

JVP REVOLT: ECONOMIC FACTORS ?

— *Eduardo Marino*

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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PRABHA GOES FOR HIS GUN

— *Mervyn de Silva*

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— *Savitri Gunasekera*

LENIN IS NO ICON

— *Reggie Siriwardena*

UNDERSTANDING PRO-ISRAELI BIAS

— *Izeth Hussain*

SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE SELF

— *Sunil Goonesekera*

TODAY'S PLANTATION TAMIL

— *P. Muthulingam*

RASA'S LAST RIOT — A REVIEW

— *Shelagh Goonewardena*

SHAN ON SHAN'S MEMOIRS

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TRENDS

EXTERNAL DEGREES FOR ALL

All universities will award external degrees in future, following a decision of the University Grants Commission. The UGC has also decided to admit only 6000 of the 20,000 who qualified for university entrance at the GCE (Advanced Level) examination.

The external courses are to provide for those who qualified for admission, but were shut out due to lack of space.

NO SALARY FOR THEM

School teachers refusing to accept transfers will not be paid. Recent regulations require teachers in overstaffed schools to move out to places with a shortage. Altogether there are more than 10,000 excess teachers in some schools, a survey has revealed. But there is a shortage of 1,500 in schools in the Moneragala, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts.

Education Minister Lalith Athulathmudali has ordered his officials to rectify this anomaly by August.

LETTER

STALIN'S HERO

Mr. U. Karunatilake, one of the few surviving Stalinists in Sri Lanka has a penchant for bringing his patron saint's name into his occasional doggeral. In the L.C. of 13/3/90 "(Siberia revisited)" he mentions Lysenko, the blue-eyed boy of Stalin in the 50s. He says that Lysenko was sent to a Siberian prison camp after he confessed his errors for having faked experimental

This is utter nonsense! Far from being sent to prison, Lysenko was made a hero by Stalin, because Lysenko's spurious theories fitted neatly with Stalin's ideology, that acquired characteristics could be genetically inherited.

Throughout Stalin's life time Lysenko ruled Soviet biology. One of the world's greatest geneticists, the Russian Vavilov, was removed from the Academy of Sciences and disgraced, because he did not accept the absurd theory of Lysenko and his boss, Stalin. He was accused of being a "bourgeois idealist" and a saboteur. He was banished and died under miserable conditions, in a concentration camp. Thus it was exactly the opposite of what Karunatilake said that happened, and he is trying to palm these untruths to unsuspecting readers, in the course of his singing praises to his demigod, Stalin.

Amaradasa Fernando

BRIEFLY

● Proposed new legislation to dissolve the North-East Provincial Council and hold fresh elections is expected to be challenged in courts by the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). The bill containing this legislation will be referred to the Supreme Court by the Government. An EPRLF spokesman has told the press that they were vehemently opposed to the Government's move.

● The Emergency will be lifted when necessary laws are enacted to keep hardcore subversives in jail, State Minister for Defence, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne told newsmen. "After that there will be a gradual de-escalation of security arrangements", he said.

● Casinos will soon be for foreigners only; and gambling will be in foreign exchange only. Legislation for this will be brought before parliament, State Minister for Finance Harold Herat said. This has been recommended by a committee appointed by government to look into the operation of casinos.

● Sri Lanka's view of the Kashmir dispute is that it could be settled through a process of dialogue and consultation, Foreign Minister Harold Herat told Parliament.

"We in Sri Lanka strongly support a resolution of the dispute in keeping with the SAARC spirit through a dialogue that would make each side aware of the concerns and perceptions of the other. Such dialogue in turn would help evolve a lasting and durable settlement that would be acceptable to all parties", he said.

● Police seized Rs 3.3 million from seven businessmen in and around Colombo following the arrest of a Middle East returnee believed to be the king pin in a smuggling racket. Police believe that the money seized is cash realised from the sale of smuggled gold.

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Editor: Mervyn de Silva
Telephone: 447584

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Prabhakaran makes his move

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Eclat War 2? Not quite. Or, not yet. The IP/KI commander, General Kalkat, told an Indian friend, he expected the LTTE to start trouble by July. First came the Vavuniya incident: a soldier was killed and another ten injured when LTTE militants opened fire at one of their check-points. If the IOC was playing "War games" that was the sort of incident it may have simulated to test individual and group responses under stress and fire. More than that, in fact.

The "peace talks" are going on but these talks, understandably, concentrate on political issues, at least the main questions — the 6th amendment, the dissolution of the North-East Provincial Council, fresh elections etc. Fortunately, the government delegation included the Provincial Governor, Lt. General Nalin Senewiratne, the former Army Commander, and top representatives of the Defence Establishment, such as the Defence Secretary, the JGP, and often some of the Service Commanders. The LTTE had its military commander, Mahuttaya.

This is a political-military conflict in a heavily militarised little island. The after-effects of the much shorter JVP insurgency in the South are still evident in the continuous eruption of violence and the breakdown of discipline even in the most disciplined of institutions — the armed forces. (See RANJAN interview). Likewise, the LTTE which recently has gone on a massive recruitment drive, has opened its ranks to thousands of teenagers who have never come under fire. They may not always be trigger-happy but they are certainly not battle-tested.

As important therefore as the negotiations on the substantive issues is agreement on "ground rules" for the respective militia. Or mechanisms that will control fire-fights or little incidents that can flare up into major armed clashes. To be sure, the LTTE is one of the toughest as well as one of the most rigorously disciplined guerrilla groups in the world but when numbers rise rapidly, discipline does tend to break down, particularly among the raw recruits. This certainly happened to the Sinhala soldier in the early 80's.

Unless, one concludes that the LTTE has made a coldly calculated decision to step up the military pressure on Colombo in order to speed up the negotiations and extract more political gains, the breakdown of these agreed rules — that is, not to provoke, confront or trigger skirmishes — is the problem faced by both sides. There is no other way out but for the negotiators, most of all the military representatives, to tighten up these "procedures" in some tense situation or other. Essentially, it is a question of not going for one's gun as the first response to anything 'suspicious' or 'provocative'. The LTTE High Command must crack the whip and hold the District/Area Commanders responsible.

If on the other hand, the LTTE has decided to step up the pressure on the government then the challenge of the June 11-12 outbreak of fighting in the Eastern province and the resultant confusion and near-anarchic conditions is far more serious — not just for the regime, but Sri Lanka. We are all on the threshold of 'Eclat War 2'.

It would be foolish to think that such a war would be confined to the East, or North-East. Colombo itself could be a target. We had a taste of it in 1985-87. The situation, in a way, is worse because there are more guns around and more disaffected groups in the South ready to use them.

But bullets, grenades, claymore mines and bombs are not the only explosive material. Passions are. The Sri Lankan is an expert witness to that fact. Throughout the world, explosive ethnic allegiance is deciding the fate of nations, and the peace and stability of societies.

It has been my firm belief and I have stated this, July '83 was as much organised (State-sponsored) as spontaneous. It was an attempt to "teach the Tamils a lesson" and to tell the LTTE that a million or more Tamils were "hostages" in the South. Sad to say, the Sinhala people had their name smeared and the Tamil case earned much more international sympathy. Surely the bitter lessons of that experience have been learnt?

EXPLOSIVE POTENTIAL

But this society post-83 has gone through the JVP violence too. There is, I suspect, much anger and hatred deep down. The discontent may have only been suppressed for the time being. It cannot create a violent situation, but it can make a politically tense situation violent. And that's where a parliamentary consensus — UNP and Opposition — not to inflame passions is vital. Nobody will be delighted to see violence and chaos in the South than Mr. Prabhakaran, for he is a militarist, meaning a man who uses military means for political ends. And by military means, in

this unconventional war, we do not mean set-piece battles. Creating chaos and division in the rear of the enemy is a military tactic.

In this context, a report in the *ISLAND* is most pertinent. It also throws some light on the theory of a breakdown in communications between the LTTE and its widely spread, inexperienced fighting units. The LTTE spokesman in Batticaloa said that the "attacks on the police stations will stop only if Prabhakaran issues such an order". In other words, the Supreme Commander is supreme. Upto the IPKF's pullout, the central concerns of President Premadasa and Mr. Prabhakaran converged. For different reasons, of course. The LTTE leader wanted the IPKF off his back and his men out of the jungle. President Premadasa wanted to disarm the ultra-nationalist JVP by grabbing its principal ideological-propagandist weapon what the JVP called "Occupying Hanuman (monkey) Army".

After that, politics took command for both. This meant for Prabhakaran, "Eelam" ideally, or regional autonomy as close as possible to an independent state. Before that he would like things done — such as the repeal of the 6th Amendment, which makes the espousal of any separatist cause, illegal. More symbolic than anything else but yet it is also a test of the government's (and the Sinhala-dominated Parliament's) *bona fides*.

And then, the Provincial Council — its dissolution followed by elections. Both have been delayed. And a condition laid down — surrender of arms before the polls. In his eyes, delays, conditions, uncertainties. So, he decides to do something about it, a warning to the government, to the Sinhala Establishment, perhaps even to his own negotiators. Start a fight, which is what he knows best. By this, he can also achieve something else — have his raw, teenage recruits bloodied, test the responses and fighting skills of the Sri Lankan security forces.

How the mini-war began

The government threw the maximum resources of the security forces into the war the LTTE has unleashed in the Eastern Province and prepared, in the words of Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, "to wrest back the police stations" seized by the Tigers.

Our Digamadulla correspondent D. W. Ranaweera, reported that land, sea and air resources are being deployed and the forces are determined to fight until the police stations are taken back, the abducted policemen released and the captured arms and ammunition recovered.

The Special Task Force is being moved from their Mone-ragala base to the Ampara district, he said, and reinforcements are arriving in the area.

Military sources in Colombo confirmed that six police stations in the Batticaloa district have been overrun by armed Tigers. These are Kalkudah, Valaichenai, Eravur, Batticaloa, Vellaveli and Kalawanchikudy.

Our correspondent said several army camps in the Ampara district were under LTTE attack. Military sources confirmed these attacks, but said they were being resisted.

"There were Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim policemen in the stations the Tigers attacked", a senior military official said.

Our correspondent said that according to information available at Ampara, Tigers seized between 570 and 625 small arms from the police stations they captured with an estimated 70,000 rounds of ammunition.

They also seized walkie-talkies,

police vehicles and other equipment, he said.

According to the statement to parliament by Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, the train of events that led to the LTTE takeover of the Batticaloa police station began on Sunday after a Muslim youth was found with a married Sinhalese woman inside the refugee camp in Batticaloa town.

The woman's husband had assaulted the youth. The quarrel had been settled by a policeman on guard duty at the camp. Subsequently, the Sinhala husband and the Muslim youth had been produced at the Batticaloa police station.

Both had minor injuries from their fight. Further incidents had developed from this — the youth being a tailor of LTTE uniforms — with the LTTE saying that all policeman should be chased out of Batticaloa. The situation had thereafter escalated, culminating in the LTTE takeover of the Batticaloa police.

Our correspondent said some policemen at Kalmunai had also been killed in the fighting. But the military authorities in Colombo, who confirmed injuries to two policemen and abduction of several more, said they had no information of any policeman being killed up to noon.

Two stations seized

The Point Pedro and Kankasanturai police stations in the Jaffna peninsula have been taken over by the LTTE, military sources in Colombo said.

