

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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As strikes continue and life grinds to a halt

MPs demand tough action to arrest situation

Terrorism Fund for Private Buses

GCE 'O' and 'A' exams postponed

Parliament adjourned after commotion

INCITERS WILL BE SHOT ON SIGHT

By Roy Danish

meeting that the armed forces... tempting to provoke violence... he said... all public

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Thondaman in Delhi tries to end rift

Rajiv keen to clear deadlock on IPKF

Sri Lanka firm on boycotting SAARC

by Winston de Valliere

to persuade Sri Lanka to reconsider its decision will

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meanwhile was scheduled to have

The Sri Lankan Crisis — last turn of the screw? — Mervyn de Silva

How large is the IPKF? — Ravi Rikhye

Another look at Naipaul — Izeth Hussain

Benazir Bhutto : the education of a leader — Neelan Tiruchelvam

The JVP : Confluence of four currents — Dayan Jayatilleka

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TRENDS

CREDIT SQUEEZE

The credit squeeze recently imposed on the commercial banks has affected the cash flow so drastically in the past few weeks of turmoil that the Central Bank is being pressed for a less restrictive policy. The near-total breakdown of banking activities have hit normal business severely and our best clients are in serious trouble. Laying-off labour or stopping all new recruitment are choices that can have other ill-effects on the economy. So we would welcome relief measures", observed a director of a top finance company.

A senior executive of a foreign bank said that import curbs, specially on luxuries, were desirable but the effects on the chaotic situation since mid June did require a "review of policy" to get business moving again.

LAWYER KILLED

A 35-year old attorney, Charitha Lankapura, who had figured in many human rights cases, was killed in his Slave Island home by unidentified gunman.

According to a Government communique (July 30):

"University students forcibly removed the dead body of attorney-at-law Charitha Lankapura from the undertaker after the magistrate released the body to the next of kin. The university students thereby committed an illegal act.

"The university authorities had informed the police in Boralle that no dead body could be permitted in the university premises.

"Thereafter, the security forces removed the body and handed it over to the next of kin for cremation".

TEA DOWN

There was a 22 per cent drop in black tea production in the first five months of this year, compared to the corresponding period last year, according to figures made available by the Sri Lanka Tea Board.

The figures were 80,941,295 kg compared with 103,742,857 kg, a decrease of 22,801,562 kg or 22 per cent. The decrease for the month of May alone was 546,400 kg.

INDIA TRADE

The major banks, including the Bank of Ceylon, have

reported a sharp downturn in the number of LC's opened for Indian goods since the mid-June anti-Indian "boycott campaign" was launched by the JVP. The decline was severe, a banker told the ISLAND but declined to quantify the trend.

INSPECTION TEAMS

The appointment of two high-level teams by Sri Lanka and India to discuss a time-table for the total withdrawal of the IPKF has been proposed by the SLMP National Organizer, Mr. Ossie Abeygoonesekera. The SUN reported that he had urged that two delegations, preferably parliamentary, should visit each other's country to assess the actual situation and then draw up a precise timetable.

These could also serve as 'inspection teams' to watch the actual troop pull out.

LADBA

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LET THE HEADLINES SPEAK...

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

On the cover of this issue of the L.G., dated July 15 but printed a week later, we have reproduced several headlines from the daily press of the past weeks. "Let the Headlines speak..." was the frame of mind in which we put the clippings together, hoping that the montage would convey to the reader, particularly our growing overseas readership, not just the dramatic character of the fast moving events but something of the spirit of the crisis which is upon us. And of course, what sense we can make of it even as we ourselves are swept by the swirling currents. More and more, we note in passing, we become conscious of the function of this little journal as a compulsive monitor of that crisis, a role thrust upon us rather than consciously undertaken, by a national tragedy that is larger and more commanding than any institution or individual, political party, social group, or regime in the past decade. The crisis deepens. And it accelerates. There is no respite. The 'State of Emergency' is no longer a law or a collection of restrictive regulations. It is no more a temporary measure or an aberration. Emergency rule is not abnormal. It is the norm. "Emergency" is the permanent feature, a way of life, the national condition.

The so-called 'state of Emergency' testifies to a State and Society in the vice-like grip of crisis.

Third World observers may take some slight comfort from the thought that this is a chronic condition of many an underdeveloped 'new' nation-state. In our view, Sri Lanka is unique.

We know of no other country which is confronted by a triple threat — to its sovereignty, its unity and territorial integrity, to State power and one might add, to civilised life itself. Lebanon is in better shape!

And so we start with the demand of the Government parliamentary group, which urged "tough action to arrest" a situation of near-total paralysis. In short, tough emergency rule.

As President Premadasa kept repeating on almost every public platform, he removed the emergency in line with his polls promise, and ordered the release of 1,800 suspected 'subversives' detained under emergency. How did the Security Establishment react to this move? Knowing the psychology of 'security' organisations in almost every country, not too happily is a fair guess. Here then was the classic duel and dilemma on the basic question of 'how to deal with security threats' — politically, militarily or a judicious combination of both. The civilians prefer the purely political; the military mind the other.

The declaration of the Emergency represented then a turning point. In practice, it meant arming the security Establishment with extraordinary powers which, experience again in most Third World nations shows, can lead to abuses. (Hence the emergence and intense activity of 'human rights' groups).

The nature of the threat was a new factor. The regime faced a new enemy, a silent, subterranean and deadly enemy on an entirely new front. The pre-election period saw many a crippling hartal but no work

stoppages by organised labour, no widespread strikes by major trade unions. The Economy is the silent and sinister foe. Inflation is one of its dangerous weapons. And Sri Lanka is particularly vulnerable, with its administration trapped between the hopes of an electorate, built on polls pledges, and the dictates of the IMF. (The IMF team will be here by Sept-Oct, to discuss a vital loan that has not been negotiated since March 1988).

Thanks largely to the J. S. S. and the strong-arm tactics which led to the collapse of the 1980 General strike and the subsequent demoralisation of unionised labour, the trade union movement has been splintered and greatly weakened. The JVP has made an earnest bid to build its own trade union base. It has not been too successful.

Yet, a new 'Satan Paramuna' was able in a matter of weeks to seize the initiative and open a new anti-government front.

Since President Premadasa had seized the most potent propagandist weapon in the JVP armoury — the IPKF issue — this was a remarkably adroit JVP counter-manoeuve, and it proved stunningly successful. Economic life in Sri Lanka did grind steadily to a halt.

CENSORED

Will the other unions remain inactive?

Meanwhile July 29, President Premadasa's deadline approaches. Will the IPKF start its pull-out? Most unlikely, judging by Prime Minister Gandhi's speeches and other official statements. It sim-

(Continued on page 4)

AMIRTHALINGAM

When a quirk of the 'winner takes all' electoral system gave the TULF more seats in parliament than the S.L.F.P. Mr. Appapillai Amirthalingam became the Leader of the Opposition. It wasn't the happiest turn of events. The Government-Opposition division accentuated the communal divide.

It was a tribute to the relatively young Opposition Leader's understanding of parliamentarism and its basic ideals that he was able to meet the demands of the

higher office without compromising his commitment to his own party and its program. As Opposition Leader his finest hour was the speech he made when a cock-a-hoop UNP manoeuvred the expulsion of SLEP President Mrs. Bandaranaike from the House. This scandalous travesty of justice was denounced by Mr. Amirthalingam with a perfect mixture of controlled rage, a sober statement on the first principles of parliamentary democracy, and solemn warning.

If the frail, ascetic Chelvanayakam, the founder of the Federal party, was the father-figure of the Tamil movement, 'Amir' was its young, vigorous voice. The Tamil movement was soon to break out of parliamentarism. Young men with guns took command. As long as 'Amir' remained TULF leader however, the democratic path was still open to the generation after him. Time will bring him greater recognition.

M.

Enter EROS

Before the month ends, E. R. O. S. will become a fully-pledged parliamentary party to signal the slow, fitful but basically positive process of the re-incorporation of the Eelam militants into the Sri Lankan body politic. Thirteen EROS representatives elected at the last parliamentary polls will take their oath under the constitution. Only the LTTE, the most powerful, will remain outside, largely because it boycotted the elections, like the JVP in the South.

EROS, a special case, is specially important. Like the EPRLF, the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students, was Marxist-oriented initially, unlike the LTTE which was explicitly and fanatically nationalist. Ideology apart, EROS, pursued a policy of tactical cooperation with the LTTE. It was the only Tamil militant group which did not invite the wrath of the 'Tigers' and face its fury.

While the 'Tigers' are still engaged in negotiations with

the UNP government, EROS which won the largest number of seats in Parliament but did not make its acceptance of Parliament formal by taking the oath of allegiance, will now become the biggest Tamil group in the House. Its leading voices in Parliament will be the former military commander Shankar Raji, and the party's founder Chairman, E. Ratnasabapathy. In terms of Tamil armed struggle and its history, their parliamentary presence has a symbolic significance, no less noteworthy than the LTTE's public announcement of a cessation of hostilities with the Sri Lanka government. ●

Let the

(Continued from page 3)

ply doesn't suit his pre-election plans. The fact that the Indian Opposition has in turn grabbed

the IPKF issue to beat Mr. Gandhi will only make it more difficult for the "regional superpower" to yield. There is the question of 'face'—his own and that of the world's fourth biggest army.

