

**J.R. – An Ambiguous Political Portrait –**

— **James Manor**

**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

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## TRENDS

### OPTS OUT

Eleven EROS MPs who collected the largest number of votes for a Tamil party at the February general elections, down-grading the TULF to a position of has-been, forfeited their seats in parliament by a deliberate non attendance at sittings for three months. According to the Constitution they are deemed to have vacated their posts.

Thirteen EROS members were elected, but two resigned. The Commissioner of Elections will now ask the party to nominate new names. Will that be done? And if so, will they attend?

### LENDING RATE SOARS

Continuing unrest, economic uncertainty, disruption in public transport and a Central Bank credit squeeze pushed the inter-bank lending rate to a peak 30 per cent in the City money market last week.

The cash shortage was due to the transport strike and the tense situation in the country, banking sources said. A scramble in the small call money market sent the rate up five points overnight, from Monday to Tuesday and from 7.5 the previous Friday.

The rise in the lending rate reflected also a credit squeeze imposed by the Central Bank on importers, aimed at discouraging them.

### FLASH:

The L.T.T.E. announced a cessation of hostilities. The message was communicated to the Cabinet by Dr. Anton Balasingham.

## LETTERS

### Different perspective

With reference to Sweden's concern for armed conflicts, Sinhala refugees, human rights violations and Amnesty International made by Thomas Bibin (LG 1.6.89) these are all totally irrelevant to the point raised by me.

Interesting however, is Bibin's claim that the fact that he and his colleague do not represent SIDA "was clearly stated in the News Background (LG 1.1.89)" when in fact, the article conveys just the opposite.

To say that I support the refusal of a visa to Bibin and his colleague is to misconstrue facts. I have pointed out certain circumstances which are known to all Sri Lankans living in Sweden, as a possible reason for the refusal of a visa and I have firmly upheld the right of every country, including Sri Lanka and Sweden, to deny visas to aliens for their own reasons. Bibin of course has a somewhat different concept. For him "it is only an

irony" that he and his colleague who have been "sponsored" by SIDA have not been granted visas. He thereby expresses his notion that Sri Lanka, as the recipient of "Sweden's major single aid project ever" is under obligation to grant visas to whoever is sponsored by SIDA.

As for visas issued by Sweden, I accept Bibin's statement that each case is regarded as an individual one and that "Sweden has rejected some Tamil cases and it has accepted others. It then follows that the allegations made by the separatist lobby against the Swedish Embassy in Colombo are unfounded.

Sam Casie Chetty  
Sweden

### NOTICE

We regret the delay in the publication and distribution of this issue. The circumstances were beyond our control.

The L.G. of July 15th will also be delayed.

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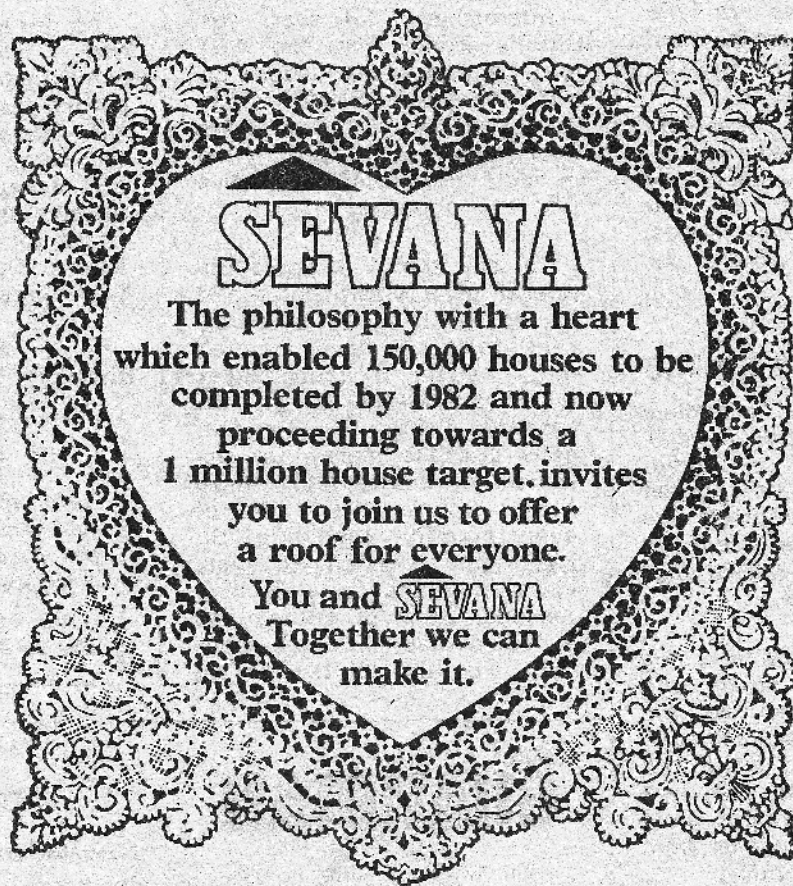
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### CONTENTS

News Background	3
The Region	10
Sri Lankan Crisis - III	11
Foreign News	16
Elements of JSP	17
The Sinhala Press	19
The Liberal Myth	21
Book Review	23
Correspondence	24
Poetry	25
The Arts	27

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# The 'Phoney peace' is over — protracted war begins

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

When a country's capital turns into a ghost town, not from natural calamities but as the result of a fierce struggle for power between the major contending forces, seen and unseen, the city becomes a symbol. Of what?

In countries swept by insurgencies, the capital is usually "encircled" by the rebels who control most of the countryside. The city comes under siege in the penultimate stage.

Here hardly anything moved — neither army nor insurgent. It was a no-go area for the people as well as for the militia. So, the rebel forces cannot capture the city but they can paralyse it, no matter what the means. And in this case, the means was stunningly simple — posters, leaflets, word-of-mouth communications.

What the people in some areas call the "**punchi sanduwa**" (Government Jr. or parallel government) was not installed in Colombo for a day. But its shadow fell over the capital.

This is psychological warfare at the highest level of effectiveness. No regime, worthy of its name, can ignore the challenge. So from the psychological and political, we will surely move to the arena that finally counts, the clash of arms. Thus, the State of Emergency, the Armed Services re-armed with extraordinary powers.

The six months "phoney peace" is over. Two connected events have dragged the Sri Lankan crisis into a new, dangerous phase, straining with each passing day the capacity of the six-months old presidency to meet the basic obligations of

government. While president Premadasa's room for manoeuvre, and the political space, narrows steadily, time is running out. Ironically, it is Mr. Premadasa himself who determined the time factor by fixing a deadline, July 29th, for the total pull-out of the IPKF.

In a clever move to partially disarm the JVP, Mr. Premadasa seized its most potent propaganda weapon, the IPKF, an "occupation army" symbolising the impotence of a "puppet president", and Sri Lanka's "limited sovereignty". His mistake was to publicly, unilaterally make a legitimate, desirable and necessary decision sound like an ultimatum to a powerful neighbour whose prime minister is already on a rough campaign trail.

The JVP's reaction has been smarter. Having ended its anti-India "boycott" campaign on June fourteenth (14), without a single Indian killed or harmed physically, it switched to new tactics, forgetting the IPKF, for the moment. The JVP knows that the IPKF, will be here long after July. Its presence will only strengthen the JVP's case. "We told you so" the JVP will then argue, pointing out that only a "national liberation" struggle led by a "Patriotic Front" can free the country from the "expansionist-hegemonist" Indians, an aggressor with over a thousand year history.

## INFLATION

The government is now confronted by an enemy more insidious and destructive than the insurgent. The enemy lurking in the shadows is inflation. Just when the pre-election spending

spree is being felt in rising living costs, and the I. M. F. is waiting for "corrective measures" the J. V. P. has directed the trade union movement and skillfully exploited the mood of organised labour to launch an attack on this most vulnerable flank.

The magic of numbers has captured the imagination of a hard-pressed public sector wage-earner. The city's walls are plastered with the magic number "2,500" in red. No explanation is necessary. Despite its tenuous hold on the trade unions, the JVP has been able to mobilise organised labour on the "2,500 rupees" minimum wage demand thanks to weaknesses of the established union leadership.

Jayewardena's reply to strikes by left-controlled unions was the JSS, the trade union which he personally moulded into the party's 'strong arm'. The opposition said the JSS lived up at least to two of its initials!

The JSS organisers were a top priority target in the selective "hit-list" of the D J V, the "patriotic peoples' movement". The pro-Jayewardena groups in the party hierarchy and the administration are as demoralised as the JSS. The JVP read the mood of a restive state sector labour correctly. Fear, intimidation and manipulative skill achieved the rest. The JVP seized the initiative to pick the transport sector for the first battle. Sectoral paralysis was its tactical objective. It moved to the port, state banks, post and telecommunications later but only for token 'sympathy' one-day strikes. In any case, the bus strike reduced attendance at all



offices and corporations to a poor thirty percent.

The government's response in declaring a state of emergency was the other connected development that has brought the crisis to a new stage. Premadasa lifted Jayewardene's five year emergency and released one thousand eight hundred (1800) "subversive" suspects. The police and the army grumbled. The police had a particular worry. The CID had made a breakthrough in many of the major assassination cases on "information received." The release of 'hard-core' subversives would put the lives of informants in jeopardy and dry up the flow of intelligence. But Premadasa went ahead. The army too complained that it was fighting with its hands tied.

### ARMY'S ROLE

The emergency and the JVP's multi-front protracted war sees the return of the army into the political game. Up to a decade ago, it was said of this small, ceremonial army that it had never fired a shot in genuine anger. The "war" in the tamil north and its social consequences saw this tight little island caught in the grip of a militarisation process. Accompanying this was the institutional and psychological transformation of the armed forces.

The defence vote swelled to finance a rapid expansion program, modern equipment, and professional training abroad. When 'security' became Colombo's main preoccupation, the army gradually assumed a decision-making role, and a new self-confidence. The upper echelons even earned some social recognition. Traditionally, the professional elite, equipped with classical education at four or five posh schools, treated the army top brass with poorly disguised disdain as the bearers of "*corpore sano*" than the custodians of '*mens sana*'. No more. The army cammandor, Lt.-General

Hamilton Wanasingha addressed the nation on TV soon after the emergency was declared. It was the first such appearance.

Mr. Wijeweera, the JVP leader, watches these trends closely. Before the polls, he sounded the alarm. "J.R." (Jayewardene) he said was planning to instal a "pro-Indian Junta". He named names. Meanwhile, he has not been idle. 'The extent of infiltration' is fairly extensive, claimed an intelligence official when an arrested "subversive" was found to be an ex-minister's personal bodyguard who had quit the army. The newest JVP leaflets call on "brother soldiers" to be "patriots" rather than "traitors" serving an "illegal president". The supreme court is now hearing Mrs. Bandaranaike's polls petition.

Senior officers now talk freely to the press, though *incognito*. A Senior officer told The *Sunday Times* (25/6) that they had urged the government not to permit the LTTE to use the state media for 'anti-Indian propaganda' they were worried that it would affect "the rapport" which now existed between the two armies, with India training some 60 officers and 300 men at regular courses free, and offering logistical support whenever requested locally.

The JVP fears an India-backed civilian-military junta, with Jayewardene and a few of his trusted ministers, now downgraded by Premadasa, plus some opposition figures to give it a "national government" facade. Diplomats style it as Delhi's "American option", accompanied by snide remarks about RAW-CIA parallels and Indianised characters like "Oliver Nath" involved in macabre clandestine operations and arms deals. The "American option" club rules out open support for the EPRLF's "UDI" threat. "Any mixture of Bangladesh-Cyprus will ruin India's international image and regional position" a senior South Asian diplomat observed.

They all remember Mr. Gandhi's remark to British TV soon after the accord. "It will be a short sharp exercise and our boys should be back home soon". The insensitivity in the choice of phrase was hardly relieved by the charming naivete. The lesson to be drawn now is that India shared the over-confidence of the superpowers in superior military force. Such strength can be counter-productive when the nature of the conflict and its complexities have not been fully grasped, most of all the dynamics of nationalism and identity.

