

SPECIAL TO THE L. G. TRIBAL REVOLT IN INDIA

— *Arvind Das*

LANKA

GUARDIAN

Vol. 11 No. 2 May 15, 1988 Price Rs. 5.00 Registered at the GPO, Sri Lanka QJ/84/NEWS/88



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— *the UNP's succession war*

— *Mervyn de Silva*

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ANOTHER UNIT MOVES SOUTH

Proscription or no Proscription, Commander-in-Chief JR is keeping his powder dry. Last weekend, a new unit of the Combined Services moved out of barracks. Its destination — the Southern Province, where the government is ready for a full-scale battle by June 9, the day of the provincial polls.

President JR has been planning his polls like a military campaign. Once it was clear that the East was not peaceful enough to hold the North-and-East election required by the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, he decided to have elections in the seven predominantly Sinhalese provinces. But the JVP stepped up its own armed attacks on UNP stalwarts, district organisers and potential candidates (UNP and USA). In the light of these spectacular JVP 'strikes', the armed forces would have had to be spread out over seven provinces, and spread out thin.

The C-in-C picked four of the less disturbed areas to defend, and to test also the JVP's capacity for deployment, its territorial reach, manpower and its arsenal.

From both a security and a political point of view, the provincial polls, despite a relatively poor turnout, represented a psychological victory. Then he decided to have the Western Province, and the South, the JVP bastion, on different days. In short, he has picked both the place and time for the big battle. The JVP replied with its daring raid (for the second time) on the SLAAF base, a superb operation, not only in terms of dramatically enhanced firepower but of the newly acquired communications equipment, communications by the way being one of the secrets of the LTTE's success.

So, another unit moves South.

PROVINCIAL POWERS

How much power does a Provincial Council need? It all

depends on how honestly a Central government wishes the exercise in devolution and decentralisation to work.

Last week, 37 functions were passed on to the four P.C.'s now going through the preliminary ceremonies of getting down to business. The powers include all irrigation works, other than inter-provincial tanks and canals, roads and ferries, except trunk routes, all cultivated land other than state plantations, all hospitals, save Teaching Hospitals and special-purpose medical institutions. In the revenue-collecting areas, perhaps the most interesting is the transfer of the power to issue licences for motor vehicles, taverns and toddy tapping.

SIRIMA ON THE STOMP

A few days before the UNP Working Committee was told by an experts group that President JR could contest the next elections and serve a third term, Mrs. Bandaranaike opened her campaign at Katugampola. Earlier she had welcomed the UNP leader as a rival. Prime Minister Premadasa or National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali 'would be harder to beat' she added.

(Continued on page 4)

TRENDS + LETTERS

10th Anniversary Issue

I, as one who has collected each single issue since its inception, and as one who has occasionally contributed to its columns, take pride in saluting the Lanka Guardian on the 10th anniversary of its publication. It had weathered many storms of political, social and economic changes that swept across the country during the first decade of its existence. It had remained steadfastly loyal to the accepted principles of reporting and commenting. While being fiercely critical, it was fearlessly objective. The Lanka Guardian remains the guardian of principles of justice and the watch-dog of national interests. I wish it many years of service to the people and the country.

E. M. G. Edirisinghe

Welipenna

LANKA GUARDIAN

Vol. 11 No. 2 May 15, 1988

Price Rs. 5.00

Published fortnightly by
Lanka Guardian Publishing Co. Ltd.

No. 246, Union Place,
COLOMBO — 2.

Editor: Mervyn de Silva
Telephone: 547584

Printed by Ananda Press
82/5, Wolfendhal Street, Colombo 13.
Telephone: 35975

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UNP-JVP "Peace Accord" or Lalith-Gamini Prestige Battle ?

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

"Even if their signatures are not authentic, I feel a start has been made to bring about peace" said National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali at a meeting in his Mt. Lavinia constituency on Wednesday evening (11/5) when it was already clear that the GREAT UNP-JVP PEACE ACCORD BALLOON had burst. On the street walls not far from where he spoke, the posters that had come up the day before, with a pleasing colour photo of the Minister, carried their own message.

The slogans were interesting. They all hailed the Harbinger of Peace, the Saviour of the Nation, Sri Lanka's Great Hope!

The JVP 'Accord' brouhaha had had very much to do with issues that had little relevance to the JVP itself. It had a direct bearing on the current UNP leadership and succession struggle, and was closely, if not too overtly, connected to the foreign supporters of the two main contenders — Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali and Mr. Gamini Dissanayake. For all his Mahaveli connections with the west (US, FRG, U.K., Sweden etc) Mr. Dissanayake's key role as the initiator, and later negotiator, of the India-Sri Lanka Peace Accord has more or less made him Delhi's man, although that is certainly not how he would like to be identified.

Indeed, his identity earlier was just the opposite. In the pre-'83 period, he was the Sinhala-Buddhist activist in the Cabinet,

second only in militancy to Industries Minister Cyril Mathew. But Mathew was never a candidate for UNP leadership and the Presidency. Gamini, directly involved in land, land settlement and "colonies", personally associated with the Maha Sangha, and some younger clerical agitators, and openly at war, as head of the party's plantations Union, with fellow Cabinet Minister, Mr. S. Thondaman, was the favourite of the western embassies and of course Israel. Just as much as he was the main target, along with Mr. Mathew, of Indian (and Tamil) attacks.

In the pre-Peace Accord period and more so after it, the Lands Minister gradually became President JR's trusted 'special envoy' to India and the main communication-channel of 'secret diplomacy', his confidential consultations and transactions with Prime Minister Gandhi. Though 'Mahaveli' still keeps him in the (western) donor orbit, the much bigger stakes of the Presidential 'Power Game', make him Indo-Soviet bloc's 'best bet', with Cuba a minor but colourful member of the cheer-squad.

Mr. Dissanayake's personal-political background is Kandy, semi-rural Sinhala middle-class, and "SLFP-ish", with the Law college opening a door to professional and even more strikingly, political (UNP) advancement. Interestingly, his main rival, Mr. Athulathmudali has similar beginnings, but more low-country — and SLFP-

ish too, with S.W.R.D. showing the path to wider (international) horizons via a scholarship to Oxford.

Mr. Athulathmudali's educational and post-graduate background establishes intimate connections with Britain, US, Israel and Singapore. In the present phase of post-Accord politics, this background is by no means irrelevant considering his post of National Security Minister. On the level of official policy, the US, UK and the donor community support the Accord as a pre-condition for Sri Lankan stability — unfortunate, regrettable but an unavoidable choice for Colombo given the unalterable characteristics of the conflict. Yet Indian help and cooperation, and the accompanying Indian influence on Sri Lanka should not lead to Indian dominance or as the Chinese who share this view, would put it "hegemonism". The Pakistanis not only subscribe to this view but can hardly help containing their anger and bitterness over the way they were 'used' and then edged out.

Japan, the rays of the Rising Sun, advancing steadily over South Asia (India notably), plays its own game — quite cleverly but not always as cleverly as some diplomats imagine.

J.R.'s Double-Track

President JR has to contend with two major conflicts the yet unresolved conflict in the North-East, meaning the LTTE,

and the JVP challenge which the government has not been able to crush or effectively blunt. The first area of conflict is already Mr. Dissanayake's operational terrain. President JR wants Mr. Dissanayake to persuade the Indian policy-makers that they must "deliver" (not necessarily physically) Prabhakaran to fulfil their part of the bargain and enable the President to face more confidently his own direct challenger, Mrs. Bandaranaike.

This challenger evidently is planning to maximise Sinhala support, much of which is already hers, and augment the SLFP forces with the pro-JVP militants. Heron, Anura, has gone to the extent of offering the JVP three portfolios. If the JVP youth vote goes SLFP, the advantage gained by the U. N. P. through the U. S. A. siphoning off anti-UNP votes, would be negated. It was time to pre-empt this SLFP move and perhaps neutralise the JVP. Who better than the other young contender, Mr. Athulathmudali for this exercise? Not only does he have a big personal stake in such an exercise, its political rewards would be immense. He would be, after all, bringing the Sinhala youth rebels back in to the democratic mainstream, thus healing the deep, painful wound in the Sinhala psyche.

Warning Anura

The press neglected to report some highly significant remarks of Mr. Athulathmudali at his press conference. He sneered at Mr. Anura Bandaranaike's offer of three portfolios. He went further. The "3 portfolios" he predicted would become the topic of political debate in the weeks ahead. In short, he would deal with Anura, soon!

He dismissed the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord as an accord that was "not meant to be implemented", thus casting serious doubts on Indian bona fides. He wished he was "allowed" to negotiate with the LTTE (as he

had offered to do after Vadama-archi) in the way he had successfully negotiated now with the JVP!

The "Hail Lalith" posters were on the walls when Mr. Dissanayake returned home. A pure coincidence, doubtless, but

J.R. for 3rd term

President JR can seek a third term and contest the presidential election that has to be held before Feb. 4, a six-member UNP Committee has ruled. Five members have reported to the UNP Working Committee that Articles 31 (2) and 160 will have to be amended by a two-thirds majority. Mr. Paul Perera held the view that no amendment was required. The relevant Articles are:

Article 31 (2) states: No person who has been twice elected to the office of President by the people shall be qualified thereafter to be elected to such office by the people.

Article 160 provides: that:-
"A person holding the office of

so highly meaningful. Some uncharitable person or person have thrown mud on those posters and scribbled rude and crude remarks from Colombo 7 to Mount Lavinia, which Mr. Athulathmudali offered as a venue for the first public meeting of the J. V. P!

President immediately before the commencement of the Constitution shall be the first President under the Constitution and shall be deemed for all purposes to have been elected as the President of the Republic.

The Committee consulted a wellknown President's Counsel on the constitutional issues before it submitted its report. On the question of a referendum, the committee submitted that the relevant Articles are not entrenched clauses requiring a reference to the people before.

If there was any doubt it is now clear that President JR will be the UNP candidate at the next elections.

TRENDS...

(Continued from page 1)

Her main campaign arguments are (a) the unparalleled chaos and violence in the country after a decade of UNP rule (b) the presence of foreign (Indian) troops in the North and East and (c) the economic burdens cast on the people, and the misery of the poor of all communities.

EXILES RETURN

The TULF leaders who went into exile after the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 and the 6th amendment to the constitution rushed through Parliament in August have announced their return to Sri Lanka. The TULF MP's refused to take an oath renouncing separatism, the gist of the 6th amendment. They made Madras their headquarters though former Opposition Leader, A. Amirthalingam, the party's Secretary-general travel-

led widely publicising the plight of the Tamil community.

