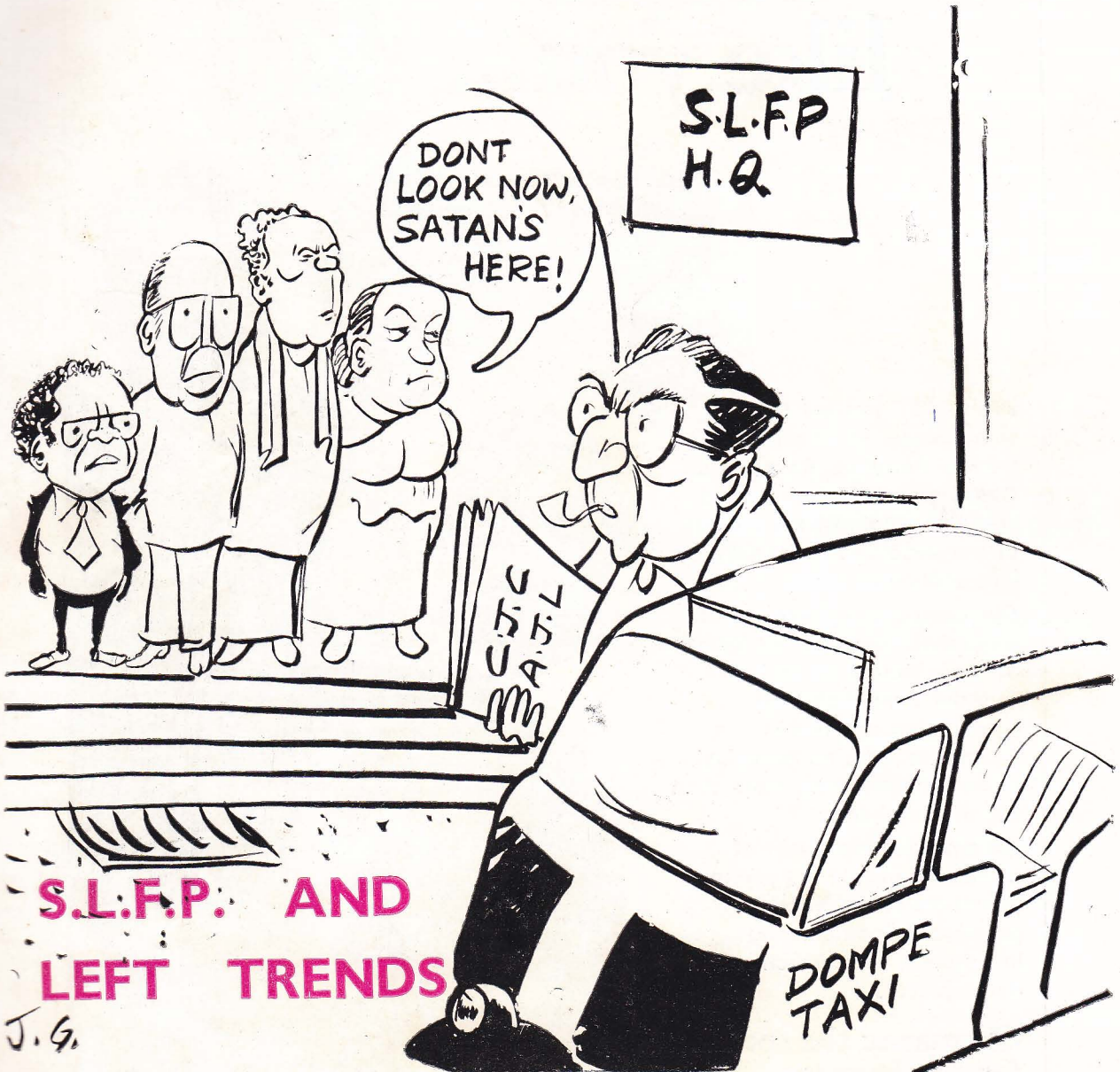


# GUARDIAN



## S.L.F.P. AND LEFT TRENDS

J.G.

Proportional representation — Tissa Balasuriya

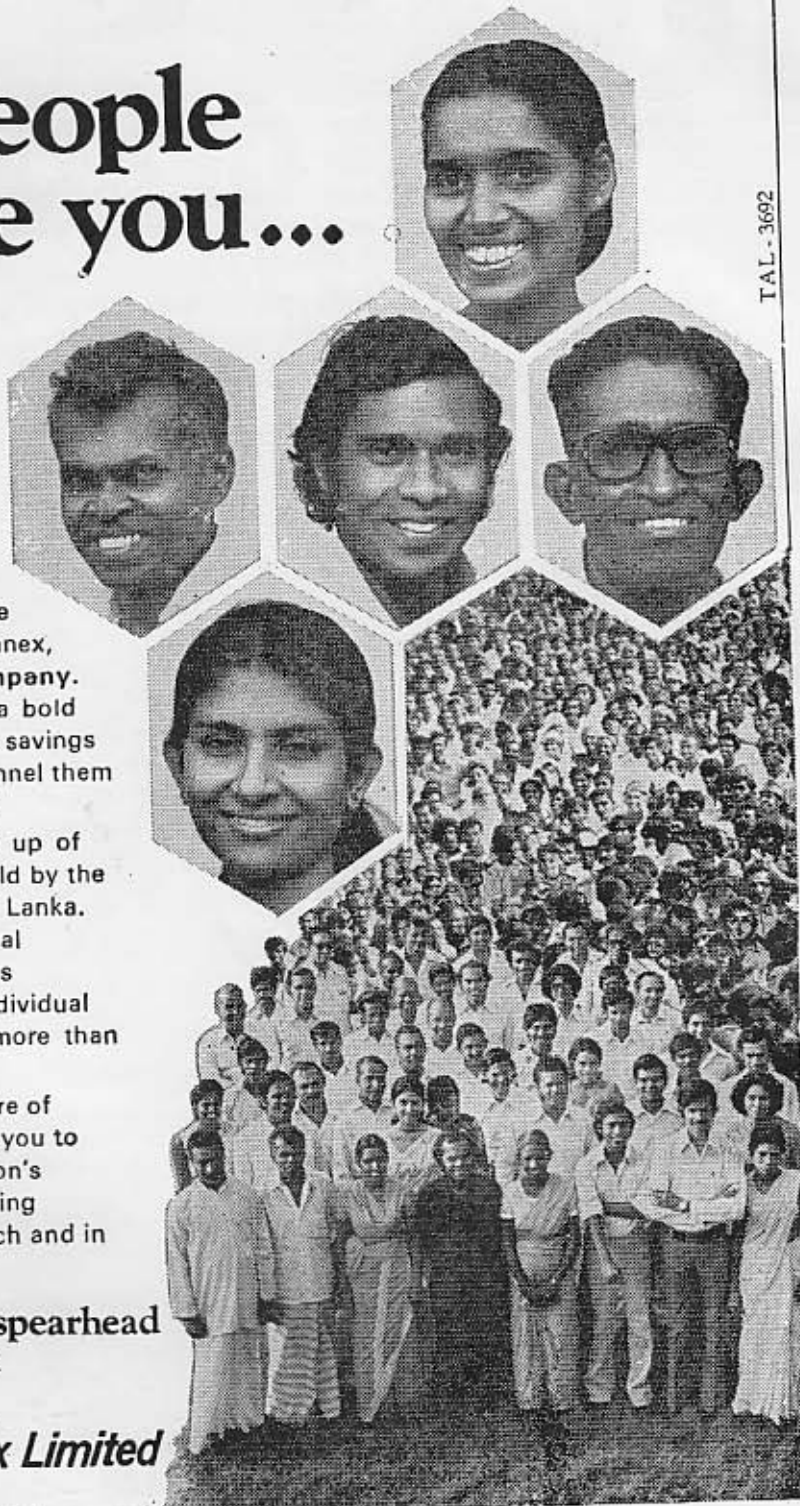
The right to communicate — Chakravarti Raghavan

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Eelam and Marxism — 1. Kumar David 2. Chintaka

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## SLFP, ULF protests

The real, if undeclared reason the SLFP refused to nominate anybody to the Presidential Commission was its conviction that the move was part-and-parcel of a larger political design in which the new anti-Terrorism Law was a central piece.

The SLFP spokesman, Deputy Leader Maitripala Senanayake made 3 basic points: (a) some provisions were more stringent than any in the past and some were without precedent (b) it seeks to create a permanent state of emergency throughout the country, not merely in the north and (c) it helps the government to arm itself with extraordinary powers to 'deal with political agitation' that must sooner or later arise on account of the failure of its economic policies.

When the SLFP PB. met it felt that its position had been more than vindicated by the declaration of ALL 24 districts as 'security areas'.

A study of the ULF press (not to mention the JVP, and other 'new' Left groups) shows that despite the fact the Left has now little to do with the SLFP, common ground has been found on this issue. ALL agree that this 3 year law will be used to stifle political protest over economic hardships, and is therefore an anti-democratic measure.

## TUs too

This opinion is of course shared by the major unions. The Joint Committee of Trade Unions, which includes the CFL, CFTU, ULF, the GCSU, the Jatika Guru Sangamaya etc, have addressed a letter to the President, in which it "denounces" the use of emergency powers and the new Law. The law is described as a "clear violation of the fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms of the masses".

Any kind of formal understanding, leave alone unity, between the SLFP, and the Left parties, may be too premature. At trade union and rank-and-file level however the shared perception of a common threat is promoting such understanding. It will be an irony indeed if the government, by

its own actions, helps to unite a palpably and grievously disunited opposition.

## Two Vavuniyas

When the government decided to attach 3 AGA's divisions from Anuradhapura to Vavuniya there were protests both from the TULF and the SLFP in the NSA. The press has now reported that the government has decided to stay the decision. What follows could be a new demarcation that includes Mullaitivu and two Vavuniyas — Vavuniya North and Vavuniya South.

Would such a step be a mere matter of administrative convenience? With all this talk of decentralisation, district councils etc, a political commentator in 'FOCUS' has used the term 'Bantustanisation' — a Pretorian device where strategy and security considerations are as important as the political. Other observers prefer to study Israeli policy in the West Bank, with the old Allon plan for 'security buffers' and the Begin plan for Jewish settlements.

## Press and racialism

A lively symposium on the Mass Media which the Marga Institute sponsored recently led last week to a newly formed council of media observers. Its main function will be to study, 'racial prejudice' in the local press (all three languages) and radio.

The rank racialism propagated by certain news sheets as well as the insidious injection of bias by the mainstream media will come under continuous scrutiny.

The discussion produced one shattering example — a sentence from an editorial in no less a paper than the 'Daily News'. The sentence read: "We have been too kind to the Tamils."

## T. V. meditations

We must all be grateful to Minister Anandatissa de Alwis and his TV advisers and experts who make public speeches and write lengthy articles telling us the great virtues of television.

On Nikini Poya I stared at the Ruwanwelisaya for at least two minutes between two soul-stirring American films. A little later I was forced to meditate for another two or three minutes on the Sigiriya frescoes. I also contemplated the Sigiriya Rock, a most uplifting experience. Sometimes I watch a station instruction like "Place Commercial 4" here.

I have watched TV in a small town in Africa and also in a town

(Continued on Page 24)

LANKA

# GUARDIAN

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# FDB, family bandyism and Left moves

The L. G. was in print with the Felix Papers (FDB's "My dear Sirima" correspondence) when a posse of Dompe Regulars were 'bombarding the headquarters', to rehabilitate a once popular Maoist expression in the heady days of the Red Guards. A citizens' Committee of 40 (ten SLFP stalwarts from each of Dompe's V. C. areas) came to the party office at Darley Road with a 'We want Felix' message from the heart of the Bandaranaike territory.