### MUKTI BAHINI

The defence establishment, now closer to the decision-making centre, will be responsive to Indian proposals.

Fears about a post-withdrawal "security vacuum" and the safety of the Tamils are well-founded and understandable. Electoral compulsions vis-a-vis Tamilnadu and Delhi's moral obligations to the EPRLF, ENDLF etc are both appreciated. The fear among the Sinhalese and Muslims is that these groups are being converted into "Mukti Bahini" in readiness for UDI. These mutual fears need to be dispelled at the highest level.

At his first press conference, Prime Minister Gandhi said "improving" relations with neighbours will be his top priority. The current climate mocks his good intentions. He can however turn bad into good. Indo-Pakistani relations are less tense than ever before. Pakistan is trusted by both the Muslims and the Sinhalese. Some Pakistani contingents in a mixed SAARC-NAM peace-keeping force, along with India, can be a confidence-building exercise in Sri Lanka and the region. India has an over-the-horizon presence anyway. This may not appeal to the vanities of a regional *gendarme* but burden-sharing as already a superpower fashion. The question is whether big power can think 'big' with the Gorbachevian gift of imagination and daring.



# Emergency Again After Five-Month Lapse

The Government last week declared a State of Emergency a little more than five months after the last one lapsed. That had been kept on for five years. Announcing the decision to the Government Parliamentary Group, State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne said that it "was necessary for the maintenance of public services and for the protection of the people."

The Minister said that President Premadasa had lifted the State of Emergency which had been in operation for over five years and had unconditionally released about 1800 persons who had been in custody. He had invited all militant groups to talk to him about their problems, but the destruction of public property and the killings had continued. "Since January, 1705 persons had been murdered".

The Government Group unanimously adopted the resolution moved by Mr. Wijeratne that a State of Emergency should be declared.

Introducing the regulations in parliament later, Prime Minister D. B. Wijetunga said that the Government was reluctantly compelled to do so. The State Minister for Defence, Mr. Wijeratne said that the emergency powers will be used "sparingly". He said that the southern subversives were continuing in an attempt to destroy democracy and grab power; they were trying to wipe out the UNP. "If the JVP, DJV or SLFP think that could be done, they have to think again", the minister said and added: "We will fight back, and we are prepared to meet that challenge."

In the debate that followed Mr. Anura Bandaranaike (Opposition — SLFP) said that there was a growing, creeping paralysis of fear in the country, not known before. At the elections the UNP had promised peace and prosperity, but since January 1989 there had been four

thousand politically motivated killings. Provincial Council members were being killed, security personnel were being killed, and there also existed "black cats," "pink elephants" and "green elephants" and other vigilante groups carrying out their own killings. The country was on the brink of a major disaster.

Mr. Dinesh Gunawardena (Opposition — MEP) said that wrong policies followed by the Government were at the root of the country's problems today. Solutions could not be found by using force, he said. "Don't suppress people by the gun. You did it once and you created this situation. You thought of democracy only to suit yourself. This is not the first time you have taken such steps. Don't forget the past. You cannot solve problems by imposing the Emergency", the MP said.

Mr. A. Amirthalingam TULF said that the country was facing its grimmest crisis and a grave economic situation. In the meantime, relations between India and Sri Lanka were being handled in the most amateurish manner.

Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne (Opposition — SLFP) said that the Government was holding "Gam Udawas" at time when the country was on fire. It was a "Gam Rudawa"; it was like Nero fiddling while Rome was burning. In answer to a reference to the Kataragama beauty queen murder case, the MP said that the SLFP government of the time dealt legally with the two accused. One was sentenced to 18 years in prison and the other to 15 years. One died while serving his sentence, and the other was released after serving his term and was done away with by the "people's court".

Mr. Tillekeratne also said that Opposition Leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike did not call for a state of emergency as stated

by the Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Defence, an erroneous statement which had been given wide publicity. Mrs. Bandaranaike was not even in the country.

Mr. Amarasingh Dodangoda (Opposition — SLFP) said that he doubted that the Emergency would solve the problems of the country. He produced a book of ballot papers and said that everybody knew how the elections had been conducted.

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake (Government — UNP) said that the Emergency was long overdue.

Mr. Lalith Arulathimudali (Government — UNP) said that the behaviour of the SLFP in walking out of the house without staying to vote for or against the motion, was disgraceful. The SLFP had no guts, he said.

The resolution relating to the proclamation of a state of Emergency was passed unopposed. The SLFP had walked out earlier over another issue. No Opposition members were present when the vote was taken.

## Strike Talks Deadlock

A three hour discussion between Transport Minister Wijepala Mendis and representatives of Sri Lanka Transport Board United Action Front ended in deadlock. The minister told the strike leaders that the government was not in a position to meet their financial demands. The Front vowed to continue the strike.

Transport Board buses continued to be off the roads, except for a few driven by uniformed soldiers. Private buses too were off the roads. Train services were also disrupted.

## LATEST

The Government will discuss all demands of the strikers but they must return to work first.



## Don't quit — Tamil Nadu dons urge Gandhi

**S**eventy-five academicians from various colleges in Tamil Nadu have urged the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, to "reject outright the unilateral and unjust demand for the pull-out of the IPKF from Sri Lanka."

In a joint appeal to Mr. Gandhi, they said the pull-out would be used by the "chauvinistic Sri Lankan army to come out of the barracks and unleash terror on the innocent, unarmed Tamil-speaking people. "The well-known nexus between the LTTE and Colombo Government will be militarily used against the Tamil political parties, which accepted the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, laid down arms, accepted the democratic process and demonstrated faith in peace and democracy. This unnecessary and unwarranted clash between the Tamil groups will not only take the lives and property of innocent Tamils.

The academicians also pointed out that Sri Lanka had a track-record of betraying the Tamils;

everytime a reasonable agreement was reached between the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamils, the former went back on the agreed terms through various "deceptive ways and means." India was a signatory

to the Agreement, which was approved by various Tamil groups "India's honour is at stake and as patriotic citizens of India, we urge the Prime Minister to take all bold steps in meeting the challenge thrown at our country by the Sri Lankan President, Mr. R. Premadasa," the academicians said.

### THE SPEAKER CALLS

**S**peaker M. H. Mohamed last week invited the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) to talk to him. Issuing his call from the Speaker's chair in parliament, Mr. Mohamed said that he would be willing to meet the JVP unconditionally and at any place of their choice, to resolve the gravest crisis facing the country.

"Internal strife has brought us to the brink of disaster. I am the spokesman for parliament and owe allegiance to Parliament, to my country and its people. I have informed all leaders of parties in Parliament and am making this appeal", the Speaker said.

### TIGERS PROTEST ABDUCTIONS

**N**orthern and Eastern Tamil youths are being abducted for conscription into the Citizens Volunteer Force of the North-East Provincial Council, the Tigers (LTTE) have complained. They have accused the EPRLF of doing this with the help of the Indian army. EROS, club mate of the LTTE, joined the Tigers in making the accusation. They said that 4,505 youths had been abducted; 4,000 had been snatched in the Batticaloa district, 105 had been taken off a train at Vavuniya, and 400 were being kept at the Alles Garden IPKF camp in Trincomalee.

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# DJV's Boycott Makes *HINDU* Headlines

Thomas Abraham

The statement by Koorli Wijebahu, Jt. Commander of the Patriotic Peoples Armed Front announcing 9 point anti-India boycott plan made the front page lead. In a report by its Colombo correspondent Thomas Abraham the *Hindu* highlighted the DJV's distinction between anti-Indian and anti-Tamil, and referred to an "Assurance" to Tamils. Excerpts:

## 'Assurance' to Tamils

One feature of the DJV's orders was that it specified that plantation Tamils who had become Sri Lankan citizens were not being asked to leave. "This (the order to leave the country) is not related to the estate labourers who have obtained citizenship". The JVP-DJV combine also tried to assuage Tamil fears that they were the targets of the campaign by issuing another statement specifying that the "Tamils need not be frightened by the JVP" and pointing out that the "present struggle is against the Indian Government and Indian expansionism and not against Tamil people." The JVP also said that it would not allow the sort of communal violence that had broken out in 1983.

Intelligence reports on the JVP's strategy and the turn that the anti-Indian campaign could take in the future indicate three things — that the JVP is unlikely to attack specifically Indian targets for fear of provoking Indian military intervention in the South, but they are likely to attack businesses belonging to prominent Sri Lankans of Indian origin, and bomb attacks on such targets can be expected within the next few days.

There are several wealthy business families from the Gujarati, Sindhi and Bora communities

who have been settled in Sri Lanka for several generations, and they are believed to be the most vulnerable targets in the present campaign.

Intelligence reports also indicate that the JVP will make a concerted bid to snap all business links with India, and so the three Indian banks with branches in Colombo, the Indian Airlines and Air-India, and organisations involved in trade with India could also be vulnerable.

All the Indian banks here stayed open today, but with reduced staff, thanks to a bus strike which has made commuting to work difficult. The Indian Airlines office, which has received threatening phone calls, remained closed though the Air-India office was functioning. The Indian High Commission and the Sri Lankan Government have been working closely on providing security to Indian establishments, and policemen armed with automatic weapons have been stationed outside Indian enterprises.

The officers and staff of the Indian High Commission remained in hotels for the second day today, along with other Indian nationals who felt themselves to be at risk, such as bank managers.

## How long?

The Main street, in the Pettah area, the commercial hub of Colombo, and the street on which most businessmen of Indian origin are concentrated, was heavily patrolled by armed policemen. But the mood of the shopkeepers was one of nervousness about the future. "How long can we expect police protection?" asked a young Sindhi businessman. "The JVP has a long-term campaign, and

they can wait for weeks and months, and then hit us," he said.

The DJV has also ordered shops to display a sign stating that they do not stock Indian goods. No one on the main street has done this so far, but many shopowners seem to have quietly removed stocks of Indian commodities.

Many local businessmen who import goods and raw materials from India have decided to freeze their imports at least temporarily. A move which, combined with the ban on shipping services, could put a sharp brake on Indo-Sri Lankan trade.

Though the first day has been peaceful, the JVP can afford to take its time before striking, and most informed observers expect a series of small actions over a period of time, slowly building up into a large scale anti-Indian campaign, which would eventually snowball into an anti Government movement.

## No move to refer to I.C.J.

Foreign Affairs Minister Ranjan Wijeratne said that there was no move to refer the IPKF issue to the International Court of Justice.

Answering an adjournment question raised by Nimal Siri-pala de Silva (SLFP) — the Minister explained that the Sri Lanka government was still awaiting a reply to the message sent to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. "Let us overlook Press statements appearing at various times. Let us wait for the reply", he added.



## DJV's 'Boycott India' Targets

The following is the text of the letter issued by the "Joint Commander, Headquarters of the Patriotic Peoples Armed Front".

Order with regard to boycotting of Indian products:

Indian imperialism has already invaded our motherland economically as they (have) done politically and militarily. Indian products are having a monopoly in our local markets, and Indians who have obtained honorary citizenship are exploiting our national resources. This is a struggle to gain our national freedom against Indian imperialism. The following orders are made that come into effect from 14 June 1989.

1. Importing, selling, distributing of Indian products is prohibited.

2. All the transactions made with Indian banks and Indian companies should be terminated.

3. Sri Lankans should withdraw from all Indian joint ventures.

4. All Indian business institutions should be nationalised. Indian citizens who serve in these institutions should leave the country immediately.

5. All people should refrain from importing, releasing and watching Indian films and video films.

6. All Indian businessmen who have obtained honorary citizenship should leave the country immediately. This is not related to the estate labourers who have obtained citizenship.

7. All Indian air services and shipping services should stop immediately.

8. People should not give any sort of protection, or lodging to any Indian and should not give premises on a rental basis.

9. After 14 June 1989, all the shopkeepers should put up a notice indicating that no Indian products are sold there.

All the patriotic people who love their motherland should cooperate with our movement as a step to gain our national freedom. Whoever does not obey our orders will be treated as traitors and will be subjected to severe punishments.

May our freedom fight be successful.