The long self-imposed exile however not only allowed the LTTE to easily slip into the vacant leadership role but began to erode Tamil public sympathy for the old parliamentary veterans. Several TULF ex-MP's were brutally killed by LTTE hit-squads, while the LTTE's propaganda unit in Madras trained its guns on Amirthalingam and Co. and on their alleged 'high-life.'

Their return of course foreshadows a Delhi deal with the LTTE. Several rounds of talks between LTTE representative and mid-level Indian officials have ended in Madras. The main sticking points are the composition of the pre-polls 'council' (in short, how many seats for the LTTE) and the modalities connected with the surrender of guns. What share will the returning elders get?

ECONOMIC SCENE**1988: Prospects not pleasing**

The balance of payments position, the debt-service ratio and the time-table for repayment of debts, especially borrowings from banks at high interest rates, will be one of the first duties of the Sri Lankan President who will take office on Feb. 4. This would be true whether the newly elected President is UNP or SLFP, now that the SLFP has clearly repudiated its old economic policy, especially on the role of private enterprise, import and price controls and distribution.

How do things stand? The following excerpts from the recently issued Central Bank report present a broad outline of the answer:

The current account deficit GDP ratio which is a basic indicator of the degree of weakness of a country's balance of payment declined from 6.6 per cent in 1986 to 5.2 per cent in 1987. The current account deficit excluding official transfers dropped to SDR 405 million in 1987 from SDR 516 million in the previous year and as a ratio of GDP it declined to 7.9 per cent from 9.6 per cent over the two years. However, the overall balance continued to be in deficit and the short-fall in 1987 was SDR 72 million. This was the third consecutive year when the overall balance was in deficit necessitating drawing on external reserves, underlining the continuing weakness of the country's balance of payments position.

The cumulative drop in net external assets, due to continuing deficits, in the overall balance during the last three years siphoned off nearly 90 per cent of the net gain in reserves during the tea boom in 1983-84. Although a deficit in the overall balance was anticipated in 1987, the eventual deficit turned out to be much larger due to the poor performance of traditional exports decline in tourist earnings and a substantial shortfall in foreign aid disbursements. Although exports in SDR terms increased by 4.5

per cent, the level of export earnings fell short of its five year (1983-1987) average of SDR 1,164 million.

Export earnings which had declined by nearly 30 per cent between 1984 and 1986, recovered slightly recording a 4.5 per cent increase in 1987. While the prices of tea, rubber and other agricultural products increased marginally, the price of coconut exports rose substantially by 57.0 per cent. The overall export price index increased by 3.9 per cent in SDR terms. Export volumes of all major agricultural products declined during the year with tea, rubber and the three major coconut products declining by 3.2 per cent, 3.7 per cent and 51.3 per cent, respectively. Export earnings from minor agricultural products decreased by 4.5 per cent due to a drop in export volumes. Industrial exports recorded a 9.2 per cent growth almost entirely due to an expansion in garments exports. Export earnings from ready made garments and textiles increased by 16.3 per cent in 1987 and continued to be the largest gross foreign exchange earner as in the previous year. Earnings from gem exports increased by 66.0 per cent which is partly the outcome of the new agreement signed with Thailand to regularize the gem trade.

Import payments declined by 4.3 per cent in 1987 mainly due to a 5.8 per cent reduction in consumer goods, 7.3 per cent declined in volume terms by 51.0 per cent, 15.5 per cent and 20.0 per cent, respectively. In contrast, the import volumes of sugar and crude oil rose by 16.8 per cent and 8.5 per cent, respectively. While the import price of rice and crude oil increased by 7.4 per cent and 7.1 per cent, respectively the price of wheat grain decreased by 7.5 per cent in 1987.

The overall price movement in international markets was marginally favourable to Sri Lanka in 1987, with export prices increasing by 0.3 per cent and import prices decreasing by 2.7 per cent in SDR terms. Accordingly, the terms of trade recorded a marginal improvement in 1987. This followed two successive years of adverse terms of trade when it deteriorated by 19.8 per cent and 5.0 per cent, respectively.

The net outflow of foreign exchange on account of services increased from Rs. 3,617 million (SDR 109 million) in 1986 to Rs. 4,257 million (SDR 114 million) in 1987. The deterioration in the services account was entirely due to a sharp decline in tourist earnings. As against this, there were several favourable developments in the services account. The port, transportation and insurance category which had been in deficit in the previous two years produced a surplus of SDR 8 million in 1987 due to increased receipts from the port and a reduction in charter fees and foreign payments for fuel by Air Lanka. In addition, the deficits in investment income, government expenditure and miscellaneous categories declined in 1987.

INTEREST PAYMENT

Interest and other service charges on foreign loans including those on IMF credits amounted to Rs. 5,929 million (SDR 156 million) in 1987, as compared with Rs. 5,248 million (SDR 159 million) in the previous year. The reduction in interest rates in international markets and the appreciation of the SDR were the major reasons for this decline in interest payments reflected in SDR terms. Interest payments accounted for 38.0 per cent of the total service payments and continued to exert heavy pressure on the balance of payments. Interest receipts consisting largely investment goods and a substantial reduction in defence related imports. Among the major imports

rice, wheat grain and fertilizer of returns on portfolio investments of the Central Bank amounted to Rs. 2,041 million (SDR 53 million), as compared with Rs. 1,878 million (SDR 58 million) in the previous year. The decline in SDR terms was attributable largely to a reduction in the level of such investments. In 1987, foreign exchange outflow in the form of repatriation of profits and dividends was lower than in the previous year.

The most disappointing development in the services account was the large drop in receipts from tourism. Net foreign exchange earnings on account of travel became zero in 1987. In an uncertain climate, the inflow of

tourist traffic declined by 20.6 per cent in 1987 and receipts from tourism dropped from Rs. 2,326 million (SDR 71 million) in 1986 to Rs. 1,813 million (SDR 48 million) in 1987, recording a decrease of 32.0 per cent in SDR terms.

In 1987, foreign exchange inflow on account of private remittances showed a marginal decrease in SDR terms but recorded an increase of 16.0 per cent in rupee terms. The gross inflow of private remittances amounted to Rs. 10,255 million (SDR 268 million) as compared with Rs. 8,873 million (SDR 269 million) in 1986. Official transfers, consisting of project and commodity aid decreased from SDR 153 million in 1986 to SDR 130 in 1987.

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Gandhi's moves on the 'Southern front'

It is not for nothing that the A. I. C. C. chose Kamaraj Nagar, Madras for its National Convention, held late last month. Tamilnadu has been under Presidential rule since the death of MGR, the state's charismatic Chief Minister, close Rajiv ally and the key political underwriter of the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord. In answer to persistent Opposition questions in Parliament, the government hinted that polls will be held in June.

When pressmen put the question to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at the end of the AICC sessions, Mr. Gandhi was reported to have turned to Governor P.C. Alexander and said, "You should seek the

answer from Dr. Alexander". Later when journalist did so, Dr. Alexander one of India's veteran civil servants, smiled as he replied "You should not have let off the Prime Minister. . . you know very well that the decision will be taken by the Elections Commissioner".

The Conference resolution duly hailed the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord but the political line of the Congress was clearly drawn by the chairman of the reception committee, the party boss of the state, Mr. G. K. Moopanar. "Regionalism" he said was the nation's principal foe. While the Congress was preoccupied with the task of

nation-building, it had ignored the insidious encroachment made by regional forces. We have lost battles in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Yet the Congress will never be vanquished".

Since Tamilnadu and Dravidian nationalism posed a major challenge to the Congress in the first post-independence phase, the "anti-Dravidian stance" was noted as significant by a news analyst of the *Deccan Herald*, published in the neighbouring state of Karnataka. Here is an excerpt from his report on what the Congress is up to, and another extract from a joint report by four *Indian Today* correspondents covering the South.

Cong (I) chances bleak

V. M. Badola

MADRAS

After three days of what the Congress (I) believed was a "massive show of people's love for party," the general reaction of the common man here has been that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is no nearer to capturing power in Tamil Nadu than he was one year ago.

The recently-concluded AICC(I) session at Marimalai Nagar will not only be remembered for its utter mismanagement, but also for the fact that a big party, claiming to be the "only saviour" of the people, betrayed an utter lack of grasp of the ground realities and a total disregard for the sensitivities of the people it wants to lure back into its fold.

It is common knowledge that Tamil Nadu was chosen as the venue of the session with an eye on the impending Assembly election. But if before the session the general belief was that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi would give an indication of the dates, of the poll, it became clear at the end that he had developed cold feet. Indications now are that despite the Govern-

ment's assurance earlier this month in Parliament that Tamil Nadu would go to the polls by June end, the State may continue to remain under President's Rule for quite some time now.

This became clearer on the last day of the session when Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in his concluding remarks suddenly chose to attack the "populist policies" of the late M. G. Ramachandran. The immediate reaction in both the AIADMKs was one of anger and dismay. If Mrs. Janaki Ramachandran chose to issue a public statement criticising Mr. Gandhi's remarks, the Jayalalitha camp was quick to point out that the Congress(I) was most likely trying to woo DMK leader Karunanidhi now.

A senior leader of the Jayalalitha faction told this correspondent angrily: "If giving mid-day meals to poor children and distribution of saris to poor women is populist, then what do you call the loan melas so shamelessly organised by the Congress? And, referring to the accusations that the MGR regime has been corrupt, the same leader reported: "Let Rajiv look back to what his mother said,

After all, she used to say that corruption was a global phenomenon".

ANTI-REGIONALISM: The tone for taking an anti-Dravidian stance was set by Mr. Moopanar when in his welcome address he assured Mr. Gandhi that the supremacy of the Dravida parties in Tamil Nadu was "only a passing phase", adding that the "clouds which seem to darken the Southern sky will soon disappear". Therefore, more than anywhere else in India, he said, "It is in the South that the Congress must launch a mighty onslaught on the forces of regionalism."

And how could this be done? Most young men and women had strayed into these regional parties, Mr. Moopanar said "because they find the doors of the Congress are mysteriously closed to them". The door must be thrown open to bring them to the mainstream because "more than any other part of India, it is the South which is alive to the grave dangers of regionalism."

