide elections, Presidential and General, have been and are being, made abortive?

So compulsive is the paradox, that the hard won Democratic System built up from pre-independence times, is being consciously subverted, by its open detractors while being unconsciously undermined by its most vocal believers.

*The author is Chairman, 'Janasetha' and also General Manager, National Housing Development Authority (NRDA). He presented this paper to the Commission of 'Youth Unrest'

The Crisis — From Outside

A useful method to look at Sri Lanka from outside is to juxtapose its comparative performance in National Development vis-a-vis other Asian states.

The outcome of the diagnosis is something of this order:

Singapore, Hong-Kong, South Korea and Taiwan, all of which obtained independence long after Sri Lanka, have acquired a NIC or Newly Industrialised Country status, with per capita GNP's of over US \$3,500.

Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand are on the way to acquiring NIC status and have per capita GNP's of over US\$2000.

China, under socialism, has been successfully combining redistribution with growth to feed, clothe, shelter and keep healthy its 1.1 billion people.

Philippines, India and Pakistan have succeeded in bringing structural changes in their economy by laying a foundation for manufacturing and industrial development.

Among countries with generalised crises are Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea.

We have failed to mobilise the energy and the creativity of a highly aware, literate and ingenious populace.

We have hopelessly mismanaged the assets and resources we had, and succeeded in only taking ourselves towards Crisis.

Diagnosing Causes — Making a Start

A tentative starting point for a Diagnosis of causes could be like this:

Vision — hasn't there been a failure of Vision? (Assumption — countries cannot develop without a Vision.)

Policies — hasn't there been a failure of Policies?

(Assumption — policies are the forms that embody elements of a vision.)

Strategies, Programmes, Procedures — hasn't there been a failure of Strategy and Programme development?

(Assumption — policies are translated into practical reality by means of strategies and programmes.)

But these are not enough. We need more concrete reasons.

More Concrete reasons

Role of People — People must be given a role to create and produce, and opportunities for fulfilling them. The mass of people are the real agents and subjects of development. Their energy and creativity must be fully mobilized into production. Countries are developed by the many, not by the few. People make their own history: no one makes it for them.

Role of Leadership — Leaders set goals for people and create or don't create the conditions for them to make history. Leadership takes one of two or three forms. Often there is one particular individual — the leader — and is supported by a team of equally eminent men and women. Or there could be a small collective leadership. Leaders possess vision, amongst other qualities.

Role of the Few or Elites — there is a role for elites, who represent the few, opposed to the majority or the masses. Elites are composed of those trained to use their minds as opposed to their hands. They occupy the upper echelons in the system. The role of an elite is to analyse between contending and compelling forces to produce clarity, to identify options and then decide on the basis of what is authentic. A key function of an elite is to

build and formulate values and an ethics which are the criteria for authenticating and legitimising what are key felt needs of the society. Fundamental to the quality of an elite is its perception of the role of the majority, the masses, from whom they must drive their strength, their inspiration and their faith. The masses are the foundation and bedrock on which an elite bases itself.

Internal and External Factors and Decolonization — the relative roles of Internal and External Factors in social production must be clearly understood, and more especially, the primacy of the Internal Factor over the External. E.g. the Internal Factor will be primary in the development of say a hamlet, a cluster of hamlets, a division, a district, a province or a country. This is also the method and process of decolonization in ex-colonial countries.

Hard and Soft Policies — qualitatively, policies could be characterised in terms of hard and soft. Hard policies derive from hard options, possessing features of market values, great effort (work ethic), discipline, rule of law, affordability, high productivity and sustainability. Soft policies derive from soft options, undervaluing the capabilities of the masses, lack of discipline, manipulation of the system, a fixation with the short term, low productivity, lack of linkage and unaffordability.

Overall growth and productivity — for a country to develop, there must be sustained growth and sustained increases in productivity, throughout all (or most) sectors and regions in a country. Or, the creative labours of the masses must be mobilized and harnessed on a long term basis, for new wealth to be created by the people for themselves. The most valuable resource in this growth and productivity-process, is the human resource itself. Without a continuous creation of new wealth, a country can't improve, it can-

not hope to satisfy the basic needs of its people.

Human Resources Development — a country must develop its most valuable resource, its human beings. Develop in two fundamental senses. First, help a person to internalise within herself or himself, a value system and ethics to guide her or him through life. Second, help a person to acquire marketable skills which will render her or him productive and useful to both society and herself or himself. Sri Lanka has impressive achievements in Human Resources Development in terms of health, education and participation in social life. But it has failed to (a) create sufficient wealth, and (b) relate education to value-building and skill acquisition. Hence, the massive unemployment and underemployment of educated and young human resources. Ironically, we have ended by strengthening the frustration-creating machinery in our society viz-a viz the youth.

Role of Government. We seem to have misunderstood the Role of Government. We have created a governmental colossus, which is unproductive, unimaginative and self-serving. For example, we have even thought that governments are good at business, and hence, our large state-owned corporate sector. But in housing, we learnt that government should not build houses, that people can do it better, and hence, we completely reversed policy in the Million Houses Programme (1984-89). Shouldn't government be only a facilitator, supporter, and learner, leaving maximum space for people to create wealth, take risks and self-manage their lives? Haven't we got the Role of Government wrong?

Role of Intelligentsia. The Role of the Intelligentsia is to help institutionalise the process of knowledge-building and learning to learn, in a country. Analysing, conceptualising and

theorising from the past and present experience of its own people, is a key function. This is the super-important process of decolonising thought — generating theory and practice primarily from within. To do this, an intelligentsia has to forge organic links with the lives of ordinary people. Then, and only then, can they be useful to and be heard by, the many, in a country.

Crisis of Youth

This is another particular manifestation of the general crisis. It cannot be separated from it. In fact, it is a good vantage point from which to look at it. In fact, all the Concrete Reasons given above, have their points of correspondence and reference in the Youth Crisis too.

What is to be Done?

The way out is to turn the Crisis into an opportunity to look within, soul-search, and get to the root causes of the problems.

This is a national project. The political, business, professional and intellectual elite has to lead.