(Signed) Keerthi Wijebahu

## Rows with Sri Lanka, Nepal threaten Gandhi

NEW DELHI

A bitter row with Sri Lanka over withdrawal of Indian troops from the island and a trade war with Nepal threaten to overshadow Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's early diplomatic successes in an election year.

Analysts said on Tuesday the two issues gave the opposition a chance to make Gandhi's Congress (I) party's foreign policy record a major issue for the first time in a general election, which Gandhi must call by the end of the year.

On Sri Lanka, Gandhi has rejected President Ranasinghe Premadasa's demand for the pullout by July 29 of 45,000 troops of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) sent under an accord between Gandhi and Premadasa's predecessor, Junius Jayewardene.

On Nepal, Gandhi has refused to renew trade arrangements

which control the entry of nearly all imports into the landlocked Himalayan kingdom from India because of perceived moves to improve ties with China.

India's best-known opposition leader, Vishwanath Pratap Singh has already said he intends to make Sri Lanka and Nepal part of his campaign platform for the polls.

The opposition will focus criticism on the loss of nearly 1,000 Indian soldiers in operations carried out by the IPKF against Tamil rebels, said former Foreign Secretary, A. P. Venkateswaran.

The troops, sent to Sri Lanka to disarm Tamil rebels under the 1987 accord are now in danger of turning into an occupation force, said Ashis Nandi of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.

Newspaper reports from Colombo, unconfirmed by the Sri

Lanka government say Sri Lanka may take the issue to the U.N. Security Council or the International Court at the Hague if India refuses to comply with the July 29 deadline.

"Such a move will immediately make the IPKF an occupation force and tarnish India's reputation as a mature nation in the third world as well as reinforce suspicions among its neighbours of being a regional bully," Nandi said.

He said the damage to India's international standing could lose Gandhi the goodwill he earned with visits to the United States and the Soviet Union soon after coming to power in 1984.

The U.S. visit launched an era of economic cooperation and that to the Soviet Union successfully re-affirmed old ties cemented by a friendship treaty in 1971.



## SENSE ON SRI LANKA

A Self-Defeating Sri Lanka policy, pursued stubbornly even after its fatal flaws became evident, has landed the Government of India in a situation in which it appears more like a street bully than like the regional policeman which it wanted to be. Its political and military limitations are glaringly exposed, with Indian nationals, including diplomats, huddled together in two posh hotels of Colombo for their safety, even as representatives of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which the Indian army failed to eliminate even after prolonged and ruthless warfare, are in that city to resume their dialogue with the administration of President Ranasinghe Premadasa. What drove the Indians to five-star refugee camps was a campaign launched by the extremist Sinhala organisation, the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna, to force the Indian troops to leave the island. Withdrawal of the Indian army is one of the few issues on which there is near unanimity among the various sections of public opinion in Sri Lanka today. Only a few Tamil groups enjoying New Delhi's patronage favour continued Indian military presence in the island. Prominent among them is the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front, which leads the recently created North-Eastern provincial government.

It is aware that its government has no chance of surviving once the Indian troops are gone. The JVP has not held out any threat of violence against Indian nationals, its campaign taking the form of boycott of Indian goods and services. However, given the organisation's record of terrorism, the risk to which Indian personnel and institutions are exposed cannot be underestimated.

Early this month, Mr. Premadasa formally called for the pull-out of the Indian troops by July 29, the second anniversary of the Indo-Sri Lankan accord under which they were brought in as a peace-keeping force. The confusion caused by Colombo's move came through clearly in the self-contradictory remarks by an Indian official spokesman: he claimed that India had begun a phased withdrawal as early as January last, but he also insisted that withdrawal can only be made according to a schedule to be drawn up through mutual consultations. He reiterated the commitment to pull out the troops, but he also sought to dilute it by laying down conditions such as devolution of effective powers to the provincial council and creation of an effective law and order machinery in the North-Eastern province. The validity of these conditions is not in doubt. However, the Govern-

ment of India is as much to blame as the Sri Lankan Government for the non-fulfilment of the relevant provisions of the accord. At a time when it should have used diplomatic pressure on Colombo to fulfil its promises, New Delhi chose to concentrate its energies exclusively on a futile attempt to exterminate the guerilla organisation which enjoyed the most support among the Tamils. The misguided effort so weakened its position that it is now left with few options.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's remarks in Bangalore on Wednesday indicate that he is still inclined to drag his feet on the issue of troop withdrawals. In doing so, he is presenting the JVP with a popular cause on which to base its campaign to overthrow the established order in the island. Mr. Gandhi, who claims that India is primarily responsible for the security of Tamils in Sri Lanka and integrity of the island, should realise the absurdity of projecting himself as a greater champion of Sri Lanka interests than Mr. Premadasa and a greater exponent of Tamil interests than the LTTE leader, Mr. V. Prabhakaran. Frequent Indian references to the sacrifices by the Indian army are entirely misplaced.

— Editorial, Deccan Herald

## Army expresses concern

Senior security officials have requested the government to reconsider its decision to permit the LTTE to use the official media to publicise anti-Indian statements.

Since the Sri Lankan Government began talks with the Tiger delegation, the Ministry of Information has issued several statements made by the LTTE.

Senior Services personnel also feel that the prevailing strong anti-IPKF stands taken by the various groups could seriously hamper rapport between the two armies.

At present about 60 army officers and about 300 soldiers are trained free of charge in India. "It was only last year that a host of new courses

were made available to us" said a senior service official.

Another officer pointed out that co-operation between the two armies in the past couple of years, in particular, was very high and cited an instance when the Sri Lankan Army needed immediate logistical support owing to the situation in the south. "The Indians didn't hesitate a moment in meeting our request," he said.

(Sunday Times)



## THE REGION

# Study predicts India as regional power

WASHINGTON

**T**he prestigious Rand Corporation, a major California-based think-tank, has forecast that in the next two decades western military and economic power will see a relative decline and shift to the far east, and that India, which it says is already "a middle regional power," will become increasingly more important both economically and militarily.

### STABILITY LIKELY

The Corporation made the study for the Pentagon and the US President's National Security Adviser. Some of its conclusions have already been released by the Pentagon but the publication, captioned "A Rand Note — Longterm Economic and Military Trends 1950-2010," elaborates many aspects of the new thesis which may well become the Bible for Washington policy-makers.

The Soviet Union is a big question mark, according to Rand. If President Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika succeeds, its Gross National Product will shoot from an estimated \$1564 billion in 1990 to \$4697 billion in 2010.

By 2010, the US GNP should be \$7859 billion, Japan's \$3714 billion, China's \$3791 billion (it will have overaken Japan), West Germany \$1525 billion, France's \$1410 billion, India's \$1330 billion, U. K.'s \$949 billion and Brazil's \$939 billion. If on the other hand Perestroika fails, the Soviet Union will be far behind China. Its GNP could be down anywhere between \$2613 billion and \$2873 billion.

### GNH GROWTH

The middle regional powers are likely to grow significantly relative to the economies of western Europe. For example, in 1980 the national products of India, Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico were about 70 per cent as large as the national products of West Germany, France and the U. K. (1.4 trillion 1986 US dollars compared with 2.1 trillion for West Germany, France and the U. K.).

By 2010, the same seven regional economic powers will probably have combined national products about 18 per cent larger than those of the three west European economies (4.6 trillion 1986 US dollars for the seven non-European countries versus 3.9 trillion for the European ones.) The methodology adopted for estimating the GNP of countries is different from that of the World Bank and others. It says, for example, that an estimate of the Chinese per capita at \$1000 for 1986 "is entirely reasonable." World Bank and other estimates are over 50 per cent less.

### ARMS SPENDING

Rand estimates that annual military spending of the US will hit \$462 billion by 2010, Soviet Union \$411 billion and China \$218 billion. The Indian expenditure on the military is expected to reach \$53 billion in 2010 (28 billion in 1980, 34 billion in 1990 and 45 billion in 2000). Of the major European countries, only France will be spending more than India — \$57 billion by 2010. West Germany will be spending \$49 billion and the U. K. \$50 billion.

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# The Marxist Predicament

Dayan Jayatileke

**T**hrowing away the huge weight of the Indian state was strategically unintelligent when it cannot be compensated for by an alliance with the Sinhala people, given the post Anuradhapura context. The Vietnamese were able to dodge Soviet and Chinese pressures to settle the conflict because they had their own state as a rear base i.e. North Vietnam. If they had their headquarters in either of these two countries which provided their units with a safe haven, then the pressure could not have been resisted.

Because of the killings of rival groups and their families, that was spoke of earlier, there will be a further shrinkage of the LTTE's support base. The LTTE, not being a socialist oriented group, cannot compensate for this narrowing with a "deepening" in class terms. Right through the history of the struggle, though it has had its supporters and sympathizers, the LTTE has never attempted to permanently mobilise this mass by structuring it in mass organisations, in mass fronts. There are no mass organisations in the LTTE. I am not one of those who says that there ought to be mass organisations from the beginning of an armed struggle. I do not agree with the notion that there must be fully fledged mass organisations before the initiation of armed actions. That argument taken to an extreme, can have economic and populist implications. But 15 years of armed action and there are no mass organisations? This then is not a people's war! This was the fundamental flaw of the struggle, namely that it could not make a transition from a "Vanguard war" to use Debray's term, to a "people's war". So it will definitely not be able to compensate in depth what it is losing in breadth.

This, however, is where the question of devolution enters. If the Government of Sri Lanka successfully denies devolution, if the Government of India is unable or unwilling to extract substantial power from the centre (Colombo), if the other Tamil groups do not have sufficient leverage with Delhi, the southern opposition and the international donor community, in order to secure that, then the LTTE can get a lease of life, because the longstanding grievances of the Tamil people will not have been redressed. Therefore, if one is in fact for the just demand of the Tamils for peace, and is also for the interests of the Sinhala people; if one is for a united Sri Lanka, then quite irrespective of what the SLFP or the JVP say, one must be for devolution, for democratisation of the State system. It is the only way to prevent the LTTE from getting a second wind. The task of progressives across party lines is to make sure that real and constructive devolution is extracted from the centre.

However, any move to strengthen the Provincial Councils will only incense the Sinhala chauvinists to whom peace means "putting the Tamils in their place" and to whom even diluted devolution is "too much".

For over a decade, from 1958, Sri Lanka has been ruled intermittently by Emergency. Emergency was introduced because of the race riots of 1958, and was re-imposed from 1965 to '70 under the UNP regime. The SLFP led UF's years of emergency lasted from 1970 to '76. Then came the current UNP regime and the operation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Now, this process of permanent Emergency is something of a contradiction in terms. Emergency has become the norm in Sri Lanka. This process of near-

permanent emergency has some structural implications, in terms of the evolution of what is called in Latin America, the National Security state. The centralising of the state — its juridical expression is the constitution of 1978 — is the main obstacle to granting the legitimate grievances of the people.

Now if the Indian State, one of the most powerful bourgeois states in the Third World, can be used by the Tamil militants as a lever — albeit in pursuance of its own interests, because it has to give something to the Tamil people now particularly afraid the IPKF operations, and also because of Tamil Nadu public opinion — then the polity and centralised state structure of Sri Lanka can be democratised, and such democratic structural reforms can be effected. After all, Sri Lanka, unlike India, does not have a big landlord class which is the social class that usually resists democratisation. Unlike in most Third World societies, there are hardly any feudal residues. Capitalism is not only the dominant but almost the exclusive mode of production in the Sri Lankan social formation.

The agrarian revolution is not the main aim of the democratic revolution here. These externally induced reforms of the State structure (the Provincial Councils) can possibly be seen as analogous to the land reforms under Douglas MacArthur in post war Japan. The problem is that since these reforms could not come from below, owing to the **Mahavamsa mind-set** i.e. majority chauvinism, they had to come from "above and without" as it were, generating a strong resistance and reaction from below.

Irony, therefore, is in command and contradictions abound. The various struggles for peace, against racism, for autonomy,



against authoritarianism, against capitalism, against fascism, against imperialism, the struggle for national reconciliation and unity, the struggle for national independence and sovereignty, **diverse, collide and contend.** Far from being able to effect the necessary **articulation** of the anti-racist, anti-authoritarian and anti-fascist struggles, these **concretely get dis-articulated.** The struggle for the recognition of 'diversity in unity' comes up against that for 'unity in diversity'.

