

● **PRABHAKARAN TAKES A BREATHER** ●

Mervyn de Silva

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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NO ARMS FOR THE BOYS

A 1500-man Citizen's Volunteer Force recruited by the North-East Provincial Council is idling without arms, a Provincial council minister complained. The Central government has failed to provide them the necessary arms and ammunition. Mr. Periyatharby Kirubakaran, Food and Fisheries minister told THE ISLAND on the line from Batticaloa.

The CVF was trained by the Indian army. Now they are moving about, unarmed, in the North and East with the Indian Peace Keeping Force.

Official apathy has left trained men doing nothing, the Provincial council minister charged. The NE Provincial Council has plans to take in 7500 youths for the CVF, which will be the provincial police.

HABEAS CORPUS — A RECORD

Eighty-five habeas corpus applications were filed in the Court of Appeal in a single day, April 20. This was a record number, legal circles said. The applications were in respect of persons detained in police stations and army camps.

Sweden concerned on armed conflicts

Apart from the deep breath of disgust from Mr. Chetty (LG 15.3.89.) in support of the visa denial to me and my colleague, some questions on the official Swedish standpoint vis-a-vis Sri Lanka were raised.

It was not "separatist lobbies" here that raised the issue of the Swedish Embassy in Colombo discriminating against Tamils from Sri Lanka applying for visas to Sweden. The story was revealed by the ruling social democrats' weekly "Broderskap" and then further elaborated in Sweden's largest morning daily "Dagens Nyheter" (liberal) and others. The facts were there and the relevant Government authorities in Stockholm later instructed the Embassy in Colombo to correct its routines with regard to Tamil visa applicants.

The Swedish Government does generally not proclaim a standpoint on visa or asylum seekers. Each case is regarded as an individual one (except for the quotas received from the UNHCR which do not apply here). This means that

TRENDS + LETTERS

Sweden has rejected some Tamil cases and it has accepted others. Interestingly there are now also some Sinhala refugee cases under consideration.

The Swedish Government has expressed its grave concern on the armed conflicts in Sri Lanka. Therefore the 1987 peace agreement between Sri Lanka and India was welcomed by the Swedish Government. However, the reports from Amnesty International on human rights violations in Sri Lanka apparently has made greater impact on the Swedish Government than on their colleagues in Sri Lanka. Said the Swedish Minister of Development Affairs in 1987: "We trust the Amnesty International due to their good reputation all over the world. The violations in Sri Lanka is only one example of the violations they have reported."

Last year the Swedish Minister of Foreign Trade wrote that Sweden do not allow the export of arms to Sri Lanka due to the armed conflicts there. This indicates that the Swedish Government might not approve of all measures taken by the Sri Lankan Government to solve the conflicts.

Mr Chetty extensively discussed the fact that we were two individual cases being denied

(Continued on page 36)

Could Mr. Vasantha Amarasinghe kindly call over at this office to discuss his request to the Editor. We do not have his address or phone number.

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The Tiger, bruised but untamed, springs a surprise!

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

The 'Tiger' is ready to talk — to President Premadasa's representatives. The LTTE's team will probably be led by Anton Balasingham, often described in the western press as the 'theoretician' of the LTTE but more accurately its long-time London based political spokesman.

Timing it for the traditional New Year 13-14 April, the only national festivities that the Sinhalese and the Tamil can jointly celebrate in recent times, President Premadasa launches his "Peace Offensive". It will begin with a week long ceasefire by government troops. It will be unilateral, a token of his commitment.

The "peace offensive" was aimed at the JVP, primarily, if not exclusively. The JVP's reply is a resounding "NO". (See Upatissa Chamayanayake's statement).

Meanwhile, the LTTE in an "open letter" to the President has described it as 'an exercise in futility'. It underlines the government's failure to address "the central issues of the Tamil struggle". It refers to "You, your government and the Government of India" presuming obviously that the ceasefire is a joint exercise. The LTTE is firm on one point. It will NOT hand over arms — not to anybody.

The letter also notes that 'before the election' Mr. Premadasa was committed to the withdrawal of the IPKF. Evidently, the LTTE says, he has changed his mind. Then comes this most interesting statement:

"It may be that you do not consider the Indian Army is an occupying Army. Because after all the Indian government is performing a task that you want done without unduly depleting your own resources. . . . However we wish to tell you straightforwardly that you may go ahead and mortgage the birthright of the Sinhala people but we will not mortgage the rights of the Tamil people".

The letter ends on this note: "Until the oppressive Indian army leaves our land, there will be no such thing as a ceasefire. And after they leave, you will come to recognise that in the island of Ceylon, there are two nations. And after that, we will need neither war nor ceasefire".

Except on the basic question of 'two nations', the LTTE standpoint has many features common to the JVP position, most of all on the IPKF and its role, and on President Premadasa's pre- and post polls postures.

Yet, in less than 72 hours — by April 14 — the LTTE does a dramatic turnaround that surprises and possibly jolts Delhi, the Sri Lankan public and the official Opposition, and international observers. What happened in the interval?

- (a) The JVP's outright rejection of the ceasefire.
- (b) Foreign affairs and State Minister of Defence, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne's expression of surprise and disappointment that the IPKF would not respect the government's ceasefire declaration.

which departing Indian High Commissioner, Mr. J. N. Dixit, had assured him that it would.

- (c) The car bomb blast in Trinco, which killed at least 50 persons, mostly Sinhalese, the anti-Tamil reprisals, and attack on Muslim villages in Mutur by unidentified hands, believed to be armed Tamil groups, bombs thrown at Jaffna-bound buses in Colombo and a grenade attack on the FPRLF office in the GCSU building, and crucially, Mr. Wijeratne's statement on TV that Sinhalese residents in Trinco pointed an accusing finger at the IPKF. This brought an angry outburst from North-East Chief Minister who accused, in turn, "Sinhalese politicians", including Ministers, state officials, and certain newspapers, of trying to de-stabilise and destroy the N-E council and the devolution scheme.
- (d) Opposition Leader Mrs. Bandaranaike's statement that the bomb outrage and other organised violence could be part of a plan to chase away Sinhalese and Muslims from the East before the July 5 referendum to decide the fate of the North East merger.

While there is a JVP-LTTE convergence on the IPKF and the need for its withdrawal, there are other developments and tendencies which perhaps provide the necessary background against which to understand both the LTTE's tactical manoeuvres as well as the responses of Colombo and Delhi. The main threat to the Sri Lankan state comes from the JVP, not the LTTE. All parties to the conflict now appreciate fully

the 'security dilemma' characterised by President JR as "the two-front war". Given its manpower, resources and inexperience, the Sri Lankan armed forces cannot fight on two fronts — the South and the North. That dilemma is also President Premadasa's most burdensome legacy.

The JVP's "patriotic war" began with the July 1987 war and is kept alive and nourished by the provocative presence of an 'occupying foreign force' — the foreigner being the historic enemy of the Sinhalese, the aggressor from the north, India, the Dravidian South. President Premadasa realises that even a partial pull-out of the IPKF will weaken the potency of the JVP's main propagandist-agitational issue (the IPKF) and its capacity to mobilise militant nationalist Sinhala youth.

As important, is the widening gap between the Centre and the EPRLF-controlled North-east council, the EPRLF being Delhi's favourite, and the LTTE's main enemy. The EPRLF Chief Minister has persistently protested that the Centre has denied it effective, and substantial power, funds, arms for its 1,500 Citizens Volunteer Force, and complained bitterly over the uncooperative, if not obstructionist attitude of government officials.

It is in this situation that the LTTE saw an 'opening' which it seized, in the hope of immediate, tactical gains, if not long-term advantages.

The LTTE has lost its once unassailable political-military dominance over the North.

If its military back has not been broken, its body has suffered many bruising blows. It was smart to help its ally EROS win many parliamentary seats, defeating the TULF-EPRLF group in the North.

The LTTE knows that many Tamils resent the IPKF presence (See JAFFNA REVISITED) and are also petrified at the thought of the Sri Lankan army returning. The war-weary Tamil community craves for a restoration of normal conditions.

The LTTE's notorious intransigence is seen as a major impediment to such a process. Secretly, a large number of Tamils may be critical of the LTTE's refusal to 'compromise'. The LTTE needs a 'breather'. What better time than this? President Premadasa and the UNP would dearly love to start talks with the JVP and coax them to lay down arms and consider entering the democratic process. Failing that, the government must blunt the attack of Sinhala opposition — JVP, the armed vanguard, and the SLFP-MEP etc, the parliamentary opponents. For this, there must be a more self-assertive Presidency that distances itself from Delhi, and logically, Delhi's favourite, the TULF-EPRLF combine.

Jaw-Jaw is always excellent P.R., not only locally but internationally where the resolution of armed conflicts is the dominant trend. In so aid-dependent a country as Sri Lanka, the regime must be constantly alive to international opinion especially when its relations with the all-important IMF-IBRD are in a state of dangerous flux.

Ceasefire, negotiations, peace talks, the international fashion, is a pressing need of the regime.

Mr. Velupillai (Clint Eastwood) Prabhakaran will never give up AK-47 or his dream of 'Eelam'. Right now, however, bargaining from a relatively weak position, he has been sharp enough to see that the contradictions between the main players, Delhi and Colombo, the UNP, the JVP and the broader Sinhala opposition, offer him a 'target of opportunity' which it would be foolish not to hit.

Minimally, he buys time, the necessary breather. If he is offered terms (devolution) more attractive than the 'Accord', he can then re-establish contact with Delhi and bargain with India for even better terms. If the talks collapse, which may be likelier, he has demonstrated that he is not the incurably militarist commander with a "closed mind".

Taken as a whole, what do these events and trends indicate? Mohan Ram, a well-known India specialist on insurgency, has said: "Readiness for talks with the LTTE implies that the rationale of continued Indian involvement is now officially in doubt... the conflict is better left to be sorted out between the Sinhalese and the Tamils".

The LTTE statement expressed special appreciation of President Premadasa's remark that "external forces have been able to secure their own interests because of internal conflicts".

Mr. Premadasa returned to the subject on Sunday 23rd, when he addressed the UNP's Colombo Central organisation. "Why can't we join hands and forge ahead?" he asked, observing that Sri Lanka had been under foreign rule many times.

Mrs. B wants Israelis to go

The Hon. leader of the opposition, and SLFP leader Mrs. Bandaranaike has given notice of the following motion: — That while welcoming the decision to upgrade the P.L.O. Mission to embassy status, this House resolves that Sri Lanka should suspend diplomatic relations with Israel, until the Israeli Government stops the atrocities being committed in the occupied territories, respects U.N. and N.A.M. resolutions, recognises the P.L.O. as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and agrees to participate in an International Conference, supported by the U.N. on the Middle East; this Parliament calls upon the Government to endorse this resolution as a demonstration of its commitment to the U.N. and the Non-aligned Movement, and as token of its respect for the sentiments and aspirations of the Sri Lanka Muslim Community, the Arab and Islamic countries.

NEW YEAR BLAST

TRINCO — the eye of the storm

It was a bleak New Year in the eastern seaport of Trincomalee.

A car bomb exploded at the marketplace near the town clock tower on April 13, the eve of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year. Forty five people, among them children, were blown to pieces. Most of them were Sinhalese. They were families in town for last-minute purchases for the traditional New Year. Trincomalee's Sinhalese population do their shopping mostly at this market place; many of the stallholders are Sinhalese.

The bomb, estimated by army experts to have weighed 50 kilogrammes, wounded 55 people in addition to the 48 dead. It was hidden in a Morris Minor car. The explosion gutted seven shops in the vicinity. Unattended vehicles are not permitted to be parked in the North-East province after that, or so the Indian Peace Keeping Force warned the next day.

Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne, who is also Minister of State for Defence, flew to Trincomalee after the bomb attack. He was accompanied by Trade Minister Abdul Razak Mansoor, a Muslim with family connections in the Eastern province. Lt. General Hamilton Wanasinghe, Commander of the Sri Lanka Army was also in the party. Mr. Wijeratne told newsmen that investigators were trying to establish responsibility for the outrage; allegations had been made against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as well as against other Tamil groups. The Minister said that an Indian General of the IPKF was of the opinion that the bomb blast was "an act of sabotage by the LTTE". He said, however, that Sinhalese residents of Trincomalee whom he had met alleged that another Tamil group, the Felam

People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) was responsible and that the LTTE had no hand in it. The N-E Chief Minister angrily denied the charges accusing in turn Sinhala politicians, ministers and certain newspapers of trying to discredit his council.

Mr. Mansoor, the Trade Minister, described the scene of the carnage. "Flesh and blood were scattered all over place. It was a terrible and gruesome sight. I do not understand how anybody could do such a cruel and inhuman thing. Such dastardly acts aimed at innocent and defenceless should be condemned by everybody", he said.

About the allegation that a Tamil group other than the LTTE was responsible, Mr. Mansoor commented: "The people who galloped at the scene made certain allegations. All that will be gone into".

In a retaliatory attack, five Tamils were killed outside town. White flags of mourning were draped over Trincomalee town, and there were no signs of New Year celebrations as tension ran high in the district which is an ethnic 'mix' of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim.

Meanwhile in Kinniya, away from Trincomalee town five Muslims had been killed over the death of a Tamil boy. According to Minister Mansoor who went there too along with Minister Wijeratne, 5000 Muslims had fled their homes in fear.

North East Provincial Council Chief Minister Varathuraja Perumal accompanied the two central government ministers to Kinniya. His reception was hostile. The Muslims in Kinniya alleged that EPRLF was responsible for the killings in Kinniya and wanted Sri Lanka

government security forces and police to provide them security.

Minister Ranjan Wijeratne said that the situation was tense but could be eased if the IPKF worked with the Sri Lankan security forces and police, as he had advised them to do.

In Colombo, after the Trincomalee bomb explosion, twenty people were injured in bomb attacks on Jaffna-Colombo private buses. A bomb was also flung at the GCSU headquarters building in Parsons Road which houses an EPRLF office in the basement.

President Premadasa visited surviving victims of the Trincomalee bomb attack, at the Anuradhapura hospital where they had been removed for treatment.

In Colombo, Opposition Leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike asked in a press statement whether the bomb in Trincomalee was part of a plan to get rid of the Sinhalese from the East, before the July 5 referendum which will ask the province whether it wishes to continue the merger.

In many ways, Trinco is the eye of the storm. It is here that the two main schools of thought on causes of the Sri Lankan crisis, and of Indian policy under Indira Gandhi meet. Those who place Delhi's strategic interests above its concern over the local Tamil revolt and its likely fall-out in Tamilnadu, point out that Trinco was Mrs. Gandhi's chief anxiety. The anxiety became a major problem when President JR began to pursue a decidedly pro-US policy, and was planning to make a deal with a Bermuda-based US firm with unsavoury reputation and sinister

(Continued on page 6)

Opposition parties form human rights organisation

A human rights organisation has been formed by the members of the opposition parties in the parliament.