But here is the contradiction — the ordinary people — and the youth are among them — are far, far ahead of their leaders. Meaning, the elite factions cannot come up with effective policies and programmes sufficiently fast, to mobilise the energy and the creativity of the people and retain their credibility.

A very honest and crystal clear analysis of our failures and self-deceptions, could serve as a vital catharsis and shock to help us to see what we have been blind to so far.

We need to be bold and daring.

We must ask our youth and our people to help us to get the project going. (Janasaviya is an attempt at such mobilization).

Did Lenin open the "open" door?

Tisaranee Gunasekera

"The payment made to the concessionaires (international capitalists — T. G.) in the form of a share of the highly valuable products obtained is undoubtedly a tribute, which the workers state pays to the world bourgeoisie without in any way glossing this over, we must clearly realise that we stand to gain by paying this tribute, so long as it accelerates the restoration of our large scale industry and substantially improves the condition of the workers and peasants". (Lenin — Third Congress of the Communist International — Selected Works — Vol. 3, Page 563)

The spectre of the closed economy is haunting us again. The shrill cries of the Opposition demanding the dismantling of the open economy are growing this time had even managed to evoke responses even within the ranks of the ruling party. This, at a time when most of the socialist countries are getting rid of even the last vestiges of their closed systems and opening their doors to the outside world (in some cases as a result of the pressure from the masses) ironic but not surprising. To paraphrase a popular T. V. ad, "In an ever changing world there are some things that never change — like Sri Lankan leftists!"

Vietnam, after waging an epic struggle against U. S. imperialism, had no qualms whatsoever in joining the IMF and the World Bank (institutions dominated by US capital) and to remain as a member even after the economic sanctions imposed by the western world. Undoubtedly Vietnam communists were untroubled by the kind of 'finer sentiments' which fills the hearts and minds of our local leftists. Which is probably why they said that if half a million GIs couldn't subjugate them a few dozen foreign companies won't be able to do so. In fact Viet-

nam approved a foreign investment law with liberal provisions for western capital involvement quite unprecedented among socialist countries: as far back as in 1977. Under the new economic reforms a new foreign investment code has been proposed which would allow **100% foreign ownership and a guarantee of no nationalization during the contracted period.** Also under this code, foreign joint venture investment will be allowed to increase from the earlier limit of 49% upto 99%. Profit tax will be between 20% — 26% with a grace period of several years. Vietnam officials readily admit that Vietnam has only its natural resources and cheap labour to export in order to accumulate capital for industrialization and agricultural development. In order to facilitate this, Vietnam will establish **several export promotion (free trade) zones.**

The Soviet Union is implementing a very liberal foreign investment policy in order to attract western capital. According to these new policies the foreign counterpart will be allowed to become the dominant partner in joint ventures AND (this would most probably make quite a few of our leftist shudder with horror) the Soviet Union is today taking the first steps towards **abolishing the monopoly of the state over foreign trade!** As a result 20 ministries and departments and 76 enterprises have been allowed to participate in foreign trade directly. China too has accepted the opening of the country to the outside world as an essential aspect of its modernization programme (at least before the crushing of the pro democracy movement).

Unfortunately there seems to be no end to the perfidy of these socialist reformers! Soviet economists are now talking about turning the rouble into a convertible currency

which will, in effect, amount to a devaluation. Though at at this moment the value of the rouble is higher, officially, than the US dollar, this will change once the rouble becomes an internationally convertible currency. Then its value will be determined not by the Soviet government (as it was done in the past) but by international demand and supply. To our leftists who regard devaluation as a special measure designed by the blood thirsty imperialists and their stooges — the IMF and the World Bank to destroy the economies of progressive countries, this will doubtless look like the greatest betrayal of all. But socialist countries have today realized that keeping the value of their currencies at a high level artificially does not contribute to the building of a healthy economy. One can't stay in the clouds forever, however much one drugs oneself. One has to come down to the earth — either you do it before it is too late and try to cure yourself, or you'll end up six feet under. The reformers in the socialist world are merely taking the first way out.

As a result of the revolution in communication methods, the world has shrunk and has become more closely integrated than ever before. Thus today no country can isolate itself if it desires a genuine development and a better life for its people. It's the realization of this which had led the socialist countries to open their doors to the outside world in more ways than one. To our leftists — those vociferous champions of a closed system — this going back to an open door policy would amount to a complete betrayal of socialism lock, stock and barrel. But what these critics of open door policy are unaware of or deliberately forget is that it was none other than Lenin who advocated this policy first in his famous NEP.

A major aspect of the NEP was to encourage western capitalists to invest in the Soviet Union. Lenin's objective was to get the machinery, capital and

technology necessary for the industrialization of the Soviet Union by **leasing out** mines, forests and oil wells to foreign capitalists (would our leftists start accusing Lenin of trying to sell the Soviet Union, I wonder) and by encouraging the formation of joint ventures. Lenin said that the capitalists, after the failure of their attempts to destroy the Soviet Union by waging war against her were "forced to reckon with political and economic realities and declared: we must trade." This is one of our greatest victories". Obviously the prospect of doing trade with the robber barons' did not cause any heartburn to the founder of the Soviet Union. Far from it. He even welcomed the offer of a massive loan by western capitalists — while knowing that these capitalists will charge "an exorbitant rate of interest". Unlike our local sages who do not want to give even a cents worth of our national wealth to those vile capitalists and will regard this as a supremely unholy act, Lenin had no such scruples. "So long as there is no revolution in other countries it would take us decades to extricate ourselves and in these cir-

cumstances we cannot grudge hundreds of millions or even thousands of millions worth of our immense wealth, our rich, raw material sources in order to obtain help from the major capitalists. Later we shall recover it all and to spare. The rule of the proletariat cannot be maintained in a country laid waste as no country has ever been before — a country where the vast majority are peasants who are equally ruined — without the help of capital, for which of course, exorbitant interest will be extorted. Hence the choice is between economic relations of this type and nothing at all" (Lenin — Tenth Congress of the RCP (B) — Selected Works — Vol. 3 Page 515). For this purpose Lenin advocated making formal written agreements with the most civilized, advanced West-European capitalism" (yes comrades, signing away the economic freedom of the country!) Thus the Soviet and other socialist countries' reformers are really going back to Lenin and the NEP with the open door policy and liberal investment codes.