What counter-strategy has Sri Lanka got? First, regional and international opinion; and second the talks with the LTTE.

Mr. Gandhi has been busy making his own moves to meet criticism abroad. And he is still hoping he can convince Mr. Premadasa that a compromise is possible. Hence, Mr. Dashmukh's visits to US and UK (the two most influential countries vis-a-vis Sri Lanka) and his trip to Colombo, cancelling a scheduled journey to Moscow to join Mr. Gandhi there. He has failed however to win Prime Minister Bhutto's backing. "India has its own point of view" said Prime Minister Bhutto after her meeting with Mr. Gandhi. "But we have expressed our concern with the developments" in Sri Lanka.

How Many Indian Troops in Sri Lanka?

Ravi Rikhyo

India requires a defence consensus at this troubled juncture in its national security affairs. Unless the government comes clean on Sri Lanka there is no chance of building the needed consensus.

With the highly publicised withdrawal of four Indian infantry battalions (6,000 troops including support) from Sri Lanka, the question arises as to how many are left. To determine this, it is necessary to estimate the peak deployment.

Before the November 1988 reinforcement, the Indian high commission in Colombo put out the figure of 45,000 to 50,000; Delhi diplomatic sources estimated 75,000; and I had estimated 'up to' 1,00,000. My estimate, made on the back of an envelope during lunch, included not just the army in Sri Lanka, but also the *de facto* provisional corps HQ in Madras, paramilitary, IAP based in Sri Lanka, and Indian Navy afloat. This is a more complete figure than just army troops in that country, and added something between 10,000 and 13,000 men to the army total. Thus, the true gap between myself and diplomatic sources was 12,000 to 15,000 (75,000 diplomatic versus my army estimated to be 87,000 to 90,000).

Without reiterating the tedious details of my earlier estimate, it appears that I had overestimated the number of troops in the four division HQs assigned to Sri Lanka. Whereas I had taken 5,000 men per division HQ (exclusive of 9,000 men in three brigades or the equivalent per division), the actual seems to be 3,000. Thus, I should reduce my estimate to a little over 90,000 troops, say 92,000, of which 80,000 to 83,000 were army.

This is still higher than the diplomatic estimate, but in my

opinion, these sources were neglecting the presence of extra infantry battalions. Incidentally, both estimates took into account the withdrawal of the mechanised/armour units sent in the early stages.

Now, in November 1988 three additional brigades were sent. This implies 9,000 troops plus some support units. The latter would, perforce, be small in number because most of the required support infrastructure is in place. It is likely something a little over 10,000 men were sent which would have put the total by my estimate at something between 1,02,000 and 1,05,000 men. With the withdrawal of 6,000, there should be roughly 95,000 to 1,00,000 men in Sri Lanka. (The corps HQ in Madras is included in my estimates because it is only lack of infrastructure that has prevented its logical move to Sri Lanka.)

The Sri Lanka deployment exceeds the equivalent of six divisions and has many implications.

One is our amazing ability to become relaxed about Pakistan once we went into Sri Lanka. Earlier, with unfailing regularity Delhi would conjure up a Pakistan threat, particularly in the winter. We have withdrawn the equivalent of six divisions from the mainland at a time Pakistan has added two divisions; that is, the relative balance between the two countries has worsened by eight divisions since the bull-buloo of spring 1987. Yet in the winter of neither 1987-88 was there any noise from Delhi on the Pakistan threat. Either we are being criminally negligent, or we have deliberately been overestimating the Pakistan threat. Both explanations have very

serious implications for our security.

Next, with the infantry component of the strike forces and army HQ reserves seriously weakened by the Sri Lanka deployment, we are in no position to hold major winter exercises. Thus, our offer to Pakistan to cancel the winter exercises smacks of the same shabby, hollow rhetoric that Delhi insists on substitution for genuine measures to reduce tension in the region.

Another implication is that while the army is quite content to be in Sri Lanka on the grounds it is getting operational training, no one has thought to ask why its readiness has deteriorated to the point that a shooting conflict is necessary to restore efficiency.

And why has the Indian press remained silent on the issue of numbers of troops in Sri Lanka? The total by itself is irrelevant: the deployment is dictated by operational requirements. It could have been 10,000 or 2,50,000 depending on circumstances and objectives. Every journalist covering Sri Lanka, however, knows the official figures are gross under-estimates. Yet he or she is silent.

A last issue is why the government of India is permitting the ministry of external affairs to undermine its credibility. It is clear we are being told neither the correct deployment figures nor the true situation about several aspects of the LTTE/JVP insurgencies. Doubts are also arising on the casualty figures: if the totals are correct, why is the government not issuing weekly casualty lists?

India desperately requires a defence consensus at this troubled juncture in its national security affairs. Unless the government comes clean on Sri Lanka, there is no chance of building the needed consensus.

The writer is a noted Indian military affairs analyst. He contributed this article to the reputed Economic and Political Weekly, India.

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Indian hegemonism at work

Ariya Abaysinghe

The Kingdom of Nepal, lying along the southern slopes of the Himalayas mountain ranges, is a landlocked country located between Sikkim (now absorbed by Indian Union) and India, to the east, India to the south and west, and the Tibetan Autonomous Region of the Peoples Republic of China to the north. Its territory, which has an area of 54362 square miles (140,798 square kilometers) extends roughly 500 miles from east to west and 90 to 150 miles from north to south. Nepal, for long under the rule of hereditary prime ministers favouring a policy of isolation, remained closed to the outside world until a palace revolt in 1950 restored the king to his position of authority in 1951. The country gained admission to the United Nations in 1955. In 1960 King Mahendra assumed direct rule, and on his death in 1972, King Birendra succeeded his father to the throne. Wedged in between two giants, India and China, Nepal seeks to keep a balance between the two countries in its foreign policy and thus to remain a free and independent sovereign state. A factor that contributes immensely to the geopolitical importance of Nepal is the fact that a strong Nepal can deny China access to the rich Gangetic Plain. Nepal, thus, marks the southern boundary of the Chinese sphere north of the Himalayas in Asia. This factor, mainly pushed India close to Nepal.

Prithvi Narayan Shah (1742-1775) and his successors established an unified state in the central Himalayas and launched an ambitious and remarkably vigorous programme of expansion, seeking to bring the entire

hill area, from Bhutan to Kashmir, under their authority. They made considerable progress. Successive setbacks in wars with China and Tibet (1788-1792), with the Sikh Kingdom in Punjab (1809), with British India (1814-1816), and again with Tibet (1854-1858), frustrated Nepal and set the present boundaries of the kingdom. The British conquest of India in the 19th century posed a serious threat to Nepal — which expected to be another victim — and left Kathmandu with no real alternative but to seek an accommodation with the British to preserve Nepal's independence. This was accomplished by the Rana family regime after 1860 on terms that were mutually acceptable, if occasionally irritating, to both. Under this de facto alliance, Kathmandu (Nepal) permitted the recruitment of Nepalis for the highly valued "Gurkha" units in the British Indian Army and also accepted British "guidance" on foreign policy; in exchange, the British guaranteed the Rana regime against both foreign and domestic enemies and allowed it ritual autonomy in domestic affairs.

The British withdrawal from India in 1947 deprived the Ranas of a vital external source of support and exposed the regime to new dangers. The Ranas quickly evolved a new foreign policy, under which Nepal's traditional isolation policy — vigorously enforced until then — was abandoned and relations were established for the first time with several governments as a counter-balance to the now democratic Indian regime. Meanwhile anti-Rana forces, composed mainly of Nepali residents in India who

served their political apprenticeship in the Indian nationalist movement formed an alliance with the Nepali royal family, led by King Tribhuvan and launched a revolution in November 1950.

With strong diplomatic support from New Delhi, the rebels accepted a settlement with the Ranas, under which the sovereign of the crown was restored and the revolutionary forces led by the Nepali Congress, gained an ascendant position in the administration.

The introduction of a democratic political system in Nepal, a country accustomed to autocracy and with no deep democratic tradition or experience, proved a formidable task. A constitution was finally approved in 1959, under which general elections for the parliament were held. The Nepali Congress won an overwhelming majority and entrusted the formation of the Nepali first popular government in December 1960. The 1959 constitution was abolished in 1962, and a new constitution was promulgated, making the crown the real source of authority. King Mahendra obtained both Indian and Chinese acceptance of his regime, and the internal opposition was weak, disorganised and discouraged. Mahendra died in January 1972 and was succeeded by his son, Birendra. In the early 1970's there was substantial dissatisfaction with some aspects of the country's political and economic system and Kathmandu, Nepal's capital, was the scene of anti-government rioting in August 1972. With the inauguration of SAARC, Nepal too joined it as a member.