**The struggle for democracy itself** splits up between those against authoritarianism (anti regime), for devolution (anti regime in the **pre-Accord** period but **pro regime in the post-Accord conjuncture**) and against fascism. The anti fascist struggle necessitates alliances even with authoritarians, pro imperialist capitalists and chauvinists — the very targets of the other (earlier?) struggles! The struggle for peace, for autonomy and against chauvinism, necessitated a bloc with pro imperialist and undemocratic authoritarian bourgeois elements. The 'democratic bloc' can therefore be neither 'national' nor 'popular'! Since neither the SLFP nor the UNP are liberal or **consistently democratic** forces (the former being anti-devolution and the latter, authoritarian), the 'anti-fascist bloc' is not the equivalent of a 'democratic bloc'. Finally, since both the SLFP and the UNP have fractions which appease the JVP, a distinction has to be drawn between an 'anti-fascist bloc' and a 'non-fascist' one.

The Marxist-Leninist EPRLF, representing the interests of the proletariat, is ensconced in the camp of the Indian army, representing the interests of the Indian big bourgeoisie! In the south, the left parties, not to mention the revolutionary groups, are closer to the dependent capitalist UNP at this moment, than to the anti-imperialist, plebian JVP. Similarly, the Marxist EPRLF is farthest away from the plebian nationalist LTTE and

the **Marxist EROS** and is closer to the **nationalist TELO**. Class struggle, but which classes against which? How do we get out of this back to the 'correct class struggle track'? Is there any such straight and narrow path? At the present moment what alternative strategy is possible or more correct? How do we prevent this from causing a deviation of long term consequence? Class struggle isn't like some football match with just two teams, clearly identifiable in their jerseys. 'Classes' don't 'struggle' that way. It's '**blocs**' that contend — and these blocs consist of class and non-class (or infra-class or cross-class) social groups, connected in **certain changing patterns** of hegemony and subalternity. In other words we are talking about **politics**, though not in opposition to class struggle. It is necessary to understand the various connections between 'social classes and political power', which was the focus of Poulantzas' major work. Gramsci, Poulantzas and Laclau are now more relevant than ever.

### **Crises within the Crisis: A Crisis of Categories**

The Lankan crisis has inverted all the traditional categories of Marxism-Leninism, causing a veritable 'crisis of categories'. We normally speak of a 'progressive national bourgeoisie' and a 'reactionary compradore bourgeoisie', but here we have a 'progressive (neo) compradore bourgeoisie' — at least on the issue of devolution — and a 'reactionary national bourgeoisie'! Marxism-Leninism (and Dependency Theory) holds that the more nationalist and anti-imperialist the bourgeoisie is, the more progressive and reformist it is. But here the most nationalist sectors — Cyril Mathew earlier, now the SLFP — are the more reactionary, anti-reform and even somewhat pro-fascist. The more dependent on imperialism they are the more democratic, reformist and 'progressive' the Sri Lankan bourgeoisie seems to be.

Ronnie de Mel, 'Yankee Dicky' and Gamini Dissanayake are cases in point. If the regime were **less dependent** and pro-imperialist, or, to put it more rigorously, if the most pro-imperialist fraction was not hegemonic (even temporarily) within the regime, there would be no devolution — not to mention the possible release of revolutionary political prisoners! Two cheers therefore, for imperialism and dependent capitalism?

Above all, the anti fascist struggle in Sri Lanka is complicated by the fact that unlike in most other countries it is not intertwined with the national liberation struggle, hence rendering it a national-democratic people's revolution (China, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Albania and most of Europe) simply because Sri Lankan fascism is precisely that i.e. **indigenous**. It is the **anti fascists** here who are seen as — and in fact **are** — dependent on outside entities! Hence, the banner of national liberation is not in the hands of the anti fascists but rather, the fascists! It is important to note that in Germany, Italy and Japan i.e. **societies in which fascism was home grown, domestic anti fascist forces failed to defeat it.** The Italian communists grew more than those in the other two countries, perhaps because racism and xenophobia were not as present in Italian fascism as they were in the other cases. It took external intervention to crush fascism in these three countries. That intervention came about because those fascisms **had overstepped their national boundaries**, unlike those of Spain and Portugal which therefore were not touched by the Allies. Sri Lankan fascism is not likely to pose such a threat to anyone. Furthermore, the presence of ethno-religious chauvinism and xenophobia give it more emotional charge, adhesive power and broader appeal i.e. render it more powerful than Italian fascism and therefore more difficult for domestic forces to



combat. The likely interventio-  
nist force from outside being  
India, perceived as the tradi-  
tional foe of the Sinhala people,  
it will add fuel to the fascist  
flames turning it into a veri-  
table prairie fire.

If not for the Emergency,  
we'd still have had the ethnic  
war (because the chauvinist  
mobs would have stymied an  
agreement as they did in 1957  
and 1968. S. W. R. D. Bandera-  
naika and Dudley Senanayake  
were too democratic, too popu-  
list, to push any ethnic settle-  
ment through in the face of  
majoritarian opposition. Much  
more specifically, if not for the  
crackdown on the JVP and its  
student activists in the months  
preceding the Accord, they  
would have turned the anti-  
Accord riots into an armed  
insurrection. They could not  
have seized State power, but  
no Accord would have been  
signed either. Now this crack-  
down could not have been  
done under the normal law.  
On what grounds could it have  
been done? It is not only that  
Jeyewardena managed to secure  
the support of the Big Neigh-  
bour by depicting the dissent  
as anti-Accord. In actual fact,  
it was. The repression in the  
South at that moment was not  
meant to keep down the socia-  
list revolution — of which there  
was little manifestation, but  
to suppress anti-Peace, racist  
action including armed ac-  
tion. The fact that the UNP  
will try to use this repression  
and foreign legitimacy for the  
purpose of suppressing legiti-  
mate struggles as well, in the  
future, and will probably suc-  
ceed, does not mean that that  
is the main content and cause  
of this phenomenon now! Just  
as we cannot guarantee the  
safety of the Tamils and there-  
fore had to swallow — wel-  
come — the presence of foreign  
troops, one has to ask the  
question of how to keep  
the JVP at bay without  
the coercive power of the  
bourgeois state? Certainly it  
should be done by the 'revolu-  
tionary Left', but such an entity  
will cease to exist and may

never re-emerge if the JVP is  
at full strength.

### Marxist Predicament

None of this means that Marx-  
ists should be happy with the  
situation.

Our politico-moral predicament  
is pathetic and the choices avail-  
able to us, ghastly. But we  
have to strive to bear in mind  
the aims, character, programme  
and content of this organisa-  
tion. What is worse is that  
they have become the armed  
vanguard of the anti-UNP  
struggle and we cannot out-  
strip them in this due to  
material difficulties. I do not  
think the Left and progressive-  
democratic forces should do the  
wrong thing simply to compete  
with the JVP. Then again, not  
competing with them to  
monopolize the anti-UNP  
struggle! This is a veritable  
Catch-22 situation.

What for instance is going  
to be the main democratic  
agitational slogan of the Left?  
Perhaps we are bereft of one.  
We were opponents of the  
undemocratic presidential sys-  
tem, but without it the Accord  
and the Provincial Council sys-  
tem, the most fundamental,  
radically democratic structural  
reform of the post-independence  
period, could never have been  
pushed through. Furthermore, a  
Parliament elected on propor-  
tional representation will not  
give any party a two-thirds  
majority, will have a strong  
opposition, and in combination  
with the Provincial Councils  
and the Presidency will cause  
a separation of powers which  
is very healthy in that it con-  
stitutes an obstacle to dictatorial  
drives. Only a 'lunatic Left'  
would advocate armed struggle  
against such a set-up. So per-  
haps our main democratic slo-  
gans should be for

- (1) a reform of the Presi-  
dential system, making it more  
accountable, as the U.S. Execu-  
tive is,
- (2) for genuine autonomy for  
the Provincial Councils, and
- (3) for the setting up of a  
Second Chamber, resulting in a  
bicameral Parliament.

### Armed Autochthonous Archaism

Though feudalism does not  
exist as a system, though pro-  
Capitalist relations do not pre-  
dominate at the level of  
the economy, these do persist  
powerfully at the level of  
consciousness. And as Marx  
said, "Ideas, when they grip  
the masses, become a material  
force".

In Sri Lanka archaic ideology  
has been a material force suf-  
ficiently strong to resist, for a  
long time, the pressures of  
world capitalism for political  
settlement to the ethnic problem.  
It is still to be seen whether  
this autochthonous archa-  
ism, with its contemporary  
politico-military vanguard, the  
JVP, will succeed in rolling  
back the externally induced  
capitalist reform of the State  
structure (PCs). The failure of  
the Red Army, the most mo-  
dernised component of Sovi-  
et Socialism — a historically ad-  
vanced formation — to defeat the  
not merely pre-capitalist but  
also pre-feudal Afghan Mou-  
jaheddin, is a stark example of  
the enhanced power of such  
forces in the contemporary  
period of the crises of world  
capitalism and world socialist  
systems and the erosion of the  
hegemonies of the two super  
powers — the U.S.A. and the  
U.S.S.R. The hegemony of the  
forces of armed autochthonous  
archaism within the anti — sys-  
temic struggles in many coun-  
tries, takes place against the  
backdrop of, and is probably  
due to the disunity and crises  
of the international Communist  
Movement in the post —  
Stalin period.

Sri Lanka is a modern socie-  
ty by Third World standards.  
Feudal relations of production  
hardly exist. The social struc-  
ture is relatively modern and  
advanced, rigid upward social  
mobility being an indicator of  
this. The civil administration  
and political structure is bour-  
geois. The State is a modern  
capitalist State, rather than a  
pre-capitalist or oligarchic, ie.  
archaic, one.



## Traditional foe

This renders Sri Lanka **more modern** than most Third World societies. And yet, by stark contrast, archaic ideology — the Mahavamsa mentality — plays a **much greater** role than it does in most other Third world societies! Feudalism is dead but Dutugemunu and Elara live! And they grow stronger as capitalism grows! This coexistence and interaction, this 'articulation' of the archaic and the modern **within a single socio-economic and ethno-national formation renders it different from Afghanistan and also barbarian conquest of Rome.** All these are profound theoretical problems that marxists must grapple with, as Trotsky did with the uneven nature of the socio-economic formation of pre-revolutionary Russia.

It is interesting to note that important democratic changes, such as the granting of universal franchise in 1931 and of political independence in 1947 were much more as a by-product of external processes and impulses, especially those in the then metropolitan centre, Britain, than as a result of internal ones. What this tells us about the Lankan social formation I do not know for certain, but it bears inquiry. Perhaps we lack sufficient levers and motive forces internally to cause profound democratic transformations. Hence these have to take place from 'without'. **But**, as a result of this direction, this trajectory and chain of causation, there is recoil and resistance from below. This is especially true when the reforms emanate from a big neighbouring state and one that is perceived as the traditional foe. This then is one of the many tragic dilemmas that the democratising forces face in Sri Lanka today.

The fact that capitalism in Sri Lanka, as in almost all Third World countries, was imposed from 'without' i.e. by imperialism, lends it certain important structural characteristics, certain specificities. These have had

certain socio-political consequences, forcing Marxists to recognise these specific structural features and base their strategies accordingly. The externally induced or propelled nature of the democratic political reforms referred to earlier, also as its consequences. Therefore, Marxists have to bear in mind in the task of strategizing, the flaws and fragility embodied in the genetic code of certain political institutions and practices that exist or have existed in post colonial Sri Lanka.

Making democratic reforms in Sri Lanka therefore, requires a judicious mix of pressures from below and above, and from within and without. Domestic weaknesses will have to be offset by tapping potential external strengths. The indigenous barbarians will have to be warded off, utilising in a strictly non-military capacity, the resources of the contemporary world-system, which is the dialectically contradictory unity of the capitalist and socialist world-systems. But excessive reliance on the external will delegitimise the left-democratic forces and will therefore prove profoundly counter-productive. Betting the 'mix' right, (external-internal/top-down) on each issue as it arises, is one of the most crucial problems that the democratic left will have to face in Sri Lanka.