All this would undoubtedly seem like nightmarish acts of

treachery to our local leftists whose dream is to build a "self sufficient Sri Lanka". But self sufficiency can hardly be called a Marxist concept. It was during the period of feudalism that there existed "self sufficient" societies. It was the **British Mercantilists** and not Marxists or socialists, who later advocated a system incorporating certain key aspects of those self sufficient societies, (no imports, producing all those commodities within a country encouraging exports). **Thus in reality, this self sufficient society our leftists talk about is really an up dated form of mercantilism and not socialism.** The founders of Marxism in no way advocated such a system. Lenin wanted to integrate the Union into the world economy **even on terms that were far from fair.** Today, socialist countries are talking in terms of a **single world economy.** The world is coming together overcoming the barriers of nationality, religion, culture and ideology. At such a time any talk of building self sufficient societies' is not Marxist, but a variant of the so called "National Ideology" (Jathika Chinthanaya) which harks back to that bygone era-feudalism.

PLANTATIONS . . .

(Continued from page 8)

- 8) Speedily announce that the present Indian Passport holders will not be sent to India immediately and their problems will be discussed. Through this we can avoid the youths joining the J.V.P. violence. (The J. V. P. is recruiting them by saying that 'you all are citizens of this motherland and there is no need to go to India'. Recently in the Kandy and Uva provinces J. V. Pers collected their Indian passports and destroyed them). Most of the applicants are dead but their children are willing to live in this country.
- 9) Form a Home Guard comprising of the estate workers and the jobless youths to

- safeguard the estates and the factories. Through they can be given the belief that the factories are their belongings and should be defended by them.
- 10) To create jobs start reforestation schemes and also dairy farms (on unprofitable lands).
- 11) Fill the teaching posts with the plantation youngsters who have got through O/L examinations (because this is the maximum education they can get).
- 12) Grant a special employment quota ('affirmative action') since malnutrition and under-education reduces the employment opportunities especially in the armed forces and in the police.
- 13) Grant a monthly wage
- 14) Change the All Indian Labour Ordinance which is

outdated and pass new labour legislation in line with the national labour ordinance.

- 15) Establish a separate Cultural Board to combat the backwardness of this community and to socially uplift them.
- 16) Form a separate Women's Bureau for the plantation women's emancipation.
- 17) Start a labour bulletin under the Plantation Ministry. This will be an information bulletin. (It should be in Tamil & Sinhala and published every 2 months. An English bulletin should appear every 6 months.)
- 18) Start an independent Tamil magazine which can give the Hill Country Tamil youth an alternative consciousness & ideology.

Liberalisation and the Welfare State

Asoka Bandarage

As a part of the liberalization of the economy after 1977, the local market was thrown open to all manner of imported consumer goods and services—color TVs, videocassette recorders, liquor, toiletries, cosmetics, and banking, restaurant, and travel services, etc. It should be remembered, however, that in recent years the import of weapons has surpassed any of these consumer imports, making the arms traders and black marketers within and outside the country extremely rich.

In the long run the deluge of imported consumer goods has had a negative effect on local industry and employment generation. Contributing further to the trends towards import liberalization and privatization, the national milk industry has been handed over almost completely to Nestle. This Swiss transnational company, known for its controversial baby formula sales in the Third World, now collects milk from small producers throughout the island. The logic or illogic of the current import-export economy could lead to locally produced milk being replaced by imported milk powder. Researcher and activist Patrick Fernando sees signs of this already beginning to happen.

Dismantling the Welfare State

The military expenditures, production loss, capital flight, refugees, civil disorder, and destruction resulting from the ethnic war have severely aggravated the economy and threatened the survival of the Sri Lankan people. As the feminist publication *Sawakali* points out, the defense bill was Rs 6.2 billion in 1985 or Rs 1.7 million a day. This represents a twelvefold increase since 1978 and the biggest single item of government expenditure, surpassing the total amounts spent

on health, education, and food subsidies. This amount could feed eight million people a day—half the population of Sri Lanka.

But even without a war of such massive proportions, Sri Lanka would have faced some severe economic and social problems endemic to the very logic of peripheral capitalist development. Decreases in world tea prices, decline in the demand for labor in the Middle East, increases in oil prices—any one of these is enough to undermine Sri Lanka's economy at any given time. During the 1977-87 period the external dependence and vulnerability of all sectors of the Sri Lankan economy have greatly increased. Even the peasant agricultural sector that hitherto remained domestically oriented has become more tightly incorporated into the world economy through transnational agribusiness and international aid agencies. With increasing landlessness and obsolescence of traditional skills, independent sources of livelihood are fast disappearing. Yet only a few people have the resources to survive adequately within the expanding market economy.

Even before the ethnic crisis sharpened in 1983, the problems in the Open Economy had already begun to be felt. Foreign debts were mounting; donors were beginning to leave, and the Middle East exodus was starting to fizzle out. By January 1987 debt service payments had risen to about 30 percent of foreign exchange earnings. The Sri Lankan experience in capitalist development during the 1977-87 period was less akin to that of Taiwan, South Korea, or Singapore which it sought to emulate than it was to countries like the Philippines and Jamaica upon which the international financial and development agencies imposed the po-

licy mix that is popularly known as Structural Adjustment. In Sri Lanka, too, Structural Adjustment has involved concentration on export-oriented production, devaluation of the local currency, liberalization of imports, privatization of state-owned sectors, social service cutbacks, and removal of food subsidies and price controls on consumer goods.

Structural Adjustment and the Open Economy widened income inequalities and pushed the state in an increasingly authoritarian direction. Between 1973 and 1981-82, the share of the highest quintile income earners rose from 46 percent to 57 percent of total income in the country, representing a 120 percent increase of their real mean income. The monthly earnings of an average middle-class family rose by Rs 420 during 1978-87; but their cost of living more than doubled to Rs 908. (In the 1988 exchange rate, 30.5 Sri Lankan rupees equals one U. S. dollar.) Nearly half of the population was pushed below the official poverty line of Rs 350 a month per household (according to some other accounts, however, the official poverty line is Rs 300). About 37.5 percent of Sri Lankan children suffer from malnutrition and 50 percent from nutritional anemia. In areas in the South where the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (J V P) insurgents are fighting the state, 40 percent of the working-age population is unemployed. If current trends continue, by the year 2000 out of a projected 20 million people, 60 percent would belong to the working group but many of them would be chronically unemployed.