It would, therefore, appear almost certain that Mr. Gandhi, after initial hesitation, has agreed

with Mr. Moopanar's perception. But the most important question is: Can the Congress (I) go it alone in Tamil Nadu? After losing power in the State, the Congress has never fought elections here without joining the bandwagon of either the DMK or the AI-ADMK. The only exception was 1977 which was a disaster for the party.

It is here that the suspicion among the AI-ADMK leadership about the Congress making up with Mr. Karunanidhi assumes significance. Some senior Congress (I) leaders did not rule out the possibility of Mr. Gandhi deciding to hand over the State to the DMK with the proviso that Mr. Karunanidhi will not stake his claim to the Lok Sabha seats. But, then, these Congress (I) leaders were also quick to point out that "this is only an idea" and that no serious exercises had been conducted in this regard so far.

(Deccan Herald)

'INDIA TODAY' reports:-

The battle plans have been finalised and the generals allotted their commands. J. Vengala Rao in Andhra Pradesh Janardhan Poojary in Karnataka; G. K. Moopanar in Tamil Nadu. Now, all that remains is for the foot soldiers to be whipped into shape before the siege of the south is launched in earnest.

In preparing the ground for that ultimate — and ambitious — objective, the Congress (I) commander-in-chief Rajiv Gandhi has followed the classic manuals of war. The campaigns already launched against the most formidable rival commanders, N. T. Rama Rao, Ramakrishna Hegde, are designed to keep them off balance, dilute their personal image and sow the seeds of disunity within the ranks.

And like any good general, Rajiv has worked out the basic elements of his battle strategy within a given time frame and with clear-cut instructions to his generals in the field. These include:

- ▷ Rake up corruption charges against the chief ministers.
- ▷ Organise rallies in the districts which will be addressed by Central leaders.
- ▷ Try to create divisions within the local ruling parties.
- ▷ Use the governor's office extensively to keep the chief ministers on a tight leash.
- ▷ Use Central funds freely to promote the party's interests in the south.
- ▷ Deploy the official media — especially Doordarshan — to the Party's advantage.

The basic idea behind all this to keep the chief ministers confined to their state capitals so that they are unable to link up effectively with opposition forces in other states. That fits in with another aspect of the plan; Rajiv will visit at least one southern state each month.

If there is one state in which the Congress (I) seriously entertains hopes of coming to power soon, it is Tamil Nadu, where it has been out of the ruler's chair for over two decades. With former AICC (I) general secretary G. K. Moopanar now at the helm of affairs in Tamil Nadu, the party's hopes of success are on the rise.

Moopanar's resounding success at a public meeting in Tiruchi last fortnight has whetted the ambitions of his partymen down the line. Madras Doordarshan played up the public response to Moopanar, who is being projected as the next chief minister.

The party leadership hopes to not only come back to power, but also do it alone — without riding piggyback on the Jayalalitha faction of the AIADMK. Says a TNCC (I) office-bearer: "Our party bosses are convinced that the Congress (I) can go it alone and yet emerge with a convincing victory in the polls."

The party is consciously creating the impression — via Governor P. C. Alexander — that the Centre can provide a good administration. Alexander set the tone soon after taking over: "I am identifying the

weaknesses in civic planning and will improve performance after assessing the problems." He made some grand promises too: relating to providing drinking water, street lighting, and a health campaign. Said he: "I am motivating the civil service for higher levels of performance. I want to make people believe that this is not a bureaucratic rule."

Under President's Rule, the state Government has announced a 50 per cent increase in the stipends and scholarships for students of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The governor is also ensuring that each family gets 12 kg of ration rice a month. Last fortnight, the police undertook a surprise inspection of fair price shops across the state and detected 49 of them short-changing customers. The Centre has also increased the monthly allotment of rice to Tamil Nadu from 50,000 to 80,000 tonnes.

That the governor is well aware of Congress (I) interests is apparent. Soon after Moopanar arrived in Madras to take over as president of the party's state unit, he handed over a detailed memorandum to Alexander. He urged a relaxation in action against farmers for non-payment of land revenue and electricity arrears. The governor promptly complied.

But DMK President M. Karunanidhi is critical of what he sees as a hand in glove operation. He points out for instance, that the Centre has since long stalled appeals from Madras asking for a tribunal to settle the Cauvery waters dispute. "Now when New Delhi's agent, Governor Alexander, has made the request for the tribunal, the Centre has acceded. These are all Congress (I) rehearsals for the Assembly elections," he says.

Apart from Moopanar, Union Minister of State for Home, P. Chidambaram, has also been spending his weekends in Tamil Nadu to help out in party work. Says he optimistically: "We will ultimately come to power in Tamil Nadu." For the first time after years, Congressmen are beginning to believe in that with some conviction.

Benazir on Indo-Pak issues, democracy, and Afghan accord

WASHINGTON,

Pending issues between India and Pakistan over the nuclear question and Islamabad's support to Sikh extremists, among other things, should be resolved through bilateral talks, the Pakistan People's Party leader, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, has said.

"I am concerned that after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the tension between India and Pakistan should not increase," she said addressing a news conference at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Centre.

Two new elements have been added to the "traditional question" of Jammu and Kashmir in the last 10 years, Ms. Benazir said. These concerned an Indian apprehension that Pakistani was aiding the Sikh terrorists and a Pakistani apprehension that India continued to take territory in the Siachen Glacier area. "I think it is very important to reduce these tensions," Ms. Benazir said.

Expressing the hope that the reports of Islamabad assisting the

Sikhs should not be true, she said the image of Pakistan in India is however "harming" to her country. On the nuclear issue, she agreed with a questioner that even if Pakistan unilaterally signed the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), as insisted upon by the West, suspicions would not go away. The best course is for both India and Pakistan to resolve the issue through diplomacy.

The purpose of her visit is to impress upon Washington that it should not allow U. S. interests in Pakistan and its concern for restoring democracy in that country to wane after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. "Many in Pakistan fear that after the Soviet withdrawal the democratic process initiated in Pakistan could well be aborted."

Another purpose is to remind the U. S. that the Opposition parties in Pakistan did not take part in the 1985 elections. In the recent elections to the local bodies "we found (that the)

Inherent fraud, and weightage towards the ruling regime were of such a nature that it was impossible for the Opposition to score a victory." As much as 40 per cent of the Opposition nominations were rejected, with the result they contested only in 60 per cent of the seats.

Asked about the political scenario in Pakistan "after Gen. Zia stepped down from office" in 1989, Ms Benazir said in the first place, Gen. Zia has not said that he would step down. If he remained in office after 1989, it would make the transition to "full democracy" more difficult.

She also held out the possibility of a political vacuum in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal. Local commanders could take the situation in their own hands and there could be a civil war or possibilities of a fragmentation. It is in everyone's interest not to let this happen. All parties should cooperate with the U. N. Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, in reaching an agreement on forming a coalition government in Afghanistan.

Afghan pact should end arms flow: RV

NEW DELHI, May 4.

India and Afghanistan today expressed confidence that the Geneva accord would help bring peace and stability to South Asia and free the region from outside interference.

At a banquet held in honour of visiting Afghan President Najibullah, President R. Venkataraman hoped that this "historic" development would remove the excuse for induction of sophisticated weapons into the region, particularly the supply of lethal weapons to Pakistan, which could be used against India.

Mr. Venkataraman assured his Afghan guest that India was prepared to stand shoulder-to-shoulder "with our brothers in

Afghanistan to help them in every possible manner within our modest means" in the task of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

India, Mr. Venkataraman said, had been deeply affected by the developments in Afghanistan in the last several years.

He said it was for the Afghan people themselves to determine their destiny, free from all foreign intervention. He supported Dr. Najibullah's offer to the rebels to form a broad-based coalition Government.

He said a strong, stable and non-aligned Afghanistan could only emerge if the Geneva accord was properly implemented and the process of national unity

and consolidation carried out by the Afghan people.

Mr. Venkataraman was confident that the Afghans would show the requisite maturity, courage and political wisdom to bring about a genuine consensus within the country.

Calling India and the Soviet Union "true friends" of Afghanistan, Dr. Najibullah said his Government was ready, without pre-condition, to call upon all Opposition, whether in Pakistan or in any other part of the world, "to attend the forthcoming nation-wide 'Jirgah,' an assembly of distinguished citizens, to be convened to decide the the future Governmental set up in the country.

(Continued on page 13)

Why Rabin was silent on Sri Lanka

Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (Haifa Univ.)

By 1983, a full-scale guerrilla war had broken out. The Sri Lankan government asked Britain and the United States for help; however, they did not want to be directly involved in an ethnic conflict. When the Sri Lankan asked the United States for counterinsurgency advisers, it refused again, but turned the matter over to the Israeli government.

Israel was the only country that did not hesitate. The decision was made by David Kimche, director-general of the Foreign Ministry and former Mossad deputy chief. An Associated Press correspondent reported that National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali said that the Sri Lankan army was being trained by SHABAK advisers in counterinsurgency activities. Athulathmudali also said, "Our men say that they never had such good training. Every state is entitled to the best it can get." As of August 1984, there were reportedly up to six domestic intelligence experts from Israel working with the government to develop a new intelligence network against the Tamils. Douglas Liyanage, secretary of the Sri Lanka State Ministry — who had been accused in 1961 of leading an abortive military coup, had barely escaped conviction, and had languished in political oblivion until 1979, when he joined the government — visited Israel in August 1984, publicly lauded relations with Israel, and met with Kimche. Liyanage's visit and his statements caused uproar in Sri Lanka, and on his return to Colombo he was forced to resign.

(The author, an Israeli scholar worked on a grant by the American Middle East Researcher Center at Columbia Univ. This is an excerpt from his new book "The Israeli Connection").

The conflict with the Tamils has led the Sri Lankan government to purchase armaments from the United States, Israel, South Africa, Britain, Italy, Pakistan, and China. Six patrol boats were ordered from Israel to control the sea lanes between India and Sri Lanka. The question of a deal between Israel and Sri Lanka for the sale of these boats was raised in the Knesset by Matityahu Peled, who on May 27, 1985, asked whether reports about the deal were true, and whether Israeli instructors would be sent to Sri Lanka. Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin refused to answer the question, stating that it would be harmful to state security.