It was FDB's final move in having himself rehabilitated by a party in which he had for over 15 years played such a key, if highly controversial, role only to be given the cold shoulder after the July 1977 disaster. FDB had two problems one legal, the other personal. The SLFP's new constitution evidently ruled out the possibility of a dues-paying party member resident in Kollupitiya getting on the Gampaha list and becoming a District Organiser. As for the personal factor, FDB felt and openly stated that the party leader had lost confidence in her one-time Kissinger.

From Nittambuwa to Weke and Pugoda, there were SLFP exchanges, FDB-Sirima encounters and even angry confrontations. With each battle FDB gained ground in his campaign for rehabilitation. Showing a tactical resourcefulness and resilience that Deng Hsiaoping may have envied, FDB saw Sirima publicly state she had not lost confidence in him. Only the legal obstacle now remained. And that was cleared away at the PB meeting the first week of August.

Correctly sensing the significance of these moves, the mainstream media distorted the facts (or were

misinformed) and misinterpreted the event in order probably to promote its propagandist line. Was the spectre of Satan haunting the SLFP once more? Was the constitution interpreted in order to accommodate FDB in Dompe and bring him back into the party's power-centre, and restore him to his old position of legal-adviser, policy planner, speech-writer, and Mr. Fixit? Was this not a clear case of 'family bandyism' or 'bandynaikism'?

The facts are: (1) FDB did not attend a PB meeting because he is not a PB member and is not likely to be one for sometime at least (2) there was no special resolution to allow FDB to get on the Gampaha party list (3) he has not been made District Organiser, Dompe, although this may well happen.

A decision was taken on the basis of an interpretation of the party's constitution. By this general decision, FDB, among others, will benefit vis-a-vis dual residence.

The national press however was right in highlighting the story, a story built, interestingly enough on reports culled from the LSSP's *Janadina* and the CP's *Aththa*.

FDB's partial rehabilitation is politically significant in terms of (a) developments within the SLFP leadership (b) the recent change in the CP hierarchy and current moves in the wider Left movement (c) future SLFP-Left relations, if any and (d) how these relations will take shape, if at all, in the run-up to 1983.

After the July 77 drubbing Mrs. B. got a team of "loyal" lawyers (some of them not so

uncritically loyal these days) to draft a new constitution (a transitional arrangement) which had a single aim—to give her a tight grip on the party. In essence, the slogan was 'All power to the Leader'. To present a facade of democratic decision-making a Politburo was created. It was packed with carefully chosen loyalists.

Mrs. B. has always been very much in command of the party. Her merest wish became a fiat. This political-psychological fact was institutionalised by a huge, unforeseen event: the 1971 insurrection. True, the Cabinet met and Parliament sat. But the day-to-day decision-making process produced what a belatedly awakened Mr. T. B. Subasingha called 'the invisible government' i. e. the court caucus inter-linked with a new bureaucratic-security apparatus. Senior ministers had to find out what was actually happening from key civil servants, top security personnel and family 'insiders'. Those were the days when Mr. Kumar Rupasingha, his hands folded, would stand erect and motionless at some Ambassador's reception while ministers, VIP's and other Ambassadors paid obeisance to the Janavegaya Chief. (A *Janavegaya* which had absolutely no legal standing within the SLFP). In those times, FDB was Mrs. B's multi-purpose man.

The SLFP decision not to nominate anybody to the Presidential Commission was the clearest signal that even a carefully selected PB has been sensitive to internal and external pressures, and is no longer a rubber stamp.

A new power-centre has emerged sharing authority with the leader—the Maitri-TBI duo, acting in concert perhaps for the



first time in SLFP history. It is now a triumvirate rather than one-woman rule. But when the 'duo' takes a strong line, the PB backs it up. Often Maitri does the running; sometimes TBI but the result is generally the same. Those who have an intimate knowledge of SLFP trends found the strangest convergence of forces at the last meeting: the Old Guard, the Sinhala-Buddhist champions from Kobbekaduwe to Kularatne, youth leaguers infiltrated by Anura in his quiet build-up of strength in the succession stakes, and even the small but close-knit Peking brigade. They were unanimous—with one odd man out, Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne, whose name was freely publicised by the official press as the SLFP's nominee.

In the absence of FDB, Stanley had emerged as legal adviser, platform attraction, the writer of party statements, the close confidante. In part, this was an attempt at building a 'counter' to Maitri-TBI. Ratne and Lakshman Jayakody didn't match up to the task. As ex-Speaker, lawyer, and orator Stanley was better material. For months now, the pint-sized Stanley has been walking Tall. The last PB meeting marked his downfall. It will become official when the PB names a 'legal committee' as required by the constitution. Exit Legal Adviser.

Still, there is a vacancy in the post once filled by the corporeal FDB, a bigger man in all senses than Stanley. Will Satan return?

If he does it will complicate matters for the Left. Analysing 'CP trends', the LG anticipated the Keuneman-KP switch. The CP will now move into a more independent, flexible, middle position not allowing itself to be encumbered by its 'coalition' past (Pieter like the LSSP trio were ministers) or by the LSSP Old Guard's antipathy to Wijeweera, Vasu, the MEP etc. As the follow up of the crucial CC meeting indicated, the CP will NOT contemplate any more a 'political alliance,' with the SLFP (a 'right opportunist' error, as the CC decided). But a broad Left, once united, could

have agreements and understandings with the SLFP. There's a catch. If all these parties (LSSP, CP, JVP, New LSSP etc) are hostile to Mrs. B., FDB is their *bete noire*. ●

## A legal poser

Not much news has come out of the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute's Human Rights Centre which has moved into an impressive building near Freedom Square. The SLFI itself (a Bandaranaike blessing) is very active as usual although some of its cerebral activities seem to be needlessly shrouded in secrecy. The press, for instance, is not always invited for its seminars which have very wide-ranging themes, some of which are extremely interesting.

Academics and lawyers believe that the Centre could be 'researching' (i.e. looking into the past rather than the immediate present) or preparing material for international organisations and conferences. Now a nice poser has been sent to the Centre. It's a legal poser. Is there an anomaly in the attitude of the authorities to persons alleged to be involved in offences connected with the 1971 insurgency?

Honouring an election pledge, Prime Minister J. R. Jayewardena's government repealed the CJC Act of 1972 in September 1977. In November an amnesty was granted to those persons convicted by the CJC. But there were others tried under the normal law for offences connected with the 1971 events. Some were convicted and are still in prison.

Now Mr. H. A. Seneviratne, a lawyer, who has appeared in many cases both before the CJC and before the normal Courts, has written to the President of the SLFI's Human Rights Centre about 2 cases where the indictments were signed *after* the November 1977 amnesty. The cases, under the normal law, came up before

two High Courts. In one case, one of the 4 accused, was convicted by the CJC and sentenced to 4 years. Then he was released under the amnesty. Now he is being tried again.

## Communal harmony

At the Seminar on "The Role of Media in relation to Communal Harmony" organised by the Marga Institute, the following citizens who participated in the seminar decided to take steps towards the formation of a Council for communal harmony through the media. The functions of this Council will be to scrutinise the media in order to detect and to counteract dissemination of material that is likely to lead to communal tension, and also to further healthy and harmonious communal relations through the media.

The signatories appeal to all citizens who agree with these aims to support them, and would be glad to hear from any persons who would like to assist in the work of the Council. Please communicate with the Secretary, Council for Communal Harmony, through the media, P. O. Box 601, Colombo 5.

Sgd/Charles Abeysekera, S. R. Asirwacham, Sunila Abeyasekera, Mohan Bhagavandas, Sardha Coorey, Radhika Coomaraswamy, Prof. Wimal Dissanayake, Rev. Celestine Fernando, Godfrey Gunatillake, Victor Gunewardena, Bandula Sri Gunawardhana, S. A. Gnanamuttu, S. M. Kamaldeen, V. Kanesalingam, Prof. K. Kailasapathy, P. P. Manikam, Dr. K. S. Nadarajah, S. Nimalendran, M. J. Perera, Rajan Philip Pillai, J. R. Ratnanayagam, E. Rathinam, C. V. Rajasundaram, Reggie Siriwardena, S. Sivanayagam, Enoka Stanislaus, Livy Wijemanne.

## Indian crisis : period of instability ahead

by Rajan Philipupillai

(A young engineer by profession  
is a student of Indian politics).

On August 28, Mr. Charan Singh will be seeking a 'vote of confidence' in the Lok Sabha for his new Janata (S)-Congress coalition government. It is not certain whether he will be able to muster sufficient support to avoid defeat on the very first day itself, as Prime Minister, in the Lok Sabha. The element of uncertainty continues even though the flurry of defections has stopped and the various parties have stabilised their positions. Defections from the official Congress, within which differences have arisen over the distribution of ministerial offices, cannot be ruled out and if they do take place, would lead to the downfall of the government. But the greatest worry of Mr. Charan Singh concerns the role that the Congress (I) of Mrs. Indira Gandhi would decide to play.

In the drama now being enacted in New Delhi both Mr. Charan Singh and Mr. Jagjivan Ram—the new leader of the Janatha Party and the leader of the opposition who is hopeful of ousting Mr. Charan Singh and succeeding him as Prime Minister, are being kept guessing by Mrs. Gandhi, while both Charan Singh and Ram are compelled to rely on the support of Mrs. Gandhi, the latter can opt to extend her support to either of them to help run a stable government that will withdraw the judicial proceedings against her, or to support neither and force mid term elections at the moment of her choosing. The reported strategy of the new Prime Minister to draw Ram into his government along with other non-Jan Sangh members of the present Janata Party, is not likely to succeed for Ram, having

missed the bus once, is determined to go flat out and defeat the Charan Singh government and then try the permutations and combinations of forming a new government, himself.

India has recently been witnessing the demoralising spectacle of her parliamentarians, both individuals and parties, shifting positions, changing loyalties, and shuttling from one alignment to another, without even pausing to offer some form of justification for the changed stances. The resultant political groupings are appallingly opportunistic and unprincipled, and totally inexplicable except by the hackneyed theory of the politician's "never ending love for power and the perks that flow from it. Mr. Jagjivan Ram, leader of the 80 million harijans, has thought it fit to remain the leader of a (Janata) party, 50% of which is constituted by the right reactionary Jan Sangh—the political arm of the pan Hindu anti Muslim and anti Harijan Rasatriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS). One also saw the strange kinship between Charan Singh and Raj Narain on the one hand and Mrs. Gandhi and her son on the other to embarrass and and finally vanquish their common foe Mr. Morarji Desai, and can now see the Machiavellian strategy of Mrs. Gandhi, having seen the end of Desai, to strike a deal with Ram, the man who deserted her after she dissolved Parliament in 1977, further her own schemes.

It is not difficult to see that these instant coalitions that are hurriedly formed by the different political parties are congenitally unstable. They are illogical extensions of their own individual organisational peculiarities. What is worse, there is no uniform pattern of coalescing at the centre and in the states. For instance, the Congress, (I) is ambivalent towards Janata (S)

and Janata at the centre support Janatha in Bihar, and supports Janata (S) in Utar Pradesh and Rajasthan. There are obvious contradictions between national perspectives and those at the level of the state governments, being manifestations of the basic contradiction between the pan-Indian industrial big bourgeoisie, and these have become increasingly pronounced on the political plane, in the aftermath of the Congress party being divested of its monopoly power at the centre and in the states.

The replacement of Congress rule at the centre and in the northern states made matters worse. A new dimension to political instability, — the North-South polarisation, was added. The bitter differences at the state level among the constituent groups of the Janata party were carried into the central government while the factional clashes at the centre had their reverberations in the states. There were open feuds in UP, Bihar and Haryana, between Charan Singh's BLD, and the line up of Desai, Jan Sangh, and Ram's CFD. In New Delhi, cabinet ministers accused one another of sectarianism; freely criticised one another in regard to ministerial performances; openly apportioned blame to others while disclaiming responsibility themselves on controversial and sensitive issues; wantonly bandied charges of corruption and nepotism against cabinet colleagues and their relatives. Devoid of any understanding of the basic problems of the Indian society, lacking ideological commitment and organisational cohesion and riven with dissension, the Janata government stumbled from one crisis to another until it finally cracked up in the face of a routine Parliamentary no-confidence motion moved by Y.B. Chavan.



