

LANKA

GUARDIAN

Vol. 11 No. 3 June 1, 1988 Price Rs. 5.00 Registered at the GPO, Sri Lanka QJ/84/NEWS/88

The
South
strikes
back !

— Mervyn de Silva



Second time of asking !

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Secretary to the Council.

University of Ruhuna,
Matara
10th May 1988.

What, no takers ?

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How the poor grow poorer — NORAD Report

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THE VICIOUS SPIRAL

The number of habeas corpus applications pending before the Courts in connection with alleged illegal detention in the South exceeds 300, says the Civil Rights Movement in its latest report. There were angry and noisy exchanges in the House when SLFP MP Amarasiri Dodangoda took up the same matter and argued strongly for a Parliamentary Select Committee.

The CRM is not unmindful of the "very serious security problem" facing the Government and recognises fully the government's right and also the responsibility" to maintain law and order. But the government "may have largely brought this situation on itself by riding roughshod over dissenting views and acting oppressively against its opponents".

The CRM concludes by warning the government "not to compound its errors by using repressive methods which can be counter-productive". The result of course will be a vicious spiral of violence.

BY-ELECTIONS

May 18 was the last day for the U.N.P. to nominate successors to the four party MP's who recently resigned their seats to become Chief Ministers of the NWP, NCP, Uva and Sabaragamuwa.

The UNP High Command however chose not to avail itself of the opportunity created by the new Presidential Constitution of avoiding by-elections. The UNP's failure to nominate four persons to fill the vacancies passed the onus of responsibility to the Elections Commissioner. He has duly performed his duty by fixing June 15 as Nomination day for by-elections in Katugampola, Ratnapura, Well-mada and Kekirawa.

Interestingly, President JR told a UNP Ex-Co meeting in March —

"The SLFP and the Opposition are demanding elections. I'll give them a surfeit of elections".

He seems keen to carry out his threat. Experienced political observers however are puzzled by his tactics. He can certainly exhaust the Opposition's resources. But what if he loses all four by-elections? Wouldn't the average voter interpret it as the 'wave of the future'? And since our electorate is notoriously opportunistic — *vaasi patheta holya*... — wouldn't this letting-off-steam, pulse-testing exercise cost the government dearly?

LALITH'S THEOREM

Perhaps UNP confidence is firmly founded on Lalith's Theorem. The Trade Minister, who now spends much less time at his other ministry (National Security) is deeply immersed in various pre-election 'studies'. Opinion polls, computer projections, provincial voter sampling etc etc. Since we now have a highly complicated PR system, with an incredibly high $12\frac{1}{2}$ percent cut-off point, not every party is equipped to 'scientifically predict' voter behaviour under the new system. Mr. Athulathmudall is convinced that the UNP can't be beaten. The SLFP has decided to field candidates in all four constituencies.

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TRENDS
+
LETTERS

10th Anniversary Number

The Special 10th Anniversary Number of the Lanka Guardian has just reached me, living in sabbatical exile in Finland. My first impulse was to take up my pen and write this message, as one who possesses every single number of the Lanka Guardian ever published.

The Star of Lanka Guardian is, of course, its Editor. I have savoured everything he has written in the journal, without swallowing all his conclusions. I have admired his lively style, his pretty turn of wit, his occasional flashes of irreverent and unsolemn flippancy, his skill in exposition and his eye for the significant detail. Above all, his sophisticated evaluation of local and international news has invariably commanded my serious attention. Mervyn de Silva has created and nurtured a good journal; in fact, the best of its kind in our country.

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THE ROOTS OF SOUTHERN REVOLT

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

The JVP's answer to the bogus UNP-JVP "accord" announced at the National Security Minister's press conference was a furious burst of T-56 gunfire. Mr. Athulathmudall himself called it 'a killing spree' — the victims, predominantly UNP stalwarts and candidates at the forthcoming P. C. polls. The climax of course was the assassination of UNP General Secretary Nandalal Fernando, a quasi-commando operation as spectacular as the gunning down of party chairman Harsha Abeywardena, also in broad daylight on a busy street in Colombo.

It really shook the UNP Establishment, and stunned the metropolitan middle-class suddenly awakened to the fact that the city was by no means immune, and 'terror' was at its doorstep. The citizens of a Third World nation's capital have peculiar psychology. Even when their country is in throes of civil war or revolution, they are protected by the comforting illusions of a special immunity. This, in turn breeds a smug complacency.

It is when the 'terror' and the armed conflict advances and closes in on the capital that this smugness of Third World regimes and metropolitan elite is shattered, only to be replaced by a siege mentality. We had a fleeting glimpse of it, when Colombo was gripped by a sense of helplessness and fear, totally exaggerated as it proved to be, in the first week of JVP insurrection of April '71.