Indo-Nepalese Relations

Before India gained political independence, its relations with Nepal were based on a treaty signed in 1923. It was a contract between a sovereign Nepal and a colonial India and its terms and conditions did not reflect that Nepal had surrendered her sovereignty to the British. The Nepalese never allowed the British to interfere in their domestic affairs and the British Government itself recognised Nepal as an independent state. India became politically independent on Aug 15, 1947, the Government of India, agreed to respect the Treaty with Nepal. India's involvement in Nepali revolution in November 1950, was India's interest in protecting the northern frontier especially after Chinese occupation of Tibet in October 1950. So India directly and indirectly continued its interest in the domestic affairs of Nepal. It calculated that a democratic Nepal would promote its national security by remaining a buffer between China and India and deter the Chinese from advancing into the region south of the Himalayan watershed. India, thus, viewed, a democratic Nepal as a significant component of its security system in terms of its defence preparedness vis-a-vis China. This was the origin of the **Indo-Nepalese Treaty of Peace and Friendship of July 1950**. On the surface, the Treaty stated, as usual, that there shall be everlasting peace and friendship between the two governments, both of whom recognised the complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the other. It also contained provisions that Nepal could import **from or through** Indian territory, the arms, ammunition, material and equipment, for her security and that each Government will accord to nationals of the other in its territory, national treatment regarding participation in the industrial and economic development of such territory and grant of concessions and contracts relating to such development.

But later late Pandit Nehru revealed at a press conference

that a paragraph in the hitherto unpublished letters exchanged between the Governments of Nepal and India, when the 1950 Treaty was signed, in effect converted the treaty into a PACT OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE in the case of foreign aggression, because it also provided for mutual consultation in the case of a threat to the security of either government. Nehru said in the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha, that any aggression against Bhutan and Nepal would be treated as an aggression against India. This was a clear warning to China that India was determined to defend Nepal's security and integrity. The Treaty with Nepal thus preceded the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of 1987. It was to the lasting credit of former President Junius Richard Jayewardene of Sri Lanka to have refused to agree to the Indian suggestion that the Letter of Exchange between Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene be unpublished and treated as secret.

Jayewardene placed them as annexes to the Accord 1987 and published them.

So when an advisor to the Government of India is reported to have said that Nepal's weapon purchases from China jeopardise the very basis of the Indo-Nepali relationship and negate the so called special relationship implied in the 1950 Peace Treaty he was merely confessing that the rumpus over the **Trade and Transit Agreement** was a mere facade for concealing India's intention to interfere in Nepal's internal affairs, as in the case of Sri Lanka, in the event its interests were crucially endangered. In any case, what really is the problem concerning the Trade and Transit Agreements which expired on March 24, 1989. Does it defy solution to such an extent that India feels compelled to starve the little Himalayan kingdom of Nepal into submission? What India has done in blocking all but two of the 15 routes to Nepal is the very antithesis of friendship and good neighbourliness among countries and the principles of regional cooperation including SAARC.

India, it is reported, wants a combined treaty covering trade and transit. Nepal insists that the two issues must be kept separate by two different agreements. Trade and transit are two matters over which there has been perpetual irritation in the Indo-Nepalese relations. Traditionally, more than 90% of Nepal's trade has been with India, since Nepal is a landlocked country with its east, south and west bordering India's border.

In the North, are the inaccessible Himalayas range with Kodari pass and Rasua pass through which a small quantity of trade and commerce has been transacted with Tibet from time immemorial. Ever since Nepal opened the doors to the outside world and adopted a trade diversification and market diversification strategy to minimize dependence and India's single stranglehold, there has been a clash of interests for long. Nepal had asked for a transit route through the West Bengal's border town of Radhikapur into Bangladesh in order to gain access to the port at Chittagong in order to reduce its dependence on the part of Calcutta which always remains congested. India views this Nepal's insistence on transit facilities through Radhikapur unrelated to the volume of trade with Bangladesh. Nepal has contended that the quantum and the type of Nepalese exports to overseas terminal markets and imports from them were the internal affairs of Nepal and what India was trying to do was to pressurize Nepal to alter her trade policy in favour of India and keep Nepal ever dependent on India. Whereas Nepal was trying desperately to diversify her trade. But lack of cooperation from India was standing in the way. Nepal's exports are US \$ 161 million and imports US \$ 459 million (1985) leading to a trade balance of US \$ 298 million (1985). Principal export commodities of Nepal are—Rice, jute, dry ginger, wollen carpets, handicrafts, tanned skins, ready-made garments whilst its major imports are manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment, chemicals and drugs, food

and live animals. The Nepal Rastra Bank reported that the government budgetary deficits increased from— 2,226.8 million Rupees (1984/85) to Rs. 2,522.9 million (1986/87) financed from internal loans and foreign cash loans.

Analysis of the Issues of Conflict

India has cut off 13 of the 15 vital transit points to the landlocked Nepal virtually imposing an economic blockade at the end of the trade and transit treaties between India and Nepal. India and Nepal may have their differences but the vital question is whether such a drastic action was necessary against a poor, helpless neighbour? Beside being a consistent preacher of morality in international politics should India have indulged in such bullying acts? For a week or two India has been doing precisely that and the tragedy is that there is not even a whimper of protests from the US, USSR, UK, NAM, SAARC or the UN General Assembly. Poor Nepal remains isolated and there is no one to help. If the USA, the USSR or any western power imposed a naval or land blockade on a weak Third World country what would the world opinion have been? When former US President Reagan made moves against Col. Gaddafi and also in the Gulf, the world witnessed outright condemnation. Similarly when the Soviet Union entered Afghanistan there were outright condemnation. The world reacted to UK's Falkland war. But when a strong and large India bullies a small country like Nepal or Sri Lanka world opinion seems to be silent.

When India aided Sri Lanka in July 1987 with airdrops against Sri Lankan Government protests only late Zia-Ul-Haq openly condemned the act. India bulldozed its way to get Sri Lanka to accept the Accord in 1987. Nepalese reaction to India was evident in the recent editorial of the national Nepali English daily "Motherland" when it said:

"Nepal has maintained the utmost restraint and had honoured its commitment to discuss issues discreetly between the two countries. The Indian officials on the other hand let loose a vicious campaign of vilification in the Indian press to spread false and mischievous propaganda about Nepal that could only harm relations...

As a result of the economic blockade, Nepal will have to face many difficulties. Official sources said Nepal was willing to negotiate but never under duress. They said that it was obvious that India was trying to strangle Nepal economically to gain political advantage. Leverage in this country, something which no self-respecting Nepal would accept".

The current crisis demonstrated the futility of attempting to bring about regional economic cooperation while turning a blind eye to the wide differences that exist between the giant India in the centre and the six smaller nations on its perimeter. Despite these acts of belligerence by India, had managed to get away with it due to the attitude of the super powers. In 1971 India signed the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty which was virtually a defence agreement in that one country was obliged to go to the defence of the other in the event of a conflict with third parties and if such a request is made.

Thus, it was possible to split Pakistan into two without fear of Chinese intervention. The Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty saw to that. Since India is building up a blue water navy, the countries in the Indian Ocean namely, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion, Zanzibar, Pemba must be careful of Indian naval blockades similar to land blockade on Nepal during the

coup in Fiji in the Pacific Ocean when Col. Rimbuka took over power to the consternation of ethnic Indians. It has now been established that the Indian Intelligence Agency RAW sent arms to the Fijians of Indian origin which were detected in Canberra, Australia.

Meanwhile India has been increasing its defence budget from US \$ 8.5 billion to US \$ 11 billion and India is the world's largest importer of arms in 1987 purchasing arms to the value of US \$ 6.2 billion which is twelve times Pakistan's imports. Meanwhile a large naval base is being built in Sumatra by Indonesia which would provide quick access to the Bay of Bengal. This build up in arms and the naked belligerence and hegemonism in the region by India cannot be ignored by super-powers. India must recognise the demand of the landlocked Nepal for unfettered transit rights to and from the India Ocean, a demand that is legitimate and is in line with well established international practice. In the words of **Shailendra Kumar Upadhaya** (one time Permanent Representative of Nepal at the UN):

"There can be no compromise on the right of landlocked nations to free access to and from the Sea. For Nepal this right is of greater importance than the question of sharing the resources of the sea. Some transit countries are displaying a big brotherly attitude and creating a bogey over the demand for unfettered transit facilities. This is nothing but an attempt to make landlocked countries politically and economically dependent".

This is the crux of the Indo-Nepalese dispute. The frequent rhetoric of peace and friendship is only a cover for concealing India's determination to get her neighbouring state to surrender its sovereignty.

Root-cause of Indo-Nepal impasse

Chintamani Mahapatra

At a time when the two Super Powers have decided to bury the hatchet, for Nepal to enter into confrontation with India is indeed disturbing to world peace making an issue out of its land-locked geographical location, its economic weakness and smallness in size and population, the Himalayan Kingdom is creating an impression to the outside world that India, its powerful neighbour, has been bullying it and has now enforced an "economic blockade."

The initial cracks in the centuries-old friendly relations between the two countries surfaced two months ago (in March) with the expiry of its trade and transit treaties. While India wants to conclude a composite treaty to replace the old ones, Nepal has been insisting upon two separate treaties. Even as the matter is under negotiation, Nepal has been uncharitable enough to make wild accusations against India to mobilise international opinion in its favour.

Even its allegation of "economic blockade" is unfounded. Despite all the bitterness and differences in opinion, India continues to send Nepal basic foodgrains, medicines and essential commodities through four transit points on the common border. This is in keeping with the tradition of helping neighbours in need as was evident in its foiling an attempted coup in Maldives or say, its intervention in Sri Lanka. Not only does the Nepalese Government lack a sense of appreciation for such friendly gestures, but is today, unwilling to bear the burden of its own policy also. It wants to have the cake and eat it too!