Sharp income disparities and absolute poverty levels are relatively new developments for Sri Lanka, which until the current

Table 5
Per Capita Gross Nation Product and
the Physical Quality of Life Index

Country	Per Capita GNP (U. S. \$)	Physical Quality of Life Index	Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)	Infant Mortality per 100 Live Births	Percentage of Literacy
Burma	160	50	50	140	60
Sri Lanka	230	82	68	47	81
Sierra Leone	250	28	44	136	10
Tanzania	260	30	44	167	28
Peoples Republic of China	260	71	65	65	50-70
Uganda	290	40	50	160	35
Madagascar	290	41	44	102	39
Kenya	380	39	50	119	20-25
Cuba	1,410	85	70	27	78
Republic of Korea	1,480	82	65	47	88
Portugal	2,180	80	69	39	71
Argentina	2,230	85	68	59	93
Yugoslavia	2,430	84	68	36	84
Singapore	3,830	86	71	12	75

Source: Jerry A. Moles and James V. Riker. "National Heritage and the Future of Sri Lanka Agriculture," *Lanka Guardian* Vol. No. 5 17 (1 Jan. 1983), p. 16. The Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) is an attempt to derive a composite of indicators on a standardized scale from zero to 100. This index is based solely on three measures of development: (1) the average age expectancy at birth, (2) infant mortality, and (3) the percentage of literacy.

decade was a unique model of social welfarism and parliamentary democracy in the Third World. Beginning with the introduction of electoral politics in 1931, the Sri Lankan state followed a universal welfare policy providing free education, free health care, and subsidized food items for all (excepting the plantation sector following independence). It is this policy that gave Sri Lanka high scores on the Physical Quality of Life Index in spite of its low economic growth rate and per capita incomes (see table 5) and enabled Sri Lankan women (and men) to enjoy a

higher quality of life than their counterparts in most Third World countries. The average female life expectancy of 66.9 years (in 1971); infant mortality rate of 37.1 (per 1,000 live births—in 1979); national female literacy rate of 82.8 percent (in 1981), and an average of 4.3 children per woman (in 1979) compare very favorably with other countries.

Today these enviable socioeconomic achievements are severely threatened as the government whittles away at the welfare state. Following a process of deliberation involving the

IMF, consultants from the Harvard Institute for International Development, and other foreign and local interests, the Sri Lankan government sharply limited the food subsidies, changing the earlier general rice ration to a food stamp program limited to households below the official poverty line. The poverty line determined in 1979 at Rs 350 a month per household remained static over the years in spite of the high inflation ravaging people's lives. Finally in 1988 the poverty line has been changed to Rs 700. Yet, the Rs 75 per family per month currently given in food stamps can scarcely meet the basic food requirements of those below the poverty line. Furthermore, as in the U. S., food stamps are withdrawn when a family makes even the slightest improvement over the poverty line. As a result, most poor people and many female-headed households are forced to live on food stamps alone!

Per capita spending for education was reduced from twelve U. S. dollars in 1972 to eight U. S. dollars in 1978, and health expenditures from six U. S. dollars to five U. S. dollars in the same period. Total government expenditures for food, education, and health declined from 42 percent to 26 percent of the budget from 1971 to 1978-80. As the insulation provided by the welfare state is taken away and as unemployment and inflation rise, more and more people are pushed into poverty and insecurity. Sharpening class contradictions underlie the thwarted aspirations, growing dissatisfaction, and agitation among peasants, government workers, students, unemployed youth, and women. As elsewhere, cutbacks in social welfare hit women, the primary nurturers of families, the hardest. This in conjunction with labor market discrimination and cultural prejudices against women make poverty disproportionately a female problem.

(To be Continued)

The Sri Lankan Crisis and South Asia

INTRODUCTION

The South Asian Consultation was opened by Dr. Kumar Rupasingha of the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO). In explaining the objectives of the meeting, he referred to the previous consultations regarding internal conflicts in South Asia. There had been informal discussions with Khawar Mumtaz, Smitha Kothari and Charlie Abeyaratne since 1987 and planning meetings held in Kathmandu, New Delhi, Colombo and Oslo.

The current consultation is a valuable input to the process wherein a large group of scholars address themselves to important issues and points of view. Formal papers were not presented; the meeting was mainly a consultation, a meeting of minds in it were, to address some of the dominant concerns of the region. The consultation would also help in the planning of a major international conference on internal conflicts and their resolution in South Asia in 1990. It is hoped, therefore, that the meeting envisaged for 1990 will result in a large volume on the subject.

One of the three major research programmes PRIO is currently

engaged in is the ethnic conflict and conflict resolution programme, the areas of concentration of which are both country specific and regional. For instance, it has ongoing researches in Sri Lanka and South Asia, Uganda and East Africa, South Africa and Southern Africa, Vietnam/Kampuchea and the Far East and special programmes actively collaborates with International Alert, the United Nations University and a number of research institutions.

NORAD and the Ministry of Development Co-operation and Head of Information of NORAD Mr. Hille Jan Hansen assisted in providing the material means for making the South Asia consultation possible.

The participating scholars, some of whom had travelled a long way, represented a fair cross section of South Asia. It was unfortunate and regrettable that there were no representatives from Nepal and Bhutan and one representative from Bangladesh.

Mr. Chandrika Kumaratunga, President, SLMP, Jayan Jayatilaka, General Committee member (SLMP), Dr. Kumar David, Dr. Shanmugaratnam and Mr. Kellish Loganathan were among Sri Lankan participants.

imposed by the IMF have led not only to a resource crunch (through the debt servicing linkage) and a distortion of internal priorities; it has also undermined the basic economic sovereignty of the different countries.

This picture of an impending breakdown should not, however, be read to imply that the current policy mixes would undergo a radical alteration, or that the different regimes are on the verge of collapse. While development has deepened the different inter- and intra-state conflicts in the region, the abilities of different states/regimes to respond to and contain the crisis have also been a crucial factor in conflict management. These factors operated in varying degrees in each country.