For the first time, President JR invited the JVP leader Mr. Rohana Wijeweera for roundtable talks. Also for the first time, there was a flicker of real hope when Mrs. Bandaranaike responded to the President's offer of all-party talks and said the SLFP would participate (See interview).

But very quickly, President JR returned to his more characteristic posture of defiance, and challenged Wijeweera to single combat on Galle Face Green.

NEW PHASE

The JVP, meanwhile, moved into a new phase of the armed struggle, with individual targets for assassination and the disruption of the PC polls (June 2 and June 9) remaining however its main tactical objectives. To broaden the popular support base of the struggle and draw in more social forces and groups into it, the JVP extended the campaign on the campuses to the schools, and identified itself sympathetically with the sporadic anti-government outbursts of other middle-groups, notably the nurses and hospital workers, and the government doctors. **Not only politically but geographically too, the JVP has expanded the the struggle.** From its southern stronghold, its main base, it is encroaching systematically on the Uva province. Some 30,000 students have participated in walk-outs and sit in demos in Badulla, Bandarawela etc. In many ways, parallels the LTTE's advance from its stronghold in the Jaffna peninsula. Once again, students led the advancing columns.

In any case, the university is both recruiting ground and battlefield. By his standing as a university student — a position acquired through sacrifice and fierce competition — the university student, and young teacher are the natural spokesmen-cum-opinion leaders of the new generation, Sinhala or Tamil. He represents not only the expectations and ambitions of his generation but its sense of frustration and anger. Hopes have been raised but remain unfulfilled.

It would be foolish to regard this young rebel or potential 'subversive' as an individualistic loner, and concentrate on his 'mind-set' as many western political sociologists as well as counter-terrorism pundits do. He is not 'alienated', not society's drop-out or eccentric maverick. That again is the western model.

REVOLUTION BETRAYED

The 'rebel' has roots in family, class, and place. By and large, semi-urban or rural lower-middle class. He has roots also in history, recent history. Their parents or elder brothers were perhaps in the vanguard of the 1956 'Cultural Revolution' which held out such great promise for the rural lower-middle class and particularly its intelligentsia. A promise hardly fulfilled; 'Revolution' betrayed!

Besides the socio-economic impulses and demands — a fairer sharing of the material rewards of 'development' with a narrow-based, entrenched Anglicised elite — there was the even more powerful driving force of Sinhala-Buddhist resurgence. The consequences of the new post-1987 growth model and the ugly distortions of this "development" was accompanied by a new heightening of Sinhala consciousness, the direct outcome of the aggressive challenge of Tamil separatism. The typically Third Worldist distortions of "development" in a decade of global economic crisis, were paralleled by the authoritarian re-shaping of Sri Lanka's democratic system and the attendant deformities. **To put it crudely, no Sri Lankan of 30 years and under (a large segment of the population) has had the chance to vote in a parliamentary election in a**

country which was known for the perverse persistence with which the electorate threw out the ruling rascal.

Stressing the truism that 'growth' does not mean 'development' no less a person than the Finance Minister Mr. Ronnie de Mel told

a seminar in May last year "certainly poverty has increased since 1983, certainly unemployment has increased. . . some people think that 3.6 million Sri Lankans (nearly a quarter of the population) live below the poverty line". (See **Rasaputra** and the **Norad Report**, in this issue).

SINHALA MILITANCY

The intensification of the ethnic conflict and the brutal reach of Tamil separatism (massacres in Anuradhapura, bombs in Colombo) together with the re-appearance of the old spectre of the Dravidian horde, the invader from the North (Jaffna, Tamilnadu, India) created the climate for the dramatic rise of Sinhala militancy. The student and youth are its shock-troops, the monk, and teacher are its ideologues, the deep South, Duttugemunu country, the historic matching reply to the historic enemy, is the main base, and the Ruhuna University (see Cover) where the Vice Chancellor has fled, is its obvious symbol.

A new factor whose importance is rarely recognised is the economic consequence of soaring defence spending after 1983, and the social impact of the militarisation process. In his address, Ronnie de Mel traced the rising curve of the defence vote. Placing the issue in a wider budgetary context, he noted "The combined effects of a rapid increase in population, and a steady decline in the terms of trade, and the increase in defence expenditure rendered the welfare package unsustainable". Sri Lankan welfarism, romanticised as 'socialism' was possible with a population of 6 to 8 million when surpluses from the plantation sector was adequate to maintain the social welfare votes.