(Daily News, 13/6)

STOP PRESS

As we go to press, "further deterioration" in the security situation is reported by the Defence Ministry. After the LTTE ignored the Wednesday noon ceasefire negotiated by Justice Minister Shaul Hameed, the Sri Lankan forces have lost 5 men, with a dozen injured. (The day before 11 soldiers were brutally killed, the Ministry added by a group of 300 Tigers). LTTE has taken control of ALL police stations in the Batticaloa area. On Wednesday-Thursday, the LTTE mounted attacks in the North-West, Mannar and Murukkan in particular. The Vavuniya police evacuated the station.

Some of the withdrawals were described as tactical. Stations in Point Pedro, KKS and Kiran have been overrun. Reinforcements are being sent to the north and east by air. Helicopter gunships, SIA marchetti aircraft, and SLN patrol boats have also been placed at the service of General Denzil Kobbekaduwe, overall commander of the military operation.

PARLIAMENT:

FIGHTING RANJAN ON "TIGERS"

Will the minister inform this House.

(a) Whether the government has promised the LTTE not to move out its forces without notifying the LTTE?

(b) If so promised, who was responsible for ordering the said soldiers to move out, thereby subjecting them to injuries?

(c) From this incident it is clear that the LTTE maintains illegal check points in the North and the East. Has the government empowered them to do so?

(d) If no such power have been granted, will the government take steps to do away with these check points?

(e) Will the government adopt legal action against the LTTE with regard to the said attack?

(f) Will the government compensate those injured and the dependents of the killed?

(g) What steps will the government take to prevent the repetition of similar incidents?

Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne in reply said:

(a) I have given a pledge to get at their (the LTTE) necks.

TELO condemns

TELO in a statement condemned the LTTE's military action in the Eastern Province and said that there was no valid reason whatever for such an offensive on the part of the LTTE.

Mr. G. Karunakaram, MP, Secretary-General of TELO said that the LTTE's military confrontation of the government at a time when an earnest effort was being made to evolve a viable and lasting political solution to the ethnic issue "was unwarranted, uncalled for and absolutely unjustified".

(b) The said troops were travelling from one point to another. The LTTE met them and opened fire. We have been making every effort to avoid bloodshed. At this stage I ask Amnesty International to follow the LTTE's doings and not to accuse us of genocide. Taking note of the LTTE's actions we will deal with them accordingly.

(c) Now they are running with their shoes out. Very soon their pants will go too.

(d) There will be no LTTE or watch posts soon.

(e) We are not going to courts. We will use the barrel. That is what they use on us.

(f) We will do that.

(g) Flatten the LTTE.

N-E POLLS

'Tigers' to Contest?

The Supreme Court will soon rule whether an amendment to the Provincial Councils Act which the Cabinet has agreed is an "urgent measure" is constitutional. The politics of the bill is more interesting than its legal aspects. The North-East Provincial Councils Act — one of the most important consequences of the India-Sri Lanka Peace Accord — needs to be amended if the Elections Commissioner is to call for fresh polls. The North-East Council is NOT functioning because its Chief Minister Vartharaja Perumal has fled to India and thence to Madagascar and the other members of the Council, all EPRLF or allied pro-Indian parties, branded traitors by the LTTE, to India. There are not enough PC members of the 73 member assembly around to form a quorum.

If the bill is okayed, the Elections Commissioner can announce a date for fresh polls, which the LTTE boycotted because of the IPKF's presence. With the IPKF in control of the two provinces, there wouldn't be a 'free and fair' election. And the LTTE made its point when the EPRLF and its allies swept the polls, with the S.L.M.C. winning 17 seats.

The LTTE is ready to contest fresh polls. If it does, it'll be

the first overt action to signal its willingness to join the democratic mainstream. Thus, the amendment and the announcement of a polls date is vital. But it is also urgent because incidents like Vavuniya confrontation (see editorial comments) indicate mounting strains on the LTTE-Government 'peace talks' and the tensions in the South, not to mention possible frustration and dissatisfaction in the security forces, and the public service over LTTE behaviour in the north-east.

"Free and fair" elections must mean a "gun-free" election. The LTTE must agree to that. The LTTE does have cause to worry about its security. It still has many enemies about, or that is its firm conviction. Its distrust of the State is part of the Tamil psychology. Its mistrust of IPKF — trained and heavily equipped rivals runs deep. Its hatred and suspicion of R.A.W. is nearly pathological.

The amendment to the PC Act, which the EPRLF will challenge in court, is both the first serious effort to draw the LTTE into the democratic process as well as a concerned move to shore up an ongoing negotiating process which is under serious stress.

RANJAN ON LANKA'S WARS

(Excerpts from an interview with ASIaweek)

But (the EPRLF) delayed) the Sri Lankan Army from going into the deinducted areas. Instead they surreptitiously set up camps for the so-called Tamil National Army.

The LTTE did not take kindly to this. Look, they said, we were fighting the IPKF to drive them out of this country because they were killing us. What does the (IPKF) do? They withdraw and supplant with the so-called Tamil National Army armed to the teeth. We can't face this. We can't come into the democratic process with such an army camped throughout the districts and provinces. So we asked the EPRLF, is there an illegal army? The chief minister denied it. So we told the LTTE, look they are denying there is such an army; what are you accusing them of? The LTTE said, all right, we'll prove it to you, and they assaulted two camps in the Batticaloa district, captured all the chaps, killed most of them and captured all their arms—two trailer loads of arms given by the IPKF.

The LTTE proved to the government and the world that there was an illegal army. There was proof because we too captured TNA soldiers, so-called soldiers; we collected 10 million rupees worth of brand-new arms... The LTTE is holding on to its arms because it says that RAW, India—the RAW arm of India—and the TNA are conniving to destabilise them. **Do you believe that?**

To some degree. RAW is up to no good. I've myself warned them not to interfere with our internal affairs. I know (they're interfering) because there is an allegiance.

Stability in southern Sri Lanka has come at a high cost in terms of lives lost and property damaged. Wasn't their any other option besides the military one?

No. After President Premadasa took office he lifted the emergency which had been in place for five years. We let loose 1,800 criminals involved in subversive activities, hoping they would come to the conference table. What did they do? The opposite of what we anticipated. They doubled their atrocities, created fear psychosis throughout the country. By July (1989), things had got so bad that people thought the government would fall any moment. We had to promulgate emergency rule, enforce curfews, close down universities—they were hotbeds of subversion—close down the schools. We said, right, now it's going to be a free-for-all. Enough is enough. And we went for them.

My intelligence arm was organised by the first week of August, and coordinated a plan for all the forces. I went to the field myself, to the front line. And within three months, we smashed the JVP hierarchy... It was my life against Wijeweera's life. They put my neck on the block, by challenging me. They put me against the wall, virtually. I was not going to sit with that. I said, right you're prepared to take my life, I'm going to take yours. That was the motivation; they motivated me.

But many Sri Lankans feel that in the process the government has released forces it cannot control. There have been wide-spread reports of extra-legal killings by hit squads and vigilante groups.

I don't deny it. There have been extra-legal killings, mainly by people who have been hurt. In the village people know who killed whom, and they take revenge. The military also had been infiltrated by subversives—they also killed, they deserted and they killed. Some politicians may have used this opportunity to get rid of their adversaries, on all sides. It

would be foolish on my part to say nothing happened. But as far as the forces are concerned and the police are concerned, they are a disciplined lot. I have not told any of my men to do an unnecessary killing. My instructions were (to) go for the terrorists and capture them. If you come into combat with them shoot... (But) just because they put on uniforms they're not saints. You get the pathological cases.

But did you let them go at that time, or did you try to rein them in when you spotted those men who got out of line?

At the height of the anarchy, I had to use the bravest of men to face up to it. I had to get people who were prepared to do the job. They have been enthusiastic, a little more perverted than they should have been. We have now eased them out from their charges, because they're no longer required for that type of activity.

Have you remanded people for abuses?

Of course. I have a little over 100 men in the armed forces and police who will be court-martialled. I have a list of names and I'm going to ensure they are court-martialled or brought to the courts. I'm going to follow up on that.

Do you have any personal feelings about what happened over the last year? A lot of innocent people were killed.

I have a feeling for our people. I am a good Buddhist, a practising Buddhist. I look at it from a philosophical angle. If a bunch of criminals are killing innocent people and I fold my arms and look the other way, I feel I am conniving. I did not want this society decimated by a bunch of criminals. In Buddhism, we are told "don't kill." But that does not mean we should allow criminals to kill.

A Petition by SSP Ronnie Gunasinghe

Senior Superintendent of Police Ronnie Gunasinghe has petitioned the Court of Appeal seeking to squash the Moratuwa Magistrate's order to arrest and produce him before court in connection with the Richard de Zoysa murder inquiry.

Mr Gunasinghe has said that he was greatly distressed and disturbed when he read in *The Island* newspaper that he was to be arrested and produced before the magistrate following an affidavit filed by Dr (Mrs) Manorani Saravanamuttu in which she swore that she had personally succeeded in identifying him as one of those who took away her son.

He said that the magistrate had not considered the belatedness of Dr (Mrs) Saravanamuttu's affidavit. Mr Gunasinghe alleged that the affidavit submitted by Dr Saravanamuttu was false and mala fide.

CRM alarmed over threats

The Civil Rights Movement said in a statement that it was an alarming trend that human rights defenders should be deliberately selected as targets of summary or arbitrary executions, since without their activities human rights violations would largely remain undetected, would not be reported to the authorities or in the public, would not be investigated and would not be punished.

The CRM has cited death threats against Dr (Mrs) Manorani Saravanamuttu, the mother of the late Richard de Zoysa and against her senior counsel Mr Batty Weerakoon.

The CRM statement says, among other things, that the practice of trying to pervert the

course of justice by death threats, often directed against lawyers, judges and witnesses, has recently received the serious notice of the United Nations. The CRM has drawn the attention of the Government, the legal profession, and the general public, to the observations on this in the report issued in January 1990 by the UN Special Rapporteur on Summary or Arbitrary Executions.

Peoplisation and protests

Around 200 state owned corporations, boards and Government Owned Business Undertakings (GOBUs) will eventually be "peoplised". The process is now "gathering momentum", the state owned *Sunday Observer* said. Forty corporations and 30 GOBUs have been identified for immediate attention. The exercise is handled by the Commercialisation Division of the Treasury and the recently set up Public Investment Management Board.

The state-run public transport service, the CTB, is now being peoplised. Last week Transport and Highways Minister Wijepala Mendis said that peoplisation would enable Sri Lanka Central Transport Board employees to run the bus services under government supervision. He said that while the SLCTB employees would hold 50 per cent of the shares without charge, the balance 50 per cent would be held in trust. No employee would be allowed to hold more than ten per cent of the shares, to prevent monopolies being formed.

President Premadasa in his May Day speech this year announced that workers could become share-holders under the peoplisation program. They could do so as individuals or register themselves collectively under the Companies Act. As shareholders, workers would have

a direct interest themselves in capital growth and dividend income; and the rights of the workers would be further strengthened and safeguarded, he said.

Meanwhile trade unions affiliated to opposition political parties have denounced the peoplisation of the CTB and warned that it would lead to a collapse of bus transport and eventually of the economy. The SLFP's Mr Anil Moonasinghe MP, a former minister of transport, who chaired a joint press briefing by five trade unions, said that the opposition parties and their trade unions would launch an islandwide agitation to safeguard the nationalised bus service. The opposition has also asked for a debate in parliament.

