

● **Sri Lanka, India and the October Revolution** ●

— *Wiswa Warnapala*

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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TRENDS

A JUDGE THREATENED

When police witnesses continued to refuse to give evidence without legal counsel, Colombo High Court Judge H. W. Senanayake closed the inquest into the death in police custody of attorney Wijedasa Liyanarachchi. The Bar Association of Sri Lanka was continuing with their decision to deny legal assistance to police officers, following their colleague's death.

The judge said that he will submit his report to the Attorney General, without the evidence of the police officers concerned.

The judge also said that during this case he had been threatened on the telephone that he would be killed, for the first time in his 22 year career as a judicial officer.

THREATS AND EXPLOSIONS

The SLEP called off two propaganda meetings in its Presidential election campaign in the Badulla district, at Uva-Paranagama and Vyalawa, following poster and

leaflet threats, but went ahead with a meeting at Badulla. Explosions were heard during this meeting.

SLEP leader and presidential candidate Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike accused "persons" in the UNP, worried about large numbers attending her meetings, of issuing the threats under the name of a different organisation. Opposition Leader Anura Bandaranaike accused UNP and SLMP Leaders.

But the Government controlled Sunday Observer said that "UNP authorities" had categorically denied that they had anything to do with attempts to prevent Mrs. Bandaranaike from holding her meetings. "They said that the Prime Minister had declared that he wants a clean election and no supporter of the UNP would do anything to defy the PM's advice".

Quoting "police sources", the Sunday Observer said that the posters were not the work of UNP supporters but the work of the JVP "following a breakdown of communications between the leadership and its branches".

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JVP: the 'third force' as the key factor

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Nothing throws a sharper light on a confused, baffling and fast-moving political situation than the letters exchanged between the four Mahanayakes and President JR, and Mrs. Bandaranaike's statement prompted by that exchange. The JVP may not be the strongest political party in Sri Lanka but it is right now the main actor in the main arena of the island's politics, the South. The war in the South (not the clash of arms but the political battles) occupies the central arena because it is a fight for State power. The guerrilla war in the north remains a separate problem.

The JVP's final objective may be the seizure of power, and this could be the penultimate phase of its own strategic calculation, but the main contest (UNP — SLFP) remains within (or strives to remain) within the system, meaning elections. The JVP, though no longer proscribed, opts to stay outside that system. From outside, it is seeking to influence the system, the principal contestants, the balance of power, and the ultimate result of the contest in a manner most favourable to its own final aim. Or it is attempting to re-enter the system for one last time in order to make maximum use of it, till the time is opportune to destroy the old structures altogether.

By agreeing to all four "steps" recommended by the Mahanayakes (See 4 points) including the dissolution of Parliament and the establishment of a 'Caretaker' government, President JR has cleverly played the ball back into their court. The crucial passage of course is:

"The implementation of these decisions by the Government and other parties will be successful only if the JVP participates in them. I hope for your advice to the JVP to join

in this process and expect the co-operation of all other political parties"

In short, now that the Mahanayakes have advised the Head of State, and he has dutifully accepted their advice almost in the manner of an ancient Sinhala monarch, the next duty of the Mahanayakes should be to proffer equally sound counsel to the young Sinhala rebels.

The JVP is the key issue in the President/Mahanayake exchange. It is the unspoken factor in Mrs. Bandaranaike's statement. Whereas President JR refers to the "seven parties" that met him and underlines the absence of the JVP, Mrs. Bandaranaike includes the JVP by speaking of '8 parties'. Going further, she refers to herself as the candidate of the 8 party front on a "common program". By describing her forthcoming "victory" as "the victory of all 8 parties and the people of Sri Lanka" she underlines it again. In case, the point is missed, her statement adds:

"I want to bring all sections including the youth into our

future government... this is the only way to ensure peace"

When the SLFP had to cancel meetings in Uva, the message from the JVP was clear. No presidential election would be possible without JVP cooperation. The SLFP could not go into the Presidential polls on the assumption of unconditional JVP support. On the contrary, the JVP could deny the SLFP the chance of victory by creating conditions that would force a postponement of elections.

Ideally, the JVP would like the resignation of President JR but that's not easily attainable, and there is not much the SLFP can do about it, either. But a dissolution of Parliament, and a date for parliamentary polls would give the JVP a chance to make a final decision on its 'in-out' tactic vis-a-vis the 7 party front. Once parliamentary polls is a certainty, the JVP could then discuss more firmly with the SLFP the items it would like included in the common program and the number of seats it would like to contest.

Mahanayakes' 4-point Appeal

1. The Government should notify immediately the date for the Presidential and the Parliamentary elections.
2. The Parliament should be dissolved and the Presidential and Parliamentary elections should be conducted under a caretaker Government.
3. Meaningful steps, which in general are acceptable to all citizens of Sri Lanka, should be taken after discussions with Party leaders, for conducting fair elections in a manner that will win the confidence of the people.
4. Party leaders and the general public should conduct their affairs with restraint and patience, considering the present dangerous and volatile situation in the country.

Clergy, educationists call for caution, discipline

Religious leaders and educationists raising a chorus of concern about the turmoil in schools and campuses, have called for caution by the Government and discipline from the students.

The Mahanayake of the Asgiriya Chapter, the Venerable Palipane Sri Chandananda Mahanayake Thera told a weekend newspaper that the Government should seek the root of the unrest; there was no point in blaming the students, and tough laws only worsened the problem.

The Mahanayake of the Malwatte Chapter, the Venerable Srimawatte Ananda Mahanayake Thera said only that students should be calm and continue with their school work without disruption.

The Mahanayake Thera of the Amarapura Sri Dharma Rakshita Maha Nikaya, the Venerable Madihe Pannaseeha Mahanayake Thera called on all concerned to resolve the problem of student unrest in a farsighted and intelligent manner; he called on the Government to act with restraint and said that the tougher the laws the worse the student unrest gets.

The Mahanayake of the Amarapura Sri Suddhammavamsa Nikaya, the Venerable Talalle Dhammananda Mahanayake Thera said that what was most important was that students must study, and that the Government was giving them all necessary assistance for this purpose. He also said that the problem of student unrest should be solved in a non-partisan manner.

Educationists too were asked for comments in opinion surveys done by other newspapers. Education Ministry sources told one newspaper that students had clearly voiced their demands. They were agitating for a change in government; the re-opening of universities as they saw no point in pursuing studies to enter them if they were to remain closed; and the withdrawal of the continuing assessment scheme which was unfair because of varying

standards between rural and urban schools.

A former Director-General of Education, Mr George Mendis told the interviewers that changes were necessary in the educational program for the welfare of the country, but these changes could not be made to suit personal whims or political gain.

A spokesman for Ananda College said that an outside organization had brainwashed students and discipline was breaking down. But, he also said that in one instance the police had provoked the students.

A spokesman for a leading girls school in Colombo said that students should not get involved in politics.

The Principal of Lumbini Maha Vidyalaya, Mr. W. P. A. Perera told another newspaper that the present crisis was brought about not because of problems within schools but by students getting involved in a national problem.

The Principal of Thurstan College, Mr. H. D. Herman Perera said that teachers had been reduced to a state of helplessness in the face of a problem which was not of their own making.

Taking a broader view than most, Mr L. Ariyawansa, Presi-

dent of the World Teachers' Association, said that student agitation about national problems was not a phenomenon unique to this country; it had happened recently in Burma and in France in 1968. He said that he could not accept that the unrest was caused by a few students incited to agitate; the problem went deeper than that.

A Member of Parliament and former school principal, Mr Richard Pathirana (SLFP) summed the situation. It began as a problem concerning education, he said. But at this stage economic, social and cultural problems have contributed to the gravity. Today 19,986 university students were on the streets; the future of 38,000 to 40,000 school children was uncertain.

The first cause was the White Paper which both students and teachers were against; then came the continuous assessment scheme. The Government's answer to student protests was to ban student councils, and repression.

Students too are citizens. They can see the uncertainty of their future and they protest. There is no political incitement, he said.

N. R.

THE WARRIOR DEAD

This is no hearse, steel blue
This lucky scion wagon
Purrs at your door, we must be on our way
We'll lift you in
We'll keep your face on to this June
This last June watching through its leaves
Its buds and fruit, fast star, and rising sun.
The road you curved out of the hillside with your hands
Now taking you away.

Each June, a foreign summer, hides the birds
You waited for each year
You go alone
Between the tall eucalyptus and the wild doves
Who never betrayed you and who never slunk
Away when guns exploded. Now
A wind, a quiet guard of honour and a dingy
The trees that sprung and the doves that bred in them

We follow you as we did in times of Peace
You crunched the shimmering gravel in your stride
To wave us at the bridge,
When long days end and we depart,
But this time you do not wave, you come with us.

— U. Karunatilake

Dissolve Parliament - Mrs. B.

Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike called upon the government to dissolve Parliament and the Provincial Councils to ensure a free and fair election.

In the statement, she has also said, she would campaign on the basis of the common programme of the eight party alliance.

There is a crisis situation because certain sections fear there will not be a free and fair election.

It is upto the government to assure the country, there will be a free and fair election. If the public confidence can be won on that issue, then, there will be no difficulty in holding the elections

and easing the tension in the country.

This I am confident will ensure the end to violence allowing for the democratic process to take root once again. This is why I welcome the proposals made by the Maha Nayakas.

We have agreed to work on the basis of a common programme and I will certainly stand by it. It is my bounden duty to do so.

This programme will include both the structure and composition of our future Government as well as how we will function after the election.

For T. S. Eliot (centenary of his birth)

*If not for you I would not be,
Nor would I have seen that I was
"Pinned, wriggling on the wall",
Or at another time, still young
Wondering whether "I had the strength
To force the moment to its crisis",
"I was afraid" as I too asked "do I dare",
With time, and good Leavis guiding me
"To the words on the page"
I arrived faltering at the "burnished throne"
And saw the "glitter of all jewels"
"From satin cases pouring in rich profusion",
I was also disturbed by the "strange perfumes"
And suddenly I realised I was in the "unreal city"
And heard the "agony in stony places,
The shouting and crying", I heard
"Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata",
My own words, and my forefathers!
I went back to the Ganga, and relieved,
I was there all the time, lost.
Yes when time past was time present,
And the past and present appeared as one
"In the still moment", in the white light"
That I had missed all the while.*

Tilak A. Gunawardhana

Union opposes Telecommunications Act

The Union of Posts and Telecommunications Officers (UPTO) has recorded its 'total opposition' to the proposed Telecommunications Commission Act. The ultimate aim of the Act is privatisation, to which the union has always been opposed, the UPTO has told the government.