The organisation which is called "Parliamentarians for Human Rights" appointed a committee comprising nine members headed by Mr. Dinesh Gunawardene, MEP leader and MP for Colombo District.

Mr. Gunawardene said that those in the Opposition felt

the need of banding themselves into such an organisation in view of the large number of complaints they received from the public day in and day out about gross violence of human rights.

"We cannot allow the present state of affairs to continue any longer. Effective measures have to be taken to check this" Mr. Gunawardene said.

On Monday alone, it had been brought to our notice the disappearance of 40 university students, he said.

Mr. Dharmasiri Senanayake, MP for Kegalla is the secretary of the organisation. Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara MP for Ratnapura district and Mr. Nanda Ellawala MP for Ratnapura district, Mr. Kandiah Navaratne (TULF) and Mr. Isybullah are Vice Presidents, Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse is the organising secretary.

TRINCO — the eye...

(Continued from page 5)

links. 100 old oil storage tanks left behind by Lord Mountbatten would be converted into a 'oil tank farm', giving ready access to Trinco, a larger natural harbour and potential base than Subic Bay. Any concession to a outside power would undermine India's own hegemonistic interests in the Indian ocean.

But Trinco also stands between the North, the Tamil homeland, and the ethnically mixed East — 42% Tamils, 33% Muslims and 25% Sinhalese. What is more Trincomalee itself reflects this ethnic situation in cameo, the town in particular. Trinco is the capital of the North-East P.C. And the July 5 referendum is a time bomb ticking away.

The bomb explosion reverberated throughout the island, with consequences in Wellawatte, the Tamil suburb, and Fort, the city centre. This is a tight little island where everything interacts and anything can lead to a chain-reaction.

N. R.

GRENADIER COARD

(Late of the 5th International)

*Will this great rally redeem
Promises that were never kept?
Commissar Coard hesitates,
He listens furtive
Looking away, up the street. Voices plead
They come, may we also come?
He falls at the top of the steps
While they grapple with sudden joy
Why does he have to turn, retrace,
Turn his eyes from the street
Averting eager, upturned faces
He stammers, coldly, undecided.
There are others on the march,
In the mirror, his eyes slide startled to the street
Draped with the flags of recent history, Cuba, Vietnam,
Angola, Nicaragua.
The afternoon traffic bears Presidents, Prime Ministers
Who have slung guerrilla rifles, manned the barricades
His eyes in the mirror twist to those
Leaping past with the banners of ninety nations
Heralding the agony of revolutions still to come
Their eyes, the eyes of the people
Tumbling out of Asia, Africa, Latin America.
How welcome each confrontation, if they were also here
How welcome this road, leading away from Death
Fresh in the drizzle with its vista of trees
If they were gathered to resolve, in History's analysis
The pain of his Contra Silence, the startled flight in the mirror
Of his eyes
His Pol-Pot, Unita, Mujadeen eyes.*

— U. Karunatilaka

Send IPKF home, abrogate accord retrospectively — Upatissa Gamanayake (Gen. Sec. J.V.P.)

The speech made by the President at Giranduru Kotto may be seen as an attempt to hide from the outside world the steps that are being taken to destroy the membership of the J.V.P. on the advice of the Defence forces.

The President's statement made on the instructions of the defence forces is an attempt to hide the genocide that is being carried out with the hope of destroying about one hundred and fifty thousand people suspected of having connections with the J.V.P. while certain demands presumed to be extracted from publications and hand bills issued by the J.V.P. and for which replies are said to have been given are not our demands, they have failed to give direct replies to an issue raised in our publications.

Our demand is not for a Friendship Treaty to replace the Accord signed on 29.4.87, which converted our motherland into a dependency of Indian imperialism after the aggressor had invaded a part of our country, to satisfy its political and military interests, accepted the North and East of our country as the permanent home of the Tamil communalists and agreed to have a single Administrative unit thereby providing the basis for the establishment of Eelam.

What we demand is the abrogation of the Accord with retrospective effect.

The truth is that the Indian army did not come to our Island on our invitation. Rajiv Gandhi sent his army here to establish his authority over our country. But the President, well aware of the fact that he too has contributed towards the surrender of our country to Indian imperialists has now suppressed facts

and says that although the Indian army is ready to leave our country, this cannot be done because of the activities of the patriotic youth in the South and the terrorist activities of separatists in the North. However it is a fact that even before the Presidential elections the Indian imperialists were assured that there was no objection to the presence of the Indian forces in Sri Lanka. It is therefore with contempt that we condemn the government's efforts to hide its servility and malice by attempting to hold the J.V.P. responsible for the failure to send the Indian army home. He says that he lifted the emergency and released the political prisoners. What are the facts? As announced over the radio on 2.4.89, at present there is only one individual under custody in the Galle District, 11 in Anuradhapura, 11 in Hambantota and only a few under custody in other places. If that is so have they released the thousands of youth taken into custody? No! They have actually been killed. Some are being kept to be killed later.

We have never asked for the forces to be brought back to the

condition they were before 1983. Our request was that the R.D.F., S.T.F., N.A.T. etc., formed for the purpose of suppressing political opponents, be disbanded and those killers promoted on political grounds to return to their substantive positions.

All patriots know that the struggle of the J.V.P. is not to get appointments in an illegal government, but to gain national independence, people's freedom and social justice.

As a people's party having faith in democracy our request is that the President and the Parliament should resign. We are neither U.N.P., S.L.F.P., L.S.S.P. nor C.P. we do not seek posts. We have among us people prepared to sacrifice their lives to protect the supreme aspirations of the people.

The J.V.P. with its firm patriotic foundation, requests all sons and daughters of Sri Lanka to join us in the struggle carried on by us with a firm resolve and purpose.

(This is a translation of an article which appeared in the DWAINA)

SLFP wants debate on security

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) has written to the Speaker of Parliament asking for a day to debate the security situation in the country including the Trincomalee bomb blast and the Welioya incident.

Earlier the security situation was reviewed every month when

the motion to extend the state of emergency was taken up in Parliament.

"The security situation in the country is deteriorating and a debate on it is therefore vital", the SLFP states.

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This is the Passion. . . . Will Easter ever come?

Paul Casperax, S. J.

Significantly, my visit this time began on Good Friday, in the company of the silent and meditative JJK. The journey in a large, comfortable over-crowded CTB Express — it now leaves Kandy for Jaffna and Jaffna for Kandy every day at 6.45 a.m. — took each way 10½ hours. The bus delayed a full hour at the point of departure in the Kandy depot because of some intractable engine defect which the not unusual ace of an "ordinary" CTB mechanic, arriving at 7.30 for his day's work with a beedi in his mouth and a small cloth parcel of tools under his arm, took only seven minutes to put right. I must admit that I was not quite convinced by the man's mechanical magic and resigned myself to reaching Jaffna the next morning, or never at all. But the driver made up for the hour's morning delay with some excellent manoeuvring at the wheel and we sighted at the Jaffna terminal shortly after 5 p.m. About JJK's feelings as the bus got on its way I cannot tell. It was Good Friday, he insisted, one should welcome the opportunity of sharing silently in the Passion, and told me he would neither eat nor drink, not even plain bread or black tea, till 12.

It must have been just past noon when, after the first perfunctory check by Sri Lanka forces at a checkpoint at Rambawewa, we arrived in Vavuniya. From there on and all the way to Jaffna there was the atmosphere and the evidence of people and land both besieged and besieging. Just past Vavuniya as we looked out of the window on

the east there was as far as the eye could see an ocean of canvas army tents from which occasionally armed jawans would emerge to move to a sentry point or to other tents. The very hot period of the hot season of March-May was beginning and I pitied these soldiers, so far away from sweating in their khaki, tight at the ankles and buttoned up nearly to the neck.

"Like the EPRLF?"

"No"

"Like the IPKF?" I placed my lucky lips on the block for what I decided would be the last risk of the encounter.

"Ha, ha" he replied, as he zipped back my bag to me. "Come again" and he looked the other way.

... "the militant groups are not merely using 'Instant Justice' against one another; they often made it follow INTENSE TORTURE. The once so disciplined and law-abiding Jaffna society was being rent asunder by internal dissension, violence and murder. . ."

At one of the numerous checkpoints manned by Indian soldiers between Vavuniya and Jaffna I deliberately took last place in the queue and, as I zipped open my bag for the usual inspection, I hazarded a few words with the Indian soldiers who, I found, had a smattering of English.

"Where going?" he asked me in an effort to respond to my show of friendliness.

"Today Jaffna" I said "Next week Bombay"

"Bombay" his eyes sparkled. "My home near Bombay railway station."

"Like Sri Lanka" I ventured.

"Sri Lanka not bad" he answered.

"Like the LTTE?" I risked a further question.

"No"

JJK was still impassive, though he had had his first cup of tea for the day and a lozenge when the bus made its first stop at Vavuniya. So I was forced into reminiscing privately about my previous visit to Jaffna, only three weeks before the Indo-Lanka Accord of 29th July 1987 (See *Lanka Guardian*, 10:8 15 August 1987)

Operation Liberation had taken place at Vadamarachchi between 26 May and 3 June. Seventy per cent, at the lowest estimate, of the local population had fled the area, and those who dared to return had found Operation Goodwill or Operation Minds and Hearts to be anything but what the words indicated. The feeling then was that the people had seen the ultimate in atrocity. Beyond it there was only the merciful escape of death. No wonder they welcomed the fact and the symbol of Delhi's

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air-lifted food aid. Later, once the Accord was so unexpectedly signed, they greeted with kiri-bath and plantains the first contingents of Indian soldiers to arrive in Jaffna to keep the Sri Lankan Army at bay and restore peace to the people and security to their homes. To the Jaffna person home is home and home is castle, and each home is carefully screened off from its neighbours by closely thatched fences.

Then with amazing rapidity what had happened? The Accord began to show symptoms of breakdown in late September and in October actually to run counter to all it had promised. In less than three months what entered as an army of liberation stayed on as an army of occupation. At least so it seemed to the people increasingly to be.

With all the signs of such an army: ignorance of local language, customs and culture, high-handedness of manners, isolation, nervous over-reaction to what seemed like the wilful non-cooperation of the local people. The jawans would also have noticed the contrasts between the high levels of education of the Jaffna people and their own lack of it. Language and religion may have been used to better advantage by the planners of strategy in Delhi but, at least at the beginning — may be to allay the suspicions of the Sinhalese South — there were hardly any Tamil speakers among the Indian soldiers, few South Indians and too many non-Hindus. Some said that the Sri Lankan Army was not as bad: "at least it was then possible to talk to and complain to someone".

However, we found during our visit that the mutual alienation from each other of the people of Jaffna and the Indian forces was probably less in open evidence and certainly less heart-breaking than the deep and growing divisions

among the people themselves. The EPRLF had the support of the Indian Army and for that very reason had lost the confidence of the people. The LTTE was against the Indian Army and for that very reason won the support of the people. The EPRLF with its continuing creation, the Civilian Volunteer Force (qualifications for admission: Std VII, age 18-25, pay the now mystical Rs 2500/- p.m.) and other militant groups, opposed to the LTTE, were being used by the Indian Army — sometimes with the technique of the masked face — to identify and to hunt down LTTE. At some sentry points on the way no attempt seemed to be made to conceal armed or unarmed EPRLF youth flanking the jawans.

On a wall along Hospital Street in Jaffna town I saw a poster of a film called "Instant Justice". The irony was too evident to be missed. The militant groups not merely used Instant Justice against one another; they often made it follow Intense Torture. The once so disciplined and law-abiding Jaffna society was being rent asunder by internal dissension, violence and murder.

Three weeks before we arrived in Jaffna, local Tamil daily had carried on its first page a banner headline: SODA BOTTLE IN STOMACH OF STUDENT. The paper went on to say that two days earlier a youth had been admitted to Jaffna hospital with excruciating pains in the stomach. Surgery was performed. An empty bottle of aerated water was found in the stomach, apparently forced through the anus. The youth was still in hospital when JJK and I were in Jaffna. We learnt that the bottle was a bottle of Fanta. As someone told us the horrifying story, another interjected that the Elephant House bottle would probably have been rejected because of its wider diameter. The youth was only 18 and was in the middle of

his Ordinary Level examination when, upon suspicion that he was a Tiger, another group had arranged to deal with him. We could not help feeling that in his case Instant Justice would have been compassionate after torture so intense. But the doctors were using all their skills to save the youth's life: he will live, but maimed, probably forever.

After our visit to Jaffna in the immediate pre-Accord period, the present writer stated:

"...It is agonizing for the people to know that the groups can be even more ruthless to each other than to the common enemy. The militant groups are fighting for freedom from the Sinhala army. But how much freedom will they allow the Tamil people — to dissent, to propose alternatives, to choose their own leaders? Will the people of Jaffna shake off one set of oppressors only to saddle themselves with another? Someone must have the courage to speak up against violence for violence' sake, to recall the youth to their initial idealism and to the mainsprings of the ancient noble culture of the Tamil people."

More urgently than then, someone must stand up now and tell the youth, Enough! The Forces of evil must not be allowed any more to destroy the people of Jaffna and their land. A second person will take up the call, even if the first has paid for it with life itself. And so on and on until Jaffna is saved from catastrophe. Will someone stand up? If so who?

But Jaffna still remains a charming town. Jaffna mangoes and Jaffna ripe jak were not in season but vegetables were being sold at moderate prices, with brinjals quite cheap and good sour plantains at Rs 5/- only a kilo. The main roads are in many places broken up, with the nervous speeding of drivers of heavy army trucks and armoured vehicles, then of the Sri Lankan Forces, now of the Indian Army, said to be the fourth largest army in the world. But turn away from the main roads into the lanes and alleys which wind

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The Soviet elections: Another step for Perestroika

Reggie Siriwardena

Writing on the morrow of the March elections in the Soviet Union, *Pravda* asked the question, "Why does the Party committee's dislike of a deputy whom the apparatus doesn't sympathise with suddenly give rise to powerful support of the people?" The particular case that *Pravda* was highlighting was the resounding victory in his Moscow electorate of the party maverick Boris Yeltsin. Equally significant on the other side were the defeats of several party bosses — notably, Yuri Soloviev, head of the party in the Leningrad region and a member of the Politbureau (although unopposed, he was struck off the ballot by more than 50% of the voters). The Soviet people had always possessed this right to vote "No" against a single slate, but in the past few dared to exercise it. Now, in the March polls, there were (as a picture in *Moscow News* shows) demonstrators in the streets with placards reading: "Vote against every solitary candidate." Where the apparatus had succeeded in manipulating single candidate tickets, voters often showed their disapproval by slipping them down — most clearly, in Leningrad. Equally, they showed their independence by choosing in many electorates candidates unacceptable to the party machine. In a post-election comment, *Ogoniok* (the most independent and courageous of Soviet journals) said: "The results were unexpected. Above all, because the hopes of a part of the bureaucratic apparatus for success of the endeavours by one means or another, to eliminate, even before the elections, all those candidates who in the opinion of the majority were worthy of parliamentary seats, were not realised."