Opposition trade unions have asked SLTB workers not to leave their jobs but organise themselves to oppose peoplisation.

"We are going to take the issue to the people and the workers. We will build up opposition among the people. We must stop the peoplisation scheme", the Communist Party's Mr M. G. Mendis said.

He said that former President J. R. Jayewardene had started killing the SLTB by not providing adequate finances. Other reasons that led to its decline, after the SLTB had made profits in the sixties and early seventies, were bad management and failure to win the co-operation of the workers.

It was also said at the press briefing that the SLTB ran at a loss after 1977 mainly because the UNP promoted unsuitable employees to higher grades on political patronage. This resulted in the number of employees increasing from 48,000 in 1977 to 74,000 today. Corruption too was cited as one of the reasons for the decline of the SLTB.

Editorial Comments

The Vavuniya shooting

The Posen day shooting at Vavuniya, where one soldier lost his life and several more were wounded, must worry not only the Government and the defence hierarchy responsible for the security forces but also the rest of the people of this country.

We have repeatedly stressed, in these columns, that nobody wants to start another war. The country has learned the bitter lessons of two senseless civil wars, and no effort is being spared to ensure that a new conflagration does not arise.

The LTTE, as much as anyone else, have the primary duty to do everything they can to forge a durable peace. But some of the events that have been reported in recent weeks suggest that certain sections at least of the LTTE do not seem to understand this truth.

Even the ranks of Tuscany must admit that the Government has been acting with an abundance of patience in the face of many provocations from Tiger ranks.

The LTTE know very well that the ruling Establishment in Colombo is responsible to a national constituency. Also, there is an opposition which is ever ready to seize on Tiger doings to further its argument that Colombo's writ does not run in the North and in the East.

The Government can be greatly embarrassed and, indeed, has been greatly embarrassed by many of the LTTE doings which Minister Ranjan Wijeratne has publicly attributed to "underlings".

— Daily News.

Salvo in Vavuniya

For the first time after a thirteen month ceasefire between the Sri Lankan military and the Tamil rebels a soldier was killed and several others injured in a clash near Vavuniya on Thursday.

While reports were still sketchy about the incident, the impact of it has caused understandable concern among the peace loving people.

The incident took place at a time when the Sri Lankan government and the leaders of the LTTE were in the process of seeking a political solution to the north east crisis. It is therefore most unfortunate. Urgent remedial action must be sought to resolve any misunderstandings that could arise from the Vavuniya incident.

The government had tried but with hardly a success to persuade the Tigers to lay down arms and contest the upcoming Provincial Elections. And with a sense of optimism it had sought to prevent any direct confrontations by its military and police with the LTTE cadres who evidently enjoy a field day in the North and East these days.

— Sun

per social perspective the 'Sun' heaped anathemas on the authorities for what it called a 'disgusting' and 'preposterous' move.

It argued that if the idea was to make money from the sale of alcohol it would be better to offer a safer drink at affordable prices to the clientele which goes in for kasippu.

Now this is precisely what the Government cannot do. In fact the recurrent price increases through every Budget make it clear that the Government is depending on the sale of liquor to boost its revenue substantially each year. Meanwhile there is no curtailment in the spread of kasippu. Not only are more and more people driven to it as a result of prohibitive arrack prices but it is big business and forms a large part of the underworld which overlaps with the sleazy areas of the political underworld as well. Moreover it is clear that the authorities charged with combatting it are quite happy to turn a blind eye to its operations. It is naive for the 'Sun' to ask why if the law enforcement authorities could battle armed terrorists, they cannot take on the kasippu barons. Money talks and these barons have a lot of it.

In such circumstances it is better to legalise kasippu and be finished with it rather than have it as a dirty little secret in our social life. Of course there is no formula for making it and some manufacturers do introduce lethal elements to give it that extra kick. But much of the kasippu produced in the western coconut belt is considered by connoisseurs to be equal to arrack and there is the possibility that if kasippu is legalised the good will edge out the bad from the market.

— Island

Kasippu and Humbug

The announcement by the Minister of State for Finance Harold Herat that the Government is considering legalising the manufacture of kasippu has been greeted with the predictable moralistic howl. While the normally staid and conservative 'Daily News' surprisingly welcomed the announcement putting it in the pro-

'International Alert' Report (2)

by Eduardo Marino

"Bottled-up in men are great emotional forces and these must have an outlet in a way which is positive and constructive."

Field Marshall Montgomery, North Africa

"The law of armed conflict... which protects man from his own folly".

Jean Pictet, International Red Cross

On Political Responsibility

The killings and terror in Southern Sri Lanka since mid-1987 have been quite deliberate: a result of political decisions by political actors. The killings are not the necessary, expected or even understandable product of socio-economic factors. Socio-economic evolution and context may explain a degree of permanent social unrest and the frequent outbursts of violence, in the form of riots, within the predominantly Sinhalese community over recent times. However, these factors go no way to account for the many hundreds of cold-blooded killings and calculated counter-killings which have taken place and continue to take place within this community, mainly in the villages. There is a clear, distinct and total political responsibility for what has been happening — responsibility on the part of the government and the party-in-government and on the part of groups in opposition.

Intermittently, the killings and disappearances have stopped overnight. A number of days without casualties then follow. Suddenly, blood is spilt again, which simply means that the killings are either ordered or called off at will. Evidently, they are not the inevitable consequence of unemployment and other social ills — insofar as the killings by the insurgency are concerned — or merely a deplorable result of police indiscipline or weakness — insofar as the killings by the government are concerned.

The realisation that most of the killings on and by all sides are a result of policy or command may be the first step to see how best to confront them.

To confront the killings however — through political negotiations and/or through the enforcement of international public law — may be rapidly becoming an impossible task. As the spate of individual and small-group assassinations (by the insurgents) and extra-judicial executions (by the government) engulf larger groups of people in more places, the possibility of a fully-fledged civil war looms clearly on the horizon. The political, moral and historical — responsibility remains the same. Even if unplanned by anyone, a civil war would be a logical outcome of the escalation of deliberate terror and counter-terror.

Still, political negotiations and/or enforcement of international public law — with external assistance, if necessary — are the only positive options immediately open to those with political responsibility on whichever side; that is, unless some or all of them have already made up their minds about the other option — which is annihilation of the opponents and all those caught in-between. The 'final solution' is advocated by some or many on the government side; 'power at all costs' is advocated by some or many IVP supporters. The killings are already counted in hundreds each day. If political solutions are not found, the

number of deaths will continue to multiply. It makes no sense to talk about the possibility of either side 'winning'. The whole people of the country is losing. One full generation, mainly of young males, is being decimated. It is up to the political leadership on all sides to choose between holocaust and the construction of a new genuine democracy.

On Public Information

In Sri Lanka today, as with many conflicts elsewhere, misinformation, including partial information, is an instrument of government, a tool of opposition to the government, a weapon of strife. Political violence thrives on censorship, misreporting and more violence. There is the inhibiting effect of absence of information: people who would react positively in the full knowledge of the events, remain passive. There is the still more damaging effect of false information which misleads people into ineffective or counter-productive attitudes. Fear dominates the area of information, and physical threats are the daily experience of those responsible for the media.

Distorted information is in the essence of political criminality and dirty war. Perpetrators of atrocities hide or fake their identity. Operatives are not only clandestine in the manner of conventional war but often perfidious. Communications become anonymous. A 'disappearance' or a 'missing' person are, by definition, a problem of misinformation. Nowadays, torture is feasible to the extent that it is secret or covered-up. To prevent identification the heads of the victims are defaced or chopped-off altogether — their fingertips crushed. Often political motivation is a facade for profit motive and political atrocity a misnomer for economically motivated crime. In order to act illegally, law enforcers disguise themselves in plain clothes. The opposition stays underground not only to protect itself from

brutal repression but to act brutally with impunity. All these elements are found in the scenario of the political killings in Southern Sri Lanka.

However, a major investigative effort would be required to reveal all the facts. Ignorance of the full facts, of course, makes it impossible to understand situations and processes and act or react accordingly in a positive and effective way.

Broadcasters, press-editors, researchers, public writers and others, could consider a discussion of this problem, including the particular forms it takes in each one of the three languages: Sinhala, Tamil, English.

A Bill on Public Information, securing a constitutional democratic right to know, at least, in matters pertaining to basic rights and freedoms, could be put before Parliament and an autonomous (tri-lingual) high public authority put in place to oversee its execution. To be of practical importance, fair, full and prompt reporting, well beyond central Colombo, should reach the villages.

The JVP/DJV have been threatening and killing journalists and radio-broadcasters, accusing them of under-reporting and misinformation about the activities of the security services of the government. The government, in turn, regrets that so many people have fallen mentally captive to JVP/DJV propaganda.

In the present circumstances of deadly polarisation it is improbable, therefore, that a public information authority, credible to all, will emerge from the Sri Lankan polity. It would be in the best interests of all—of the Sri Lankan population at large—to invite the UN to set up, as an interim measure, an impartial, properly equipped, Observation and Reporting Service—Island-wide (including North and East, of course)—to be responsible jointly to the Secretary General of the UN and the Supreme Court of Justice or the Attorney General of Sri Lanka. The purpose of such a service being to observe on site, and

report publicly on, the behaviour of all conflicts actors under Chapter III of the Constitution of Sri Lanka (referring to Human Rights) and (with the assistance of the International Red Cross) under International Humanitarian Law as applicable in times of emergency.

On Defence of Life

Political and related killings could be called off overnight by an act of will of the political leadership on all sides, or negotiation between them. Such has been the control and discretion of the political leadership on the campaign of terror and death that, over the weeks of the presidential and parliamentary elections, politicians and commentators in Colombo could talk in terms of a period of 'calibrated violence'—meaning the tactical limitation of killings by one side in response to limitation by the other side/s.

It can be taken for granted that very many in the Sri Lankan community are absolutely rather than conditionally against the killings and the life trade-offs. The fact is, however, that, given the nature of the problem, only a few individuals or groups have been able to do anything positive in defence of life as a human right. They just cannot compete with those using it as a bargaining chip. Only relatively few lawyers in the South are known to have regularly been active regarding inquests, disappearances, *habeas corpus* and detentions related to the political violence. Those who have been are obviously in danger: the house of one of them has been machine-gunned; some have received death threats; and at least two have been killed. Equally, few groups have been speaking out impartially and consistently against the misdeeds by all sides. Group members have been sent death threats. Buddhist monks demonstrating against the atrocities have been beaten and humiliated. Military officers recommending an approach to 'hearts and minds' rather than dirty-war approach have been trans-

ferred from frontline to rearguard positions.

