
EASTERN EUROPE

AND

SRI LANKA

SPECIAL ISSUE

***THE THATCHED PATIO* Vol.3 No.2**

- ARTICLES BY**
- Reggie Siriwardena**
 - Jayadeva Uyangoda**
 - Chanaka Amaratunga**
 - Mervyn de Silva**



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES (ICES) is a non-governmental organisation, established as a non-profit organisation chartered under Sri Lankan company law. It is sited entirely in Sri Lanka, and its staff is Sri Lankan and multi-ethnic in character. Its Board of Directors, on the other hand, is international in composition. The international mandate of ICES, reflected in the name of the Centre, is expressed not only in the membership of its Board but also in the scope of its work. While ICES in its research projects, workshops and publications embraces ethnic and related questions that are global in character, its work has a predominant South Asian emphasis.

EASTERN EUROPE AND SRI LANKA

SPECIAL ISSUE

***THE THATCHED PATIO* Vol.3 No.2**

ARTICLES BY

**Reggie Siriwardena, Jayadeva Uyangoda, Chanaka Amaratunga and
Mervyn de Silva**



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES

8 Kynsey Terrace, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka

the thatched patio

Vol.3 No.2

March/April 1990

EDITOR'S NOTE

The articles in this number consist of papers read at or written for ICES in the course of recent months in 1990 on the subject of the changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and their relevance to Sri Lankan thinking. Although some of the developments referred to in them have since been overtaken by later events, they are published in the form in which they were originally read or written, since the significance of the issues raised in them has not been outdated.

----- * -----

CONTENTS

HISTORY IS OPEN	
- Reggie Siriwardena	1
SOVIET SOCIETY: The Fallout From Eastern Europe	
- Reggie Siriwardena	11
EASTERN EUROPE: Implications for Socialism	
- Jayadeva Uyangoda	18
THE POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE	
- Chanaka Amaratunga	24
CONTOURS OF THE NEW EUROPE	
- Mervyn de Silva	35
ISAAC DEUTSCHER REVISITED	
- Reggie Siriwardena	40

'HISTORY IS OPEN'

By Reggie Siriwardena

I would like to begin by stating what will be, and won't be, the scope of this talk, I am not going to indulge in any crystal-gazing; so if you expect that I will try to work out what will happen to Eastern Europe next week, or next month, or next year you will be disappointed. That would be a hazardous undertaking in any case from a distance of several thousands of miles away – and all the more so in a highly fluid and volatile situation. I am concerned not so much with prediction as with the implications, in terms of our own political thinking in Sri Lanka, of the extraordinary events in Eastern Europe during recent months.

There is a second preliminary point I want to make – and that concerns terminology. In the course of this talk I shall have occasion often to use the word "socialist" in referring to the social and political structures of Eastern Europe. This may raise a problem for some people. You know, I am sure, that according to Plato this table, and every other table, is only an inferior copy of the ideal table laid up somewhere in heaven. In the same way there are some species of Marxists for whom the societies existing in what has been the Eastern bloc are only an inferior version – or a distortion – of an "ideal socialism" which exists only in Marxist texts. I hope my talk as a whole will show why I consider such an approach unhelpful. But since I don't want anybody to get up and say "But that wasn't socialism!", I must make a clarification. When I use the term "socialism" here I mean what Rudolf Bahro called "actually existing socialism" – that is, the social and political forms that have existed in the Soviet Union since the Russian Revolution – not static, of course, but changing and evolving forms – and those that were created in Eastern Europe after the Second World War.

My principal focus is not historical, but I think a short historical sketch will be in order. As a generalisation one can say that Eastern Europe in the pre-modern period didn't produce a strong bourgeoisie, and this made for a different pattern of development from that of Western Europe. Of the region as a whole, it would be quite inaccurate to speak of the present movements as leading towards the "restoration of democracy" – for the simple reason that most of these countries didn't have a functioning democracy at any time in their history. The exceptions were Czechoslovakia – between the Treaty of Versailles and the Nazi occupation – and Eastern Germany as a part of the Weimar Republic until the triumph of Hitler. What existed elsewhere in Eastern Europe at the time the Second World War broke out

were semi-feudal or military absolutisms – though perhaps behind a facade of formal democracy. Hugh Seton-Watson says that at the end of World War Two "the social structure of Eastern Europe more closely resembled that of Russia, or even of Asiatic countries, than that of France, Britain or Germany".

The entry of the Red Army into Eastern Europe in the latter stages of the Second World War resulted in the incorporation of these countries as satellites into the Stalinist empire. This was a highly ambivalent phenomenon – neither simple revolution nor simple conquest. The decisive factor in bringing about this change was the presence of the Red Army as an occupying force. In the initial stages nominal coalitions were set up in each of these countries where a whole spectrum of parties from right to left was represented. But in these coalitions the Communist parties made sure they controlled the army and the police; and through the armed force at their disposal they were then able to purge the bureaucracy, and ultimately to cut off the non-Communist parties from access to political life (except for those rumps which were willing to accept a servile position). The process was consummated peacefully not through insurrection but through pressures, manoeuvres and purges, though the working-class following of the Communist parties could from time to time be mobilised in the streets to lend mass backing to the stratagems being operated at the top. However, none of this would have sufficed without the implicit threat of Soviet armed intervention if there was any resistance. On occasions, the threat became an overt one – as in Rumania in 1945 when King Michael refused to replace his Prime Minister (Radescu). Vyshinsky flew to Bucharest and demanded that the king make the change in two hours, on pain of his refusal being treated by the Soviet Union as a breach of the armistice. Michael surrendered.

Indeed, the whole process of the creation of the so-called "Peoples' Democracies" was achieved at the choice not of the Eastern European Communist parties but of Stalin himself. This process of revolution by conquest resulted in the imposition on the Eastern European states of the forms and structures of Soviet socialism. Its political features were the one-party state with the Communist Party monopolising power (though a pseudo-democratic facade could still be maintained by the toleration of parties which accepted Communist hegemony); the bureaucratisation of the internal party structure itself, with policies and decisions being transmitted from the top down; wide-spread use of terror and coercion to maintain the power structure; and the total subordination of civil society and its life – economic, cultural and religious – to the norms laid down by the state. At the same time East European socialism satisfied the dominant property forms, carried through land reform in a region where feudal and semi feudal relations had survived, and instituted extensive social welfare policies – notably, that of mass education. However, all this was achieved under conditions in which the interests of the East European states were subordinated to those of the Soviet Union. There is in fact some evidence that Stalin didn't at first even intend a radical transformation of East European society, and that it was the emerging conflict with the United States and Western Europe that made him decide to turn the region into a defensive outpost for the Soviet Union. Control of East European political life

and of its economies became a matter of Soviet security. In particular, in a region well known for its tenacious nationalisms any manifestations of Titoist-style tendencies within the Communist parties were eliminated by the purges and trials of the late 40s and early 50s. The more drastic crises of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the "Prague spring" of 1968 were met by full-scale armed intervention.

Those who believe in simple historical schemes and linear patterns of historical development would do well to reflect on two paradoxes. The first is that in Eastern Europe some of the socio-economic tasks left unfinished by the abortive bourgeois democratic revolutions of 1830 and 1848 were consummated by a social revolution imposed from above by foreign domination. The second paradox is that other unfinished tasks – the political tasks of the establishment of parliamentary democracy – are being accomplished today by a people's revolution against the Communist state.

This is an appropriate point from which to go on to point out the limitations of both right-wing and left-wing interpretations of the present changes in Eastern Europe that are current in Sri Lankan political thinking. Reading whatever has been written on these developments, I have been struck by the efforts made by commentators committed to one political doctrine or another to fit the events into a previously existing theoretical framework. For me, on the other hand, the East European democratic revolution is a phenomenon which calls in question a whole range of preconceptions and formulas, and demands a radical intellectual reorientation.

It seems to me that the right spirit in which to approach the East European changes is suggested by a reported conversation last year between Mikhail Gorbachev and Richard von Weizsacker, the West German President. On that occasion Gorbachev is reported to have said: "History is open". He had gone on to say one couldn't foresee where it would lead in 200 years. Yes, history is always open to the new, the unforeseen, the unpredictable, and we mustn't assume that it runs on preordained tramlines.

Since the East European democratic revolution began, there has been a simple right-wing interpretation of it: Communism is inherently a totalitarian system, and it has collapsed because the people's natural desire for democratic freedom can't be suppressed indefinitely. There are several reasons why such an explanation is inadequate.

In the first place, everybody will agree that the East European revolution couldn't have taken place without the stimulus of Soviet perestroika, and perestroika itself would have been impossible without the initiative of the reforming group in the Soviet hierarchy, led by Gorbachev. If the right-wing stereotypes of Soviet Communism as inherently totalitarian and monolithic were true, how did it produce at the top of the party a reformer like Gorbachev? Secondly, although political changes in Poland and Hungary had already taken place by the first half of 1989 in response to Soviet perestroika, what was decisive for East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and

Romania was the historic declaration of July 1989. That was at the Warsaw Pact meeting, when Gorbachev made the pronouncement: "Each people determines the future of its own country and chooses its own form of society. There must be no interference from outside, no matter what the pretext." It was this repudiation of "the Brezhnev doctrine" – as well as the later explicit disavowal of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 – that signalled to the East European peoples that the Soviet Union wouldn't intervene, whatever the road they took in determining their internal political and economic structures.

A third factor which demonstrates the inadequacy of these stereotypes: the East European revolution has been carried through by a multiplicity of political forces. Among the wide range of groupings participating in these movements – alongside liberals, religious groups, environmentalists etc., – have also been dissident Communists. Their numbers and weight in the movement varied from country to country. In Czechoslovakia after the 1968 invasion the resistance was sustained by liberals and human rights activists, and it is the Civic Forum that now seems to be dominant. But in Romania the Ceausescu regime had something of the character of a family dynasty, with a narrow base even within the Communist Party, so that the fall of the regime was accomplished by the large-scale defection of Communists themselves at all levels of the party. I therefore conclude that the European revolution can't be understood without taking into account the duality of Marxism and Marxist movements. Within them, throughout their history, there have been both authoritarian and libertarian elements, and the latter have entered into the making both of Soviet perestroika and of the East European democratic revolution.

One more word to those who speak of the "collapse of Communism". I am sure that the political and economic structures of Eastern Europe will undergo far-reaching transformations in the months and years to come. But I am certain that one thing will be carried over into the future as the heritage of the socialism of the post-war years, and that is the spirit and ideology of egalitarianism. It would be quite wrong to suppose that what is beckoning East Europeans into the promised land is simply the spectacle of the goodies available on the other side of the Brandenburg Gate. The mass anger and revulsion aroused by the revelations of the sybaritic life-style of the Ceausescus or of the luxury in which the East German party bosses lived is a sign that the passion for equality is alive, as it also is in the Soviet Union.

But now I want to turn to the preconceptions and formulas through which many people on the left see the current East European events. These are much more difficult to combat. There is a simple reason for this. The Sri Lankan right – no doubt with the exception of the Liberal Party – manages for the most part without a political theory; that is, perhaps both its weakness and its strength. But the left, true to its intellectual traditions, approaches every issue in terms of its theoretical orthodoxies. Theory is an extremely valuable tool, provided it is used as a tool – that is, if one is prepared to discard it or exchange it when one finds that it is no longer of use. It is a burden and a fetter when one is determined to make the reality fit an

outworn theoretical framework. "Theory is grey, my friend," quoted Lenin on a momentous occasion during the Russian Revolution, "the tree of life is always green." Lenin didn't, I think, always take his own advice, but that is no reason why we shouldn't profit from it.

This why it is depressing to find people on the left in Sri Lanka greeting the East European events with cries of "Counter-revolution! Capitalism is being restored!" or "Back to Lenin!" or "Trotsky has been proved right!". In all these cases, the ideological signal is "Business as usual".

Marxism was supposed to be "scientific socialism" – an analysis of the directions of social evolution based on the observation and study of the real forces at work in a society. But in parties and political movements, this has been superseded by a theological temper of mind which judges all issues through the enforcement of orthodoxies and the ritual enunciation of sacred texts. Let me take simply the most recent example of many that come to mind. I have seen a newspaper debate here on the market mechanisms that are sought to be introduced in the Soviet Union, and now, of course, also in Eastern Europe. I can perfectly understand a discussion on the basis of the relative merits of the market as against central planning in achieving economic productivity to meet social needs, and also on the compatibility or incompatibility of the market with social goals of equity. But much of the discussion has turned on this issue: "Is or is not the market mechanism that is being introduced today what Lenin stood for in his New Economic Policy?" And on both sides, this discussion is conducted through the mobilisation of texts. To me this is wholly irrelevant. The New Economic Policy is nearly seven decades old, the society it was designed to serve has changed beyond recognition, the problems and needs of today are new and different. What have Lenin's goals in 1921 to do with the matter?

So it is in this spirit of fresh inquiry that the left must be urged to look at the changes in Eastern Europe. First and foremost, it would be a grievous illusion to believe that what is being rejected in Eastern Europe is merely Stalinism. It is also Leninism that is repudiated.

- Everywhere in Eastern Europe, one of the first attacks on the existing political structure has been on the leading role of the Communist Party written into East European constitutions. This is the constitutional mechanism, backed by the coercive apparatus, that guaranteed the political monopoly of the Communist Party. That monopoly is now being dismantled throughout Eastern Europe. How long it will last in the Soviet Union itself is a matter for speculation. The Second Congress of People's Deputies recently declined by a majority to debate the relevant Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution, but the majority was hardly so large as to guarantee its indefinite continuance. My own guess is that unless perestroika is halted or reversed, the issue will arise again, and that the Soviet Union cannot avert the movement towards a multi-party system.

So what is being cast aside in Eastern Europe is the Leninist doctrine of the vanguard party – the party that by its superior understanding of the movement of history guides and directs society to the socialist goals. Why has his doctrine proved repugnant – so much so that Communist parties in Eastern Europe are rushing even to shed their party names?