In return for its help, Israel was allowed to open an Interests section in the American embassy in Colombo in the summer of 1984 — the first time the United States had acted in such a capacity for Israel. The official announcement in Colombo mentioned an Israeli-interests section not only in the U.S. embassy, but under "American auspices." The Israeli-interests section was headed by David Matnai, a specialist on Asian affairs who was identified by British sources as a Mossad agent. On June 28, 1984, a bomb was detonated near his room in a Colombo hotel, killing one woman. The renewed contacts between Israel and Sri Lanka also brought about expressions of opposition from Moslem groups, as well as from the left-wing Freedom Party, headed by Anura Bandaranayake, son of the leader who had broken off relations with Israel in August 1970.

The case of Sri Lanka is one example of Israeli involvement in the Third World that was instigated by the United States. Without the United States, Israel would never have gotten involved with aiding the Sri Lankan government in its struggle against the Tamil minority. The operation was run by the Mossad, while the actual men in the field were on loan from the SHABAK. An Israeli journalist provides us with the only public justification for this involvement: the Tamil insurgency is the result of Marxist incitement, and therefore it is clear that Israel should oppose it.

Lebanon of South Asia

The matter of Israeli aid to the Sri Lanka government's suppression of the Tamils was raised in the Knesset by Matityahu Peled on October 23, 1984. Prime Minister Shimon Peres answered the parliamentary question on January 22, 1985, denying any Israeli involvement. In the fall of 1985, there was a secret meeting between Sri Lankan president Junius Jayewardene and Prime Minister Shimon Peres, during a visit by the latter to Paris. After Peres told of the meeting during a Knesset debate, the Sri Lankan government decided to suspend further official contacts. In any event, this renewal of contacts with an Asian country was not a complete success. The help received by the Sri Lankan government has not enabled it to subdue the insurgents. If anything, it seems that since Israel became involved in 1984, things have become bloodier and less hopeful. Sri Lanka has now earned the frightening nickname of the "Lebanon of South Asia."

Trouble-shooter Walters paves the way for Mossad

Jane Hunter

In its approach to India and Sri Lanka, Israel is tripping over its own feet. The Israeli government gives every appearance of wanting normal relations with India, but a particularly nasty spy incident and Tel Aviv's support of the Sri Lanka government's vicious war against Tamil separatists would seem to rule out that prospect.

Moreover, the branch of the Israeli government that markets counterinsurgency consulting will surely not want to use the Sri Lanka experience in its promotional material. Stories of the four Sri Lankas—a navy lieutenant, two soldiers and a police commando—who went to Israel to be fitted with artificial limbs makes good reading for the home audience, but since Israeli advisers began helping the Sri Lanka military in mid 1984, their client's fortunes have gone from bad to worse.

1983 RIOTS

The conflict in the island nation which lies off Southern India and was formerly known as Ceylon, was kindled by a 1983 pogrom conducted by the Sinhalese majority against the Tamil minority. Originally from India, the Tamils, who comprise 18% of the population of 15 million are mostly Hindu, but among them are also Christians. The 1983 attack on Tamil civilians was set off by an attack by Tamil guerrillas on the predominantly Sinhalese army.

In 1984, after attempts by the Tamil United Liberation Front, a moderate political formation willing to accept a compromise short of the independent nation in the north and east called Tamil Eelam envisioned by the separatists, to negotiate partial autonomy with the government

broke down the longstanding enmity blazed into civil war,

The government of President J. R. Jayewardene went running to Washington, London, and Bonn, for help. Not wanting to anger India—50 million Tamils live in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu and have been a source of unofficial support for the Tamils—the Reagan Administration declined—as did Britain and West Germany—to give direct aid. But it did smooth the way for Israel to render assistance.

In May 1984 the US allowed Israel to establish an interest section under the aegis of the US Embassy in the capital city Colombo. Israel opened an office near the embassy and sent a senior diplomat, David Matndi, to head it. It would soon be reported that Matndi was an agent of Mossad, and that he coordinated the training program Israel provided Sri Lanka. The report took on added credence when Matndi was transferred after only four months.

GENERAL WALTERS

Along with the British M15, Israel's Mossad secret service had trained the intelligence officers of Jayewardene's predecessor.

Although it is often difficult to determine whether Israel becomes embroiled in someone else's war for its own motives or on behalf of the US, in this instance Israel's presence was quite clearly as a US proxy. The arrival in December 1984 of Gen. Vernon Walters in Sri Lanka underscored the continuing US interest in the situation there. Walters, a former CIA officer and President Reagan's favorite "troubleshooter" until he became US ambassador to the UN in 1985, met with President Jayewardene and security minister Lalith Achulathudali.

The Jerusalem Post said it was the first time that Israel had carried out diplomatic functions from a US embassy, that Israel normally works out of a European embassy in those countries which do not recognize it. Sri Lanka broke relations with Israel in 1970.

The Israelis, as is their practice, never admitted anything about the military side of their activities. In announcing the partial restoration of diplomatic ties the Israeli government radio said that "Israel is aiding Sri Lanka in the agricultural area, among others." The radio noted a report in the Indian paper The Daily Sun saying that Sri Lanka had sought the help of Israeli intelligence services in fighting the Tamils.

A Sri Lanka official visiting Israel asserted that it was mainly because Israel was aiding its counterinsurgency efforts that his government had restored limited diplomatic ties.

MOSSAD AND SHINBETH

It has never been clear how many Israeli agencies were involved and exactly what the Israelis were assigned to do in Sri Lanka. In addition to Mossad, the mention has been made of Israel's internal security service Shin Bet. In August 1984 Sri Lanka's security minister Achulathudali said Shin Bet was giving training in intelligence gathering, handling explosives and commando operation. Colombo confirmed that it was Israel's internal security service that was involved in Sri Lanka and that two Israelis had trained the police in intelligence gathering.

Speaking in Copenhagen in June 1984 Sri Lanka's foreign minister A. C. S. Hameed said that Mossad would train a special counterinsurgency corps. In July President Jayewardene said that Israeli antiterrorist expertise would be used to assist his security forces in operations against extremists

from the minority Tamil community. The next day Israeli radio reported that Jayewardene intended to ask "Israeli experts to collect intelligence information on the Tamil terrorists". Jayewardene, the radio said, also "confirmed having commissioned mercenaries from Great Britain." Pakistani help to the government has also been reported.

This spring there was a report that India had protested the use of "foreign pilots" in helicopter gunship attacks on Tamil bases. Security minister Athulathmudali said that about 10 Israeli agents had trained 100 Sri Lankans over a period of two months. Athulathmudali said, "They come in batches and give a course. They do not go out of the classroom."

Several thousand refugees from shelling by the Sri Lankan navy have fled to a camp on the northern coast, as the Government continues its operation, staged with the help of Israeli secret service advisers, to clean up the bases of Tamil militants reported *The Guardian*. The British paper went on to note that Mossad consultants had been training Sri Lanka's security forces since May and that the Tamil radio station had asserted that the military was blocking wounded Tamils from access to medical treatment.

Ties to Israel Criticized

In addition to stiff protests from the small Muslim minority in Sri Lanka. There have been well modulated expressions of disappointment with Colombo from abroad. The Arab League vowed to work for the reversal of Sri Lanka's decision. PLO chairman Yasir Arafat dropped the island from the itinerary of an Asian tour he made in the summer of 1984, a move said to signify disapproval of Sri Lanka's links with Israel.

But when Ceylonese workers in the Gulf States — about 100,000 by one estimate — began to worry that they would be the object of retaliatory moves, officials in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia denied there would be expulsions or other restrictions imposed on the expatriates.

On July 9, 1985 the Jerusalem Post quoted sources in Sri Lanka to the effect that, with Canada and Saudi Arabia putting a giant river diversion program on hold due to Saudi objections to the Israeli presence, Sri Lanka might be preparing to turn its back on Israel. Israeli training having been received, went the reasoning, according to this account, the purpose for renewing limited ties with Israel had been served. That report appears to have been in error.

A ban on trade with Israel that had been in effect since the diplomatic rupture in 1970 was lifted that same month and in August 1985 Colombo announced the resumption of commercial ties. Israel has begun to buy coconut and regularly takes 5% of Sri Lanka's tea, the country's principal export.

Last October Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres had a secret meeting in Paris with President Jayewardene, who asked that Israeli agricultural aid — three development advisers were sent to Sri Lanka upon the opening of the Israeli Interest section and Ceylonese students have visited an Israeli kibbutz — be continued, but refused Peres request for full diplomatic ties.

Patrol Boats from Israel

Last summer as the government began acquiring more sophisticated weapons — gunboats, helicopters, armored personnel carriers and rifles came from China, Belgium, Britain, Pakistan, South Africa, and the US — Israel sold Colombo six patrol boats. But the army acquiring this hardware was as a *New York Times* headline expressed it, "Increasingly undisciplined." Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of torture.

The war has become bloodier. Whereas two years ago there were scattered bands of guerrillas and intermittent massacres of civilians by the army, now there is a full blown civil war, the daily death toll mounting as the government bombs civilian areas and carries out mass evacuations of Tamils, 20,000 in one instance.

And the government seems to be losing. The Tamils now control about a third of the country. The predominantly Tamil Jaffna peninsula in the north and a good part of the eastern edge of the island are liberated zones, where government forces are limited to occasional forays. Tamil forces, operating in at least a dozen separate organizations, have also developed a support structure in India's Tamil Nadu state. Sri Lanka's economy is devastated.

Pakistan's Role

Sri Lanka might be getting what its security minister has termed "the world's best consultants to help eliminate terrorism in this country, but it is doubtful that Israel has profited greatly especially in its relations with India, the dominant government in the region and a giant on the international scene. Those appear to have deteriorated markedly.

The downslide began from around zero, where relations had been since India expelled the Israeli consul from Bombay, the Jewish state's only diplomatic representation in the country; that occurred during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, when the consul charged India with subservience to Arab governments.

India has been trying to act as mediator between the Tamil organizations and the government of Sri Lanka. Prime minister Rajiv Gandhi is supporting a negotiated autonomy for the Tamils that stops short of partition. But he has been appalled at the "mass killings" of Tamils by the Sri Lanka military. Gandhi recently told the Indian parliament that Israel and Pakistan were working "hand-in-hand" to help the government in Sri Lanka, remarking that "politics make strange bedfellows."

India's foreign minister said that India did not favor the stationing of UN peacekeeping forces between the warring parties because of opposition to the presence in Sri Lanka of foreign elements including Pakistan or Israel.

Set in the late 40's by India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru—he regarded the new state of Israel as a reincarnation of the British Imperial presence—India's policy has been to hold Israel at arm's length, while extending warm support to the Palestinian cause: India's small Jewish population attests it is treated with similar warmth.