The following may be some elements to be considered, among others, when designing a bold and well-defined special action in defence of life as a human right in Sri Lanka:

- A bi-lingual Sinhala-English public information campaign in all villages, in the spirit of Lanka Buddhism's Law of Righteousness and the letter of human rights law, to make people more aware of their basic rights, especially in times of strife. Wall posters and leaflets to all households could be the media for such a campaign.
- The organisation of an impartial and qualified 24-hour emergency legal and popular service, preferably with the support of the Bar Association, under the mandate of Chapter III of the Constitution of Sri Lanka, the International Covenant of political and Civil Rights, and humanitarian law, with focus on the Right to Life. This could be built upon the already existing documentation and *habeas corpus* networks. Consulted lawyers in the Deep South are of the opinion that this service could or should operate as part of the Attorney's General apparatus of public vigilance, advice and intervention at district and village levels, with the support of human rights groups and other grass-root community networks.
- The organisation of a forum with police superintendents, officers and constables under the heading of **Human Rights in Times of Emergency**, to assess the police experience under the emergency legislation and discuss a professional programme to protect basic human rights, particularly in emergency situations. In this respect, a recent local proposal should be noted: "... that the special committee of independent, non-partisan experts be created to keep under review the law and practice relating to detention, custody and interroga-

tion in emergency situations to ensure that basic human rights are not negated in the name of the needs of national security..." (researcher's emphasis)

- The organisation of a Mass Appeal on human and people's Rights, from all towns and villages in the South, directed both to the government and to the JVP/DJV as part of an effort to encourage and empower the common people to speak out for the basic rights of all rather than remain passive victims of the violations.

In general, a bold, wide, sharp, politically impartial information campaign on human and peoples' rights and duties would be likely to help many people psychologically and emotionally. It may deter many of them from joining in or lending support to more violent actions. It may give many individuals the rationale they need to articulate their instinctive disgust at deadly violence. It may impress even some of those inside the violent groups. It would compete with and challenge the discourses on destruction and death.

On the JVP/DJV

The JVP began preparing for an armed struggle from at least 1983, when they were proscribed by the UNP government. Clearly they wanted to prepare for themselves a position of combat readiness quite unlike their military adolescence of 1971. In 1982, the JVP contested the presidential election. The identity of its election and polling agents throughout the country was officially recorded. The intelligence services of the government took advantage of these electoral records to monitor JVP membership when it went underground. Occasionally this was followed by searches and arrests. It was not until late 1986, however, that the first murder by the security forces of a known JVP member, a lecturer at Ruhuna University in the Deep South, took place. The students were deeply shocked.

Before 1987 the JVP assiduously

recruited, inducted and educated new members, introduced military training or both new and older members and occasionally raided police stations to seize weapons and ammunition. Some of the weapons training is said to have been given by members of the security forces themselves. It has always been a JVP tactic to woo the lower ranks among the armed forces of the state. Many soldiers and JVPers come from the same groups of families and villages. Galle is said to have been the main centre for political indoctrination during that period, whereas JVP military exercises appear to have been conducted in places such as the jungles of Gokarella and, reportedly, also in camps in Southern India.

For that period, the commonly estimated strength of the JVP is between 1,000 to 2,000 full-timers and up to 10,000 supporters. By 1989, according to a credible source, the security forces estimate of their strength had grown to 100,000-plus supporters. It should be remembered that R. Wijeweera, the leader of the JVP, obtained nearly half a million votes in the 1982 presidential elections.

Unrest in the South grew during 1983-86 as a consequence of developments in the North and last to which, originally, the 1983 massacre of Tamils in the South contributed so much. The rate of casualties in the Sri Lankan army was increasing all the time, as it was also among the Sinhalese inhabitants and settlers, especially in the East. Each time the government appeared to be making concessions to the Tamils in the North East, many Sinhalese would react in the South. The boiling point was reached when the government proposed in mid-1986 to grant some autonomy to the Tamils through Provincial Councils. The JVP sensed the negative reaction predominantly from the Buddhists and shifted its political priorities accordingly: now the 'national question' and the unity of the country took precedence over the 'social question' and the class struggle.

Later developments have already been summarized, with the Indo-Lankan Accord and the military intervention by India lying chronologically somewhere in between the beginning of the unrest and the eruption of the strife in the South. The first 'lamp-posting' by the JVP/DJV was reported from the village of Telijjwila on 25 November 1987. During the same days some friends of the President Jayawardena were also killed. The President went to the villages and made his often echoed war declaration (December 1987): "Kill, kill, kill the brutes!" he ordered the security forces and subsequently offered them indemnity for all actions in the course of their counter-subversive operations. Within hours of the presidential speech, the secretary-general of the UNP was gunned down in central Colombo. The symbiotic escalation of terror and counter-terror flared up. Village after village in the course of 1988, was caught up in the strife.

Following the presidential and parliamentary elections in late 1988/early 1989, and despite the heavy death toll among its ranks, the JVP seems to have made the decision to try an all-out assault to seize power. Confidently, the JVP leaders reported sometime in March/April 1989:

"After two years (1987-89) of agitation firstly among the students, next the industrial working-class and thirdly the rural proletariat, the JVP's standing in the country is such that we can claim with confidence that we have won the support among the majority of the citizen."

Ginipupura JVP Journal, mid-1989

There was a more significant factor behind their display of confidence: by then the JVP infiltration of the armed forces was considerable. Aiming to make the army disintegrate, at this point the JVP made a decision which proved suicidal: to start killing the families of those soldiers reluctant to switch sides — in fact, the majority of soldiers. Far from falling apart, the army more

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Israeli Interests Section: A Muslim View

Izeth Hussain

It is known that many Israelis have become disturbed over the changes in international attitudes since the 1973 war. Stephen Spender states in his *Journals* that in reply to a question posed by the Israeli President's wife in 1975 he said that the mood of the Israeli people was serious but determined and confident. She said in response, "Underneath they are very unhappy. The whole world seems to have turned against us. When I saw that the United Nations gave a standing ovation to our worst enemy — Arafat — I realized this was true." An exaggeration, of course, to believe that the whole world had turned against Israel, because our pro-Israelis are always there.

I have gone into details about changing Western attitudes to pinpoint the oddity of the pro-Israeli phenomenon in Sri Lanka. Doubtless you can find pro-Israelis in some other Afro-Asian countries as well, but they too have to be regarded as oddities. I have argued that Israel has signified internationally white, or more specifically Western white, domination over natives. I have argued that was welcome to Westerners at one time, their attitudes to the coloured peoples of Afro-Asia have been changing, and consequently their attitudes to Israel have also been changing. But the Sri Lankan pro-Israeli commitment remains just as firm as ever.

What is the explanation for this oddity? What to my mind seems an obvious explanation suggests itself, which is that there are Sri Lankans who are deep down unreconciled to Sri Lanka's independence and want Western domination. I suggest that one category of pro-Israelis consist of some members of groups or sub-groups which were at the commanding heights under Western

domination after a Western neo-colonial dispensation as they want to be at the commanding heights once again. Or perhaps some of them feel that they can ensure fair-play for themselves only under Western neo-colonialism. A second category is suggested by the fact that the natives to whom Israel has been administering thrashings for decades are for the most part Muslims. I suggest that there is a category of Sri Lankans of trading origin who are pro-Israeli because they have inherited anti-Muslim prejudices. We might speak of a third category of Sri Lankans who are driven into being pro-Israeli because of obscure psychological compulsions.

An article by the first Israeli Charge d'Affaires in Sri Lanka, Netanel Lorche, which was reproduced in the *Lanka Guardian* of 1st March, 1985, could provide some illumination about the first category of pro-Israeli. He wrote that many of our Tamils identified emotionally with the Jews, and proceeded "They viewed with admiration mixed with envy the feat of a small people which, with tremendous effort and sacrifice, had succeeded in establishing its own independent state." But at the time Lorche was here, in the late fifties, our Tamils were not thinking in terms of an independent state. The more likely explanation for the emotional identification is that Israel signified Western domination, under which the Tamils had fared much better than after our independence. I am not dealing here with the rights and wrongs of the Tamil problem. I am merely arguing that the Tamils were pro-Israeli because of the situation in which they found themselves placed. I am certain that any comparable minority anywhere in the world, such as for instance the Ibos of Nigeria who have been far more

dynamic under the British and thereafter the majority Muslims, would also have been pro-Israeli. Anyway, with the Israeli intervention in the Tamil problem we can expect the Tamil enchantment with Israel to have largely evaporated. Other groups who have given the impression that they are by and large pro-Israeli could have sub-conscious motivations which they themselves should try to analyse.

It is significant that in the Philippines, where there is nothing like the pro-Israeli sentiment prevalent in Sri Lanka, there were no minority groups or sub-groups who were dominant or privileged under the imperialist rule of the Spanish or the Americans. There are linguistic-provincial divisions among the Christians who constitute the great majority in the Philippines, but no group was specially favoured by the imperialists. Had there been such a group, it would today very probably be pro-Israeli.

In dealing with my second category, I must first state that we Sri Lankans cannot possibly be immune from the universal virus of group prejudices, and we must recognize also that such prejudices can be expected to flourish when there are conflicts of interests between groups. The Muslims were traditionally the only trading group in this country, a position which changed with the coming of the Western imperialists and the growth of an indigenous bourgeoisie, a process which certainly involved conflicts of interests. It has been acknowledged for some time by our historians that the dynamic behind 1915 riots was provided by trade rivalry. It seems to me very probable that the pro-Israeli members of our Westernized bourgeoisie, who today may be in the professions, administration, or politics, have inherited anti-Muslim prejudices from their trading grandfathers.

The contrast with the Philippines is again striking. The Muslims lived apart for centuries in their semi-feudal Mindanao fastness where there was only localized petty trading. The Christian bourgeoisie emerged without conflicts of interest involving the Muslims. The conflict between them is really over land, which led to the Mindanao rebellion, but even so the average Filipino does not seem to have anti-Muslim sentiments to any significant extent. Consequently there can be no pro-Israeli sentiment as a corollary of anti-Muslim sentiment.

My third category consists of people who seem to be driven by obscure psychological compulsions. I do not have in mind the Sri Lankan who may be somewhat sympathetic to Israel after a visit to that country or because he happened to have an Israeli friend. The motivations of such people might be explained rationally. I have in mind the Sri Lankan who cannot be fitted into the two categories I have discussed above and who displays an emotional commitment to Israel that seems to be impervious to reason. I recall the case of a Sri Lankan official, very senior and very intelligent, who sometime in the late fifties showed himself to be fiercely resistant to the idea that the Arab League had to be allowed NGO status at FAO. Data about parallel cases and overwhelmingly convincing arguments left him undeterred. It turned out that the resolution in favour of the Arab League was adopted unanimously except for Israel's negative vote. Even Zionist America voted in favour. Some of my readers may consider President Jayewardene, who is widely regarded as a great admirer of Israel, as belonging to this third category of pro-Israelis. His decision to get Israeli help in combatting the Belam problem was arguably a mistake, but that does not by itself betoken a pro-Israeli stance as the national interest could sometimes dictate a turning to the devil. However it was soon apparent that the Israeli presence here spread well

beyond the parameters of the Belam problem. It is also known that Jayewardene had for long been critical of the Bandaranaike decision to suspend relations with Israel. H.S.S. Nissanka wrote in his book *Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy* that Jayewardene had "castigated" Mrs. Bandaranaike over her decision. But Jayewardene would surely have known that the majority of Afro-Asian countries, and not just Muslim ones, had broken relations with Israel following the 1967 Arab-Israel War. Her behaviour over Israel was quite normal for an Afro-Asian leader. What was abnormal was the idea that she had to be castigated for that. It is arguable that there has been something irrational behind Jayewardene's position on Israel.