Again, I think, it would be a serious error to suppose that it is only the practice of Stalinist-style dictatorships that has led to the rejection of the vanguard party. For the necessary implication of this doctrine is the inequality of power. The assumption that a revolutionary elite possesses a superior wisdom by virtue of which it is entitled to lead and direct others towards historical goals that it has chosen is totally incompatible with diversity of opinion, open debate and free choice. In practice, therefore, whether during the Leninist or the Stalinist era, the role of the vanguard party has never been achieved without the suppression of contrary opinions and varying degrees of coercion.

I believe there are some Marxists – less starry-eyed than others – who would admit this. But they would go on to justify this concentration of power in the hands of the vanguard party on the basis of two considerations – one, that it guarantees the speedy and thoroughgoing transformation of the social structure and the development of the productive forces; the other, that in the meantime political freedom has temporarily to be exchanged for economic egalitarianism.

My answer to the first point is that there is no calculus by which we can measure the human cost – in lives, in loss of personal freedom, in enforced uniformity of thinking – against the presumed social development that is to be achieved through this means. If, as has been estimated, the price of the Stalin regime was 20 million lives, if even the price of the Ceausescu regime was 60,000 lives over 25 years – apart from all the other sufferings and deprivations involved – where can we find the scale in which we can weigh these against the material or other progress won at this cost? Particularly when at the end of the process today, it seems evident from the condition both of the Soviet and of the East European economies that bureaucratised concentration of power ultimately frustrates even economic development.

My answer to the second point is that there is no way of bartering political freedom for economic egalitarianism – and the whole experience of "actually existing socialism" proves this. Socialist societies have gone through three stages as far as economic egalitarianism was concerned. The first two stages were enacted in the Soviet Union; the third stage was shared by the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In the first stage, because the Soviet regime was born out of a popular revolution, there was enough revolutionary fervour and idealism to maintain a spartan austerity even among the political and bureaucratic elite. The second stage was reached in the Stalin era. A new class differentiation took over from the old. Partly to provide economic incentives for skill and effort, but also to ensure the loyalty of higher cadres to the power structure, economic inequalities and privileges were actively promoted. By the time the Red Army entered Eastern Europe, the whole system of special rations, special shops,

special housing, special transport and (as a Soviet journalist has recently remarked) even special cemeteries, had become part of the prerequisites of power for socialist rulers. This system of privileges was transplanted to Eastern Europe.

However, in the Stalin era, whether in the Soviet Union or in the Soviet Union or in Eastern Europe, the members of the bureaucracy were always insecure, they were always vulnerable to the mechanism of terror, almost as much as the people were. This set limits to their acquisitive appetites, although they lived in relative comfort as compared with the mass of the people.

The third stage was reached in the post-Stalin era. Although throughout Eastern Europe the terror continued to rule the lives of the mass of citizens, there was considerable relaxation of it as far as the bureaucracy was concerned. Moreover, the era of idealism had long ended: those in the upper strata of the Communist parties were now hardened and cynical bureaucrats and for many of them, their position meant the opportunity to grab as much as they could for themselves. It was in these circumstances that there was an immense proliferation of corruption and personal enrichment. Since perestroika began there have been sensational revelations from time to time of massive embezzlement and bribery by party high-ups – such figures as Churbanov, Brezhnev's son-in-law, or Rashidov, the Uzbek party boss, who with his associates lived in Arabian Nights splendour on misappropriated funds. Now, since the East European revolution, we have had equally scandalous disclosures of the personal fortunes and foreign bank accounts accumulated by individuals in the power structure there. Clearly, the level of political morality of the Ceausescus, for instance, wasn't higher than that of the Marcoses or the Duvaliers. The system was rotten at the core. And it had to come to that in the absence of an open political life, independent media and the rule of law. The conclusion to be drawn is that the notion that economic egalitarianism can be achieved at the cost of political freedom is an illusion.

I should like to cite in this connection an interesting article in "Moscow News" of 21 January 1990 titled "Socio-Economic Rights, East vs. West" by Valery Chalidze. The article is headed by a paragraph which reads thus:

"Soviet propaganda preached the preeminence of socio-economic rights over civil and political rights for decades. This idea had some impact on international law and was eagerly adopted by the governments of developing countries which, like the Soviet Union, were looking for appropriate slogans to justify their oppression of the population and persecution of those who fought for genuine human rights. The idea is that if one is without food or shelter, one doesn't care about freedom of speech, one cares only about food and shelter. This appeals to many Third World governments which suppress the dissatisfaction of their needy populations partly by restricting their notion of human rights."

In conclusion, I want to touch briefly on one question that you may feel I have missed out. I have indicated that the trend in Eastern Europe is towards mixed economies and

multi-party systems. But I think it would be risky at present to speculate on the precise forms East European political and economic structures will take in the future. There is no reason to suppose that these will be uniform. The very conception of a single "Eastern Europe" has been engendered by Soviet hegemony and the imposition of a similar set of property forms and political systems on the region. Some Czech dissident or emigre intellectuals insist that their country isn't part of Eastern Europe at all, and that its identity and traditions are those of Central Europe, and I am sure that many East Germans would say so too. Actually, the region has a great diversity of ethnic, religious and cultural identities, and one must expect these to become more assertive from now on. The future course of these societies may therefore vary widely one from the other. More than ever for Eastern Europe, history is open.

Every where in Eastern Europe, one of the first attacks on the existing political structure has been on the leading role of the Communist Party written into East European constitutions. This is the constitutional mechanism, backed by the coercive apparatus, that guaranteed the political monopoly of the Communist Party. That monopoly is now being dismantled through out Eastern Europe. How long it will last in the Soviet Union itself is a matter for speculation. The Second Congress of People's Deputies recently declined by a majority to debate the relevant Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution, but the majority was hardly so large as to guarantee its indefinite continuance. My own guess is that unless perestroika is halted or reversed, the issue will arise again, and that the Soviet Union cannot, perhaps within this decade, avert the movement towards a multi-party system.

So what is being cast aside in Eastern Europe is the Leninist doctrine of the vanguard party – the party that by its superior understanding of the movement of history guides and directs society to the socialist goals. Why has his doctrine proved repugnant – so much so that Communist parties in Eastern Europe are rushing even to shed their party names?

Again, I think, it would be a serious error to suppose that it is only the practice of Stalinist-style dictatorships that has led to the rejection of the vanguard party. For the necessary implication of this doctrine is the inequality of power. The assumption that a revolutionary elite possesses a superior wisdom by virtue of which it is entitled to lead and direct others towards historical goals that it has chosen is totally incompatible with diversity of opinion, open debate and free choice. In practice, therefore, whether during the Leninist or the Stalinist era, the role of the vanguard party has never been achieved without the suppression of contrary opinions and varying degrees of coercion.

I believe there are some Marxists – less starry-eyed than others who would admit this. But they would go on to justify this concentration of power in the hands of the vanguard party on the basis of two considerations – one, that it guarantees the speedy and thoroughgoing transformation of the social structure and the development of the productive forces; the other, that in the meantime political freedom has temporarily to be exchanged for economic egalitarianism.

My answer to the first point is that there is no calculus by which we can measure the human cost – in lives, in loss of personal freedom, in enforced uniformity of thinking – against the presumed social development that is to be achieved through this means. If, as has been estimated, the price of the Stalin regime was 20 million lives, if even the price of the Ceausescu regime was 60,000 lives over 25 years – apart from all the other sufferings and deprivations involved – where can we find the scale in which we can weigh these against the material or other progress won at this cost? Particularly when at the end of the process today, it seems evident from the condition both of the Soviet and of the East European economies that bureaucratised concentration of power ultimately frustrates even economic development.

My answer to the second point is that there is no way of bartering political freedom for economic egalitarianism – and the whole experience of "actually existing socialism" proves this. Socialist societies have gone through three stages as far as economic egalitarianism was concerned. The first two stages were enacted in the Soviet Union the third stage was shared by the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In the first stage, because the Soviet regime was born out of a popular revolution, there was enough revolutionary fervour and idealism to maintain a spartan austerity even among the political and bureaucratic elite. The second stage was reached in the Stalin era. A new class differentiation took over from the old Party to provide economic incentives for skill and effort, but also to ensure the loyalty of higher cadres to the power structure, economic inequalities and privileges were actively promoted. By the time the Red Army entered Eastern Europe, the whole system of special rations, special shops, special housing, special transport and (as a Soviet journalist has recently remarked) even special cemeteries, had become part of the prerequisites of power for socialist rulers. This system of privileges was transplanted to Eastern Europe.

However, in the Stalin era, whether in the Soviet Union or in Eastern Europe, the members of the bureaucracy were always insecure, they were always vulnerable to the mechanism of terror, almost as much as the people were. This set limits to their acquisitive appetites, although they lived in relative comfort as compared with the mass of the people.

The third stage was reached in the Brezhnev era. Although throughout Eastern Europe the terror continued to rule the lives of the mass of citizens, there was considerable relaxation of it as far as the bureaucracy was concerned. Moreover, the era of idealism had long ended: those in the upper strata of the Communist parties were now hardened and cynical bureaucrats and for many of them, their position meant the opportunity to grab as much as they could for themselves. It was in these circumstances that there was an immense proliferation of corruption and personal enrichment. Since perestroika began there have been sensational revelations from time to time of massive embezzlement and bribery by party high-ups – such figures as Churbanov, Brezhnev's son-in-law or Rashidov, the Uzbek party boss, who with his associates lived in Arabian Nights splendour on misappropriated funds. Now, since the East European revolution, we have had equally scandalous disclosures of the

personal fortunes and foreign bank accounts accumulated by individuals in the power structure there. Clearly, the level of political morality of the Ceausescus, for instance, wasn't higher than that of the Marcoses or the Duvaliers. The system was rotten at the core. And it had to come to that in the absence of an open political life, independent media and the rule of law. The conclusion to be drawn is that the notion that economic egalitarianism can be achieved at the cost of political freedom is an illusion.

I should like to cite in this connection an interesting article in "Moscow News" of 21 January 1990 titled "Socio-Economic Rights, East vs. West" by Valery Chalidze. The article is headed by a paragraph which reads thus:

"Soviet propaganda preached the preeminence of socio-economic rights over civil and political rights for decades. This idea had some impact on international law and was eagerly adopted by the governments of developing countries which, like the Soviet Union, were looking for appropriate slogans to justify their oppression of the population and persecution of those who fought for genuine human rights. The idea is that if one is without food or shelter, one doesn't care about freedom of speech, one cares only about food shelter. This appeals to many Third World governments which suppress the dissatisfaction of their needy populations partly by restricting their notion of human rights."

In conclusion, I want to touch briefly on one question that you may feel I have missed out. I have indicated that the trend in Eastern Europe is towards mixed economies and multi-party systems. But I think it would be risky at present to speculate on the precise forms East European political and economic structures will take in the future. There is no reason to suppose that these will be uniform. The very conception of a single "Eastern Europe" has been engendered by soviet hegemony and the imposition of a similar set of property forms and political systems on the region. Some Czech dissident or emigre intellectuals insist that their country isn't part of Eastern Europe at all, and that its identity and traditions are those of Central Europe, and I am sure that many East Germans would say so too. Actually, the region has a great diversity of ethnic, religious and cultural identities, and one must expect these to become more assertive from now on. The future course of these societies may therefore vary widely one from the other. More than ever for Eastern Europe, history is open.

SOVIET SOCIETY:

The Fallout From Eastern Europe

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

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

In the first three years of perestroika the ideological struggle was against Stalinism. That debate is now over. Not that the political structures, the practices and even the mental habits that are the legacy of Stalinism are altogether dead. But nobody - except for some anachronistic figures like those who met recently in Stalin's hometown to form a 'World Communist Party' - any longer dares to defend Stalinism in public. During the initial phase of perestroika the cry was 'Back to Leninism'. The push towards democratisation was represented as the return to Leninist political norms, the trends towards a market economy as a revival of Lenin's NEP, and the moves towards greater autonomy for the constituent republics as a restoration of Lenin's nationalities policy. That is still the position of the Gorbachevist centre within the ruling Communist party. But that Leninist orthodoxy is now being called in question by new movements and trends among radical sections both of the party and the non-party intelligentsia.

I remember that the Russian poet Sergel Yesenin in 1924 wrote a poem about his visit to the peasant home in which he had been brought up. He found that his sister who had joined the Komsomol had replaced the icons which used to hang on the wall with a picture of Lenin from a calendar. 'To me Lenin too is no icon,' the poet commented. But of course an icon was exactly what Lenin was turned into during the sixty five years since his death. The saint's relic preserved in Red Square with the faithful paying their daily devotions is only the most obvious sign of this cult, and it seems to me entirely appropriate that it should have been instituted by an ex-seminarian. However, what has been more seriously disabling is the unquestioning deference to Leninism as an ideology, the ritual citation of Lenin's texts as the fountainhead of political wisdom, and the taboo on critical discussion of his theories and actions.

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

In one respect this aspiration has already borne fruit in respect of State policy. Last year the Congress of People's Deputies refused by a majority vote to debate the issue of Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution which guarantees the political monopoly of the Communist Party. In February this year the deputies reversed their earlier decision and agreed to repeal Article 6. This was clear evidence of the pressure exerted on the Soviet polity by the developments in Eastern Europe. Everywhere in those countries the demand for the ending of the Communist Party's monopoly of power and the institution of a multi-party system had been the spearhead of the democratic struggle. It had seemed earlier that it might take many years for the same demands to be

pressed successfully in the Soviet Union (I thought so myself), but the Eastern European example was apparently irresistible.

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

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

One of the phenomena evident in Soviet society since perestroika began has been the intense concern to re-discover history -- the truth about the pre-revolutionary past. However, this preoccupation is not an interest in the past for its own sake. It springs from the urgent compulsion to know how Soviet society came to be what it is, and to find in the understanding of these shaping forces the guide to the directions of change that are necessary in the present. The first expression of this re-exploration of the past was the flood of revelations about the horrors and crimes of the Stalin era that was opened up by Soviet journalistic, academic and creative writing during the initial phase of perestroika. However, it wasn't enough to know that these things had happened, it was more important to know why they had happened. The naivety of Khrushchev's explanation -- that Stalin was a bad guy -- could no longer be acceptable. Hence the enormous volume of historical and theoretical writing of the last few years directed towards exploring the social and political bases of the apparatus of dictatorship and terror without which Stalin couldn't have been possible. The fundamental problem is stated in two sentences at the end of the opening chapter in the new 'History of Soviet Society' that is being written by a group of historians in the Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Sciences (this chapter has appeared in the journal 'Istoriya SSSR'). I translate:

'The socialist revolution could be considered to have been genuinely completed only with the achievement of democracy. How and when did the authoritarian alternative in the development of Soviet society arise, and why did it triumph?'