Even though Israel responded to Nehru's urgent request for mortars when India was fighting China and Pakistan, after a begrudging *de jure* recognition in 1950, Nehru never allowed Israel more than the consulate in Bombay, a policy continued by his daughter Indira Gandhi, and following her assassination in 1984, his grandson, the present prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Last summer Rajiv Gandhi told *Le Monde* that India would only recognize Israel when "Israel changed her attitude on a number of subjects."

Spy for Israel Arrested

In February Ram Swaroop, a prominent member of a rightist political party, was arrested on charges having spied for the US, West Germany, Israel, and Taiwan since 1954. Two cabinet ministers and numerous leading politicians and journalists were linked to Swaroop's activities, which in addition to passing highly sensitive military and political secrets, included agitating for recognition of Israel, conducting anti-Soviet propaganda with American funds, and acting as Taiwans' unofficial ambassador. Swaroop was also head of the local branch of WACL, the ultra-right World Anti-Communist League.

In 1978 he arranged a secret visit for Israeli defense minister Moshe Dayan with Moraji Desai, who had briefly replaced Indira Gandhi as India's Prime minister. Desai's son was one of those linked to Swaroop's spy ring.

The former Israeli consul in Bombay told the *Jerusalem Post* that Swaroop had indeed set up meetings with Indian politicians for visiting Israelis and that he had been paid for his services

by the piece, rather than engaged on a retainer. Declaring the charges "fabrications," the Israeli foreign ministry said Israel had no intention of helping Swaroop.

Defending Swaroop, however, is Israel's biggest booster in India, attorney Ram Jethmalani. He was the prosecuting attorney who won a conviction for electoral malfeasance against the late Prime minister Indira Gandhi and her deceased son Sanjay in 1975.

Jethmalani apparently has taken over for Swaroop's first attorney P. N. Lekhi, who was barred by the government from appearing for Swaroop, after he was implicated in the case. Lekhi had defended Satwant Singh, one of the Sikh militants charged with the murder of Indira Gandhi.

Ties to Sikh Militants

There have been persistent reports, impossible to confirm, that Israel also has connections to some Sikh militants. Recently the Mexican government arrested 29 Indians, "presumably linked to the assassination of Indira Gandhi," According to Agence France-Presse. The agency said it had been told by Jose Jimenez, an Immigration official, that when apprehended in Oaxaca the 29 had been on their way to the US to seek asylum. They had entered Mexico through Panama and Guatemala. Jimenez said Both of the latter are countries where Israel has strong connections with the national military institutions.

"Israel knows India is in a tight spot with the Sikhs," said a journalist familiar with South Asian affairs, "and is simply using the Sikhs as leverage." Several other analysts of Indian affairs did not find the notion farfetched that Israel would enjoy the sight of the world's largest democracy losing its footing, even if only momentarily. India's participation in the nonaligned movement has greatly enhanced the status of the grouping of 101 nations, which has been steadfast champion of the Palestinian cause.

(Israeli Foreign Affairs, — May 1986)

Afghan pact...

(Continued from page 9)

He expressed confidence that the war-stricken people of Afghanistan would support his constructive initiative.

Earlier in the afternoon, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Dr. Najibullah began the first round of their discussions on the newly-emerging situation of Afghanistan following the Geneva accord.

While delegations of the two countries held separate meetings the two leaders were closeted for more than 150 minutes without aides. No official word was available on the exact nature of the talks but they are understood to have centred around the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan beginning on May 15 and the overall security environment of the region.

PAK STANCE

Before going into discussions with Dr. Najibullah, Mr. Gandhi is understood to have been briefed by Foreign Secretary K. P. S. Menon on his talks in Pakistan from where he returned earlier in the day.

Mr. Gandhi and Dr. Najibullah are scheduled to hold another round of talks tomorrow or the day after.

It is learnt that the two leaders reviewed in detail the possible Pakistani stance in the wake of the accord and the Soviet withdrawal, besides the dangers posed to the region by the acquisition of sophisticated US arms by the military regime in Islamabad.

Although Foreign Secretary Menon had told newsmen on arrival here from Pakistan that his talks had gone "very well" in Islamabad, there was considerable dismay here from Pakistan's assertion that India's invitation to Dr. Najibullah was "unfortunate." Foreign office sources, however, refused to react to this statement.

Both Afghanistan and India appeared determined to make a success of the Geneva accord and pledged support for each other for solving pressing regional problems.

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Israel uses toxic gas

Vienna (Reuter)

Israeli soldiers have used new and highly toxic gases against demonstrators in Gaza and the West Bank, a United Nations doctor who returned from the the region recently said.

Dr John Hiddlestone, director of health of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, said at least two Palestinian youths had died after being sprayed, and in two camps he was told that 60 women had miscarriages after being affected by gas.

He said Israeli troops were using the new gases in addition to normal tear gas to quell Palestinian riots in Gaza and the West Bank. One kind of gas caused severe abdominal pain and another immobilized its victims by weakening muscles when inhaled.

In one incident he alleged that two young men were beaten and an aerosol was sprayed into the room. "The room was then shut and after an hour or so two bodies were removed."

He said samples of the spray, which formed a reddish powder on the walls, had been sent to the International Red Cross for analysis. "We have not yet had the results of that analysis but it looked as though these were some very toxic nerve gas," he added.

Dr Hiddlestone also described injuries he said were a result of beatings of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers using batons made of iron covered with plastic.

"They hit the cheekbones, causing the eye to come out," he said. "There was such a degree of accuracy that they must have had training for this particular blow."

In Tel Aviv, military officials acknowledged that people with

health complications could be harmed by the tear gas, but strongly denied it would be harmful under normal circumstances. But an official said: "I believe that a tremendous amount of tear gas, for someone with a heart problem, might have a poor effect."

Of the baton accusations, he said: "Metal rods wrapped in plastic are not standard practice."

Gaza's Shifa hospital said yesterday that a 70-year-old Palestinian woman from a refugee camp died after inhaling tear gas the previous day.

Relief agency sources said that 3,252 Palestinians had been injured in clashes with Israeli security forces since last December.

World Court ruling on PLO mission

THE HAGUE

The World Court ruled against the United States' attempt to unilaterally shut down the Palestine Liberation Organisation's mission in New York.

The ruling implicitly condemned the US move to close the PLO mission to the United Nations by supporting the UN position that the dispute must be submitted to independent arbitration.

"The court unanimously is of the opinion that the United States of America as a party to the Headquarters Agreement of June 26 1974 is under an obligation... to enter into arbitration of the dispute between the United States of America and the United Nations, said the ruling by the 15 judges of the court, the judicial arm of the United Nations.

The tear gas canister

Donald E. Wagner

On 9 February 1988, I visited Dohaisha refugee camp near Bethlehem in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. A nine-year-old boy, who had narrowly escaped being kidnapped by militant Israeli settlers near his home the previous day, brought me a used tear gas canister which had been shot into Dohaisha during the weekend.

I was then taken to the home of a young mother of 24 who was seven months pregnant until 9 February 1988. A tear gas canister was shot into her home during the dinner hour. The next day she lost her baby. We walked up to the house to pay a condolence visit and her sister said: 'She is not here. She had to go to the hospital this morning for an operation.'

The tear gas canister was a silver cylinder, approximately one and a half inches in width and six inches in length. As I examined it, a fine black powder fell from the three holes at its base. I could feel the powder affect my eyes and sting a cut on my face.

Written on the canister was the following text: 'Mk. 11,560 CS' in bold letters. Immediately below was written '150-yard long Range Projectile', followed by the emblem of Federal Laboratories (a knight in armour clutching a spear). Below the emblem, in smaller letters were the following instructions: 'To be used by trained personnel only. WARNING: May start fires. Must not be fired directly at persons as death or injury may result. For outdoor use only. FEDERAL LABORATORIES, INC. Saltzburg, Pennsylvania 15681, USA. The concluding line on the canister was equally instructive: 'Made in the USA 123456789 MFG 1988.'

The Killing of Abu Jihad

April — three days before the raid.

Three Labour Ministers in the national unity coalition with the Likud Party expressed reservations from the start. They were Shimon Peres, the Labour Party leader, Foreign Minister Ezer Weizman, the former RAF trained airforce commander who is now one of Israel's foremost doves, and Yitzhak Navon, the Education Minister. Two other Labour members of the 10-man inner-cabinet supported the raid. They were Yitzhak Rabin, the Defence Minister, and Haim Bar-Lev, the Police Minister. Both of them have served as chiefs-of-staff.

Critics of the plan are understood to have pointed out the damage done to Israel's image abroad after assassination teams were unleashed against Palestinian targets in Europe following the September 1972 massacre of 11 kidnapped Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. Under the code-name, Wrath of God, these teams bombed and shot their way across Europe, killing one man in Paris with a bomb that was activated by calling him on the telephone. But in July 1973 the WOG teams came to grief in Norway, a good friend of Israel's, when four of them were picked up at Oslo airport after they had murdered a Moroccan disc jockey in the small town of Lillehammer. They all escaped with short prison sentences but it marked the end of the WOG teams.

Israel's decision to return to a policy of selective assassinations, especially if they involve the kind of hutzpah the world applauded at Entebbe, is seen as an attempt to restore the deterrent effect of the Israel military.

The four-month Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories has fostered notions of Israeli

**Special report by COLIN SMITH in London,
ERIC SILVER in Jerusalem,
and MIKE THEODOULOU in Nicosia**

vulnerability. This began before the uprising when the Palestinians suddenly became the military athletes on the world stage when a lone hang-glider pilot penetrated northern Israel and killed six soldiers.

Generals and politicians have taken every opportunity to remind the Arabs that the army's main job is to defend the borders and fight an enemy more lethal than teenaged boys armed with catapults and molotov cocktails. Whenever a terror squad is intercepted the soldiers are lavishly praised for their professionalism and dedication. Two generals believed to have been involved in planning the Abu Jihad assassination took part as young officers in the Israeli raid on Beirut on 10 April 1973 in which three PLO leaders and at least one innocent Lebanese woman were killed. They are Major General Ehud Barak, Israel's most decorated soldier who is now Deputy Chief of Staff, and Major General Amnon Shahak, now chief of military intelligence.