Two indicators suggest the general pattern of the voting.

One, that about 40 party officials of the top and middle rank were rejected at the polls; the other, that 60 journalists (as compared with seven in the previous Supreme Soviet) were elected. The significance of the latter phenomenon lies in the fact that it is the radical wing of the Soviet media that has been the spear-head of reform.

Between 1985 and March 1989 it was possible to argue that the desire for change was confined largely to the intelligentsia, and that the mass of the Soviet people were concerned less with democracy than with bread and butter issues. This view is no longer tenable, as the poet Andrei Voznesensky was quick to point out immediately after the elections. Four years of political debate and struggle over *perestroika* seem to have brought home to the Soviet people the realisation that the best hope for shortening the queues and filling the empty shelves is to press for political reform.

These optimistic evaluations need, no doubt, to be qualified by two considerations. The major overturns in the elections have been in the cities rather than in the countryside — evidence of the inevitable unevenness of the advance in political consciousness. Further, of the 2,250 deputies who have been elected to the Congress, only 542 will be chosen by the Congress to sit in the Supreme Soviet, the regular legislative body. There is, therefore, still room for some conservative manoeuvring in this choice of deputies. However, even if it turns out that the conservatives still outnumber the reformers within the Supreme Soviet, it will no longer be a monolithic, rubber-stamping body. It will be the arena of further struggle bet-

ween the forces of reaction or inertia and those of change.

In these circumstances, the fact that the Soviet Union is still a one-party state assumes decreasing significance. Step by step, over the past four years, diversity of opinion within the party has grown, and was openly aired on the floor of the 19th Party Conference last June. In fact, the gulf between the political positions of a Nina Andreyeva at one end and a Boris Yeltsin at the other is wider than that between some U.S. Republicans and Democrats. This pluralism will now be carried into the Supreme Soviet itself. However, the new climate of debate and controversy is being sustained not only by intra-party diversity but also by the large number of independent organisations that have come into existence in the atmosphere of *perestroika*. Though not in the formal sense political parties, these societies and clubs, (like the Memorial Society, which has brought together the most actively reform-minded members of the intelligentsia) create public opinion and exert pressure on the party and the state. Their activity in the election campaign contributed heavily to the setbacks that the conservatives suffered.

What will be the effect of the March elections on Mikhail Gorbachev's position in power and on his policies?

It can reasonably be inferred from the elections that a considerable part of the Soviet people want a faster pace of change. Some Western commentators think this situation poses a danger for Gorbachev. I disagree.

Since he assumed power Gorbachev has shown that he is not only a leader and a statesman with a long-term vision but also

an astute tactician. Between 1985 and now he has taken bold initiatives but tempered them in some respects with caution. He has balanced the contending forces within the party and its leading organs, zigzagging when necessary to see that the conflict between them would not precipitate a crisis that would imperil the course of *perestroika* itself. But he has also called into activity forces outside the party that will strengthen his hand against the conservatives within it. The constitutional changes and the elections are part of his strategy of giving more autonomy to the Supreme Soviet as an organ of people's power and as a makeweight against the party dictatorship.

We need to remember what Gorbachev has never lost sight of — that *perestroika* is not an overnight revolution but a continuous process. It has not been called into being simply by the will of one man; it is a response to the inescapable needs of Soviet society itself. And with each day that passes, the reforms seem more irreversible. What could a neo-Stalinist restoration do to solve any of the critical problems of the Soviet Union — the need to pull the economy out of its bureaucratic rut, the need to satisfy the people's aspiration to political freedom and the rule of law, the need to fulfil the political and cultural strivings of minority nationalities? How could a more dictatorial regime contain these problems — unless by full-fledged military rule, which might mean the disintegration of the Soviet Union?

In the next stage of *perestroika* the unmistakable declaration at the polls of the people's desire for speedier reform will strengthen Gorbachev's hand. Hopefully, it will enable him to push through the structural changes in the economy that are vital for growth and public warfare but are still being hampered by conservative bureaucrats.

A pre-election issue of *Ogonyok* carries on its cover a picture of an election rally, with these words imposed on it: "Land to the peasants, factories to the workers, power to the Soviets — in reality!" The old slogans of 1917, long submerged by the bureaucratic usurpation of power. It is a measure of the hopes and aspirations raised by *perestroika* that they are heard once more. But *perestroika* cannot be simply a return to the idealism and euphoria or the programmes and formulas of October. History never retraces its steps. The Soviet Union of 1989 is a different country with new problems. To redefine what it means to give land to the peasants themselves, to ensure for workers control over their factories, to make the Soviets genuine organs of people's power — and to find, through innovation, experiment, dialogue and debate, the means of achieving these goals — that is what *perestroika* is about.

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This is the...

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their way one into the other like intricate embroidery on a broad scarf. Into these lanes and alleys the Forces are wary of entering, except in times of well mounted massive cordon and search operations. Along these byways youth gather to chat in small groups of four or five at garden gates, some even play soft-ball cricket with umpires and all, and girls cycle gracefully to or from school or tutoring or the shops in town. After dusk, however, even these alleys tend to be as silent as footpaths in a cemetery and people keep doors and windows closed, hoping that there will be no dreaded knock at the door, summoning someone, usually a son or brother as suspect or hostage.

So the charm of Jaffna is today tinged with unspeakable anguish. People ask, how much longer, and await the dawn with the classic steadfastness of the Jaffna people. Many have lost all human hope: in the governments of either Sri Lanka or India or in any of the militant groups. Every possible deliverer seems to have hands stained with the blood of innocents. Many do not see light at end of the tunnel, only the tunnel getting longer and longer and blacker and and blacker every day.

A few others do not agree. They are grieved that those who should have led and guided the people of Jaffna in this critical time have been frightened either into the safety of foreign lands or into silence. They believe that each one can light in the gathering darkness the little light of one's own life of truth, justice, beauty and love. And one light will summon up another. Finally, though it may take years, dawn will break again upon the now benighted land.

Soviet Marxism is being De-Russified

Hector Abhayavardhana

This article bases itself on the conviction that, despite everything that has taken place in the Soviet Union during more than seventy years that have followed it, the Russian Revolution was no chance event. Liberal historians kept referring to pre-revolutionary Russia as the sick man of Europe. Trotsky wrote that, under pressure from richer Europe, the Russian state swallowed up a far greater relative part of the people's wealth than in the West, and thereby not only condemned the people to a twofold poverty, but also weakened the foundations of the possessing classes. Lenin summed up what had taken place in the graphic utterance that the chain of world capitalism broke at its weakest link. Whatever the explanation, there could be no doubt that the Russian Revolution was one of the most prepared for events in history and was ever elaborately rehearsed twelve years before the final curtain-raiser.

The question arises of what kind of event was thus prepared for. Until he wrote his "April Theses" Lenin did not consider that the Russian working class would be able to establish itself in power before other sections of the European workers. But once the workers had set up their parallel power in Leningrad and Moscow, it appeared likely to him that a proletarian state would appear in Russia before it could happen elsewhere. Even so, he never fell into the error of believing that it would be possible to build a Socialist society in Russia, even if the revolution was isolated. He consistently regarded the Russian revolution as setting off the revolutionary process in the rest of Europe, and especially in Germany. He repeated several times that the Russian Revolution was "doomed" unless it spread to the

West. On 1 October, 1918, when the first news reached him of the overthrow of the monarchy and the setting up of workers' councils in Germany, Lenin wrote to Sverdlov, then Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Soviets: "The international revolution has come so close in one week that it has to be reckoned with as an event of the next few days. Urging Sverdlov to organise all aid, including military aid, to the German workers, he wrote: "We must have by the spring an army of three millions to help the international workers' revolution."

Anxious as he was that the revolution in Germany and elsewhere in Europe should not be delayed, Lenin was conscious of the absence of one of the main elements essential to ensure the revolution's success. There was no revolutionary party powerful and mature enough to ride the mass tide. It was clear that such parties had to be built in Germany and elsewhere before the situation changed, if the existing opportunity was not to be lost. In a desperate race against time, delegates — most of them handicapped — were assembled in Moscow and a highly centralised "World Party of Revolution" was launched in March 1919. But the German Spartacists, led by Rosa Luxemburg, could not be brought into this International, although Germany was the key area that would determine the future of the new Russian workers' state. "It will be a Russian shop with which we shall be unable to cope. We shall perish with it," Rosa Luxemburg told her Spartacist associates.

That is precisely what took place. Lenin himself took a hand in it. "Not merely several but all the primary features of our revolution, and many of its secondary features, are of

international significance," he declared. And again: "At the present moment in history, it is the Russian model that reveals to all countries something — and something highly significant — of their near and inevitable future." But in fact there was a world of difference between the conditions in which the revolution had unwound in Russia and the social conditions of Western Europe. The attempt to ignore this difference and impose formulae that had been thrown up by the Russian experience on the European countries, only brought about the Russification of Comintern Marxism and its catastrophic inapplicability to European problems.

Gramsci has focussed attention on the essential difference in the social structures of Russia and the Western European countries in a passage which we quote from his *Prison Notebooks*—

"In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State (in the West) was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks; more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying — but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country."

The importance of civil society in Western Europe was revealed above all in the powerful mass organisations behind the Social Democracy, viz. the trade unions

and the cooperatives. The working class was distinguished by its loyalty to these organisations and could hardly be expected to desert them at the call of a newly formed world party of revolution. Despite this, the "21 Conditions" of admission to the Comintern called for an immediate and total break with all centrist and reformist organisations, both political parties and trade unions. Heinrich Brandler, the only member of the Spartacist Central Committee to vote in favour of joining the Comintern and a founder of the German Communist Party, confessed his remorse at his own repudiation of ideas he had once cherished: "Only now do I realise how tremendous was the treasure of ideas which the German workers' movement acquired by its own exertions and quite independently. We were so impressed by the achievements of the Bolsheviks that we forgot our own."

The doctrine of Leninism, with its dogmas and rigidities, had been constituted even before Lenin was dead. But while Lenin was yet alive, his own flexibility and practicality was a corrective to the tendency of his followers to bureaucratic steps. Isaac Deutscher, in an essay on "The Moral Dilemmas of Lenin", mentions a remark which Lenin made at a Party Congress in April 1922, the last which he attended. "Powerful forces," he said, "diverted the Soviet State from the proper road." It was an early reflection of a creeping despair and a sense of alienation from his own handiwork. The European revolution had failed and the USSR was isolated. The poverty and backwardness of the country, compounded now by ruin through years of war and civil war, was almost an insuperable obstacle. The individualism of the peasant had its foil in the early socialist zeal of the worker, but now even the latter was demoralised. Adds Deutscher:-

"But something else now also struck him (Lenin) with

great force. As he watched his colleagues, followers and disciples — those revolutionaries turned rulers — their behaviour and methods of government reminded him more and more of the behaviour and the methods of the old Tsarist bureaucracy. He thought of those instances in history when one nation conquered another but then the defeated nation, if it represented a higher civilisation, imposed its own way of life and its own culture on the conquerors, defeating them spiritually. Something similar, he concluded, can happen in the struggle between social classes: defeated Tsardom was in fact imposing its own standards and methods on his own party... Tsardom was spiritually conquering the Bolsheviks, because the Bolsheviks were less civilised than even the Tsar's bureaucracy had been."

Lenin died in January 1924. Though Germany was still in ferment and would continue to be for some time, there was little chance of the world revolution now coming to the assistance of the beleaguered Soviet state. Was the USSR then really doomed? By the end of 1924 Stalin had begun to revise the basic internationalist premise on which the Soviet state had been founded. If the world revolution could not assist the Soviet State, the latter had better learn to do without the world revolution. In an article written in December 1924, Stalin contended that the law of uneven development enables a country in which the revolution has taken place to hold out against the capitalist states by playing them against each other, and thus complete the building of Socialism. The programme approved by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 elaborated this position further and went on to say: "the Soviet Union is the true fatherland of the proletariat, the strongest pillar of its achievements, and the principal factor in its eman-

ipation throughout the world, this obliges the international proletariat to forward the success of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union and to defend the country of proletarian dictatorship by every means against the attack of the capitalist powers."

Thus with Lenin's death, the military defence of the Soviet Union had displaced the international Socialist revolution as the principal task of the international proletariat. The Soviet State had become "the principal factor" in the emancipation of the proletariat throughout the world. The idolatry of the Russian State had become the supreme obligation of Marxists everywhere belonging to the Stalinist orthodoxy. Stalinism had supplanted Leninism, even if the two conveniently continued to be identified.

So far as the Soviet Union was concerned, the theory of Socialism in One Country directed a clear and simple message to its people. They had now to rely on themselves alone to beat back a military challenge of the capitalist world. They could, of course, seek to play these states against each other for some time. But nothing could gainsay the probability of war, what was necessary was military capacity, even more than Socialism. Successful building of "Socialism" would be accounted in the light of its ability to fight and win a war that the capitalist states might spring on them. It is not a matter for surprise, therefore, that the principal preoccupation of successive Soviet Russian governments in peacetime has been preparation for the eventuality of war. This has been such a colossal drain on material resources and manpower that not very much has been left for the building of Socialism. Today the position has been complicated even more disastrously. The proliferation of nuclear bombs and weaponry and powerful ballistic missiles

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The National Question and Marxism

Dayan Jayatilaka

In studying the complex nature of the National Question in Sri Lanka, let us remember that there is no theory of the National Question in the dependent formations, in Marxism-Leninism to date. This question has been theorized in the contexts of —

1. Pre-capitalist autocracy (Tsarists Russia) which was also a metropolitan i.e. imperialist formation.
2. Semi-peripheral formations (Central and Eastern Europe)
3. Straightforward colonial situations (India, China). Hence the formulation, the 'National Colonial Question'. This is the question of National Liberation.

But what of the 'internal' national questions? Much writing has been done on the Welsh, Scots, Basques, Quebecois. Tom Nairn's book is truly brilliant. But what of struggles in the periphery? Some work has been done, on the ethnic aspect of struggles (Indians in Guatemala), yet those are questions which do not deal with a fully fledged secessionist struggle as in Sri Lanka. True, Sri Lanka is not unique. The Moros of Mindanao, various struggles in India, Pakistan, Eritrea and the Kurds have produced some literature but they are all descriptive, informative and often propagandist. Nothing conceptual, theoretical has been done. No one has addressed the following problems. —

1. The problem of the National Question in post/neo colonial formations, i.e. the question of independent struggle within politically independent societies, which unlike Britain/Ireland or Spain, still have to struggle against dependency and thus have a 'national/patriotic' or 'independentist' aspect in their revolution. These social formations are themselves dominated while they dominate other national groups within.