## LTTE's Prospects

To answer the question as to whether or not LTTE can get over a shrinkage of its base depend on (1) the degree of devolution of powers, (2) the role of the non LTTE Eelam groups, (3) the role of the IPKF (a) in relation to the JVP, (b) in relation to the other forces including those (uniformed and otherwise) which may begin killing the Tamils again once the IPKF withdraws. While the IPKF will be targets of classic hit and run urban and rural guerrilla tactics deployed against a conventional force, the LTTE will be hamstrung by numerous disadvantages viz,

1. It has been cut off militarily, though not necessarily politically, from its rear base. Therefore, its ammunition supply line has, in the main, been cut off.
2. It cannot retreat south because it will be walking right into the hands of the Sri Lankan army.
3. The Tamil populace will be divided amongst those who actively collaborated with the IPKF, those who support the LTTE and those who simply want peace.
4. Informers and members of rival groups, or family members of those killed by the Tigers, will point out the LTTE personnel and weapons caches.

So while the LTTE will exist in the form of guerrilla squad, for sometime to come it will be finished in its earlier form as a Lebanese type of guerrilla militia openly controlling towns and terrain.

The IPKF can't fight the JVP. The IPKF hasn't exactly had a cake walk in Jaffna and if it is finding it so difficult to handle one and a half million Tamil people, that is two thousand five hundred fighters, they are going to be in very real trouble trying to hold an awful lot of terrain in the south, with no significant local support base whatever. So it just can't do the job. But that does not mean that the UNP won't try, or won't be forced by circumstances, to try to get them to. I am quite sure that they do not wish to. Yet this can happen a few rungs up the escalation ladder. It is in the logic of events in one scenario, the other one being the scenario of the de escalation of tensions.

## Regional Bonapartism

I do not agree with the terms 'indian imperialism' or 'Indian expansionism' and think that the terms 'hegemonism' and 'interventionism' are more accurate.

There is a notion that Rajiv Gandhi was duped by Jayewardena, into doing his dirty work

(Continued on page 22)



# Too close for Nato's comfort

Edward Mortimer

FOREIGN  
NEWS

Mikhail Gorbachev has arrived in Bonn. So what? Nowadays heads of state spend most of their time flying back and forth, and Mr. Gorbachev has a penchant for foreign travel. He is not the only national leader to find his opposite numbers abroad more polite and more amenable, and foreign crowds more enthusiastic, than he can usually count on them being at home. He is probably more popular in every Nato capital than the local politicians. Why should he not go to West Germany and be popular there too?

Of course there is no reason at all. But it is quite evident that his reception in West Germany causes anxiety, not perhaps in every Nato capital, but certainly in London, Paris and Washington.

Last week in London the Royal Institute of International Affairs held a conference entitled: The Federal Republic of Germany: a Proven Ally of 40 Years. Two German ministers came to London to reassure us that the Federal Republic is indeed an irreproachably loyal ally. One of them, Mr. Lothar Späth, is the minister-president of Germany's economically most successful Land, Baden-Württemberg, and the favourite to succeed Chancellor Helmut Kohl as Christian Democrat leader. The other, Mrs. Ingrid Adam-Schwartz, is a member of Mr. Hans-Dietrich Genscher's free Democrat party and his assistant in the Federal Foreign office.

So much reassurance betrays the presence of a nagging doubt. Mrs. Adam-Schwartz bridled with a show of outraged innocence at a British newspaper's assertion that "the seduction of West Germany by Mr. Gorbachev proceeds apace." "Eighty percent of the people of my country," she countered, "are convinced of the necessity

of our Nato membership." Yes, but that is not the issue at this stage. From time to time the Warsaw Pact does issue rhetorical appeals for the dissolution of both military blocs, but Mr. Gorbachev has certainly not come to Bonn to persuade the Federal Republic to walk out of Nato.

The issue at this stage is not whether Nato, but whither Nato. Mr. Gorbachev seeks to influence Nato as a whole — particularly on issues of nuclear armament and disarmament. He also wants Western investment to oil the creaking wheels of perestroika. On both points he gets a more helpful response from Bonn than from other major Western capitals. His undoubted popularity in West Germany, and the influence that it has on West German political leaders, are clearly useful to him.

Some Western defence specialists are puzzled and irritated by what seem to be a 180-degree turn in the German attitude to nuclear weapons over the last 10 years or so.

For much of its history the Federal Republic has clung, almost obsessively, to the American nuclear umbrella. Being the front line in the Cold War, it knew very well that it would be overrun and devastated in any imaginable scenario for a conventional hot war. Its interest in deterring conventional war was obvious, and its great fear was that, not being a nuclear power itself, it might not get the benefit of the nuclear deterrent. Who would believe that the US would risk its own annihilation to defend West Germany from conventional attack? All the strategic arguments within Nato from the late 1950s to the early 1980s revolved around attempts to answer that question, and the answer took the concrete form of de-

ploying nuclear hardware in Germany itself.

German public opinion never particularly liked this, but German political leaders pushed it through because they were convinced that a credible deterrent was vital to the country's security, if not survival. The last time this happened the leaders in question were the same ones — Helmut Kohl and Hans-Dietrich Genscher — who are still in power now. But now they are running before the wind of public opinion instead of standing up to it. Why? There is a micro-answer and a macro-answer.

The micro-answer is that it all has to do with the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, and more especially with the "second zero". In the minds of the Americans who negotiated it, the INF treaty simply removed one essentially superfluous category of nuclear weapons. The net gain in detail was for the West (since the Soviet Union had to destroy many more warheads than the US did), and the fundamental nuclear equation was unchanged. But the message to the wider public was that the nuclear build-up had now gone into reverse. People assumed that other categories would follow; the idea that new nuclear weapons would still have to be developed and deployed, even to replace obsolescent systems not covered by the treaty, seemed unnecessary, provocative and perverse.

The "second zero" gave that feeling a special focus for Germans by reducing the category of short-range weapons to a point where the range coincided almost exactly with the size of Germany. The catchphrase "the shorter the range the deader the German" is of course nonsense if taken literally. More

(Continued on page 20)



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# Elements of JSP

Sunil Bastian

**A**lthough JSP can be classified as a welfare programme within capitalism it has certain distinguishing elements. Before discussing its possible outcome, it is necessary to identify these elements that characterise it.

First of all it is a targeted programme. In contrast to general subsidies, which would benefit the entire population, JSP is targeted to a needy group. Its beneficiaries are going to be Food Stamp holders or those who are eligible for it. The Food Stamp scheme also had the same character, but at a much lower scale. In other words, JSP keeps to the policy recommendations for the poor that is usually prescribed under a structural adjustment programme. Within the latter, general subsidies which 'distort' market mechanisms, and which usually do not percolate down to the poorest classes are not favoured. What is normally advocated are targeted policies in order to cushion the most needy from the impact of adjustment policies. This is the line of thinking followed in JSP as well.

The scale of JSP was what startled many at the beginning. In the way it was first announced (Rs. 2600 a month to all Food Stamp holders) it would have cost Rs. 42 billion. However the amount allocated in the budget is only Rs. 10 billion. What will be utilised within this year might be even less because of implementation problems. Nevertheless this is relatively a large allocation. It has introduced a new element to the Public Investment programme in order to take care of the poor.

The unit of implementation of the programme is the family. The programme itself has two components — one for consumption and the other for investment. The consumption component is to be given to the recipients largely through kind and not cash. It will more or less be an expanded form

of the Food Stamp scheme, perhaps with a larger basket of goods to choose from. The investment component is expected to make the family self-reliant within a two year period. Therefore it is limited to a certain period.

JSP is the brain child of the present Head of State. Because of the enormous power wielded by the executive President under the present constitution, any programme that gets a backing from the President tends to get a strong support at every level of the government. JSP does not simply have the backing of the President, it is his own programme. Therefore almost every ministry is trying to fit into the programme and every government officer at the A.G.A. level is mobilised for it. According to the plan, the target is to have one officer responsible for each hamlet. A hamlet is supposed to be a unit smaller than the village. Thus there is mobilisation for the programme from the top to the bottom.

This ever expanding ripple effect of Presidential power has influence outside the government as well. JSP is welcomed by sections of the private sector as well as the NGO sector. In other words, there is hardly anyone not supporting JSP, leave alone opposing it. Poverty is by itself an issue that can have social consensus. But a poverty alleviation programme with such a backing from the President and in the present context of social instability seems to generate support all round.

The coordination of the implementation of JSP has been handed over to one of the powerful Ministries — Ministry of Policy Planning. If it had been under a Ministry like the Ministry of Social Service for example, one would not give it a great importance. Such a Ministry would have been constantly struggling with the Finance Ministry to get

the necessary funds. But this is not so in the case of this programme. It had been strategically placed under the very same Ministry responsible for highest level of planning. Perhaps this might result in introducing the reality of poverty at the highest planning level. Sri Lanka is still to see a planning document that includes targets on poverty alleviation. JSP might be able to do this for the first time.

The implementation method adopted for JSP has a very large dose of what one might call populist ideology. It calls for 'participation of recipients' in all stages of implementing the programme; it has 'change agents' (External and internal) to motivate the participants; the government officials are to be more helpers or catalysts assisting the own efforts of people themselves; the implementation is supposed to be 'bottom up' and not 'top down', etc. In other words it has all the elements and jargon of populist ideology within capitalist societies. Whatever might be the actual outcome of this implementation method proposed, its objective at this moment is very clear. It hopes to give the impression of a programme not only caring for the poor but giving primacy of place to them in implementing it.

We would argue that this is directly related to the ideological role such a programme has to play in the present context. The suggested implementation mechanism is the ideological answer to the accusation that post '77 policies have ignored the poor. However this exists through a programme that gets the push from the Head of State. That is, this "bottom up" mechanism of implementation is possible with blessing and power that flows from top to bottom. It is interesting to see how this contradiction will be resolved through the programme.



As stated by spokespersons for JSP on several occasions, the newly formed Provincial Councils are to play an important role in implementing "Jana-saviya programme. Although this element was not there in the initial documents, it was soon rectified. Nevertheless, how this is to be done is still to be clarified.

### **JSP — will it work?**

There is no doubt that the government is keen on implementing a welfare programme directed at the poor. At this juncture it is in the self interest of the ruling section to do so. It is a response to the prevailing situation of social conflicts. It is also an assertion of the more populist wing of the UNP. Although UNP is the best bet that the capitalist mode of production has, it is not a monolithic unit in class terms. Being a product of parliamentary politics, it also has representatives of petty bourgeoisie, whose outlook is more populist. In fact President Premadasa is the best representative of this wing. Even the policies he followed during the last eleven years as the Prime Minister and Minister of Local Government, Housing and Construction, were influenced by this outlook. His million housing programme and his concept of decentralisation, "taking the government to the people", as he calls it, had this character.

One of the mistakes done by the critiques of the post '77 policies was to look at them in a very simplistic manner, most often using clichés of the dependency theory. This framework was imported in toto either from Latin America or to some extent from Philippines. It refuses to recognise the historical role that capitalism can play in societies like ours and provides a more moral criticism of capitalism rather than a structural one. This form of analysis prevented us from looking at policy packages in more detail and its social impact in class terms. This is a major task that has to be carried out

within progressive circles. For the moment it is sufficient to say that a more closer look at the policies followed since 1977 would show many welfare oriented policies. This is not to say that they were successful or achieved their targets or they have successfully tackled social problems of our society. They had shortcomings and limitations as all welfare policies had under this social system, whether they were implemented under a government led by the UNP or the SLFP. However the important thing to understand is the possibility of such programmes within this social system even under a liberalised economic model. Such policies are possible because of the presence of pressure groups representing different social layers within the UNP. What has happened now is something similar. There is a situation today which gives a chance for the more populist section of the UNP to have an upperhand and introduce a new dose of populism. It is also politically necessary for the ruling sections.