Dressed in drag

A third officer who took part in the 1973 raid, Shmuel Pressburger, said this weekend: 'From what I read in the newspapers the raid in Tunisia was very similar to the operation in Beirut. The fact that cars were found by the beach having apparently brought the commandos to and from their target is similar to what happened there.'

Three Mossad agents travelling on false Lebanese passports flew into Tunisia and hired the two transit buses and the car used in the raid. These were later found abandoned on a secluded beach where an Israeli missile boat is thought to have ferried ashore between 30 and 40 commandos in rubber dinghies. These

men belonged to a unit called Sayaret Matkal, which means 'reconnaissance party of the General Staff.'

Out to sea was an Israeli Boeing 707 packed with electronic counter-measures which were capable of blocking all telephone calls and radio messages from Abu Jihad's villa. The aircraft was on Flight Path Blue 21, the normal commercial route between Sicily and Tunis, which comes under Italian flight control. The actual hit squad seems to have consisted of nine people. The veteran Pressburger, who is running for Mayor of Jerusalem on the right-wing Likud ticket, was intrigued by reports from Tunis that a woman was seen among the killers just as there had been after the Beirut raid.

Last week he revealed in an interview with a local weekly paper that on that occasion the woman was none other than his comrade, Ehud Barak, who had dressed in drag while making a final reconnaissance. In Tunis the commandos, using what appears to have been silenced sub-machine guns, shot his two Palestinian bodyguards and a messenger who regularly stayed overnight before proceeding to the first floor. Here Abu Jihad (the name literally means Father Holy War) emerged from his study and stepped into Palestinian legend with a pistol in his hand. He is said to have been hit almost 100 times from the Israelis' automatic weapons.

His wife Intissar, mother of five, then appeared with their teenaged daughter. Intissar saw her husband lying in a pool of blood and, thinking her last moment had come as well, turned her face to the wall to await the executioner's bullet. Instead,

(Continued on page 22)

Iran-Contragate: What You'll Never See in the Establishment Media

Douglas Allen

Many Citizens in the United States believe that we get the best politicians that money can buy. But is it really possible that the dollar has become so devalued? Some commentators attack voter apathy, but looking at the televised hearings of the Iran-Contra Congressional Committee in 1987 made one realize that such apathy at least partially reflects good common sense.

What follows are four major lessons of Iran-Contragate, lessons that will never be seen in the establishment media, the sole sources of information on Iran-Contragate for at least 90 percent of the U.S. public. We shall focus on the Contras, since the committee was not willing to defend the Reagan Administration's sale of arms to Iran. Nevertheless, at least our second, third, and fourth lessons apply as well to Iran as to the Contras.

The Biased Composition of the Committee

Much of our disappointment can be related to the extremely conservative nature of the committee. The Republicans, as one would expect, loaded the committee with rightwing ideologues, who used the hearings to protect President Reagan, lobby for the Contras, and attack the hearings themselves.

Perhaps most revealing on the Republican side is the record of the two Republican committee members most attacked by the rightwing for betraying Reagan and being too critical of the administration's Iran-Contra policies. The media even described Senator Warren Rudman of New

Hampshire and Senator William Cohen of Maine as the "moderate" and more "liberal" Republicans. When it comes to his voting record on aid to the Contras, the military budget, and a large number of other military and foreign policy issues, Rudman has a liberal score of 0%; he voted with the Reagan administration 100% of the time. Cohen is not quite so predictable: he voted conservative only 85% of the time, including aid to the Contras. So much for the myth of moderate Republicans.

The Democrats, probably to guard themselves against the predictable rightwing charge that they are unpatriotic, i.e. "soft on communism," loaded the committee with many conservative Democrats, such as Nunn, Heflin and Boren. None of the forceful leading critics of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua were on the committee.

Perhaps most revealing on the Democratic side was the highlight of the hearings for many critics of Reagan's Iran-Contra policies: the dramatic and "courageous" speech given by Senator George Mitchell of Maine when he lectured Oliver North. What did Mitchell say? The fact that I may disagree with you on the issue of aid to the Contras does not mean that I love my country less or love my God less than you do. Mitchell reassured us that he was not arguing that his position was more adequate than North's he was simply expressing a different point of view. The fact that one even needed to make such a case for minimal tolerance and against fanaticism, and that such a defense was praised as remarkable, says much about the dangerously biased nature of the hearings.

The biased composition of the Iran-Contra Committee is clear from the figures: while two-thirds to three-fourths of the U.S. public opposes aid to the Contras,

two-thirds (17 of 26) of the committee members have supported Contra aid.

Lesson I: McCarthyism Is Alive and Sick

Throughout the hearings, one observed the legacy of McCarthyism rearing its ugly and dangerous head; blind, falsely-patriotic anti-Communism, alarming and dominant, often bordered on what in other societies we would label fascism.

One illustration will suffice: three months of endless rightwing speeches and hundreds of references to the Contras as "our Nicaraguan freedom fighters." This was a perfect illustration of the Big Lie. One of the saddest moments in the hearings occurred when Senator Daniel Inouye, an opponent of aid to the Contras, became so defensive that he blurted out that he opposed aid to "our freedom fighters." As one critic observed, the liberals just sat there like warts on a pickle.

No committee member dared to challenge the months of lobbying for "our Nicaraguan freedom fighters". No member spoke of "our Nicaraguan puppets," even though the Contras are largely a U.S.-created and maintained counter-revolutionary force. No member spoke of "our Nicaraguan terrorists," even though the Contras direct most of their military effort toward terrorizing the civilian population. No member spoke of "our Nicaraguan fascists," even though the overwhelming majority of the Contra military leaders were part of Somoza's fascist National Guard. No member spoke of "our Nicaraguan baby-killers," even though 42% of Nicaraguans killed by the Contras have been children. No member spoke of "our Nicaraguan rapists and torturers," even though widespread rape and torture by the Contras have been documented

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by international humanitarian organizations.

To speak of our Nicaraguan puppets, terrorists, fascists, baby-killers, rapists and torturers would, of course, be tantamount to political suicide. Through the continuing poisonous legacy of McCarthyism, such fabricated anti-communist "freedom fighters", became the dominant theme of the hearings.

Lesson 2:

An Exercise in Damage Control

The Iran-Contra hearings were basically an exercise in damage control, more of an avoidance than a serious attempt at getting at the truth. As with the Vietnam War and Watergate, the unsuccessful U.S. policies, in this case directed toward Nicaragua, had led to disastrous consequences which threatened to bring about a historical and structural change of power. Similarly, unsuccessful U.S. policies toward Iran, from Washington's support of the Shah through the disasters of the Carter administration to Reagan's failures in recent years, had threatened to bring about significant changes of power in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. The Tower Commission and the Iran-Contra committee were unusual but necessary devices for limiting the damage of Iran-Contra and preserving the status quo.

Perhaps most basically, no committee member raised key questions about U.S. policies that are essentially anti-democratic in that they align themselves with the vested interests of the wealthy landlords, large capitalists, are repressive military of Central America and against the self-determination and empowerment of the workers. Such anti-democratic policies, of course, require massive military and economic intervention in order to preserve the imperial status quo. (These points, defining Washington's policies toward Central America, are also essential in understanding the history of U.S. policies toward Iran.)

Lesson 3:

An Imperialist/Interventionist Agenda

Members of the Iran-Contra Committee simply have a very different agenda from millions of us concerned with the policies of ContraGate. This of course, was always clear with the right-wing ideologues, but the liberal minority also did not raise basic questions central to ContraGate. They limited their industry to such concerns as whether some individuals profited from the arms sales to Iran and the diversion of the Contras.

Committee members did not raise questions about U.S. history, which includes more than ten major U.S. military invasions of Nicaragua since 1850. Members never raised questions about the record of U.S. corporate greed and domination of the peoples of Central America, never raised basic questions about U.S. policies that have necessitated and continue to necessitate military and economic intervention in Central America.

Members never even raised basic questions about the legitimacy of DIA and other covert operations. (Covert operations were assumed by all members to be legitimate, even though a few critics raised a few questions about whether a specific covert operation might be excessive or even illegal.) No one even took seriously the embarrassing questions about the Contras and drug trafficking.

In short, the third lesson is that all Iran-Contra committee members, implicitly or explicitly, assumed interventionist and imperialist policies. No one challenged them.

Lesson 4:

The Fundamental Basis of U.S. Policies

The fourth and major lesson of ContraGate, never mentioned at the hearings, does not concern either a few overzealous fanatics or a few money-seeking individuals, but rather what all the revelations, and especially the unasked questions and suppressed information, say about U.S. policy toward Central America (and

Iran), about the U.S.'s fundamental economic, political, and cultural values, and about military-industrial structures of power.

At the end of World War II, all of the other major countries were greatly weakened militarily and economically. The United States alone was greatly strengthened. Economically, politically, and militarily, the U.S. was number one; its closest competitor was distant second. The U.S., as the world's number one power, increasingly perceived its self-interest as maintaining the status quo. U.S. policies become increasingly counterrevolutionary since revolution threatened the status quo.

At the same time, the period was one of rising national liberation movements, struggles of the former colonies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America for national independence and self-determination. This movement was, and continues to be, world historical development: the greatest movement toward democracy in the sense of economic, political, and cultural empowerment and self-determination. These two forces — counterrevolution and revolution, domination and self-determination — are on a collision course. For us, the fundamental question of the Iran-contra affair is the basic question: Which side are you on?

On the one side are those responsible for Iran-ContraGate and those on the committee who accept and perpetuate U.S. interventionism, who invoke anti-communism to silence their critics, and who, when necessary, exercise devices of damage control to minimize their losses.

On the other side are those of us who do not regard the peasants and workers of Central America as our enemies, who do not regard the religious liberation communities as our enemies, and who do not regard those struggling for a new economic, political, social, cultural, and moral order — in which they can relate to us as equals — as our enemies. They are our sisters and brothers. Their struggle, and their coming freedom is our freedom.

JHARKHAND'S ROOTS

Tribal Identities in Indian History

Arvind N. Das (Assistant Editor, Times of India)

(Exclusive to Lanka Guardian)

The inability of Indian state to cope with tribal movements like the resurgent Jharkhand agitation is historical. Indeed, the problem of the relationship between the tribals and so-called mainstream population is civilisational in spite of the fact that the development of Indian civilisation and culture is a saga of the intertwining of the tribal and non-tribal strands. Although Indian history has not witnessed the mass extermination or brutal subjugation of indigenous peoples as happened in America or Australia, despite the integral role of the tribal's manpower and natural resources in the Indian economy and in the evolution of the material and moral culture of India, the tribals have always been considered alien, 'the other', exotic and marginal. The response of the state to them has been conditioned by this.