That puts very succinctly and precisely the crucial questions raised by the Soviet experience. However, until very recently, all explorations of these questions stopped at 1924, the year of Lenin's death, or at best, at 1923, the year when Stalin through the troika prepared for his takeover. What is profoundly significant is that some Soviet inquirers are today going back to the Leninist era, even as far back as the October revolution itself, to answer the questions raised in the two sentences I quoted from the new 'History of Soviet Society'.

In his Lenin Day address in April 1990 Gorbachev devoted one part of the speech to attacking what he called 'destructive approaches to Lenin', and said, 'They are aimed at identifying Lenin with Stalin and can paint all Soviet history black to portray the October Revolution and the ensuing events as errors and, even worse, as crimes against the nation and humanity.'

However, Gorbachev is wrong. The question is not that of 'identifying Lenin with Stalin', nor, I think, do the sober and responsible critics of Leninism in the Soviet Union today do so. There is an important difference between the two men and the two eras. Lenin preserved freedom of discussion and dissent within the ruling party, while eroding and ultimately wiping out freedom of political expression outside it. Stalin turned the ruling party itself into a monolith, crushing dissent within the ranks of the party too. But once this distinction has been made, we have to recognise that there is a continuity of historical processes between the two stages. The Communist Party could not indefinitely maintain political freedom within its own ranks once it had destroyed freedom outside them; the progression from one-party rule to the monolithic party and ultimately the dictatorship of one man was a necessary progression. Trotsky had prophetically foreseen this in his pre-revolutionary polemics against Lenin, when he characterised Bolshevism as an endeavour to substitute the party for the working class, and predicted the outcome in the event of its triumph: 'The party organisation would then substitute itself for the party as a whole; then the Central Committee would substitute itself for the organisation; and finally a single dictator would substitute himself for the Central Committee.' However, Trotsky went back on this insight in entering Lenin's party in 1917, and later did even more than most of its other leaders to strengthen the centralising trends within it. The figure that deserves to be honoured most today as prophet is neither Lenin nor Trotsky but the German Communist woman leader, Rosa Luxemburg. She defended the Russian Revolution against its right-wing enemies but from the earliest days frankly and relentlessly criticised its authoritarian tendencies. After the long and tragic experience of prison-camp socialism, not only in the Soviet Union but in many other post-revolutionary societies, the words of her pamphlet on the Russian Revolution have acquired an even deeper resonance than at the time they were written:

Without a free and untrammelled press, without the unlimited right of association and assemblage, the rule of the broad mass of the people is entirely unthinkable...Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party -- however numerous they may be -- is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently.'

And again, in a passage which reads like a description in advance of Soviet political life in the seven decades to come:

'With the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the Soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element...Among them, in reality only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading, and an elite of the working class is invited from time to time to meetings where they are to applaud the speeches of the leaders, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously -- at bottom, then, a clique affair -- a dictatorship, to be sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians...Yes, we can go much further; such conditions must inevitably cause a brutalisation of public life...'

It isn't my intention, however, to follow the demonisation of Stalin with a demonisation of Lenin. Lenin and Leninism were a product of the Russian historical context -- the belatedness of Russia's historical development, and the concomitant absence or retardedness of liberal enlightenment, bourgeois advancement and democratic political culture. Leninist authoritarianism thus took on the imprint of the very power structures it overthrew. I fully agree that any society with a legacy of belated historical development will have to contend with similar burdens of the past in seeking to transform itself. But what was destructive about Leninism was that it sought to make the political forms evolved in the underground struggle against Tsarism the ideal, and to recreate the whole of society in the image of the centralised party. This was fatal. The subjective drives of Leninism towards the imposition of a social model determined by a revolutionary elite on the rest of society worked together with the objective circumstances -- the cultural gulf between the mass of the people and the leaders -- to make dictatorship inevitable.

Since then the Leninist model -- further debased and brutalised by Stalinism -- has established itself, with the prestigious authority of the first socialist revolution, as the example to be emulated by all third world socialisms. Wherever Leninist parties have come into power, the dangerous combination of the subjective drive towards authoritarianism inherent in their ideology and the objective social circumstances favouring such a development have manifested themselves in practice. Hence the indifference or downright hostility of many Asian Marxist parties to perestroika is not surprising: it goes against the grain of their whole political culture. The contrast between, say, the reaction of the CPI(M) and that of the Italian Communist Party

which is reconstituting itself as a social democratic movement is a measure of the distance between the two worlds.

One of the consequences of the kind of belatedness in historical development that I have been talking about is the tendency to compensate psychologically for it by claiming the privileges of backwardness. There are many examples in Russian history -- from the Slavophiles and Narodniks who thought Russia could avoid the fate of the West by by-passing capitalism, to Lenin and Trotsky imagining in 1917 that Russia could lead the European revolution, to Stalin proclaiming socialism in one country. However, under Asian conditions, with their even greater belatedness of development, these aberrations become further accentuated, as in Maoism with its idealisation of the peasantry. After perestroika and the Eastern European revolution there is a danger that some Asian political groups will see themselves as the guardians of socialist orthodoxy against a decadent western world enticed by the fleshpots of capitalism. This tendency is present among some Sri Lankan socialists too. I see this as a phenomenon within the socialist camp analogous to the rejection of Western thought by the nationalist propounders of 'jatika chintanaya'. Let us remember, therefore, that political democracy, the rule of law and human rights today represent fundamental and universal advances, and that any socialism that turns its back on them is really perpetuating the ideology of a pre-capitalist past.

In conclusion I wish to say that I don't want to indulge in any euphoria about either the Eastern European or the Soviet developments. That Stalinism has been discarded in the Soviet Union, that Leninism has been thrown out lock, stock and barrel in Eastern Europe, are good things as far as they go. But all these countries face a host of complex and arduous problems, and there is no guarantee that their future path will be smooth or peaceful. The burdens of historical belatedness are not to be cast off in a day or a decade. Let me finish by quoting the concluding paragraphs from an article written last year in 'Ogonyok', the most independent and forthright of Soviet periodicals, by a man whom I regard as one of the wisest political commentators today in the Soviet Union, Vyacheslav Kostikov. Its immediate purpose was to warn against over-expectations after the first sessions of the newly elected Congress of People's Deputies. But the political wisdom of his remarks is, I think, equally relevant to Eastern Europe today, and has also its lessons for us in our very different political circumstances. I translate from the original:

'It does not follow that we should surrender to illusions and suppose that in one day democracy will reign among us. Enough of utopias! The years of a mature democracy are counted in centuries. Glasnost, freedom of the word, parliamentarianism, are only the attributes and the instruments of democracy. And those who expected from the first Congress of People's Deputies a miracle -- the speedy introduction by decree of democracy from the western borders to the shores of the Pacific - will surely be disappointed.

To the emerging civil society the Congress of People's Deputies has given that without which no democracy can grow - - the taste of freedom. Having tasted of what was yesterday still that "forbidden fruit", the Soviet people, like the Biblical Adam and Eve, will assuredly no longer be able and no longer desire to live in the sterile mythical paradise, but will prefer the "sinful world" of democracy.

R.S.

EASTERN EUROPE:

Implications for Socialism

By Jayadeva Uyangoda

The rapid political and economic changes taking place in Eastern Europe have already baffled the mind of many a socialist. With an extraordinary rapidity, the old political structures have collapsed, economic models altered and what was assumed to be 'Eastern' in that part of Europe increasingly disappearing. In the postwar world political order, Eastern Europe, along with the Soviet Union, constituted a cluster of political, social and economic models with shared characteristics of being 'socialist.' They were also the advanced guard of the twentieth century socialist change in the non-advanced capitalist world. Today, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union appear to represent yet another historical role of an avant grade, in a trek to the yet unknown world of post-socialism.

Interpreting the changes in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Europe within the socialist discourse is somewhat problematic. The difficulty lies largely in the limitations of the existing categories of the Marxist/socialist analysis. For some, it is easy to rely on conspiracy theories of history to argue that the Western imperialist project of subverting and destroying socialism is in ascent. Ironically, such a 'socialist' reading of Eastern Europe will find parallels in the Right wing understanding that communism has collapsed and that history has vindicated the virtues of free-market capitalism. Another Marxist version would tell us, in a self-congratulatory tone, that Trotsky's prediction of the fall of bureaucratic regimes has come true, although authentic working class revolution in Eastern Europe is still far from being a reality. Still some other Marxists of orthodox persuasions would like us to believe that there has been no socialism in these countries to begin with. Socialism in Marxist polemics is obviously a nebulous and uncertain category.

The uncertainty of the language should nevertheless compel us to believe in some ideal-type model of socialism and test the experience of Eastern Europe against the properties attributed to such an imaginary model. A specific model of economy, politics, social and ethnic relations, culture and even everyday life has existed for several decades. A socialism, or some varieties of socialism, have thus existed historically and concretely. What Rudolf Bahro called 'existing socialism' and Alex Nove formulated as 'feasible socialism' are surely useful and workable categories to denote the actual experience of twentieth century experiment of a system alternative to capitalism. No historical society--capitalist or socialist--would evolve itself strictly in accordance with a pre-outlined theoretical model. If a pure model exists in theory at all, the real-life version of it would carry no more than the broad outlines of the

theoretically postulated system with variations derived from the process of its being historically formed. The discrepancy between what nineteenth century Marxism posited to be socialism and what emerged in many societies after the Bolshevik revolution had been pointed out by many schools of Marxism long before the current crisis in Eastern Europe started. A whole set of new questions now arise on the socialist model itself. Both theoretical and historical socialisms are under severe scrutiny by history itself.

Setting out the specific outlines of the classical Marxist model of socialist society is rather problematic. In the Marxism of Marx and Engels, the idea of a socialist society remained an under-defined one. Socialism was a vision which they, rightly or wrongly, had not translated into concrete and operational terms. Communism was the key category that was posited in opposition to capitalism, yet that too was confined to a bare outline. In a way, the Leninist notion of socialism is a post-Marx development in the Marxist theory. Lenin combined a notion of socialism which he derived from Marx's critique of capitalism with what he saw to be an alternative to Tsarist Russia. Reading 'The State and Revolution,' one gets the impression that Lenin was in a great hurry to develop a political--or rather the state--model of socialism which would soon replace a semi-medieval political structure in a relatively backward social formation that spread across the Eastern periphery of Europe and a large part of central and Eastern Asia.

The experience of historical socialism has belied some major assumptions of Leninist and post-Leninist concepts concerning the socialist project. Abolition of classes, dictatorship of the proletariat and the uniformity of political representation were three key concepts in the twentieth century Marxist-Leninist strategy in post-revolutionary societies. Common to all these was the assumption that once the classes of old society disappeared, consequent to statization and socialization of means of production, a process of self-reproducing social equality would set in. Extending the same assumption further, the proletarian state was posited to disappear, or wither away, coinciding with the expanding space for a self-managing and self-regulatory polity. Theoretically, the Leninist postulation of the state under socialism--the latter defined as the transitional stage between capitalism and communism--contained a gigantic paradox. A strong and profoundly interventionist state was needed to eradicate economic, social and political bases of the pre-socialist order. At the same time, such a state was supposed to nullify its own social bases of existence by the sheer fact that the social classes of the capitalist society were now abolished. "Classless society would not need the state" was the essence of this scheme. The real problem of such a model is the rather a-historical anticipation of social homogenization under socialism. Surely, many post-revolutionary societies succeeded in abolishing classes and class-based inequalities that existed in capitalist mode of production. Yet how about social stratification and differentiation that may well occur in the transitional mode of production of socialism? The experience of post-revolutionary societies does indicate that economic, political, social and cultural heterogeneity is an endemic in socialism as it could be in any previous social order. More than that, socialism has created its own forms of inequalities and social stratification as well. These are qualitatively different

from class inequalities and distinctions under capitalism. The difference is largely rooted in the absence of private property relations. Differential access to state power, state and party institutions has been a major source of social as well as economic differentiation of the populace in socialist systems. Stratification due to division of labor could be seen even within the working class. Social privileges available to party officials and functionaries who constitute a distinct stratum in society is at the core of what some Eastern European dissident Marxists call dictatorship over needs.

Economic and political inequality and social stratification in socialist societies defies the Marxist concept of classes which accounts for the structural composition of society based on private property. It is perhaps this difficulty that led to many Marxist debates on the exact nature of social structures in post-revolutionary societies. These debates still remain inconclusive. Many proper names such as parasitic bureaucracy, state bureaucracy, and state-capitalist classes have been thrown around, with little precision and lacking in concrete analysis, to describe the ruling strata in socialist formations. Should they not be viewed as constituting a distinct social class? That requires even within the Marxist framework of concepts a Marxist theory of historical socialism. The lack of it is a major lacunae in twentieth century Marxism.

To return to the question of political relations in socialist formations, the false assumption of a social system with disappearing class distinctions has been at the core of authoritarian political practice of the socialist variety. Monopoly of political representation was accorded to ruling parties while social formations have by no means been homogeneous. This has been a crucial contradiction of the society and politics of all forms of historical socialism, except in the first few years of revolutions in Russia and Nicaragua. The narrow Marxist critique of multiplicity of political representation assumes political plurality merely to be a component of bourgeois liberalism. Denial of political plurality has had a devastating effect on the capacity of post-revolutionary societies to develop an advanced model of socialist democracy as a real alternative to liberal democracy of the West.