Notwithstanding its widespread poverty and deep inequality, India, for instance, has over the last four decades witnessed the emergence of a growing middle class. The overall size and diversity of the country, the large internal market, an infrastructure of modern production, the relative autonomy that the state structures have enjoyed from the international system, the tradition of political democracy and its constitutional federalism have all played a role in conflict management. Nevertheless, even here, the conflicts afflicting society have become widespread, deepened and increasingly taken on a violent character, thereby occasioning the greater use of force in conflict management.

On the other end of the spectrum, Sri Lanka nearly a decade ago was a relatively conflict-free society. Today it is marked by a civil war situation and the virtual collapse of law and order. A detailed discussion on Sri Lanka highlighted the need to radically evaluate the simplistic view of a linear relationship between democracy, development and peace. A relatively successful development performance with high growth rates has not gua-

Peace Development and Democracy in South Asia

The opening session set the overall tone for the discussion on conflicts in the South Asian region. In going into a broad assessment of the future of the different countries, in particular India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the initial discussion focused on the nature of the development strategies adopted in the region.

There was broad consensus that each of the states has adopted national strategies which are overtly capitalist, with the impetus coming in a top-down fashion. Though the different countries have exhibited different possibilities for stable and viable capitalist development, their strategy has been funda-

mentally non-sustainable. Forty years of planned development have not only failed to solve the endemic poverty, in most cases the situation has deteriorated. The number of people living in poverty, indices of inequality, the meeting of basic needs for about half the population seemed to have worsened.

Further, the development model has been characterized by a steady destruction of the natural resource base on which the survival capacity of the poor depend. There has also been a growing financial allocation to military and para-military establishments. In some countries, this situation has been exacerbated by an increasing integration (on unequal terms) the global financial system, where conditionalities like those

ranted a reduction of conflicts, many of which arose from a sense of relative rather than absolute deprivation.

Equally, a commitment to democracy (say, the holding of national elections) does not imply the democratisation of state structures at all levels. The Sri Lanka situation highlights the destructive and retrogressive power of different social movements, even when they are organically a part of society. Social movements are more complex, and anti-systemic movements (ethnopolitist) do not provide the kind of alternative required for a multiethnic society.

The overall discussion underscored the basic shift that has taken place in many movements rocking the region. There is a growth of religious, ethnopolitist and obscurantist forces, which in some cases are linked to extra-national actors/agencies. The outbreak of violence, the growth of criminality, and the virtual absence of coherent political projects have contributed to increased insecurity and fragility of states and a lack of consensus on law and order.

The assessment of a proximate future has thus projected an intensification of internal conflicts—due to ill planned capitalist development and its interaction with ethnicity and class. It has also become clear that formally democratic regimes enjoy a higher possibility of conflict management.

In discussing the broad outlines of an alternative strategy, the following have been suggested: selective de-linking from the global system; a reduction in military expenditures; the development of decentralized systems to accommodate the urge and demand for autonomy; an expansion of the basic services sector; restriction on the current push towards liberalization and privatisation; and a judicious policy of natural resource use and management. What remained unclear, in the

concrete conjunctures of each country, is the question of which agencies (including movements) can adopt these tasks as their political projects. It is not that "the owl of Minerva flies at dusk," but that "the great disorder under the heavens implies that all is not well."

Internal Conflicts in South Asia and their Resolution

Conflicts have been the motor of human progress and development. What we are interested in however are conflicts which reproduce violence and tend to become pathological. Conflict management may result in a situation where all parties to the conflict lose or where all sides see a gain. There are also instances of a no win-no lose situation and sleeping conflicts which could be roused by some outside catalytic agent.

The SIPRI Yearbook reveals that in 1988, there were 36 armed conflicts in the world, with "armed conflict" defined as a situation with over 1,000 casualties per year. Most armed conflicts are found in the Third World. The overwhelming majority are identity conflicts with ethnic, religious or linguistic struggle involving the assertion of identity and the search for security. Many of such struggles are concerned with the devolution of power.

There are, moreover, three times as many conflicts where the number of casualties have been under 1000 per year. Such conflicts usually involve the state and a particular minority. Statistical tabulations cannot provide us with the dynamic aspects of these conflicts. However, there is a range of anticipated areas of deterioration or sleeping conflicts. The 1987 yearbook of IWGIA (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs) carried a fairly comprehensive list of conflicts involving vulnerable peoples who may face extinction. This list included conflicts with episodic

events such as riots against unarmed populations like the Burundi or the Sikhs in Delhi in 1984 or the pogroms against the Tamils in 1983.

The present consultation was interested in discussing internal or domestic conflicts. So far, scholarly attention has analysed wars between nation states. It was felt that the need now is to work more towards analyzing conflict conditions and potential conflicts within state boundaries. There is also the felt need to delineate these types of conflicts more sharply in order to clarify the conditions in which a sleeping conflict may develop into a conflict process that accelerates into violence and internal armed conflicts.

It is therefore essential to have a sharper definition on such concepts as ethnic groups, minority, tribe, nations and nationality. The mere existence of diverse ethnic groups does not automatically lead to violent conflict. Key factors are the ethnic stratification system, the existence of cross-border networks and forms of mobilization available. To distinguish between types of ethnic conflicts and stratification empirical research must be undertaken. What is therefore suggested is that the mobilisation processes for political autonomy or secession depend on certain conditions. It is the given basic structures which determine the course of the conflict and possibilities for resolving it. Several different types of stratification exist from a conflict resolution perspective, namely:

1. dominating majority who are numerically, politically, and economically powerful,
2. dominating minority who are numerically small but with political/economical power,
3. balanced relation with nation-building people and several ethnic groups or nationalities,
4. division of power between territorial based and functional groups,

5. oppressed but economically strong minority, and
6. many small groups in balance.

This typology has proved useful in speculating on the types of conflicts which each model may generate. With regard to secessionist movements, types (1) and (3) seem likely candidates, but this of course depends on several other factors. The worst possible situation is where the majority and minority have strong perceptions of being engulfed and dominated by the other. To understand the dynamics of mobilisation processes which aim at political autonomy and secessionist solutions, we must above all analyze the ethnic balance of power. This reflects not only demographic conditions but also differences between the resource bases of various ethnic groups, their economic power and organizational propensities.