At the best of times, the hegemonistic subjugation of the tribal has always carried the implicit threat of coercion. Thus even after Priyadarshi Ashok, the Mauryan emperor, had renounced war and taken to *dhamma vijay* (conquest through righteousness), his edict addressed to the *atavikas*, the forest-dwellers, forefathers of today's Jharkhandis, grimly reminded them, "Forget not that the Beloved of the Gods, in addition to being righteous, is also powerful". The rulers of today, especially in benighted Bihar, certainly do not have that sophistication of expression. Their response to the tribal's movement is one of sheer coercion in the form of the functioning of the unthinking machinery of state power.

Outside the state apparatus also, there is no clarity about the content of the Jharkhand movement. In spite of its profes-

sed commitment to decentralisation, rights of minorities and its oft-repeated assertion that adequate royalties from natural mineral resources should accrue to areas of their location, the CPI (M) sees the Jharkhand movement as yet another manifestation of separatism which needs to be combatted. On the other side of the ideological divide, the BJP sees sinister designs of Christian missionaries and godless extremists instigating what it patronisingly calls simple *banvasis* (forest-dwellers). Such liberal opinion as at all concerns itself with the issue finds an easy explanation for it in the pat formulation of assertion of ethnic identities.

All these shades are coloured by the picture of the tribal as an unchanging savage, noble or otherwise, and do not recognise the political economy of the movement. The simplified conception of 'tribe', fostered by colonial anthropology and unchallengingly adopted by the uncritical unintelligentsia leads to simple and inadequate response to an immensely complex phenomenon.

To begin at the beginning, it is particularly important in any discussion of 'tribes' to note that 'tribe' need not be related to 'race'. A fallacy has often been repeated by ethnographers and anthropologists a-historically or with the help of pseudo-history in assuming in their use of 'tribe' for certain communities a supposedly common ancestry and specific characteristics. Such presumption has facilitated political, cultural, and economic domination of such communities. It is also not merely accidental that only in the heydeys of colonialism, did colonial administrators, who where the proto-anthropologists, label sections of the subject people as

racially defined tribes. Before that 'outsiders' who came into contact with such communities — generally referred to them as 'people', 'kingdoms', 'dwellers of certain regions,' etc.

Indeed, in the Indian historical tradition, there is no equivalent of the value-loaded term 'tribe'. The nearest concept is that of the Sanskrit *janah* which denotes the agglomeration of individuals with a definite territorial, kinship and cultural pattern. Prior to the colonial annexation of parts of India inhabited by such groups, most of the presently designated 'tribes' were either unconscious of their ethno-tribal identities or called themselves 'people' vis-a-vis others. The issue of juxtaposed identity was very important in the demarcation of self-identity as the latter was neither conceptually autonomous nor, in practical existence, particularly distinguishable.

It was only when the perpetrators of colonialism, who conceived of themselves as racially distinct and superior, faced formidable opposition from 'forest-dwellers', 'primitive groups' etc., as compared to the relatively simpler subjugation of the 'mainstream' population, many of these 'peoples' were termed 'tribes' and attributed racial characteristics which were borrowed from the colonial experience in America, Australia and Africa. They were simplistically distinguished from Hindus and Muslims on the assumption that they were animists whereas others were not. On the economic scale they were placed as being 'backward' food-gatherers or shifting cultivators. On cultural criteria, obviously artificial and alien, they were described as being 'primitive'. On juridical grounds, since they were difficult to subject, many of them were

classified as being 'criminal'. And, in tune with the different phases of colonial administration, they were either brutally suppressed or subjected to special regulations which at best amounted to paternalistic despotism.

Through the systematic fragmentation of the non-racial and composite culture of India a situation was created where most such 'peoples' have come to be known today by names they did not recognise themselves. Thus, while several widely dispersed masses of people were brought under a blanket nomenclature, a number of cognate groups of people were arbitrarily divided into several communities. In the 1931 Census attempt was made by the colonial administration to list the "primitive tribes". Shortly thereafter, the Government of India Act of 1935 redesignated them as "backward tribes". After Independence, special provisions for the administration of these peoples were made under which they were listed in separate schedules of the Constitution, thus creating the term "scheduled tribes".

In short, 'tribe' in India is essentially a politico-administrative category. The eminent sociologist Ramakrishna Mukherjee has asked "Should the juridical category of scheduled tribes, which may grind a political axe, be our guide to impose invidious distinction of 'tribals' and others in Indian society?" However, through the ad hoc, unscientific, stereotyped classification geared to administrative ends, a political categorisation of society has been reified into becoming social reality.

A critical analysis requires fresh thinking on stereotypes and tired old images of ethnic identity and makes it necessary to examine two important aspects: (1) the distinction, if at all possible, of tribe from other social aggregates like peasantry, caste, class, etc., and (2) the contemporary self-perception of the concerned people. Historically this exercise is extremely difficult because the entire course of Indian history

shows tribal elements being fused in general society. The idea that tribal society was isolated and insulated is patently false. Indeed some anthropologists have even concluded that it was only the colonialism that the "isolated" and the "primitive" was born.

What can certainly be said that colonialism changed the context and level of tribal-non-tribal social interaction. In the present context a very important aspect is that many of the tribes are settled cultivators, internally stratified and practically indistinguishable from other peasant groups. Critical anthropology has thus had to discard some myths about tribes and come to terms with the fact that the ideal social aggregate of tribe is merely conceptual and, if it existed, it did so only in the undefined past and that what exist today are tribes in transition.

This realisation of tribes in transition as peasants does away with the perspective of timeless, unchanging, undifferentiated conglomerates eking out subsistence in struggle not with other men but with the elemental forces of nature. In contrast to the idyllic tribal stereotype depicted annually on the Republic Day tableaux, tribes are internally differentiated not only by a ritual hierarchy but also a secular, politics-economic hierarchy based on the devolution of economic and social power. And, change among the tribes, as among other people, has to be analysed through the framework of class.

A creative application of class analysis to change in tribal societies has to relate to the issue of how external forces articulate themselves within the tribal socio-cultural organisation. Ironically however, a widely accepted theory on the articulation of the external and internal factors in the dynamics of tribal societies is in fact based on the curious paradox of dis-articulation through physical displacement of tribal groups from their original habitat by non-tribals.

The dis-articulation theorists base themselves on the assumption that tribes were pushed back into inhospitable terrains by waves of Aryan invaders. Not only does such ethnology ignore that in many respects the Aryans themselves, such as they were, seem to have been constituted of what would appear to be tribal formations but also, given the stage of production, the sparsity of population and large-scale availability of fertile lands in that period, it was neither necessary nor possible to carry out displacement of aboriginal population.

The answer to the displacement theorists lies in the stages of production of various social groups. The agriculturists and traders inhabited the river banks of Western India and coastal outposts, the pastoral people spread out in due course along the lush river valleys eastwards and the hunters and gatherers lived in the uplands which were suited to their appropriation of subsistence without the necessity of clearing dense forests, a task which would in any case have been impossible without the use of iron.

These separate modes of existence were of course articulated with each other. There were not only commercial, political and cultural contacts but each one also took over aspects of the very production activities from the other. The post-colonial administrator-anthropologist K-Suresh Singh has pointed out that the names of a number of agricultural implements mentioned in vedic literature, like *langala* or *hala* (plough), *Kuddala* (spade), etc. are of Mundari tribal etymological origin. It is also an immense significance that the sources of the most vital element in production for the last two thousand five hundred years — iron — are largely located in precisely those areas which are the tribal heartland, the region which was called Jharkand by Akbar's chroniclers.

NEXT: Ethnicity and Regionalism.

The peasant — nobody's cause

S. Pathiravitana

Though rice was (and still is) politics in Sri Lanka, agriculture has enjoyed no such eminence in the thinking of the country's political left.

What it has preferred to tell us is about is agri-business. Under British colonialism and in the salad days of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, it was the Planters' Raj the young radicals tried to take on. And in our, what are known as neo-colonial days, there are some fringe leftist parties snapping and biting at the multi-nationals who are planning to gobble down the country's agriculture in Latin-American style.

And in Latin-American style there are a few cassocks leading the fight. The absence of the orthodox Marxist left in this struggle is striking. Is it because agri-business is another of those areas where both the democratic plutocrats and the orthodox Marxists hall each other like lost brothers? For, after all, peasant agriculture, where a lone man treads after a lonelier plough singing snatches of encouragement to his buffaloes or horse, now there's a waste of time for you.

Think of the output of a single two-wheeler, belching black smoke into the blue sky, and the increased yield which will help the poor yokel to have more of radios, TVs, artificial textiles and a lot of other bric-a-brac. Lenin too dreamed of it in that way and equated socialism with electricity.

But we, even without enjoying all the megawatts promised have, in the last eleven years despite our tea, rubber and coconut fetching unsteady prices, had a tremen-

dous increase in material goods. Has this in any way increased the content of our happiness? Or has the tinsel and glitter of our 'supermarket' increased the desire of our people to work harder to get the goodies of life?

If the mere increase of material goods and money (by pay hikes etc) is bound to increase human happiness, then surely the decade that has gone by will remain truly memorable. But will it? How do those who have gone through it, those who have received the goodies and those who had them only on the trickle, feel about this historic era? The simple answer to that is nobody now believes this is the promised Dharmishta era.

When the political agitator gets on to the subject of poverty and promises to eradicate it you know he is talking nonsense. Aristotle said that poverty breeds revolution and crime. It is understandable why the political agitator holding the reins of power is anxious to eliminate it, while the agitator out of power is inclined to agitate, if not for crime at least for revolution.

To escape the wiles of both let us see what the thinkers have to say about poverty. Let's begin with Plato who says that "poverty consists not in the decrease of one's possessions, but in the increase of one's greed" which leads us to the thought that the world's poor are really the rich who are sowing the seeds of poverty everywhere by their style of life.

But no political agitator, not even the decent ones like Indira Gandhi who had eradication of poverty on her program, would have been bold enough to offer a decrease of possessions as the

way to eradicate poverty. One man in our time did in fact make it his way of life. But there are no serious takers now, though hordes followed him then, among the political agitators of his country to listen to Mahatma Gandhi.