The root causes of the present impasse in Indo-Nepalese relations however, lie somewhere else. One of the reasons is reported to be King Birendra's growing apprehensions about his political future. The monarch is certainly alarmed at the increa-

sing demands for democracy and the rising incidence of civil unrest within his kingdom. His fears have been reinforced by the "waves of democracy" striking the Philippines in 1986, South Korea in 1987 and Pakistan in 1988. It could as well be Nepal's turn next.

Big brother

The most eloquent display of King Birendra's innermost feelings was noticed at the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation) Summit in Islamabad last December when he abstained from joining other heads of governments in congratulating Benazir Bhutto for heading a civilian Government in Pakistan. Moreover, when almost all the participants tendered tacit support to India's actions in Sri Lanka and Maldives, the Nepalese monarch could well have restrained himself from describing these gestures as indicative of India's "big brother attitude."

Clearly, King Birendra, in his anxiety to hold on to power, has been on the look out for some pretext to divert public attention in Nepal. And India, now happens to be a convenient whipping boy. He is aware that although it has rejected Nepal's zone-of-peace proposal, this has not been perceived as a hostile act. On the contrary, India supports Nepal's diversification of trade policy. This is despite its share in Nepal's foreign trade falling from 80 per cent in 1975 to about 50 per cent in the 1980s and around 37 per cent last year.

It is against this perspective that the introduction of work permits for all foreigners including Indians, has to be viewed. Even as this blatantly violates the spirit and content of the 1950 Peace and Friendship Treaty between India and Nepal, King Birendra has discovered an effective ploy to whip up sentiments

of Nepalese nationalism. And with the expiry date of its trade and transit treaties with India drawing closer, he decided to further precipitate the matter.

The Government of India did not retaliate by adopting similar measures, despite the fact that there are three times more Nepalese residing in India, than Indian nationals in Nepal.

Meanwhile, King Birendra adopted another strategy. He imposed extra duties on certain Indian goods entering Nepal and simultaneously reduces duties on goods imported from the People's Republic of China. This discrimination which betrayed Nepal's intention to play the Chinese card was followed by another incident. On May 10, the Nepalese journal, *Hindu Weekly*, accused India of violating Nepal's air space. "Last week, a Mig-21 fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force took off from Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims to be part of its own territory, on a routine patrol flight. It was supposed to reach its destination within Indian territory via Bhutan and Sikkim. Instead it violated Nepal's air space and caused big panic in eastern Nepal," the report claimed.

Weapons

The news item was indicative of the shape of things to come. For Nepal soon acquired from China hundreds of trucks loaded with arms and ammunitions, including anti-aircraft guns! The timing, method and the source of acquiring these weapons were again in violation of the 1950 Treaty on Peace and Friendship. Besides, the type of weapons acquired, caused grave anxiety in New Delhi on account of the possibility of these getting into the hands of terrorist groups operating in various parts of the country.

At present, Nepal and China are working on several joint

(Continued on page 16)

The Sinhala and Tamil Left: The Great Divide

Dayan Jayatilleka

In a situation where substantial devolution has not been secured for the Tamil people, I think a change of tack is called for, at least to the extent of urging a withdrawal of the IPKF and a positioning of a U. N. force, to be followed/practised/accompanied by a ceasefire and negotiations.

Except for the Tigers (and they will do so if their hegemony is ensured) all the Tamil groups are hoping, consciously (EROS) or unconsciously (EPRLF) for a Cyprusization i. e. prolonged presence of IPKF and a separate existence, secure from the Sinhalese. Within this, they hope for a greater or lesser degree of administrative power (PCs). This despite all their talk and indeed hopes, of integration into the mainstream of the Left movement in the South. Eelam as a separate state, though not as an independent one, lives on in their minds!

How then to reunify our country? Is it inevitable that it be done the Dutugemunu way? Isn't there another way? How can a two front struggle of the Sinhala and Tamil Left become possible, when, far from **converging** (though that is happening at one level), they are **diverging** on the issue of the IPKF. This external presence provides a unique historical opportunity for the forging of a Sri Lankan national consciousness. Though they may flirt with each other, the Tigers and the JVP can't do it, because they are ethnically exclusivist or hegemonic. The rational leftists among the Sinhalese won't be able to do it because our Tamil counterparts are engaged in 'comprador politics' with the external forces. Even in the event of the IPKF coming south,

what will be the role of our Tamil Left counterparts? Once again, a joint struggle might not take place. A tragic irony understandable perhaps only in terms of the iron law of uneven development.

The IPKF presence was accepted at the time of the Accord because it would keep the Tamils safe from the Sinhala Army. Then when the war with the LTTE started, I thought (and still do) that a weakening of the Tigers is beneficial overall. It must be understood that the anti-IPKF feeling of most Sinhalese is linked to their chauvinism in that they consider the North and East to be their soil.

Now since genuine devolution is not on the agenda, I think that the LTTE cannot be defeated politically (and therefore militarily). Thus one has now to change course. I am opposed to the call for an immediate IPKF pull-out **without a substitute** because the Sinhala Army will go back in. Hence the need for a multilateral U. N.-type force.

Sri Lanka's unending Lebanonisation renders it difficult to have a single strategy, because everyone has different perceptions of who their main enemy is. The EPRLF's is the LTTE, while ours is not. The SLFP is for some leftists, though not for us. Even within the chauvinist opposition, there are differences. The Sirima wing's main enemy is the UNP, while Anura is more intent on fighting Indians and the Tamils. And so on.

If the IPKF enters the South, it will be truly a foreign occupying force.

The Left forces must fight independently of the JVP, submerging our distinct organisational identities into a single resistance army.

The JVP

The JVP stands at the confluence of four currents of dissent generated by the following causes:

- 1) The socio-economic grievances accumulated over eleven years due to the polarisation generated by the 'open economy' of the UNP;
- 2) The political practice of the UNP, which fashioned an authoritarian political system and resorts to state terrorism;
- 3) The ethnic terrorism of the LTTE and EROS;
- 4) The presence of the IPKF.

Now the first two — and a half of the third — are legitimate factors. The JVP is using these two, but chauvinism is the 'over determining' factor.

For all their bragging, the ruling bourgeoisie is hard put to tackle the JVP challenge, primarily because **all the instrumentalities for repression, the 'repressive state apparatus' are suffused with populist chauvinism, as are the 'ideological state apparatuses'**. Given the consciousness of the intermediate strata, their **class composition** may eventually make these apparatuses go against the **class interests** they are supposed to subservise. There may be an 'ideological amnesia' going on below, as during the July '83 riots. Since the middle echelons of the military are not so much pro-UNP as pro-SLFP they'll remain neutral in such an event, and even the pro-UNP officers will be hard put to fire at, say, mutinous soldiers.

The Army

As for the military, the following speculative scenarios should invite discussion:

(Continued on page 13)

(Transcript of a talk delivered at the J.V.U., New Delhi)

JSP: Implementation Problems Ahead

Sunil Bastian

Certainly the government will have the task of convincing the IMF/World Bank with regard to the need for these policies for Sri Lanka, at this moment of time. This might not be difficult as some of the critics of the government expect. While introducing this welfare package the government is not going away from the basics of the liberalised policies. The liberalised economy will continue to a large extent. Sri Lanka will depend on developed capitalist countries for capital and markets and the process of getting linked with them will continue. Export orientation will be promoted, privatisation programme will continue and even such things as administrative reforms recommended by the World Bank are being implemented. This is observed in the streamlining of the ministries that has already taken place to some extent. Thus JSP will be an expansion of the social sector policies within a liberalised framework. There is no going back to the pre '77 situation with regard to the development policies in general.

IMF/World Bank also do not operate purely on economics. *There are many political imperatives* as well. In fact even during the last eleven years Sri Lanka did not follow strict structural adjustment policies. We have deviated a lot from them. Some authors have cited political reasons for the continued support that these institutions gave to Sri Lanka despite these deviations. Perhaps these political arguments are still stronger in the present climate. Even the international institutions have now taken into account the social instability created by excessive 'belt tightening policies' as demanded by IMF/WB from developing countries. The most recent example of Venezuela

has strengthened this perspective. In addition, the donor community is also not homogeneous. There are donors, such as those from Scandinavian countries, who have already been helping poverty oriented programmes in Sri Lanka. In the present climate Sri Lanka might have also other countries that will lobby on her behalf within the multilateral aid agencies. Taking all this into account, it might not be such a problem to convince the donors, provided the programme is worked out concretely and professionally.

While the basic idea of the programme in its modified form can get off the ground, it is in the implementation of it that it is bound to face much more contradictions and problems. The effectiveness of implementation is relevant for the success of several aspects of the programme. The very fact of reaching the poor in a capitalist society is a difficult task. This needs more planning. The international funding agencies will require more concrete programmes to support.

The shortcomings of implementation of JSP can arise from several sources. Of course there will be problems arising out of the limitations of our existing institutions of implementation. Inefficiency, corruption, nepotism, etc., will affect the programme. Apart from these usual problems, another set of contradictions can arise because of certain naiveness reflected in the populist ideology which seems to dominate the implementation process. The elements of this populism we have pointed out in characterisation of the JSP.