Disillusionment, with the government had set in much earlier both in the country and among the Janata members themselves. Apart from the worsening economic situation, the communal clashes, the mounting industrial unrest, the strains on the Indian political system alarmingly manifested themselves when jawans of the State and Central police organisations struck work and staged demonstrations, agitating not merely for wage increases but for trade union rights. The blundering Janata government shocked the nation, when a week before Parliament reassembled for the new sessions on July 9, it called on the military to confront the striking policemen, which led to a showdown between the two involving the death of 25 persons and injuries to hundred others, before the eventual surrender by the policemen.

Disillusioned political pundits and commentators accustomed to lively speculation within the traditional framework had been for sometime pushing the idea of a 'third force' which would be a rejection of Indira Gandhi's authoritarianism and provide the alternative to the inept Janata party. An occasion for the emergence of such a 'third force' arose in the last week of June, when Mr. Devaraj Urs was expelled from Congress (I), following his opposition to Sanjay Gandhi's re-entry into Congress (I) politics. The Karnataka Chief Minister said to be in a great hurry to push himself up from Southern obscurity into national limelight, immediately established his own Karnataka State Congress, and by ordering the defection of his supporters in the Lok Sabha from the Congress (I), brought down the latter from its status as the official opposition party. He went further and convened a conference of Congressmen in Bangalore on July 5 at the Lal Bagh Glass House, where exactly ten years ago Indira Gandhi had engineered the first split, in the Congress, emerging as the only man among

the old women of the Congress. Hopes of reuniting the Congressmen, now scattered in six or more parties and factions both nationally and regionally, were rekindled, only to be blown out within a week by the sudden turn of events in New Delhi.

It is by no means suggested that but for the sudden turn of events in New Delhi, the dream of a reunited and rejuvenated Congress would have come true. Indeed the seriousness of those who pass as the official Congress was amply demonstrated during the past few weeks. They proved themselves to be nothing other than a bunch of ministerial office seekers. It is so with every other Congressman or ex-Congressman now in Lok Sabha. As a matter of fact, barring members of the Jan Sangh and the Left parties all other MPs have had their political ordination in the Indian National Congress founded 94 years ago. It is impossible to reunite quondam Congress colleagues in the absence of compelling objective circumstances and a requisite cementing ideology. Subjective motivations fed by spiritual and moralising sermons cannot hold the Indian politicians together, given their notorious opportunist proclivities, as can be seen from the disastrous failure of the grand Janata experiment.

The Charan Singh government falls far below the lofty expectations of the dreamers of Congress unity. Unlike in the case of the Janata government its formation was not accompanied by mass euphoria and enthusiasm. The new Prime Minister is not a charismatic leader capable of projecting a national image and winning countrywide acclaim. In addition to all this the new government is now sure of a majority in parliament. It would be naive and simplistic to suggest instability in India has come about on account of the absence of constitutional provisions preventing defections by MPs. So long as the fundamental contradiction between the growing industrial capitalism and the stagnant and suffering rural sector, remains unresolved the instability in the Indian polity will continue.

Attempts by previous governments to circumvent crises through green revolution, emergency measures and export of Indian capital, have all ended in failure. The Charan Singh government is incapable of even these measures.

## India Secession war picks up again

by Mohan Ram

New Delhi

After a three-year lull, India has resumed its remote, rugged war against secessionist insurgents in Mizoram in its strategic north-eastern corner with Burma and Bangladesh.

The end to the uneasy truce came as hardcore Mizo secessionist insurgents renewed their campaign of terror and violence, marking the end of the July, 1976, agreement between their leader, Laldenga, and the Indian Government about peaceful solution of the Mizo problem, which dates back to the widespread armed revolt in 1966 in which they proclaimed an independent Mico state.

Indian troops moved in to quell the revolt, and their two-pronged drive — of containing Mizo resistance and cutting the insurgents off from the people — further alienated the people.

Mizos, who practice shifting cultivation, were uprooted from their villages and re-grouped in Vietnam-style strategic hamlets. Foodstocks were seized or destroyed, and people were dependent on government rations for survival.

The desultory guerrilla war continued for more than 10 years, and the Mizos used sanctuaries in the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and had Pakistani and Chinese support.

(Continued on Page 7)



## Malaysia

# Raping refugees?

Is the Malaysian Navy guilty of deliberately drowning Vietnamese refugees? Have its officers committed rape?

Reporting from Letung, Indonesia, James P. Sterba sent this despatch to the "NEW YORK TIMES":

"United States officials, with the help of Indonesians and United Nations workers, have been accumulating evidence from Vietnamese refugees here on drownings, rapes and other incidents caused by the Malaysian Navy and coastal guards since Malaysia began towing refugee boats back out to sea.

"They have compiled detailed accounts, including the numbers of Malaysian Navy patrol boats and the names of Malaysian military officers allegedly involved in apparent attempts to capsize refugee boats.

"Informed sources among international officials trying to help the refugees said the United States had refrained from publicly confronting the Malay-

### Secession . . .

*(Continued from Page 6)*

The Mizo National Front ran a parallel underground government and collected taxes.

The immediate cause of the 1966 revolt was the government's callous response to warnings of an impending famine in 1959 and inadequate relief measures, resulting in starvation.

It is the familiar scenario of a classical South Asian ethnic revolt and the government's twin response of pacification and repression.

sians in the hope they would gain control of several notorious patrol boats and officials along their east coast.

### Cut tow lines

"Since last month, when Malaysia announced it would begin expelling refugee boats, nearly 35,000 refugees have been beached here in the isolated Anambas Islands. Many of them were held for weeks in Malaysian camps before being ordered back to sea.

"Many refugees here said their boats were towed from Malaysia in a zigzag course apparently designed to jerk them into a wave and a swamping. The leader of several refugee boats said they cut the tow lines when the movement became too erratic and when it became apparent that they were not being towed to the large refugee camp on Malaysia's Bidong Island, as promised.

"In a camp on nearby Kuku Island, the refugees from one boat said they were divided among five smaller boats after beaching their original craft on the Malaysian coast, and were towed back out to sea.

"They said that while a Malaysian patrol boat was towing two smaller boats, B-5 and B-7, it began a zigzag course that swamped B-5, which contained about 90 passengers. According to passengers on B-7, all but four people on B-5 drowned. Two of the four survivors were women who were reportedly taken aboard an oil tanker, AL-501, and raped by two Malaysian navy officers in uniforms with name tags. The two women, along with the occupants of B-7, are now in a refugee camp on Kuku Island.

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# Some reflections on the Nicaraguan revolution

The Latin American rural guerilla movement was buried on a cold Sunday in October 1967 in Bolivia's Yuro ravine, which is located far from the Rio Grande. Or so it seemed. The death of the Continents' foremost theorist and practitioner of that specific form of armed revolution was welcomed by US imperialism and the entire global status quo including Right opportunism within the international Communist and working class movement. With the death of Commandante Guevara, the revolutionary struggles shifted both strategically and geographically—from the country side to the cities.

Taking with him the Sao Paulo branch which was the largest urban branch of the Brazilian Communist Party, the veteran Marxist Carlos Marighella chartered the course of urban guerilla warfare. Others followed: the Tupamaros led by that indefatigable organizer of the

agrarian proletariat Raoul Sendic, initiated armed struggle in the towns and cities of Uruguay from the year 1968.

The Chilean MIR which was conceived in Santiago's prestigious Catholic University grew rapidly in the late '60's. In Argentina, the left wing Peromist Montoneros and the Marxist PRT/ERP unleashed a violent revolutionary process which reached a crescendo in '73/74. The great cities of Sao Paulo, Montevideo and Buenos Aires thus became the theatres of central confrontation between the State and the revolutionary forces on the Latin American continent in the late '60's and early to mid '70's. But most of all, they were gigantic graveyards for the urban militants, just as the mountains and jungles had been for their rural guerilla predecessors and brothers.

The death of ERP leader Roberto Mario Santucho in 1976 seemed the final signal of the definitive failure of the Latin American revolution. The death of Fabricio Ojeda and the

Venezuelan guerilla in 1966; the deaths of Javier Heraud and Luis dela Puente Uceda which marked the crushing of the Peruvian guerilla movement by 1965; the accidental death of Turcios Lima and the defeat of the Guatemalan guerilla's by 1966; Padre Camillo Torres' death in 1966 in Columbia and Guevara's murder the following year—these were followed by the killing of Carlos Marighella in '68 and of his close comrades Ferreira and Lamara which effectively silenced the Brazilian urban guerilla's in 1972.

The defeat of the Tupamaros in '72/'73 was perhaps the most crushing blow inflicted upon the urban guerilla struggles and was followed by the Argentinian generals' ruthless extermination of the ERP in 1976. These defeats in both rural and urban guerilla combat, taken together with the violent abortion of the Chilean 'experiment' in 1973 meant that the Latin American revolution had run out of strategic options.

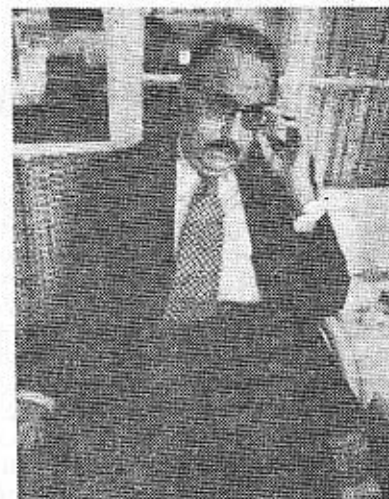


Sandinistas celebrate



But the law of uneven development has its own inner cunning. The revolutionary impulse had made its way in the '60's and first half of the '70's from Central America via the continent's northern tier ridged by the Andes, down to the narrow, "but endlessly deep" countries of the Southern cone, i.e. Chile and Argentina. And there the revolutionary impulse died away and the guns fell silent. But with the benefit of hindsight, we can now discern the motion of that revolutionary 'impulse' moving deep beneath the crust of the continent and making its way back to whence it came: to Central America, which, bordered by the Pacific and the Carribean, protrudes like a tongue from the gluttonous mouth that is the Northern American landmass. There in the Karmic cycle of history the Latin American revolution has been re-incarnated in the concrete shape and form of guerilla warfare.

What is more, for the first time in the two decades since the Cuban Revolution, the people of this Continent and indeed, of the entire Western hemisphere, have achieved a real victory. 'Victory or Death!', 'Fatherland or Death!', 'Liberty or Death', these were the battle cries that issued from the lips of a generation of revolutionaries in Latin America, and too often it had been the latter half of the slogan that echoed and re-echoed mockingly as they fell, guns in hand. The clarion call of the Cuban Revolution 'Venceremos! — 'We shall Triumph!' — had begun to sound in the ears of some, an empty rhetorical flourish. But no longer. This then is the first significant feature of the emergence of new combative vanguards in EL Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala and of victory of the Nicaraguan revolution. And so, the debate reopens.



"I wasn't thrown out. I am a pacifist", said Somoza in his Miami home. Since then he has been kicked out of Bahamas.

## Time to panic

by Roger Woddis

*The Organisation of American States has turned down a US proposal to send a 'peace-keeping force' to Nicaragua.*

Thankless are the states that spurn  
Secretary Cyrus Vance,  
Having painfully to learn  
Changing worlds mean changing pants.

Time was when good sense prevailed,  
Using democratic means;  
When, as frequently, this failed  
There were always the Marines.

Now the poor man at the gate  
Calls himself a Sandinista;  
Gangsters, to avoid their fate,  
Pack their luggage like Batista.

Needing native wages low,  
Wall Street hires the heavy mob;  
But, alas, they have to go  
When they cannot do the job.