In its political model, twentieth century socialism has failed to contribute any constructive alternative to capitalism. The historical fate of the politics of socialism is that it was tried out in societies which had not gone through the experience of bourgeois democratic revolution. All the pre-socialist polities in the Eastern Europe, and the Third World as well, were generally autocratic or authoritarian political systems of pre-bourgeois democratic mould. When the communists came into power with the project of building socialism, the modern state had not even formed in many of these societies. Building the state, or stable and strong political superstructures, therefore became an integral component of socialist transformation. And the state was built as if socialism was synonymous with the ability and capacity of the state to transform the old order and to direct the new order within a rather brief interval of history. In this sense, the socialist state became a profoundly vanguardist force. Invested with the task of transforming backward and pre-or semi-capitalist societies

into advanced ones, the state in post-revolutionary societies was more than a superstructure. It was also a shell which encompassed the society in its entirety.

Twentieth century politics has shown that no vanguardist state, whether socialist or capitalist, can be democratic. Although it may sound somewhat uncomfortable to accept the implications, the closest parallel to the vanguardist socialist state is the vanguardist capitalist state in the Third World. Of course, the two systems are fundamentally different in terms of social relations of property, class nature and relations of the state and social commitments of the state. Nevertheless, both are politico-economic models designed to achieve goals which were not all that dissimilar—modernity. Modernity involved achieving progress through industrialization, modernized agriculture, advanced social infrastructure and institution building. Differences in the two paths to modernity were perhaps blurred by the similarities of techniques and strategies. In Eastern Europe, East Asia and Latin America, the developmental state was the privileged agency in socio-economic transformation. To the extent that the Eastern European state deviated from the principles of socialist democracy, the peripheral capitalist state did not adhere to the notions of bourgeois democracy. The general principle in both instances has been the evolution of a political model which did not separate politics from economics, the state from the society and public domain from the private.

Recent democratic changes in Latin America in a way signify the admission by these societies the failure of the authoritarian model of the state. East Asia has not yet shed the political model which is so incongruous with the enormous economic advances gained over the past two to three decades. Eastern Europe, in contrast, is a collective example of transforming a political order which has worked up to a distinct point. The authoritarian state of the socialist variety reached a point of deep crisis once the contradiction between socialist politics and socialist economics became uncontrollably sharpened. For any further progress and modernity in these societies, the old authoritarian order is no longer the dynamic facilitator.

To place the above contradiction in a broader context, let us turn to the nature of historical conjunctures in which East European socialism came into being and evolved. Eastern European 'revolution' was as much a creation of European politics as it was a product of internal dynamics. The rise and fall of fascism in Germany, the course of the second world war, and the post-War settlements between the Soviet Union and Western Powers were crucial factors in the creation of what came to be known as Eastern Europe. The model of socialism in these countries was basically derived from the Stalinist variety of socialism in the Soviet Union. The only significant deviation was in Yugoslavia where techniques of self-management and decentralization was introduced in the domain of economics. And then, the state system of Eastern Europe was sustained, paradoxically, by the cold war. If the post-War Western strategy of containing communism meant to protect Western Europe from turning communist, it also nourished the the kind of socio-political system worked out in Eastern Europe. It is perhaps not a historical accident that the dismantling of the old socialist order in

this part of Europe has now coincided with the emergence of the post-cold war world order.

The evolving post- Cold War world order implies a qualitatively different historical context for Eastern Europe. One fundamental characteristic of it is the hegemony of the world capitalist market--a phenomenon grudgingly acknowledged by Gorbatchev and his reform-minded colleagues. Soviet socialism and its Eastern European mirror images were made possible in a historical conjuncture where certain national economies could withdraw themselves from the capitalist world market and still achieve a degree of industrialization and technological progress. Soviet industrialization in the 20s, 30s and the 40s is the classical example of transition to industry in almost total isolation from the world market. Subsequently, industrialization was regarded in Eastern Europe to signify the mainstay of socialist achievements. It is correct that the European republics of the Soviet Union, East Germany, Hungary, Rumania and Czechoslovakia achieved tremendous degree of industrialization within a comparatively brief period of just a few decades. However, this socialist encounter with industrial modernity was a historically specific and limited one, qualitatively analogous to conventional industrialization in nineteenth century capitalist Europe. Meanwhile, post- War Western capitalism, despite the naive Marxist predictions of its collapse, survived many crises and entered a process of restructuring the productive forces. The technological transformation of Western industrial production also signified a gigantic movement towards releasing the capacity of productive forces in a qualitatively new direction. The socialist economies, with emphasis on conventional heavy industry, Fordist labor processes, central planning and centralized management principles could not keep pace with the advances in increasing productivity, quality and technological progress of capitalist industry. Industrial stagnation was a subject of many debates among Eastern European economists even in the sixties and seventies, yet dogmas of central planning, the state control of productive forces and the relative isolation from the vast and highly competitive world market could not offer viable alternatives to socialist industrialization of the traditional kind. The market-oriented economic reforms carried out in Hungary and Poland in the late sixties and eighties were already significant economic deviations from the old model of socialist economics. To consider market-oriented reforms as rejection of socialist economic principles is fundamentally wrong. The relevant question would be whether market forces are necessary for socialist economies to overcome structural crisis which is built into economic forms which so far existed. In other words, socialism needs radically new economic reforms.

The qualitatively new stage of socialist economic transformation is very likely to move Eastern Europe away from the old economic order. The governing theme in the evolving economic reforms is the acceptance of the hegemony of the capitalist world market and perhaps the leadership of Western capital. In such a context, internal economic reforms will be drastic, because Eastern Europe does not at the moment have capacity to resist the demands of Western capital. The West-East economic relationship is one of unequal parties, one hegemonic and the other opting to be subordinate.

However, it is still too early to predict the exact nature of future forms of economics, politics and society in Eastern Europe. Evidently, there are many paths opted for. In the extreme case of East Germany, the unification with West Germany would alter all the major facets of five decades of East German socialism. Poland has already accelerated capitalist-type economic reforms which had been inaugurated in the early seventies. For Hungary, Rumania and Czechoslovakia, as is for the Soviet Union, the option of capitalist-oriented reforms is not yet easily available. As far as this latter cluster of countries are concerned, the nature of the emerging model may not be adequately captured by the conventional terminology of socialism vs. capitalism. The current debate in Hungary on the best socio-political option for Eastern Europe is an indication of new directions. There are two significant models being mentioned in Eastern European discussions --Scandinavian social democracy and the Korean path to economic reconstruction. The relevance of Nordic social democracy is perhaps obvious. It posits a combination of the best elements of socialism and capitalism. The considerations of a socially tolerant state, extensive measures of social welfarism, political plurality and a continuing role for the state as a social regulatory agency side by side with the market are implied in this Scandinavian model. The proposed Korean model posits economic considerations to be primary. The idea is to revive stagnant economies through massive foreign investments while maintaining the traditionally central role of the state. The continuing role of the state is advocated primarily to preserve one of the main achievements of Eastern European socialism--social welfarism. Free market capitalism of the Thatcherite kind may not have strong supporters in eastern European societies. Even if there are some, the myth of the free market would not be the best substitute for the myth of central planning.

THE POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE:

Some Historical and Contemporary Comparisons

By Chanaka Amaratunga

The events of 1989 and 1990 which have produced an extraordinary transformation in the political and economic life of Central and Eastern Europe came as a surprise to most political observers. It has however become commonplace, now that this transformation is well underway, to recognise that it is entirely the consequence of two factors. The first of these is believed to be the rejection by the people of Central and Eastern Europe of all forms of totalitarianism and political repression. The second is the total dissatisfaction of the people of those states with the material bankruptcy of socialist economics.

There can of course be no dispute on these two factors being the most predominant in bringing about the entirely praiseworthy transformation in what were once nations behind the Iron Curtain. Nor do I intend to suggest otherwise. But amidst the journalistic and sometimes simplistic and simplifying accounts of the political transformation in Central and Eastern Europe, there are two factors which must not be ignored. The first of these is that there is by no means a uniform state of political, still less economic, development in all the nations that have emerged out of Communism. The reasons for such variation of political and economic development are, of course, numerous and cannot be dealt with comprehensively in an article such as this. Nevertheless it becomes clear that the recent past, that is to say the last two decades of Communist rule in such states provides part of the explanation for such uneven development. The other factor which is a key to the present is the impact on each nation of its pre-Communist past. It seems to me therefore evident that the impact of history on political developments in the nations of Central and Eastern Europe plays a considerable part in shaping our understanding of their contemporary differences.

In arriving at an understanding of the contemporary political differences between the different nations which have emerged out of Communism (in which the state of their economies are also a useful guide), the results of elections held in 1990 after the structures of dictatorship had been dismantled are vital sources of enlightenment. When election results are used as a basis of differentiation, the states of Eastern Europe that liberated themselves from Communism fall into three categories. Within the first would be those nations in which a firm multi-party liberal democracy may be said to have emerged in consequence of such elections. In

determining these two criteria should be applied. The first is whether or not the political party which was in each nation a successor to the Communist Party emerged victorious. The second is whether the election results genuinely produced Parliaments of significant political diversity and the prospect of several significant political forces contending for office. The application of these standards suggests that East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia (or more accurately Croatia and Slovenia) have established liberal democratic regimes within a firm multi-party system of representative democracy. Poland and some of the states within the territory of the Soviet Union, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Georgia have moved towards liberal democracy in so far as they have elected to office political parties opposed to the Communist Party but have not firmly established a pluralist political system as in all these states a single powerful party has replaced the Communist Party whilst not providing much political space for other political parties. Furthermore, the victorious political forces in such states have been broad, amorphous political movements rather than political parties and have contained within them vastly diverse political elements opposed to Communism, as in the case of Solidarity in Poland, or have been nationalist movements though with liberal overtones, like the Sajudis of Lithuania. These states would fall within a second category. Rumania and Bulgaria become the odd nations out in that the elections held in those states produced victories for the successors to their former Communist parties.

While it may be misleading to extrapolate too much from history, it is perhaps more than coincidence that it is the two nations on the South Eastern periphery of Europe which before independence were a part of the Ottoman Empire that seem to have been least able to shake off the last vestiges of a repressive political system. The political legacy of the Ottoman Empire was of course a general unfamiliarity with the working of liberal democracy, a political system prone to corruption and the use of violence and the excessive dependence on a large and inefficient bureaucracy. All these factors bedevilled the Rumanian and Bulgarian political systems even in the era of the pre-Communist monarchies under which those states were governed since their attainment of independence from Turkish rule in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is perhaps further significant that in both these states (although this is also true of some of the states which I characterise as having established a more secure base for liberal democracy) constitutional government had broken down several years before the advent of Communism through physical imposition by the Stalinist dictatorship. Since 1924 in the case of Bulgaria and since 1938 in the case of Rumania periods of Royal dictatorship had taken place. In consequence the electoral process had all but atrophied and political parties had for long periods been banned. The political outlook and even the memory of a pluralistic and open political process was in these states therefore even less evident than among many of their fellow members of the Warsaw Pact. Indeed when I observed the Rumanian Presidential and Parliamentary Elections of 20th May 1990 as a delegate of the Liberal International, I was often informed of the immense disadvantage of political culture faced in the conduct of that election, by a nation that had its last free election as far back as in 1937.

The economic conditions of Rumania and Bulgaria, industrially the weakest nations of Eastern Europe with the exception of Albania, and those most dependent on agriculture provide another factor in the failure in those states of liberal democratic market economy-oriented political forces. The political primacy of the rural population is nowhere as acute in Eastern and Central Europe as in Bulgaria and Rumania. In Rumania I was able to observe at first hand that there does exist a great political contrast between the views of the urban and better educated sections of the population and the rural and the not-so-well educated sections of the population. While the urban and educated were strongly opposed to Ion Illiescu and the National Salvation Front which is the lineal successor of the Communist Party of the notorious and universally unlamented Nicolae Ceausescu, and strongly supported the principal parties of the opposition, the National Liberal Party and the National Peasant Party, the rural population and the not-so-well educated for the most part genuinely believed that the National Salvation Front was all that it claimed to be and supported it as an improvement on the Ceausescu dictatorship. There was then a clear differentiation based upon an urban rural dichotomy as well as one based on the level of education in favour of multi-party liberal democracy, a market economy and a constitutional monarchy on the one hand and a dominant single party system in which the level of state control in the economy would only be very gradually reduced. In Rumania in particular considerations of national pride, rather immaturely manifested, played a part in the political choices of the electorate. The leadership of the principal opposition parties having been provided from among recently returned exiles (the Liberal leader Radu Campeanu had spent his exile in France and the Peasant leader Ion Ratiu had spent his in the United Kingdom), was resented by many rural and not-so-well educated elements because it was contended that such leadership "could not understand the problems of the Rumanian people". The need for opposition political leaderships dominated by exiles exists in Rumania because the brutality and level of repression of the Communist dictatorship prevented an indigenous opposition movement from emerging.

It must be emphasised however, that as there are similarities between the political and economic conditions of Rumania and Bulgaria which following the recent elections, have placed them among the poor relations of Eastern Europe, there are also significant differences at least in the contemporary political situations, which the election results demonstrate. Although the Bulgarian Socialist Party, the successor of the dissolved Communist Party did win the Bulgarian Parliamentary Election in June 1990, its margin of victory over the principal opposition alliance, the Union of Democratic Forces was narrow. In the final results the U.D.F. obtained 37% of the vote and when the vote of smaller opposition parties is taken into account well over 40% of the electorate was recorded as having voted for non socialist market oriented political forces. This is in stark contrast to the Rumanian election in which President Illiescu was shown to have received over 87% of the vote in the Presidential Election and the National Salvation Front who have received 71% of the vote in the Parliamentary Election. In contrast to the performance of 37% for the Bulgarian U.D.F., the principal opposition alliance in Rumania of the National Liberal Party, the

National Peasant Party, the Social Democratic Party and a Hungarian Ethnic Party based in Transylvania obtained a combined vote of no more than 14% which many of my colleagues as International Observers and I do not believe to be an accurate reflection of the Opposition's strength. Furthermore the Bulgarian election results accurately reflected its dichotomy of opinion between the urban and rural areas. In the Bulgarian capital Sofia the ruling Bulgarian Socialist Party failed to win even one out of the approximately 30 seats, while the opposition alliance won all but 3 seats which went to smaller opposition parties. In the other principal cities of Bulgaria too the opposition won a clear majority of the seats. Although the state of opinion between the urban and rural areas was assessed to have been divided in precisely the same fashion in Rumania not even in Bucharest or in Timisoara which seem clearly strong holds of the opposition was there a result which even approached an opposition majority. It therefore seems that Bulgaria has a better prospect of the establishment of at least a minimal liberal democratic regime than does Rumania.