However as in the case of all other welfare policies, these are also implemented within capitalist relations. Therefore the question to ask is what are the limitations posed by these structures to the success rate of such policies. In fact the task of the more progressive sections should be to try and push these structures as much as possible. This is what they have been trying to do all along with regard to welfare oriented policies. For example in the area of education, while standing for the principle of "free education" the progressives of this country had tried to push its boundaries. In order to do this, it is important to understand the structural limitations of these policies within this social system. This we shall do now, keeping in mind the main elements of JSP already mentioned.

As already mentioned the JSP policy package is based on an attempt to direct a welfare pro-

gramme to a targeted population, rather than introducing general subsidies. In fact we would argue that this is a better method of looking after the poorer sections of our society within this social system. General subsidies always percolates through the class structure and do not reach those right at the bottom of the social ladder. This had happened in Sri Lanka as well. Therefore targeted intervention of the State has more chances to reach the poorer section at the bottom of the society.

Within the structural adjustment policies however, the amount of resources that are made available for the targeted population is very meagre. It is also done through various mechanisms of implementation such as food for work, nutrition programmes, etc. As often stated this is meant for a cushioning of the target population temporarily. According to this thinking the more permanent benefits of development will reach the poor through "long term trickling down." However when JSP was first announced it deviated from a normal structural adjustment programme for the poor simply because of the scale. Its budgetary requirements amounted to Rs. 42 billion if it was to be implemented in the way it was first announced. Such a programme would have met with lots of difficulties. A direct transfer of resources of that magnitude to the poorer section of our society is almost unthinkable under this social system. It would have led to budgetary problems by pushing up imports. Inflationary impact would have been high.

It also would have generated various social pressures. The fixed income earners whose situation had worsened because of post '77 policies would have been affected even more. Inflationary pressures would have eroded the purchasing power of wage earnings of fixed income earners.

*(Continued on page 28)*



# Commerce dominates culture

Amarawansa

With the activities organised as part of the **Martin Wickremasinghe** Commemoration programme, and felicitation of **Prof. Ediriweera Sarachchandra** on his 75th birthday, the focus shifted, for a brief while, to topics like national culture, identity and orientation.

**Cultural debasement:** Prof. Sarachchandra's own assessment of the state of Sinhala drama, and the prevailing cultural scene was contained in a presentation of his views in the *'Lankadipa'* of Sunday 4th June. After tracing briefly the state of Sinhala drama prior to 'Maname', and the circumstances that lead to his research on Folk Drama culminating in the production of 'Maname' which became an instant hit with Sinhala audiences of the time, Prof. Sarachchandra highlights the disturbing trends that have emerged during the last decade. Among these are an unfortunate change in the composition of Sinhala theatre audiences, and the commercialisation of dramatic and other arts. With the progressive impoverishment of the middle class, the literate and discriminating audience of the Fifties and Sixties have been supplanted by an audience composed mainly of the newly emergent class of small entrepreneurs who were not well acquainted with literature, music and other arts, and wanted merely superficial laughter and entertainment. The growth of a commercial theatre to cater to the tastes of this audience has resulted in the vulgarisation of taste and a steady decline in standards, even though it also provided a basis for the emergence of professional dramatists, actors, and actresses.

Mass media, especially the state owned media like Television, have compounded the adverse effects further by allowing considerations of commercial profit and value alone to determine the choice of programs

and material. The tastes and sensibilities of the people have been debased so much during the last decade, particularly after the introduction and popularisation of television.

Prof. Sarachchandra concludes by reiterating his warning about the likely consequences of these ruinous trends:

"What is happening today? The middle classes who appreciate high and medium quality arts and crafts are battered by economic oppression. There is no room for criticism. If they do they are subject to threats and growls. Sometimes they are even penalised. Everything is now being directed according to commercial considerations. As a result a low level culture is emerging all round. This situation is not at all conducive to the people's welfare, to moral upliftment, and to spiritual development. If we go on like this we will be looked down upon by the international community. How does one recognise one nation from another? It's on the basis of a nation's culture. On the basis of its cultural features like language and values. Only if these are preserved can a nation's identity be preserved. If not we will end up as a worthless, debased (tuppahi) nation. We will be treated with contempt by other nations. It is this cultural decline that is taking place today. If we do not arrest this trend immediately, I have no doubt that as a nation we will end up in total disaster."

**Search for a Sri Lankan Identity:** In an article under the heading 'Martin Wickremasingha's perception about national identity' which appeared in the Wednesday Supplement of the *'Diyaina'* of 7th June, Dr. Nalin de Silva focussed on the prospects for forging a common Sri Lankan identity based on common cultural traits and values.

Martin Wickremasingha's highly perceptive analyses of various aspects of indigenous culture lead him on to the finding that despite the diverse external influences to which it was subject, and the wide variety of sources from which it drew sustenance, our culture had many features and elements which were distinctive and independent, and set it apart from other cultures which influenced it. He referred constantly to the remarkable capacity, the people of this country had, 'to synthesize and adapt whatever they borrowed or absorbed from other cultures, and the distinctive features which are evident in every field, be it arts and crafts, literature, sculpture or architecture. Dr. de Silva examines the relevance and applicability of these findings and ideas in the context of the crisis the nation is faced with today.

While noting that Martin Wickremasingha had referred to the many elements which the Sinhalese had borrowed from Hindu culture, he emphasises that the reverse was also true, in that the Hindus had to a certain extent similarly absorbed some elements of Sinhala culture and yet maintained their identity. This is also the case with the Muslims and even Burghers of this country. All of these communities have in turn developed cultural traits which are distinctive and which set them apart from Tamils, Muslims, Dutch and Portuguese communities and descendants elsewhere. This adaptability and capacity for absorption of elements borrowed from other cultures which is deeply ingrained in the people of this country could be a resource that can be drawn upon in forging a common national identity based on common cultural affinities.

Citing the historical precedent of how the Nagas and Yakkas who originally inhabited this



island, absorbed the cultural traits of the people who came from North India (symbolised in the form of Vijaya) and became Sinhala while retaining a distinct identity, he goes on to state:

"It is necessary to integrate all sections of people in this country like the Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers, as one nation with a common identity. How can this be done? Basically I have no objection to our becoming Sri Lankan at this juncture. If the Yakkas and Nagas could become Sinhala, their should be no problem about Tamils and Muslims becoming Sri Lankan. But we cannot become Sri Lankans like collecting coconuts in a sack. What is meant is that it is not merely an act of putting together various people including the Sinhalese and Tamils in separate groups and calling them Sri Lankan. If we become Sri Lankan there has to be one culture for the nation to be designated Sri Lankan,

and there cannot be several cultures which are separate."

Explaining further that what is envisaged is a common culture within which the different communities could still continue to preserve cultural traits which are specific and exclusive to each group, Dr. de Silva cites the example of the United Kingdom where the common and dominant cultural features are those of English Anglo-saxon culture, but the people of Scotland, for instance, preserve cultural traits which are special to them — like their bag-pipe music and mode of dress like the kilt. Most of the main features of a Sri Lankan culture will, of necessity have to be derived from Sinhala buddhist culture which have had a pervasive influence on the way of life in Sri Lanka.

**'Jathika Chintanaya'**: In the first part of an article which appeared on the same page of the *'Divaina'* of 7th June, H. G. Charles sets out to examine the reasons why we as a nation

have failed to develop what has been conceptualised and termed as national thought or consciousness ('jathika chintanaya') which could provide the necessary cohesion, direction, and thrust to national development or liberation. In his view nationalistic fervour and patriotism constitute the womb within which national thought or consciousness is conceived and nourished as shown by the Indian independence struggle. He goes on to recount how the Indian Swadeshi Movement served as a firm basis for uniting the people against British domination, and instill deep and abiding feelings of national pride and patriotism which provided the necessary thrust for the independence struggle. How great Indian poets like Tagore, Aravinda Gosh, Guru Govind and others through their intensely patriotic writings helped in further intensifying the feelings of loyalty to and pride in, their motherland among the Indian people is dealt with in detail in the rest of this article which is to be continued.

## To close...

(Continued from page 15)

accurate, if less pithy, would be the formulation "the shorter the range the higher the proportion of Germans among the dead." But then no one would be dead if the weapon did its job, which is to deter.

The starting-point of the whole argument (now apparently forgotten) was that the proportion of Germans among the dead in a purely conventional war was likely to be higher still, and that a conventional war would be more likely to happen if there were not a clear risk that it would escalate into a nuclear one, precisely because the superpower might then think it could be confined to Germany.

But that brings us to the macro-answer, which is much simpler. It is that the vast majority of Germans simply do not believe any longer in a real danger of Soviet attack, whether conventional or

nuclear. Why then do they still believe in the necessity of Nato? Presumably they have a residual sense that Nato's existence has ensured their security for the last 40 years and has helped to bring about the present happy state of affairs. Presumably they also feel, as Mr Gorbachev himself argues, that no abrupt step should be taken to upset the present balance and stability in Europe, on which the new *detente* and the hopes of further disarmament and freer communication between the two halves of the continent are based.

An alliance which commits other countries to come to the Federal Republic's assistance costs little in itself (the contingency of German troops being asked to serve on the US-Mexican border being reasonably remote) and may always come in useful. What have come to seem unnecessarily onerous are the specific costs, such as the stationing of nuclear weapons, the interruption of everyday life by low-flying aircraft, or the maintenance of the German

army at a level which falling birth rates make impossible without an extension of military service. (British critics of German policy are ill-placed to develop this last point, since Britain has had no compulsory military service at all for the last 30 years.)

Perhaps it is fitting that the Federal Republic, as it celebrates its own 40th birthday and that of the Atlantic Alliance, seems to be coming back to the original conception of that alliance as a purely political commitment. It was the Korean War that convinced the allies that a military organisation was needed to make the commitment credible. North Korea's attack on South Korea was interpreted as evidence that Stalin intended to expand the frontiers of the communist world by military aggression. Historians now believe that that interpretation was wrong about Stalin. Can the Germans really be blamed for refusing to interpret Gorbachev's intentions in the same way?



# The Liberal Myth

R. S. Perinbanayagam

One must not stop short with accounts of the violence; what must be explained are the structures of conflict that lead to the violence. In explaining this conflict one can overdo this demons, devils and sorcery bit. If one overcomes the fascination with their charms, one can see that there are other myths that go to constitute the ontology of the Sinhalese (and the Tamils too), that can more parsimoniously account for the conflict in the island after independence from the British was achieved. These myths have been created and distributed, I believe, more widely and deeply than the primordial ones.

**The new myths:** If the primordial myths are capable of creating "the fundamental principle of being in the world and the orientation of such a being towards the horizons of its experience" (p. 79), then the new myths are infinitely more capable of doing so.

From the middle of the nineteenth century itself a new myth that I will call the **Liberal myth** has been created and distributed in Sri Lanka. From the very early years of the British administration this potent myth has nurtured not only institutions but had contributed many elements to an emerging Sri Lankan "ontology".

This myth manifests in the economic sphere as in the socio-political one. In 1833, what came to be known as the "Colombo Reforms" changed the economic and political life of the people. In history books, the creation of a legislative council and the conferment of certain powers to the local elite are typically recorded as important events. However the economic changes that the reforms introduced and the social implications were more far-reaching than the legislative reforms. In mythic terms they

became the seeds of an ontology of self and activity and economic advancement and social liberation. They introduced a number of reforms designed to create a *laissez faire* system in the island. The commission rejected the *rajakariya* system and sought to abolish economic monopolies. They discouraged the state from participating in economic activities, besides creating an environment for the free enterprise of individuals to occur. This was a fundamental change in theory and practice which at once challenged not only the mercantilist practices that the British had introduced but also the feudalist premises of old Sri Lanka.

This may not have had immediate consequence to the masses of the country in practical terms; however the elite structures as well as some non-elite ones were able to engage in trade and commercial agriculture and become economically independent. For example, even the Kandyan peasants described in many Sri Lankan treatises as indifferent to new economic opportunities, were found to have engaged in cultivating coffee for profit on a small scale. The same could be said of the Karaves of the maritime provinces. Traditionally occupied in seafaring and soldierly activities they took to the new economic opportunities and prospered into a social and politically powerful segment of the society (Roberts, 1982). In the north, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula, the members of the middle castes as well as landless members of the higher castes took to both economic enterprise and educational programs with a vengeance, changing the social life of Jaffna forever. In economic life too, the ideology of trade and business and commercial agriculture (for example tobacco cultivation) began to take hold and lead to radical changes in a few decades.