Though Somoza's fall from grace  
May be followed by a hearse,  
That is easier to face  
Than the risk of something worse.

## Sandinista Front programme

Recently, FSLN has published its programme for the reconstruction of Nicaragua.

\* Programme of National Reconstruction: The main task of the government will be to promote a programme of national reconstruction that will save Nicaragua from the social, economic, political and moral catastrophe into which it has been plunged by the dictatorship. This programme will also lay the foundation for overcoming our country's backwardness and economic prostration and allow for the full and effective development of broad democratic freedoms.

\* National Army: A new, genuinely democratic and national army must be organised, based on the defense of the democratic process and national sovereignty.

\* Foreign policy of Non-alignment: An independent foreign policy of Non-alignment, which will link our country to all nations which respect the principles of self-determination and just and mutually beneficial economic relations. Economic, political and cultural links with the central American and Carribean community.

\* Patrimony of National Reconstruction: A patrimony of national reconstruction will be created, based on the expropriation of all property usurped by the Somoza family and its use to help overcome, above all, the backwardness, poverty and unemployment suffered by the masses. The patrimony will also be used to meet the needs of all families affected by the war, refugees, and emigrants without discrimination of any kind,

## Free markets vs public interest

by U. Karunatileke

While at the end of the previous regime certain industrialists were gleefully walking away with brand new million rupee production lines; the pharmaceutical industry was in a run down condition in spite of all the massive incentives it received in the form of the National Drug programme. The decision by the present regime to provide free exchange for renewal of plant therefore was a welcome shot in the arm. It has rejuvenated the drug industry. However with so much good, has also, come a large dose of harm, in fact the 'free market forces' liberated by current policy, run counter to the National Drug programme, and in doing so to the local manufacturers who are its mainstay. It must be remembered that the original incentives like duty concessions that were given to the Drug Industry had long ceased to operate. By the mid sixties the industry was on its own feet. The only concessions it now enjoyed was (1) active participation in the country's drug programme through the 34 Drug Scheme (2) Ban on the import of finished drugs, except by the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation (3) Higher import duty on finished drugs.

All three concessions were virtually removed overnight under the import liberalization policy of the new regime. The 34 drug items, as well as other drug items were thrown open for import. Import duty on finished drugs was abolished. Price control was lifted. Worse still brand names even in respect of the 34 items were restored, and the promotional machine, the multinational drug propaganda system, went back into action.

The theory was that free market forces, (whatever they are) would operate, prices would tumble, and no shortages would

occur. In actual fact, drug prices of imported brands have quadrupled (in some cases they are about ten times the price of the generic items marketed by the Corporation.) To maintain these prices the propaganda machine is busy reviving the old superstitions, and the old incentives, that make medical men prescribe by brand name and tell their patients, make sure you get 'Fibsol' and not the Corporation stuff. This is a form of exorcism and as Abraham Koor used to say, the most propagandized exorcist is the most effective. Moreover, mantrams also meanse a lot of money for the right people. Thus captive patients pawn their belongings in order to buy 'Fibsol' and 'Fibsol' instead of coming down in price, as pedicated by the free market enthusiasts, keeps going up.

The worst part of the bargain is that 'Fibsol' consumes foreign exchange obtained on loan, and comes in duty free whereas the local manufacturer who makes the generic equivalent of Fibsol consumes only a fraction of the foreign exchange, pays up to 100% duty on ingredients, provides employment and skills to local operatives, and ends up by not being able to sell his product. The most recent and most dangerous development in this field is that Government tenders for simple formulary drugs like antiparasitics are being awarded to multinationals on brand names, at higher prices.

As a result of this some of our cherished public health campaigns like those against malaria, filariasis and worm infestations may stagnate without funds and without enough drugs.

The National Drug Industry has shown rapid growth and technological promise in recent years. It has begun to fulfill a role in keeping with the latest thinking by W.H.O. on Pharmaceuticals Management in the Third World countries. In fact, even the rich industrial countries have realised that the nation's health is a major social commitment and cannot be left to the narrow mercies of profit-making and private enterprise.

The only role that the private sector can perform in the Drug industry is hence a guided mission within the framework of national, or perhaps regional drug policy. Within such a scheme, it has a major production capability. The future potential can be judged from just one fact. The essential items now manufactured are only 34. The essential drugs list consist of about two thousand items. The employment ratio of Chemists to other operatives in the Pharmaceutical industry is higher than most other industries. A national pharmaceutical industry catering to the basic medical needs of the population can hence be a major factor in our economic growth. As important, is its social impact as its breaks through the scabid fringes of poverty and helplessness that isolate 90% of our people.

**Concluded**

*(From a talk delivered at a Seminar on Chemistry and the Private Sector at the Institute of Chemistry, Sri Lanka).*

ITEM	UNIT	GENERIC PRODUCT RETAIL PRICES	BRANDED PRODUCT RETAIL PRICE
		Rs.	Rs.
1. Chlorpheniramine 4 mg	1000 tablets	9.23	27.00
2. Cotrimoxazole	500 "	311.95	890.00
3. Diazepam 2 mg	1000 "	8.31	443.79
4. Diazepam 5 mg	1000 "	12.99	908.46
5. Haloperidol 1.5 mg	1000 "	120.00	1,050.00
6. Propanolol 40 mg	250 "	75.27	274.28
7. Reserpine .25 mg	1000 "	17.03	60.00
8. Tolbutamide 500 mg	1000 "	196.80	352.51
9. Xanthinol Nicotinate 150 mg	200 "	28.01	68.70



## A case for the Third World

The Ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 held at Arusha in February this year in preparation for UNCTAD V has outlined a programme which could form the basis of the Third World Agenda for collective action in the Eighties. The programme seeks to give concrete expression and substance to the two basic objectives of Third World efforts as they have taken shape in the Seventies—collective self-reliance through cooperation within the Third World and collective bargaining for restructuring Third World relations with the North. The two components of the Arusha programme highlight the magnitude of the negotiating task which faces Third World countries—a task which demands on the one hand a capacity for negotiating among themselves to reach common positions which accommodate their diverse interests, and on the other, the ability to mobilise and use their countervailing power effectively in their negotiations with the North.

The dimensions of the task and the complexity of the problems involved have emerged with some degree of clarity in the past few years. It was during this period that the developing countries began to move into a distinctly new phase in their economic relations with developed countries. The change itself was the outcome of the events in the first half of the Seventies. The breakdown of the monetary and trading system, OFEC action which dramatically altered the terms of trade of oil exporting countries, the unprecedented phenomenon of rising inflation combined with high levels of unemployment and slow growth in developed countries—all converged to undermine the foundations of the international economic system as it had been constructed after the 2nd World War. They significantly altered

the balance of economic forces which had evolved in the post-colonial period.

These developments set the stage for the initiatives that came with the Sixth Special Session of the U. N. General Assembly held in March 1974. The Declaration of the New International Economic Order and the programme of action adopted at that Session could be regarded as a decisive turning point in the economic relations between developed and developing countries. Being a declaration of Principles and objectives, these U. N. resolutions by themselves could not immediately produce any concrete changes in the structure and systems governing these relations. Their significance lay in the new directions they gave to international policies and strategies on development, and in particular the Third World's approach to such strategies. It would be correct to say that the Declaration and Programme provided a new conceptual framework for such strategies.

Whereas in the past international strategies for development sought to promote improvements essentially within the existing framework of international economic relations, the New International Economic Order was based on a recognition of the need for a comprehensive restructuring of the system itself. Within the U. N. framework, UNCTAD had already mounted a powerful attack on the existing system and its failure to support and accelerate the development of the Third World. Within UNCTAD, developed countries had organised themselves to exert pressure for changes which were in the nature of structural adjustments in existing Institutions and relationships. The identification and consolidation of interest groups and a basis for a system of bargaining was beginning to take shape. It is the Declaration and Programme

Last Monday, President J. R. Jayewardene declared open an international conference on the "North-South Dialogue" sponsored by the Society for International Development. The Third World's case in this continuing debate is presented by the Third World Forum, Geneva. The TWF was started by a group of eminent Third World personalities. The paper was prepared for UNCTAD V in May.

however which sought to bring these elements together as part of a concerted strategy aimed at the restructuring of the existing system at a more fundamental level.

### Differences

These initiatives inevitably have had far-reaching implications on intergovernmental deliberations and relationships. They have led to a wide-ranging and intensive process of international economic negotiations which are significantly different from what preceded the Declaration of the N.I.E.O. This difference could be perceived in at least three key elements in the negotiating framework that this is evolving.

● Developing countries are called upon to negotiate a major restructuring of the prevailing world economic system. Negotiating structural changes in the fields which are of vital importance to Third World demands the will and capacity for collective action and a clear perception of the enduring long-term collective interests. The strategies required for such negotiations are very different from those needed at negotiations which are predominantly concerned with concessions, adjustments, and resource transfers within the existing system.

● An integral component of the structural changes is a new

framework for the international decision-making processes concerning the management of the world economy and control over the use of the world's resources. At each stage and in each important sector, the negotiations have to aim at creating the appropriate institutions and arrangements which enable developing countries to participate effectively in the global decision-making processes.

● However, in bringing about these basic structural changes, developing countries have to start from their present conditions of dependence on developed countries. Therefore they need to derive the motive forces for their development increasingly from within the Third World itself through the intensification of links and exchanges among themselves.

By such a strategy of collective self-reliance, they need to enhance their collective economic weight in the world system and increase their bargaining power to negotiate and carry through a programme of international structural change.

### **New demands**

The negotiating agenda which follows from these objectives places entirely new demands for collective action by Third World countries. In the field of international economic relations, this shift calls for a new set of responses and new negotiating disciplines. In the negotiating tasks facing the developing countries

● they need to ensure that their bilateral approaches and transactions are consistent with the collective strategies to which they subscribe ;

● they need to reconcile their diversity of interests to evolve viable joint negotiating positions ;

● they have to coordinate their negotiations in different fora with a clear understanding of the interrelations of issues and

In terms of an overall strategy for the implementation of the N.I.E.O.,

● the technical complexity of the issues that are being negotiated has to be fully mastered by the Third World negotiators ;

● furthermore, developing countries must select the relevant forum in which the issues can best be negotiated.

The area of international decision-making has widened from the cluster of institutions in which the decision-making was effectively controlled by the developed countries, such as the IMF, IBRD and GATT, to include more universal fora such as the Committee of the Whole and UNCTAD.

### **Emerging framework for negotiations in the Eighties**

It is in this context that UNCTAD V meets in Manila in May this year. Both the Arusha programme and documents issued by the UNCTAD secretariat stress its importance as a major world economic conference which could set the directions for international economic policy in the Eighties. The Agenda for the Conference covers most of the major international economic issues which are vital for the implementation of the N.I.E.O. It seeks to press forward with some of the initiatives launched in UNCTAD IV and take them to the next stage of implementation. This applies to the problems of world trade in commodities, on which the Conference aims at launching negotiations for an internationally agreed framework to increase the share of developing countries in processing of their raw materials and their participation in marketing and distribution. This also applies to problems of trade in manufactures, external debt, transfer of technology and restrictive business practices where negotiations have either to be advanced to a successful conclusion as in the case of the code on the transfer of technology, or gains already made need to be consolidated and extended as in the case of external debt.

At another level UNCTAD V addresses itself to new problems which have emerged in the wake of the persisting world economic crisis. The Agenda accords high priority to a programme dealing with the disruption of world trade in manufactures which has resulted from the new protectionism in the developed countries. The Conference aims at a negotiating framework in which the world community would address itself to both the short-term objective of containing protectionist measures and the long-term goal of restructuring industry to promote a more efficient and equitable international division of labour.