There must be Filipinos who are fiercely pro-Israeli because of obscure psychological compulsions but they must be minuscule in number, certainly not as substantial or as influential as in Sri Lanka. Otherwise they would have constituted themselves into a lobby to campaign against the Israeli Embassy being reduced to no more than a token presence. The contrast with the situation in the Philippines could call into question the validity of my third category. There might be something peculiar about our society, not just psychological compulsions, to breed so many individuals who are peculiarly pro-Israeli. Admittedly I have not got to the bottom of it, and my third category might therefore be regarded as a false category, a residual one, something of a rag-bag into which I have dumped all sorts of individuals on the assumption that they are driven by peculiar psychological compulsions. The question has to be explored further. All that I can say is that I find the individuals in the rag-bag category even more interesting than those in the other two. Plagiarizing what Nietzsche wrote in another context, I must say that of all the causes presented over the years by the pro-Israeli Sri Lankans,

far and away the most interesting, is himself.

The analysis made above of the pro-Israeli Sri Lankan could provide the explanation for the UNP having been the pro-Israeli party for four decades. It has been pre-eminently the party of the minorities, and it has also been regarded as the quintessential mudalali party. It has been dominated by the low country bourgeoisie of the Western littoral most of whom had forebears who emerged into the middle-class or upper class through trade. On the other hand the SLFP has been pre-eminently the party of the majority Buddhists, and even though it has had plenty of members of trading origin, its ethos has been shaped by the Kotte aristocracy of the Bandaranaiques and the Obeyesekeres, the Kandyan aristocracy of the Ratwaties, and the triumvirate of monks, school teachers, and ayurveda physicians, none of whom engaged in trade. The President's decision on the IIR could therefore indicate a profound character-change in the UNP, which could lead to some potentially serious divisions within that party.

NEXT: The Israeli Lobby

International...

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then responded in kind. The generals extended the scope of their repressive action and unleashed all their forces against JVP members, supporters and sympathisers—real, suspect, potential and imagined—practically any young village or suburban male became a target.

President Premadasa still talks about peace. The military order-of-the-day is to finish the JVP. The scale of the slaughter can now be seen daily by the roadsides and in the rivers carrying the corpses. According to an usually well-informed source (*The Economist*, London, 7 October 1989) Sri Lanka's civil war had reached the highest murder rate, proportional to the population, among all internal wars going on around the world today.

Who is a Sri Lankan? : A compelling portrait

Shelagh Goonewardene

Who or what is a Sri Lankan? In a land that is composed of so many racial groups living together, this question began to emerge almost imperceptibly from 1956 onwards, when the majority race, the Sinhalese began to assert its political and linguistic dominance over the rest of the nation, escalating the development of the Sinhala—Tamil conflict, the major force that has shaped the history of our times.

Yet despite all the divisiveness engendered by this conflict, as Sinhalese and Tamils explored the nature of their separate nationalities, and the other communities fell into defensive positions, experiencing their own limitations and powerlessness as minority cultures, or seeking to strengthen themselves by identifying with more powerful groups abroad with whom they shared affinities: the sense of being not merely Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslim or Burgher, but Sri Lankan, survived and persists.

So we return to the central question, who is a Sri Lankan? For me, and an audience of about thirty-five people on May 13th, in Sydney who witnessed the first public rendering of Ernest MacIntyre's new play "Rasanayagam's Last Riot," the answer was given in dramatic terms with the clarity, force and imaginative vision that only a good work of art can convey.

The play revolves around three characters — Philip Fernando and his Colombo Tamil wife, Sita, and Philip's friend from University days in early '50's, T. Rasanayagam, who habitually seeks refuge in Philip's house each time there is a communal riot. The action takes place in Philip's home on that first terrible day and night of the devastating communal riots in July 1983, but there is a difference to previous occasions. Philip and Sita are only weeks

away from emigrating to Australia, so it will be "Rasanayagam's Last Riot" under his friend's protection.

In the course of two acts, we are taken through the biographical and historical lives of Philip, Sita and Rasa — flesh and blood characters who involve us, on a broad canvas, the biography of the Colombo English-speaking middle class and its reaction to a historical phase for which it was ill prepared.

The crux of the dramatic action in the play is whether Philip, the Sinhalese, and Rasa, the Tamil whose close friendship, first cemented as undergraduates at Peradeniya, has survived all the challenges and threats to it that political events have posed, by a simple avoidance of all discussion of them, can bring themselves to open out to each other on the forbidden subject.

The chief protagonist in the play, created with rare sensitivity and insight by the playwright, is Philip's wife Sita, a typical Colombo Tamil who is gradually stirred out of her complacent and safe existence which is securely grounded in her English education, to discover a growing sense of her Tamil nationality, a development which prompts her urge Philip to have it out with Rasa. As she says, if the English speaking middle classes cannot discuss their innermost feelings frankly with each other, how can they expect the Sinhala and Tamil peasants, separated by the Vavuniya jungles, to do so.

As we watch Sita unravelling her innermost self and Philip's reactions and adjustments to free expression of her views, we realise that there is both allegory and analogy present, skillfully employed by the playwright to accomplish his artistic purposes.

The allegory lies in the double interest in the characters as human

beings coping with their feelings and problems in the situation they are in, but in the process also conveying ideas and concepts, being representatives of their class and background in society and typifying their respective racial reactions. The analogy drawn is between the attempt of Sinhalese and Tamils to live together, despite their differences, a historical commitment, with the commitment of two separate individuals in marriage.... "and they twain shall be one flesh." It is a particularly apt analogy and MacIntyre makes full use of it to explore the nuances of relationship on both levels.

The catalyst in the play is provided by the character of Rasanayagam whose dilemma forces Sita to formulate her intellectual position on the Tamil question, while firing her personal reactions to the late revelation of her Tamil-ness.

In the moving resolution of the central issue of the play, as Philip and Sita surmount the crisis in their marriage, they also achieve a realisation of their wider nation identity — that of being Sri Lankan.

What is striking about the play is the sheer volume of material and the wide range of discussion that MacIntyre has compressed into his deceptively simple plot contained within two acts of reasonable length and a brief epilogue. This is a work that incorporates many of the major historical events that took place between 1983 and 1985, and juxtaposes them to achieve maximum dramatic effectiveness and real emotional clout.

The lasting value of MacIntyre's play is that he is able to make so many thoughtful and valid points through characters who are absolutely convincing — so believable that we are sure we know them, and so

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Dynamics of Sociocultural Change in Sri Lanka

Sunil Goonasekera

Where is the wisdom lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge lost in information?

Elliot

My topic is a complex one. If my intention is to discuss it purely within a sociological framework it would have been much more convenient. Yet, at least for me, it would also have been rather boring. But in the context of Teilhard de Chardin, its complexity grows and becomes at one and the same time both challenging and stimulating.

What are the basic contours of Sociocultural change in Sri Lanka? What gave the socio-cultural system of Sri Lanka the impetus to change? What are the principles of its dynamism?

Traditional Sri Lankan society was an extension of the greater South Asian society. Ours has been a variation on a theme. The social plane of the society, where the organizational principles, principles of political authority and the economic organization come into play, was based on a feudal hierarchical system. Just as in various parts of South Asia, particularly in South India, houses arose and fell, crumbled, were destroyed. But the old stones were recycled for new houses built on the same plan. Our social system changed but only slightly. Its organizational principles remained virtually intact over time and bore characteristically South Asian marks. Despite the recurrent wars between the Sinhala and Tamil peoples, their identity, which they shared with the rest of the South Asian communities, remained quite stable.

This was the same with the cultural plane as well. Sharing a pan-South Asian way of understanding and interpreting the world, Sri Lankan culture also remained stable for centuries. Gods came into being and died, giving way to new gods who played the roles of the older dead gods and functioned according to the same old principles. In India, ideological

controversies developed internally, causing cultural schisms, as when paradigmatic changes occurred around the Buddha's time, resulting in the regrouping of peoples in accordance with their adherence to the different cosmologies, soterologies and eschatologies. But all these schisms occurred while retaining certain central ideas about man and his place in the cosmos. In Sri Lanka also, the Hindu/Buddhist world view prevailed despite the rise and fall of dynasties, ethnic conflicts and migrations. The culture rationalized and criticized the social system. Either way it went hand in hand with the social system in a conservative bondage. It is hard to say that the Sri Lankan sociocultural system was in a state of continuous equilibrium. Rather it oscillated between change and stability. But the emphasis was more on stability rather than change. It was, as if, only the greed for power provided the energy for historical movements in time and this energy was not sufficient for radical structural changes in the sociocultural system. Once a spell of greed was satisfied through warfare and acquisition of power, the system returned to the former state and remained until another war created a short spell of hardships. Even the conversion to Buddhism or the periodic resurgence of Brahmanism could not and did not make a significant change in the overall sociocultural system.

The decisive century was the sixteenth century and the decisive event was the arrival of the Portuguese. What the Arabs, the Islamic merchants from the Middle East who visited and settled down in Sri Lanka over the centuries, could not influence to any appreciable degree, the Portuguese shook from the foundations. Sri Lankans encountered an entirely different

The author, who holds a PhD from the University of California, San Diego, is a Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Fundamental Studies (IFS), Kandy, where he is working on a book on George Key.

This paper was presented at the Teilhard de Chardin Colloquium 1990, which was on the theme 'Being Sri Lankan: From the Past to the Future: The Challenge of Cultural Change'.

Speakers at the colloquium included Prof. Senaka Bandaranayake, Rev. Dr. Bellanwila Wimalaratna Thero & Dr. Wimala Ratnayaka.

Rev. Fr. Mervyn Fernando chaired the meeting, which was organized by the Institute of Integral Education.

and strange, hitherto unheard of set of sociocultural principles. They could not ignore these because they were imposed on them by coercive means. What the Portuguese began, the Dutch and the British brought towards a completion.

The fundamental sociocultural change that occurred was a radical change in the conceptions of the self, the other and the world at large. The traditional sense of the selfhood depended on both social and cultural definitions of the social and psychological personality. Socially, this was defined by kinship and the hierarchical place of the kingroup in the wider social system. Culturally, the selfhood was defined by the moral, ethical and aesthetic considerations deriving largely from religion. Traditional religion was not a textual religion only. It was also a religion couched merely in public spectacles and noisy celebrations. Rather, it was more deeply rooted in the social conduct and the conscience of the individual. Organized religion evaluated an individual in terms of the moral worth of the life that he lived. His livelihood, ethicality of his social interactions and the ethicality of his relationships with the natural world were under the careful scrutiny of the organized religious institutions which ranged from monastic establishments to

non-monastic social groups. This, while restricting his personal freedom, also provided him with guidelines to mould his conduct. Sociologically, this was the cultural way of effecting social control. Not only the individuals but also the various social groups came under these religious observations. Depending on the way a person managed himself in society, the culture gave him an evaluated position, as a good or a bad person, and his conduct as a right or a wrong line of action and so on. These evaluations reflected upon his social self when others used them as measures of his social worth and related to him accordingly. The good were in demand, the bad were punished and the ugly were banished.

This, in turn, had a psychological impact. Men acted according to convictions. Convictions are created by internalizing culture. The religious meanings of the self, others and the world, constitute a large and crucial area of internalized culture. When the culture 'without' evaluated a person's conduct the culture 'within' also, concurrently, evaluated it. This was how the culture and the personality functioned together and became personally and socially meaningful. And this was how persons developed a personal sense of the self. This in turn fed the social and cultural selves in a system of feedback relationships. And this was how men related to one another and to the world at large spiritually.