2. The problem of linking this struggle (or devolution/federalism with overall problem of democratizing the state structure — a problem that Clive Thomas deals with so well. A complicating factor is that federalism was an anarchist slogan rejected by Marx, but we have things to learn from Bakunin and Kropotkin.
3. The problem of linking these struggles for democracy with the struggle for socialism i.e. the connection between the anti-authoritarian and the anti-capitalist struggles.
4. The problem of linking these three struggles — devolution, overall democracy, socialism — with the anti-dependency, anti-imperialist struggle.
5. Articulating these with the struggle against fascist movements 'from below' and the ideological struggles against all forms of obscurantism.
6. Linking these with the strategic, tactical and organisational problems of armed revolution (which Clive Thomas doesn't do).

We must bear in mind that revolutions hitherto have taken place in contexts that were —

- a. pre-capitalists (Russia, Ethiopia)
- b. colonial, semi-colonial, early neo-colonial (Vietnam, China, Cuba)
- c. oligarchic (Cuba, Nicaragua), or
- d. fascist (Albania, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe where the revolution was courtesy of the Red Army).

We have to situate our problem in the very different context of a politically independent yet neo-colonial, modern capitalist (not pre-capitalist or oligarchic) and authoritarian (not fascist) formation. This is an entirely new problematic and conceptual challenge.

The questions of political philosophy that we are finally left with are perhaps these: what are the factors making for a durable peace and what are those rendering another inter-ethnic war inevitable? If peace proves longlasting, the System gets stabilized, but then again, it will be deprived of the option of an ethnic diversion as the crisis deepens — so which outcome is in our interests? What kind of society do we desire and what are we willing to do to change existing society? What are the limits of what is possible in our society in this historical period? What kind of society are we willing to settle for; what kind of society are we willing to put up with? What aren't we willing to put up with? Chile proves that there is no peaceful path to socialism but I think that Latin American and Southern Europe also demonstrate that a peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy is possible. At some point resistance to the institutionalised (i.e. State) violence around us may involve violence. But how not to permit ourselves to be prematurely provoked? Indonesia shows that under certain conditions the very prospect of a left led coalition government will trigger preventive counter-revolution. How do we avoid the needless carnage and brutalisation of war? We must be sure that what we are unleashing is worth it, from the point of view of the masses — not from our point of view.

Quite apart from the absence of a subjective factor, there seems to be a massive structural blockage to democratic socialist revolution in the present historical period and, in fact, the absence or chronic weakness of the subjective factor is a reflection of this — which in turn has to do with culture in the very broadest sense.

Engels spoke of 'whole reactionary nations', a concept much

* This article is largely based on a lecture given at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, sponsored by the Radical Students' Union, India.

criticised since then. One conspicuous absentee in the legion of critics is Marx himself.

If Sinhala and Tamil chauvinism proves to be a 'bottom-up' phenomenon — and this awaits deeper study — would the Marxist have to return to Engels?

* * * *

The Tamil national liberation struggle as an armed struggle commenced around 1972. People talk of the "war" as dating from 1983 — which is correct if one means a generalised armed conflict; but we are talking about an armed struggle which has gone on for about fifteen years.

We know that the question of self determination is a democratic question, and our stand on this is determined by the needs of the general democratic struggle, because we do not support 'democracy' in the abstract. Self determination must be seen against the backdrop of the overall struggle for democracy and social progress. The Tamil people, as a nation, i.e. as an ethno-national formation that has evolved into a nation, have the inalienable right of self determination; which includes the right to set up their own independent and sovereign state. In accordance with Leninism, this right is supported by us unconditionally and unreservedly. We are well aware that, like the right to divorce, it is one thing to support the it's exercise in the form and modality of separation at given time. We must remember that the right of self determination can be exercised in numerous forms — federal, semi or quasi federal, confederal, regional autonomy, etc.

A ZERO-SUM GAME

From 1976, when the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) adopted the Eelam slogan, to roughly 1985, it was possible, indeed incumbent, for socialists to champion the right of the Tamil people to national self determination including the right of secession and furthermore to support the Tamils' effort to exercise that right to the fullest

in the specific form of the setting up of an independent, Sovereign, (hopefully socialist) Tamil Eelam State. The key link in Sri Lanka politics was the Tamil national question. It was not that some of us were fashionably tailing behind this or that nationalist tendency. No, the central question of the Sri Lankan revolution at that time was in fact the Tamil national question.

In May 1985, the attack on Anuradhapura took place in which at least 200 (in this case the Government figures were played down because of a possible backlash) innocent, unarmed, noncombatant, entirely uninvolved men, women and children of all ages were slaughtered in cold blood by the LTTE. It was the Anuradhapura massacre that brought home two facts — firstly the character of the LTTE and secondly their hegemony within the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle. We cannot deny these facts — it is not a luxury that we can afford.

Now, until May 1985, the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle did not target non combatant civilians. So there was, in that sense, a compatibility between revolutionary activity among the Sinhalese people and the defence of the Tamil Eelam demand. It was a non-zero sum game between the mass base of Sinhala progressives and the mass base of the Tamil liberation movement. But this changed qualitatively in 1985.

MISHANDLING CONTRADICTIONS

From its inception, the LTTE has demonstrated an incapacity to distinguish antagonistic contradictions from non-antagonistic ones. It has habitually displayed its proclivity for the violent resolution even of "contradictions among the people". It has no idea of the "correct handling of contradictions". Mao warned against the cutting off of the heads of one's political rivals, because, he said, "they do not grow back like leeks". The LTTE had no such compunctions. This was manifest in its

internal killings which took place even in its earlier incarnation as the TMT (Tamil New Tigers), as well as in the liquidation of individuals belonging to other liberation organisations. In 1981, we have the killing of one of the key dissident members of the LTTE, Sundaram. He was the first important dissenter from the LTTE — the founder of the paper "New Path". Those who are familiar with the story of Lenin would know that when he was told of his brother's execution for the assassination attempt on the Czar, he said — "That it is not our way. We will try a new path." Sundaram who was one of the finest fighters of the LTTE (he was later involved in the PLOT's Kilinochehi bank operation), was critical of the pure militarism of the LTTE and wanted to chart a new path. Subsequently, Uma Maheswaran also left the Tigers to join him in his project. Sundaram was coming out of a printing press in Jaffna where he had printed a Christmas card with a progressive liberation theology content, when he was killed by the LTTE. Of course, the PLOT retaliated and killed two other people who were not members of the LTTE, but sympathisers! From the early days of the Tigers we have internal executions which are little known, and then execution of dissidents like Sundaram.

While these incorrect practices were pioneered by the LTTE, it is also true, as we have seen, that other important liberation organisations did not react in a proper manner and in fact adopted similar methods of resolving contradictions within the ranks of the national liberationists.

A TALE OF TWO PATHS

Another stage followed that of the liquidation of rivals. The error broadened into a deviation with the killing of unarmed civilians in an attack on two fishing villages, Naiaru and Kokilai. There are photographs of the results of the attack. One of them is that of a little Sinhalese girl killed inside a small toilet. One had hoped that

the international propaganda fall out of this deed would have prevented its repetition. Indeed, the Sinhala revolutionary internationalists hoped that this deviation would have been checked after the "unity" committee, the ENLF, was enlarged to encompass the LTTE. But this hope was frustrated. In 1985 the attack on the civilians of Anuradhapura was preceded by an attack on the Dollar and Kent farms. These perhaps can be understood because there were Sinhala ex-convicts perceived to have been involved in the Colombo prison massacres of '83, settled in those farms.

THE CONJUNCTURE OF 1985: ANURADHAPURA AND THIMPU

To go back a bit... in December 1984, the TELO had come on to the scene and they had attacked the Chavakachcheri Police Station. In early 1985, they blew up a train which was carrying a large complement of soldiers. In '85, PLOTE had its radio, the Voice of Tamil Eelam, which was very well received in the South. And it launched its first operation in the South—an armed expropriation. It was also known that the EPRLF had links with Sinhala revolutionaries. That was the conjuncture of mid-1985.

The Tamil struggle was faced with two divergent paths—one was for the project for the Eelam struggle to be transitional to the setting up of a socialist Tamil Eelam State and simultaneously or sequentially to the overall Lankan revolution involving the working people in the south. This entailed winning over the majority of the Sinhalese masses (or at least neutralising them). The other path was that of a bloody fratricidal struggle against the Sinhala people. Was it to be a contestation of the two peoples in a grotesque distortion of people's war? Would the Sinhala and Tamil people unite on the basis of anti-State struggle irrespective of ethnicity or contend as two blocs? That was the question in 1985. After the Anuradhapura massacre took

place, it was a whole new ball game. Hitherto the contradiction had been between the State and the Tamil guerrillas, or rather, between the State and the Tamil people. The LTTE transformed it into the State plus the Sinhala people versus the Tamil guerrillas plus the Tamil people. They broadened their target to encompass the Sinhala people. They began to wage war against the Sinhala nation as a whole. Uninvolved, non-combatant, unarmed, innocent Sinhala civilians were attacked on a large scale for the first time. Rarely, if ever, in the history of the world revolutionary and national liberation movements up to that time, had an act of conscious and deliberate terrorism of this magnitude been reported.

The massacre was followed two months later, by the Thimpu negotiations.

The EPRLF's official newspaper, called *"Eelam Spokesman"*, carries a long article in its issue of October/November 1985, six months after the massacre, on the implications of the Anuradhapura massacre. This was, in fact, written primarily by me together with another comrade who was also a leader of the Vikalpa Kandyama, the EPRLF's Sinhala ally, and sent to the EPRLF just after the Anuradhapura incident, and before the Thimpu talks. One point in that article is that this kind of tactic would push the Sri Lankan Government into a rapprochement with the Government of India, the result of which would bury the Eelam struggle itself, because, as a French Utopian socialist said "He who makes a revolution only half way digs his own grave". To quote from the article:

"If there is a downward spiralling process of mutual slaughter of unarmed civilians, in other words if there is a slide towards barbarism on both sides, the international community may request India to militarily intervene or countenance such action on India's part. Such interven-

tion will not lead to the setting up of an independent Tamil Eelam of any sort, let alone a socialist Tamil Eelam. Rather it will result in the setting up of provincial cabinets under the TROP and whichever sections of the Eelam movement choose to collaborate. In the south it will mean general elections, preceded possibly by a 'National Government' led by Mrs. Bandaranaike and followed by an SLFP government also headed by her. Such a denouement will set back the Eelam liberation struggle and the Sri Lankan socialist revolution by decades. Those Eelam militants and Marxists who oppose such a 'solution' will doubtless be disarmed or eliminated by the Indian armed forces.

"So please desist from a course of action which will succeed merely in shaking the tree so that the fruit falls into the bucket of the oppositional bourgeoisie. Or, to put it more scientifically, do not embark on a course of action that will help an externally induced, bourgeois-reformist 'solution' to this most profound crisis of the Sri Lankan state in its 20th century history."

In 1985 at Thimpu, all the Eelam groups were present and the ENLF (Eelam National Liberation Front) had been formed, comprising the LTTE, ERROS, EPRLF and TELO. The PLOT was kept out at that time, which I think was a mistake.

The groups put forward four basic demands of the Tamils.

MAXIMALISM

While the Thimpu talks were going on, the situation on the ground was such that in one particular operation—Vavuniya—the Sri Lankan army went on a rampage and the representatives of the Tamil Groups walked out of Thimpu. Whether or not that was a mistake, one does not know. I think it was the natural thing to do at that point of time.

The Government of India suggested that the four points presented by the Tamil groups be concretised in the form of legislative and constitutional ideas, that they be given political form. This was not done. I think this was a mistake. There is a term that we are familiar with in progressive political discourse called 'maximalism'.

It's like fundamentalism — you have economic fundamentalists and you also have Marxist fundamentalists. They argue from first principles and then there's just the maximum programme and nothing in between! There have been plenty of people like that in socialist parties at various times. The inability to think in terms of a minimum programme; to think in terms of intermediate, interim and provisional solutions; not to be able to see the intermediate as transition — these characterised the Eelam struggle.

I'm certain that the Marxist-Leninist organisations in the Tamil resistance were aware of this, but the degree of hegemony of the LTTE was such that even they did not want to go against the Tigers. So they did not come out with any concretisation of the four principles either, leaving it to the TULF to do the "constitutional stuff". This was mid-1985. In a way, this error mirrors that of the Russian Economists — limiting themselves to the economic class struggle while the political struggle was to be left to the liberal bourgeoisie. In late 1985, the TULF came up with its package of proposals which it forwarded through the Indian Government to the Sri Lankan Government. The Sri Lankan Government said "no way" and it came up with its rehashed version of the very minimalist response to Tamil demands in the form of the district level development council. We could call it 'mega DDCs' or 'DDCs plus plus'.

This question still faces us today, namely, that the **minimum**,

(Continued on page 26)

Soviet Marxism...

(Continued from page 14)

makes it virtually inevitable that a future war will be a no-win affair and result in the total elimination of human life. This makes it sensible that the "building of Socialism", instead of providing a cover for the accumulation of military potential, should be decisively divorced from the preparation for war. This is one of the cornerstones of President Gorbachev's current policies.

We have attempted to show that the idolatry of the State (Gramsci has called it "Statolatry") and the elevation of military preparations as the supreme factor governing the working out of all State policies are traceable to the loss of faith in international revolution and the enthronement of bureaucracy. Militarism is a typical resort of bureaucracy in a tight corner. It follows that the freeing of economic and social policies from the military strait-jacket cannot take place without the dethronement of bureaucracy.

Gorbachev's speech to the 27th Party Congress of the CPSU suggested that his principal concern was with shortcomings of the economy and that his Perestroika would be limited to correcting them. Thus he would not be able to achieve the planned growth in national income without huge increases in labour productivity brought about by intensive investment in high technology. He had the huge problem of low quality unsaleable goods in shops and factory godowns amid a general clamour for industrial consumer goods. There was the problem of the shadow economy with its enormous and flourishing private sector on the labour market. Whole brigades of independent workers were signing private contracts with state factories at five times the wage of ordinary workers. The state was reluctant to repudiate these contracts or stop the practice as these workers alone were

responsible for half the construction work going on outside the capital. It has not mattered until now that hordes of parasites batten on these contracts and the accompanying purchase of raw materials.

In the course of 1986, however, Gorbachev steadily extended the scope of his reform programme to include radical political steps. He appeared to be signalling some definite recognition that no technocratic reforms could be of value if the political system could not be adapted to the needs of a growingly pluralist society. Through 1987 and 1988 he has moved considerably further. A kind of separation of powers is already on the way by which executive authority will be vested in the Soviets and the Party will be largely removed from interference in state administration and economic management. The basic role of the Party will be ideological, philosophical and political. The Soviets will perform their functions of management and be responsible to the Party. A judicial reform is also contemplated. The elections of People's Deputies that have recently been concluded have, within their limits, already provided the Soviet people with their first elected parliament.