In addition to affecting the lives of 20,000 Post and Telecommunication employees, privatisation of this vital national asset would also affect national security, the union has told the authorities.

Colombo becoming Chicago

Colombo is becoming another Chicago, said Kalawana's Communist MP Dew Gunasekera when the Betting and Gaming Levy Bill was taken up for debate in parliament. The Minister of Finance should reveal how many casinos exist in this country, the MP said, and added: "Colombo is becoming another Chicago. Recently there were murders committed in Duplication Road as a result of a clash between the rival gangs of the various casinos.

"The cost to society will far outweigh the money that this legislation will bring in. It will create a parasitic layer in the upper strata of society. It will open the gates for various international gamblers to come in increased numbers to Colombo".

Mr. Ananda Dasanayake (SLFP) — "The Government says that the implementation of these anti-social Acts will bring in good money. We are indebted to the tune of Rs. 19 thousand million. We do not know of course what the internal debt is.

"We need not bring these socially corrupting legislation if the colossal waste of money is genuinely checked".

T.Nadu elections will be over before January

Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, Mizoram and Nagaland are expected to be completed by January and next year, the AICC (I) general secretary in charge of Bihar, Mr. Oscar Fernandes told *The Hindu*. He also indicated that parliamentary and Assembly by-elections in different States may also be held simultaneously.

Asked if the formation of the Janata Dal would affect the fortunes of the ruling party in the

coming general elections, Mr. Fernandes said it would be erroneous to describe the newly formed party as centrist. "It is out and out a rightist. In fact, an extreme rightist party".

Representing the interests of the feudal rich, the Dovi Lal-V.P. Singh combine has even dropped the prefix socialist from their party. This would naturally help the polarisation of the weaker, exploited sections and minorities in favour of the Congress (I).

"From our past experience, we can say that the Opposition parties and their leaders come together and then drift apart. Otherwise, how do you explain the absence of Mr. M. Karunanidhi and the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. N. T. Rama Rao, not to speak of Mr. H. N. Bahuguna, from the Bangalore Opposition conclave? No less significant is the fact that the dramatic peripeteia in the earlier Opposition conclave at Madras and the latest in Bangalore were different.

Central leaders favour T.Nadu Poll

Various indications point to January next year as the timing for the assembly elections has to be constituted by January 29, when the State completes one year under President's rule, the maximum period permissible under the Constitution.

January was mentioned in recent informal discussions between Central leaders and the State's representatives. Announcement by the Election Commission postponing by-elections in seven parliamentary and some 30 assembly constituencies, in appears, is not unrelated to the Tamil Nadu poll. According to official explanation, this was done at the suggestion of the

concerned State Governments, which found November unsuitable because of the sowing season. That may well be the case but, according to another account, political bosses at the Centre did not want the shadow of possible reverses in the by-elections to fall on the Tamil Nadu poll.

Nagaland and Mizoram which were brought under Central rule recently following re-alignments in their assemblies, are to have fresh elections too. The principle of simultaneity may, therefore, be extended to cover the two States by the January poll schedule. This may add up to a significant test of strength — the last one before the next general election. January will be well within the first six-

month term of presidential rule in the two States. The Centre, of course, has the option of delaying the poll in these two cases — by seeking from Parliament another six-month extension. But central rule cannot be prolonged beyond one year in Tamil Nadu except by taking the extreme step of amending the Constitution, as was done in regard to Punjab.

December is not favoured for various reasons. The winter session of Parliament will go on till after the first week, and later, the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, will be out of the country — for visits to China in the third week, and to Islamabad for the fourth SAARC summit. Christmas is another factor. *Hindu*

Indian PM's China visit, a test for diplomacy

K. K. Katyal

NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China has been scheduled for the second half of December, probably the third week, as a result of the recent discussions by a team of senior Indian officials in Beijing. It is on this basis that the details of his programme are being worked out.

The Prime Minister will spend four or five days in China, most of the time in Beijing, but the

plans for trips to one or two other places are still at a tentative stage. To say that his talks with the top Chinese leaders will be the highlight of the visit is to stress the obvious. The duration of the forthcoming visit is short, as compared to the nearly two weeks that Nehru spent there or the longer trips of the former Chinese Prime Minister, Zhou-en-Lai in India, or for that matter Nehru's first visit to the Soviet Union or the U.S. as Prime Minister. It is an interesting study

in contrast with the leisurely style of diplomacy of those days.

The preparatory discussions were preliminary, and the officials will pay at least one more visit to Beijing to tie up the arrangements. This exercise is likely to be completed before the Soviet leader, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev's arrival here in the third week of November. Led by the Foreign Secretary and a former Ambassador to China, Mr. C.P.S. Menon, the Indian team included Mr. Gopi Arora,

Secretary, Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Ronen Sen, Joint Secretary, Prime Minister's office and Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Joint Secretary, External Affairs Ministry.

Perhaps because of the preliminary nature of the discussions, the Indian side was recalcitrant. It was known, however, that the Sino-Indian boundary issue figured during discussions on the agenda for the Prime Minister's talks.

That the Beijing visit will be by far the most sensitive mission abroad by the Prime Minister is evident, more so because of its timing. For an Indian Prime Minister to go to China during the pre-election year involves political risks in the domestic context. This could not but have been taken into account, at the time of the decision to accept the Chinese invitation. Considering the lack of progress in the several rounds of talks by officials in the past it will not be realistic to expect a dramatic, spectacular breakthrough on the border issue.

At the same time, the Prime Minister could not afford to be seen as having returned "empty-handed" after what is certain to be a high-profile contact at the political level, or as having accepted an arrangement considered out of tune with national sentiments. That leaves very little scope for manoeuvrability on discussions on this ticklish, delicate subject.

No serious problem would have been caused internally, had the Prime Minister decided not to go to China before the elections. There is thus an element of boldness in New Delhi's decision on the Prime Minister's visit which undoubtedly will be a major test for India's diplomatic ingenuity.

The Prime Minister's visit acquires significance in the background of the fast-changing correlation of forces in the world, particularly in the region around India. As shown by the recent seven-point proposal of Mr. Gor-

bachyev for cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and related diplomatic moves, the Soviet Union is paying close attention to matters, concerning its relations with China, Japan and the U.S. (as a country of the Pacific). The development of relations between China and Japan is not marked by inhibitions of the type, evident till recently Moscow finds it hard not to take note of economic successes achieved by South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong and watches with interest the progress by Thailand, Indonesia and other ASEAN countries. With such shifts, real or promised, in the balance of forces, New Delhi could have delayed the highest-level contact with China only at the risk of missing out on diplomatic initiatives.

Both India and China would have been free from major diplomatic missions by the second half of December — like Mr. Gorbachev's visit to India and the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Qian Qichen's talks in Moscow.

Party merger dents Bhutto victory chance

Christina Lamb

A late attempt has been made to spike the chances of victory for the Pakistan's People's Party, the largest opposition party, as Pakistan heads towards its first open, multi party election since 1977.

On the eve of the last day for filling nominations, a merger was announced yesterday by the two rival factions of the establishment party, the Muslim League, to counter a growing wave of support for the PPP.

The sudden move, which both factions had ruled out only hours before, occurred through pressure from the armed forces. The military, although anxious for elections to take place, would be unenthusiastic about a PPP victory. Despite recent reassurances from Ms. Benazir Bhutto, the PPP leader, the army fears that a PPP government would slash the defence budget and seek vengeance for the harsh treatment party members received under martial law between 1977 and 1985.

The defence budget accounts for about 26 per cent of total budget expenditure and 7 per cent of GDP — proportions which many opposition leaders see as being overripe for pruning.

A flood of candidates has joined the PPP in recent days, applicants offering 3m rupees (£97,000) for a party ticket. About 18,000 people applied for 800 national and provincial tickets, including many Muslim League supporters and former ministers such as Mr. Rana Nasim Mahmood, Defence Minister in the last Government.

Ms. Bhutto has drawn strong criticism from party workers for allotting tickets to such people. In Rawalpindi, workers have put up their own rival candidate.

PPP leaders argue that the party must win the elections at all cost and, given the feudal nature of Pakistan's society, people are more likely to vote for influential local figures rather than for those who have suffered in the fight for democracy.

Admission of such local notables made a PPP victory look more certain, particularly after the party announced an agreement with the Jamiat-ul Islam Party to guarantee it a big share of the religious vote and a large number of seats in North-west Frontier Province.

Such developments worried both factions of the Muslim League, each of which had seen many of its members leave to join Ms. Bhutto. The Muslim League (J) of Mr. Mohammad Khan Junejo, a prime minister under the military regime, had formed a five year alliance with two other parties, while the Muslim League (F) of those in the present caretaker Government had entered an electoral alliance with eight other parties including Pakistan's most influential religious party, Jamaat Islami.

The merger of the two factions under the leadership of Mr. Junejo is clearly intended to bring together parties of both alliances in a grand coalition to defeat the PPP, as occurred in 1977.

Rajiv's prospects grim

Nikhil Chakravartty

The new party that was announced in Bangalore under Vishwanath Pratap Singh's presidency is certainly a far cry from the original concept of a viable centrist formation.

For one thing, it is for all practical purposes the Janata Party of 1977 minus the Jana Sangh. So its appeal will certainly be far less than its initiators expect.

Second, it will actually be under the dual leadership of Devi Lal on the one hand and Chandra Shekhar on the other. Mr. Devi Lal may not be able to pull much weight beyond the Jeez homeland, which, of course, is not inconsiderable. As for Mr. Chandra Shekhar, he has really thrown in his lot with Atal Singh and Subramaniam Swamy. It is understood that Mr. Swamy was implacably opposed to having anything to do with any party talking of socialism. Hence the dropping of the prefix "Samajvadi" at the insistence of Mr. Chandra Shekhar. This was one of the reasons why the Congress (S) chose to stay away from the new party.

PROBLEMS

The new Janata Dal's problems have not all been overcome. Within the faction coming from the old Janata Party, the rift between Ramakrishna Hegde and Mr. Chandra Shekhar has not been patched up. It is bound to surface in the near future. Second, Mr. Devi Lal's steamroller tactics could not force H. N. Bahuguna to fall in line with the new formation. If anything, the birth of the Janata Dal may precipitate a split in the Lok Dal itself. Lastly, the Jan Morcha is hardly unified. No doubt Arun Nehru's presence will strengthen Mr. V. P. Singh's position in the new party, but Ram Dhan's staying away will not be an insignificant loss for it.

CHALLENGE

Therefore, on the whole one cannot help feeling that this new Janata Dal will hardly generate

confidence in the public mind about its capacity to rally all Opposition parties together for a combined onslaught on Rajiv Gandhi's Congress. What is, however, significant is that the Janata Dal will pose a serious challenge to the Congress (I) in the Hindi heartland. The Congress (S) is a very negligible factor in the politics of the Ganges basin. Therefore, its absence from the new party will make little difference to its effectiveness in this Middle Kingdom of Indian politics.