When the culture is threatened, cultural institutions that function as moral arbiters and disseminators of morality are socio-economically invalidated, as it happened during the colonial era, this spiritual thread that link people becomes stretched to a breaking point. New values and norms deriving from new beliefs attempt to redesign the sense of the self, the others and the world modernization. The result is a sociocultural and personal crisis. Colonialism created it. Up to this day, this crisis persists. Sri Lanka today is a nation of indi-

viduals with poor sense of the self. The self that is defined is the self as in selfishness not the self as in personal dignity deriving from a moral existence. People no longer think about shame. Our sense of shame has eroded to the bare bones. People no longer feel guilty. Guilt has been swallowed up by greed. And men with bad faith and empty hearts go about maximizing their immediate gains.

On the other hand the indigenous political system, the feudal order, was slowly undermined by the expansion of the colonial regime which used more strictly bureaucratic principles of legislation and administration. The role of inherited rights began to diminish. Particularly towards the end of the last century the development of the democratic principles of government and the universal suffrage demolished the feudal sociopolitical order. That led to a radical redefinition of the self, the other and the world in general. Traditional sociocultural structures against personal advancement became less rigid, more manipulable and surmountable. Thus, the caste, economic bondage to land owners, gerontocratic authority, which, during the feudal period were the designing principles of the sense of the self, lost their grip. Instead a manipulable social order came into being with more independent methodological individuals who acted upon the world and the others with self interest.

The introduction of schools had far reaching effects. This formal education system challenged and politically negated the traditional education system, which was restricted to a privileged few, thereby allowing more and more individuals to reevaluate their traditional social positions. It also disseminated ideas about an alternative society based at first on Christian values and then on scientific values. The latter deserves further elucidation because it helps us link Teilhard de Chardin's philosophy with what has been occurring in our society.

(To be continued)

Who is . .

(Continued from page 14)

can laugh at the comedy in their lives because we recognise it as the comedy in ours, and be moved to tears at the tragedy that overtakes them, because it is also our own. The playwright is dealing with the material of our own experience, individually and nationally, and the vital issues of our times, and in doing so he brings order and meaning which illumines so many areas in our personal lives and the larger life of the nation.

The play is presented as a Comedy, and while there are several moments that justify this description, the final impression is that of Tragedy. Those who experienced the conflagration of July 1983 in Sri Lanka, either directly or indirectly as helpless spectators, will relive their memories as they watch the last half of the play. The emotion generated by the action is palpable and real. I found it hard to hold back my tears and there were others in the audience who were similarly affected.

The three players in "Rasanayagam's Last Riot" were Ernest MacIntyre as Philip, Nalini MacIntyre as Sita and Raja MacIntyre as Rasa. This was a 'moved reading' with the actors reading from scripts and moving in the confined space of a sitting room. Yet their performances were of such high quality that they achieved the dimension of the real stage and provided an unforgettable evening at the Theatre.

In my opinion, this is Ernest MacIntyre's most significant, powerful revealing play to date, and one that every Sri Lankan must see in order to enrich and extend his understanding of his own biographical and historical selves. This self-awakening will linger in the mind and the heart long after the play itself is over.

Do the people get the justice they deserve?

Savitri Gunasekera

What is the role of Law? Is it a command or should it reflect the aspirations of the people? The *Volksgeist*, as Savigne used to say. The contradiction between the Positivist school which says that law is a command and Savigne's theory of the historical school, which says that law must spring from the people.

Now, in a Third World country like ours, in that particular context, I think it is difficult to talk in terms of law and a legal system that must reflect and satisfy the aspirations of the people. But it is not easy to find out what we mean by the 'people'; it is not easy to find out what we mean by the 'aspirations' of the people.

Very often we fall into two categories. One is the category of policy-makers, legislators, who justify every act whether it is progressive or whether it is reactionary, on the basis that they are the spokesmen for the people; those who articulate the aspirations of the people. And very often we have seen in the past that policies are made for the people, which are in fact not reflective of what they would want, in fact are probably the reverse of what they want. We fall also into that category where we say well we belong to the "educated" and "elite" or we belong to a Western-educated elite and therefore we are not the people and consequently we should not presume to talk for the people and in that way those of us who have had the benefits of a free education, a privilege which is indeed rare in the region, have again got into a situation where we exercise self censorship. We say "well who are we in say what we have to say. That way I think the country loses out too.

Now, to me again there is a problem when we talk about the aspirations of the people, because in a plural society like ours we may find that if the law was to reflect the aspirations of the people it may be that since we have different communities, different religions the law is in fact articulating values and ideas which again may not be in the interest or may not be in conformity with universally accepted liberal values. I can think of ethnic and religious laws. Very often we say ethnic communities, religious communities, have to have certain specific norms recognized by the law. And in the process of doing that we say these are the legitimate aspirations of those ethnic or religious groups. Those values which the law then seeks to articulate may be completely in conflict with accepted values as reflected in internationally accepted law. In that situation, I tried to look at this theme and ask myself what do we mean when we say the law should reflect or satisfy the aspirations of the people. I like to see also an equation between Law and Justice and when I talk of law, I tend to think that law will bring equity and justice. Not talk in terms of a specific definition of economic or social justice, but in terms of certain fundamental values of civilized norms which are reflected in the International human rights documents. By this, I mean the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the various other international documents, right up to 1989 the UN Convention on the Charter of the Child. I say that because the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself is a document born out of human suffering. It reflects certain deep convictions on the importance of the human being as an individual. I think it is said somewhere that human rights is a "western" concept.

I tend to disagree with that and disagree with it very strongly.

GROUP/INDIVIDUAL

Recently we criticised human rights and said the focus should be on group rights and not on individual rights. I tend to disagree because I think that the developments that are going in the rest of the world in Europe, in South Africa indicates that throughout civilization we have moved towards this ideal that the human being is important. His dignity or her dignity is important and that the concept of equity, equality and justice in human terms are internationally acceptable. They reflect the importance of the human being and they also postulate certain norms of equity and justice. And therefore, when I say that I am committed to the concept that the law must satisfy the aspirations of the people I would like to define the aspirations of the people in terms of that desire for equity and for justice in the sense of a control of abuse of power, the right to personal security and a right to fairness. Now, if you look at it in that way and postulate it in that way, then I think we are on safer grounds because the moment you talk of aspirations of the people and say well in the Third World countries the basic need is for economic justice, then many of our regimes will justify repression on the basis that they are going to introduce this "New economic order" whether it is through an open market economy or whether it is through a socialist regime. And the people of these areas whatever their economic position will say that they are certain that there are things that we all want for ourselves. And to that extent I think each one of us whatever class, whatever religion,

* The writer is Professor of Law at the University of Kelantan.

whatever community we belong have one concept of justice and equity in the widest sense of that term.

I don't know whether there is any equivalent in Tamil, but I know that the Sinhala concept සාධාරණත්වය, යුක්තිය has certain definite connotations. We may not be able to pinpoint it, but it has a connotation and this, I think, is what the legal system of this country should try to do.

LEGAL SYSTEM

We have inherited a colonial legal system, but again I must say that with all these limitations I am convinced that the Anglo-American system of jurisprudence postulates a certain "value framework" which offers the capacity to bring justice to the community. And of all the other systems that have been tried and tested I think it stands on personal liberty, on personal security, on equity and justice stripped of all the other trappings does offer something which is of fundamental importance. I believe that the legal system in this country though it is an inherited system can be fashioned in such a way that it can deliver justice to the community. And it must do so. Now, if it is to do so, then there has to be the recognition of the total failure of the legal system throughout a period of time. This is the year in which lawyers and judges and those involved in the administration of justice must hang their heads in shame and also in anguish, in an painful awareness that the legal system has failed to protect the citizen and failed to give equity and justice. And in the knowledge and recognition of that failure to reassess the different components that go up to make this legal system and try to see whether we cannot bring it into that structure a system which will deliver equity and justice.

We need to focus on the three inter related areas in which the law and the legal

system are based and on which they function. i.e. the law-making process, the judicial process, the law-enforcement process and public participation or involvement in that process.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

Let me take first, the legislative and law-making process. Now in a Third World country, I do not believe that a law which is going to be equitable must necessarily come from the intuitive feelings of the people. It may be necessary for law to give direction and to postulate values which are not necessarily accepted within the community. There are so many examples where you are aware surely that this is so. In the process of law-making it is essential that there should be a consultative process and a process of dialogue and communication, so that the law that is created will try to seek a balance between what the community wants and what is or should be the goal or the policy. In Sri Lanka we do not have that consultative process and it is because we do not have the consultative process, and we do not have the dialogue, whether in controversial or non-controversial areas the law that comes out through the legislative process does not always ensure equity and justice.

We have Law Reform Commissions, we have different bodies which are supposed to have consultative status. But very often what we see in our statute books is legislation which has been conceived in secrecy and which emerges in the stage of a Bill. No one knows what it consists of, no one knows whether the actual implications of those laws have been studied.

Take the present Workmen's Compensation Ordinance. Now this Ordinance has been amended and it has been passed through parliament probably after a century. One would have thought that, legislation should have been the subject of serious review, discussion, etc. before

it was passed. That there are many young academics in the Medical faculties who have done extremely interesting research on the impact of occupational health-hazards. Why then is no one consulted? Why is this done in this way? In other countries whether it is in the West or in the sub-continent law reform and law-making is a much more consultative process. I suggest the reason that there is no consultations is a failure of the Press, the failure of the media, the failure of non-governmental organisations and the paranoia that the government and the policy makers seem to have with regard to criticism. I find very strange because we say that often policy makers refer to the Buddhist tradition in this country and we talk of Karuna, Maithri and Upekka, කරුණා, මේඛලා, උපේක්කා etc. and we talk of the Buddhist rituals but intrinsic to the Buddhist tradition is the tolerance of criticism. Because the Buddha himself said 'Do not accept what I say because I have said it, observe, discern, evaluate and reject'.

But nevertheless, because of this paranoia of criticism we all fail in our duty as legislators. We do not like criticism; as government servants and policy makers, we are hesitant to criticise because we think that criticism will be not seen as creative but as destructive. And so, laws are made with this passivity and then laws are made without any awareness of implications.

If the legal system is to achieve justice for the community the law-making process must function as it should function.

I would like to discuss what I think is the role of the judiciary in a country like ours. Ultimately in the Anglo-American system we know that the separation of powers, the control of abuse of powers and the independence of the judiciary is crucial to the functioning of the system and the delivery of justice to the com-

mentality. Both lawyers and judges have an important role to play. The lawyer has a creative role to play in the process of law-making through the Courts. Whether we like it or not we have to understand that the great changes in the Anglo-American tradition of jurisprudence came because lawyers and judges were alive to the creative role of the judiciary. I know that some judges in the past have suggested and I refer here to Justice Oranien Cecil Chapman who said the judge only interprets the law as it is. And he cautioned that Sri Lankan judges should "not denoting a Denning" and "not Aitken or Aitken". He was referring to the changes made in the English Common law by great English judges like Denning and Aitken. Now this is a mistake because the role of the judiciary has to be creative and particularly because we have an inherited legal system it is vital that lawyers and judges see the law not just as a system of rules, but as a system of rules meant to achieve certain goals. It is because lawyers and judges do not understand that role that you get cynicism and the distancing of the lawyers from the public.