Stalinism was the means by which Russified Marxism turned its back on internationalism, transformed Socialist development into idolatry of the State, suppressed Soviet democracy and substituted for it the unbridled dictatorship of the Communist Party and converted the Communist Party itself into the totalitarian instrument of a handful of ruthless bureaucrats grovelling at the feet of a sadistic dictator. Mikhail Gorbachev has been able to swing the Soviet state in the reverse direction in respect of every one of these processes through his policies of Glasnost and Perestroika and democratisation and the active pursuit of world peace. Soviet Marxism has begun to be de-Russified and returned to Internationalism.

INDIA AND EELAM:

Sri Lanka's dependency syndrome

Izeth Hussain

The polls victory of Karunanidhi's DMK caused some anxieties in Sri Lanka in the beliefs that it might lead to further complications in our Tamil problem. But we cannot be certain about this. So much depends on changing circumstances about which we can never be certain. What we can be certain about, however, is that the fundamentals of the Tamil problem remain unchanged. And we can also be practically certain, that what is going to happen will depend far more on ourselves than on the DMK or the Indian Government or any other external factor.

It appears that up to now India has failed to arrange a satisfactory accommodation with our Tamils. This will be apparent, 22 months after the Peace Accords, if we take a look at the situation in the North. Provincial Councillors were declared elected there without a contest, obviously because LTTE opposition prevented the holding of normal elections. The polls at the Presidential elections were very low partly at least because of LTTE opposition. No normal electioneering was possible for the General Elections, and the results showed a serious erosion in the position of the moderate TMLF. It is said that Government offices function only three days in the week, because such is the diktat of the LTTE. And every now and then skirmishes take place between the LTTE and the IPKF. It is obvious that the LTTE, far from having been eliminated

or neutralized, is active and remains as intransigent as ever.

We cannot pretend that there is anything like normalcy in the North, even if there might be something like it in the East, and this surely means that the IPKF can be expected to remain in this country for the foreseeable future, continuing what looks like an ineffectual role. Even if all our political parties, without exception, concur in the demand that the IPKF be withdrawn forthwith, the Indians are not likely to oblige. Over 700 Indian soldiers have died on Sri Lankan soil, more than in any of India's wars with its neighbours. For that surely a price has to be paid. We can take it that what prompted the IPKF presence here was not pure and unadulterated altruism. We cannot realistically expect an IPKF withdrawal until the objectives which led to its presence here are secured.

There are two identifiable Indian objectives, apart from another possible objective which will be dealt with here. One is to ensure that the Tamil problem is solved so that there will be no further fall-out in Tamil Nadu. We may suspect that India exaggerates the problem of the fall-out as it provides an excuse to interfere in the affairs of its neighbours. But there is no doubt whatever that some of the internal problems among India's neighbours do cause fall-outs in India. In the case of our Tamil problem, the fall-out has not been confined to Tamil Nadu alone as can be seen from the fact that the Home Minister of Andhra Pradesh stated some time ago that Naxalites there had obtained weapons from the LTTE which

were used to kill seven policemen. We may regard this as the consequence of India's folly in allowing the LTTE to operate in Tamil Nadu. But there is also the case of the Maldives where, according to President Gayoom, the abortive coup attempt of last November was master-minded by PLOTE which hoped to use a Maldivian island for training guerillas and for arms smuggling into Sri Lanka. It cannot be denied that internal problems can sometimes cause legitimate concern to neighbours.

Our Tamil problem has not caused any really serious problems in Tamil Nadu, but all the same we cannot realistically expect any Government in Delhi to ignore Tamil Nadu restiveness over what happens in Sri Lanka, more particularly now that the DMK has assumed power there. It was the DMK which started the first separatist movement in India, and with its assumption of power in the largest of the Dravidian states all of the South is lost to the Congress, a fact of some importance in a country where the cultural cleavage between the Aryan North and the Dravidian South has been historically important. We must now expect a greater Indian resolve to withdraw the IPKF only after there is reasonable ground to believe that the Tamil problem has been solved. Taken with draws every now and then make no difference.

A second Indian objective, which is also an easily identifiable one, is to ensure that Sri Lanka never gets together with a foreign power in a manner that might endanger Indian interests. It cannot be doubted that suspicions on this score

The writer, a retired Foreign Service officer, was Ambassador in the Philippines. The article is based on a talk at the Margu Institute.

were of crucial importance in the developments leading to the IPKF presence here. One of the reasons why India seems to be paranoid about neighbours getting together with other powers could arise out of its ethnic, religious, linguistic, caste, and other diversity which spawns separatist movements, even though there is undoubtedly an over-arching cultural unity which has held India together up to now. India began its independence with the trauma of a break-up, and ever since then India has continued to be bothered by what Indians used to call "fissiparous tendencies".

Phrases of that sort, needlessly polyllabic as they are, sometimes have an anaesthetizing function, suggesting in this case a dread of the break-up which Indians vehemently deny. It should be obvious that our Tamil problem causing a fallout in Tamil Nadu, together with suspicions that a hostile Sri Lanka wanted to get together with other powers which have a powerful potential for meddling in India's affairs, could have been expected to drive India to desperate measures.

Meeting these two objectives to the mutual satisfaction of Sri Lanka and India has proved to be difficult, but they do not seem to present problems of an insuperable order. In regard to satisfying Tamil aspirations, a major problem is apparently the unit of devolution because a single North-Eastern Province, on which the LTTE is supposedly intransigent, is not acceptable to the Sinhalese and Muslims. The Tamils should be able to understand that their claim to a homeland absorbing the whole of the Eastern Province is worse than dubious on historical grounds. Special arrangements for the Eastern Province, if not a separate Province altogether, should be regarded as equitable. In any case, the extent of the devolution could turn out to be far more important than the unit of devolution and on this there has to

be flexibility, not an insistence that there should be an identical amount of devolution as in India or some other country. The test, however, is whether our Tamils will have the requisite degree of autonomy to allow them to live in security and dignity. In principle at least the problem of devolution does not seem to be an insuperable one.

On foreign relations, there is one fact to which importance should be given. For decades we had very friendly relations with India, while India's relations with practically all its neighbours to the North were, at best, rather uneasy. It is important to note that we managed to have cordial relations with both India and China at the same time while relations between those two countries were hostile. That was a situation in which India might have been expected to insist on a distancing of Sri Lanka from China as the price for continued cordial relations with India. **Instead, India was quite satisfied as long as we were not getting together with China against India.**

There is a striking contrast between India's usually unsatisfactory relations with countries to the North on the one hand, and with Sri Lanka and the Maldives on the other. The explanation for this could be historical, apart of course from geo-political realities.

India's conquerors from the time of the Aryans came from the North-West, and in 1962 it was found that the Himalayas were no impassable barrier to one of its neighbours. The threat to India historically was from the North, while from the South there was none. And it does not appear that in recent times any power really wanted to get involved in Sri Lanka to the detriment of Indian interests. In any case, what we require from the West is economic aid

and that does not require that we serve any malign purposes against India or any other country in this region. All that is required is that we follow sensible economic policies. There is no threat to India from the South and that means that we can work out wholesome relations with India, without fearing "Finlandization" and even without a Friendship Treaty.

It does not seem that we are facing insuperable problems in coming to terms with the Tamils and with India. But we seem to be stuck in some sort of stalemate. Retrospectively, and showing wisdom after the event, it can be seen that the failure to involve the LTTE in the negotiations leading to the Peace Accords was a stupendous blunder. The assumption that the Tamils would be grateful to their saviour, India, and that the LTTE could be eliminated or neutralized without difficulty has proved to be mistaken. For one and a half years the LTTE and the IPKF have been locked in deadly combat, with the LTTE being unable to drive out the IPKF and India being either unable or not wanting to eliminate the LTTE. **What is required now is a recognition that India intervened in Sri Lanka to solve the Tamil problem for us, but if it cannot the logic of the situation points ineluctably to the conclusion that we have to come to terms with our Tamils. The responsibility for breaking out of the stalemate rest partly with the Sri Lankan Government. The alternative might be to reconcile ourselves to a continuing IPKF presence in this country for the indefinite future.**

The analysis so far is in terms of two objectives which can be easily identified and which India can openly avow. There can be another objective which has to be concealed. This is that India wants to assert itself as a great power in relation to Sri Lanka.

(To be continued)

Nepal and Indian security doctrine

Prof. Shelton Kodikara

The manner in which both Nepal and Bhutan fit into the security framework of the South Asian subcontinent is still determined largely by the strategic doctrine laid down in respect of these countries by the British raj. Independent India reinstated treaties which the British had with these countries, which had accorded them (and Sikkim as well) varying degrees of a dependent status as buffer states in the sensitive Himalayan region, which divided the Tibet region of China from India. Sikkim's incorporation in the Indian Union in 1975 underlined the new realities of South Asian politics arising from the integration of Tibet into the Peoples' Republic of China, and from China's border dispute and armed confrontation in 1962 with India. The new Chinese presence on the Himalayan border gave both Nepal and Bhutan a greater leeway in foreign affairs than had existed before, contrarywise to what happened in Sikkim, but it was a leeway which was strictly defined by the primacy of India's own conception of her security interests.

Thus, the Indo-Bhutan treaty of August 1949 stipulated that the Government of India would exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan, while on its part Bhutan agreed "to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations". Under article VI, Bhutan could import arms, ammunition, machinery, warlike material and stores, through India, only with the assistance and approval of India. India has now accepted that it is not

mandatory for the Bhutanese king to accept all foreign policy advice proffered by the Government of India; and Bhutan has enlarged its diplomatic representation abroad, becoming a member of the United Nations (under India's sponsorship) in 1971, opening diplomatic missions in Bangladesh (1978) and Nepal (1983), and nonresident diplomatic contracts with several other countries, including Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands, and the EEC. Most importantly, Bhutan became an integral part of the SAARC framework from its inception.

India's treaty relationship with Nepal was less restrictive than that with Bhutan, as benefitted its classic role as the most important Himalayan buffer state, its larger size and the fighting qualities of its Gurkha regiments, which were attached, successively, to the British and Indian armies. Under Article II of the Nepali Treaty of 1950, the two governments were obligated to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any neighbouring State likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations subsisting between the two Governments. This provision was further consolidated by an exchange of letters (which were not made public until 1959), which stipulated that neither Government would "tolerate any threat to the security of the other by a foreign aggressor. To deal with any such threat the two Governments shall consult with each other and devise effective counter-measures". Article V of the Treaty granted Nepal the right to import arms, ammunition or warlike materials and equipment necessary for the security of Nepal through India, though the procedures for giving effect to this arrangement were to be worked out through joint consultations.

Even before the signing of the 1950 Treaty, Prime Minister Nehru had declared in the Lok Sabha: "We cannot tolerate any foreign country in any part of the Indian subcontinent. Any possible invasion of Nepal would inevitably involve the safety of India". Elaborating on this theme, Nehru declared, in December 1950:

From time immemorial, the Himalayas have provided us with a magnificent frontier. Of course, they are no longer as impassable as they used to be, but are still fairly effective. We cannot allow that barrier to be penetrated because it is also the principal barrier to India. Therefore, as much as we appreciate the independence of Nepal, we cannot allow anything to go wrong in Nepal or permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened because that would also be a risk to our security.

The degree of diplomatic manoeuvre available to Nepal was considerably enlarged by the situation in South Asia in the aftermath of the India-China war of 1962, and by China's new interest in the Himalayan region. China built a road connecting Kodari in Tibet with Kathmandu, and signed a border agreement with Nepal, both in the 1960s. But even before China became thus an important variable in Nepalese foreign policy, Nepal had become resentful of the 'special relationship' with India and, as Professor Leo Rose pointed out, demands for the revision of the (1950) treaty were voiced almost immediately after ratification, and the Ranas were accused of concluding an unequal treaty". It was not that Nepal made any formal representations to New Delhi for revising the special provisions of the Treaty, but "public statements have been made from time to time for public consumption".

The Chinese option, however, has not diminished significantly

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The article is excerpted from the author's Framework for Regional Security in South Asia, recently presented at a seminar sponsored by the Colombo University.

Benazir: long way for consolidation

Pramod K. Mishra

As Benazir Bhutto completes a hundred days in office, gradually some inner contradictions of the Pakistan politics are going to pose serious challenges to the stability of the government. One can identify them as follows:

To begin with, the charismatic daughter of an enigmatic former Prime Minister inherited the legacy of a country which in its four decades of turbulent history has remained a pawn in the hands of the military clique in close collaboration with the elitist bureaucracy and business houses. Hardly, the people of the moth-eaten country have breathed freedom even during the so-called democratic interlude of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's regime (1971-77).

Second, willy-nilly Pakistan has become a pliable tool in the hands of one super power in the latter's global strategy and especially in becoming "a front-line state" in the volatile Gulf-region. Ironically enough, in spite of serious challenges at home, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, the controversial military dictator survived one crisis after another for 11 years mainly due to the Afghanistan crisis and the open rivalry of the two super powers at his door-step.

But even after Zia's exit, his fundamentalist legacy continues to haunt the Pakistanis even now. Besides, he has virtually left the country on a silver platter in the hands of his mentors, the United States and the multinationals. It is Washington, which played the tune in the installation of a popular government in the hands of Benazir Bhutto whose Pakistan People's Party (PPP) emerged as the single largest majority, at the November 16 elections to the National Assembly.

After the ten-day drama of hide and seek by President

Ghulam Ishaque Khan, the US Ambassador in Pakistan had to directly intervene in persuading the top army brass to support Benazir in the formation of a government, while at the same time keeping the interests of the armed forces unhindered.

POSITIVE STEPS

After Benazir Bhutto won a vote of confidence in the National Assembly on December 12, she has taken a number of positive steps in accordance with the election promises made by her party. About 2,000 political prisoners, many of whom are PPP activists and a large number of working class men and women have been released. Another 2,000 prisoners who had been condemned to death by the Zia regime, had their sentences commuted. Her second achievement lies in the area of liberalization of the national media.

After nearly three decades of state regulation on the print media, now there is complete freedom of expression and any outside observer is amazed at the quality of news reporting by the prominent English and vernacular dailies in the country. Even the state-controlled radio and TV have been overhauled and a considerable coverage is being given to shades of opinion expressed by different political parties.

To the Pakistan people the recent 90-minute concert (Music-89) given by young Nazia Hassan and her brother Zoheb was indeed a refreshing change although the conservative groups castigated it as "unbridled liberalism." Her third achievement is in lifting of a ban on trade unions. Now student unions, labour forums and other associations of different groups of workers have been reactivated.