The basic problem in this populism is that it is unable to understand that we are dealing with a capitalist society with all its contradictions. As already stated, capitalism can deliver a certain degree of social welfare

within its limitations. However populism either does not understand these limitations or refuses to acknowledge them. As a result it might not be able to foresee these limitations and devise methods to overcome them. Even if they devise methods it is based on naive romantic notions of the society that they are dealing with. These contradictions can be illustrated taking each step of the implementation process, starting from the method of choosing the beneficiaries.

With scaling down of the programme not all Food Stamp holders will be entitled to the benefits. As it is well known, the Food Stamp scheme also did not manage to limit the programme to the most needy. Its method of selection and the pressures that operated in the process, had left out from the programme some of the people who should have got Food Stamps. For example, because it depended purely on income criteria, almost all the plantation workers whose income could be very easily determined did not benefit. On the other hand, because of the difficulties of determining income in kind and because a detailed assessment of the value of various kinds of assets owned by households were not taken into account, the Food Stamp list would have had some undesirables as well. Without trying to improve the methods of selecting this target population, the populist notions of implementation, hope to depend on 'people' to select the intended beneficiaries. People of a village or hamlet are to come together and select the beneficiaries 'openly'. This kind of a process could have some success in remote villages where there is some sort of homogeneity in class terms. However the bulk of our society does

not consist of a nebulous category called 'people'. The society consist of 'classes' and other social groups that have contradictory interests. These are sure to operate during the selection process. Of course the meeting of the 'people' will come out with a list of beneficiaries. This is what will happen in the 'open'. However the underlying social process of actually doing the selection will be quite different. In addition the stake in this programme is also very high. No amount of romanticising of the 'harmonious village' or so called cultural values, will be able to overcome the social contradictions existing in reality. One can very well expect the latter to determine the beneficiaries.

These nebulous concepts of selection do not also spell out the role that has to be played by the administrative and political institutions in the selection and implementation. We have in mind specially the newly established Provincial Councils. If the JSP programme is going to be the lead project of the government during the coming years, it will be the first major project after the establishment of Provincial Councils. If it bypasses them it could be interpreted as an attempt by the government to undermine the Provincial Council structure. That could very well be the beginning of a process that will take the PCs also in the same direction as DDCs. This could very well happen if their role is not spelled out much more clearly, despite all good intentions of the President to make the PCs work. In this regard it is the contradiction between the Provincial Council framework and the Government Agent framework which is an extension of the Centre, that seems to be important. The Government Agent structure and the Home Ministry have already got a leading role in the implementation process. However the role of Provincial Councils is not very clear. Unless the institutional structure of implementation is clearly worked out,

JSP might very well be an arena where we will see a conflict between the devolved structure and a structure that is part of the Centre.

More than the selection process the real test of JSP will be its capacity to make a certain section of the beneficiaries self reliant within two years. This is in fact the most crucial part of the programme. It is an attempt to bring at least some sections of the poor into the economic mainstream of capitalism. However if it is to be an exercise that will not depend on continuous subsidies, the economic activities generated will have to be a part and parcel of those sectors of the economy that have an advantage for growth within the overall model that is followed. For example one can very well imagine projects in which beneficiaries of JSP will be linked to export promotion efforts. How many beneficiaries such sectors will be able to cater to will be another question. But the important thing is JSP will not be able to operate outside the dynamics of capitalism, the effects of its market etc. These would ultimately determine its success rate and who and how many will benefit. There will be little room for sustainable projects outside this overall framework. No amount of external or internal change agents, attitudinal changes or bottom-up planning will be able to bypass these dynamics. If the income generating programmes do not fit into the dominant dynamics of a liberalised economy we will either have projects that will continually depend on subsidies or a large number of unsuccessful projects.

Finally this brings us to monitoring. If the programme is a success, it will have to succeed in getting a certain proportion of beneficiaries into viable income generating projects. What will happen to the general poverty levels because of this will be another indicator. Whatever might be the result, it has to be monitored strictly and evaluated professionally. There

has to be a procedure and a methodology devised for it. Instead what we might have is propaganda about individual successful projects and probably some absolute figures about number of projects. Looking at the amount of media coverage that JSP is getting already, there is a possibility that media coverage of successful projects might replace more professional monitoring. In the implementation programme it is not clear whether there will be any such strict socio-economic monitoring. Certain notions that 'people' themselves will monitor their progress are not very helpful. What we need more is an impact assessment of the overall programme, a method by which we can understand the social processes that have determined the outcome and a method of getting information that will help to overcome the shortcomings. These needs cannot be avoided by falling back on a notion of 'popular participation'.

How to...

(Continued from page 11)

- a) being fissured like the Philippine army in the last days of Marcos, or
- b) split outright like the Lebanese army, or
- c) subject to a mutiny and chain of coups and counter-coups like the Bangladeshi military in 1975, resulting in a ultra-right wing civilian-military junta which the JVP would find it very easy to topple due to its narrow social base, or
- d) disintegrating in the face of unremitting mass pressure and agitation as did the Russian military in 1917 and the Iranian in 1979, or
- e) giving rise to a radical left putsch from within its own ranks as happened in Ethiopia in 1974 and Portugal in 1975, or
- f) generating a nationalist-populist coup of which examples are legion throughout the Third World from Nasser to Juan Velasco Alvarado of Peru.

(To be continued)

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The real conflict

R. S. Perinhanayagam

These three new myths, the economic myth, the political myth and the educational myth, had their appropriate rites too. People were breaking from their traditional caste-determining occupations and seeking new jobs; they were voting in large numbers in all the elections and joining political parties and movements with gusto; and they were joining schools, or sending their children to them. In the schools, they participated in the rites of examinations, playing cricket and doing all the other things that elite schools used to do. Cricket as a rite of modernity in Sri Lanka is perhaps more pervasive than Soonlyam!

It is impossible to over-estimate the radical and revolutionary implication of these myths and rites to a society characterized by feudal economic and taurist systems, and political forms based on caste and aristocracy — certainly not at the ontological level. This was the revolution that occurred in Sri Lanka, it took several decades and came into a sort of fruition in the late fifties and early sixties. The Bandaranaike, the SLEP, and the MEP of 1956 were not either the founders of the revolution or its architects. Rather the revolution which took a long time to ripen, fell into their eager and waiting hands in 1956. I do not know how widespread and deep are the beliefs in the Vijaya Myth the Duttu Gemunu myth, and particularly the stories and rites of the Soonlyam. I venture to say nevertheless that the belief in the new myths of political equality, economic opportunity and occupational advancement are deep and widespread. Every political meeting, every election campaign all of the widespread educational ins-

titutions, every public examination that the Sri Lankan youth faced, every job application that he sent, are the means by which these myths were articulated and practised. The countless newspapers and pamphlets, even the music, theatre and cinema, the ballads and folksongs too at times, can be shown to be manifestations of the new ontology. In this matters the left parties were particularly instrumental in spreading the new samasamajaya message. Their meetings were rhetorical feasts that many attended as well as for instruction, as they did the mythological performances in the past. Who could have listened to a Colvin R. de Silva in his heyday and thought it was merely political instruction and propoganda? His attacks on the evils of exploitation, class oppression and general inequality were surely as effective as those of any other mythicist and demonologist! The left produced in fact a vast literature as well as "theatre" in Sinhalese and Tamil manifesting the themes of the new myths.

Conflict and the new myth

These three myths then were able to create an ontology for the Sri Lankan masses, Sinhalese and Tamils, that defined a set of expectations in an open, egalitarian and just future in which they had power and control over their lives. When people participate in elections and political parties and their leaders make promises, the voters tended to believe them. When children are sent to schools and universities, they are being given an implicit promise: no more peasant life, laborer's life, but a "respectable" white collar one, with economic sufficiency.

The Sri Lanka people, defining their ontologies with these new myths, found that, however efficiently and dedicatedly they performed the rites, they were not capable of lifting them into a just and egalitarian social order or provide them with the jobs and comforts of life. Indeed the more dedicatedly and vigorously they performed these new rites, the more disappointing were the results. Economic opportunities dwindled, except for a few of the elite of the government. Political processes produced only a different set of self serving results whose efforts had little impact on the general welfare. Education lead to a wilderness in which employment was not available locally or internationally. The language in which the new education was being imparted too was making the new graduates ineligible in the expanding world market. These features seemed to exist whether a "socialist" government of the 1970-77 type or a capitalist government existed. However, it may have become more exacerbated under the latest governmental system — as Newton Gunasinghe had argued (1984). The new capitalism introduced by the UMP, what may be termed "bandit capitalism" seems to have increased the existing frustrations and inequalities.

Faced with these intolerable contradictions, the masses were ready for anything. The ancient myths and the ancient rites could be resuscitated but they now had new meanings. They were not being used to cleanse the polity of an alien and polluting enemy, but as a means of creating economic and political opportunities to those whose dreams have been thwarted and whose myths and ontologies and

the rites that put them into practice had become fruitless and frustrating.