Recent reassertion of militant ethnicities has been aided by both the overall technological advances as well as access to the diaspora of such communities which provides transnational actors to operate in an ethnic conflict situation, aided, abetted and perhaps even initiated by foreign agencies. In this context, the emergence of ethnopopulist guerrilla movements has a military-political context which rely on, to an extent, the pathology of violence with its own relatively autonomous modes of social articulation.

Keeping the above considerations in mind the imperative in the conference was to distinguish the various types of domestic conflicts which generally result in serious or violent hostilities. The classification below was thus attempted.

1. **Ideological conflicts** are those conflicts between the state and insurgent movements where the social inequality between classes is dominant.

2. **Governance and authority conflicts** are conflicts concerning the distribution of power and authority in society. Demands from the opposition are for regime changes and control over resources.
3. **Racial conflicts** included the conflicts in South Africa and Namibia, as well as those in the US and Europe.
4. **Interstate conflicts** are those between two formally recognized states.
5. **Identity Conflicts** have ethnic or religious, tribal or linguistic differences as the dominant aspects. Often these conflicts involve a combination of identity and the search for security where the main contention concerns the devolution of power. This was the main type of conflicts occurring in 1987 with the likelihood of increasing in the future.

The discussion in the session on internal conflicts was principally concerned with defining the nature of existing and emerging conflicts in the region and in arriving at a working typology. Also an examination of some of the specificities of each of the countries in South Asia.

Pakistan

The determinants of Identity.

The session started with a discussion on Pakistan where the issue of identities as one of the fundamental causes of conflict was examined. In Pakistan, the question of Islam as an ideology as well as the determinant of identity remains unresolved. The notion of the ruling elites to create a homogenized Islamic nation-state with a unified national cultural

identity — in effect subsuming and even negating sub-national/regional identities — has generated a "crisis of identities." The continuity and the gravity of the crisis are manifest in the demand of the *muhajirs* (those who migrated from North India at the time of independence in 1947) to be recognized as a separate ethnic entity.

Accompanying this crisis of identities is the crisis of the state itself. Under periodic and extended rules of absolutist military dictatorship, the state has been unable to cope with the needs of multiple identities and has failed to develop a pluralistic system. While the establishment of a democratic government in Pakistan has created a relatively improved situation in this regard, the insecurity of the regime as well as the still evolving nature of different identities and their political/social articulation has so far not provided conditions for resolving identity-based conflicts.

Closely linked to these ethnic and identity based conflicts, which are exacerbated by militarization of the state, are conflict situations engendered by conditions of economic inequality (reflecting uneven development). These create both actual and perceived deprivation of sections of the populations which then lead to real or potential social conflicts gaining precedence and demanding immediate attention, others arising out of class, gender or national resource-use factors are relegated to the background and their seriousness minimized.

In addition, external pressure has generated insecurities which lead to foreign policy options that have induced drug and guns in society, thus contributing to widespread violence — yet another dimension in an already conflict-riven situation. Easy accessibility of sophisticated weaponry has extended the use of force by or against the state to contending groups against others for settling scores.

India

The partisan state.

In the Indian context it was suggested that, whereas the state had earlier acted as a mediator in inter-group conflict, the state has now become partisan. This happened in a situation where, on the one hand the struggle for sheer survival has become more intense and, on the other hand, power or efficacy of mediating social institutions has been eroded. Such a situation can and does give rise to several types of conflicts which were identified as:

1. Conflicts arising out of sub-nationalist demands for greater autonomy, self-determination (leading up to even secessionism at times) and moves for re-drawing international boundaries;
2. inter-religious and sectarian conflicts in which state assumes the character of the majority community;
3. conflicts arising out of contending demands on scarce and rapidly-depleting natural resources—these relate to both ownership of management of such resources (e.g. land and water) and can threaten the very existence and sustainability of various types of diversities and pluralities that have hitherto existed;
4. conflicts created by the nature of the existing political system, such as those generated by the majoritarian electoral practices; and
5. conflicts created by political policies, such as those relating to quotas prescribed in the furtherance of protective positive discrimination and, in particular, by the backlash unleashed by the privileged groups in the context of such conflicts.

Sri Lanka

The defective state.

Sri Lanka has a specific stratification system with special

characteristics. The evolution of the post independent state in Sri Lanka is the process of asserting Sinhalese hegemony can be divided into three phases: 1, Anti-colonial agitation with its anti-state character; 2) post-colonial control and domination of the state and exercise of hegemony over other minorities; 3) post accord

phase when it assumes an anti state character. With regard to the post colonial phase, any discussion must be related to the control of the state, welfare policies adopted by all governments, and an inherited political system which allowed for majority rule. Ethnic stratification in Sri Lanka is characterized by a dominant majority and a minority with cross-border affiliations to South India. The majority Sinhalese and the main Tamil minority each have strong perceptions of being engulfed and dominated by the other. This system stratification is further compounded by the strong sub-nationalist assertions of the Indian State of Tamil Nadu vis-a-vis New Delhi. Such a system stratification has inherent potential for protracted violent conflicts.

To understand the ethnic stratification system in Sri Lanka involves examining features like the "defective nature of its state," the majoritarian electoral patronage system, the petit-bourgeoisie base of its ethno-populism, etc. The role and effect of the lumpenization of the economy and of lumpen violence also need to be considered.

In the context of Sri Lankan and in the light of the historical experience where the intensity and extent of conflict situations have assumed seemingly intractable proportions, a regional, extra-national resolution of the conflict might become necessary and indeed inevitable.

Gandhi ...

(Continued from page 5)

cover-up. Suspicions turned to documented accusations as statements that he and other officials involved made to Parliament over the Bofors controversy were found to be incorrect. As the quagmire deepened, the country's institutions—the office of the prime minister, Parliament, the police and judiciary—were seen to suffer from their involvement.