At least one Gandhian economist of that time raised a question which is of relevance today when people in the West and East are both concerned about Alternate Styles of Living. Bharatan Kumarappa wrote: "the question of whether an abundance of goods is necessary for human well-being is never so much as raised."

Poverty was only to be mentioned in passing. The main thing that I needed to say was that the Sri Lankan peasant is in danger of extinction. The billions that the World Bank and the IMF on one side and the Anglo-Saxons the Nordics and the Teutons on the other are pouring into the Mahaweli may enable the peasant to buy his little radio or TV or that cheap gew-gaw from Taiwan, but they will all be responsible for destroying his contentment and happiness and freedom when he is reduced to the status of a wage slave working for a multi-national producing a monotonous variety of banana or orange.

With him will die over 2500 years of agricultural practice which astonished observers from the West. Here is one such pre-industrial revolution observation made by that practical minded, utilitarian Robert Knox, who was a prisoner in this country for 19 years in the 17th century. Referring to the Sri Lankan plough Knox says:

I said before it was a crooked piece of Wood, it is but little bigger than a Man's Arm, one end whereof is to hold by, and the other to root up the Ground...

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These Ploughs are proper for this Country, because they are lighter, and so may be the more easier for turning, the Fields being short, so that they could not turn with longer, and if heavier they would sink and be unruly in the mud. These Ploughs bury not the grass as ours do, and there is no need they should. For their endeavour is only to root up the Ground, and so they overflow with Water, and this rots the Grass.

These practices are observed even today, except that in the Mahawell in the drier season there is a restriction in the use of tank water for paddy cultivation because the farmer is discouraged from 'rotting the grass' (inexpensive weed control) with 'overflow of water' (agro-scientists call this wasteful use of water). Despite the billions of rupees of faith built into the Mahawell there isn't enough water to crop the rice the way farmers want.

Knox also notes:

They never use any dung, but their manner of plowing and soaking of their Ground serves instead thereof.

So flooding of the paddy field for weed control (natural weedicide) is also the farmer's method of adding (non-chemical) fertiliser, effecting savings in foreign exchange if such things were in operation then.

A joyous side to the agricultural life is also noted by Knox who writes:

When they Till their Grounds, or Reap their Corn, they do it by whole Towns generally, all helping each other for **Attoms**, as they call it; that is that they may help them as much, or as many days again in their Fields, which accordingly they will do... Every man during the reaping of his corn, finds all the rest with Victuals. The womens work is to gather up the Corn after the Reapers, and carry it all together.

Robert Knox was a practising Christian who was only too aware he was living among 'heathens'

and 'idol worshippers' to get too close to them. However accurate his observations were in depicting overt action, he hadn't the gift of insight into the life of the people he was living among. It could be said of him that he had the experience but missed the meaning.

A profounder observation, enhancing and enriching Knox's remarks and applicable to a great many Asian countries which are predominantly rural, comes two centuries later at the height of Victorian imperialism and the triumph of the Industrial revolution, from a great lover of Indian culture, Sir George Birdwood.

Birdwood was born in India and grew up in Mahratta and had such a close intimacy with Indian life at different levels and was in a better position than Robert Knox, who was a prisoner of his Puritanism as well, to appreciate the meaning and value of life revolving round Asian agriculture.

Writing on the Mahratta Plough in his collection of essays published under the Sanskrit title *SVA* Sir George Birdwood says:

The Indian plough is, in short part and parcel of a fixed, crystallised way of life, wherein it is the primitive and primary integrant molecule, regulating the relations, and determining the dimensions, and the ultimate character of the entire and indissoluble economic, social, and religious system built upon it.

In that life all are but co-ordinate parts of one undivided and indivisible whole, wherein the provision and respect due to every individual are enforced, under the highest religious sanctions, and every office and calling perpetuated from father to son by those cardinal obligations of caste on which the whole hierarchy of Hinduism hinges.

In Sri Lanka over 70 per cent of the population is still rural. Life still revolves round this 'primitive' tool as it has done throughout the centuries. The Tank and Dagoba concept, symbols of peasant culture, was put

out as a slogan by the agitators on the political right of this country. But they have dropped it once in power.

Instead of strengthening the peasant at grassroot level the agitators are now encouraging him to believe that well-being rests on an abundance of material goods. This is now creating far-reaching social, cultural and economic complication. The corruption and moral confusion prevailing in the country today is due largely to the loss of faith in institutions which people held in great esteem and sanctity until recently.

The Killing...

(Continued from page 16)

she heard one of the hooded gunmen say to her daughter in Hebrew-accented Arabic: 'Go tend to your mother.'

In Israel the death of Abu Jihad was hailed as a famous victory by the majority of its citizens and even some liberals were muted in their criticism. 'It is good for our egos but doesn't deal with the serious problems facing our country', wrote the columnist, Yoel Marcus, in *Haaretz*. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir still insists that the first he heard of the raid was when he switched on his radio. But the winks are getting broader. 'Let us hope that our enemies will realise and understand that Israel knows how to wage war and that all those who hurt us will be hurt manifold'.

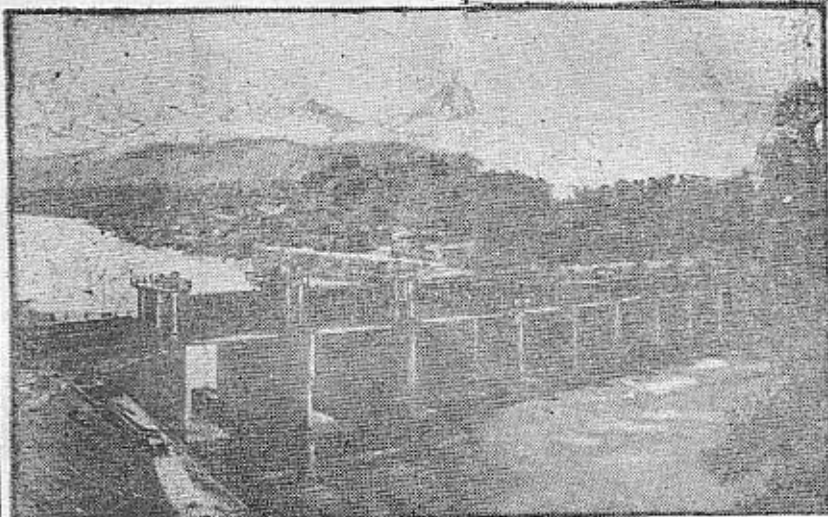
For the moment, men like Ezer Weizman, the Spitfire pilot who became the architect of the overwhelming Israeli air victory in the 1967 war, remain voices in the wilderness. As a member of the cabinet he must stick to the fiction that Israel was not involved in the killing. All he can say is: 'If I had to make the decision I would have said no. The assassination didn't contribute to the fight against terrorism or to the peace process.'

Our correspondent in Jerusalem was subject to Israeli military censorship.

— London Observer

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Nikolai Bukharin : Centenary Reassessment

Reggie Siriwardena

The conclusion cannot, I think, be avoided that collectivisation in 1929 and the early 'thirties was premature, since the Soviet economy could not yet afford the agricultural machines and other facilities that would have made possible a willing movement towards collective farms. In 1930 there was an official estimate that 1,500,000 tractors were needed to ensure full collectivisation; actually, in 1929 the output was only 3,000; and in 1932 it was still only 50,000.

The question must be raised therefore whether it would not have been wiser to let small-scale peasant farming co-exist for some time with socialist industry until the Soviet economy had the sinews which would have made possible a more painless advance. This does not mean that private farming need necessarily have stagnated in the intervening period. Because of the low level of technology of peasant cultivation, it should have been possible to make considerable increases in productivity by the supply of simple implements (even produced on a craft emphasis on heavy industry). It should also have been possible, given the political will, to prepare the peasantry for future development of collectives by promoting intermediate forms such as co-operatives.

Like many conclusions about past history, this assessment must remain indeterminate. Meanwhile, it is interesting to look at the measured judgment of Mikhail Gorbachev on this question, delivered in his 70th anniversary speech last November, and cast in the restrained language appropriate to a ceremonial occasion. He defended collectivisation as a transformation of fundamental importance, but said:

A rigid centralisation and command system was impossible in

tackling the problems of refashioning rural life.

There was an underestimation of the fact that the peasantry as a class had changed radically in the years since the revolution. The principal figure now was the middle peasant. . . . If in general the attitude to the vast mass of the peasantry . . . had been politically more judicious, if there had been a consistent line to promote the alliance with the middle peasantry against the kulak . . . then there would not have been all those excesses that occurred in carrying out collectivisation . . . This most important and very complex social process, in which a great deal depended on local conditions was directed by fundamentally administrative methods. A conviction had arisen that all problems could be solved at a stroke, overnight. Flagrant violations of the principles of collectivisation occurred everywhere.

This is not identical with Bukharin's view in 1929, but it goes a long way towards recognising the substantial character of his objections to the 'revolution from above'.

However, it is not only in this respect that Bukharin remains a voice that speaks to the present. He fought against the over-centralisation of the economy: he advocated the autonomy of the individual state enterprise: he favoured competition between different enterprises as a means of protecting quality: he asserted that 'the consumer was not for the economy but the economy for the consumer: and he endeavoured to distinguish the market mechanism from its specific form under capitalism, maintaining that the market could be a useful tool of a socialist economy. In all these respects his ideas

find a strong echo in the reforms taking place in the Soviet Union today. It is not too much to say that in many ways Gorbachev has inherited the legacy of Bukharin.

There's a final reflection I want to offer. In George Orwell's 1984 his hero, Winston Smith, has a job which involves eliminating from old newspapers facts which have become politically inconvenient. 'This process of continuous, alteration,' wrote Orwell, 'was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound-tracks, cartoons, photographs — to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance.' Everybody knows that Orwell's 'memory hole' in 1984 was an extension of the real practice of Stalinist Russia. You will remember the editions of the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* in which articles about former leaders used to disappear when they became non-persons: you will recall the photographs of the Revolution retouched so as to eliminate Trotsky. Yes, people did disappear down the memory hole in Stalin's Soviet Union as in Orwell's anti-utopia. But Orwell's pessimistic fantasy was too myopic, too much at the mercy of a single-track ideological vision. It's now four years later than 1984, and the processes of the destruction of memory are being reversed. After half a century of slander succeeded by silence, Bukharin, and others like him, walk again. That's why I have placed at the centre of my play an old lady of 76 who has kept alive in memory, through twenty years in the prison camps, through another thirty years of loneliness, the words of a letter.

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