The first time that these ontologies of frustration lead to violence was in 1971. Rightly one must consider the JVP rebellion of that year as a quest for the fulfillment of the dreams nurtured on the new myths. Thousands of young men, educated and unemployed or underemployed, kept in oppressed social relations of caste and class, and seeing no hope of liberation even after a "socialist" government was elected, look to violence. Their movements were tactically innocent (attacking police stations) and ideologically simple minded, but its deep roots in the new myths cannot be gainsaid. It too sought to use the primordial myths, but it is foolish to think that they were seeking to create a monarchy in Anuradhapura. Its founder however was wise to the uses of the Dutu Gemunu myth and the Ruhunarata myth and used it for his own purposes. Let us not forget that when these young men and women resorted to militant action, thousands of them were slaughtered too. And sadly, their tactics have not become wiser over the years and neither is their ideology able to acknowledge the complexity of the sociopolitical scene in Lanka and South Asia. But that is another story.

The ontology, to continue Kapferer's terminology, that resulted then was not one in which ancient myths were being continued, but one to which a number of new myths had made important contributions. Viewed in this way, the people of Sri Lanka cease to be fixed entities, their consciousness forever filled with primordial categories, but a willfully modernised people, trapped in the realities of local and international social and economic conflicts.

The conflict then in Sri Lanka is between the dispossessed or rather one should say, those energized with ambitions and dreams and dispossessed at the

same time, and those with power and privilege. The violence is deflected and expressed against the minorities, but the conflict is between other forces and representations. Indeed since 1987, the violence is no longer directed against the minorities, but against those perceived as oppressors. It is not that Kapferer is unaware of this. He does acknowledge in many places the importance of class and caste, of economic oppression and contradictions in the explanation of recent Sri Lankan social processes. Yet these "contradictions and transformations" and "fury of class politics" as he calls them, are not used in the explanatory structure. They are merely used to display an awareness of these factors and to redeem the work from the charge of an unwarranted idealism. The anthropological pathos seems to take over and off he goes looking for demons and sorcerers.

It is important to politicize demons, rather than demonize politics and investigate how the "fury of class politics" gets transformed into heroes, devils, and villains. The masses of Sri Lanka, particularly its youth are demanding the fulfillment of the ideals of the European enlightenment which included the notion of equality (as Jatika Chintanakarayas must note), introduced into Sri Lanka in the form of Benthamite and Marxist perspectives over the years, just as Kapferer's Australians are doing. The idea and practice of social, economic and political equality is a strange one for South Asians, but once it has been introduced and embedded in ontologies and practices and institutions, it is dangerous to seek to thwart its fulfillment.

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Root-cause of. . .

(Continued from page 10)

ventures including setting up of development project in Tibet. Insofar as India is concerned, friendly relations and economic co-operation between Nepal and China will certainly augur well in creating a peaceful atmosphere in the region. New Delhi is also anxious to improve relations with China and therefore, can have no objection to Nepal also doing so. However, Sino-Nepalese co-operation does not have to be pursued at the cost of Indo-Nepalese relations. Curiously enough, the Nepalese Government does not believe in this policy and is determined to play one neighbour against another in securing its own ends. This has only aggravated the tension in the region.

After all, what is Nepal's demand from India?

Special ties

According to diplomatic circles, the Nepalese draft proposals aim at ending the age-old special relationship by opting for a "most favoured nation trade regime" with trade to be conducted in foreign currency instead of the Indian rupee. However, at the same time it wants border trade to be exempted from both. This one-sided deal would only open the flood gates to massive smuggling of Indian goods from across the 1700 km-long open border, as also encourage trade malpractices and including on paper goods which would be shown as exported to Nepal, but not sent across.

A perceptive section of the Nepalese intelligentsia which has been closely following the game plan, is conscious of the strategies to perpetuate the privileged status of the Royal family. The public at large also do not blame India for the current impasse as they still value its friendship and traditional ties. It is now for the ruling elite to guard itself from the consequences of its follies and possible civil interest.

— PTI Feature

"DAUGHTER OF THE EAST"

An autobiography, by Benazir Bhutto,
Hamish Hamilton, London 1988

BOOK
REVIEW

Neelan Tiruchelvam

A J. P. Taylor the English historian once wrote "both historians and biographers use fictions. Intellectual devices to produce an illusion of reality. The biographer relies on the fiction that he can recapture a man's character by literary skill and imagination. The historian welds individuals into a composite picture to which their individual existences are subordinated". When Benazir Bhutto was approached by friends and publishers to write a book on the Bhutto era, she faced the choice of a biography of her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, or an autobiography of someone "whose important political battles were still to be fought". Benazir resisted the latter choice believing that autobiographies were intended to be reflective and retrospective, written in the autumn of one's life. Publishers however, prevailed upon her to write her own story as opposed to that of her father. The story is largely one of pain, anguish, and struggle in one of the most traumatic chapters of the troubled history of the sub-continent. Benazir felt that the very experience of recalling and recording these events would prove cathartic.

The book is structured differently from conventional autobiographies. It begins with the event that tormented the latter years of her life the execution of her father. The last meeting with her father was in his prison cell at Rawalpindi on April 3rd, 1979.

Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, a lawyer from Sri Lanka, was in Pakistan recently as member of a group of eminent persons from SAARC countries observing the Parliamentary Elections.

"Why are you both here" my father says from inside the inferno of his cell. My mother does not answer. "Is this the last meeting?" he asked. My mother cannot bear to answer. "I think so" I said. He calls for the Jail Superintendent. Is this the last meeting" my father asked. "Yes" comes the reply "Has the date been fixed?" "Tomorrow morning" the Superintendent says. "At what time?" "At 5 O'clock, according to Jail regulations." "When did you receive this information?" "Last night" he says reluctantly. "How much time do I have with my family?" "Half-an-hour" "Under jail regulations we are entitled to an hour" he says. "Half" the Superintendent repeats. "Those are my orders." Half-an-hour, half-an-hour to say good bye to the person whom I loved most, more than any other in my life. The pain in my chest tightened into a vice I must not cry. I must not break down and make father's ordeal more difficult."

Despite her courage and fortitude Benazir felt deeply vulnerable. The bond that bound her to Zulfikar was one which was deeper than that between a loving father who lavished his love on a devoted daughter. Zulfikar was her political intellectual guide and mentor. He had nurtured her political instincts, fired her imagination, shaped her to his own image.

"What would I do without him to help me I asked him in his death cell. I needed his political advice, for all that I held were degrees in Government, Harvard and Oxford. I was not a politician, but what could he say? He shrugged helplessly." During the early hours of April 4th, 1979, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed.

The pain was unbearable, and a part of Benazir died with him. She writes, "I felt completely empty that my life had been shattered."

At the age of 16, Benazir, "Pinky" as she was affectionately called in view of her complexion, was admitted to Radcliffe College. Her mother settled her in her room at Elliot Hall, and calculated the location of Mecca, so that she would know in which direction to pray. In Cambridge her school-mates were then understandably unaware of the Bhattos. She relished her years of anonymity. "Here I was free for the first time," she says. She shed the warm, woolen *salva khamiso* lined with silk that her mother had affectionately left for her and resmaged in jeans and sweat shirts from the Harvard Coop. She left her hair grow long and flattered when friends likened her to Joan Baez. She consumed gallons of apple cider, patronised Brigham's Icecream Parlour where she wolfed peppermint icecream cones sprinkled with "jimmies". Clearly these were the happiest years of her life. She played with Friebes at Harvard Yard, shopped at Filene's Basement, and listened to the lyrics of Peter, Paul and Mary.

But these were also turbulent years, and she plunged herself into the anti-war movement and marched at rallies at Boston Commons and Washington D.C. she caught, "her first whiff of tear gas". She was also influenced by the feminist movement and read avidly Kate Millet, Germaine Greer and the new feminists. "In Pakistan" she says, "I have been amongst the minority who did not view marriage and family as their primary goal. At Harvard I was amongst a sea of women who

felt unimpeded by their gender as I did. My fledgling confidence soared and I got over the shyness that had plagued my earlier years."

She deliberated on the choice of an academic major. She had originally thought of studying psychology and related subjects, but became squeamish at the prospect of the desecration of animals; and much to the delight of her father, opted for comparative government. She learned the distinction between political and constitutional legitimacy in Professor Womack's class on Political Science.

Terrible events in Pakistan began to cast a cloud over the tranquility of her secluded academic life. In early 1971 East Pakistan began to command world's attention; the secessionist struggle by Mujibur Rahman and the military reprisals that followed it. 'Your army is barbaric' the classmates accused her. "You are slaughtering the Bengalis." "We are not killing the Bengalis" she countered, her face blue with indignation. Professor Walzer in a public lecture on 'War and Morality' in her junior years declared, "Pakistan had denied the people of Bangladesh the right of self determination." "That is completely wrong, Professor" I corrected him, my voice quivering. "The people of Bangladesh exercised the right to self-determination in 1947 when they opted for Pakistan." There was a stunned silence.

Despite her brave protestation, almost two decades later she reviewed these events differently. "How many times since I have asked God to forgive me for my ignorance. I did not see then that the democratic mandate for Pakistan had been deeply violated. The majority province of East Pakistan was basically being treated as a colony by the minority West. The army, the largest employer in our very poor country, drew 90% of its forces from West Pakistan, 80% of its government were filled by people from the West. The Central Government

had even declared Urdu as our national language, a language only a few in East Pakistan were speaking, thus further handicapping the Bengalis in competing for jobs in government or education. So, no wonder they felt excluded and exploited. I was also too young at Harvard to understand that the Pakistani army was capable of committing the same atrocity as any army let loose in a civilian population.