PROMISING

On the economic front, although Benazir has made a promising start, several chronic problems still haunt her. Ironically enough, one of her first steps after taking over as Prime Minister was the embarrassing constitutional requirement of approving 1988-89 budget prepared by the top officials appointed by Zia-ul-Haq's government. However, in keeping with PPP's election promises, her government has provided Rs. 200 crores for people's-oriented programmes like health, drinking water, education and communication.

Besides, by launching a campaign against drug pedlars, tax-evaders and corruption and by imposing strict control over government expenditure, the Benazir government has converted a deficit budget of Rs. 270 crore in December 1988 into a surplus of Rs. 260 crore by the first week of February.

Happily enough, after her government took power, Pakistan's exports have increased by eight per cent where as imports increased only marginally (1 per cent). There was, however, a major decline at the front of remittances by non-resident Pakistanis which fell by 18 per cent. The PPP government has in the meantime approached Libya, Iran and Iraq to provide three lakh jobs for the Pakistanis.

CRITICAL

However, at the same time one cannot close one's eyes at some of the vulnerable points in Pakistan's economy. As some economists have clearly conceded, Benazir has inherited one of the worst economic crisis in the country's history. According to unofficial assessment, the nation's foreign exchange reserves have fallen to \$ 300 million, which can only cover two-weeks imports.

Inflation is now running at about 13 per cent. Her government will have to borrow money just to pay the salaries of state employees. The caretaker government of Ishaque Khan had signed a package deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) just before the elections. The deal would bring \$1 billion over three years in return for stringent and unfavourable conditions that could further fuel inflation and public unrest to destabilise the Benazir government.

But Benazir has expressed her helplessness about it and she is in no mood to renegotiate the unfair deal. In her view, the whole system built up by Zia is loaded against PPP and till the next budget in June, her government would just have to make do which makes it next to impossible to start new economic and social programmes for the poor.

But in an atmosphere close to bankruptcy if prices go up further there would possibly be a popular backlash. Another alarming feature is in the area of defence spending, which has gone up by 234.4 per cent during the last six years.

Out of the total budget on public expenditure, defence stands at the top claiming between 37 to 40 per cent of the total. This is followed by expenditure on debt services, subsidies, general administration and social services in that order. Thus defence offers the biggest scope for economy in public expenditure, but as long as the army continues to call the shots, reducing military expenditure may be hazardous for a civilian government.

Besides, she cannot forget the fact that it is Gen. Afzal Beg, the Chief of Pakistan Army, who played a key role in persuading President Ishaque Khan to appoint her as Prime Minister.

MAJOR CHALLENGE

The major challenge to Benazir comes from the main op-

position party, i.e. Islami Jama'at-hi Ittehad (JI) led by Nawas Sharif, the Chief Minister of the most populous province, Punjab. The latter not only staked his claim to the prime ministership after the national elections, but also continues to create all sorts of hurdles for her government.

The fiasco over the premature dismissal of the Baluchistan government of Zafarullah Jamali by Governor Mohammad Musa, it is alleged, was masterminded by the JI to destabilise the Benazir government within the first month in office. But she somehow overcame that crisis and stilled a possible backlash in the neighbouring province of North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) where the PPP has managed to form a government in alliance with the Awami National Party (ANP) led by Abdul Wali Khan.

Yet another jolt to Benazir from JI came during the major by-election on January 28. At stake were thirteen national assembly and seven provincial assembly seats, mostly vacated by candidates who had won more than one seat in November general elections.

The results cemented JI's hold on Punjab by its winning seven national assembly and three provincial assembly seats. In particular, the PPP received a major jolt with the loss of its NA seat vacated by Benazir herself in Lahore. It had only a poor consolation by winning two NA seats in NWFP.

Nevertheless, even after the January byelections, there is no dramatic change in the political scenario. PPP remains the only national party in the real sense, as it is the only one to be represented in all the four provinces. JI has only proved its unassailable position in Punjab.

PROBLEMS

Yet another problem area for the Benazir government comes from the composition of the 87-

member Senate, where the JI has a majority and its Chairman Wasim Sajjad, a Zia supporter can create problems for her. Under the present constitution, the all-powerful President can be succeeded by the Senate Chairman in case of a contingency. The Speaker of the National Assembly comes only next in the order of succession.

While assessing Benazir's performance at home, the India card played by her should not be bypassed. She has displayed remarkable sagacity by showing an olive branch to Rajiv Gandhi soon after her assumption of office.

In keeping with the popular sentiment of the younger generation of Pakistanis who have displayed keenness to understand and interact with their counterparts in India, Benazir went out of the way during the SAARC summit at Islamabad to invite Rajiv for a private dinner.

Although the chronic differences over the Kashmir issue were not discussed, the signing of the three broad agreements during Rajiv Gandhi's visit augurs well for a new momentum of peace in the subcontinent. Both the countries have now agreed not to attack each other's nuclear facilities.

They have also decided to spare each other's airlines from double taxation and cooperate on cultural and educational matters. But Benazir has to play her India card very carefully as her main rival, the JI is likely to capitalise on the anti-India sentiment of the conservative and vested interests duly backed by the military-bureaucratic complex.

It is in their interest to perpetuate a continuing hostility with New Delhi.

Only a step-by-step approach by Benazir in the normalisation process may help her consolidating her power base and at the same time educate the new generation of Pakistanis in a more meaningful way.

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Let's face the facts

Dr. Mervyn D. de Silva M. P.

I have been baffled as to why a government that idolises the Singaporean model of development did not adopt the strict planning methodologies followed by that country. Perhaps, it does not know that central planning, which is an anathema to the UNP, is practised in Singapore. The Ministry of Policy Planning may do well to read the article by Professor Ian Mac Donald entitled "How Singapore makes Central Planning Works", which appears in the journal — *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1986.

Honourable Chairman, before I present my main observations on the Janasaviya program, I owe a word of explanation in regard to the origin of the word Janasaviya and the movement itself.

The Janasaviya is not a new concept created by this government just as much as poverty alleviation was not originally conceived by Dr. Rasaputra and his team of officials. It is a World Bank strategy and the World Bank has been in the poverty business for quite some-time.

It was as far back as 1982 that a people's movement called Janasaviya took root in the Chilaw and Galle districts. A dedicated band of grass root level workers led by two succeeding Directors of the Socio Economic Development Centre in Colombo namely Fra. Vincent Dep and Peter Charles Fernando were the originators of the Janasaviya concept of Integral Human Development. In fact, the Socio Economic Development Centre made the Janasaviya movement the main plank of its activities. I shall now quote page 15 of the annual report of the centre for the year, 1987 —

"During the year under review, SEDEC made greater effort to promote grass root level people organisations called Janasaviya under our development education program. The central objective was to give the people a model organisation to promote their own welfare.

The Janasaviyas are small groups of families of 20-25 within a given area of a village organised on the basis of self-help and mutual help. Its primary objective is to organise people to pool their individual resources and talents for their own development according to their own needs and the needs of the village, for the participants, of the participants and run by the participants."

Today many organisations do concentrate on organising the people at village level not excluding the public authorities make difference between the Janasaviya approach and others lies in the factories, former are not rubber stamp organisations to implement or endorse other people's opinions, to fight for that cause or this cause, but are organisations of the beneficiaries to promote social and economic services to themselves as a collective effort — one of the basic dimensions of development — the man to man relationship, first in the individual; the second collectivity.

As for the term Janasaviya, it was coined by a trained teacher from Mahawewa by the name of W. Basil Fernando who had received many cultural awards.

Janasaviya as few may know is an acronym for a beautiful concept. I shall now quote from a booklet on the movement put out by the pioneers.

Ja stands for Janatha meaning people; Na stands for namiya—the meaning adaptable, flexible; SA stands for sampath meaning resources; VI stands for Visarjunaya meaning sharing and spreading; and ya stands for movement or process.

The authentic Janasaviya then, must mean not a mere doling out of money but a movement comprising of people, who are adaptable and flexible and are capable of sharing their resources and skills for meaningful human development; and then join in the on-going struggle for justice and liberation from all forms of oppressive structures.

Since, this is the intellectual property of Mr. Fernando, I think he should be given credit, both for his contribution towards the movement and for neologising a word which has become a household word in this country today.

I do not think anyone will grudge the use of the concept or the name, particularly when it is for the good of the people, especially the poor people; but there is the fear that the core values in this concept may suffer distortion.

Honorable Mr. Chairman, poverty, powerlessness, and oppression among people had been the centre-piece of SLFP policies since 1956, and I am grateful that this Ministry will concern itself with the poor, after having left them in the limbo of forgotten things for 11 long years. During this period the monthly money income of Rs. 300/- of food stamp recipients lost its purchasing power by 61.3%.

However, in my view the Ministry has taken a very simp-

listic view of the problem of poverty. If poverty was so simple to tackle, surely, many countries would have banished it from their societies long years ago.

But, poverty is a very complex problem with a multiplicity of causes and a multiplicity of interlacking strands. But worse, it is embedded in our political, economic, social and even religious structures that are hard to penetrate.

Because poverty has a multiplicity of causes, we have to identify all these causes and find appropriate solutions for all of them. This would mean that there must be a multiplicity specific — diverse solutions.

This fact was recognised by Madam Bandaranaike as back as 1971 when she stated in her foreword to the 5-year plan I quote.

“The government realises and the people too must realise that we cannot expect today’s crisis to be overcome by policies of self deception. We cannot afford to consume today all that we produce without making provision for the future. That was a policy of the past and that policy clearly failed. We cannot merely continue to alleviate poverty without taking steps to attack its causes”.

Nineteen years ago we tried scientifically to alleviate poverty by going into their causes. The UNP scoffed at us, and today, 18 years later they are trying implement some of those policies without making the required structural changes.

While I am glad the government has woken up to the agonies of the poor, I am constrained to think that like the old trickle down theory, Integrated rural development, and the bottom up approach, poverty alleviation too will end up as a fad that will resound in national and international fora, while the system and structures that inherently promotes poverty, continue.

Let us be honest and see the reality why people are poor, and then answer the question — Is poverty the real problem? I would like to answer that question with a positive no. No, poverty is not the real problem.

The real problem, is that mankind is divided into rich and poor within nations and between nations. The reality and depth of this problem arises from the fact that the man who is rich has power over the man who is poor, and similarly the nation that is rich has power over the policies of those that are not rich. But, more importantly, our economic, social, and political systems nationally and internationally support these divisions and constantly increase them.

We have to face this reality, accept it, and innovate policy decisions to tackle it. This then is where the problem lies. And, this is where any serious poverty program must surely begin.

Mr. Chairman, if the Janasaviya is to have even a semblance of success, the Ministry of Policy Planning would have to come up with immediate policies to bring in appropriate structural and institution changes and adjustment nationally, by which the levers of economic, political and administrative power are within the reach of the poor themselves. It is only by providing the poor accessibility to the corridors of power in that manner, that the Janasaviya can become a reality and a true antidote for all subversion in our country.

In the name of the poor in this country I demand that the Ministry brings in this fundamental structural and institutional changes, and then, make the Janasaviya a success.

The point I am making is clearly brought out in a resolution of the 4th UNTAD Conference held in Nairobi in 1986, which I shall quote.

“The struggles of the poor and oppressed is not merely food and other necessities, but also freedom, creativity, and participation in the decision making that effects their lives. Because poverty has its roots in unjust systems and structures, the poor are obliged to subsidise the rich — the development process inevitably involves efforts aimed at systemic changes at local and international level.”

Finally sir, for more than a decade the policies of the preceding UNP government, kept this country under the spell of a crude form of bandit capitalism that entrenched these systems, and now, in the face of resultant disillusionment, discontent, and national disintegration.

Disillusionment not merely with the economic, social, and political system but also the democratic and electoral processes that have been tampered with, corrupted and brutalised, the Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation is attempting to alleviate poverty, without the required policies to bring about structural changes and adjustments, with the right policies.

[This is an extract from the budget speech of Dr. Mervyn D. de Silva SLFP MP and former senior researcher in the Ministry of Planning.]

The National. . .

[Continued from page 18]

which even the most moderate Tamils see, rightly or wrongly, as the legitimate rights of their people, is more than the maximum, that the bourgeois and petite bourgeoisie political formations of the Sinhalese are willing to concede. The questions of merger and colonization are cases in point. Even the TULF, the most moderate, liberal party of the Tamils, says that the powers contained in the PC legislation are not commensurate with the loss of life of the Tamil people.

IMF admits its programmes hurt Third World poor

Juan V Sarmiento Jr

MANILA

A study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose policies have long been criticised here for making life difficult for Filipinos, admits that Fund-supported programmes in the Philippines have indeed adversely affected the majority of the poor.

"The implications of Fund-Supported Adjustment Programmes for Poverty", an IMF study of May 1988, examined the impact on poverty group of policy measures adopted under Fund-supported adjustment programmes in the Philippines as well as in six other countries (Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Thailand).

IMF, composed of 151 member countries among which the United States has the biggest share of votes, provides medium-term (one to three years) credits to countries to bridge foreign exchange shortfalls caused by balance of payments deficits. But in order to borrow more than its quota, a member government has to follow IMF "stabilisation programmes" which involve currency devaluation, cuts in government spending, wage controls, higher interest rates and removal of barriers to foreign investments and external trade.

(From 1963 to 1985, the IMF had overseen 17 standby agreements and one extended fund facility in the Philippines)

The IMF study says that devaluation was one adjustment policy in the Philippines that proved costly to the poor. It found that in countries like the Philippines, Chile and the Dominican Republic, which have large urban poverty groups, devaluation imposed immediate costs on the urban poor who are engaged in the production of non-tradables and goods using imported inputs.

The study adds that devaluation was ineffective in improving the plight of the rural poor in the three countries, where land ownership is concentrated and labour was mobile between urban and rural sectors.

"Whereas many of the rural poor are engaged in the production of tradable crops and took advantage of increased rural employment the immediate benefits to these groups from the depreciation was rather limited" said the study, because they had to pay higher prices for the food they bought in the market.

The study also notes that the poor were also hurt by the delay in adjusting the exchange rate in the Philippines during the period preceding the financial crisis in 1983. The delay, says the study, allowed the better-off to move their assets abroad to escape future depreciation and taxation on capital incomes that may be imposed as a result of the growing foreign debt.

Such options, says the study, were not available to the poor since their only assets are their labour. They therefore bore the burden of the adverse external shocks and the debt service obligations that go with net-external borrowings.

Sharp cuts in capital expenditures may have also hurt the poor in both the short and the long run, says the study. The short-run effect of such cutbacks, says the study, was to reduce real wages and employment opportunities for the poor.

(The IMF says that despite attempts to cushion the erosion of real incomes in the Philippines by raising wages and salaries, real wages nonetheless declined by 20 per cent in 1984 and by 5 per cent in 1985).