Militarisation did not merely lead to the diversion of funds from development projects or welfare and the rapid expansion of the armed services. It has produced the phenomenon of deserters, some 2000 — 3000 with weapons-training and combat experience. A fraction of this number may have been absorbed by the 'underworld', and the new 'mafias' that have been spawned by the 'open economy'. But other groups, which served in the north and saw their comrades blown to bits by landmines, may have been psychologically disturbed (the Rambo mind-set) and also politicised.

(Continued on page 21)

M de S interviews Mrs Bandaranaike

No evidence to justify ban

(Q) You have responded positively to President JR's invitation to the J.V.P. for round-table talks?

(A) Yes, I said we will participate if the JVP attends such a conference and hear its grievances and see what can be done to stop this new wave of violence in the south.

(Q) Its main grievance was that it was unjustly proscribed after the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983, and that is why it has adopted illegal and other methods. Isn't that so?

(A) Quite right. Two other parties were proscribed and later the ban was removed on them but not on the JVP.

(Q) Do you think the grievance was justified?

(A) Well, the government had more than four years to produce some evidence. . . even in the case of the Naxalites, do you remember, they produced Tyrell Goonetilleka's report which was just pavement gossip and of no value at all.

(Q) What will a round table conference achieve?

(A) Now that the so-called 'agreement' of Lalith Athulathmudali has been shown to be a farce or a hoax but the proscription remains lifted, the JVP can use the opportunity to state its views before all other parties, if it so wishes.

(Q) but the JVP may have qualms about coming into the open. . .

(A) Well, if the JVP doesn't trust the government, then there is nothing we can do about it. . . but as a democratic party, I feel the SLFP should join other democratic parties in listening to what the JVP has to say. That is my personal view. Naturally, the party Exco will finally decide. . .

JR: Duel at Galle Face

When one is a party leader or President one has to have protection whether one likes it or not. This is the pattern all over the world. When one becomes a President or Prime Minister, the aim of some is to assassinate him.

There are lunatics like that. They attempted to assassinate Reagan. Earlier they assassinated Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln. In England they tried to kill one Prime Minister 150 years ago. They made attempts on the life of Mrs. Thatcher. They killed Mahatma Gandhi, made an attempt on the life of Rajiv Gandhi. In Sri Lanka, they assassinated Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. We should be careful.

These terrorists come in the dark or in hiding and kill. That is what I regret. Why cannot Wijeweera come directly and say: Mr. Jayewardene I want to kill you?

I invite him to fix a date. I will come to Galle Face (applause). I'll come alone. I'll come walking. He can select the weapon, whether it should be a bomb, a knife, sword, gun or T-56. I do not know how to use it but I'll come. You may know how to use it. Let us fight face to face and see who would die and who would live. Why kill innocent people? That is how Dutugemunu acted. He told Elara why do we allow our armies to die, let us fight each other.

The President drew rounds of applause from the massive crowd, when he threw this challenge to Wijeweera at a provincial council election meeting.

He said: "I invite him to fix a date. I will come to Galle Face. I'll come alone. I'll come walking".

Crowds cheered as he offered to send Wijeweera his horoscope.

He said they should all be prepared to die one day, whether Wijeweera was there or not.

Concluding, he said "If I retreat, destroy me; if I am killed, avenge me; if I advance, follow me".

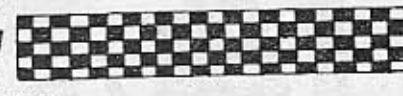
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INDO-LANKA DEFENCE TREATY

— the Authentic Draft

When President Jayawardene visited India as Chief guest at the Indian Republic Day celebrations, commentaries and speculative reports in both the Indian and Sri Lankan press gave special attention to a Indo-Sri Lankan Defence Treaty drafted by Sri Lankan official. There were in fact many drafts prepared by the Foreign Ministry and the government's legal advisers, both within the administration, and outside. This may explain the various versions, and excerpted reports of what was offered as the Defence Treaty. For the record, we publish the following which we have reason to believe is the full, authentic draft that remains to be signed, if at all.

The Indian Defence Minister Mr. K. C. Pant has returned to Delhi after a two-day visit to Sri Lanka.

AGREEMENT TO CONSOLIDATE AND EXTEND THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA AND THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA.

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Republic of India, (hereinafter referred to as the Contracting Parties).