In the field of money and finance, the Conference seeks solutions to the acute problems of balance of payments adjustment in developing countries which have grown in intensity during the Seventies. It also expects to launch an effort to evolve a comprehensive system of international financial cooperation which brings together the various elements such as balance of payments support, development assistance and access to capital markets within a coherent framework, filling important gaps in what is presently available. The Agenda of the Conference also includes important items on shipping, special measures in support of least developed countries, and relations between countries with different socio-economic systems, particularly between the developing countries and the Socialist countries.

The Conference will have before it the Programme of Collective Self-reliance which developing countries put forward at Arusha. It contains the proposals for economic cooperation among developing countries which have been identified and elaborated after UNCTAD IV and the Mexico meeting of the Group of 77 held in 1977. It would be seen that the initiatives that are being proposed at the Manila Conference encompass a range of economic interests wide enough to cover the diverse interest groups in the Conference. As will be discussed later, a negotiating platform of this kind which is capable of forming a viable coalition of interests is an essential condition for



strengthening the collective will and consolidating a collective negotiating strategy.

UNCTAD V also becomes specially important for the reason that it meets at the threshold of the Eighties. The Conference could therefore launch a new international negotiating process for the Eighties. The Agenda in fact sets out to provide a framework for such a process. The underlying theme of the Conference is the restructuring of the international economic system and each item contains important elements of restructuring in the key areas of concern to developing countries.

#### Rationale of agenda

The first substantive item of the Agenda attempts to spell out the rationale of the agenda and show how the various items form part of a consistent effort to promote structural changes needed in the world economic system as a whole. It is largely in support of this approach that the Conference addresses itself to questions relating to the international decision-making processes and the global framework of rules and principles governing international economic relations. The Secretariat papers as well as the Arusha programme suggest the creation of a mechanism through which developing nations would have a more effective voice in the management of the world economy' particularly in regard to the interdependence of policies in the field of trade, money, finance and development. By this means developing countries could bring into the international forum matters of profound importance to themselves which are now confined to the summits of industrialised countries. Developing countries could thereby keep under review the effects of policies pursued by developed countries in the process of development and structural change, and exert timely pressure to align these policies with international development goals.

The Conference also expects to give attention to the need for reviewing and revising the rules and principles governing international economic relations which

were accepted and embodied in the Bretton-Woods Agreement and GATT after the 2nd World War. The task has become imperative in view of the fact that the pattern of economic relations, the main actors in the scene, and the trading and financial operations and practices that have appeared since these rules were adopted have in large measure rendered these rules irrelevant and obsolete. The initiatives that are envisaged may well lead to a new international economic convention which could be a major objective of the Eighties.

It would be pertinent to recall here the three key elements in the negotiating Agenda of the Third World which were discussed earlier. The UNCTAD V agenda falls clearly within this pattern and contains all three elements. In the main items dealing with North-South relations, the developing countries will be negotiating a programme of structural change. In the issues relating to the international decision-making processes and the revision of rules and principles governing international economic relations, the developing countries will be seeking to share more equitably in international decision-making and participate more effectively in setting the rules and principles for international economic relations that have grown after they achieved political independence. In regard to collective self-reliance, the Arusha programme will be available to the Conference; the Conference will deal specifically with international support for the programme, while the implementation of the programme itself will remain the responsibility of the Third World.

**NEXT: Some conceptual issues relating to international economic negotiations.**

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# The right to communicate

by Chakravarthi Raghavan

**W**HETHER we like it or not there will be a "New World Information Order". It could be the driving force and the fuel for New World Economic Order called for by the less Developed Nations ... — The "New World Information Order" will not only be created because of the urgings of the developing world; all nations will be involved. The impetus may not be nations, however, but the incredible speed with which innovative technology is changing the face of society and international relations'.

Judged by the outcome of the 20th General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the 33rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, the third world and the New World Information Order may appear to have been relegated to a state of limbo or purgatory.

And if some of the diagnostic reasonings and suggested cures of the North are accepted, the third world may even find itself in danger, in the long run, of being coopted and integrated into the present western Information and Communication Order, that may be heaven to the transnational power structures benefiting by it, but could turn out to be hell.

The UNESCO has adopted a declaration on mass media and the UNESCO and the UN General Assembly in other resolutions have adopted calls for working towards 'a new, just and balanced world information and communication order' (in lower case). All these in effect have sought to reduce the problem to one of remedying the technological and material deficiencies of the third world mass media.

The 'Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International

Understanding, the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid, and Incitement to War' has some references to the third world demands for a New World Information Order. There is a reference to the NWIO in the preamble to the Declaration and an indirect response in one of the Articles of the Declaration.

Para 16 of the Declaration says: 'Conscious of the aspirations of the developing countries for the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order'. The New World Information Order has been sought to be downgraded by putting the words in lower case and making it all a set of qualifying adjectives — 'a new, more just and more effective', and noticing it as merely 'the aspirations of the developing countries'.

(The introduction of the 'more effective' concept is a somewhat totalitarian concept — it was a western input incidentally — mixed with the commercial efficiency concept.)

The operative Article 6 of the Declaration, dealing with the issue, says; 'For the establishment of a new equilibrium and greater reciprocity in the flow of information, which will be conducive to the institution of a just and lasting peace and to the economic and political independence of the developing countries, it is necessary to correct the inequalities in the flow of information to and from developing countries, and between these countries. To this end, it is essential that their mass media should have conditions and resources enabling them to gain strength and expand, and to cooperate both among themselves and with mass media in developed countries.

At US insistence, there is no mention in the Article of a new world information order, in lower

The debate on a new international information order continues in spite of efforts by the major agencies and their Third World allies, both open and covert. This article was published in the Indian journal "Seminar" in the light of the controversial UNESCO conference. The author was Editor-in-Chief of the Press Trust of India. He now works for a Geneva-based Third World agency.

case or capitals, qualified or unqualified. Amendments by the nonaligned and group of 77 to the original draft tabled by the Director-General of UNESCO, had contained a reference to the 'new world order of information and communication' (in lower case) both in the preamble and Article 6. The reference was not found in the revised draft declaration submitted by the Director-General and ultimately adopted by consensus by the Conference. The US delegate later told a meeting of the OECD group of countries at the UNESCO, that one of the American objectives in the whole exercise, and one in which they had succeeded, was to prevent any mention in the Declaration of 'The New World Information and Communication Order' that the third world had wanted.

In a dozen other resolutions and decisions, the UNESCO General Conference has endorsed efforts to establish 'a new, just and balanced world information and communication order' and has dealt with information, exchanges, communication policies, mass media, and role of information and communication in endogenous development. Everywhere the free flow doctrine has been qualified or modified with better and more balanced flow, importance of cultural diversity and preservation and fostering of variegated cultures, etc. The overall philosophy is a pot-pourri of different concepts but with repeated emphasis on its being



different from the existing state of affairs.

If resolutions and declarations help to create a new order, the overall picture is such that the Third World has not succeeded in creating an imagery or goal to which the world community is committed to move in the field of information as in the case of the NIEO.

However, the subject is on the international agenda, and cannot be brushed away or put under a rug.

\* \*

The very pace of technological changes is certain to end the current state of affairs. Either we will really have Orwellian Big Brother controlling the world information and communication, centred in Washington with Comsat and IBM (in their combination of 'satellite business systems'—SBS) running the most organised form of information imperialism or, as a reaction to it after it is born or to prevent its birth (if nations, specially third world nations act wisely now), communication policies will be evolved based on horizontal communication systems and an appropriate technology that would ensure decentralisation rather than centralisation and monopoly.

In the UNESCO, as many as 48 countries, developing and developed, made references to the New World Information Order (or its semantic variations). Almost everyone agreed that the present world information and communication structures are less efficient and less than just to the third world. Even more, some of the developed country spokesmen themselves saw that the existing order does not enable participation of the masses in their own countries in the communication/information process.

\* \*

Whether NWIO was put in capitals or small letters, whether it was qualified or not so qualified, the issue is squarely on the international agenda. The role of information increasingly perceived as a factor of production and development, and a multiplicity of organs are handling it and dealing with it, and, by and large, aim to make it serve the purposes of NIEO—in promoting cooperation among developing

countries, in technical cooperation among developing countries, economic cooperation among developing countries, transfer and development of technology, modification of the industrial property system, regulation and control of communication as a step or part of the disarmament processes (the deterrent power of nuclear giants is as much based on the nuclear armoury as the satellite-intelligence and communication-channels, to issue orders and carry out human decisions by missiles.)

Undoubtedly, the forces that are compelling the world towards a new, more just order of relationships—political, economic, social and cultural—are just beginning to gather momentum. The order created in the world in the aftermath of the second world war by the victorious allies is crumbling and collapsing despite all the repairs being undertaken to preserve the system.

If there is no restructuring of these relationships through changes in the North (within individual countries of the North and inter se within the North), changes in the South (within the countries and among the countries inter se), and in the North-South relations, changes involving economic, social cultural and political power and forces, the world is surely heading towards catastrophe. It may not be a nuclear holocaust, though even that need not be ruled out, but one of a series of explosive and disintegrative changes that in any event would mark the end of the modern consumerist industrial civilization.

\* \*

A new world information order is of importance, not only because of its inherent merit, but its utility in preventing such an outcome and promoting the other necessary changes through peaceful persuasion and cooperation of all nations.

One may ask what is this NWIO?

Contrary to some of the columnists and editorial writers, neither the concept nor one of its offshoots, the nonaligned news pool, owes its origin to Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her minions—Sanjay, Shukla, Yunus *et al*—and not even to her Emergency, though they all tried to use the concept for their own ends. The pool or a different version of

it, as a cooperative effort of some of the agencies, without involving governments would have come into being much earlier if in India, the Press Trust of India's efforts to have an overseas cast had not been stymied in jurisdictional disputes between the External Affairs Ministry and the Information & Broadcasting Ministry, and the Communications Ministry.

The concept itself is part of the broad post-war decolonisation process in the world, a process that in some cases, like that of India's, began even at the moment of establishment of the empire. Though the struggles of the colonial peoples often looked like a mere political struggle, the attempt of indigenous leaders to take power from foreign rulers, the motivating force and the urges of the peoples, in all times and at all places, is the urge to live and develop according to one's own genius, in full economic, political, social and cultural enjoyment.

In the immediate postwar years, as nation after nation gained its independence and political power came to local hands, the countries tried to shape their destinies, little realising the interconnection of the various elements and strands in the world. An understanding of the struggle of the peoples, in the South and in the North today, is only possible through an understanding of the major force behind the existing order in the world.

\* \*

The world was always inter-connected (or inter-dependent to use the latest variant expression). While there had always been empires before, the Industrial Revolution in Europe brought with its birthpangs a new relationship—the colonial, dependent (or interdependent) relationship of the industrialising world, exploiting segments within it and even more in the 'colonies' that it acquired for the supply of raw materials at cheap prices and as the market of manufactured goods. The motivating force was the creation of profits and accumulation of capital for further investment and industrialisation, leading to more profits and more accumulation of capital.

(Continued on Page 17)



## The arc of revolutions

Events in Iran have posed the more advanced capitalist states, and in particular the USA, with a major strategic challenge. The popular revolution there has been described variously as the greatest crisis in Carter's Presidency, as the greatest 'threat to the west' since the Korean War, or simply as the greatest crisis since the end of the Second World War. The foundations on which US policy so confidently, indeed complacently, rested in Iran, namely the Pahlavi dynasty, have been shown to be far frailer than almost anyone had imagined. And Washington's capacity to respond effectively to the Iranian crisis, indeed to evolve any coherent policy response, has been questioned by many US commentators. Yet the new situation facing the USA stretches far beyond the borders of Iran. Four years after being driven from Indo-China, Washington faces a potential setback throughout a whole region that is of even greater significance than the ignominious flight from Saigon.