Her first exposure to international diplomacy came with her father's visit to New York for the Security Council debate. How many do you think will in the Security Council condemn India, Bhutto asked his 18 year old daughter. "How can they not," she answered. "You may be a good student in international law, Pinky, but I hesitate to disagree with a Harvard undergraduate. You don't know anything about power politics."

Her meeting with Mrs Gandhi did not prove to be as memorable as she had hoped it to be. She had deeply admired her perseverance, and her steel determination. But Mrs Gandhi was reticent, aloof and terse.

"My nerves were also unsettled by the fact that I was wearing a silk saree my mother had lent me. Even though she had given me a lesson in wrapping yards of material securely round me, I was nervous that it would suddenly unravel. . . . Mrs Gandhi kept on staring. Perhaps she was recalling the diplomatic missions on which she had accompanied her own father. I thought to myself, was she seeing in me the daughter of another statesman, was she remembering the love of a daughter for her father, a father for his daughter. She was so small and frail. Where did her fame and ruthlessness come from? She had defied her father to marry a Parsee politician of whom he did not approve. Their marriage had not worked and they ended up living separate lives. Now both her father and her husband were dead — was she lonely?"

She graduated from Radcliffe with a cum laude degree and was rewarded by her father with a Yellow MG convertible. She pleaded with her father to allow her to proceed to Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, but he was adamant that she should read for the PPE

at Oxford. "It was he after all, who was paying for my tuition and expenses. I had no voice, and I was a practical person." When she arrived in Lady Margaret Hall in the Autumn of 1973, her father wrote to her "I feel a strange sensation in imagining you walking on the footprints I left behind at Oxford over twenty-two years ago. . . . since I was not at Harvard, I could not picture you there through the same camera. Here I see your presence like mine in flesh and blood, over every cobble of the streets of Oxford, over every step you take on the frozen step ladders, through every portal of learning you enter." She joined the Oxford Union to please her father, but made it one of the most important focal points of her Oxford years. During the three years reading for the PPE, she had been elected Treasurer but been defeated in her first attempt at the Presidency. She returned for a fourth year for post-graduate diploma, and in December 1976 was elected the President of the Oxford Union.

A shy introverted teenager had been transformed into a mature and astute politician imbued with a passion to restore democracy to the people of Pakistan. But doubts continued to persist amongst her concerned countrymen as to whether she would prove effective as the leader of a nation of one hundred million. Would she bind the nations wounds, or prove to be imperious, intolerant and contemptuous of her associates? Although her political instincts were clearly sound, did she have an adequate grasp of the details of governance, the perseverance, the toughness of spirit to make hard policy choices and carry them through to fulfilment? Will she listen to wise counsel, or prove impulsive and erratic as her father was sometimes prone to be?

The auto-biographical tradition in South Asia has in recent years been in a state of acute decline. Few contemporary lea-

(Continued on page 21)

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A Satiric Stage Bow

Craig R. Whitney

LONDON

“England, where we boast of ‘free speech,’ seems to have decided to let Salman Rushdie rot, and to forget him,” the British playwright Howard Brenton laments in the foreword to a new play he and Tariq Ali have written in support of Rushdie, the beleaguered author of “The Satanic Verses.”

The play began a nine-day run Wednesday night at the Royal Court Theatre, which has hired a security service to search handbags and briefcases even though Rushdie was not at the premiere.

The author has been hiding under British police protection since February, when Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran denounced his book as blasphemous to Islam and offered a reward for his assassination.

Ali, a friend of Rushdie and like him a product of the Muslim culture of the Indian subcontinent who emigrated to England, originally wanted to call the play “A Mullah’s Night Out.”

“The theater management thought the title might be a bit dodgy,” Ali said, and so they changed it to “Iranian Nights.”

“I felt we ought to do something in support of him,” Ali explained, referring to Rushdie’s plight. “In the United States, they’ve had public readings of his work. In this country, all there was a sort of photo opportunity, a few writers delivering a letter to Mrs. Thatcher on his behalf,” he said, referring to a protest delivered to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Brenton calls it a “pinprick” of a play, but the audience warmly received all 45 minutes of it in the small theater Wednesday night.

Rushdie, Viking Penguin, the publisher of his book, and Khomeini are all lampooned with-

out much subtlety, but with wit.

“And what was the blasphemy?” asks the Caliph at the beginning of the play.

“No one knows,” answers Scheherazade. “It was a book that nobody could read.”

The core of the play is what Brenton calls “the cultural crisis within the Islamic community,” the collision of an ancient Eastern faith with the secular values of the modern Western world. “On a small island in Satan’s thrall, where two queens sat on a single throne.”

And the dramatic high point is a closing speech by Scheherazade (Fiona Victory):

*Who can understand the fate
Of the prisoner and the poor
Who have fled from hate
To a nowhere in the rain?
A nowhere in the rain?
Who can understand our pain?*

It goes on:

*A miracle
That only a few have gone fanatic
That only a few
Rave about the Satanic
Therefore the more who speak out
The better.*

“We’re pretty critical of the liberals in this country who’ve been running for cover and desperately trying to appease the supposedly outraged feelings of the Islamic faithful,” Ali said.

His message is that Islam has a tolerant, nicely human side that the fundamentalist clerics, in Britain and in Iran, have obscured for reasons that have nothing to do with religion.

Thatcher, in her first public remarks on the affair since Iran broke diplomatic relations with Britain over it in March, told an East-West forum Wednesday that she had rejected calls to censor “a book like the one written by Mr. Rushdie, which broke none of our laws.”

“This must never be an area where the government has dis-

THE ARTS

cretion,” Thatcher said. “It must always act within the law.”

The foreign minister, Sir Geoffrey Howe, said before Iran broke relations that many British readers of the book had found it as offensive as Moslems had, but emphasized that Britain would stand up for Rushdie’s rights of freedom of speech.

(NYT)

“DAUGHTER OF . . .

(Continued from page 18)

dera have had the temperament or the talent to record the experiences or reflect on the more enduring influences on their lives. A few who have ventured have shown little capacity for self introspection, and their memoirs have often been insipid, colourless accounts written in pedestrian style. Part of the explanation for this decline rests in continuing erosion in the intellectual content of politics. No longer is politics conceived primarily in terms of a struggle over ideas, or grounded firmly in the belief in the ultimate power of ideas to transform social reality.

The release of this extraordinary biography on the eve of Benazir’s electoral victory is a publishing event, without parallel in the recent history of South Asia. It is a deeply personal and candid account dominated by years of detention, exile, and the tragic death of her father and her brother. It is written simply and elegantly, but unpretentiously.

Bonazir Bhutto inherited the political mantle, indomitable spirit and charisma of her martyred father. Once again the destiny of Pakistan and the hopes and aspirations of its diverse people became inextricably interlocked with that of a charismatic and articulate Bhutto — a daughter of the East.

Meet Mrs. Rushdie

Caryn James

After a bookstore in Washington sold out of Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses," Marianne Wiggins's new novel, "John Dollar," appeared in the window.

"If you can't read the husband's book," said a sign above the display, "read the wife's."

Under normal circumstances, such a condescending link between the brilliant, controversial husband and the second-best wife would be outrageous and offensive, especially to a writer with Wiggins's feminist concerns.

But Wiggins was amused and cheered when she phoned from her guarded hiding place and heard that story from Terry Karten, her editor at Harper & Row.

Her reaction seems a small symbol of how abnormal every event surrounding "The Satanic Verses" has become.

When Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's death threat against Rushdie sent him and Wiggins into hiding, her identity seemed to vanish under the neat and nearly anonymous formula used to describe her: Salman Rushdie's wife, the American novelist Marianne Wiggins.

For most people, that bland shorthand evokes the barest trace of curiosity. Who is Marianne Wiggins? Is she anyone I should know?

It turns out that she is a woman whose childhood was shaped by religious conservatism, which she attacks head on in "John Dollar."

Her literary career, which was about to be given a huge push with her new novel, has been abruptly halted, her own book promotion tour canceled.

She is a U. S. citizen who has scarcely been mentioned in

public statements by the U. S. writers' groups that have rallied to support her husband.

The controversy, of course, surrounds Rushdie and not his wife. Yet Wiggins, whose life and career have been altered as irrevocably as her husband's, seems the all-but-forgotten victim in "The Satanic Verses" debacle.

Her life with Rushdie is relatively new. They met when she moved to London four years ago, and they married in January 1988. The 41-year-old author's pre-Rushdie life had its own U. S. version of cultural drama.

She grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where her father failed as a farmer and eventually committed suicide. When Wiggins was a child, every Sunday her father would preach in a conservative Christian church founded by her grandfather. It was, she told Publishers Weekly in a recent interview, "a Bible-beating, reactionary kind of church," called "the First Church of Christ Salvation or some long thing like that."

When she was 9, Wiggins was baptized into the Greek Orthodox religion of her mother. "I left those wooden pews for rooms full of icons and incense and men in robes," she said. It would be years, however, before organized religion turned up in her fiction as the great evil.

Until "John Dollar," Wiggins's writing closely charted the surface, though not the depths, of her own life and times. After an early marriage and divorce — Wiggins has a grown daughter — she worked as a stockbroker in the early 1970s.