Mr. Gandhi, like the Shah, felt the criticisms of him were unfair or ignored the favourable side of the picture. The economy entered a period of higher growth. India's fast-expanding middle class did well. Mr. Gandhi's image stood much higher with foreign leaders and businessmen than it did with domestic opinion. All these factors combined with the prestige of the Nehru family. India's long-standing fear of the instability that an opposition government could bring, and the conservatism of a rural society, gave him the feeling that he could win the election.

Mr. V. P. Singh, the leader of the opposition but formerly Mr. Gandhi's Finance Minister, believed two years ago that the tide had turned against Mr. Gandhi in the villages of the Hindi belt. He also believed that Bofors had become a stone around Mr. Gandhi's neck, which would slowly bring him down. These judgements proved correct.

Defeated in this election, Mr. Gandhi seems determined to remain leader of the Congress Party. His mother made a comeback after being routed in 1977, by exploiting the divisions within the opposition and by carrying her campaign to the people. If only because of the massive security that surrounds him—and is likely to continue to do so because of the bitterness in the Punjab against him and his mother—Mr. Gandhi has a hard task in winning back the hearts and minds of village India.

The ideological character of Liberalism

Chanaka Amaratunga

In both political and intellectual terms, Liberalism is at present in the midst of a powerful advance. I do not use the word 'revival' because although the magnificent outburst of Liberal writing in what remains the intellectual heartland of the world, Western Europe and North America, is indeed a revival of interest in a form of ideological writing which had been surpassed in influence over the intellectual debate in the 1930's and after, at the directly political level, that is to say direct influence in terms of political programmes, 'revival' is an inappropriate word because the last decade, indeed the last four years, have seen a spectacular advance of Liberal ideas and values in areas where they had seldom (and often never) existed in the past. What began initially as an enterprise at the highest level of ideas to combat the apparent mastery of the Marxist left and its intellectual though bitterly hostile kinsman the Fascist right undertaken with a power of thought and expression which though slow to make converts has at last burst forth upon the intellectual consciousness of the world with an unquenchable authority, the writings of Friedrich Von Hayek, of Karl Popper, of Isaiah Berlin and even that work of deadly insight which lays bare the dangerous illusions of rationalist excess whether in Rousseau or Marx, Saint Simon or Comte, Jacob Talmon's *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, has now flowed into and become the mainstream of ideas. And thus today an explicit interest in Liberalism as an ideology accompanies an advance of Liberalism across the political agenda and at the ballot box.

While at one level we recognise the advance of Liberalism, at another level, certainly in countries which can in the Liberal sense be described as

free, Liberalism has always been, if not the overtly dominant ideology, then the core idea, basis of reality, rather than one idea among many. In free societies, Liberal ideas are implicit in the very nature of human life, in the very structure and form of human relationships. Tolerance of diversity, the value of debate, the opportunity for choice, the integrity of individual personality, a belief in the potential improvability of persons through the imbibing of knowledge, experience and skills, an acknowledgement of the validity of individual judgements, all of these are liberal ideas based upon analyses, however unrecognised and inexplicit of man and society and an acceptance of fundamentals, which are the foundation of Liberalism.

At the first level at which I consider the state of Liberalism, it has been absent from Sri Lanka until it was introduced to this country by the movement that conducts this seminar and subsequently by the political party to which I belong. But at the second although it is clear that an important aspect of the current crisis is the crisis of Liberal values, Liberal assumptions are deeply ingrained in our own society. Liberalism as a core idea, may be said to be less absent here than in the great majority of the world's nation-states.

But what is this Liberalism which is now enjoying a new lease of intellectual and political life? What are its characteristics, what are the basis of its validity, what the worth it bears over its rivals in the ideological spectrum and what the place it is likely to create for itself in the world of the future?

John Gray in his work *Liberalism* rightly describes the idea as 'the project of theorising political institutions for the government of an individual

ist society'. Gray at present a Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford has become one of the leading new exponent of Liberalism. His studies of the two men I regard as the principal Liberals of the 19th and 20th centuries John Stuart Mill and Friedrich von Hayek, in relation to their conceptions of what D.J. Manning in his work *Liberalism* rightly asserts is the "first concern of the liberal" liberty, are of the first rank. *Mill on Liberty* and *Hayek on Liberty* powerfully introduced John Gray to those interested in Liberal ideas and he has further developed this central liberal concern in the volume of essays he edited jointly (and to which he is a contributor) with his fellow Oxford academic Zbigniew Pelczynski, *Conceptions of Liberty in Political Philosophy*. He has contributed to a fascinating collection of essays published under the title *Marxism and Liberalism*. Gray's essay in that volume 'Marxian Freedom, Individual Liberty and the End of Alienation' is a determined defence of Liberal conception of liberty and individuality against the Marxist notion of human liberation.

The unity of Liberal ideology is to be found in a particular conception of man and society which has four distinct characteristics. Only the existence of a conception of a man that combines these four elements may be said to be truly Liberal. The hall mark of Liberalism then, is that it is an ideology that is individualist, egalitarian, universalist and meliorist. Liberalism is individualist "in that it asserts the moral primacy of the person against the claims of any social collectivity" it is egalitarian "in as much as it confers on all men the same moral status and denies the relevance to legal or political order of differences in moral worth among human beings," it is universalist in that it affirms the "moral unity of the

human species and accords a secondary importance to specific historic associations and cultural forms," it is meliorist "in its affirmation of the corrigibility and improvability of all social institutions and political arrangements."²⁰ These characteristics have given Liberalism its distinctive identity over centuries as an ideology of individuality, tolerance, enlightenment and radicalism and has firmly placed it upon the progressive side of the political divide.

THE THIRD WORLD

In Sri Lanka and indeed in much of the Third World, particularly in those states which have emerged out of colonialism in the 20th century, Liberalism is hardly familiar and the idea of it that is commonplace would hardly concur with a description of it as radical and progressive. Both these terms have in much of the Third World, certainly in Sri Lanka, falsely become synonymous with the politics of Marxism and full blooded socialism. Among some political groups 'progressiveness' has come to be associated with what to the Liberal is the worst of all possible words the combination of collectivist economics with strong nationalism, cultural chauvinism and racism. The ideologies that underpin a sincere socialism and a strong nationalism/racism are by no means the same but the similarity of their intellectual antecedents is established by their common appeal to a collectivist ideal. Considered in terms of these fundamentals, Liberalism shares with Marxism a universalist conception of man but none of the others. Marxism and full-blooded socialism view politics and indeed human beings and national development through the distorting and one-dimensional vision of the class struggle and the simplistic notion that all life is explicable through an analysis of economic relations. It has no room for individualism and its conception of man is in the Liberal sense neither meliorist nor egalitarian.