The clearest formulation of this new international conjuncture which opened up in the latter half of 1978 has come from the militant right. Former US Secretary of State Kissinger has talked of 'the geopolitical decline from Vietnam through Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen and Afghanistan' which has, he says, 'demoralised friends and emboldened enemies'. Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski has spoken in terms of 'an arc of instability, which can be drawn on a map from Chittagong in Bangladesh, through Islamabad, all the way to Aden'. Brzezinski is alarmed by the 'fragile social and political structures in a region of vital importance to us threatened with fragmentation', and adds: 'The resulting political chaos could well be filled by elements hostile to our values and sympathetic to our adversaries' in the same vein we have *The Economist* talking of 'the crumbling triangle'

bounded by Kabul. Ankara and Addis Abbaba, and depicting the following scenario.

A year ago, most things in the region seemed to be going the west's way. A year later, the Shah's Iran may be disintegrating; there have been pro-Russian coups in Afghanistan and South Yemen; the once solidly pro-western conservatives of the Arab world have split for and against Egypt's American-brokered peacemaking with Israel; a Cuban army is entrenched in Ethiopia; and a potentially neutralist prime minister has come to power in Turkey.

Predictably supportive noises have come from those western journalists close to right-wingers in the US and British states and, in particular, from journalists close to the espionage apparatuses politely referred to as 'the intelligence community. Arnand de Borchgrave, the pro-Shah foreign editor of *Newsweek*, reports on another geopolitical problem, 'the gulf of anxiety', expressing his anxieties through a report of the Saudi ambassador's complaints to Washington. The ambassador complains that the Carter administration is not listening to the Saudi government's warnings about Ethiopia, Iran and Afghanistan. Others berate the US for its 'ho-hum' attitude, which not only makes Washington unpopular with the Saudis, but also with the Pakistanis. The latter complain they are not being helped enough to foment dissension in Afghanistan. From November of last year onwards a whole string of articles, written in what might be called 'geopolitical macho' terms, appeared in the British and American press on the dangers of Soviet advances and the weakness of the west. With the Russian bear advancing across two continents, as one *Time* magazine cover had it, Washington was seen to be 'emasculated' 'flabby', 'naked', 'Pollyannish' or just 'as slack as Perry Como'. (5) While Kissinger called for

Both leftwing and rightwing analysts tend to see dramatic changes and upheavals in Third World countries as part of "plots" hatched in Washington or Moscow. This "conspiracy theory of history" is almost always contradicted by actual facts about the internal situation. Dr. Brzezinski started the now fashionable debate going with his catch-phrase 'an arc of instability'. The *Economist* entered the discussion with a "crumbling triangle". The *New York Times* ridiculed it all with an editorial entitled "A Rhomboid of Rhetoric". Fred Halliday, author of "IRAN: Dictatorship and Development", is a research fellow of the Institute of Transnational Studies.

stiffening of US nerve in Asia, Africa and the SALT talks, ex-CIA Director Richard Helms, a former ambassador to Iran, called for new CIA action to support the Shah 'We ought to keep quiet and go to work where it matters', he said, calling on the US 'to pull all the backstage levers it can' in Iran.

The terms in which this argument is phrased are deliberately simplistic designed to arouse fear and thereby legitimate an aggressive US response. Yet they reveal a genuine problem to which the left should have a reply. The strain of subterranean paranoia, based on almost total public ignorance, is a constant of US foreign policy debate. It is evident in this 1978 discussion on the arc of instability, and in the debates earlier in the year over the Panama Canal and US withdrawal from South Korea. It was rampant in the policy discussions that accompanied the build-up in Vietnam in the 1960s and the launching of the cold war in the late 1940s. Yet it is not totally based on misinformation. Very real changes are occurring in the countries under discussion, and it is possible to gain some understanding of them, and to indicate a more balanced assessment of their importance, by disentangling the terms in which the 'arc of instability' discussion has been posed. The following is an initial attempt, limited by space and the fluidity of

events, at such an alternative analysis, focusing on the problems of liberation in this area.

### The central themes

Extrapolating from the variations and repetitions, the right-wing argument can be summarized under three headings.

1 In a range of countries in Asia and Africa regimes sympathetic to the west have been overthrown and/or regimes sympathetic to the Soviet Union have been established. All this is a result of Soviet 'interference'. These developments are especially clear in four countries: Iran, Afghanistan, South Yemen, Ethiopia. Events in all these countries must be seen primarily in terms of the global strategic relationship between east and west, and as deliberate advances by the Soviet Union.

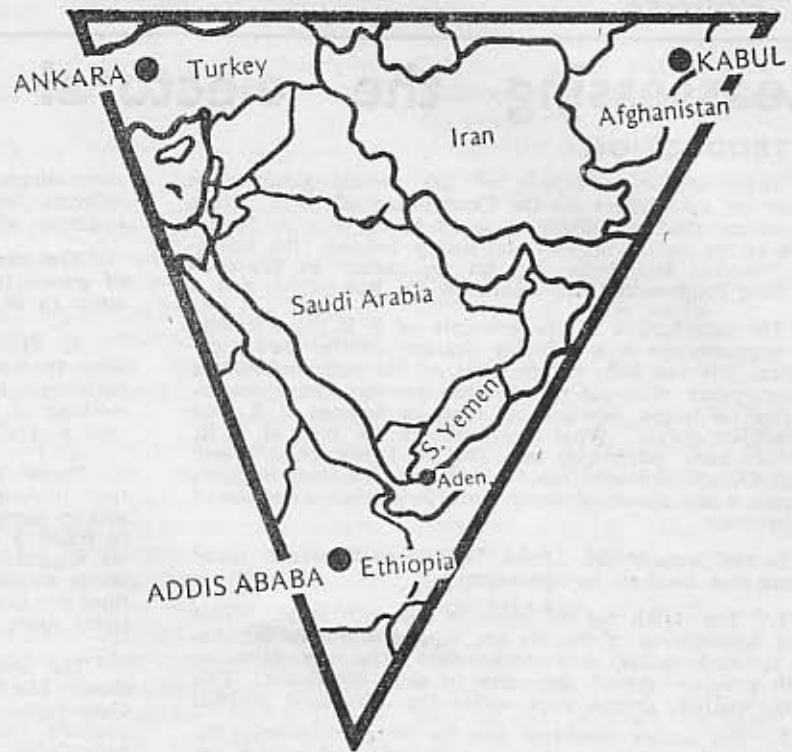
2 The US role in this has been an innocent one, based on passivity and non-involvement. Crippled by Congressional constraints on both covert and overt military action, and weighed down by a 'post-Vietnam complex', the USA is, we are told, losing the initiative in this region.

3 The Soviet Union is an expansionist power that is putting into operation a master plan, much of it derived from Czarist, dreams of breaking through to the Indian Ocean. Local forces are in essence its clients and acting at its behest. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's vision has come to dominate this debate:

When the Shah of Iran looks at a map of his region he has a nightmare vision. He sees a Communist pincer movement closing in on him from South Yemen in the south and Afghanistan in the east. . . The Shah is convinced that the crisis facing his nation is a result of a cunningly executed master plan conceived years ago by the Soviet Union.

Although he qualifies it, Kissinger ponders in a similar way: We simply do not understand that what happened in the Horn of Africa had a geopolitical design, independent of any specific action that the Soviet Union might have undertaken.

**NEXT: The counter-themes**



### The right . . .

*(Continued from Page 15)*

The post-war era saw the end of the colonial era in its political aspects. It has however taken the newly independent countries some thirty years to perceive that the colonial heritage persists in other spheres. The drive or force behind the existing order is the transnationalisation of production, distribution, and consumption, including the global homogenisation of tastes of the consumer. The colonies of the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries ended political frontiers, bringing about a vertical relationship between the metropolitan country and the colonies that helped the industrialisation process.

The transnational phenomenon of the post-war world, still expanding with an explosive force, has been performing the same function. Hitherto it even did it better than the old colonial methods, for it enabled the dirty job of repression and disciplining of the exploited to be done by local men and rulers. But the colonial process too originally began as a trading operation of the transnationals of that era and gradually ended up by acquir-

ing political power and control with the help of natives.

The same game is being attempted by the transnational forces today as when the TNCs bribe or win over or help the coming to power of forces and men in the developing world that will further the TN phenomenon, and pull down from power those opposed to it. Occasionally, or even frequently, the TN attempts are aided by governments of home countries—whether indirectly by the CIA or directly as in the interventions in Zaire through the Kolweze operation, or the several colonial-type interventions in several Francophone countries.

The information and communication industry in today's world is not only transnational, but is a part of the overall transnational phenomenon. The TN elements of information and communication are becoming more and more powerful, and seeking to absorb or control and influence the national sectors and, willy nilly, to influence and maintain the present economic order (and its superstructures, the political and social orders) which is the main support of the TN phenomenon. **(To be continued)**



# Reassessing the electoral system

## INTRODUCTION

There are some aspects of the present Constitution which are an advance on the Constitution of 1972. There are others which are likely to cause problems in the future: such as the nature of the relationship between the Executive President and Parliament; for the present we are dealing with Proportional representation (P. R.).

The introduction of the principle of P. R. as a method of representation is a desirable feature of the new Constitution. It can help reduce some of the imbalances of the earlier system of single or multiple member constituencies. We are no longer debating the issue as between P. R. and the earlier system. What is at issue is the type of P. R. that has been introduced into the Sri Lanka General and Local Government elections. P. R. as a system is good, but not every aspect of every form in which it is introduced is desirable.

In the present Sri Lanka legislation there are many aspects that need to be rethought.

1. The 1/8th cut off point is one such issue. This has a consequence of making the representation in the elected council rather disproportionate. The axe falls on small groups—though they may be quite significant. This denies smaller groups hope within the democratic process.

2. The further weightage given to the party winning the highest number of votes by giving it additional seats in the councils is another factor making for disproportional representation.

3. Another important problem is that of the relationship between candidates and elected members and the voting public. Some method must be found for re-establishing a

more direct linkage between the public and their rulers at different levels. There are many experiences in different countries which are worth our consideration.

The party caucuses are unduly strengthened by the type of system that we have been given. The candidate himself tends to be a number on the party list.

5. The cancellation of by election to the present parliament in view of a P. R. system of elections for the future parliament does not seem to be one which strengthens the working of the democratic process between 1978 and the next general elections.

Those in power tend to frame Constitutions to suit their interests. The British did so. The 1972 Constitution makers were also carried away by their own desire to try to frame a Constitution suited to their needs. At that time we suggested that they were subjecting the Constitution to severe strains, eg. as by the postponement of general elections by two years, and by not guaranteeing fundamental rights more effectively.

The present Government has a 5/6 majority in Parliament. The lasting value of the Constitution given by this Government will depend on its capability to respond to people's changing need and options. If it frustrates the people's will it may be also shortlived as our previous constitutions of this century have been. We would like to urge the Government to consider meaningful changes in the system of P. R. so as to remedy it of its present shortcomings. This is true of elections to the local bodies also.

Tissa Balasuriya, o. m. i

## The Law on PR

### SECTION

99. (1) Proportional representation.

At any election of Member of Parliament, the total number of members which an electoral dis-

trict is entitled to return shall be the number specified by the Commissioner of Elections in the Order published in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (8) of Article 98.

(2) Any recognized political party or any group of persons contesting as independent candidates (here-in-after referred to as an "independent group") may for the purpose of any election of Members of Parliament for any electoral district, submit one nomination paper setting out the names, in order of priority, of such number of candidates as is equivalent to the number of members to be elected for that electoral district, increased by one-third. Where one-third of the number of members to be elected for any electoral district is an integer and fraction the integer immediately higher to that integer and fraction shall be deemed to be the one-third for the purposes of this paragraph.

(3) Each elector whose name appears in the register of electors shall be entitled to only one vote notwithstanding that his name appears in the electoral register in more than one electoral district.

(4) The recognized political party or independent group which polls the highest number of votes in any electoral district shall be entitled to have the candidate whose name appears first in the nomination paper of that recognized political party or independent group declared elected.

(5) (a) Every recognized political party and independent group polling less than one-eighth of the total votes polled at any election in any electoral district shall be disqualified from having any candidates of such party or group being elected for that electoral district.