These activities — and many related ones that need not be discussed here, radically undermined the feudal/mercantilist structure of economic and social relations. Changes in this structure developed also, it is safe to say, however slowly and incoherently, an ethnotheoretical/ontological change in the consciousness of the people. This change can be summed up as **the developing belief that an individual is not completely bound by the caste system, the tenurial system and the barter system and can venture into social and economic and monetary transactions as he wished.**

No doubt only a few took practical advantage of these developments but many were to become imbued with it, nevertheless, at the ontological level in Kapferer's terminology. These changes then opened up the possibilities for the individual, even if he did not realize them in practical terms. It laid the seeds of a new esteem of the self as well as the new esteem of the group of which he was a member, including the caste. If the Vijaya and Duita Gemunu and Sooniyam myths are capable of defining the ontological limits of Sinhalese consciousness, the new myths of economic opportunity, enterprise and limited liberation from caste-occupations and bounds, were to more likely to define its contours and contents.

These myths of the economic and social sphere beginning from 1833 in merely legal forms no doubt took a long time to mature into a generalized belief system. There is no denying however that as the years advanced, it did move in that direction. This myth was soon reinforced by an equally powerful new one — the one of political equality. The universal adult franchise was put into practice in the elections of



1932. Even before then a partial franchise was in operation and elections were lively and hotly contested events. Universal adult franchise, on a merely technical level allowed people to vote in elections and chose a member of the governing council and it allowed them to do it secretly. The elections to the State Council were soon extended to local communities as well. Municipalities, Village committees and Town councils emerged and once again people were asked to vote for a candidate of their choice. Moreover, the elite of the land and the locality now came canvassing the support of the humble peasant, worker, low-caste laborer and coolie. Not merely content to canvass them, they were soon being cultivated as well as the pampered. Almost invariably in the early elections the people tended to vote for the local chieftain or landlord, often aided by his hired thugs, money and alcohol. The fact of the vote nevertheless conferred certain powers on the masses.

This was as heady a myth as can be designed for a society, particularly for its non-dominant sections who were victims of a double slight. The European peasant had only the feudal slights, based on land-ownership, to face. The Sri Lanka peasant had to deal with that as well as the slights based on caste with attendant theories of karmic "faults" and vague notions of pollution. This myth of political power, based on the franchise was to become a very forceful feature of the Sri Lankan's ontology. The many elections that Sri Lanka has had since Independence, the enthusiasm and decisiveness with which the Sri Lankan participated in them recently, even at the risk of their lives, bears ample testimony to its potency in the local ontology. Indeed those who opposed the elections in the latest exercise of this myth, made another of their self-destructive miscalculations. Sri Lanka is one of the few places in the world where the franchise is taken by the masses as conferring so much power that they exercise it regu-

larly to "throw the rascals out" with a certain regularity. It is foolish for anyone to ask them to surrender such a potent weapon without a struggle.

The final myth that was to define the ontology of the Sri Lankan masses was a result of

*(Continued on page 28)*

## The Marxist...

*(Continued from page 14)*

while another notion is that there is a much deeper Indian design. I would say both are correct. It is true that Rajiv Gandhi has been taken for a ride by Jayewardene when it has come to actual implementation of the accord. I think Rajiv would have preferred to have the accord implemented in full. But the structural question remains — the Indian state, the nature of the Indian state, its role. In that sense, I think it has aspired to recognition as a "sub-super-power" and it has always got it from the Soviet Union from the time of Khrushchev. The problem with the Americans was that they failed to concede it until after Bangladesh. However, the U.S. can concede it relatively unproblematically on the question of Sri Lanka. This is not so concerning Pakistan where the American commitment goes back three decades. This is enhanced because of Afghanistan. But on Sri Lanka American stakes are sufficiently low. It's a non-zero sum game it can concede India's regional pre-eminence only on this question. So I think there is a condominium between the United States and India on this question.

The role of the Indian State is very much like the role of a Bonapartist State. It is a regional Bonapartism, relatively autonomous of the contending forces (Sinhala and Tamil), tilting to one side and then the other and finally imposing a settlement, a *Pax Indica*, on both. At one time it tilts to the Tamils, equips them, then it tilts to the Sinhalese and raps the Tamils.

What must be understood is that 'regional Bonapartism' acted through the 'domestic Bonapartism' of the Jayewardena regime, while the latter leaned on the former. Jayewardena was balancing between —

- a) the Sinhalese and the Tamils
- b) the fractions of his own party and government
- c) the left and the ultra-right,

He was relatively autonomous of these forces and cracked down alternately on each.

India is now trying to get some more concessions from the Sinhalese. In order to pacify the Tamils, including those in Tamil Nadu, India will have to extract sufficient concessions out of Colombo. But will we have some 'relaxation of tensions' as a by-product of that? Will the Tamil people accept any Provincial Council structure in which the LTTE is not represented and even if the other groups accept representation won't they be incessantly trampled by the LTTE? Will EROS have its role enhanced because the Indians need pipeline to a quasi-LTTE group, or reduced because they may be penalised by the LTTE for being close to the Indians and by the Indians for being critical of the IPKF offensive? Most fundamentally will India be a force for prising open democratic space or for propping up even more repressive regimes in the north-east and the south? Will Delhi realise that the opening up of safety valves in south is in its interest?

I don't see a danger of India being able to establish a new colonial hold over Sri Lanka because the Sri Lankan bourgeoisie does not have any significant degree of economic dependence on the Indian big bourgeoisie. In that sense the IPKF doesn't have any 'anchorage' in the island: it's kind of hanging in mid air. I do think though that the IPKF's size should be rapidly scaled down leading to its substitution by a multilateral force—something akin to a U.N. peace keeping force. Such a force would not be a magnet but a blurred target for chauvinists.



# J.R. : a political portrait

James Manor

BOOK  
REVIEW

[T]here have been several biographies written about Mr. J. R. Jayewardene but none so informative or interesting as that by Prof. K. M. de Silva, Professor of History, University of Peradeniya, and Prof. Howard Wriggins, an authority on South Asian Politics and one-time US Ambassador to Sri Lanka.

Titled **J. R. Jayewardene—A Political Biography**, it is the first volume of a two-volume publication and runs into 320 pages. The publishers are Anthony Blond/Quartet. An announcement from the publishers in late 1988 said the book would originally be available in the United States and Canada. Now it is available in Sri Lanka. An advertisement in *The Sunday Times* of 4th February said, "It is not an official biography or an authorised version of his life. It presents a candid account of the remarkable career of a man who has been in the public life of this country, for the longest period this century. A well researched work, it provides a wealth of information, not only about President J. R. Jayewardene, but also about the forces of change in the country's politics from colonial times, through independence to the later tempestuous periods. The authors have used as source material published and unpublished documents, including the President's diaries, a mass of letters and interviews with persons who have known him for a long time.")

## James Manor writes:

J. R. Jayewardene has been an important figure in the high politics of Sri Lanka since 1947—his country's Prime Minister and then its executive President since 1977—so his story offers a useful way into the recent history of this fascinating and sometimes alarming island. He is also one of the five or six most intelli-

gent and adroit politicians to achieve prominence in South Asia over the past half century.

This book, the first of two volumes by K. M. de Silva, Sri Lanka's most eminent historian, and Howard Wriggins, who has written the best study of the island's politics and was United States Ambassador during the first four years of Jayewardene's current spell in power, covers the period up to 1956 and is predominantly the work of de Silva. Half of it is a deft account of Jayewardene's ancestry, youth and early political life before he joined the first Cabinet on the eve of the island's independence. These were such palmy days for the anglicized landed elite, and the young man was emotionally so well balanced, that it adds up to a less than riveting story. But de Silva injects enough solid social and political analysis to carry us along. Once Jayewardene becomes Finance Minister in 1947, there is far more to interest us. He has to find ways to maintain welfare state provisions that Ceylonese ministers had initiated under colonial diarchy, while responding to pressures from conservative interests, including his own Prime Minister. He helps to develop the Colombo Plan and presses complacent colleagues for concessions to the Sinhalese language and culture. When Sinhalese discontents burst out in 1955, he wages a vain struggle to persuade the monumentally insensitive Prime Minister to respond. The result is defeat for Jayewardene and his party at the 1956 election, the crystallization of something like a two-party system, and the emergence of Sinhalese chauvinism as a major political force. In opposition, Jayewardene then sets about rebuilding his party and proves to be the only leading politician in either major party who under-

stands the importance of organization-building. And yet, for reasons that are still obscure he remains deferential to the failed scion of the party's dominant family, as most others in both parties did for far too long.

In most of this, de Silva's assessments are sound. He has always been able to draw his readers along with tart comments or throwaway criticisms, and he often does so here. But Jayewardene himself largely escapes this acute treatment. This is pity, since a little less close identification with him would have yielded a picture of the man that was more rounded and—ironically—more appealing. This is the book's main weakness, but another more marginal problem cannot be ignored. Readers who know nothing of events in Sri Lanka under Jayewardene's leadership, during the past eleven years will conclude from this book that things have gone reasonably well. Mention is made of the "tragic events of that tempestuous decade", but the nation and the President appear to have risen above them. He did not allow these events "to erode his commitment to policies of reconciliation with the Tamil minority", and he worked to prevent tensions from "damaging its democratic system beyond repair". This is misleading. Sinhalese mobs rioted against Tamils in 1977, 1981 and 1983. The first and last of these entailed ghastly carnage, and in 1983 elements within the ruling party organised and abetted much of the mayhem. The Government failed to deliver on promises to Tamils of modest devolution in 1981. After 1983, acts of terrorism by Tamil extremists were more than matched by massacres

(Continued on page 24)



# Lyn's 'Long Afternoons'

A couple of months ago a few of us were treated to a most delectable hors d'oeuvre in the form of a letter by Ian Goonetilleke, and subsequently this communication appeared in the L.G. of 15th October 88. On the 25th of May 89 (last month) we were introduced to an equally enticing entree at the British Council with garnishings by one time students of Ludowyk, Reggie Siriwardena and Ashley Halpe, a junior contemporary of his at Richmond College, Kenneth de Lanerolle, and Neville Kanakeratne who had come to know 'Ludo' through the University (or University College) 'Dram soc' of his days.

Given to reminiscing, the evening conveyed to me, more than anything else, a sense of irretrievable loss, and the demise of a culture. Each one of the speakers attempted a partial reconstruction of some part of the man to whom they had owed a great deal. And this essay would have appeared a little superfluous to that limited audience whose members already knew something of the man, if not for the fact that the speakers chosen for the meeting dealt with matters within their own personal experience.

This meeting therefore was more than a launching of a book. Thank heavens Ludowyk was not there in some guise, for he would have been the first person to have laughed at that kind of introduction of a book or author to the public. I doubt very much if he ever dreamt of a book of his being "launched". If he knew that what he had handed over to Ian Goonetilleke with the express request for it to be published only posthumously was destined for the kind of thing the publishers had organised, he would have made an additional request that it should not be "launched".

Ashley [Halpe] of course read a few lines from the book, just

to draw the attention of the audience to its literary excellence, but the others, as I have already mentioned, confined themselves to aspects of his personality each one knew best. Kenneth had known him and his family members, at Richmond College, the Galle of the burghers during the time covered by the book. Reggie, apart from other matters, reminded listeners how Ludowyk introduced them to Brecht at a time when he was hardly discussed in literary circles.

He meant not only in this country! Even in Britain Brecht had been unknown when Ludowyk had drawn his students attention to the German dramatist about whom anyone in the theatre world today would love to expatiate at length on the slightest provocation. This fact alone speaks volumes of Ludowyk's rare capacity to make literary judgements that could stand the test of time.