LAW AND JUSTICE

The cynicism which says that these are not "courts of justice," but are "courts of law." Therefore it is adequate and only right that we stand in Court and argue on fine points of law and then that the judge turns round and says at the end of the day, we recognise there is an injustice here, but this is what the law is and therefore there is nothing we can do about it. If we look to the subcontinent we find that the judiciary in Pakistan, in Bangladesh and in India specially we see in Chief Justice Bhabani's court the creativity of the judiciary, the idea of "Social action" litigation develops from the fact that certain of the concepts that you see in Anglo-American jurisprudence had to be modified

in order to achieve those concepts of justice. If the judiciary can see their role in that way and the profession can see their role in that way you will not get the cynicism and the disenchantment with the legal system you do get now.

The distancing comes from the fact that neither the judges, nor the lawyers sometimes are seen as appreciating the need, community's need to see or to feel that justice is not only done but seems to be done and in that context the role of the legal profession is crucial. I was at a seminar recently where I made a presentation on certain decided cases and I had occasion to express my views with regard to how those decisions should have been taken and another senior lawyer got up after me and he admonished and advised law students and said don't ever criticise judges if you want to win your case and to get your briefs. Now that is a total misconception as far as the legal system or the functioning of the judicial process. Finally, the role of the public.

PUBLIC ROLE

This whole system cannot work. It can do so if the public is also aware of its rights and the public too are conscious of the need to monitor the performance of the law. Now that can be done not by individuals in a country like

ours where many people don't even know their rights but by organisations which take on that lobbying, an activist's role and groups of lawyers, groups of organisations can, and I think should, do that if the legal system is to be responsive. In that way, by campaigns of "legal literacy," by campaigns of agitation for law reforms we can see a more responsive legal system. Unless that is done we may say individuals are visible but organisations are invariably not. We can link across organisations and do that then we can use this self same system to achieve the justice that we want for the community. Quite often what happens is that in this country we have cynicism and to a great extent that is further bolstered by what Mr. Kanakasabhai referred to and I agreed with. The hypocrisy within us which makes us listen and tolerate that which we know is wrong and yet do nothing about it. We, I think have an obligation in whatever role, in whatever position we are placed, we have an obligation to be able to criticise and not to feel threatened by doing that.

If there is a lively public opinion, if there is a lively press, there are lively organisations, that kind of double-standards, which is socially destructive because it undermines the belief in institutions, would not flourish.

THE ARCHDUKE FRANZ HAUNTING

*Once there were Communists
Now Serbs and Croats,
Czechs and Slovaks,
Yugos and Slavs,
Bulgars and Poles,
Romanians and Hungarians,
Armenians and Azerbaijanians
At their throats.*

Patrick Jayasuriya

Where will repatriation lead to ?

P. Muthulingam

Most of the Sri Lankan political analysts predicted that the plantation sector would play a major role in the nineties. The statement of the Minister of Plantation Industries at the mammoth May Day Rally organised by the CWC at Talawakelle — that the Indian Passport Holders must leave on the resumption of the Mannar Ferry Service seems to confirm this view.

Mr. S. Thondaman an unchallenged plantation trade union leader and the Minister of Small Industries and Tourism, would never have expected such a statement from the Minister — Ranjan, whom, the CWC leadership invited to attend its May Day hoping for benefits for the plantation Tamil community. The sudden move of the Minister would certainly have shattered all CWC hopes.

Answering a question by a reporter, the Minister said, "this is not a problem to be dealt with by Mr. S. Thondaman; therefore do not try to force us to deal with him"; it is a problem between the two governments". This answer, I am sure, came as a shock to Mr. Thondaman.

Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne may be a newcomer to the portfolio and to parliament but certainly not to the plantation industry. Having been a successful planter himself knowing the plantation community in-and-out — like any well experienced plantation trade union representative. A statement, therefore, coming from him that Mr. Thondaman does not have anything to do with the problem, politicians as well as political activists know that the plantation trade unions are part and parcel of the plantation, the latter scene, the workers having considered their trade

unions the medium of public relations. And therefore the very thought of keeping the plantation trade unions at a distance is absurd.

An effort to trace the history of the present passport holders will reveal injustices committed against the plantation workers by both the regimes. The UNP government of D. S. Senanayake not only disfranchised them but decitizenised them in 1948. The successive governments after 1948 claiming to solve the problem were bent on deporting them to India.

Mrs. Bandaranaike, in office in 1964 took advantage of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's goodwill and his appreciation of Sri Lanka's nonalignment, its strategic position and pro-Indian rather than pro-Pakistani tilt, persuaded Delhi to sign a pact that decided the fate of these workers. Under this accord India was to take back 5½ lakhs and Sri Lanka to grant its citizenship to 3½ lakhs — the irony being that neither government thought fit it to consult the affected people or their representative bodies — in this case, the trade unions, Mr. S. Thondaman, then an appointed M. P. obviously irritated by this calculated move by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party Government, severed his connections with that party and aligned for the first time, with the UNP. The plantation workers, on the advice of the CWC and even of the other plantation trade unions, did not apply for the citizenship of either country until in 1969 the C.W.C. advised plantation workers to apply for the citizenship of the country of their choice. Some trade union representatives filling the applications in the plantations said, the author remembers, "India today is not what she was... here all facilities — loans, lands — will be available". A large number of workers applied for Sri Lankan Citizenship —

an indication that they were not willing to leave the country. When the Pact was implemented the passport holders started to leave. This resulted in an acute shortage of labour when the UNP came back to power — in 1977. And that compelled the government to allow the repatriates to take their own time. The ethnic violence of 1977 caused both governments to suspend the ferry service — with an effective freeze on repatriation.

The present generation of the plantation workers holding Indian passports are the natural increase or children below 18 years dependent on their parents who applied for Indian passports. And, of course, minor dependents whose fate had to be decided by their parents. Their names were also included in the parent's applications for passports. Today almost 20 years later, they are adults legally entitled to decide their own fate. And at least 45% of the original applicants are not among the living.

Apart from this, the struggle in the North Eastern Province has given new ideas to the plantation workers. EROS and EPRLF openly advocating a theory that "the plantation workers are part and parcel of the Tamils of the North East," included the plantation areas in their map of "separate state". Not limiting their thesis to words they went ahead actively converting plantation workers. They had considerable success in winning over the youth, the children of the plantation workers. A significant and an inescapable fact is that a majority among the plantation children who joined the North Eastern militant groups are the children of Indian Passport Holders. Events before and after the 1983 holocaust gave these people another motive. At the Thimpu conference, the TULF

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The writer, a leading figure in Peasants and Workers Institute, Kandy, has a trade union background.

Soviet Society and the changes in Eastern Europe

Reggie Siriwardena

Everybody recognises that the Eastern European democratic revolution of 1989 wouldn't have taken place but for the example and the stimulus of Soviet perestroika. One can go even further and say that in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania the trigger for the popular upheaval was provided by Gorbachev's repudiation of the Brezhnev doctrine. This was in his statement at the Warsaw pact meeting of July 1989. (Poland and Hungary had, of course, embarked on the course of reform before that date.) If I may indulge in a little speculation, I would conjecture that in making his historic declaration Gorbachev deliberately called out the Eastern European peoples against the ruling Communist parties. I base this conjecture on the fact that so intelligent and subtle a politician couldn't have failed to foresee the electrifying effect that the removal of the danger of Soviet military intervention would have on the peoples of Eastern Europe. My view is that by mid-1989 the tempo of reform in the Soviet Union had slowed down — in particular, the desperately needed economic reforms were blocked by the conservative party bureaucracy — and Gorbachev had to find a fresh force for change. He did so, I think, by summoning the Eastern European peoples into the arena. However, the rest of my analysis is not dependent on whether you accept this conjecture. For whether Gorbachev intended it or not, there can be no doubt about the outcome. At mid-1989 the greater part of Eastern Europe was still ruled by Stalinist structures and ideology. In the democratic revolution of the second half of the year

Eastern Europe caught up with and outstripped the Soviet Union, not only de-Stalinising but dismantling Communist party rule. What we are now experiencing is the rebounding of this process back on Soviet society and its political system. This is a subject that has been little discussed, and that is why I have chosen it as the subject of my contribution to this seminar.

But before I embark on it, I must first say why it is relevant to a discussion on "Eastern Europe and Sri Lanka". Perestroika and the Eastern European democratic revolution represent a major intellectual crisis for the Sri Lankan left, as for the left elsewhere. There are, of course, still many people who prefer to play the ostrich and pretend that nothing has happened that need disturb their cherished beliefs. There are others who have decided, more realistically, that they have belatedly to endorse the changes that have already taken place. Even lifelong devotees of Stalin and Brezhnev have begun to denounce them and to greet their dethroning as a great victory for socialism. But what I want to say in this talk is that the process of intellectual and ideological spring-cleaning can't stop there. That is why I think it will be instructive to look at the new debates and controversies that are going on in the Soviet Union.

In the first three years of perestroika the ideological struggle was against Stalinism. That debate is now over. Not that the political structures, the practices and even the mental habits that are the legacy of Stalinism are altogether dead. But

nobody — except for some anachronistic figures like those who met recently in Stalin's hometown to form a 'World Communist Party' — any longer dares to defend Stalinism in public. During that initial phase of perestroika the cry was 'Back to Leninism'. The push towards democratisation was represented as the return to Leninist political norms, the trends towards a market economy as a revival of Lenin's NEP, and the moves towards greater autonomy for the constituent republics as a restoration of Lenin's nationalities policy. That is still position of the Gorbachevist centre within the ruling Communist party. But that Leninist orthodoxy is now being called in question by new movements and trends among radical sections both of the party and the non-party intelligentsia.

I remember that the Russian poet Sergei Yesenin in 1924 wrote a poem about his visit to the peasant home in which he had been brought up. He found that his sister who had joined the Komsomol had replaced the icons which used to hang on the wall with a picture of Lenin from a calendar. 'To me Lenin too is an icon', the poet commented. But of course an icon was exactly what Lenin was turned into during the sixty five years since his death.

The saint's relic preserved in Red Square with the faithful paying their daily devotions is only the most obvious sign of this cult, and it seems to me entirely appropriate that it should have been instituted by an ex-seminarian. However, what has been more seriously disabling

is the unquestioning deference to Leninism as an ideology, the ritual citation of Lenin's texts as the fountainhead of political wisdom, and the taboo on critical discussion of his theories and actions.

That taboo has been breached today. From my reading of the Soviet press I would say that this development had already started around the beginning of 1989. But it has been greatly strengthened and accentuated by the Eastern European revolution of the latter months of the year. The wholesale rejection of Leninism in Eastern Europe, the discarding even by the former ruling parties of the name 'Communist', the dismantling of statues and monuments of Lenin himself in Eastern European cities, have all given enhanced courage to those reforming elements in the Soviet Union who want to discard the ideological baggage of Leninism.

In one respect this aspiration has already borne fruit in respect of State policy. Last year the Congress of People's Deputies refused by a majority vote to debate the issue of Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution which guarantees the political monopoly of the Communist Party. In February this year the deputies reversed their earlier decision and agreed to repeal Article 6. This was clear evidence of the pressure exerted on the Soviet polity by the developments in Eastern Europe.

Everywhere in those countries the demand for the ending of the Communist Party's monopoly of power and the institution of a multi-party system had been the spearhead of the democratic struggle. It had seemed earlier that it might take many years for the same demands to be pressed successfully in the Soviet Union (I thought so myself), but the Eastern European example was apparently irresistible.