On the other hand, cuts in capital expenditure also affected services provided to the poor by the social and economic infrastructure in the long run. For instance, the study says, cuts in expenditures in rural infrastructure may have prevented poor farmers from responding to improved price incentives.

According to the study, cuts in health and education expenditures also adversely affected the poor in the Philippines as well as in Sri Lanka in both the short and long run.

Money and credit policies in the Philippines also had negative effects, says the study. Tighter credit during the IMF programme with the Philippines in 1984-85 contributed, in the short run, to lower real output and higher unemployment which it said hurt the urban poor.

However, the study says that high interest rates may have encouraged large firms to adopt labour intensive production in the long run. This, the study notes, could have increased the demand for labour, to the benefit of some poverty groups.

As for wage restraints, the study says that these led to difficult tradeoffs in the Philippines, Ghana and Sri Lanka. The study says that although wage restraints may have benefited some of the poor in terms of employment preservation, others may have suffered from ineffective public services, low productivity, and high taxes that resulted from a large public sector bureaucracy.

On the reduction of price subsidies, the study says that "untargeted open-ended price subsidies are relatively ineffective instruments for reaching the most needy", because these

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Tourism — Boon or Bane ?

Frederick Noronha

In Goa, it's generally the more sensational aspects of the anti-tourism protests which draw attention. Like, for instance, the dumping of cowdung into the buses of charter tourists, and nudism. But the relevance of questions like the one above is not lost here.

The position of the Government and industry is clear. "Tourism today is the world's largest and fastest-growing enterprise," Goa Tourism Minister Dr. Luis Proto Barbosa says, and points to the country's need to increase its share in world tourism earnings.

Tourism is also credited with boosting foreign exchange earnings, domestic incomes and employment. It has been described as a vital force for world peace and international co-operation by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO).

Diverse views and criticisms have been expressed on tourism and its impact on the developing countries.

"Tourism is a modern form of colonisation," says Mr. Sergio Carvalho, the professor of education, who leads Goa's anti-tourism Jugrut Goenkaranchi Fauz (JGF, or 'Vigilant Goans Army'). "And, just as in the case of colonialism, they tell you that they are doing it for your own development."

Somewhat ironically, much of the questioning about the actual economics of tourism originates from the First World itself, from where the vast majority of international tourists come, and have been raised by church-based and other groups.

What is the real contribution of tourism in terms of foreign exchange earnings to a Third World country?

Foreign exchange netgo on imports of the tourism industry

are put at around 25 per cent of capital expenditures and operating costs in the hotel sector. In countries where the productive base is limited and in the case of foreign-owned and managed hotels, this figure is much higher. Besides, there are also expensive promotional campaigns, duty-free imported merchandise, tax exemptions and low-interest loans.

Argues Mr. Carvalho: "The same is beginning in Goa. We now have a West German airline bringing in German charter tourists, who pay in Deutsche marks, through their own travel agency. They have German guides too. A luxury hotel is getting ready for them to stay at, which is coming-up under foreign collaboration."

Tourism as an employment booster is criticised as another "bait" to the Third World host country. Against each country labour force, the proportion of people absorbed by the tourism industry is small, and, the critics see the jobs provided as mainly part-time, seasonal, lowly-paid ones, which offer little or no job security.

The impact of tourism is also questioned on other grounds; shifting local consumption patterns to import-oriented directions; resulting in an infrastructure which bypasses the village economy in favour of tourist spots; and, not helping to make a country self-reliant.

Besides, it is seen as responsible for increasing the stranglehold of multi-nationals, diverting resources from needier sectors of the economy to tourism, displacing people from their traditional fields, harming the ecology due to its heavy demands, and leading to inflation in the host country. This lengthy list, of course, excludes the social and cultural problems which tourism is blamed for. "...

tourism wrecks more havoc than it brings benefits", says a statement on Third World tourism made by the Christian Conference of Asia in Singapore at the start of this decade.

Others, like development education groups and Third World organisations, have joined in asking disquieting questions about tourism.

In Goa, the way the issues have been perceived has shifted over time and among various sections. From raising aspects like the heavy demand on resources placed by luxury hotels earlier, the JGF has more recently shifted to campaigns on nudism and drugs. But the group says the issue of luxury tourism remains very much on its agenda.

Strongly critical of tourism in the State recently, the Catholic Church here lays strong emphasis on the moral "implications" of tourism. But the Church has also posed questions about jobs created vis-a-vis the amount invested, subsidies poured in by the Government, and the "vulnerability" of a tourism-based economy to changes in consumer preferences or social turmoil (as in Sri Lanka and Darjeeling).

Goa-based journalist Claude Alvares of the Third World Network likens Third World tourism to a poor man who sells his kidney in desperation for the money. Scenic beauty is 'sold' and nature's gifts are destroyed to earn something. The concern of the Goa Foundation, of which he is the secretary, mainly centres around the damage done by tourism to the coastal ecology.

Tourism Minister Dr. Barbosa, in the recent past, has expressed his irritation at Goa being compared with destinations which have earned a notoriety on ac-

(Continued on page 31)

Paradise or Hell?

Mr. Reggie Ranatunge (SLFP): This country was known as the Paradise in the Indian Ocean but today it is known as a Hell in the Indian Ocean. Please reduce hotel rates reasonably. Then we can attract more tourists.

There are three grades of tourists. One comes without money, but with drugs and social disease. Hikkaduwa beach is full of half-nude tourists. Action must be taken to prevent social pollution.

Several diploma level courses in the hotel school have been abolished. Please re-introduce them.

Mr. Dharmasiri Senanayaka (SLFP): We will be able to see the capabilities of the minister and his state minister in tourism in the near future. I know that both are good tourists. We have 12,000 rooms to accomodate tourists but one third of this space is occupied. I understand that some MPs have been given accomodation. This is not revenue but only government expenditure.

In 1966 Mr. J. R. Jayewardene drew up a ten year plan to develop tourism. Tourism is the third biggest industry in the world today. Please afford BTT exemption to small travel agencies and conduct a survey on big travel agencies which hoard our money abroad.

Athauda Seneviratne (USA — Kegalle) Tourism destroys the culture of the country. It brings in social evils. Therefore those in charge of this industry should bear this in mind. What is important is not money alone. We have rich cultural and ethical values and do not allow those to be frittered away by rich Americans. The media plays a great role in this.

M. H. M. Ashraff (Muslim Congress leader) Tourism also

brings its quota of social ills. Prices are fixed for the sale of infants. Our youngsters are getting hooked on the lure of drugs.

Our children are the basic assets of our country. Even if the Treasury coffers be filled to the bursting point with the profits of tourism it is useless if we sacrifice our youth.

Sri Lanka ranks second in male prostitution second only to Philippines in Asia.

Heenmahathmaya Liyanage (SLFP — Ratnapura): One reason for decline in the tourist industry was the ethnic problem. But those involved in the industry have devised dubious ways of living off their own pockets. Much of what could be earned is lost because of such practices.

We should also try to draw tourists from the Asian countries.

The employees in the hotel trade are being paid paltry wages on the pretext that the industry is in the doldrums. This must be looked into. The workers at the zoo are in very dire straits.

The building for the Prime Minister, constructed at the Gam Udawa at Embilipitiya at a cost of Rs. 90 lakhs is now kept closed by the Buildings Department. Take some action to convert this into a hotel and earn some revenue from it.

Mr. Gitanjana Gunawardena (MEP): Last year the Tourist Board Chairman antagonised hoteliers and tour operators by asking tourists to leave the country.

Even Lebanon has not asked tourists to leave despite the situation there. This statement led to the decline of the industry.

Mr. A. M. S. Adhikari, Minister of Tourism: I agree with you that the former Tourist Board chairman's statement caused grave damage to the country. But that was not during my time. I understand the former chairman took that decision on his own without ministry advice.

There must be a master plan for tourism. We must encourage tourists from East Europe if we are to expand the tourist industry.

The Lihiniya Surf Hotel at Bentota is almost bankrupt. This is the result of privatisation.

I must thank all members who participated in this debate and the President for appointing me to this ministry which is a very responsible one.

We will concentrate on developing the industry which is a rich source of foreign exchange.

We have to see that the industry progresses without damaging our culture. It is one of the most difficult things but we will do it.

I will be meeting ambassadors and foreign journalists shortly. A wrong impression has been created in the minds of foreigners. I am told that some of our missions abroad have warned tourists against visiting Sri Lanka. Small incidents outside Colombo have been shown as major incidents.

Referring to the Koggala Resort **Gaminl Lokuge** interrupting at this stage said a land has been allocated and an air strip will be prepared.

Mr. Adhikari: A master plan for the development of this industry is being formulated and we are expecting to seek foreign aid for some projects.

We intend giving a lot of publicity in Buddhist countries

so that visitors could come here to see our ancient Buddhist places of worship.

Tourism is no stranger to lots of countries. I agree that industries devastated by civil war have been built up again in many countries.

A masterplan has been prepared for the development of tourism and this has been submitted to the UNDP. We are hopeful of receiving aid for this.

Sri Lanka is still one of the countries that is guarding its democracy. We cannot allow a handful of trouble-makers to destroy this land.

I plan to give prominence to the Buddhist places of worship in Sri Lanka so that religions could be given encouragement.

There are many difficulties in the functioning of the zoo.

I visited the place. We have taken steps to help the workers.

Opposing members mentioned the spread of homosexuality. It is very difficult to prevent this.

Tourism goes on alongside with homosexuality? I appreciate the arguments of the members.

Mr. Gurni Lakuge (State minister for Tourism): From the time my minister and I took over duties, we have been studying the tourist set up of the country. There are two sections in this industry viz the local travel trade and the foreign component.

The former must be developed for the benefit of local holiday-makers. We shall implement a plan of work for this. We shall also develop the Hotel School.

When tourism was gradually improving here we had the ethnic disturbance and a wrong impression was created in the minds of the international community.

This is one industry where there is no politics.

Tourism no boon...

(Continued from page 29)

count of tourism. Why asks he, should one look at the world's fastest growing enterprise negatively?

Retorts Mr. Carvalho: "We will not be any different from the other Third World destinations destroyed by tourism". He points to Hawaii, Tahiti, Bangkok, Manila, and Sri Lanka.

As for tourism's undeniably phenomenal growth, he argues that cancer grows too. "Everything that grows is not necessarily good. It is a foisted growth and we have to see who is foisting it, for whose benefit, at what cost and at whose cost?"

In particular, Mr. Carvalho draws a parallel between the US state of Hawaii and Goa — the manner in which it was stereotyped and promoted and the effects of tourism there.

Prof. Haunani-Kay Trask of the University of Hawaii's Centre for Hawaiian Studies writes: "Goa must not be allowed to become like Hawaii, nor Tahiti or Vanuatu, or any other lovely, fragile place in the world. No place should become like us. It is, plainly, horrible."

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BOOK
REVIEW

Sarachchandra is turning towards the novel with increasing frequency, and with excellent results. *'With a Begging Bowl'* written in English was a most interesting work, and so was the novel dealing with an aspect of the seventies insurrection written originally in Sinhala, and subsequently translated by the author himself into English. While writing and producing his early plays, also he strayed into Sinhala fiction and demonstrated his unusual capabilities as a novelist.

The present work, or rather its precise 'genre' is an intriguing question. The author calls it a 'Kavya' or a poem. But it is very largely written in what the normal reader would recognise as prose. In fact it reads like a long story or a novel. In addition to the term 'Kavya' he uses the term 'Champu'. According to Mahinda Paliawadane, Professor of Sanskrit at Jayawardenapura, a 'Champu Kavya' is a work that is a mixture of prose and verse, and he insisted at the launching of this book, that Sarachchandra was entitled to call it a 'Champu Kavya'. I have my doubts, even though I have no knowledge of this kind of writing in Sanskrit literature. True Sarachchandra has a few verses here and there, and which do not add all that much to the progress of the story, or contribute in any essential way to its quality. Would that necessarily make this a 'kavya' or a poem? In that sense, to take some extreme cases, James Joyce's 'Ulysses' and 'Finnigans Wake' or Virginia Woolf's 'Waves' would be poems.

Leaving definitions aside for a moment, let us look at the

basics. It is a story about a courtesan falling in love with a high way robber and murderer, and how they unsuccessfully try to lead the life of a wedded couple, and how the man leaves the woman unconscious in the act of making love, robs her jewellery, and disappears assuming the woman is dead. It is based on a not too well known Jataka tale 'Kanavera Jatakay' Sarachchandra, as in his plays based on Jataka tales, has given his own rendering giving rise to a new interpretation of the substance of the story. He has given greater sociological and psychological depth to original story, and makes it worthwhile for a contemporary reader to spend a couple of hours reading it. The character of the woman is portrayed with great sympathy, giving the details of her background which led her to take up the profession of a courtesan (not an ordinary prostitute). In ancient India and in Sri Lanka as well a 'Nagarsobhini' used to be a woman not only with a select clientele, but also one who had been introduced to dancing, singing (the performing arts) and the art of civilised discourse. Sama in the story is one such woman who lived in a mansion surrounded by, servants, and who counted among friends and acquaintances people of the highest rank and position. This status of her's enables her to save a high way robber and murderer from being beheaded for his crimes, and subsequently live with him.

Sarachchandra makes even the criminal look very human, and his deviant behaviour is traced to his unfortunate childhood experiences. I feel that the author, in this story, is looking for sociological justifications for

criminal behaviour. This is a moot point, and as a novelist he is exposing himself too much to a deterministic view of life. The story by itself is sufficiently movingly told that Sarachchandra had no necessity to make interpretations of certain actions too explicit.

The form the story has taken is interesting. He has expanded and rewritten the Jataka almost wholly in the style of the authors of the Jathaka. The Sinhala is for the most part archaic in vocabulary and construction. It does not sound like a contemporary work. Yet I suppose the language helps to keep the reader reminded of its Jathaka ancestry.

Sarachchandra has been experimenting with a mixed language (contemporary and archaic) even in his more successful Jathaka based drama, and in them has tried to fuse a modern sensibility with experiences of people who lived a couple of millenia ago. The relevance of the past is his constant preoccupation. Being a student of Classical Sinhala, Pali and Sanskrit, Sarachchandra has enormous linguistic resources at his command, and there is no contemporary writer in this country who could claim to be so widely read in those different languages, and also in English. He is a classist in taste, and that makes him distinctive among the writers of this country in the recent past. He is very much in the tradition of the author of 'Kausilimuna', appealing to a readership that is acquainted with or even having a smattering of Sanskrit. In this sense he also resembles Eliot and Pound in English who also require from their readers some knowledge

(Continued on page 34)

THE SINHALA PRESS

Guondasa Amarasekera's latest comments on the youth uprising, contained in a signed article in the Sunday edition of the *'Divaina'* of 16 April, and in the form of excerpts of an interview in the *'Lankadipa'* of the same day—were easily the most noteworthy contribution to the ongoing debates and discussion on this subject featured prominently in the Weekly Sinhala press over the past few weeks. While it is basically a restatement of positions he has taken up consistently in his recent writings in general, and more specifically in the collection of his essays *"Ganadara Mediyama Dakshin Arunala"*, published in 1988 Amarasekera's express intention is to stress the need for a correct understanding of the nature and purpose of the struggle in which the youth are engaged, and avoiding any unfair condemnation on account of the faulty strategies adopted and the resultant distress and disillusionment.