As Rumania had a shorter history of pre-Communist authoritarianism historical factors can hardly be the explanation for the difference in the state of political freedom in these neighbouring states. Although the regime of Ceausescu was even more dogmatic and repressive than the Zhivkov regime in Bulgaria, there was nothing much to choose between them. It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that the nature of their respective Communist regimes do not provide the explanation for the different political conditions in current Rumania, and Bulgaria. The continued authoritarian political course of Rumania, graphically brought home in the recent beating up of peaceful demonstrators and supporters of opposition parties by miners brought into Bucharest at the behest of President Illiescu, is the consequence of the hijacking of the revolution of December 1989 by a cabal of prominent Communists who now form the National Salvation Front. The important distinction between the course of the Rumanian revolution and its Bulgarian counterpart is that while the popular demonstrations in Bulgaria led to the fall of the Zhivkov regime and its replacement by a transitional regime of moderate Communists led by Petar Mladenov, the Rumanian revolution led to the assumption of power under the guise of the National Salvation Front of Illiescu who had been a senior Minister under Ceausescu and was a hardline Communist who had even been thought of as Ceausescu's successor until he fell out of favour (for personal rather than political reasons) and Petre Roman the current Prime Minister, a leading figure among the younger Communists and commonly believed to be the lover of Ceausescu's daughter.

What I have been trying to demonstrate is that an exclusively historical analysis of the differences within the states of Eastern and Central Europe would lead us to the formation of a partial impression. Nevertheless history when considered in tandem with recent politico-economic conditions suggests interesting interpretations of the diversities within the area of political upheaval behind what was once the Iron Curtain. In terms of the three categories of political development into which I placed the nations of Eastern and Central Europe, the second category of states Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Georgia provide a significant case study. In each of

these states the ruling Communist Parties were decisively defeated, in each case by a single broad political movement with nationalistic or patriotic overtones, each containing within it a diversity of opinions. While the mass popular mobilisation of opinion that has gone into the creation of Solidarity or Sajudis or the Georgian National Liberation Front could provide a powerful basis for liberal democracy there exists the possibility that in these states one one-party system is being replaced by another, albeit a more open and tolerant one. Equally, a liberal democratic system can only survive in a context of real political choice. Real political choice can be exercised only where there exists a plurality of political choices provided by several firmly established political parties. It is significant too to consider in relation to this category of states, the impact of history. Much more than Rumania and Bulgaria but perhaps in common with the states in the category of firm potential liberal democracies, these states have suffered from crises of national identity. Poland, after a period of several centuries in which different parts of it were ruled by three powers, the Russian Empire, Prussia, subsequently the German Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy only obtained its current identity after the Peace Settlement of 1919. During the brief period of its independent existence before the German invasion of 1939, it had a chequered political history having to endure a period of autocratic rule from 1926 to 1936. While political parties did exist during this period they did not develop clear identities and power remained largely in the hands of an oligarchy of military officers and aristocrats. The inspirational effects of appeals to patriotism, nationalism and religious fervour (the Roman Catholic Church has been a powerful actor throughout Poland's history) upon Polish political forces are therefore strong and could well develop into forces of authoritarianism and intolerance. While applauding the role that Solidarity has played in the defeat of Polish Communism I therefore believe that the prospects for Polish liberal democracy would be strengthened if the current disputes within Solidarity between its Leader Lech Walesa and Prime Minister Mazowiecki and several others proceeds to its logical conclusion in the dismemberment of Solidarity and the creation of several political parties.

The Baltic States share an identity crisis with Poland having been for a long time a part of the Russian Empire and recently in the Soviet Union under conditions which were very similar, despite being removed ethnically, linguistically and in terms of religion from the majority of Russians. These states too, had their birth in the Peace Settlement of 1919 and had their independence snuffed out by the Soviet invasion of 1940. It is worth noting that the experience of the Baltic States of constitutional Government was limited and that all three of them had succumbed to varying degrees of authoritarianism some years before their annexation by the Soviets. Since 1926 Lithuania was ruled by a military regime although this was moderated by 1929 when a coalition Cabinet which included the main opposition parties was appointed. It was a semi-constitutional government that remained in power until the annexation. From 1934 until the annexation Latvia was governed by a harsher military dictatorship which banned political parties. Estonia while having a better constitutional record than its neighbours also moved in the late 30's into a brief form of authoritarianism although by 1938 a democratic constitution was restored. The need

for a national identity is perhaps even more acute in Georgia than in the Baltic States for it was allowed to exercise its independence only until 1921 when it was annexed by the Soviet Union. Nevertheless in an earlier era of history Georgia had been a prosperous and independent kingdom with an ancient Royal Family (the Bagratians) descended from the Byzantine Emperors. The nature of the political movements in the Baltic States, in Georgia and in other parts of the Soviet Union indicate that while a liberal democratic element is contained within them their primary motivation is nationalistic. The crucial issue for the near future is whether the liberal democratic element will survive or whether in nations where tolerance of open political processes have not taken root, nationalism will triumph at the expense of individual and political freedom. The one fact that remains obvious over and above such reservations however is that the political doctrines of Communism and the economic theories of Socialism have received an overwhelming popular rejection.

The consideration of nationalism becomes fundamental in analysing the prospects for true freedom in Eastern and Central Europe because nationalism and its by-product fascism proved the most successful enemies of liberal democracy in these states in the inter-war period. This is as true of those nations I characterise as having the best prospects for liberal democracy, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Yugoslavia (principally Croatia and Slovenia) as it is of the others. Before I consider the evolution of nationalism in inter-war Europe and consider its fatal impact on the freedom of that area I must explain my reasons for characterising East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (Croatia and Slovenia) as the best prospects for liberal democracy, in the region.

It has of course already been noted that the elections conducted in those states during the course of 1990 led to decisively defeats for their respective Communist Parties while also ensuring the emergence of strong non-Socialist Parties which can provide the strong opposition that is vital to the health of liberal democracy. In East Germany and Hungary and to some degree in the Yugoslavian states of Croatia and Slovenia these parties could be said to have the distinct ideological characters of many western political parties. The East German election saw the emergence of two principal parties, the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats and a smaller party the Liberal Free Democrats who were almost mirror images of their counterparts in West Germany. It seems highly probable that upon the achievement of German unification later this year the elections which have been announced as taking place on the 9th of December 1990 in unified Germany will produce a political and ideological pattern closely modelled on that which has existed in the Federal Republic of Germany. While it is interesting to discover what will be the fate of smaller political parties which emerged out of the specific conditions of the so-called German Democratic Republic, such as the Democratic Alternative, a party strongly influenced by Lutheran religious revivalism, it seems safe to assume that a specifically East German political character will play no more than a peripheral role in the politics of a united Germany.

In Hungary too the recent election produced a close finish between the two largest parties and has given rise to what is a hopeful sign for the stabilization of the liberal democratic process, the establishment of ideological political parties. The Hungarian Democratic Forum which emerged as the largest party in the Hungarian Parliament (but without an overall majority) has identified itself as a Christian Democratic Party and has associated itself with the Christian Democratic International. The principal party in the opposition, the Alliance of Free Democrats and the Young Democrats, a radical liberal party of the youth to which the Free Democrats are politically close, have associated themselves with the Liberal International. The Social Democratic Party is a successor to the reformist wing of the now dissolved Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (the Communist Party) but can be identified as closer to the main stream of European Social Democracy, while the Independent Smallholders Party may be identified as a conservative party with an agrarian orientation. In the Croatia election while the liberal nationalist party emerged with a majority, the principal party of the opposition is an authentic liberal party, the Croatia Liberal Democratic Union. Similarly in Slovenia the parties that obtained the largest representation in the Slovenian Parliament were moderate nationalist, Liberal and Social democratic parties.

Czechoslovakia does not quite fit into the pattern of the other states discussed, in that the political parties that emerged from its recent elections did not lead to the same degree of ideological pluralism. Although the winners of the election, the Civic Forum of President Havel and its Slovak counterpart Public Against Violence are broadly characterized as liberal they contain within them many diversities. The other parties that gained significant representation in Parliament were the Socialist Party which is the successor to the former Communists and a rather small Christian Democratic Party. Nevertheless the political atmosphere in Czechoslovakia is firmly open and pluralistic and it is widely believed that the political system will be further stabilized by the breakup of Civic Forum into more ideologically distinct political parties. Indeed the Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative which is at present a tendency within Civic Forum is very likely to establish itself as an explicitly liberal party.

It seems to me that there are several factors, socio-economic, historical and political which have led to the firm establishment of liberal democracy in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany and to the strong possibility for the establishment of a free political order in Croatia and Slovenia. Economic development is a significant factor in that Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany had a more developed industrial base, (in the case of Czechoslovakia and Germany even pre-dating the Communist dictatorship,) than many of their counterparts in Eastern Europe. Although in recent years the Communist regime in East Germany followed an extremely unimaginative and unsuccessful policy of rigid statism, that nation's cultural and historical ties to the rest of Germany and its emotional as well as material interest in union with the Federal Republic have ensured the development of a political consciousness that will enable the survival of liberal democracy. The historical legacy

in relation to East Germany is a highly ambiguous one. The unspeakable horrors of Nazism had of course immediately preceded the advent of Communism and even in the period of the German Empire, the East contained those parts in Germany most associated with rigid conservatism, autocracy and militarism. The brief interregnum of the Weimar Republic did little to foster a genuine tradition of liberal democracy. Nevertheless the German Empire had been a constitutional state and although its governments owed more to the patronage of successive Emperors than to a particular political majority in the Reichstag, Imperial Germany did provide a very considerable measure of political pluralism. Indeed so wide was the ideological spectrum represented in the Imperial Reichstag that when war was declared in 1914, one of the Deputies who voted against war credits was Karl Liebknecht one of the leading figures of German Marxism and along with Rosa Luxemburg the leader of an extreme fringe group of revolutionaries. This era of comparative pluralism, sometimes totally overshadowed by the popular historical image of the dominance of Kaiser William II and the military establishment, also produced some of the great figures of German liberal democracy such as the Liberal Friedrich Naumann and the Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert.

Hungary's prospects for liberal democracy have in my view benefited from contemporary economic conditions, its recent political past as well as from its history both in the inter-war and the pre-First World War periods. At the time of the political upheavals of 1989 Hungary had the most developed economy as well as the most open political climate of the former Communist states. Perhaps in a desire to contain the massive popular political discontent that had only been crushed by the brutal intervention of the Soviet Union and other Communist states in 1956, the Communist regime of Janos Kadar had permitted a limited degree of private enterprise and in the last few years a measure of political dissent. In consequence, Hungary's political transformation was achieved after a period of preparation and the political parties which emerged from the recent Parliamentary Election had their origin for the most part in popular dissident movements. This is certainly true of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Alliance of Free Democrats and the Young Democrats. The relative openness to western ideas and the comparative prosperity achieved by a limited degree of economic reform served to heighten the Hungarian desire for both political and economic freedom.

Although both in political and economic terms Communist Czechoslovakia was less fortunate than Communist Hungary it too had known popular dissident movements in Civic Forum and Public Against Violence and had a reasonably developed industrial base dating back to the nineteenth century.

Perhaps even more significant than contemporary conditions is the legacy of history and the hold it has on modern popular imagination. When the special circumstances of East Germany and the overwhelming impact upon it of the Federal Republic is taken into account it is of immense significance that Hungary and Czechoslovakia provide the next best prospects for liberal democracy in the region.

While the political transformation of all the states considered here has been substantial it does seem possible to draw a distinction between the political developments of Central Europe as opposed to those of Eastern Europe. It seems to me that the historic area of Mitteleuropa provides the best prospects both for political freedom and for material prosperity. That the areas of Yugoslavia which thus far have provided the most strongly democratic consciousness are Croatia and Slovenia adds to this significance. What all these territories have in common is that prior to the end of the First World War they were part of a single political unit, the Habsburg Monarchy. This vast dynastic empire wrongly regarded as an anachronism because of its refusal to base itself upon the principles of nationality and of the nation-state, was in reality governed since the 1860's upon the principles of liberal constitutionalism. The minority ethnic groups of the Habsburg Monarchy enjoyed very considerable powers of self government and all elected members to the Imperial Parliament in Vienna. The lands of the historic kingdom of Hungary were since 1867 governed by largely independent constitutional authorities in Budapest. This multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious monarchy also permitted to its peoples a considerable degree of political pluralism. It is also significant that the Habsburg Monarchy was dissolved not as a consequence of any genuine feeling against it by its peoples but at the insistence of the Allied Powers consequent to its defeat in the First World War. The degree of political pluralism permitted to Croatia and Slovenia and all parts of the old Habsburg province of Bosnia-Herzegovina which were incorporated into the new state of Yugoslavia was far in excess of the political freedom available in the new state. The traditions of relatively moderate constitutional government albeit in the latter part of the Inter-war years under increasing pressure from radical nationalism were maintained by the immediate successor regimes to the Habsburg Monarchy. In Hungary loyalty to the House of Habsburg was sufficiently strong to lead to the restoration of the monarchy in 1920 and when the Allied Powers refused to permit the former Habsburg Emperor Karl to resume the Hungarian throne, the Hungarian Parliament created a regency and elected to the office of Regent Admiral Miklos Horthy who had been Commander of the Imperial Navy during the war and before that A.D.C. to the Habsburg Emperor, Franz Josef. This Parliamentary regime in which opposition and dissent was permitted continued to exist under the Regency and when it was destroyed in 1944 it was in consequence of the German invasion of Hungary and the forcible removal of the Regent.