The only item of concern for the V. P. Singh-Chandra Shekhar combine will be the absence of Mr. Bahuguna from their bandwagon. If Mr. Bahuguna refuses to join the new party or to come to terms with it, Opposition votes will be divided in Uttar Pradesh and this can only help the Congress (I). However, this can be averted by the newly-formed National Front, whose main, if not sole, preoccupation will be to ensure that there will be no vote-splitting. Even by remaining outside the Janata Dal, Mr. Bahuguna can remain within the National Front as a distinct entity. The same may be true for the Ram Dhan dissidents in the Jan Morcha.

In the Opposition political map of the five Hindi States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan, the only influential party outside the Janata Dal is the Bharatiya Janata Party, particularly in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. If Janata Dal leaders carefully negotiate with the BJP leadership — as they are likely to very soon — then it is quite possible that the Janata Dal will not put up candidates in constituencies where the BJP is strong, and the BJP in its turn will reciprocate by not putting up candidates where the Janata Dal is strong.

The emerging scenario for the Congress (I) therefore is pretty grim. Against the National Front it will be in difficulty. In Andhra Pradesh it will have to face the challenge of the Telugu Desam, in Tamil Nadu that of the Dravida

Munnetra Kazhagam, in Kerala and West Bengal of the Left Front and in Karnataka of the Janata Dal.

NO COMPENSATION

Any success for the Congress (I) in Maharashtra and Gujarat — that too rather uncertain — will be negated by the prospect of its defeat in other States. Neither Orissa, Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu nor the North-East can make up for the loss it is doomed to suffer in the Hindi belt. And even in the North-East, the Asom Gana Parishad will be a powerful challenge.

The facile argument trotted out by a section of the Rajiv brigade is that it is a matter of concern that regional parties are making a bid to play a major role in national politics and this will be disastrous. On the contrary, a conglomeration of small parties capable of running State Governments may take a realistic view of Centre-State relations, as they have direct experience of running State administrations.

INFIGHTING

Faced with such a difficult prospect, it is amazing that the Congress (I) is showing signs of progressive disintegration. In the last one year, factionalism has been accentuated and not smothered as election day comes nearer. In Bihar, a virtual stalemate prevails and Chief Minister Bhagwat Jha Azad does not know how long he will be asked to continue. In Uttar Pradesh, Narayan Datt Tiwari has been saddled with meddling and interference by the Vir Bahadur Singh faction, which has the tacit backing of the Prime Minister's camp. In Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Gandhi has induced Shyama Charan Shukla to disturb Arjun Singh's cosy comfort. The same role is being played by Nandini Satpathy in Orissa against J. B. Patnaik, A. R. Antulay in Maharashtra against Sharad Pawar.

An impressive innings of the destabilisation game being played against its own party by the Rajiv establishment.

(The writer is a distinguished Indian editor).

Gorbachev likely to meet Deng in Peking Summit

Petar Ellingsen

FOREIGN
NEWS

PEKING
The first Sino-Soviet Summit for 30 years now seems certain to take place between President Mikhail Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping in Peking next April or May.

Diplomats and observers in both Peking and Moscow say that the meeting so long sought by Mr Gorbachev appears finally to have been agreed in principle by the Chinese. It will result in much closer diplomatic, strategic and commercial links between the two communist powers.

The decision to let Mr Gorbachev have his summit with Deng, the supreme Chinese leader, was apparently taken at a meeting of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee late last month. Zhao Ziyang, the party general secretary, is expected to extend the formal invitation to his Soviet counterpart following the planned visit to Moscow in December of Qian Qichen, the Chinese Foreign Minister.

"It is no longer a question of if (the summit takes place), but when," said a Peking diplomat, although much work remained to be done. China now supported the idea of a meeting which will be the first since Mr Nikita Khrushchev met Mao Zedong in 1959. The groundwork was laid two months ago by the respective vice-foreign ministers' meeting in Peking to discuss ways of resolving an impasse over the Soviet-backed occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnam.

Although no public solution to the occupation emerged in the talks, Chinese leaders were impressed with Soviet attempts to encourage an early withdrawal of its troops, and subsequently softened their attitude to Moscow in general, and Mr Gorbachev in particular.

Indeed, senior Chinese leaders are concerned that, despite his apparently successful palace purge last week, Mr Gorbachev may be threatened by conservatives in the Kremlin opposed to his reforms.

Chinese sources say the marked change in Peking's posture toward Moscow has been partly motivated by fears for Mr Gorbachev's survival, and a perception that his dumping would be counter to China's interests.

Just last week, in an unusual outpouring of support, Yang Shangkun, the Chinese president, and Li Peng, the Premier, publicly congratulated Mr Gorbachev on his appointment as President, and said they looked forward to improving Sino-Soviet relations.

Moscow promises peace in Pacific

Petar Ellingsen

For four days last week, 100 foreigners walked the streets of Vladivostok, photographed warships in the warm-water harbour, and listened while senior Soviet leaders made their pitch to join the economic growth of North Asia and played down worries about military confrontation in the Pacific.

As gestures go, the decision to hold an international conference in the home base of the Soviet Pacific fleet was both symbolic and dramatic, but at the end of the week, many questions remained unanswered.

Few of the visitors who headed home on Aeroflot flights doubted Moscow's intention to become an economic force in the Asia Pacific region, but there was less certainty about long-term military and strategic objectives.

Speaking in Siberia last month, Mr Gorbachev had repeated his desire for a summit, and suggested that China and the US join with the Soviet Union in a dialogue designed to guarantee peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region. Talking about a "zone of joint enterprise" in the Far East, he proposed Sino-Japanese-Soviet economic programmes, and backed expanded trade with China.

Given the tense history of Sino-Soviet relations, both the speech and the rapid change in relations represents a remarkable shift in policy. Diplomatic antagonism has been accompanied along the Manchurian border by military stand-offs since the Soviet Union withdrew all its technicians from China 30 years ago.

As one of the delegates, Professor Joachim Glatitz, a Soviet specialist from Munich University, observed: "With the Soviet Far East so economically backward I am sure they are sincere about trade and growth, but they have still to show us how genuine they are about a significantly reduced military presence."

Despite Professor Glatitz's reservations, top Soviet officials, including Mr Eugeny Primakov, a member of the ruling Central Committee, and Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Rogachev, were categorical in their claims that the Soviet Union wanted to reduce military tension in the region.

Mr Primakov, who participated in the Kremlin shakeup orchestrated last week by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, said the "greater vigour" resulting from perestroika

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'My book being put in jail:' *Rushdie*

N. Ram

MADRAS

Mr. Salman Rushdie, the author of "The Satanic Verses", characterised the official ban on the import and reading of his novel in India as "an act of colossal illiberalism, great philistinism" and expressed the hope that the Government of India would act speedily "at a very high level" to reverse the decision. He remarked that the official spokesman's explanation that the ban was "a pre-emptive step" to avoid "misrepresentation" of passages in the novel "for political purposes" amounted to saying that "because the book might become the victim of unscrupulous elements in India, it is the book must be punished."

Observing that "the energy in Indian politics, tragically, is now in these religious extremist movements, whether Muslim or Hindu or whatever," Mr. Rushdie said "the general response here has been a kind of horror that such a thing could happen in India." He added: "Now in a situation where Pakistan has made no noises and India has banned the book, this feels like an upside down world."

The well-known writer, whose 547-page novel is on the short list for the Booker prize, expressed his gratitude to newspapers and various people in India who have condemned the ban and asked that it be revoked immediately.

He said that if the Government of India, seeing it had made a mistake, reversed its decision, it would be "respected" and even "applauded" by the world.

Mr. Rushdie made these observations from his home in London in a telephonic interview to *The Hindu*:

N. Ram: How do you read the official attitude behind the ban, taking into account the official spokesman's latest explanation that it was "a pre-emptive step" to avoid misrepresentation of your novel "for political purposes"?

Salman Rushdie: It seems to me to be a case of making the likely victim of an attack responsible for the attack. It seems they're saying that because the book might become the victim of unscrupulous elements in India, it is the book that must be punished. My book is being put in jail, so to speak, as a protective measure for things that may be done to it. If they wish to make a pre-emptive strike, why not make it against the people who may be making the distortions?

It seems to me an act of colossal illiberalism, great philistinism and, I think, great stupidity. I think it is very ill-advised. It is already getting India a very bad press outside India. We have organisations such as International Pen and the Index on Censorship joining in an attack on the Indian Government. We have major writers here joining in an attack on the Indian Government. This is no way for a democracy to conduct itself — not if it wishes to be seen in the world's eyes as a free society.

Q: Mr. Rushdie, you have had much experience with people in India and this includes experience with official and political attitudes. You have had an interaction with India which is very substantive. Would you say this marks a qualitative change of some kind? Have

you come across anything of this kind before?

A: The answer is no, I have not come across anything of this sort before and I do believe that it does mark a change, a substantive change, in two dimensions. I think, first of all, it indicates a colossal weakness of vision on the part of the Indian Government and a corresponding growth in the power of religious groups to have their way in India. As you know, I was something of an opponent of Mrs. Gandhi, but I cannot imagine that this would have happened under Mrs. Gandhi's rule. It seems to me that we now have a situation in India in which any two or three religious people can get their will just by saying so! That speaks for the vacuum at the Centre and what is shown is that the energy in Indian politics, tragically, is now in these religious extremist movements, whether Muslim or Hindu or whatever.

Q: You are aware, Mr. Rushdie, that a number of people, including newspapers, in India have condemned the ban. We also learn that from outside India, organisations of writers and several well-known writers like Tom Stoppard, Kingsley Amis and Harold Pinter have protested publicly and sent telegrams to the Indian Prime Minister asking that the ban on a serious work of literature be lifted. What has been your reading of the general reaction or response?

A: I am very grateful for your support. I am delighted to have the support of these very distinguished writers and all can say is that they won't be the only ones. Because the

of horror that such a thing could happen in India! Let me say that if such a thing had happened in, for example, Pakistan, people might have been annoyed but in a way they would have expected it more. Now in a situation where Pakistan has made no noises and India has banned the book, this feels like an upside down world.

Q: Has any Indian official or politician been in touch with you on this matter?

A: No.

Q: Moving on to another area, if I may, ... could you tell us something about your work that led to this book and the idea behind "The Satanic Verses"? How long have you been working on it, for example?