Placing the current events in historical perspective he says:

"Stated very briefly, I see three phases in our national liberation struggle. The earliest phase was the struggle, launched by Anagarika Dharmapala. The second was the struggle directed by Bandaranaike in 1956. The third phase is the struggle in which our rural youth are engaged now. That is why I say categorically that it is a just and historical struggle. If our politicians think that they can stop this by giving these youth a meagre handout, or the crumbs that fall off the open economy, or by making them MPs via a national list, they are only deceiving themselves. It is through such deceptions that we tried to govern this country during the last 10 years or even 20 years. It is precisely because

of such self-deceptions that the previous government tried to make them objects of ridicule by giving these youth buggy pants, to mislead them by showing them "Knight-rider" and 'Dynasty', by providing opportunities to take to drugs and gambling, and by trying to get them lost and stranded inside 'Yovun-pura'. They should understand even now that this struggle cannot be stopped by such acts of deception".

Asserting that the popular perception that the present uprising is attributable to rural poverty is only a half-truth, Amarasekera goes on to explain the nature and purpose of the youth revolt as he sees it. He says:

"Today's rural youth are a group of persons who feel deeply about their heritage, who know their rights, and are highly politically conscious. Their political philosophy may be faulty. It may have shortcomings. They may not be intellectuals. But they are a group of persons who have been awakened with a feeling for their heritage and rights, and are imbued with a complete political awareness. It is an insult to them to say that they have risen up because of the pangs of hunger in their bellies. They have risen up with a firm resolve to usher in a new world. We must realise this even now. If we did not realise this in 1971 we should realise this even now".

TERRORIST TRAP

As for the methods adopted by the youth Amarasekera concedes that they are indeed faulty, and as a result they have distanced themselves from the majority of people and lost popular support and co-operation. He goes on to state:

"I categorically reject the path of violence chosen by these youth. It is not merely unnecessary, it is really a trap set up against them. Getting caught in the terrorist trap could very well mean that we end up in a situation where they get destroyed and the country also gets destroyed. Although it is the ruling party that pushed them towards terrorism, they should have realised that it was a trap. Terrorism is not necessary for the struggle they are carrying on. All that is necessary is a clear vision, thinking, and the people's blessings".

In support of the contention that it is possible to bring about a major social and economic transformation through non-violent means, he says:

We should not forget that capitalists in Sri Lanka are persons who have been born and bred within the Buddhist cultural environment. Did they not descend from the stage calmly when thousands of acres of their land were nationalised during 1970-77? That is the most important lesson we have to draw from the 70-77 era. It is my conviction that any basic and drastic socio-transformation can be brought about in this country without any violence and bloodshed. Even revolutionaries have now conceded that it is not possible to transcend this more praiseworthy path. Leaders like Gorbachev have today to atone for the sins of doing things without the approval and blessings of the masses".

To look for solutions to the national crisis it is necessary to understand the nature and purpose of the uprising. It is a grave error to think that it is possible to prevent the struggle by condemning the erroneous

course and methods adopted by these youth who are certainly not fools. While it is Amarasékara's belief that they have the capacity to correct their strategies in the light of experience, he concludes that what is required is to provide them with the guidance, advice, and wisdom necessary for the success of the struggle, the objectives of which are indeed laudable.

WHY VIOLENCE?

In a companion piece entitled "Why have youth who refrained from harming even a worm on a Poya Day taken up guns today?" the Ven. Madulawawe Sri Sobhita Thero also makes a plea for understanding all causal factors and circumstances underlying the problem of prevailing youth unrest. His position, however, is that the youth of this country have been compelled to take up arms in sheer desperation as they had lost all hope of being heard or having their just grievances redressed or legitimate aspirations fulfilled through recourse to democratic procedures and processes. He sees the present crisis on the cumulative outcome of the persistent onslaughts on democracy, and the acts of heavy-handed suppression and repression which shut out all opportunities for legitimate protest and dissent.

The denial of basic freedoms and human rights, the brutalities committed by the security services, and finally the blatant malpractices which led to a loss of faith in the election process itself, made it impossible for the people to look to the future with any hope. The Ven. Thero is inclined to view student unrest as well as the unrest among youth on both sides of the communal divide, as manifestations of the same sense of hopelessness brought about by the repeated failure of all attempts to obtain redress through democratic means, and the use of brutal

force to suppress those sought to fight for their rights.

Commenting further he refers to the disappearances of youth, the killings and burnings, that go on unabated, and the present attack on a group of monks who were assembled peacefully outside the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. "What did they mean to convey by this? Was that not a way of saying 'give up your democratic ways'?" he asks. Is there any meaning in saying 'give up your arms' under such circumstances?

The Ven. Sri Sobhita concludes, however, by stressing the gravity of the situation, and the imperative need for those in government and others to discuss the question openly and frankly and bring about a solution. What is needed first is to restore their credibility among the youth and seek ways and means of solving the crisis accordingly.

Besides the presentation of comments and analyses by well-known personalities like the Gunadasa Amarasekara and Ven. Sobhita quoted above, the Sinhala press has also given pride of place to the writings of many lesser known correspondents most of whom evidently are concerned citizens from areas severally affected by the violence and counter-violence, and young persons who are sympathetic to the cause of the rebels. This correspondence has taken the form of first-hand accounts of the severe hardships and distress caused to the people as a result of the violence and the disruption of normal life in the affected areas, and impassioned appeals to the youth to desist from terrorist activities on the one hand, and equally vivid accounts of the atrocities committed by the state and the shadowy death-squads, and equally fervent appeals for a realistic and honest appraisal of the incidence of terrorism and the real factors that have led to the escalation of violence.

IMF admits...

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often benefit middle-income groups and tend to degenerate into price controls which may negatively affect poor producers. However, the study says that reduced subsidies on goods consumed by the poor may seriously hurt poverty groups.

In the Philippines, an extensive liberalisation of commodity prices coupled with trade and marketing liberalisation policies benefited the poor

(T. W. N. Features)

BOOK REVIEW...

(Continued from page 32)

of Latin and Greek apart from French, Italian and Spanish.

With his academic background, Sarachchandra cannot help using the unusual knowledge he has of Sanskrit and Pali, and the average Sinhala reader has to make some effort to understand him in all his complexity.

At a time when both eastern and western classical languages have no place in school curricula, it is difficult to expect this kind of work to be read and enjoyed by more than a handful. Education, in a sense is becoming more and more restrictive leaving the vast majority of those becoming literate, only just literate. Reading itself has suffered a great deal in recent years and writers find they are addressing their work to a diminishing group of readers, and who are becoming less and less equipped to understand the reality of their situation.

If this book makes an appeal to the general reader it may be due to the simplicity of the main story, and the touch of violence and sex in it. Sarachchandra would however be very disappointed if those elements were to gain in importance at the expense of the more profound realities it tries to explore.

Vasantha's 'Reflections' a path-breaking effort

H. A. Seneviratne

CINEMA

Vasantha Obeyesekere's latest feature film "Kedapathaka Chaya" ('Reflections in a Mirror') raises certain questions connected with the future of the crisis-ridden Sinhala cinema. One of the questions the film raises in this context is in my opinion something which is obliquely but of course inherently linked to the local film in general. I refer to the problem of local film criticism, of the whole aesthetic basis of local film criticism to be sure. The film "Reflections in a Mirror" bolts the door to incompetent, superficial and traditional formula criticism by opening up new vistas in the Sinhala film by its attempt to artistically grapple with a segment of contemporary Sri Lankan life through the film language.

How far the film succeeds in this attempt is another matter. But the attempt itself is important and epoch-making.

"Reflections in a Mirror" seeks to combine the visual montage with the montage of speech and sound on the basis of a contrapuntal dialectic. It leaves out any special kind of background music as such and makes use of recurring sound cropping up in the film itself such as the sound of drums used in funeral ceremonies and devil dancing among other drum sounds. This characteristic in the film points to the feasibility of developing a new kind of film music which would not be devoid of music always.

The film uses inter-cutting to enhance the spectator's aesthetic sense. It cut outs emotion that is outwardly expressed by the players of the various roles in the film in order to establish a deeper emotion and not

sentimentality. The film therefore is innovative as far as the Sinhala cinema is concerned.

Nevertheless, innovation in itself cannot be the hallmark of artistic achievement in a work of art if it does not offer any kind of new artistic experience, a new reality so to say. In other words a film or a play or a literary work or even a painting for that matter becomes a work of art not by virtue of its form and technique but by its going beyond the real truth, that is the recording of mere facts, and reaching out to what would be called the artistic truth emerging from the artist's standpoint.

I fail to understand us to how the raping of his sister-in-law Nanda by Dhanaratne and the killing of Dhanaratne by Nanda could come anywhere near the real truth because both incidents happen so suddenly without a basis for any "willing suspension of disbelief". It is because Dhanaratne is a secret hypocrite whose sexual repression is couched in petty-bourgeois morality that he rapes Nanda? Or is it that Nanda herself has some sort of liking for the man and drives him to rape her?

Similar is the sequence where Nanda kills Dhanaratne by throwing acid on his face. How could it be that Nanda inflicts self-torture by brutally killing the man she exploits at every turn to run her petty nuclear family after she marries Piyatilake with the blessing of Dhanaratne? How could it be that Dhanaratne's assault on Piyatilake drove her to this gruesome act when the latter appears to be a worse kind of man than the eyes of Nanda herself?

These are problems that arise from the lack of a standpoint on the part of the artist, in this case the director of the film. Unlike the question the film raises because of its innovative form these questions which relate to its content is absolutely harmful to the artistic truth of the film. Even the real truth on which should be based the artistic truth is not properly brought out in the film.

In this context it is worthwhile to refer in passing to the American film "Platoon" directed by Oliver Stone which was shown in Colombo recently. The real truth in the film "Platoon" is based on the Vietnam war made more horrifying and dirty by the American invasion.

But it is not mere killing that is involved in this film because there is director's view point which is revealed through his hero Cris. Through the eyes of Cris we see the artistic truth of the film which is dehumanisation of human beings in war and of course its deglamourisation in the process.

Having in mind the artistic process involved in "Platoon" if we revert to "Images in a Mirror" what do we get? The artist's eye in the panorama of events is submerged and melted in the film's eyes shifting time and again in confusion from character to character to finally stick to its main character Nanda. The artist tends to become some sort of an omniscient being — a god — in the type of technique adopted in the film. The "mirror" is even held up before the man already dead when the film starts so that certain reminiscences appear to be shown through his eyes.

This sort of thing happens without any artistic truth being revealed. The result is the dehumanisation of the content by film in my opinion with a kind of horror especially in the rape scene and the acid throwing scene whilst tending to be godlike in its form.

The dialectic of a work of art is such that if the form rises above the content the form itself does not remain artistically intact because it has no independent existence without the content. Let us take "Platoon" again example. How simple and straight forward is its form and how vividly therefore does it bring out the cruelty of a degraded human situation created by human beings themselves!

No exaggeration; no overdoing; just the bare essentials — sometimes a bit of detail. But the details are just glimpses as in the case of the smashing of a victim's face with a rifle butt which is particularly 'ugly' moment. But it is necessary from the point of view of the spectator because therein lies the depiction of the artistic truth in the film — the ugliness or the particular dehumanised situation which is war. "Platoon" reminds us of what Dmitri says in Dostevyevsky's "Brothers Karamazov": Beauty is a fearful and awesome thing".

"Bet", let me add in concluding this review of the film "Reflections in a Mirror", "but fear and awe is not beauty in itself without being a reflection in the mirror of artistic truth".

The creativity and about all openness of mind of the artist to achieve an artistic truth as a sine-qua non for the upliftment of the Sinhala cinema is then the other question that Vasantha Obeysekere's latest film raises.

To have raised this question is in itself an achievement although the film has failed to give an answer to it.

Nepal and. . .

(Continued from page 21)

the greater influence which India has wielded in Nepal affairs in numerous ways. The Indo-Nepali border remains open; Indian currency is still legal tender in Nepal; Chinese influence and road-building has been confined to the northern parts of Nepal; India remains Nepal's main trading partner, and Nepal's trade outlets remain located mainly through India. Most importantly, even though Nepal might try to balance China against India in the diplomatic game, Nepal cannot but toe the Indian line on all security-related matters affecting the sub-continent strategy of the Nepali monarchy is geared to obtaining the support of India, as well as that of the international community, to recognition of Nepal as a Peace Zone. In one sense, the Peace Zone concept, first adumbrated by King Birendra during the time of the Sikkim "merger" was clearly related to Nepali perceptions of threats to its own security. In another sense, it was related to the increasingly felt need in Nepal to have the 1950 treaty revised, even though no formal requests to this effect might have been made to India.

Interestingly enough, Nepal has secured the endorsement of about eighty foreign countries for its Peace Zone concept, including those of the U.S., U.K., France and China, but conspicuous among those not endorsing it are India and Bhutan. India, for reasons not made explicit, has displayed no eagerness either to accept the Peace Zone concept or revise the 1950 treaty. This might be due, as Professor Muni has pointed out, to considerations of internal politics in Nepal itself.

There is nothing to suggest that India wishes to disturb the present system but since the Zone of Peace proposal has so closely been identified with specific aspects of internal politics, it is not possible for India

or any other country to extend a categorical endorsement of it without becoming controversial within Nepal. Particularly so, because none of the major non-panchayat political groups has supported the King's proposal. They clearly see this as a device by the King to mobilise explicitly international support for perpetuating his system.

Perhaps by incorporating it, by means of the Third Amendment of the Constitution, the Nepal monarchy did make the Peace Zone proposal an issue of party politics in Nepal. However that may be, it has become an integral part of contemporary Nepalese foreign policy, and it is certainly relevant to regional security in South Asia.

Letters. . .

(Continued from page 1)

visas and that we do not represent Sida (the Swedish Aid Authority). This was clearly stated in the News Background (LG 1.1.89.) so his notions are irrelevant.

Remains for us to hope that the new Sri Lankan administration will be more successful in its efforts to solve the tragic armed conflicts in the country. The lifting of the emergency is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. As spectators it will be equally important for me to preserve my integrity in relation to the "separatist lobby" as for Mr. Chetty to preserve his integrity in relation to the "chauvinist lobby".

Thomas Bibin

Swedish Broadcasting Corp

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