Kanakeratne who had read law had the privilege of coming into contact with Ludowyk in the theatre. He recalled how his mentor had worked with dedication to develop a theatrical tradition, and how eagerly he watched everyone of his productions, how he was keen to observe audience reactions, and how he introduced plays that were hardly known to his audiences. How he assisted Sarachchandra in "Kapuwa Kapotti" and launched him on his epoch making career in the Sinhala theatre was mentioned, but he did not have the time to deal with that catalytic development at any length.

Each of the speakers had, I suppose, been asked to speak briefly on what each one knew best about the man, and not so much on his work or his singular achievement. As such, and the occasion being one where a book was being launched, none got a chance to do more than just making a few appropriate comments to refresh the

memories of those in the audience and to lead them on to the last book which is very different from both his literary studies and the less academic but nonetheless very perceptively and ably written books about Sri Lanka.

**Tilak A. Gunawardhana**

## JR : A Political...

*(Continued from page 23)*

of Tamil non-combatants by mainly Sinhalese security forces. Jayewardene may have attempted a reconciliation between them and been too weak to prevent these enormities, but there is some evidence to the contrary and the issue cannot be easily dismissed.

What is clear is that he shelved Sri Lanka's democratic traditions — at least temporarily — in 1982. He was re-elected President in an election in which his main opponent, Mrs. Bandaranaike, was prevented from standing or even from speaking. He then ducked a general election by prolonging Parliament's life by six years. A referendum to endorse this was attended by thuggery and severe abuses, so that it cannot be taken seriously.

These painful events are sufficiently remote from the period covered in the book but they compel us to approach Jayewardene and every other Sri Lankan leader with caution, born of an awareness of how cruelly ambiguous the island's recent history has been. Such caution is largely lacking here, and this prevents de Silva from writing at his best.

*(The book is priced at Rs. 750/- and is available at Lake House Bookshop).*

*(T. L. S., London).*



## LONG TIME PASSING

*"I can't recognise you.  
I have changed a great deal."*

— Oscar Wilde

At twenty, he thought what a marvellous woman she was.  
At twenty-five, she left him in despair, he wanted to die.  
At forty, she came back into his life. After one evening,  
"How uninteresting she is!" he said to himself with a sigh.  
Yet, to be honest, he had to admit she looked very much the same; walked with the same shy demeanour that enchanted him once; thought the same;  
was the same person, really. Is that, he wondered, why?

## THE FALL

*"I should have bought a dog early in my life,  
which would have saved me from all those  
unhappy love affairs."*

— Kamala Das,  
in a newspaper interview.

When the animals appeared before Adam to be named,  
there came, trotting between rhinoceros and puma,  
a much smaller four-footed creature. His appearance  
appealed at once to Adam's sense of humour —  
his brown eyes were so comically wistful, his tail wagged so busily, like a reed in the wind. Adam took  
him home to Eve as a present. As he had expected,  
she fell in love with the creature at the first look,  
so he was taken into their Eden bower. Eve taught him  
toilet-training. He learned, when his human friends were in bed

to curb his impulses to bark; to amuse them with games  
of retrieving sticks and stones, or of shamming dead.

But most of all, he learned new and alien emotions.  
When Eve (lonely, because Adam had gone to meet God) gazed deep into his brown eyes, he felt an answering stir of sympathy as he licked her feet.

So in the end, when Adam and Eve had sinned, and in tears left the paradisaal garden, which all lay desolate, there came, trotting sadly behind them, the first creature ever to have known the Fall.

## THE WISDOM OF AGE ?

I used to love the rich,  
Sweet flavour of port, when young.  
Now what delights me most  
Is the tartness upon the tongue

Of a dry martini. In youth  
I was drunk on the liquor of Donne,  
On Yeats's beglamoured image  
Of his grand passion, Maud Gonne.

Beethoven's Seventh and Ninth  
Went to my head like wine.  
Today I drink fresh water  
At other fountains — the fine

Control of a Pushkin lyric,  
The self-restraint of Frost,  
A Bach partita's calm,  
— And my heart's no longer tossed

(I'm glad) by living beauty.  
The roar of its dangerous seas  
Withdrawn, I turn to the quiet  
Walters of friendship for ease.

Is this the fruit of experience ?  
Declining years ? Maturity ?  
Wisdom ? Or blood run cold ?  
Who is to say ? Not me.



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## Giving Ibsen a cinematic feel — the Ray touch

Satyajit Ray, sidelined for more than half a decade by heart disease, has returned to the cinema world with his 26th feature film and first screen adaptation of a play, Henrik Ibsen's "Enemy of the People."

The film had its premiere at the recently-concluded Cannes Festival. Called "Ganashatru" in Bengali, it has already been picked up by distributors in Britain and France.

The film will not open in Calcutta till later this year because the 67-year-old Ray, always the perfectionist, does not want to subject it to the city's non-air-conditioned theatres during the suffocating summer. "They keep the fans whirling all the time," he said. "It ruins the soundtrack."

"Why I chose a play for the first time in my career," Ray explained, relaxing in his Calcutta apartment on a warm night, "was that for five years I had not made a film because of illness. Then the doctors suggested that I could go back to making films provided I worked only in the studio, not on locations."

"If it had to be confined within the studio, then I started thinking of a play," he said. "I had read Ibsen as a young man in collage and I remembered 'Enemy of the People'. I read him again. It seemed the play could be brought up to date, transplanted to Bengal and turned into a completely Indian story, relevant to modern times."

"So I decided on Ibsen, and we got going," he said. "I wrote a screenplay; I adapted it. Three or four drafts, and there it was, ready to be filmed."

"An Enemy of the People", a five-act play Ibsen wrote in 1882, tells the story of Thomas Stockmann, a doctor in a Norwegian resort who falls afoul of vested interests when he tries to sound a warning that the

town's mineral baths have been polluted by industrial wastes.

Seeing their local prosperity threatened, even liberals turn against him, seeking to suppress his scientific report. He is hounded into isolation, a man of principle who has become an enemy of the people.

The play was thought to be Ibsen's sharp retort to Norwegian society's negative response to his previous play, "Ghosts." "An Enemy of the People" portrays a hypocritical middle class, easily persuaded to trade in their idealism for security.

Ray, who cast the man he calls his favourite actor, Soumitra Chatterji, as his Dr. Gupta, the Bengali Stockmann, said the shooting of the film went very well and that his health seemed to improve in the process.

The director comes close to being worshipped by Calcuttans, who save their highest regard for artists. In a city where people will pay for a tape of Ray's voice, his health is a matter of great local concern.

Dressed in white cotton shirt and pajamas, Ray said he feels very close to Calcuttans and would not want to work anywhere else.

Sounds of the city drifted through the large open windows as he talked in his huge, high-ceilinged study piled with papers and books. The elegant old apartment, a virtual film set for intellectual Calcutta life, has had to make only one concession to modernisation: an elevator has been installed outside in the hall to save Ray, who has had coronary bypass surgery, a climb up several flights of stairs.

"Everything was made inside the studio in Calcutta," he said of "Ganashatru", a film of about 100 minutes duration. "We had a 45-day schedule. We finished

in 28 days. We worked incredibly fast, particularly because I had a wonderful set of actors. It was okay on the first take much of the time, so I did not even have to take a second or third take."

"I had an ambulance and a doctor in attendance. My cardiologist would occasionally drop in, my family physician would come. You see, they were interested because it was the story of a doctor. Apart from taking my blood pressure and pulse, they were interested in what was going on and how the doctor was behaving in the circumstances."

"Their verdict was that I kept better when I was shooting," the director said with a low laugh. "The adrenaline, or whatever, caused an improvement in my health. They said that I should certainly be making one film a year and that in the next film, I could even include a few outdoor scenes."

Ray calls his version of "An Enemy of the People" a free adaptation of Ibsen. "People will recognise Ibsen," he said. "The debt to Ibsen is there, the five-act structure is there. But apart from that, I have had to make changes. You inevitably have to make changes. People behave differently, you see."

Ray said he dealt with the staginess inherent in a dramatic work by pulling it farther and farther out from under the proscenium as he went along. This attempt to give the story a cinematic feel has wrought additional alterations in the Ibsen work. "The first act has a lot of words, a lot of entrances and exits, but it is as cinematic as I could make it."

"Gradually, more and more, as the story develops, it departs more and more from Ibsen and becomes more and more cine-

THE ARTS



matic," he said. "Particularly, the public meeting that takes place in the film is very unlike the scene in the play. It is very mobile and free; lots of camera movements — cuts and so on and not a plethora of dialogue."

Ray said he knew that the Ibsen play would have contemporary appeal, in India as well as abroad, apart from its novelty as an Indian's view of a Scandinavian theatrical work.

"It deals with topical problems," said Ray. "Pollution is still a problem, as much as it was a hundred years ago — more than that, much more than that." Ray is optimistic that this time-liness of the topic, among other attractions — not the least being his reputation — "will help National Film Development Corporation, the production's backer, to market the film in the United States."

"There is considerable interest abroad, partly because it is Ibsen. And then, Arthur Miller had an adaptation of the Ibsen play, which has been playing in London recently and is doing very well. So I am sure is an additional reason for interest in this film."

Like this film, Ray's previous work, "Ghare Baire" (Home and the World), based on a story by Rabindranath Tagore, was also shown abroad before being screened in Calcutta.

But Ray, who has an international stature not shared by other Indian directors, dismisses brusquely the contention of some Indian critics that his films are made for foreign audiences. "I always make my films primarily for my own audience. I have never known what kind of film will export well. I have never been able to fathom what goes down well with the Western audience."

"You know, I made a film once called 'The Music Room', which thought was so Indian because it had lots of Indian classical singing and dancing and music," he recalled. "It

deals with problems which are totally Indian. I thought that film would never export. But it did very well abroad and now in France, it is my most popular film. It is considered to be one of the great films of all time," he laughed heartily. "I just do not understand. My first film was a big success in Calcutta, even before it won a prize in Cannes," he said of "Pather Panchali" released in 1955. "It is wrong to say that my success abroad eventually gave me a footing here. That is not true. In fact, I have often had great difficulties in translating the dialogues, because they were so Indian, and so Bengali. So if I had thought of the Western audience first, then I certainly would have thought of different films."

Ray said his deep attachment to Bengal has led him to reject foreign film-making offers all his life. "I could have made films in Hollywood. I have had many offers, which I turned down, because I do not have my roots there."

The director acknowledges that with a relatively small Bengali market, and with a ban on Indian films in neighbouring, Bengali-speaking Bangladesh, he has been grateful for his success abroad. "The international market helps me to survive as a film maker," he said.

*N.Y.K. Times*

## Elements. . .

*(Continued from page 18)*

Such a transfer of resources to a targeted poorer section would have met with resistance from other classes. This will include both bourgeois and "intermediate" classes. These groups would have found it difficult to accept the fact that while they who work and earn are affected, the poorer sections are entitled to this benefit. On the other hand they support general subsidies because they benefit from them as well. In fact those towards the top of the social

ladder reap more benefits from general subsidies. This is not so in a targeted welfare programme. Thus it is not difficult to see the opposition to a large scale transfer of resources towards the most needy would have generated in this society.

As revealed by the figures disclosed during the Budget speech, the programme has been scaled down. The allocation for the first year is only Rs. 10 billion. It is quite possible that the problems of implementation will see that expenditure is at an even lower level. Still thus a significant increase for welfare programmes and some of the problems stated above have to be handled. However we are talking now of a programme of a much lower scale.

**(To be continued)**

## The Liberal. . .

*(Continued from page 22)*

the others discussed so far. The myth of economic opportunity and equality created expectations of economic success. The myth of political equality created certain beliefs in the political process and its institutions. In its second term the State Council, a more or less representative body, created the myth of educational opportunity and equality. It enacted what came to be known as the Free Education Scheme and opened educational opportunities to all those who could not afford them in the past. Its slow beginning in the war years were soon followed by a scheme to build schools throughout the island. In the fifties and sixties a system of mass education, the like of which is not found in any developing country, was established. Education was now available, from the kindergarten to the university to a large number of people and to segments of the people whose ancestors, immediate and distant, were illiterate and never even dreamt of education.

**Next: Three Myths**



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