A: Well, I have been working on the book more or less for the last five years. But in another sense, the genesis of the book is even older than that. Because some of the information relating to the early history of Islam was stuff that I studied when I was studying history at University, at Cambridge. The incident which gives the novel its title, a historical incident which you will find in many books, biographies of the Prophet and so forth, was an incident that I first heard about twenty years ago, when I was studying history. And since then, I have been thinking about these matters. One of the reasons why, in the novel, I have highly fictionalised the story — why I have not called the Prophet Mohammed, why the city is not Mecca but a fictional and highly fabricated city — is precisely that I did not want to get into a dispute about whether this was historical or not. I wrote a fiction about a prophet similar to Mohammed. Now to have this fiction treated as if it was absolute fact and then called blasphemous is an indication of how naive the attack is. We are not here talking about some kind of work of scholarship or history. We are talking about narrative fiction which uses, as its starting point, certain historical events. If we are to be now told that in India a fictional discussion of the theme of religion is no longer to be permitted because it offends certain sentiments, then we have arrived at a very, extreme condition.

Q: What is the way out?

A: What is the way out of the situation?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, I think the way out is very simple. Since I have had no official contact with the Government, I have no way of knowing who exactly has made this decision. But whoever has made it is also capable of reversing it or being overruled. I think if the Indian Government, at a very high level, was to act very speedily to reverse this decision, they would be respected for doing so. I think when people see they have made a mistake and act to rectify it, one must applaud them. And I think that the world would applaud such a decision. I can only hope that the Indian Government will feel able to reverse it very fast.

On with revolution

Quentin Peel

Mikhail Gorbachev came back from his summer holiday only three weeks ago. He has wasted no time in getting back to the task of galvanising Soviet society.

Yesterday's shake-up of the top ranks of the ruling Communist Party, removing the most glaring representatives of the old regime, including President Andre Gromyko, and rapidly promoting his own protégé, has demonstrated his clear control over the party apparatus.

The man regarded as the biggest brake on radical political reform, Mr Yegor Ligachev, has been sidelined to agriculture still a critical role, but one which removes him from control of the party organs.

The central committee is facing a drastic shake-up, with its 20 or more departments slimmed down to just six, and possibly as many as half the party officials facing transfer to outside jobs.

The whole process is less than a purge. Some old faces remain and Mr Gorbachev has made some clear political compromises. But it is a solid reinforcement of the process of political reform, bringing more allies into powerful positions.

It is also a very public demonstration of Mr Gorbachev's authority, a demonstration which has scarcely come too soon. For problems have been crowding in on the Soviet leader ever since he ended his triumphant extraordinary Communist Party conference last June.

His very first trip out of Moscow when he came back from holiday brought them home to him — and to Soviet television viewers — in dramatic fashion.

Every night for a week, the good Soviet citizens of the frontier territory of central Siberia were portrayed on TV, hammering

home to their leader the problems of daily life in their towns: food shortages above all, but poor housing, inadequate transport, ill-equipped or even absent social services.

Then there were complaints about the reform process itself: the party stalwarts charged that it was undermining the old pillars of the economy, enticing the young people away from the factories and allowing profiteering in the new co-operatives.

The trip summed up at least three aspects of the problems stacking up in front of him. The first is that so far his attempts at economic reform, granting greater financial independence to enterprises, promoting the growth of a fledgling private sector in the co-operative movement and urging a switch in agriculture away from massive state farms and collectives to small lease-hold units, have caused more dislocation than they have solved problems.

The second is that very few people are yet ready to seize the initiative he is urging upon them, fearful perhaps that the reform process won't last and certainly quite unused to the process anyway.

Thirdly, the trip demonstrated more than anything else the deep public scepticism about the process. There is a perception, justified or not, that living conditions have actually got worse, not better, since the doddering old Mr Leonid Brezhnev passed away.

Nor is that all. While Mr Gorbachev was stomping round Siberia, the demands of resurgent nationalism on the fringes of the Russian empire were back with a vengeance.

In Armenia and Azerbaijan, where the Armenians are seeking the reunification of their

homeland with the return of the enclave of Nagorny Karabakh from the neighbouring Azeris, strikers and demonstrators are back on the streets. They are refusing to accept the hard-line ruling of Moscow, laid down by Mr Gorbachev in July, that the promise of economic development is enough, and nationalist demands are unpatriotic.

Perhaps ultimately more of a threat, the nationalists in the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are also taking to the streets. On the face of it they are campaigning for perestroika, but they mean by that a degree of devolution, which must be very hard for many in Moscow to stomach.

Against such a background, Mr Gorbachev knows that he can easily face exactly the sort of bureaucratic backlash which once unseated his predecessor, Mr. Nikita Khrushchev.

There have been signs of unease fraying the public unity of the Politburo, maintained since the conference in June. Mr Ligachev appeared to reject the foreign policy line of Mr Eduard Shevardnadze — that the class struggle should no longer dictate foreign relations while Mr Gorbachev was relaxing on holiday by the Black Sea.

Hence the Soviet leader's need to demonstrate his authority swiftly and clearly and show that he has no intention of slowing down the pace, nor changing the direction, of reform.

The shake-up he pushed through the central committee, the ruling organ of the ruling party, in barely an hour yesterday, is both radical enough to do that, but not so radical that it will antagonise and offend the moderates whose support he needs.

Mr Ligachev is pushed sideways, but he still keeps a criti-

cal portfolio in agriculture, the subject which repeated exhortation has placed at the very top of the political agenda. Hitherto the Kremlin number two, he can devote his considerable organising skills and determination to the task of revitalising agriculture, and his loyalty will be thoroughly tested.

The other key conservative figure in the changes, Mr Viktor Chebrikov, chairman of the State Security Committee, the KGB, has also been given a vital role as Central Committee secretary responsible for legal and judicial reform. This the job charged with transforming the Soviet Union into a "Socialist law-based society". His appointment brought a hollow laugh from the foreign and domestic press assembled in Moscow yesterday and it is still unclear that he will lose the KGB. But if he does, he will have lost a vital power-base, while still having a key job.

The departure of Mr Gromyko from the Politburo, and also that of Mr Mikhail Solomentsev, for years the prime minister of the Russian Federation under Mr Brezhnev, was inevitable. The only question was when it would happen.

Mr Gorbachev seems to have done it in a civilised and diplomatic way, paying due tribute to Mr Gromyko as the ultimate servant of the state, even though he symbolised the stony face of the Cold War to the outside world.

As for the newcomers, they have all served their time in the party machine, even if their recent promotion is owed to the party leader. Vadim Medvedev is a technocrat who came to the Central Committee secretariat only in 1986, but he joined the party back in 1952. His rise is the most meteoric, because he comes onto the Politburo as a full voting member, without even passing through candidate membership and crucial ideology portfolio taken away from Mr Ligachev.

Mr Alexander Yakovlev, the man most identified with perestroika and glasnost after Mr

Gorbachev, does not take over ideology—that might have been too much of a slap in the face for Mr Ligachev—but will instead have responsibility for international relations. From that, neither left nor right has really won.

The question is now whether Mr Gorbachev has created a solid enough platform in the top ranks of the party for the formidable agenda of reform ahead of him.

He has publicly stated his determination to press ahead, tackling both Political and economic issues at once.

"The country cannot be shaken out of stagnation by isolated, disjointed measures", he told Mr Erich Honecker, the sceptical East German leader, last week. "Any of the current burning problems underscores the necessity for radical change. It is needed in the party, in the state, in agriculture, in personnel policy and most of all in people's mentality."

All of that is on his agenda. Ironically, although it was the crying need for economic reform which started the perestroika process, it now seems to be political reform which is moving fastest.

● A major constitutional reform, to establish a new super-parliament—the Congress of People's Deputies—and to transform the present Supreme Soviet into a streamlined standing assembly, charged with genuinely amending and debating new legislation, is to be completed in the next month. It will also extend the job of president of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet—the job Mr Gromyko is quitting—into what looks very like a De Gaulle-style executive presidency.

● Legal reform is on the same time scale: the aim is to make the Soviet judiciary genuinely independent of the executive, and to reform the penal code.

● There is electoral reform, to make multi-candidate elections the rule, not the exception.

● A press law is also being drafted—a first version has been sent back by the Central Committee secretariat for being too restrictive—which is supposed to set in law the growing access to information called glasnost, although it may well go less far than the newly aggressive Soviet Press would wish.

All these issues should go to a meeting of the Supreme Soviet for approval in November.

But the key political changes concern the ruling party. All the rest could be meaningless without an insertion of genuine democracy, and a degree of democratic control, into the party structure.

Yesterday's central committee meeting still failed to spell out the final details of reform of the party bureaucracy, which amounts to nothing less than an alternative government of the Soviet Union. But the details are yet to be decided and it is clearly proving a very sticky question.

Apart from the political reform, the economic reform process is clearly in some trouble. Dr Leonid Abalkin, the distinguished director, of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Economics, was howled down by the party faithful when he suggested that the process has barely started. He was speaking an unpalatable truth.

The system is currently caught between the demands of a unreconstructed central planning system and individual enterprises being told to use their initiative, balance their books and stop making losses costing the government a conservatively-estimated Rs1bn (£10bn) a year.

The Supreme Soviet has to agree on next year's budget and annual plan next month when none of the figures appear to add up. Everyone is being told to keep meeting the unrealistic growth targets of an old five-year plan, drawn up before perestroika was dreamed of.

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Experience vs change

Stewart Fleming and Lionel Barber

The US is entering a new era in its relations with the rest of the world in which the foreign policy priorities established by President Ronald Reagan when he took office look increasingly out of date.

Both candidates in this year's presidential election, Vice-President George Bush and Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts, are aware of this and the Reagan administration itself has been adjusting painfully to the new realities. But the made-for-TV images of the campaign have left American voters with little sense of the challenges ahead. The candidates themselves have been unable or unwilling to articulate either the scope of the challenges, or how they would address them.

Mr. Bush, as a quasi-incumbent running on the Reagan record of peace through strength, wants to keep the focus on the past. He has no reason to raise doubts about either of the Reagan administration's twin foreign policy priorities: the huge military build-up and the confrontation of communist expansionism in Third World countries.

Governor Dukakis, the outsider with no foreign policy credentials, is trying to highlight the shortcomings of the Reagan record and in particular to draw voters' attention on the need for change. But his lack of rhetorical skills and experience in foreign affairs, coupled with a failure earlier in the campaign to insulate himself from Republican attacks on defence issues, have left him vulnerable.

SUCCESS

Pulling no punches — and throwing several low ones — Mr. Bush has told Americans that by elect-

ing Mr. Dukakis they would be gambling on an unknown quantity. He has even raised doubts about Mr. Dukakis's patriotism. This strategy has worked far better than Mr. Bush's campaign advisers could have imagined.