The repeal of Article 6 will only clear the constitutional block in the way of a multi-party system. Exactly what form that system will take and how authentically pluralist it will be will depend on the political processes through which its evolution takes place. Today it seems more than possible that it will begin with a split within the CPSU itself around the time of the 28th Party Congress in July — whether at the sessions or immediately after them. This could be a three-way split — between the Gorbachevist centre, the neo-Stalinist conservatives of whom Ligachev is the spokesman within the Politbureau, and the radical reformers who are organising round the Democratic Platform, and whose outlook is avowedly social-democratic. However, such a split may be combined with and further accelerate the divisions resulting from minority nationalisms. What lies ahead, therefore, is a stormy and unpredictable future. But since this talk is not concerned fundamentally with political prediction, I shall consider instead the issues that are relevant to us in the Soviet Union's abandonment of the one-party system.

The orthodox will argue that a multi-party system isn't incompatible with Leninism and the role of the vanguard party. In theory, yes; and even in practice, it may be recalled that the Bolshevik Party entered into a short-lived coalition with the Left Social Revolutionaries after October. But it can be asserted that the Leninist assumption of a single party as the instrument of history and political practice in conformity with this assumption made inevitable the development towards a one-party state. This brings me to the thoroughgoing critique of Leninism that is being made by radical elements both within and without the CPSU today.

(To be continued)

Where will...

(Continued from page 20)

and the militant groups demanded the granting of Sri Lankan citizenship to the entire plantation community. This was highly appreciated by the people of the plantations who never considered India their motherland. They are also aware of the plight of the people who are already on Indian soil under the SS Pact. In developing an awareness among the plantation community, that Sri Lanka is their home and have a right to it the NGO's too have made an immense contribution.

In these circumstances, what is important is how the government intends solving this burning problem. Is it to say the passport holders should leave this country or that leaving or staying is optional. If the government chooses the first course, near conflict the government faces will be in the plantation sector. The JVP activities no doubt would have shown the plantation workers how to sabotage the economy when all peaceful trade union action fails. This will play into the hands of some militant movements who keenly await such a situation. The policy makers should therefore rethink their decision. If the second "line" is chosen the government can perpetuate itself in power although it will face some political problems from the opposition — SLFP and other non-left parties who will raise the racist slogan to topple the government. The effect of this on the government will be short. However, the choice is the government's, now that the President has vowed to restore normalcy and national harmony.

In the meantime the recent statement of LTTE's Karikkalan that the LTTE will allocate lands for the plantation people who hold passports if they seek residence in the North East and a rumour that the LTTE is looking for an opening in the plantation for their political activities cannot be ignored.

The Unrepentant Red

By N. SANMUGATHASAN
(Colombo, Lake House, 1989)
300pp. Rs.100.

The contributions of Sanmugathasan to the revolutionary movement in Sri Lanka may be a subject of controversy among political historians, Marxist intellectuals and left organisations, but there cannot be any dispute about his leading role in creating the Maoist movement in Sri Lanka. Sanmugathasan became a communist in 1939 when he was still an undergraduate. He published his political memoirs in 1989 at the age of 70, after completing fifty years of active life as a communist revolutionary. To give fifty years of active life unreservedly to the cause one believes in is, in itself, an extraordinary human sacrifice. It is, however, not my purpose here to evaluate Sanmugathasan (Shan, as he is known to all) as an individual. Shan himself may object to such an assessment, for in his life the political and the personal have merged almost imperceptibly. So when one recalls the ups and downs, the successes and failures of Shan in the last fifty years, one is actually reviewing the career of the political organisation he led and the country's left movement in general.

Shan joined the Ceylon Communist Party as a full-timer in July 1943, two weeks after its founding and as soon as he sat the final examination at the university. The party paid him a monthly allowance of sixty rupees. The decision to become a full-timer of the CP disappointed his parents who, with their humble means, managed to give him a university education with the dream of seeing him as a colonial civil servant. Concerned about her son's future security, Shan's mother asked him what he would do in his old age. The young communist replied, 'By then we would have had socialism'.

But history did not move along the path appointed by

the CP or any other revolutionary party in Sri Lanka. Instead, the past fifty years saw the rise and fall and the fragmentation and disintegration of the socialist movement. The early radicals who set out, with great zeal, to change history, became its prisoners within two decades. They were enticed by the deceptive, but seductive, short cuts history appeared to offer in the form of Sinhala nationalism and sharing of power in parliament via cabinet portfolios. Most of the pioneers of the left movement steered their parties on to the road of capitulationism through a series of class compromises. Shan stood out against the trend and, when the Moscow-Peking split occurred, he left the CP with a handful of comrades to found the ('Maoist') Communist Party of Ceylon (CPC).

The *Memoirs* are by no means a series of anecdotes; they are pieces of history as experienced and watched by the CPC (and the CCP before that) and reconstructed by its leader. Even where the author looks at events and personalities outside the Maoist movement (for instance, his evaluation of the late Mr Bandaranaike), his approach is firmly based on the party line. The 'facts' of the events and the author's ideological interpretation form an amalgam: the political line runs right through the book like a red thread.

Of the many struggles led by the CPC and recounted in the *Memoirs*, two are most remarkable from a politico-historical perspective: the struggle against casteism in Jaffna and the mobilisation of the plantation workers by the Red Flag Union in the 1966-70 period. In both these struggles the CPC championed the causes of two of Sri Lanka's most deprived communities. Only a leadership which cared for social justice and had no thought of courting popular acclaim or votes could have dared to launch such struggles. That the movement against untouchability in parti-

cular should have been led by a 'high-caste' Tamil and taken right into the heartland of vellala Tamil society was itself a brave act. That it achieved considerable success in getting temples and some other public places open to the depressed castes attests to the shrewdness of the leadership. But the most significant achievement of all was the confidence and militancy it instilled in the Untouchables — a people who had for centuries been oppressed in the most shameful and barbaric ways by Hindu society.

Similarly, the Red Flag Union gave the thousands of disenfranchised plantation workers who were its members a sense of belonging and a spirit of militancy, at a time when the other left parties had turned their backs on them because they no longer had the vote.

However, it is also remarkable that these two great phenomena were short lived and the CPC has been conspicuously absent in the momentous liberation struggle that followed in the North and East. Untouchability has not disappeared from Tamil society, but the struggle against the oppression of the Tamil people as a whole by the self-proclaimed Sinhala Buddhist state has subsumed and subverted the struggle against casteism. While this signals something about the politics of the dominant Tamil liberation organisations, it also raises a serious question about the politics of the CPC. Why has the CPC not been able to play an active role in the Tamil liberation struggle?

This question takes us to the heart of the self-imposed theoretical dilemma of many Marxist revolutionaries in Sri Lanka: the relation between class and nationalism. Having condemned and rejected the pro-Sinhala chauvinism of the major 'Marxist' parties (the LSSP and CP), the CPC sought to rise above both Tamil and Sinhala nationalisms by turning to theoretical abstractions and overlooking the living revolutionary potential of the Tamil struggle. And by so defining

themselves out of the Tamil liberation struggle, the CPC and many individual Tamil marxists served to contribute to the strengthening of chauvinist tendencies within the Tamil struggle itself. Today, Tamil nationalism has taken a militant ideological form that sometimes looks like a mirror image of Sinhala chauvinism. Or, as Sivanandan puts it, 'the uneasy mating of bourgeois historicism with historical materialism continues to plague the theory and practice of Tamil nationalism even today.

In the *Memoirs* Sanmugathan does, nonetheless, defend the Tamil people's right to nationhood while providing at the same time an insightful critique of the Tamil liberation struggle. Of the Tamil militants, he writes:

They also failed to follow tactics of people's war, as enunciated by Mao Tse Tung, which was the only tactics which would have gained them success in a complex war against superior forces. Almost all the militant organisations were guilty of anti-people activities like robbery, extortion and murder but their worst crime was the killing of innocent Sinhalese and Tamils. At the same time they refused to arm the people and draw them into the fight against the enemy.

Very valid point indeed, but more important is that the CPC itself had failed to apply the concrete conditions of the Tamil struggle. And there, at least, there must be cause for repentance in this 'unrepentant communist'.

Even so, *Political Memoirs of an Unrepentant Communist* is an authoritative work by a most respected marxist intellectual and trade unionist in Sri Lanka. Sanmugathan has been the political mentor for generations of marxist intellectuals throughout the country. In the 1960s, I was among those who flocked to his political classes at Peradeniya University and his union's offices in Colombo

and discovered him to be one of the great dialecticians of our time. The *Memoirs*, like his lectures, is clear and enjoyable, but above all it is an outstanding historical document of and from an intrepid marxist — of whom there are scarcely any left in our country today.

N. Shanmugaratnam

CORRESPONDENCE

Indo-Ceylon Citizenship

I write with reference to the item in the TRENDS column of your issue of 15th May, on the 100,000 ethnic Indians who have been registered as Indian citizens under the Sirima-Shastri agreement of 1964, and whose repatriation to India has now become an issue in the current domestic political context in Sri Lanka as well, it would appear, in Sri Lanka's relations with India.

Your column headed "Wanted — A New Look" quotes Minister of State and CWC General Secretary Mr Sellasamy as having said that "there was a human angle to the story which had to be considered" because "agreements had been signed without consulting people".

You have further quoted an EPRLF news release which says that "the Sirima-Shastri Pact of 1964 under which these plantation workers of Indian origin were granted Indian citizenship, was a horse deal without consulting the people on whom it was thrust".

As a student who has been following this problem for a long time, let me say that the 1964 agreement was no horse deal. It was preceded by more than two decades of aborted Indo-Lankan negotiations and correspondence, and agreement was finally made possible when the two sides accepted the fact that while some ethnic Indians wanted to stay in Sri Lanka as Ceylon citizens, others wanted to go back to India as Indian citizens. If you consult my book *Indo-Ceylon Relations Since Independence* (published

1965), you will find that I have said at p. 142 note 107, as follows:

"In defending the agreement against critics in the *Lok Sabha*, the Indian External Affairs Minister, Mr Swaran Singh, stated that about 300,000 persons of Indian origin in Ceylon had indicated to the Indian High Commission in Ceylon that they wished to "come straightway" to India. (The Hindu, 26 November 1964)

Mr Swaran Singh's statement was in fact borne out in the seventies, when lists were opened for application for Indian and Sri Lankan citizenship, respectively, more than half a million ethnic Indians applied for Indian citizenship, and about 600,000 applied for Sri Lankan citizenship. Since, in fact, the number applying for Indian citizenship was 94,000 less than the stipulated figure for India, Sri Lanka passed special legislation in 1986 to accommodate this number as Sri Lankan citizens, and in 1988, went even further and enacted the Grant of Citizenship to Stateless Persons (Special Provisions) Act extended rights of Sri Lankan citizenship to every person who (a) was of Indian origin lawfully resident in Sri Lanka, (b) who was neither a citizen of Sri Lanka nor of India, and (c) who had not at any time applied or been included in an application to the Indian High Commission for the grant of Indian citizenship.

While it is right and proper that human problems be addressed in a humanitarian way, it is quite wrong to castigate as "horse-deals" acts which have been taken to eradicate statelessness from this country. If the 1964 agreement is to be regarded as a horse-deal, what would become of the many hundreds of thousands of ethnic Indians who have been granted Sri Lanka citizenship?

Shelton U. Kodikara

(Sri Lanka's top specialist on Indo-Sri Lankan relations, the writer is Professor of International Relations of Colombo University.)

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