In Czechoslovakia too despite ethnic tensions between the Czechs and the Slovaks and even more between the state and the Sudeten Germans, an essentially democratic regime survived first under President Tomas Masaryk and later under Eduard Benes. Only dismemberment and invasion by Nazi Germany finally overwhelmed the democratic regime in Czechoslovakia. Even after the end of the Second World War the Czech Government-in-Exile was restored and was able to exist until it was overthrown by the Soviet Union in 1948. The appeal of this relatively liberal and constitutional past has strongly revived in many of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. It is unsurprising therefore that the Chief Guest at the ceremonial opening of the first freely elected Hungarian Parliament in almost fifty

years was the Archduke Otto Von Habsburg, now a Member of the European Parliament and the son and Heir of the last Austrian Emperor and King of Hungary. Similarly in Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia the appeal of constitutional monarchy as a confirmation of liberal democracy has grown.

As in the inter-war years the ghost at the feast is the ghost of narrow nationalism. In the inter-war years racial antagonism and the persecution of ethnic minorities which in turn led to narrow and extreme reaction from the elements within those minorities served to undermine the constitutional structures in all the states in Central and Eastern Europe. Here I shall not discuss the most obvious example of this phenomenon, Germany. In Hungary the pressure of nationalistic forces led to the establishment of a radical right-wing government under Gyula Gombos. This government sought to enact anti-Semitic legislation and to create measures to hinder the Gypsies and other Hungarian minorities. The Regent Horthy however opposed these excesses and he dismissed Gombos's government shortly after the latter's death in 1936. Despite the efforts of several liberal Prime Ministers, the most notable among them Count Istvan Bethlen and Count Paul Teleki, the Hungarian regency was undermined by the militant Fascist movement, the Arrow Cross of Ferenc Szalasi. When the Germans deposed Horthy and abolished the monarchy in 1944 it was Szalasi that they installed as the President of a puppet regime. In Czechoslovakia while the Sudeten German leader Conrad Henlein worked closely with Hitler, the Slovak nationalists and their leader Father Tiszho helped undermine Czechoslovak liberal democracy and played a crucial part in helping to make possible the German annexation of 1939. In Yugoslavia the extreme Croat nationalist Ustasce Movement of Ante Pavelic was undoubtedly a fascist movement and actively collaborated in the German destruction of Yugoslavia. In Poland anti-semitism and nationalist sentiment assisted in the seizure of power in 1926 by Marshal Josef Pilsudski and even after the Marshal's death remained a source of instability in the Polish state. In Rumania the advent of the militant Fascist movement the Iron Guard of Corneliu Codreanu and particularly its assassination of the strongly anti-fascist Liberal Prime Minister Ion Duca paved the way in 1938 for the royal dictatorship of King Carol and after Carol had been forced to abdicate in 1940 to the neo-fascist dictatorship of Marshal Antonescu. (Antonescu's dictatorship was overthrown by King Michael, in 1944 and Rumania joined the allies in the Second World War).

Nationalist feelings and racial intolerance are by no means absent in the newly emerging Central and Eastern Europe. In several of the recent election campaigns anti-semitic and anti-minority as well as xenophobic sentiment did appear.

No one who values individual liberty and the open society can fail to be exhilarated by the incredible spectacle of the fall of brutal tyrannies like houses of cards across Central and Eastern Europe. In so falling they have exposed the shabby myths of the popularity and prosperity of Communism which so many of the dishonest or deluded intellectuals of the Third World had so eagerly embraced, for the bankrupt lies they have always been. While the present bout of nostalgia is entirely

understandable and while pride in the best elements of their pre-Communist past by the nations of Central and Eastern Europe is only fitting, the achievement of a liberal democratic and a prosperous life is essentially a business of the future. In the construction of that future, the darker shadows of the pre-communist past provide an important guide as well as a warning. The tragic course of the late 1930's and over forty years of the nightmare of Communism lead one to conclude by leaving to the people of Central and Eastern Europe the wisdom of George Santayana;

"Those who forget the past are condemned to relive it."

Select Bibliography

- Phyllis Auty, Tito New York, 1972.
- Winston S.Churchill, The Second World War : Volume I : The Gathering Storm, London 1948.
- C.Fotich, The European Powers 1900-1945, London 1965.
- Paul of Hohenzollern, Carol II, London 1988.
- Hannah Pakula, Queen of Roumania, London 1984
- H.M.King Peter II of Yugoslavia, A King Heritage, London 1961
- Anthony Polonsky, The Little Dictators: The History of Eastern Europe Since 1918 London 1975.
- A.J.P.Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War, London 1966
- H.S.H.Admiral Miklos Von Horthy de Nagybanya, Memoirs, London 1956.
- Elizabeth Wiskemann, Europe of the Dictators 1918-1945, London 1954.

CONTOURS OF THE NEW EUROPE

By Mervyn de Silva

The hectic, unpredictable pace of change, if not its general direction, must surely disconcert, if not always confound, the daring architect of perestroika, his skills in diplomacy abroad and crisis-management at home, notwithstanding.

Soon these skills are likely to be concentrated on his own country and the crumbling Soviet system, where his political survival itself may be at stake.

But the forces of change which Gorbachev's historic initiative has unleashed are already transforming the entire international order, a unique bipolar post-war world.

A physically divided Europe -- the Berlin Wall its stark symbol -- was the immediate arena for a new, protracted conflict between two sharply competitive ideologies and economic systems. That Europe should prove the first battleground was determined not merely by the outcome of the war, the spoils of victory, but by modern history. Till the outbreak of hostilities, the world had learned to live for many centuries in the shadow of European dominance -- European ideas, European power, from the Renaissance, the voyages of discovery, the Industrial Revolution and Empire.

Came the "superpowers", a new nomenclature meaningful at first only in terms of a single attribute, the nuclear weapon. As the post-war rivalry of these superpowers grew in both intensity and scope, the protracted conflict and struggle for supremacy assumed truly global dimensions. Such were its international ramifications that no nation, big or small, could remain aloof or unscathed.

If the main centre of global influence and extra-territorial power was no more European but American and Euro-Asian, the principal victim of the protracted conflict was the innately vulnerable, de-colonised "Third World", a definition founded on bi-polarity.

The Cold War is over. Communism has lost. The Berlin Wall has collapsed. The Soviet colossus has been exposed as an essentially one-dimensional power, military power. To acquire and sustain this military strength, the USSR has had to exhaust much of its ample natural resources, poorly exploited in any case, by an inefficient economic system. The price of matching nuclear arsenals and achieving parity or near-parity with its rival has been paid by the Soviet citizen, his living standards, a major cause of the current upheaval.

What was acclaimed by American prophets as 'the American Century' is also over. The oppressive burden of defense spending, the arms race, has placed serious strains on the US economy too. As James Chase observes:

"The United States had set up a worldwide alliance system, serviced by its fleets and air bases, at a time when it supplied almost 50 percent of the world's product. Forty years later, America generates less than 20 percent and has become the greatest debtor country in the world, gravely dependent on foreigners to finance its living standard."

Thus, the consequences of *perestroika* reinforce two fundamental developments in the international system, and its supportive power structure. If the military balance, near equivalence, made war unwinnable, the menacing nature of the weaponry, the "balance of terror", has made it unthinkable. In the doctrinal lexicon of the nuclear strategists, "mutual assured destruction" was guaranteed. The acronym M.A.D. is the final crushing verdict on the lunacies of the arms race.

The other vital change is the movement from bi-polarity to multi-polarity. A recognition of the relevance and relative importance of different kinds of power -- the economic as against the exclusively military, for instance -- together with the diffusion of power, a geographic re-distribution, have undermined the post-war structure. Japan and the phenomenal East Asian growth area as well as Germany and the E.E.C. are the obvious examples. What do these historic developments represent? Even as the peoples of Eastern and Central Europe, the Soviet Union, China and much of the Third World cry out for democracy, the inter-state system itself is being democratised. The last such endeavour was the Non-aligned Movement.

In one sphere alone, American dominance remains almost unchallenged -- the global communications system which influences the international debate, its content and course. The "end of ideology", a distinctly American expression, is the latest example of this all-pervasive influence on the intelligentsia, specially the western-educated elites that govern many a Third World country.

Right now, the spirited revival of other, older 'isms' which have always claimed a stronger, more tenacious allegiance than, say, Marxism-Leninism, is both remarkable, impressive and disturbing. Nationalism, which has so often assumed an aggressive, militaristic and expansionist character, has played a far more active role in the making of war, and through war and conquest, shaping the destinies of nations, than communism. The resurgence of German nationalism and the relentless advance of Japanese power, albeit economic-diplomatic at the moment, make more than neighbours nervous. As Mr. Gorbachev returns from Washington to Moscow, the Russian nationalists, wrote a British correspondent, are at the very gates of the Kremlin.

'Isms', whether Communism, Nationalism or any other, should not be studied solely in terms of ideological content. It can be both a means for self-advancement of the nationality or nation-state, as well as a weapon of self-defence, of group security. However 'security' is the neglected factor in the general discussion of the European revolt. In a map printed by the Soviet Foreign Ministry the whole of the Baltic region, except the cities, is coloured pink --- 'out of bounds' for foreigners. Michael Dobbs of the *Guardian* calls it a "vivid reminder of the Kremlin's strategic interest in the 500 mile stretch of the Baltic coastline that marks the USSR's north western borders".

The culmination of Moscow's military interventions within its own security sphere right up to Czechoslovakia 1968 was the Brezhnev doctrine of "limited sovereignty". The integral connection between ideological and security interests has been succinctly stated in a recent article by Christopher Bertram, the former director of the Institute of Strategic Studies, London. The self-assertion of the "satellites" may not have been so successful or even possible if not for a crucial re-definition of Soviet security concerns. Bertram describes this re-formulation the most significant geopolitical development of the late 80's:

"Europe and Germany have been divided for the past four decades because of Soviet insistence that the security of the USSR called not only for the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union but also for ideological integrity in a communist system of States. Thus the Soviet Union maintained massive military forces not just to deter and defeat a military aggressor but also to quash any ideological rebellion. The presence of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe was a vital security interest for the Soviet Union. It was precisely this combination that constituted the European security problem over the past four decades"

In short, the political systems of East Europe were released from communist control, and the East European countries from Soviet control. Can this trend be reversed? Difficult to imagine, the writer concludes.

If the East is no longer "red", the East-West divide is being steadily narrowed, the East moving westward. So much for political geography. Post-war history is also unravelling.

The questions arising from these manifold, fast-moving and criss-crossing processes are mind-boggling. We may focus on a few: (a) the immediate future of a divided Germany in what remains a divided Europe in a bi-polar world; (b) the fate of the two military alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact; on these we should be on surer ground by 1991; (c) domestic discontents and their impact as a shaping force on the

post-imperial Soviet State; (d) the health and shape of the global economy as we approach the 21st century.

The core issues in what is plainly a more profound civilisation crisis may be identified as (i) the global democratisation process and respect for human rights (ii) the rich-poor conflict within and between nations (iii) global security, defined not merely in military terms but in terms of the social-economic stability that can strengthen participatory processes.

The Gorbachevian commitment to "de-ideologise" international relations fortified what was already self-evident, the primacy of economics.

The Soviet dis-Union and disarray, and the American decline -- the fate of the war's victors -- was matched as well as mocked by the spectacular rise of Japan and Germany, the miraculous good fortune of the vanquished. Hegel's "cunning of history" was thus laced with Engels' "ironies". Japan presents no security problem. Not yet anyway. Germany which launched two wars, does. Soviet troops are still stationed in the GDR, the cutting edge of the Warsaw Pact's European defense, and a critical factor in the strategy of the USSR, the continent's strongest land power, perceived by the West as a Soviet "threat".

By July, the two German states will be members of a monetary union, proclaiming the West German D.Mark's supremacy over the German Marx.

It was the revolt in East Germany, long regarded as the most efficient and stable Communist state, which had a ripple-effect on other 'Pact' countries. German unification will be tolerated. Moscow however will remain deeply concerned about the GDR's status vis-a-vis the post-war alliance system. Certainly it will oppose the GDR incorporation in NATO. That much was clear from the recent Gorbachev-Bush summit. Fearing what Bertram calls "uprisings throughout the former Soviet security glacis", Moscow will resist any unilateral moves.

"A free, united Germany within a free United Europe". Konrad Adenauer's vision was now within reach, proclaimed Chancellor Helmut Kohl proudly. The conservative CDU leader could not wholly suppress his partisanship. The realisation of that vision would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of another Chancellor, the far-sighted SPD leader and pioneer of Ostpolitik Willy Brandt. As Chairman of the Socialist International Willy Brandt devotes more time and energy to his parallel project -- "the North-South Dialogue", where the hopes of the wretched of the earth rest. There can be no "Peace" or "Security" for "East-West", even in the event of a steady merger, if that 'security' is earned at the price of "North-South" co-operation and the decency and dignity of an impoverished South. Brandt's humanist vision, founded on the quintessential virtues of Socialism, of a Socialism that works, could take mankind one more step in its long, weary and winding journey to Utopia.

"Men do not fight because they have arms... They have arms because they deem it necessary to fight" wrote Hans J. Morgenthau in his path-breaking **Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace** (1948). And peace, says the UNESCO Declaration, must be constructed in the minds of men --- the duty primarily, I would add, of the intellectual.

ISAAC DEUTSCHER REVISITED

By Reggie Siriwardena

On many thinking people of my generation who couldn't accept either of the rival orthodoxies of the cold war -- Stalinism or anti-Communism -- the writing and thought of Isaac Deutscher exerted a profound influence. He was, to my mind, the outstanding interpreter of Soviet history as well as the most penetrating commentator on Soviet affairs during the last two decades of his life. My own intellectual debt to him is considerable. From the time of the publication of his political biography of Stalin in 1949 until his death in 1967, I read nearly every one of his books as they came out and reviewed some of them. In the 'fifties I arranged for the publication of his periodical articles on the middle page of the "Ceylon Daily News", and in 1952 I had the privilege of a long afternoon's conversation with him at his home in Coulsdon. Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since Deutscher's death. How well do his analyses and his historical prognostications stand up in the light of these two decades and a half -- and particularly in the context of the enormous changes that have shaken the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the end of that period? To attempt answers to that question is the task of this paper.