Ironically, the success of the Bush campaign's tactics have allowed the Vice-President to avoid addressing in any detail how he would tackle challenges which some of his campaign advisers are saying will confront a new President. "The post-war era in international relations is coming to an end," says Henry Kissinger. "Such periods of transition have also involved turmoil and struggle." Many US foreign policy analysts share Dr. Kissinger's view that the declining appeal of communist ideology and central economic planning — not only in the Soviet Union and China but also around the world — is a historical turning-point which will require a carefully calibrated response from the US.

Just as important, the mood of the American public is in flux. "The current attitude of Americans towards the Soviet Union is different from anything we have seen in 40 years," wrote pollster Daniel Yankelovich and Prof. Richards Smoke of Brown University in a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*.

SHIFT

They described a "new thinking" among Americans on foreign policy. Towards Moscow they detected a mood of "wary readiness" wanting relations to improve, but without the excessive optimism of the Nixon-Brezhnev detente of the early 1970s. More generally they said: "Worry about whether the United

States can compete successfully in the world economy has reached the point where it is perhaps for the first time considered a vital national security issue."

This shift is coming at a time when the US is burdened by huge budget and trade deficits and beset with concern about its long-term competitiveness. Neither man is addressing problems which are cramping America's freedom of action around the world, creating tension with its allies, forcing the Pentagon to prepare for an era of drastic cost-cutting and raising doubts about Washington's ability to lead the West.

Of the two candidates, Governor Dukakis, needing to challenge the Reagan record, has been more explicit about the need to rethink America's approach to foreign policy. While backing nuclear deterrence and the modernisation of the nuclear arsenal, underscoring the importance he attaches to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation alliance, and endorsing Mr. Reagan's arms control policies, he has been critical of what he sees as the Reagan administration's excessive investment in military hardware.

On military spending he favours a "stable" Pentagon budget and has identified major spending programmes he opposes. These include the Midgetman mobile missile and the railbased MX missile, plans to expand the number of naval carrier task forces and the expensive "Star Wars" Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) funding.

His approach towards the Soviet Union seems to reflect a more optimistic assessment of the pros-

pects for change in Moscow than Mr. Bush. This is based, in part, on the view that Moscow's domestic economic problems rather than, as Mr. Bush argues, the US military build-up brought Moscow to the arms control table.

He is careful, however, not to give Mr. Bush new ammunition by appearing too optimistic. "It is a mistake to suggest that everything has changed. Mr. Gorbachev has not abandoned Soviet goals but rather seeks to advance those goals through different means."

He has also begun to argue that the US should test Soviet intentions by linking progress on US-Soviet relations to changes in Soviet behaviour in key areas. "If there is to be a fundamental change in the relationship of his country with the Western world there must first be a fundamental change in the balance of forces in Central Europe," he has remarked.

The Governor believes that the US can be more influential in the world if it abandons what he sees as the Reagan administration's penchant for unilateral initiatives such as the invasion of Grenada and the intervention in Lebanon. He puts more emphasis on working more closely with allies and through multilateral agencies such as the United Nations.

DIFFERENCES

He has no time for the Reagan administration's "Lone Ranger" approach to confronting communism in the Third World. He backs the regional peace Plan in Central America launched by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica and rejects US military aid to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua. He also calls for the US to take the lead in imposing international sanctions on South Africa to try to force a change in apartheid.

Even though he has consistently maintained that the West needs

to strengthen its conventional forces, in combination his foreign policy positions have left Mr. Dukakis open to Mr. Bush's charges that he is just another idealistic "liberal" Democrat who does not see the need for a strong US military and forceful American leadership. Mr. Dukakis last month belatedly began to toughen his rhetoric on the defence issue by, among other things, highlighting some weapons systems he does support. But he has not shaken off the doubts among Americans which Mr. Bush has succeeded in arousing.

Mr. Bush is evasive about the future but familiar and reassuring in his view of the US's role in the world. "When you look at the world as it really is, in the final analysis there is no substitute for us, for the United States of America," he says. Unlike his campaign Chairman James Baker, he steers clear of the issue of the US's economic standing in the world and the relationship of this to national security. And he is even tougher than President Reagan on relations with the Soviet Union, arguing that "the cold war is not over."

STRATEGY

Mr. Bush's rhetoric is aimed more at boosting his support in the polls than providing an outline of his policies. He has been seeking in particular to retain the support of conservative Democrats who backed Mr. Reagan and right-wing Republicans who suspect that the Vice-President does not share their anti-communist fervour.

He has carefully left the impression that what he stands for above all is continuity. He too has endorsed the Reagan arms control policies. By running on the Reagan record, Mr. Bush has made Mr. Dukakis the issue, not foreign policy. So far it has worked: Mr. Bush's still unexplained role in the Iran-Contra scandal has died as a campaign issue, so too has the Reagan administration's relationship with Panama's strongman

General Manuel Noriega and the stalemate in West Asia.

Unlike Mr. Dukakis, Mr. Bush does not have to convince Americans that there is a need for change or that he understands foreign policy. There are residual doubts about his effectiveness and judgment. But he has a record which is impressive to voters. In addition to his seven years as Vice-President, he has served as US Ambassador to the UN and China and as head of the Central Intelligence Agency.

In effect, Mr. Bush is giving Americans the same message he is giving the allies: "Trust me." Unless Mr. Dukakis can make a more convincing case for change, the voters may well give Mr. Bush the benefit of the doubt on foreign policy — but only at the expense of a clear idea about what that choice really means for the post-Reagan era. — *Financial Times*.

On with...

(Continued from page 12)

The central planners complain that factories no longer accept their orders. The chairman of the state prices committee admits that something called inflation is already under way.

The result is that the crucial next phase of economic reform — of the banking system, to provide credit for newly independent enterprises, of trade relations to cut out central government orders, and most difficult of all, of the totally unrealistic pricing system — seems to be slipping. No timetable is available.

That is the background for Mr. Gorbachev's demonstration of party authority. It is a daunting challenge and every step of the process is unpredictable. But he has served notice that the process must and will go on.

There is no alternative leader in sight, and even a conservative central committee, recognising that, has given his shake-up its blessing.

India's near failure in Sri Lanka

Ajit Bhattacharjee

Like a terminal patient kept alive on life-supporting drugs, the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement is kept going though there is little hope now of its objectives being achieved. Its provisions continue to be implemented belatedly, long after the political assumptions on which the agreement rested have proved illusory.

The central reality is that New Delhi has neither been able to cure the disease afflicting the agreement by winning over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, nor has the Indian Peace-Keeping Force excised it like a diseased limb. New Delhi has wavered between one remedy and the other, with disastrous results.

As if to demonstrate their ability to survive, after holding out against the IPKF for one full year, the Tigers observed the anniversary by slaughtering 45 Sinhalese villagers, of whom 32 were women and children. The village was just within the newlymerged North-Eastern Province, near enough the border to fan ethnic tensions.

Miscalculation

For New Delhi, the central objective of the entire exercise was to establish a viable regime in the North-East Province, with enough autonomy to meet Tamil aspirations and enough internal stability to survive. This may have been possible if the LTTE had either co-operated or been eliminated. But they remain strong enough to deter anyone in the North from contesting the elections to the merged Provincial Council except persons from the militant groups opposed to them, who live under IPKF protection.

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), the only long-established Tamil political party, publicly declared that it was too scared to contest. Other local leaders in the North may not have stood for election out of sympathy for the LTTE.

The majority sentiment will not be known because the candidates fielded by the minor factions, the Eelam People's Revolutionary Front (EPRF), the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF) and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) have been declared uncontested winners. Between them, they have won 39 of the 71 seats in the council. No polling will take place in the North, thus robbing the new provincial administration of much of its credibility.

Setback

Elections are scheduled to be held on November 19 in the former Eastern Province in which Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese are equally balanced. But hopes that the Tamils and Muslims (who speak Tamil) will cooperate have been setback by LTTE attacks on Muslims as well as Sinhalese. The recently-organised Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) will oppose EPRLF candidates in the eastern districts.

In the circumstances, the chances of an effective provincial administration emerging in the North-East are thin. But the elections are only the first hurdle to cross. A far bigger obstacle to the survival of the merger is to surmount a year later; the referendum promised to residents of the East to enable them to choose whether to remain joined with the North or separate once more.

Even when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J. R. Jayewardene signed the agreement on July 29 last year, the odds were weighed against a permanent merger. The provision was included as a sop to Tamil sentiment, but Mr. Jayewardene added a time-bomb set to explode a year later in the shape of the referendum.

The President's own views were made clear in a broadcast one week after the agreement was signed. He told his people that the merger was temporary. A

referendum would be held within a year and they need have no fear "because all of us can work against the joinder (merger), and I intend to ask all those who are against the joinder to come with me and work in the Eastern province to convince the people that the joinder should not be made permanent." New Delhi preferred to ignore this, perhaps regarding it as a sop to the Sinhalese who had agitated violently against the agreement.

At this stage, New Delhi still hoped to persuade the LTTE to participate in the elections, a hope kept alive by its intelligence agencies at considerable cost, even after the Tigers clashed with the IPKF on October 10, 1987. Both the merger and the elections were then postponed until the proximity of the presidential and parliamentary elections in Sri Lanka set a firm deadline.

Committed

Whether Mr. Jayewardene's pronouncement that he would campaign against the permanent merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces was meant for temporary local consumption or not, there is no doubt that both the Sinhalese candidates contesting the elections to succeed him are committed to doing so. Premier R. Premadasa and former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike are also committed to abrogating or renegotiating the agreement and seeking the early return of the IPKF. The widespread recent agitation against the IPKF demonstrates that it will not be easy for the new President to wriggle out of such commitments whether meant only for election purposes (as suggested in a press interview by Indian High Commissioner J. N. Dixit) or not.

Indian officials are now reduced to arguing that whoever rules Sri Lanka will not really insist that the IPKF withdraw because the Sri Lankan armed forces and

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(The writer is Associate editor of the DECCAN HERALD)

1917 : its impact on India and Ceylon

W. A. Wiswa Warnapala

The emergence of the newly independent countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and their entry into the international arena as sovereign, independent nations cannot be divorced from the general impact of the October Revolution on world politics.

Lenin, the founder of the first Socialist State and the foremost strategist of the October Revolution, stated that 'certain fundamental features of our revolution have a significance which is not local, not peculiar, not Russian only but international'.¹ Lenin, emphasised that all the fundamental and secondary features of the revolution influenced all countries in the world. The historic events which took place in the last seventy years demonstrated the validity of this judgement.