When her first novel, "Babe," appeared in 1976, she and her daughter moved to Martha's Vineyard, where she turned out

two more novels — "Went South" and "Separate Checks" — and a highly esteemed story collection, "Herself in Love." They constitute one long, wry, savvy look at motherhood, divorce and contemporary women in love.

"Separate Checks," published in 1984, is a profuse, cockeyed look at three generations of women in one family. Their stories are written from a psychiatric hospital by the heroine, whose mystery-writer mother has named her Ellery McQueen. Wiggins tweaks religion in her title, which Ellery lifts from a Mel Brooks movie. (A waiter at the Last Supper: "Are you all together or is this going to be on separate checks?")

And Ellery offers two theories why there are no men in her stories: "The first is that males born into our family were exposed at birth; and the second theory is we ate them."

One of the many oddities of Wiggins's current position is that her most artistic novel — which happens to be short, accessible and ultimately shocking — is being pitched as her most commercial.

Long before "The Satanic Verses" erupted into a political crisis, Harper & Row was planning a campaign that it hoped would make "John Dollar" Wiggins's breakthrough. It printed 50,000 copies, much more than usual for a little-known novelist, and planned advertising and a seven-city tour. There was no hint of exploiting Rushdie's acclaim.

It is too soon to know how well "John Dollar" will sell. Though Wiggins's name is in the news, early sales have not been exceptional. Reviews have offered restrained praise, not the kind of wild enthusiasm that sells books.

Naipaul's 3rd World — The Importance of Being Negative

Izeth Hussain

The frequent borrowings of Shiva Naipaul's books from the British Council Library suggests that he is one of the most popular of English-language writers in Sri Lanka today. This has to be regarded as a rather odd cultural phenomenon, as he is a relentlessly high-brow writer, whose writings furthermore are frequently depressing to read. Perhaps the explanation for his popularity is that he is one of the few, very few, writers who try to tell the truth about Sri Lanka and other Third World countries, and this can be expected to interest readers who are deeply concerned about their societies. Shiva Naipaul's popularity might be regarded as a sign of cultural health among the Sri Lankan intelligentsia.

However there are some serious limitations in his writings which the Sri Lankan reader may not notice. Before dealing with those limitations, it has to be declared that he is certainly a writer of quite exceptional quality. His first two novels, *Fireflies* and *Chip-Chip Gatherers*, are among the more distinguished works of English-language fiction since the Second World War, while his third novel, in *A Hot Country*, which is really a political tract in the guise of fiction, is a work of sombre power. As for his non-fiction writings, they certainly constitute a rare critique of the Third World. He is one of the most interesting writers of English prose since George Orwell, and one of the best. But all this is not saying much as he is not a great or major writer. The prevailing culture does not permit great writing these days.

Some misconceptions have to be got out of the way before we proceed further. It is sometimes said that his writings

PARIS

Novelist V.S. Naipaul is planning another travelogue-novel about India. Without disclosing its theme he told the Paris daily *Liberation* that his current interest in India was to collect material on the Naxalites in Bengal, the Shiv Sana in Bombay and the Sikhs in Punjab. He is here after a five-month stay in India. Mr. Naipaul, whose views on India and other Third World countries have been widely contested, feels that a novelist's descriptions must make his readers gradually discover "all the aspects of a reality."

encourage westerners to look down on Afro-Asians. Perhaps the race memory of barbarian invasions, and subliminal anxieties about being overwhelmed by hordes of black, brown and yellow fellows, could make some westerners gloat while reading Naipaul on the horrors of the Third World.

But there is little or nothing in Naipaul's writings to boost western self-esteem. In his writings on the west he focused just as much on the negative as when he excoriated the Third World societies. This can be seen in funeral of a Pope, legacy of a revolution (Portugal), in his pieces on Earl's Court and Brixton, and particularly on Hull and Liverpool, where he was horrified by the cultural nullity, what he called "darkness of mind". As for his political stance, he was certainly not pro-western. He ridiculed the invasion of Grenada by a US which for decades had shown a great deal of democratic scruple in dealing with

the right-wing dictatorship of Pado Doc Duralier. And he was critical of Reagan for being prepared to go to the Philippines as state guest of Marcos after the Aquino assassination. He in no way pandered to western racism, and the fact that some westerners may read him with racist relish in no way detracts from the value of his writings.

He is also criticised for looking at the Third World from an essentially western viewpoint. The test here is whether the perceptions of the peoples of the Third World about their own countries differ widely from those of Naipaul. Unfortunately there is no way of applying this test as freedom of opinion is not allowed in the Third World countries, apart from some Latin-American countries, India, and a very few others. Elsewhere, only the State speaks and the test is silence.

But we can make an educated guess by looking at the case of Ne win's Burma, by all accounts of those who observed it at first hand, a grim place. Had Naipaul gained entry into that country and observed the "Burmese way to socialism," he would certainly not have been complimentary. And equally certainly, he would have been criticised for failing to understand the "Burmese way to socialism", a case of "alternative development" trying to bring about a harmonious way of life consistent with Burma's Theravada culture, such high-toned objectives, it would have been said, cannot be judged or even understood from a grossly materialistic western perspective. But after 28 years the Burmese people gave their verdict by showing a preparedness to die by the hundreds and thou-

sands to extirpate, once and forevermore, the "Burmese way to socialism." One suspects that Naipaul's western perspectives on the Third World are often identical with the Third World people's perspectives.

A more serious point made against him is about his negativism. As we have already noted, even when he writes about the west he goes for what is negative, like a vulture going for decay and death, suggesting that there was something necrophiliac about him. Perhaps the psychologists would call this a case of "inverted aggression." He casts a baleful eye on Third World societies, writes aggressively about how horrible they are, and then inverts his aggression by going to other horrible places where he himself suffers horribly. Reading him one feels that he could have profited from Johnson's poem about the young man who goes for wisdom to the hermit in his heavy cell. The poem concludes with the hermit saying "come, my lad, and drink some beer."

However, our noting the psychological problem, if indeed there was one, does not dispose of the point that there is a place, and an important one too, for the negative in journalism and in literature. Naipaul has one of the characters in his novel "In a Hot Country" say "many journalists come, spend a day or two in the five-star luxury of the Park Hotel, chat over cocktails to one or two people who, more often than not, are hostile to the Government and what it is trying to do. Then they go away and pass the most unbalanced judgements." One hears that kind of thing too often. Or this, "Not that I am denying there's corruption. But, then there's corruption everywhere, isn't there? And this, "It's all too easy for outsiders to take a negative approach. You seem interested only in the bad things. You don't look at the positive achievements." All this should be

salutary for Third World patriots who want everyone to be chirrupy and cheery while all around them people are being shot to pieces or blown to bits every day.

We must recognise that the focussing on the negative in literature, as in English satire from Ben Jonson, Dryden, Pope Swift and Byron to Wyndham Lewis in this century, has its value in serving a corrective and therapeutic function. The point can be made also of the focussing on the negative aspects of society in the bourgeois novel with its diapason of criticism of the bourgeois social order.

But it will be objected that Naipaul was not writing satirical poetry or satirical fiction. In his non-fiction prose, he was engaging in a form of higher journalism where a onesided concentration on the negative has to be taken as showing bias and lack of judgement. In answering this we might consider the case of Tacitus, greatest of historians, who in writing of the post-Augustan Roman Empire was selective and biased. He noted only the negative, ignoring all the positive developments which made later historians write of the two centuries of peace after Augustus. But perhaps, if not for the critical function exercised by Tacitus and other Romans like him, the great age of the Antonines would not have followed. The specialists in the negative can say with Swift that they write for our amendments, not our approbation. We have to acknowledge, of course, that such writers do not give us the whole truth about a society and to that extent there is a limitation. The point is that they should not be dismissed for being negative.

Coming to his limitations, we have to note a superficiality, a lack of analytical depth, behind the brilliance that coruscates in much of his prose. Possibly this is the consequence of his being

so much the outsider, for he was an outsider in more senses than one. He was a member of the Indian minority in Trinidad and later of the immigrant minority in Britain. To some extent he was the outsider in both societies, and from the outsider a certain astigmatism might be expected. And, of course Naipaul was very much the outsider when he wrote about Third World countries after brief visits.

Sometimes the outsider can produce dazzling insights, of which the most striking case is that of de Tocqueville who wrote his masterwork after only 11 months in America. But usually there is a lack of depth of the sort we find say, in Tagore's *Towards Universal Man*, or Nirad Chaudhuri's great *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, which is probably connected with a sense of commitment to a society. Significantly, Shiva Naipaul's writings on India show what for him is an unusual depth and wholeness, maybe because he was developing a sense of commitment to the land of his forefathers after several visits. And when he wrote of the community in which he grew up, in his first two novels and *Beyond the Dragon's Mouth*, there was certainly no lack of depth. But too often he was the outsider.

Some of his limitations have probably to be explained also in terms of the peculiarly impoverished cultural matrix from which he emerged. The Indian agricultural community of Trinidad was breaking down with a drift to urban areas as a result of Trinidad's oil-wealth. And while he was still a youth the annual family or communal get-together, the only form of community he ever knew, of which there are excellent accounts in *Beyond the Dragon's Mouth* and *Fireflies*, also disappeared. Thereafter the Indians knew only the cosmopolitanism of Port-of-Spain and other cities, as a group that was becoming atomized.

To be continued)



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