(b) The votes polled by the disqualified parties and independent

As reported in the last issue of the 'Guardian' the Centre for Society and Religion has sponsored a wide-ranging discussion on Proportional Representation, a topic which is certain to receive the critical attention of all parties after the next polls.

Early this month, a delegation from Pakistan was in Sri Lanka to study the new electoral system here.

In connection with the discussion it has initiated, the Centre has prepared a dossier on the subject. We commence publishing parts of this dossier from this issue. The Introduction is by the Director, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya.



groups, if any, shall be deducted from the total votes polled at the election in that electoral district and the number of votes resulting from such deduction is hereinafter referred to as the "relevant number of votes."

(6) The relevant number of votes shall be divided by the number of members to be elected for that electoral district reduced by one. If the number resulting from such division is an integer, that integer, or if that number is an integer and fraction, the integer immediately higher to that integer and fraction is here-in-after referred to as the "resulting number."

(7) The number of votes polled by each recognized political party and independent group (other than those parties or groups disqualified under paragraph (5) of this Article), beginning with the party or group which polled the highest number of votes, shall then be divided by the resulting number and such number of candidates (excluding the candidate declared elected under paragraph (4) of this Article) as is equivalent to the whole number resulting from the division by the resulting number of the votes polled by such party or group shall be declared elected from each such party or group in the order in which their names appear in the nomination paper. The remainder of the votes, if any, after such division shall be dealt with, if necessary, under paragraph (8) of this Article.

(7) Where after the declaration of the election of members as provided in paragraph (7) of this Article there are one or more members yet to be declared elected, such member or number of members shall be declared elected by reference to the remainder of the votes referred to in paragraph (7) to the credit of each party or group after the declaration made under that paragraph and the votes polled by any party or group not having any of its candidates declared elected under paragraph (7), the candidate next in the order of priority in the nomination paper

of the party or group having the highest of such votes being declared elected the next member and so on until all the members to be elected are declared elected.

(9) (a) Where the number of votes polled by each recognized political party or independent ground is less than the resulting number referred to in paragraph (6) of this Article the party or group which has polled the highest number of votes shall be entitled to have the candidate whose name appears first in the nomination paper of that party or group (excluding the candidate declared elected under paragraph (4) of this Article) declared elected and if there are one or more members yet to be declared elected, the party or group having the next highest number of votes polled shall be entitled to have the member whose name appears first in the nomination paper of that party or group to be declared elected and so on, until all the members to be elected for that electoral district are declared elected under the provisions of this paragraph.

(b) After the determination under paragraph (a) if there are one or more members yet to be declared elected in respect of that electoral district the provisions of that paragraph shall "mutatis mutandis", apply to the election of such members.

(10) Where under paragraph (4) or (8) or (9) of this Article an equality is found to exist between the votes polled by two or more recognized political parties or two or more independent groups or any combination of them and the addition of a vote would entitle the candidate of one such party or group to be elected, the determination of the party or group to which such additional vote shall be deemed to have been given shall be made by lot.

(11) For the purposes of this Article the number of votes polled shall be deemed to be the number of votes counted other than rejected votes.

(12) A recognized political party shall have the right, from time to time after all the members for an electoral district have been declared elected under the preceding provisions of this Article, to change the order of priority of the persons whose names appear in the nomination paper submitted by it and to substitute the names of other persons in place of those who have died or ceased to be members of such party.

(13) Where a Member of Parliament ceases, by resignation, expulsion or otherwise, to be a member of a recognized political party or independent group on whose nomination paper (hereinafter referred to as the "relevant nomination paper") his name appeared at the time of his becoming such Member of Parliament, his seat shall become vacant upon the expiration of a period of one month from the date of his ceasing to be such member:

Provided that in the case of the expulsion of a Member of Parliament his seat shall not become vacant if prior to the expiration of the said period of one month he applies to the Supreme Court by petition in writing and the Supreme Court upon such application determines that such expulsion was invalid. Such petition shall be inquired into by three Judges of the Supreme Court who shall make their determination within two months of the filing of such petition. Where the Supreme Court determines that the expulsion was valid the vacancy shall occur from the date of such determination.

(b) Where the seat of a Member of Parliament becomes vacant as provided in Article 66 (other than paragraph (g) of that Article) or by virtue of the preceding provisions of this paragraph, the person whose name appears first in order of priority in the relevant nomination paper (excluding the names of any persons who have previously been declared elected) shall be declared elected to fill such vacancy.

(To be continued)

# Stalinism and Eelam

by Kumar David

Chintaka has written a useful series on the National Question. I find wide areas of agreement and some points of difference. However I had not intended to write about the differences chiefly because to the wider (non-Marxist) readership these would have appeared to be differences that ought to be confined to the footnotes. However, Laxman Jothikumar's piece in LG of July 15 so confounds and confuses the issue that this intervention becomes necessary.

With unerring skill Jothikumar hits Chintaka at his weakest point—his soft, unprotected and theoretically defunct underbelly of ritualistic Stalinism. Jothikumar seeks to put the record right on behalf of Stalin. Jothikumar, the Stalinist Gallahad, seeks to combat Chintaka, the Stalinist Lancelot, whose "faith unfaithful keeps him falsely true".

Chintaka is far too good a practitioner of the craft of current political involvement to allow himself to be diverted to a wholly incorrect approach to the National (Tamil) Question in Sri Lanka by the gross errors of the latter-Stalin. Hence he chooses his quotations taken in the early period under Lenin's powerful influence. He makes no mention of the national oppression inflicted on several minority nations and ethnic groups such as the Jews in the Stalinist period in the USSR. In short Chintaka is grossly unfaithful to Stalin in order to make him ritualistically quotable. Nevertheless the great merit of Chintaka's series is that in the final analysis it popularises positions and explanations that are mostly correct and commendable. It debunks myths that badly needed to be debunked.

However, unfortunately for Chintaka, he falls foul of a fellow Stalinist. Jothikumar asks the question: Did not Stalin repudiate the right of nations to self-determination in the period after the proletarian revolution? If so, how come this conceptual framework nowhere breaks through to the surface in **Myths and Realities**? Why aren't you prepared to tell the Tamil people the whole story about your (Stalin's) position? If you are prepared to engrave the right to self-determination on the programme of your party now, but only subject to the condition that if the proletarian revolution is successful, this portion of the program stands annulled, what is your concept of the party program to 'the various sections of the oppressed masses who enter into a revolutionary alliance on the basis of that program'?

Jothikumar's Stalinism is consistent. (The fact that for that reason it is more reprehensible is another matter). He realises a contradiction between Lenin's position on self-determination and the latter-Stalin. He rationalises it under the formula "times have changed" (bad dialectics). He then denies the right of self-determination to the Tamil people today. Consistent Stalinism at the cost of Leninism—Stalin's post-1925 position consistently extended to the period before the proletarian revolution (Sri Lanka today). Consistent Leninism on the other hand saw the separation of Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia from revolutionary Russia with the consent of the Soviet Power. Is it too much to hope that Chintaka will opt for consistent Leninism and reject Stalin's post-1925 position? In this case **Myths and Realities**, except for the ritualistic references to Stalin,

## A reply to Jothikumar

becomes more meaningful and Jothikumar has no leg to stand on.

In fact Stalin's notorious reversal on the national question started in 1922 and brought him into collision course with the ailing Lenin. The following extracts from notes dictated by Lenin on December 30th and 31st 1922 about the handling of the Georgian national question by Stalin, Dzerzhinsky and Orjonikidze illustrates:-

"I think Stalin's haste and his infatuation with pure administration together with his spite against the notorious 'nationalist-socialism' played a fatal role here. In politics spite generally speaking plays the basest of roles" (from the note of December 30)

"The Georgian who is neglectful of this aspect of the question or who carelessly flings about accusations of 'nationalist-socialism' (whereas he himself is a real and true 'national-socialist' and even a vulgar Great-Russian bully) violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity..." (From the first note of December 31)

"The political responsibility for all this truly Great Russian nationalist campaign must, of course, be laid on Stalin and Dzerzhinsky" (From the second note of December 31).

Other than its formal and unnecessary concessions to Stalin my criticism of **Myths and Realities** revolves around one other issue only. I don't think that some of the answers (eg. Nos. 8, 19, 21) bring out sufficiently clearly the point that the revolutionary Marxist party, while it recognises the right to self-determination, conducts its struggle in the Tamil areas on the basis of its own program, which in the present case, is not a program to the Eelam perspective. To the extent that this is an alternative program to the Eelam program it may be said to be opposed to Eelam. I will not at

(Continued on Page 24)

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# Marxism and revisionism

by Chintaka

**T**he concrete analysis of concrete conditions — one would think at first glance that it is this fundamental principle of Leninist methodology that Laxhman Jothikumar is attempting to emphasize by the welter of quotations with which he pelts the reader. If this were the case then there would be little cause for disagreement. But on second glance it is evident that the comrade doth protest too much and something is amiss. It is interesting and not altogether unfunny how Jothikumar uses virtually all the cliches which revisionism has traditionally resorted to, in its attempt to distort and emasculate Marxism-Leninism. "Dogmatic approach".... "applying Marxism dialectically".... "understanding the objective conditions".... "should not be applied mechanically in another historical period".... "quoting Stalin outside of space and time".... "applied Marxism dogmatically and not dialectically".... "Lenin's and Stalin's writings cannot be mechanically applied to the present historical stage." These phrases which stud Jothikumar's reply are almost identical with those used by revisionists ranging from Kautsky to Krushchev, from Bernstein to Berlinger in their attempt to dilute the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism.

What does Jothikumar accuse me of? "Chintaka has dismembered Marxism, and taken bits and pieces to present as dogmas.... in supporting the demand for self-determination." Furthermore "Chintaka has applied Marxism dogmatically and not dialectically when he demands that revolutionaries support self-determination of Tamils." To this charge I gladly plead guilty. Even though each national struggle has its own historical specificity and relative autonomy, it is possible to juxtapose these struggles, thus moving from the perceptual to the conceptual, from the concrete to the abstract, and make certain valid generalizations. Such is the Marxist

methodology, and at the very core of the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist conceptualization of the National Question resides the thesis that every nation has an inalienable democratic right to self-determination, which is clearly defined as being none other than the right of an oppressed nation to secede from the oppressor nation and form an independent state. This was underscored repeatedly by Lenin and Stalin in their many theoretical writings on the national questions, leaving no room for confusion.

"Self-determination of nations in the Marxist programme cannot from a historic economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a nation state." (Lenin).

Jothikumar goes on to accuse me of "forgetting that Lenin did not mean by self-determination the formation of small states." He goes on to say that "Lenin has stated clearly that his principle of self-determination does not mean partition or the formation of small states." This I'm afraid is a gross misrepresentation of the Leninist position. What Lenin in fact did say was that:

"From their daily experience the masses know perfectly well the value of geographical and economic ties and the advantages of a big market and a big state. They will therefore, resort to secession only when national oppression and national friction make joint life absolutely intolerable and hinder any and all economic intercourse. In that case.... the freedom of the class struggle will be best served by secession."

After misrepresenting Leninism as being ineluctably hostile to the formation of small states, Jothikumar conveniently links it up with the argument that in Sri Lanka the demand for a separate state means in practice the formation of a small state and therefore should be opposed. We have seen

*A rejoinder to  
Laxhman Jothikumar*

that this argument of Jothikumar's does not have a Leninist foundation. But it does have a foundation of sorts—in colonialist political theory, that is. Until well into the 1950's colonialism opposed the granting of independence to certain territories and thus not viable entities. Did Comrade Jothikumar oppose the liberation struggle of the people of Sao Tome and principle against Portuguese colonialism on the grounds that this territory had a population of only 81,000? Is he unaware that the Solomon Islands, a group of very small islets lying to the North East of Australia with a population of only 180,000, became the 150th UN member from September 1958? Gambia, Maldives, Singapore, Grenada (pop - 96,000). Qatar, (pop - 95,000) The Republic of Seychelles (pop - 59,000) are all members of the UN.