The October Revolution, brought about the national awakening of the oppressed masses in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The extension to other continents of the movement for national liberation, hitherto contribution of the 1917 revolution.² In Central Asia, in Persia and Turkey and Egypt and the Middle East, the Soviet Union became the natural ally of the oppressed against the forces of imperialism. In India and in Afghanistan the nationalist movement looked to Moscow for inspiration and the October Revolution began to spread eastward into the less advanced Asian continent. The revolution, became a revolt against Western imperialism. The October Revolution gave 'an impetus to Indian political independence'.³ The October Revolution, apart from its impact on the course of constitutional reforms in India, influenced the ideology of the nationalist movement which recognised the importance of the concept of self-determination. The principle of

self-determination projected by the Soviet Union on the world scene became a comprehensive political demand that quickened the pace of the Indian political development. Besides these political developments, the nationalist movement of India transformed itself into a mass movement with a definite programme of action to overthrow British rule in India, and this dynamism was certainly due to the appearance of the working class movement on the Indian political scene. In the period 1917 - 20 the working class agitation reached a new stage of consciousness which awakened the hope for a new social order in India.

The British Government in India, recognising the international significance of the October Revolution, considered the rise of the Soviet Union as a potential threat to their supremacy in Asia. The Soviet Declaration of November 1917 had a considerable impact in India and other parts of Asia; in this respect the view adopted was that there was similarity between colonial rule in British India and Tsarist Russia. The October Revolution was not European event. It became more of an Asian event. This perception conditioned some of the subsequent reforms in India. The Indian nationalist movement, became a dynamic mass organisation. A significant factor was the admiration of the October Revolution by the Indian intelligentsia. Munshi Prem Chand, a leading literary figure in Hindi, Obaidullah Slachi who pioneered many an anti-British movement, Quazi Nazrul Islam, Rabindranath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru were convinced that the October Revolution could provide some impetus to the Indian struggle for freedom. Raj Mahendra Pratap and the members of 'Government in exile' went to Moscow to see Lenin, again provides the significance of the October Revolution to Indian struggle.⁴

The rise of China and Vietnam, the freedom struggle of Indonesia and the emergence of the smaller nations of South Asia and Africa represented the international dimension of the impact of the October Revolution. For instance, the pioneers of the Sri Lankan constitutional reform struggle derived inspiration from the October Revolution. The small coterie of educated men who constituted the Young Lanka League stated that in the October Revolution there was a vision for the future.⁵ The Young Lanka League, formed in 1915, was a radical organisation which had some links with Colombo's incipient trade union organisation and its leaders acknowledged the impact of the October Revolution on the struggle for human dignity and liberty.⁶ Even certain conservative leaders of the constitutional reform movement like Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam recognised the new forces set in motion by the October Revolution.⁷ The inspirational guidance which it provided provoked the British Imperialists to brand certain leaders of the Sri Lankan nationalist movement as Bolsheviks and Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, replying to this slanderous remark, stated that 'we are in very good company'.⁸ The impact of the October Revolution, though felt in this form within the folds of the constitutional reform movement dominated by the bourgeoisie, reached a new height in the 'circles, and the working class, imbued with the ideology of the revolution, came to play a leading role in the struggle against imperialism. Though A. E. Goonesinghe, through his trade unions in Colombo, tried to popularise some of the ideas of the revolution, the real thrust of this work began with Dr. S. A. Wickramasinghe who, in the late 'twenties, did a great deal to popularise the achievements of the Soviet Union among the

The writer is Professor of Political Science at the University of Peradeniya.

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The Long Afternoons of E. F. C. Ludowyk

Interludes of Memory

H. A. I. Goonetilleke

Artic weather and the general world gloom persist... I expect things will grow worse in S.L. as here, despite pious hopes" was a recurring refrain later. His political horse-sense and pragmatism never deterred him to the end. He anguished over the fate of his country over and over again, and in one of his last letters in 1985 he commented: "It becomes clearer and clearer to me that each one of us must do what he (she) can, in his (her) own field to attack and expose the policy of the government". He had long recognised the real issues—the victims of the system were sitting patiently in the wings waiting to unite and explode. He realised only too well that repression and state violence were only seasonal occupations, while the revival of human solidarity was irrepressible—the longest winter of discontent had perforce to yield, sooner or later, to the spring of an irresistible renewal. To him, the pure water of poetry, if it had ever flowed here, had long since turned into bloodied streams. The nexus between literature and life, man and society, was inextricable—there could be no sitting on the fence. He would have liked to have lived long enough to witness the turning of the tide, and the lifting of the darkness from the face of noon.

His annual surveys of Ceylonese history and politics in *The Far East and Australia Yearbook* from 1969 to 1977 were models of concise discernment and wary disillusion—perhaps distance helped to keep a steadier eye and firmer hand on the trigger of perception. His essay on the April 1971 Insurrection at the time it happened is relevant and thought-provoking even today, and deserves to be read, not least by the logical inheritors of the primitive hand-bomb and the stolen shotgun. His three books on varying aspects and periods of Sri Lanka's

history and culture derived as much inspiration from his permanent and growing interest in these themes, as his deepening commitment to the regeneration of the finest flower of his civilisation—born of compassion, loving-kindness, tolerance, and an understanding of the essential transience of all things under the sun. He understood more than most born-again Sinhala Buddhists the significance of the concepts of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* as ultimate truths. Shakespeare and Sri Lanka were the twin pivots which sustained his scholarship in exile, but it would be true to say that if the former was the vehicle of his academic discipline, the latter became at once the *yahana* of his heart's desire, and the congenial therapy to dispel the depressing sense of separation from his roots.

Like Herbert Keuneman, a contemporary and friend, he yearned to enter the mainstream of Sri Lankan culture, rather than nurse the flickering flame of his Burgher inheritance. His interest in the folkways of Sri Lanka was insatiable, stemming from his familiarity with the life-styles of the region south of the Bentara river. Once he sent me a carefully preserved prescription of an ayurvedic specialist to be tried out for my wife's rheumatism. Meticulous as ever, he asked for it back when he was informed that it had not worked. His letters were peppered with scraps of arcane lore, hoarded from his fifty-year residence in his native land—he invariably inquired whether this precept lingered or that practice was still in vogue. He followed Keuneman's unique odyssey in the Vanni village of Ehecuweva with a vicarious pleasure, and was distressed to learn that Herbert's beautifully written and moving account of his first encounter with the village remained unpublished even after his death in 1977.

When in March 1980 I went into exile in Nawinna from Peradeniya, he wrote to say this once somnolent bucolic suburb brought back memories of 1939 when he went to live there in a house for which he paid a rent of Rs. 40 a month, where the water and drainage were excellent.

There was an *ambarella* tree in the back garden, which produced a crop of fruit his Aunt Gentle used to preserve. His driver Martin worked a hand pump to get the water from the well to the tank. There was no electricity, and he recalled the insects which dashed themselves madly against the Alladin lamp in his study at night. Carmon lived with him in the Nawinna house, along with Thomas Hafner, the young German Jewish boy he took under his wing during the war years. "I loved it there and we had a lot of fun" she wrote, and went on to give a graphic account of instances of hilarity and frolic that had stayed in her mind. It was to a little house in a lane almost opposite that Edith came to live in 1940, (Lyn continued), before they were married the next year. Nawinna was "a little settlement, very quiet then, hardly the throbb of an internal combustion engine. All must be changed now". But those houses still stand, albeit greatly altered, and he was delighted that the rural features of a place he once dwelt in, four decades earlier, had not been erased altogether by the onrush of urban development, and the incessant roar of traffic on the main road. Clearly as he headed downhill, his acute sense of receptivity to the spirit and pulse of the past continued undiminished. The passionate intensity with which he discerned the heart of his childhood, around the same time demonstrated this gift of retrieving the atmosphere and essence of the comforting landscapes of his memory.

He had by then tired of his long sojourn in the synthetic, brash, and increasingly strident environs of London, and the move to the comfortable and cosy old Tudor cottage in Suffolk, ten years before he died, seemed to revive his spirits and stimulate his powers of introspection. In the green serenity and calm solitude of the Essex countryside he turned with a compelling fervour to the contemplation of his cherished beginnings in the sleepy seaport town of Galle in the early years of the century. He wrote the account of ten years of his childhood, in the deepening twilight of his life, going back to his secure moorings in a happily established community in the heyday of British Ceylon. It must have provided many moments of buoyant nostalgia and spirited recollection as the shadows lengthened before the close. And then it was finished and done with — a chronicle of a vanished slice of mutable, if ineffable, delight and unpretentious domesticity in an idyllic setting in Galle. In an early 1984 letter he suddenly announced that the final ritual of sortilege was over: he couldn't look at the manuscript again, and didn't have the heart to revise it any further, or produce a neater typescript: would I agree to take over these burdens and prepare it for publication in Sri Lanka after his death? And so the manuscript of his last work was handed over to me, almost conspiratorially, in June 1984 two weeks short of a year before he died. He was to brook no further questions about it, despite a natural inclination on my part to do so. It was to remain a secret between us, and to become for me a daunting challenge after his death. The present essay is the relaxed counterpart of the rather restrained and reticent Preface I have written for the book. I have twirled the kaleidoscope of intimate memory more freely here.

His writing is vivid and evocative, fresh and lively in the telling, and the text matches the mood with an unerring flair for the limpid insight, the graceful touch, the laconic phrase, and the

mischievous gleam. Reading these memoirs I was able to relive my own ten years of childhood in Galle, for the sights and sounds, and the nuances of life in that picturesque old-world town had barely changed in the intervening ten years. He was still around then as a young man, home from university vacations, and visiting his old school where he had both studied and taught, and where his father introduced me to my first Latin. I was an alien in Galle, but the Fort preserved the same aura he has recreated with so felicitous a verbal flavour; and its precincts and landmarks became our favourite hunting grounds as well. I recall my own escapades from China Garden across the Fort (where I lived for seven years), and from Richmond Hill later when I became a boarder.

Lyn's cousin, Cuthbert Andree, a school friend, was often my companion. Even in 1985 the old magic, greatly faded though, hung about the crumbling battlements and the decaying remains of a once dignified and placid urban scene, as I found on a revisit spurred by the spell of his manuscript.

To quote only the opening paragraph of the penultimate chapter "The Years of Childhood" is to offer a preview of the true sum and substance of the book. "We lie in wait for our memories of infancy, waylaying, even assailing them, for some clue of the unremembered past. But nothing comes of those forays, nothing but stirrings of sights, sounds, the feel of the body's reaction to forgotten impressions. What can one make of them, brimful of meaning as they once were, but signifying nothing now. The reverberation of the sea, the scampering of the wind on the roof, the tang of smoke the colours of the flame as it spurted up some wick, the body's sense of unease. Only experience can lend memory to such signals, experience which is awareness of the need to submit, a need which warns of the catch in everything — the folk wisdom of childhood which admonished you not to laugh overmuch, you'd soon be weeping".