I should like first to indicate by a single example the wide gulf that separated Deutscher's thinking from that of most professional Western Sovietologists of that time. When Stalin was dying -- the wire services had just flashed the report of his stroke -- Deutscher wrote an article for the "Manchester Guardian" which appeared on the day of his death. The historical sweep of the article would in any case have been striking for a piece that must have been written in a few hours, but what made it even more remarkable was Deutscher's prognosis. For Deutscher titled his article "The End of Stalinism: The Soviet Union's Coming Crisis". I shall try to indicate the direction of its analysis by quoting one paragraph:

'Let me sum up the elements of the crisis looming ahead. While Lenin was on his death-bed the revolution was evolving towards an autocracy and withdrawing into its national shell. While Stalin is wrestling with death the Soviet people seem to be sick with the autocracy, and the revolution has long broken out of its national shell. It is impossible to prophesy how this crisis is going to be solved. Probably no rapid or startling developments should be expected in the near future. "Stalin is dead -- long live Stalinism" -- the cry will resound from Moscow in the next few months, regardless of the fact that Stalinism has been half-dead even before Stalin has died.'

To appreciate how unusual such a perspective was at that time, one must recall that among both Western scholars of Soviet affairs and cold-war ideologues, it was taken for granted that Stalin's death would change nothing in the Soviet Union;

the system would go on. The orthodox theoretical model of soviet society that was current was that of the 'totalitarian state', which by definition was monolithic, static, and impervious to change -- at least by internal forces. (This last qualification was important, because it implied that if Soviet totalitarianism was to be overthrown it had to be done from outside.) This was the paradigm of the Soviet state that was common to academic Sovietologists like Kennan, Fainsod, and Brzezinski on the one hand and to vulgar and now forgotten propagandists such as Whittaker Chambers and James Burnham on the other. Against them, Deutscher was to argue then and later that Soviet society, even after the rigid mould imposed on it by Stalin, was a living and evolving society, possessing its own dynamics and its potentialities of change. Or -- as he put it in an essay in 1956 -- "Yes, the Soviet universe does move."

With other non-Stalinists of the left Deutscher had his disagreements, too. They indeed did accept that the Stalinist state was ephemeral, but they -- many of them following Trotsky's analyses -- looked to a political revolution by the Soviet masses to overthrow it. Against them Deutscher argued that in a society that had for so long become unaccustomed to political self-mobilisation, the initiative for change had to come from above -- in other words, from a section of the ruling group itself. He wouldn't assert that the democratic regeneration of Soviet society could necessarily be completed without revolutionary intervention by the people, but he wasn't prepared to rule out the possibility of its consummation by continuous reform either. The era of Khrushchev vindicated Deutscher's opinion that reform had become an inescapable necessity from the standpoint of the Soviet rulers themselves, and though the clock was again set back by Khrushchev's fall, Deutscher remained confident that the tide of reform would return. A few months before he died, Deutscher said, delivering the George Macaulay Trevelyan lectures titled The Unfinished Revolution:

'Soviet society cannot reconcile itself much longer to remaining a more object of history and being dependent on the whims of autocrats or the arbitrary decisions of oligarchies. It needs to regain the sense of being its own master. It needs to obtain control over its governments and to transform the State, which has long towered above society, into an instrument of the nation's democratically expressed will and interest. It needs, in the first instance, to re-establish freedom of expression and association.'

If Deutscher had lived into the era of glasnost and perestroika, he would certainly have found in these developments a confirmation of his expectations.

Deutscher's fundamentally optimistic view of the Soviet future would have been impossible if his analysis of the Stalin era hadn't also been significantly different from that of either Western anti-communists or of many left-wing anti-Stalinists. Deutscher had been through the school of anti-Stalinism as a member of a Polish Trotskyist group before the war, and he shared none of the Stalinist myths and dogmas. But when he wrote his biography of Stalin, he rejected the analogy which it was so fashionable to make at that time between Stalin and Hitler as tyrants 'whose record is one of absolute worthlessness and futility'. In spite of his consciousness of the

gigantic human cost of the Stalin era, Deutscher recognised also the achievement made possible by it. In the article written at the time of Stalin's death to which I have already referred, there occurs this observation:

'The core of Stalin's historic achievement consists in this, that he found Russia working with wooden ploughs and is leaving her equipped with atomic piles.'

Nor was this, as Deutscher was at pains to stress, merely an economic or technological transformation; Russia's economic advance would have been impossible without sending a whole nation to school. In the biography of Stalin there is a remarkable passage which occurs immediately after Deutscher has described the crippling regimentation of artists, writers and other intellectuals by Stalin. He goes on:

'However, the cultural significance of Stalinism cannot be judged merely by the way it ravaged letters and arts. It is the contradiction between Stalin's constructive and his destructive influences that should be kept in mind. While he was mercilessly flattening the spiritual life of the intelligentsia, he also carried... the basic elements of civilisation to a vast mass of uncivilised humanity. Under his rule Russian culture lost in depth but gained in breadth. The prediction may perhaps be ventured that this extensive spread of civilisation in Russia will be followed by a new phase of intensive development, a phase from which another generation will look back with relief upon the barbarous antics of the Stalinist era. It will then perhaps be said that Stalin's style was peculiarly adapted to the tasks of a ruler himself not well educated, who had to dragoon the muzhiks, and a bureaucracy issuing from the muzhiks, out of their anarchic poverty and darkness.'

We may salute Deutscher's insight all the more appreciatively today when the great intellectual ferment of the Gorbachev years has confirmed his hope of a new generation looking back 'with relief upon the barbarous antics of the Stalinist era.'

Deutscher's strength, then, was in his recognition that Soviet society, and even its ruling group, could generate the internal forces for democratic transformation. But what Deutscher expected was that transformation would be directed essentially towards a return to the original social and political programme of the October Revolution. Let me quote part of the concluding paragraph from the "Manchester Guardian" article written as Stalin was dying:

'No revolutionary nation has ever made real peace with returned Bourbons or Stuarts and renounced its revolutionary heritage. The peoples of the Soviet Union may in due time shake off Stalinism, or rather the oppressive aspects of Stalinism. But there is no reason to suppose that they will ever genuinely and effectively renounce the Bolshevik Revolution.'

It is noteworthy that in this passage Deutscher, having looked forward to the shaking off of Stalinism by the Soviet people, adds the qualification, 'or rather the oppressive aspects of Stalinism'. This is because for him the legacy of Stalinism consisted not only of the one-party state, the dictatorship, leader worship and police terror: it included also planned economy, public ownership of industry and collectivisation of the land. Whatever the distortions of these by the Stalinist political structure, Deutscher considered them to be a continuation of the Bolshevik Revolution which the Soviet people would not want to renounce.

Deutscher, in other words, was a classical Marxist, and he was confident that the future regeneration of the Soviet Union would take the form of a return to classical Marxism. There is an explicit statement of this belief almost on the last page of his massive and brilliant biography of Trotsky, where he envisages the future rehabilitation of Trotsky in the Soviet Union:

'When it does come, it will be more than a long-overdue act of justice towards the memory of a great man. By this act the workers' state will announce that it has at last reached maturity, broken its bureaucratic shackles, and re-embraced the classical Marxism that had been banished with Trotsky.'

Trotsky's formal rehabilitation has not yet come, but one may doubt whether, if it were to take place next month or next year, it would signify a re-embracing of classical Marxism. The Gorbachev ruling group has progressively moved away from Stalinism, but this same momentum has in several respects carried it far from classical Marxism, even while it was affirming its fidelity to it. The doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat has been silently buried, the efficacy of central planning is questioned and the superiority of the market mechanism affirmed, the concept of the decisive struggle between two contending world systems has been replaced by that of international co-operation between them, and the priority of class interests is continually denied on the basis of 'universal human values'. This has all taken place within the ruling group itself. Outside it, a far more thoroughgoing critique of classical Marxism -- indeed, often a rejection of Marxism in all its forms -- is going on among the reforming intelligentsia. And such information as is available about the broad trends of thinking among the Soviet people -- for instance, from the new institutions of opinion polls -- seems to indicate that if there were a free and open election in the Soviet Union today, last year's experience of Eastern Europe would be repeated and the Communist Party defeated. Let me recall Deutscher's words at the time of Stalin's death: 'There is no reason to suppose that they (i.e. the Soviet people) will ever genuinely and effectively renounce the Bolshevik Revolution.' Today it is perfectly possible to envisage that, given the opportunity, they may do just that.

The Eastern European revolution of 1989 offers an interesting occasion to compare Deutscher's historical analysis with subsequent developments. In his

biography of Stalin he draws a parallel between Napoleon's and Stalin's historical roles in relation to the countries they conquered in Europe:

'Napoleon, the tamer of Jacobinism at home, carried the revolution into foreign lands, to Italy, to the Rhineland, and to Poland, where he abolished serfdom, completely or in part, and where his Code destroyed many of the feudal privileges. Malgre lui-meme, he executed parts of the political testament of Jacobinism... It is mainly in Napoleon's impact upon the lands neighbouring France that the analogy is found for the impact of Stalinism upon eastern and central Europe. The chief elements of both historical situations are similar: the social order of eastern Europe was as little capable of survival as was the feudal order in the Rhineland in Napoleon's days; the revolutionary forces arrayed against the anachronism were too weak to remove it; then conquest and revolution merged in a movement, at once progressive and retrograde, which at last transformed the structure of society.'

Returning to this subject in 1950 in his essay 'Two Revolutions', Deutscher said:

'I do not believe that the verdict of history on the Stalinist system of satellites will in this respect be more severe than it has been on the Bonapartist system'.

Today, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet satellite regimes, one has reason to doubt Deutscher's conclusion. Stalin's attempt to revolutionise Eastern Europe by conquest has turned out to be more ephemeral than Napoleon's corresponding endeavour. It is true that the social advances of the French Revolution, carried by Napoleon's armies to the conquered lands, were rolled back by triumphant reaction after 1815. To this process popular nationalist opposition to French domination undoubtedly contributed. But the reversal of the progressive changes that Napoleon had brought to the conquered lands -- the restoration of the old monarchies and aristocracies -- required the military defeat of France and the victory of the Grand Alliance. Nevertheless, the counter-revolution was -- on the historical scale -- a short-lived phase. The new popular risings -- in 1830 and 1848 -- continued to be inspired by the example and the legend of the French Revolution. Moreover, two contrary images of Napoleon himself survived in the lands of his former empire -- one, of the oppressor, and the other, of the liberator. Deutscher himself recalls in a footnote to his essay, 'Two Revolutions':

'I was brought up in Poland, one of Napoleon's satellite countries, where even in my day the Napoleonic legend was so strongly alive that, as a schoolboy, I wept bitter tears over Napoleon's downfall, as nearly every Polish child did.'

But if the return of the old order after Waterloo was ensured by the military victory of the Grand Alliance, aided by nationalist forces within the former French

Empire, the Eastern European revolution of 1989 -- or counter-revolution, if you want to call it that -- was not brought about by American intervention or the military defeat of the Soviet Union. It was the peoples of Eastern Europe themselves who rose to topple the Stalinist regimes. There Deutscher's analogy seems to me to break down. And in rejecting Soviet domination the peoples of Eastern Europe have evidently repudiated the Russian Revolution too: Marx and Lenin have been cast into the historical dustbin as much as Stalin. The optimistic Marxist may argue that this swing to the right in Eastern Europe will be historically as shortlived as the post-Waterloo counter-revolution was, and that socialism will return in due course in Eastern Europe. I would certainly agree that the enthusiasm for the free market may not survive the economic rigours of rising prices and unemployment, and that a people accustomed to subsidised social services will not willingly forego them.

But whatever the political and economic structures that may emerge in Central and Eastern Europe from the present period of transition, it is reasonably certain that at least in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, it will bear no resemblance to the one-party state and the centralised economy of the pre-1989 model. (Eastern Germany will soon no longer have an independent destiny of its own.) It is only in the more backward region of the former Soviet empire -- in Romania and Bulgaria -- that the old structures retain something of their tenacity, though covered over with a veneer of reform. I would therefore argue that Stalin's enterprise of 'revolution by conquest' has been much less enduring in its historical legacy than Napoleon's.

What would Deutscher have said if he had lived to see the Eastern European events of last year? It is always possible, of course, that he may have modified his ideas in the light of the new realities. But if he had remained true to his former position, he would have had to describe these developments as 'objectively counter-revolutionary', as he did characterise the East Berlin uprising of 1953. We know also that after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 he wrote:

'One can say that the Hungarian people, driven to desperation and to a state of heroic frenzy, tried to wind the clock back while Moscow tried once more with its bayonets to re-wind the communist revolution in Hungary...'

What is implied in this position is Deutscher's certainty that public ownership and planned economy -- the essential features of the Soviet economic forms -- are the road of the future, and that these must not be abandoned because of the political deformations of Soviet socialism. To question this position involves not only debating with Deutscher's ghost but also interrogating the entire experience of the Russian Revolution. This is too large an undertaking to attempt in any thoroughgoing fashion in the latter half of a paper, but I shall try at least to throw some light on one aspect of the question. What I want to take up is Deutscher's concept of 'revolution from above'.

The phrase is not Deutscher's own: it comes from the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: Short Course, attributed to Stalin himself. It is used there to describe Stalin's collectivisation of the land, though the History, while characterising it as carried out 'from above, with the initiative of the State power', is careful to preserve the semblance of popular legitimacy by adding, 'with direct support from below'. Deutscher, however, applies the term 'revolution from above' not only to Stalin's collectivisation and Five-Year Plans but also, as we have seen, to his conquest of Eastern Europe.

What are the distinguishing elements of 'revolution from above', in Deutscher's conceptualisation? We may infer from his analyses that he saw it, in the Soviet context, as consisting of a fundamental social transformation, conceived to be historically necessary and progressive, but initiated and carried through by the will of the party and the state. The role of the masses in such a process may vary from subordinate participation to even outright hostility -- as in the case of the majority of the peasantry in relation to collectivisation.