Though he spoils the 'effect' by slinging mud at Socialist Vietnam, Jothikumar made the valid point that the "Victory of the proletarian revolution does not mean that the National Question could be settled automatically like magic". If he had read Lenin carefully, Jothikumar would have realized that in making this point he only weakens his own argument, while strengthening mine. Summing up the discussion on self-determination, Lenin refers to Engels' extremely interesting letter to Kautsky, dated September 12th 1882 and goes to say that:

"National antipathies will not disappear so quickly; the hatred—and perfectly legitimate hatred—of an oppressed nation for its oppressor will last for a while; it will evaporate only after the victory of socialism and after the final establishment of completely democratic relations between nations. **If we are to be faithful to socialism we must even now educate the masses in the spirit of internationalism, which is impossible in oppressor nations without advocating**

freedom of secession for oppressed nations." (my emphasis)

Thus the stone which Jothikumar attempted to cast at me, has now dropped with a thud on his own feet.

"The very fact that more than one nation occupies a country does not mean each nation has the right to self-determination" says our comrade. This contention is, to put it diplomatically very far from the Marxist-Leninist position, and if this is the kind of 'dialectical', 'undogmatic', 'non-mechanistic' Marxism that Comrade Jothikumar recommends to me, I'm afraid I must decline the invitation to be converted. Our comrade is horrified that "in the event (of the recognition of the right of self-determination), India, Burma, China, Pakistan, Yugoslavia and several other countries would be torn to pieces". It is a gross insult to the Chinese Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party and China's socialist society to include it, as Jothikumar does in a category of non-socialist states, thus implying that there are oppressed nations in China. Let us then exclude China from the discussion and glance briefly at the other countries mentioned.

Comrade Jothikumar is obviously unaware that the (then undivided) Communist Party of India included in its programme, adopted at its second Congress in March 1948, an item which called for "the recognition of the right of all nations to self-determination and the conversion of India into a voluntary alliance of national, Peoples Democratic Republics." This CPI programme stressed that "the only constantly democratic solution to the national question (was) the slogan of the right of all the nationalities of India to self-determination including the right to secession and the formation of independent states". It said that in general the national movement of the peoples of the Indian Union is progressive. Of course the CPI abandoned this principled position with the ascendancy of Khrushchevite revisionism, but the slogan is now being championed by the various

sections of the CPI (ML) and to a lesser extent the CPI (M).

The Hindi speaking heartland of India has always been the most economically and culturally conservative part of the country with little communist strength. The uneven pattern of communist strength corresponds clearly to the pattern of identification with regional forces. The Indian Marxist-Leninists are seeking to counter the repressive state power at the Center by forging democratic alliances for regional autonomy and even separation in those outlying states where the sense of regional subjection in a multilingual political unit have become most acute. Andhra, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Kashmir are cases in point though CPI (ML) support for the tribal minorities of the North East (the Nagas and Mizos) provide the most striking examples. The deepening of these trends and the consequent centrifugal dynamic is perhaps the best brake on India's hegemonic and interventionist capacity in the South Asia region.

Similarly the Burmese Communist Party actively co-operates with the Shan and Karen tribal minorities in their independence struggle, just as the Philippine New Peoples Army supports the struggle of the Moslem Moro National Liberation Front in Mindanao. The Malaysian Communist Party supports the national movement in North Kalimantan while the Indonesian Communist Party solidarizes with FRETILIN in East Timor. In Iran the Marxist Fedayeen E Khalq is presently supporting the Kurdish cause, while in Spain 'Grapo' cooperates with the Basque ETA. The list runs much longer, but these examples should suffice.

Accusing me firstly of basing my argument on a dogmatic interpretation of Lenin and Stalin, Jothikumar shifts his ground somewhat and subsequently traces the origins of my 'faith in bourgeois elections'. My point was very simple, elections are an index of opinion not a strategy of struggle.

The General Elections of 1977, in so far as the Tamil people were concerned was primarily a referendum on the decision to secede. The only campaign slogan employed by the TULF was that of an independent Eelam. Not only did the Tamil people in their traditional homelands accord this mandate to the TULF, but they also reaffirmed it clearly at the recent Local polls.

Finally we arrive at the very crux of Jothikumar's position. "The correct solution to the problems of the Tamils should be found whether in a bourgeois or proletarian state within the framework of a united Sri Lanka." Jothikumar thus fetishizes 'unity' in the abstract, irrespective of whether it is the unity of the bourgeois or the proletarian state—which to him seems a minor distinction but is really a qualitative distinction which is of fundamental importance to all Marxists. After all, Lenin repeatedly stated that the class nature of state power was the main thing. In the next sentence Jothikumar goes on to reveal his revisionism in all its nakedness. "Since the chances of an immediate victory of socialism in Sri Lanka is bleak, persons like Chintaka without living in a dreamworld should see daylight and find solutions to the **problem of Tamils within the bourgeois state and a united Sri Lanka.**" (My emphasis) Our comrade who alleges that I unconsciously betray my faith in bourgeois elections, betrays an extremely touching faith in and fidelity towards (if not fondness for) the very institution which Marxism is committed to destroy, **however protracted the struggle**—namely, the bourgeois state. Let us conclude then as we commenced, with Lenin, and a quotation which I strongly suggest all Tamil 'Marxists' like Jothikumar take to heart:—

"Nobody is to be blamed for being born a slave; but a slave who not only eschews striving for freedom but justifies and eulogizes his slavery — such a slave is a lickspittle and a boor, who arouses a legitimate feeling of indignation, loathing and contempt." (Lenin).

(Passed by CA)



## Letters . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

with a population of about 6,000 in New Zealand. I must say we are all really advancing. Can't Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis and the apostles of modern mass communications please bring us the 'Lone Ranger' for Vesak next year?

Colombo 4. P. D. S Perera

### Caste in Jaffna

The crux of Mr Sanmugathan's argument resides in the following two sentences of his reply.

1. "He is underplaying the existence of caste in Jaffna.

2. "Men who claim on platforms equality with the Sinhalese are unwilling to grant the same equality to Tamils among their midst who speak their tongue but by an accident happen to belong to another caste."

Let us take the second sentence first. It could have easily come from any govt communique or newspaper editorial denouncing the Tamils. It is one of Mr. Cyril Mathew's favourite arguments against the Tamils. Indeed, throughout history imperialism and colonialism have always resorted to this kind of argument to deny the legitimacy of oppressed nations' independence struggles. "They are not fit to rule themselves because of their own backward social structures. Look how they treat their own people. They should set their house in order first."

We are all too familiar with this kind of logic, which is used to uphold the status quo. Most recently we heard the West resorting to this in the case of the popular struggles in Iran. "They don't give their women equal rights so how dare they try to oust the Shaha?" screamed imperialism.

It is not surprising that Shan, with his visceral hatred of the TULF, his hostility towards the Tamil youth because of their strong sympathies with the USSR, Cuba and Vietnam, his typical Colombo-Tamil antipathy should resort to

this kind of arguments used by the State itself.

As for underplaying the existence of caste, it is correct that race, class and caste are the three major interacting factors on the Northern scene. But the point is that **Shan grossly overplays the caste factor.**

Caste is not the main axis of social stratification in these areas since feudalism is not the dominant mode of production in the Northern socio-economic formation. This is not to say that residues of it do not exist in social relations and the mass consciousness. The main antagonistic contradiction in the North is not that of caste or even of class. Rather it is the confrontation between the whole Tamil nation and their oppressors. Mr. Sanmugathan who has lectured to us in the South for so long and so incorrectly on 'contradictions' and the 'stage of the revolution' should realize that by trying to bring the caste contradiction to the foreground he is 'skipping over' the present national-democratic stage of the popular movement in the North and, therefore, objectively helping the status quo.

Gamini Dissanaiké.

### No such incident?

So, Mr G. G. Ponnambalam Jr; is challenging me to prove that at the ACTC Local Government Polls Campaign in Jaffna a speaker made a personal attack on Mrs Amirthalingam.

At the final TULF meeting held at the Jaffna esplanade the following evening speaker after speaker made a reference to it.

I was back in Jaffna last week and the TULF MPs I met there confirmed this fact.

Gamini Dissanaiké.

### Life in Brunei

I thought your readers may like to know about life in

Brunei here. We have about 150 Sri Lankan passport holders — teachers, doctors, engineers. Local politics is not discussed — perhaps a vague reference to irredentist tendencies of the Vietnamese. The 2226 square mile Sultanate has a population of 206,000. Ninety nine per cent of our revenue is derived from oil and gas. Petrol is only Singapore dollar 1.25 but a pound of meat is about 40 rupees. Whisky is cheap, about Rs. 85/- and a 20 packet of imported cigarettes Rs. 7/-. There is no daily paper, only a weekly. I work for the government and keep fit playing golf. Good luck to the Lanka Guardian.

H. M. Samaraweera,  
Seria, Brunei.

## Stalinism . . .

(Continued from Page 20)

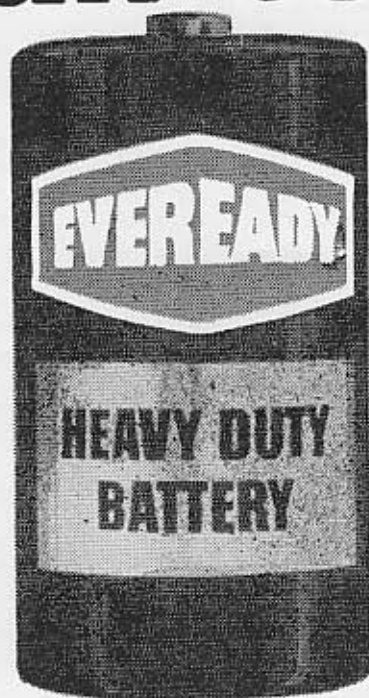
this point try to detail the action program which our party places before the Tamil people nor explain how it differs from the action program of the TULF or the Illainar Peravai. Suffice it to say that there are very basic differences on the formulation of what type of struggle can win the Tamil people their lost rights. However, as Chintaka would be quick to point out, there is also enormous room and need for common action and united fronts between nationalist organisations of the minority nation and revolutionary Marxism, these differences notwithstanding. While Chintaka makes this point very clearly he does not articulate with sufficient clarity the afore-mentioned differences nor discuss the two alternative programs and spell out their distinctions.

As for Jothikumar, his denial of the Tamil people's right to self-determination and his call to "...find solutions to the problems of the Tamils within the bourgeois state..." are manifestations of crass opportunism.

(Passed by CA)



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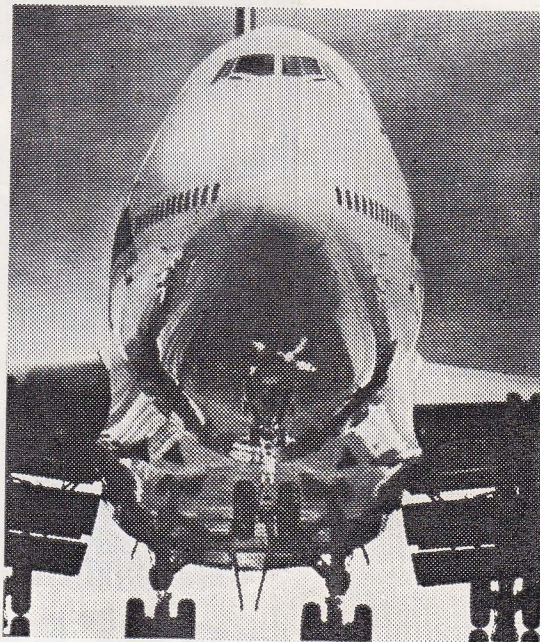
PHOENIX .

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