Those Long Afternoons: Childhood in Colonial Ceylon will finally come before Lyn's old students, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances across the world hopefully around the close of this year. The book is being published by Lake House Bookshop, and the entire proceeds from the transfer of copyright have been donated by me to the University of Peradeniya for the institution of an annual memorial award in his name. The long afternoons in the little hamlet of Lamarsh in Suffolk were truly well spent if it had produced nothing else. As we savour the far-ends of our own long afternoons, we who knew Lyn Ludowyk well will surely be thankful for his invocation of what Wordsworth once summed up so well:

"The memory of what has been
And never more will be."

(Concluded)

India's . .

(Continued from page 15)

police are fully extended in combating the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna insurgency in the South. If the IPKF comes home, no force will be available to impose Colombo's authority in the North, leaving the way open for a renewed campaign to establish an independent Eelam.

Contrast

One can hope that reason will triumph over emotion. But the manner in which the LTTE has behaved shows how difficult it is to change the direction of a movement that catches the imagination and fervour of the youth. The easy availability of automatic weapons, of which there is no dearth of suppliers, has made it all the harder to wipe out guerrilla terrorists, as the IPKF has found to its cost. Apparently, the top brass of the army assured the Government that the LTTE could be eliminated in six weeks; 52 weeks later they are still causing Indian casualties.

The mounting strains between New Delhi and Colombo, the revival of ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka and the doubtful future of the North-East Province are a sad reflection on the outcome of the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement.

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T. S. Eliot — The Buddhist

H. L. D. Mahindapala

Eliot was poised in a poetic space far removed from most other poets of his time. "What is life if full of care / We have no time to stand and stare," wrote Walter de la Mare. If Eliot had crafted those neat lines he would have divested himself precisely from that kind of jollity to give each line an ironic twist. Often rhyming couplets (in the room women come and go, Talking of Michelangelo) were used by Eliot to stress the vacuity of the speakers. Eliot could have mouthed Walter de la Mare's lines through a debauched Prufrock wasting their lives. And he would have done so with an air of mysterious indifference. There was an aristocratic touch about the 'impersonality' or the 'neutrality' of his meticulous language which made his dramatic tone ("taxi chattering, waiting...") authoritative and mesmerising. His linguistic 'neutrality' displayed a divine indifference to the sensual, commercial or other meaningless meanderings of the world and yet he was deeply committed to a sense of 'care' which went far beyond the gaiety of Walter de la Mare's rhymes. Eliot's sense of 'care' rested on a different plane. Lifting the meaning of the word 'care' to a religious realm he wrote: "Teach us to care and not to care." Investing new meaning into conventional language was a part of his poetic effort to revivify and to retain tradition. The deep and resonant tone of his voice that accompanied the new meaning was tuned to evoke instant responses of feeling even if the meaning, or the old tradition in which the meaning is embedded, was not clearly formulated in the reader's mind.

Eliot's tone was also designed to orchestrate the discontents of

modern civilisation. The note of irony that ran through his lines reinforced the rejection of the sleazy salons, affectations of sophisticated society, the trivial and seedy worlds of nervous and bored Prufrocks and the debris of our industrial society. The 'impersonality' and the aloofness in his voice heightened the cone of irony. This aloofness was also symbolic of Eliot distancing himself from the soulless, arid and derelict world. In his poems he gives the impression of a man recoiling from horror and disgust, having seen the wrecks drifting in the void of a rootless, branchless world where you could find only

"A heap of broken images,
where the sun beats,

And the dead tree gives no
shelter, the cricket no
relief,

And the dry stone no sound of
water.

Other disenchanted English poets like Matthew Arnold, Thomas Hardy, A. E. Housman lamented pessimistically. Their tragic view of life, however, was soothed and calmed eventually by accepting *nécessité* as a natural part of life. But Eliot disturbed us with his vision of the modern hell. He led us, like Dante guided by his mentor Virgil, into our joyless bedrooms, holiday resorts, streets and other cityscapes of modernity and made us gaze in horror and disgust. The escapist rituals of the bourgeois who had tea at ten, or drove in a closed car at four, if it rained, or the young man climbing stairs to have sex with a typist were the momentous events in the empty lives of those who did not realise that they were the refuse of their own civilisation. Their petty and inconsequential lives reduced them to hollow men, going through the eternal cycle of birth, death and copulation. Caught in this vortex Eliot was looking for a 'still centre'. Where

could he find 'shantih' — 'the peace that passeth understanding'? Did he find it in the Eastern philosophy, particularly Buddhism?

Some years back Stephen Spender startled me when he wrote that Eliot "seriously considered of becoming a Buddhist at the time when he was writing THE WASTE LAND". But at that time I dismissed it as being a bit of literary gossip. More so because that generation of literati — particularly the Bloomsburyites and their fringe-dwellers — were inveterate gossips. In fact W. H. Auden went to the extent of saying that there is nothing wrong with gossip as long as you don't let the victim know about it!

There was another reason for not taking Spender's statement seriously. He did not dwell on this aspect at length and explain the meaningful connections, if there were any, between Eliot and Buddhism. Besides, at first glance, the evidence was overwhelmingly against any such conclusion. Eliot openly declared that he was a "classicist, monarchist and anglo-catholic." How could such a statement be reconciled with Eliot being a Buddhist, at least in the intellectual sense? And if one considers the totality of his writings Eliot and Buddhism seem poles apart. Did he not, after all, having gone through various spiritual and intellectual exercises, finally embrace the Anglo-Catholic Church?

However, a deeper study of Eliot's syncretic mind indicates that he was once very close to being a Buddhist and he veered in that direction, particularly under the influence of his guru at Harvard University, Irving Babbie. In fact, his stature as one of the most sensitive poets of our time peaked when he virtually renounced the world in his famous lines: What are the roots that clutch, what

Mahindapala is a well-known Sri Lankan journalist now living in Victoria, Australia.

branches grow out of this stony rubbish? . . ." These lines are far removed from traditional Christian poetry. Christian poetry had a positive ring towards all creation. "Glory be to God for dappled things" cried Gerard Manly Hopkins. And he proceeded to praise "all trades, their gear and tackle and trim." On the contrary, the overwhelming tone and the moving spirit in *THE WASTELAND* express a profound Buddhist attitude towards the world. Eliot was simultaneously reintroducing traditional thoughts, myths, language and images into the disinherited minds of our time. His poetry tended to be a revelation of new meaning in the old heritage, both East and West. Unfortunately, the Buddhist tone and temperament of Eliot's poetry was overshadowed by the Western critics who emphasised only the Christian aspect. Peter Ackroyd's biography documents some of the hidden aspects of Eliot's Buddhism. It is a book that illuminates Eliot's mind vividly. Students of Eliot will, no doubt, find it authoritative, stimulating and thoroughly satisfying. It is a well-researched book that gives a rounded portrait of the man, his moods and harrowing modes of living, particularly with his first

wife Vivienne, and above all the various influences and forces that moulded his poetic sensibilities.

Understanding the poet Eliot needs an understanding of the philosopher Eliot of his early youth in America. Eliot set out to be a professional philosopher, hopefully attaining a chair in a university ultimately. At Harvard, when he was reading for his master's degree in English literature (1909), he worked with two of the great contemporary philosophers — George Santayana, with whom he never got on well and Bertrand Russell, who later took a paternal interest in his welfare and helped him financially in London. The role of Bertrand Russell, a self-confessed fornicator, seems to be somewhat questionable considering the flirtations he had with Eliot's wife, Vivienne. But of all his Harvard teachers Irving Babbitt seemed to have made an enduring impression on young Eliot. Long after his Harvard days he used to write to him as "Dear Master."

Babbitt ran a course in 'Literary Criticism in France'. His opposition to 'Rousseauism' with

its emphasis on individualism and hence the absence of authority which destroyed the classical order appealed to Eliot. But more importantly, it was through Babbitt, who had looked Eastward for a more structured and absolute philosophy to replace the Western mode of thinking, that Eliot was first introduced to the study of Sanskrit and Oriental religion, says Peter Ackroyd. (Incidentally most of the biographical material on Eliot is derived from Ackroyd's biography of Eliot.) But Eliot did not wade into Orientalism on a serious scale immediately.

First, he dabbled in French culture and did a stint in Paris imbibing as much as he could of that culture. It was only after he returned to Harvard in 1911 and enrolled as a graduate student in philosophy that he decided to study Sanskrit and Indian philosophy. Armed with Sanskrit he tried to master the *PANCHATANTRA*, the *BHAGAVAD GITA* and the Buddhist *JATAKAS*. Besides, he attended a full year's course on Buddhism given by Prof. Mahabharu Anesaki.

(Continued on page 23)

Moscow promises. . .

(Continued from page 9)

control and changes in the Politburo would flow over to foreign policy.

"We realise we can't necessarily apply European experience to this region," he said. "Our proposal is to take a fairly flexible approach. . . we don't believe we have all the answers. . . we are open to consider answers from all nations in the Asian region."

Echoing proposals put forward by Mr Gorbachev in Krasnoyarsk last month to freeze and then reduce military activity in the region, Mr Rogachev said Australian initiatives to limit nuclear weapons in the Pacific offered the best course for peace and security.

However, he said, despite Soviet attempts to reduce its naval pre-

sence in the Pacific, "the situation in the region remains rather complicated and far from stable."

With a veiled reference to the United States, he said he could not help but notice "some people" treated Soviet policy with caution and even worked against it.

Mr Rogachev claimed the US had a three to one naval superiority in the Pacific and a 10-to-one dominance in onboard aircraft. "The Soviet Union adheres to a solely defensive role in the Pacific," he said. "It does not envisage an attack on the US Pacific Fleet."

He said the US had recently added Tomahawk missiles to its Pacific fleet, "not to protect ships but to hit targets deep in enemy territory."

Mr Rogachev insisted the "so-

called Soviet military threat" in the Pacific was unrealistic. "We do not intend to interfere with the stability of the Asia Pacific region," he said. "We are aware that the situation here is closely related to global problems and depends on the US and the USSR."

Describing Soviet policy in the region as "responsible sufficiency", Mr Rogachev said Moscow wanted stability in the Far East and the opportunity to develop its fledgling economy.

Apart from the US, Soviet military attention in the region is directed towards Japan. Like China, the Soviet Union is both critical of and sensitive to the recent growth in Japanese military spending beyond one per cent of its gross domestic product.

(F. T.)