If this is what is meant by 'revolution from above', it will be evident that there can be no absolute distinction between 'revolution from above' and 'revolution from below', but that in the range of revolutionary phenomena there is a gradation across a spectrum. There is never such a thing as 'pure spontaneity' in mass action: people in such situations have always been influenced by ideas and slogans, however inchoate, and propelled into action by agitators and activists, though these leaders may not have come from organised political parties. The Eastern European democratic revolutions that we witnessed last year, for instance, tended towards this pole of 'revolution from below'. So did the February Revolution in Russia: the masses entered into it by their own momentum, and no political party was in command of the movement, even though long years of political agitation and propaganda would have gone into shaping the consciousness of the workers and soldiers who went out into the streets to overthrow the Tsarist regime.

What then are we to say of the October Revolution? The decision to take state power through an insurrection was made by the Bolshevik party, and the organisation and successful completion of the insurrection was effected fundamentally by groups directed and controlled by the party. Of course, in making that decision Lenin and the Bolsheviks acted in the knowledge that their seizure of power would receive substantial support from the working class and the soldiers in the two capitals, Petrograd and Moscow, which were decisive for the fate of the revolution. In that estimate they appear to have been right.

However, there is more to the issue than that. Between February and October the slogan that all parties on the left (including the Bolsheviks) had pushed was 'All power to the Soviets!' -- that is, to the popular organs of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies. It is well known that on the eve of the insurrection there was a division of opinion within the Bolshevik Party leadership itself on whether the

insurrection should forestall the Congress of Soviets which was about to meet. Waiting for the Congress and taking power in its name would have created pressure for a sharing of power with the other parties represented in the Soviets. Lenin wanted to face the Congress with a fait accompli so as to clear the way for a Bolshevik monopoly of power. (There was, of course, a brief coalition with the small group of Left SRs.)

Why did Lenin take this road? It is clear from the historical record that what actuated him was, above all, the will-of-the-wisp of the impending European revolution. In the resolution he put to the crucial Bolshevik Party central committee meeting on the eve of October, the first reason advanced for carrying out the insurrection was precisely that -- 'the international position of the Russian revolution (the revolt in the German navy, which is an extreme manifestation of the growth throughout Europe of the world socialist revolution)'

Deutscher himself raises the issue (though he puts it aside as unanswerable) 'whether Lenin and Trotsky would have acted as they did, or whether they would have acted with the same determination, if they had taken a soberer view of international revolution and foreseen that in the course of decades their example would not be imitated in any other country.' What is clear in any case is that Lenin wanted to use the Russian revolution as a spring-board for European revolution, and that perspective ruled out a compromise or a coalition with the moderate parties in the Soviets.

In the October revolution, therefore, there was a significant element of 'revolution from above' -- not only in the sense that the insurrection was decided on, organised and directed by a party vanguard, but in that its fundamental aim was an international revolution on which that vanguard had set its sights and its hopes. The determination to preserve Russia as the fortress of socialist revolution until the European working class should rise had as its necessary concomitant an intransigence in the face of the contrary strivings of the great mass of the population. The revolution had been won fundamentally in two cities, but the vast majority of the nation were peasants. They were willing to accept the Bolsheviks as long as they were given land, but the socialist -- let alone the internationalist -- aims of the Bolsheviks were alien to most of them. In 1918, only a few months after the revolution, the nation gave its verdict in the elections to the Constituent Assembly -- the first free elections that Russia had ever had, conducted by the Bolshevik government itself. The Bolsheviks got 24 percent of the seats, but the SRs got 40 per cent. A Soviet political analyst, Vyacheslav Kostikov, has recently commented that this distribution of seats should have made possible 'the formation of a left democratic government, which would have reflected the real democratic strivings of the toilers'. Perhaps so, and if this could have happened, the Soviet Union might have been spared the worst horrors of the Civil War, not to mention the dictatorial terror to come. Such a compromise would, however, have been alien to the Bolshevik project of holding on in the beleaguered fortress until the European proletariat came to the rescue.

The October Revolution was not only a socialist revolution imposed by an urban vanguard on a predominantly peasant country; it was also a revolution brought to a vast and ethnically diverse country by a movement based principally in the cities of the Russian-majority regions. This ethnic dimension of the Russian revolution has still not been adequately explored. In the mainstream of writing about Soviet history the ethnic aspects have been relegated to the margins. This is especially true of the work of left-wing scholars like Deutscher or left-liberals like E.H.Carr, influenced as they were by the Marxist tradition of treating ethnicity and nationality as subordinate to class or only an epiphenomenon of it. Yet the contradiction between the Bolsheviks' theoretical allegiance to the principle of self-determination and their anxiety to preserve the bulk of the territory of the empire for the revolutionary state was evident from the earliest period of the revolution. This was the beginning of the long process of transformation of a regime that claimed to speak for the entire Soviet people, and indeed for all mankind, into an instrument -- as it became in the Stalin era -- of Great Russian dominance. The contradictions between Bolshevik theory and practice surfaced when both the organs of self-rule of the Ukrainian anarchists during the Civil War and the Georgian republic set up under Menshevik leadership were crushed by the Red Army. Here 'revolution from above' assumed also the character of the suppression of the independent strivings of minority nationalities. The dilemmas of the Civil War were, of course, complex and difficult. On the one hand there were the military compulsions of defeating the White Guards; on the other, there were the varying trends of nationalist sentiment in the republics which fluctuated between the contending camps; and these were further complicated by the fact that the peasantry were alienated by the rigours of war communism. Nobody can claim that there were simple answers to these problems, but that is all the more reason why the later historian should refrain from seeing the issues in black and white terms -- or shall I say, in red and white.

Without claiming that there were infallible alternatives to the courses the Bolsheviks followed, one may suggest that their choices were limited not only by the objective circumstances but also by certain partialities of their own. Firstly, their thinking was strongly centralist in tendency, and therefore could not easily adapt itself to the aspirations of autonomous nationalist movements; secondly, they did not value national self-determination for its own sake but only as an instrument of socialist revolution: thirdly, they believed in the special mission of their own party as the privileged bearer of historical destiny; and fourthly, they were guided by the supreme objective of international, and not purely Russian, revolution.

Deutscher cannot in general be faulted for simplifying the historical issues, but like most Marxist writers of his time, he does underplay the ethnic and nationalist tensions within the Russian revolution. Their crucial character is apparent today in the light of ethnic violence and claims for secession, and this should make us re-examine the legacy of the past. In the chapter on the Civil War in his biography of Trotsky, Deutscher does not even mention the nationalist element in the conflicts in the Ukraine. He does indeed pay attention to the occupation of Georgia, but only in terms

of the issue of military intervention, dismissing Georgian separatism as a convenient pretext' by the Mensheviks. The latter may indeed have used it as a political instrument. But that Georgian nationalism was a real force is indicated by the fact that nearly seventy years after the incorporation of Georgia into the Soviet Union, the Supreme Soviet of that republic has repudiated its validity. It is pertinent to note that Soviet historical scholarship today, with the greater objectivity that is possible in the new political climate, is beginning to explore these 'blank spots' in the history of the Civil War years. The March-April 1990 number of the journal 'Istoriya SSSR' (History of the Soviet Union) published by the Historical Division of the Academy of Sciences, carries an outline for a projected 5 volume work, *The Civil War in Russia*. The outline includes the following paragraph:

'National movements and national problems. The question of self-determination of peoples. The establishment of a national state in the Transcaucasus at the time of the Menshevik regime in Georgia, the Dashnak regime in Armenia and the Musavatist regime in Azerbaidjan. Politics of the nationalist governments in the Ukraine. The struggle between centrifugal and centripetal forces. The position of White Guard circles on the national question.'

Deutscher's Marxist blindness to the strength of separate nationalisms within the Soviet Union comes out not only in relation to the early post-revolutionary and Civil War years. It is evident also in his conception of the motive forces making for the increasing centralisation of power and its concentration in fewer and fewer hands, culminating in the Stalin dictatorship. In Deutscher's analysis, this process is seen partly as due to the compulsions of a society striving to lift itself up by its bootstraps from a low level of productivity and mass culture, partly as an expression of the Byzantine traditions of the Russian state refracting themselves through the Communist dictatorship. While giving due recognition to these factors, I think we should distinguish another which was not less important. In a country which contained a bewilderingly diverse variety of nationalities, languages and cultures, existing at widely different levels of social development, there would have been a natural tendency to rely on the steel-frame of the monolithic ruling party as a means of holding in check the centrifugal trends arising from that ethnic diversity. This should be very clear today, when the relative liberalisation under Gorbachev has led to the surfacing of distinct ethnic nationalisms, often within the very ranks of the Communist Parties of the republics. Deutscher cannot be criticised for having failed to live long enough to see the implications of present-day phenomena for the whole of Soviet history. But we must, in assessing the adequacy of his historical vision, set his prognoses against the reality of today in this respect too. Deutscher down to the end of his life saw the future of the Soviet Union in terms of democratisation and the struggle against bureaucratism, privilege and the police state, and this forecast, as far as it went, has been vindicated. But it would hardly have entered his head that within a quarter-century of his death the Soviet Union would also experience strident nationalisms with their contradictory potentialities -- liberating as well as retrogressive. It may be said

that Deutscher was too much of a classical Marxist, sharing 'the clear bright faith in human reason' that Trotsky once affirmed, to have expected that seventy years after the October Revolution, scenes like those in Colombo, July 1983 would be enacted in the streets of Baku and other Soviet cities. The womb of history turns out to be more fertile in possibilities than the most acute of theorists can foresee.

In the concluding chapter of his biography of Trotsky, Deutscher said that 'Trotsky's strength and weakness alike were rooted in classical Marxism'. I think the same judgment may be made of Deutscher himself. The strength comes out in the far-ranging sweep of his vision, his ability to place men and events in a large-scale temporal perspective, and his readiness to subordinate personal preferences and antipathies to his comprehension of the movement of historical forces. The line that Trotsky was accustomed to quote from Spinoza might have served as a motto for Deutscher the historian: 'It is necessary not to laugh, not to weep, but to understand'. But his historical writing is neither bloodless nor impersonal, and certainly the Trotsky biography is deeply pervaded by the moving sense of the tragedy of a great man at odds with his time and place, enhanced by Deutscher's superb command of a language to which he was not born.

Yet Deutscher's limitations were also those of the classical Marxist. Though he spoke of Trotsky's 'almost irrational belief in the craving of the western working classes for revolution and in their ability to make it,' Deutscher himself never lost the faith that ultimately the original Marxist vision would find its true home in the West. These are his words at the end of the Trotsky biography:

'The West, in which a Marxism debased by Mother Russia into Stalinism inspired disgust and fear, will surely respond in quite a different manner to a Marxism cleansed of barbarous accretions; in that Marxism it will have to acknowledge at last its own creation and its own vision of man's destiny. And so history may come full circle

till Hope creates

From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.'

That final piece of Shelleyan utopianism is appropriate to what seems to me a voice from another era -- an era whose certainties we may envy, but, alas, cannot share.

Aspects of Ethnicity and Gender Among the Rodi of Sri Lanka

by NIREKA WEERATUNGE

Nireka Weeratunge, who carried out this anthropological study for the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, based it mainly on fieldwork in a Rodi village in the Kurunegala District of Sri Lanka. Through the oral traditions and the myths of this community regarding their origins she is able to throw considerable light on the probable historical evolution of the Rodi people. Her study points to the conclusion that the Rodi (or Gadi, as they appear to have originally called themselves) were a hunting tribe with a distinct ethnic identity who were incorporated in a marginalised way into the Sinhala caste system. Some of the most interesting and illuminating material in Nireka Weeratunge's study consists of the different versions of the Rodi myth of origin - the myth of the goddess/princess Ratnavalli - which she recorded in the community where she worked. These versions throw light not only on various aspects of the social processes by which the Rodi were transformed from a tribe to a caste but also on the changing perceptions of the contemporary Rodi regarding their identity and status. The author has devoted particular attention in her study to the position of women in the Rodi community, bringing out the fact that even though their lives are affected by the patriarchal structures and ideology of the dominant culture, Rodi women retain a certain independence and control over their lives: "they are in many ways still the daughters of Ratnavalli.".....

Distributed by
Lake House Bookshop
Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Price: Rs. 100/=

SOME ICES PUBLICATIONS

The Role of the Judiciary in Plural Societies

edited by

Neelan Tiruchelvam and Radhika Coomaraswamy

This volume assesses the recent judicial developments in Third World societies which share a common Anglo-American judicial heritage. In particular, the authors focus on the erosion of traditional judicial concepts of fair judgement in these societies. Proposals are made to check the decline in the value of these essential concepts.

193 pp. Published by Frances Pinter (London) for the ICES, 1987. ISBN 0-86187-664-4. Hard cover: Price: £22.50

Ethnic Conflict in Buddhist Societies: Sri Lanka, Thailand and Burma

edited by

K.M. de Silva, Pensri Duke, Ellen S. Goldberg & Nathan Katz

This book explores the role of religion in ethnic conflict and the formation of state policy towards ethnic minorities in three Buddhist societies. Although their different historical experiences have resulted in variations, the differences are transcended by a similarity of outlook on many issues based on common Buddhist values.

220pp. Published by Frances Pinter (London) for the ICES, 1988. Hard Cover: ISBN 0 86187 950 3; Price: £22.50

Equality and the Religious Traditions of Asia

edited by

R. Siriwardena

A volume of essays on concepts of ethnic, political, economic and gender equality as viewed by Hinduism, Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism and Islam. Within the limits of the study one can discern the diverse nature of the influences that religion has exerted on human society striving for equality.

173pp. Published by Frances Pinter (London) for the ICES, 1987. ISBN 0-86187-660-1; Price: £18.50

Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multi Ethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985

by

K.M. de Silva

An indepth analysis is provided of the major controversial issues such as language, citizenship, education, constitution-making and devolution which are at the very heart of the present ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

xix + 429pp. Published in 1986 by University Press of America on behalf of the Institute of Asian Affairs, Hamburg and the ICES. Hard Cover: ISBN 0 8191 5397 4; Price: US \$45.00; Paperback: ISBN 0 8191 5398 2; Price: US \$25.00.

All orders to ICES