It may seem strange that it could be asserted that Marxism (and full-blooded Socialism is not egalitarian. I should hasten to explain that my ascription to it of inequality is based upon the Liberal egalitarianism I set out which emphasises the equal moral status conferred upon each person in the development of the political order. What is meant by such an understanding of egalitarianism is that the state preserves the widest possible neutrality among rival conceptions of the good and that individuals are provided equal protection in the assertion of their chosen form. The Marxist or indeed the right wing totalitarian and even the milder authoritarian erects a structure which does not recognise the real possibility of rival conceptions of the goods. They believe that a particular group be it the working class, a particular racial group or those who 'truly understand the nature of society' have a special status that confers moral approbation and is worth protection. A conservative conception of society and indeed a socialist one too, subscribe to a less intolerant version of the same attitude by demonstrating themselves to be, throughout history the ideologies of special interests. In the Britain of today it is still noticeable that the Conservatives are largely the party of the financial, entrepreneurial and agricultural interests, while Labour Party is the working class, and large groups of lower income employees particularly in the state sector (teachers being a good example). Even the West German SPD is often described as the party of (teachers. Liberals on the other hand as demonstrated for a long time by the British Liberal Party (and indeed for that matter by our own Liberal Party) do not serve particular interests. The great Victorian Liberal Prime Minister Gladstone declared "all the world over, I will back the masses against the classes." He did not mean that he would support the numerical majority or the economically disadvantaged, he meant that he would

back the non-particularist sentiment against the special interest groups. It is in that sense of ascribing worth only upon the basis of shared conviction and not upon socio economic interest and even then not letting one's moral conception obtrude to the point of snuffing out individual projects for the realisation of the good, that the Liberal subscribes to a more refined egalitarianism than his socialist rivals.

In the more conventional understanding of the concept, Liberalism is not of course, an egalitarian idea. Social and economic equality is rightly viewed by the Liberal as a hindrance to that Liberty which is his primary value. Indeed in the simplest definition of the world's ideologies it could be said that while the socialist's (and here I include the Marxist) primary value is equality, the conservative's hierarchy and order and the fascist's nationality or race, the liberal's primary value is liberty. In the philosophical part of his work, John Gray uncompromisingly asserts the consistent Liberal belief that "individual freedom presupposes the juridical protection of contractual liberty and weighty rights to private property."²¹ This view has received a powerful advocacy in Liberal writings from those of Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, David Hume and the other leading figures of what is now termed the Scottish Enlightenment in the 18th Century, of Alexis de Tocqueville, Benjamin Constant, John Stuart Mill and Lord Acton in the 19th Century and of Friedrich von Hayek, John Maynard Keynes (a fact often ignored or misunderstood) Karl Popper and many others in the 20th century. The consequences of equality, an idea that has a simplistic appeal, particularly to those given to an interest in ideas that is emotive which doubtless led Raymond Aron, the fine French Liberal of our times to christen it "the opium of the intellectuals," which have led the German Liberal politician and academic Ralf Dahrendorf

(Continued on page 24)

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The ideological . . .

(Continued from page 22)

to write "equality is not only unattainable. It is also a terrible idea" are not sufficiently exposed in our part of the world.

It will also become clear that a class and economic based ideology such as Marxism, totally dependent upon a determinist world view cannot be meliorist, cannot believe that man, individual man, can improve himself and that his creations including political, social and economic institutions are capable of being reformed. When Lord Macaulay declared: "We need reform, more reform, constant reform. But we desire reform in order to preserve not to destroy" he was proclaiming in essence the Liberal view of conflict which is based upon a meliorist conception of man. The Marxist conception of a non-meliorist, therefore incorrigible man is made clear when Macaulay's words are contrasted with those of Lenin "we shall destroy everything and on the ruins we shall build our temple". The rival understanding conflict upon which these radically different attitudes to change are based is set forth with an abundant clarity by Ralph Miliband in *Marxism and Politics*.

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**NEXT: CONFLICT AND
PROBLEM SOLVING**

New Thinking . . .

(Continued from page 9)

As an immediate measure the Minister should consider initiating a few pilot projects in consultation with trade unions and village leaders as soon as possible.

Every government elected since independence have tried to foster and protect democracy in this country since we believe in a "GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE". In such a situation why should the Government continue to manage the main economy, of the country whereas in a democratic society the economy should be managed by the 'people' and not by the state.

Rise of the JVP . . .

(Continued from page 7)

create the capacity for rapid structural transformation that changes the occupational profile and makes the bundle of modern goods available to households. Therefore inherent in a basic needs strategy is the demand for a high rate of economic growth. Failure to sustain high rates of growth when pursuing a basic needs strategy will necessarily produce the type of disequilibria that have emerged in Sri Lanka."

(To be Continued)

The next instalment of Jayantha Perera's article will appear in the Jan. 1 issue.

TRENDS

(Continued from page 1)

SECURITY PERSONNEL?

Six naval ratings were arrested by the army when they attempted to extort money from a shop keeper in Kandy, according to police sources. Earlier the police apprehended four services personnel when they were attempting to rob a petrol shed at Gangodawila. Police said the suspects were two airmen, a naval rating and a soldier.

And suspected subversives, believed to be members of the underground DJV, robbed Rs. 1.8 million at a battery factory in Ratmalana. Police said the robbers were armed with sophisticated Israeli made weapons.

In another incident, a 29-year old man walked into the Joint Operations Command headquarters in Colombo and said that he wished to surrender because he had helped some subversives under threat. He was accompanied by his mother. The man said that nine subversives had forced their way into his house at gunpoint and made him minister to their needs for two days. He said that his neighbours had had similar experiences; three people from one such neighbouring house had later been abducted by unidentified men in military uniforms.

The JOC authorities directed the man to a detention camp.



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