Kipling's Homage to Buddhism

Izeth Hussain

Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, commonly acknowledged as his masterpiece, is usually taken as a picaresque novel of adventure in which India is brought alive as in no other book. It is therefore regarded as Kipling's homage to India. However, in terms of the religious values presented in the book and exemplified in the central figure of the Lama, it should far more importantly be regarded as Kipling's homage to Buddhism. More specifically, a matter of interest to Sri Lankans, it is Theravada Buddhism or at the least an approximation to it, that is the object of Kipling's homage, not Tibetan or other forms of Mahayana Buddhism. It is the purpose of this paper to establish that the Buddhism in *Kim* has to be taken seriously and that, if it is indeed a masterpiece, it has to be accorded recognition as a Buddhist masterpiece, the only one in English literature.

Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, the narrative poem on the life of the Buddha, is now largely forgotten in the West. T. S. Eliot, who first read it as a boy, retained a life-long affection for it and continued to regard it as a good poem. But no other critic of recent decades mentions it, and it no longer figures in histories of English literature. On the other hand *Kim*, first published in 1900, is a living classic widely read and widely admired as a masterpiece except by some whose view of the book could be distorted by pre-conceptions about Kipling.

As a novel of adventure, *Kim* cannot be rated highly as it lacks suspense, among the other things required for an exciting adventure story. This will be apparent if a comparison is made with Stevenson's *Treasure Island* or among Kipling's contemporaries, John. It is evident that Kiplings did not even try to make it a successful adventure story.

Certainly, on one level at least, *Kim* can be regarded as Kipling's

homage to India, written out of a great love for that country, so great that it could even accommodate the British Imperialist's favourite bete-noir, the Bengali, here portrayed in Hurree Chunder Mukerji with his polyllabic Babu English and lofty intellectual aspirations. Usually Kipling would have preferred semi-barbaric hill-tribesmen who, without questioning why, were always prepared to do in the service of their Imperial masters, to the highly civilized Bengalis who led the Indian cultural Renaissance of the nineteenth century and questioned the right of foreigners to push India around. That side of Kipling is to be seen in the revolting story, *The Head of the District* and the notorious *Bandar-log* poem in which monkeys symbolize Bengalis.

That prejudice is transcended in *Kim* which shows Hurree as a thoroughly delightful person, a master espionage-agent and utterly brave. The Russian and French spies regard him as a symbol of India in transition, the man who through his Westernization has lost his country and failed to gain another. In fact he remains intensely Indian, and that commands him to Kipling who wanted Indians to remain Indian unlike Macaulay who wanted to transform them into little brown Englishmen. The difference points to a real love for India.

In this book we have, more than in any other, the swarming humanity of India in all its rich multifariousness, the sense of a unity over-arching enormous cultural diversity, India as unity in diversity, something much more than a political slogan. This novel by an arch-imperialist is the best answer to India's ill-wishers who want that country to fragment into scores of minuscule states, all snarling and clawing at each other.

However, *Kim* as homage to India and nothing much more, presents some difficulties. The Lama who is central to the book is Tibetan, not Indian, always

conscious of himself as an alien in India and perceived as alien by those around him. Furthermore, it is Buddhism not Hinduism that pervades the book, the Buddhism that after having threatened to sweep India for two centuries was reduced to no more than a vestigial presence in that country. Kipling travelled widely as a journalist in India over a period of seven years, and he had as his mentor his bookish father who knew a great deal about India, so that it cannot be supposed that Kipling was unaware that Buddhism was an odd choice to represent the religiousness of India in a book meant to be his homage to that country.

(To be continued)

T. S. Eliot...

(Continued from Page 22)

"But," says Peter Ackroyd, "Eliot's attraction to Buddhism was not simply a philosophical one. Nirvana is extinction — the annihilation of desire, the freedom from attachments — and there was, as can be seen in his poetry, an over-riding desire in the young Eliot to be so free." (p. 47) It appears that the first phase in which Eliot committed himself openly to Buddhism ended with *THE WASTE LAND*. The early poems of Prufrock ending in *THE WASTE LAND* have a distinct characteristic of a man in "the Void" — a man counting and re-counting the motions of transitory appearances which eventually add up to sheer nothing. Eliot's aristocratic tone and cultured poetic mannerism is that of a man deliberately trying to distance himself from the fleeting world of appearance and hollow men haunting halls of modernity. Their mannerisms, social engagements, stances, herd behaviour creates a yearning only to run away from such futilities and to reach the absolute "still centre," if one can find one. Therefore, it is not surprising that some have read *THE WASTE LAND* as a pure Buddhist meditation.

(To be concluded)

(The author, a senior career officer in the Foreign Service, was Sri Lankan Ambassador in Manila)

Fine touch of first Arabic writer to win Nobel prize

Tony Walker

Naguib Mahfouz, Nobel prize-winner for literature this year once described his work as "probably like the rest of modern Arab literature, fourth or fifth rate." It was typical of him, a gentle Egyptian intellectual, to understate his considerable achievements. The award was announced on Thursday.

He is the first writer in Arabic to win the prize. His work is little known outside the Arabic world, except among a circle of discerning readers, but he has long been regarded in his own culture as a classical writer of rare distinction. His finely textured accounts of the pathos of urban life have drawn comparisons with Balzac and Dickens.

Born on December 11, 1911, to a lower middle-class family in Cairo, he graduated in philosophy from Cairo University in 1934 and soon began a long career as a civil servant. His not altogether taxing job allowed him time to develop talents as a novelist.

Mahfouz pioneered, in the 1940s and 1950s, a style of carefully drawn social criticism through the novel that was then rare in Arab literature, dominated as it had been by epic historical themes.

John Fowles, the British author, wrote in 1978, in appreciation of the novel *Miramar*, that Mahfouz allows us the "rare privilege of entering a national psychology, in way that thousands of journalistic articles or television documentaries could not achieve."

This observation could also be applied to much of the rest of Mahfouz's work, including *The*

Beginning and the End and *Midday Alley*, two of his best-known novels. These are stories of the struggle of the poor and the petit bourgeois against the authorities and their environment in an Egypt that has undergone convulsive change in this century.

Mahfouz is no stranger to political controversy. In the 1960s he dared to speak out against the excesses of the Nasser era in his books.

Children of Our Quarter, which questions religious norms in an Islamic society, is still banned in Egypt, 30 years after publication.

His novels were removed from the shelves in many Arab countries after he had supported Egypt's peace treaty with Israel in 1979. He remains a piquant observer of Egyptian life in regular columns for *al-Ahram*, the Cairo daily, although friends and critics say his best work is well behind him.

Few familiar with his novels would question, however, his claims to the Nobel prize. Youssef Idris, the distinguished Egyptian writer, said the award was "totally deserved." He said it was a tribute to Mahfouz's talents as a novelist and social critic, and to Arab literature.

Critics of his work say that, because he is so prolific (he has written 50 books in a career of half a century), some of his work tends to be patchy. Mahfouz replies that his approach is to "write and write and write until it comes."

The slight, bespectacled and nearly deaf Mahfouz was asleep in his home in the run-down Cairo suburb of Agouza, on the west bank of Nile, when news

of his prize came through. On being awakened by his wife to be told of the award, Mahfouz said, according to *al-Ahram*, that he was not even aware he had been nominated.

He is acclaimed in Egypt as a national figure but is unlikely to forsake his rather austere way of life. Friends describe him as a humble figure, devoted to his work. "He is not a man of society," observed Youssef Idris.

Mahfouz plans to continue writing in spite of indifferent health. "If the urge to write were ever to leave me," he has said, "I would want that day to be my last."

1917: its...

(Continued from page 16)

masses of the country. The formation of the first socialist political party, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) in 1935, which advocated national independence and socialism for Sri Lanka, was the direct result of the October Revolution. The growth of the socialist movement in the thirties and forties compelled the bourgeois politicians to recognise it as a force capable of fighting imperialism.

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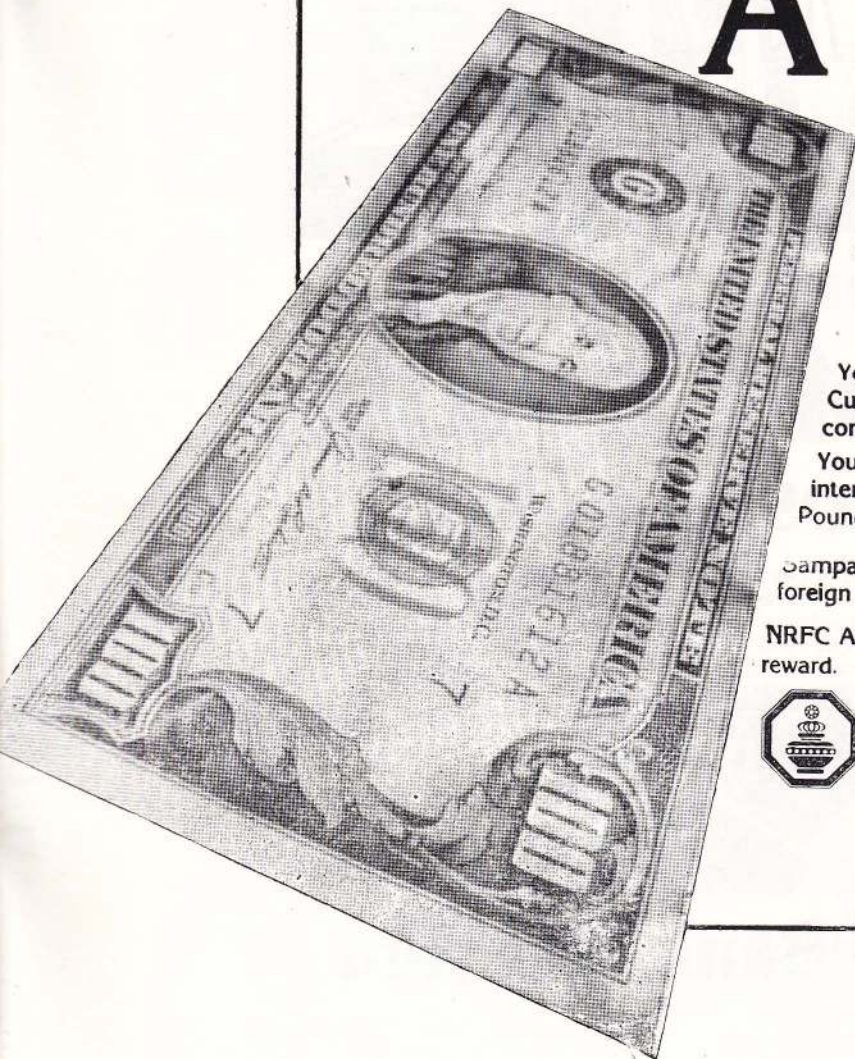
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