- Conscious of the friendship between the two States stretching over two millenia or more and recognising the importance of nurturing, intensifying and strengthening the traditional ties of friendship;
- Believing that these traditional bonds have been given a fresh meaning, importance and impetus by the fact that the two States have over their four decades of independence and against threats to the cherished system successfully upheld and promoted the democratic political order;
- Aware that the consolidation of their States as democratic societies and the further democratisation of these societies are matters mutual to their notional interest;
- Recognising the territorial character of their State Order and resolved to protect the independence, unity integrity and sovereignty of their States;
- Recognising, however, that the two States are multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious societies and the need, therefore, to foster condition in their States in which all citizens can live in equality, safety and harmony and fulfill their aspirations thereby strengthening the forces contributing to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their two countries;
- Conscious of the fact that the processes of democratic evolution and national consoli-

dation in their States are complicated by cross-border links and sensitivities that have historical origin and determined to work together constructively to remove any impediments to these processes from this situation;

- Believing that the further development of their friendship, and particularly their constructive co-operation in promoting mutual goals, would be a contribution not only to national consolidation and democratic progress in their two States but also to regional co-operation and regionalism in South Asia;
- Reaffirming their firm commitment to the U.N. Charter and to the principles of Non Alignment, peaceful co-existence, sovereign equality of States, mutual co-operation, non interference in the internal affairs of States, non use of force or threat of force and respect for territorial integrity, political independence and Sovereignty;
- Declaring their resolve to promote a regional environment conducive to the security and progress of their two States.

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The Contracting Parties solemnly declare that enduring peace and friendship shall prevail between their two countries and peoples. Each Contracting Party will respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the other.

The Contracting Parties will continue to develop and strengthen the relations of friendship, good neighbourliness and all-round co-operation existing between them on the basis of the principles stated above.

Article II

In this spirit, the Contracting Parties agree to work for the consolidation of mutual trust, confidence and good neighbourly relations and co-operation by eliminating any hindrances to achieving such relations and co-operation.

In particular, the Contracting Parties will:

- (i) ensure that all Ports within their respective territories will not be used for military purposes to the prejudice of the national interest of either Contracting Party;
- (ii) deport any national of one Contracting Party who, within the territory of the other, engages in terrorist activities or advocates separatism or secessionism with respect to the other country.

Article III

The Contracting Parties will also:

- 1:1 review the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel with a view to ensuring that such presences will not prejudice Indo-Sri Lankan relations;
- 1:2 review any agreements with foreign broadcasting organisations to ensure that any facilities set up by them within the territory of either country are used solely as public broadcasting facilities purposes with respect to the other Contracting Party.
2. The Government of India in a spirit of friendship and

co-operation will provide training facilities and military supplies for Sri Lanka's security forces at the request of the Government of Sri Lanka.

Article IV

The Contracting Parties, convinced that bilateral problems could only be resolved by discussion and dialogue declare their commitment and adherence to solving all bilateral problems through discussion and negotiations on the basis of their sovereign equality.

Article V

The Contracting parties affirm their commitment to the consolidation and extension of their friendly relations and mutual co-operation. Towards this end, they agree to promote active co-operation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, technical, scientific and other fields as mutually agreed.

Article VI

This Agreement shall be subject to ratification and shall enter into force upon the exchange of Instruments of Ratification.

Article VII

The Agreement shall remain in force until either Contracting Party declares its intention to terminate it by giving the other six months written notice.

Article VIII

The Contracting Parties shall consult each other with regard to any amendment or modification of this Agreement and such amendment or modification shall be effected in writing as mutually agreed.

Article IX

Any difference of interpretation or application of this Agreement that may arise between the two countries shall be settled in a spirit of mutual trust and understanding.

Letters. . .

(Continued from page 1)

My fervent 10th anniversary wish for the journal is that the next decade will witness the realization of the potential inherent in the Lanka Guardian to become a great journal. A journal achieves greatness in proportion to the degree that, in the public interest, it tells the truth and exposes lies and defends civilized values.

Carlo Fonseka

(Dept. of Physiology
Univ. of Colombo)

Finland.

II

Congratulations on the tenth Anniversary issue of L G.

The L G has the best Inside Information on Sri Lanka politics and should be consulted in the chancelleries of the world.

Brevity and fairness are two of its civilized virtues.

Patrick Jayasuriya

Colombo 8.

III

I have been a reader of "Lanka Guardian" for quite some time although not regular.

I wish to congratulate you on the excellent material published and your survival whilst giant journalistic efforts have crashed.

Major Tilak Ratnasekera

Kandy.

Will regular reader Rohan de S Ekanayake of Gangodawila kindly contact us ? — Ed.

Revelations

Since mid 1987 universities in Sri Lanka have been more or less closed, an invited audience was told at a seminar on "The crisis in the universities", in Colombo recently. The reasons for student unrest and closure had changed from problems to do with education, to problems of the nation, speakers at the seminar said.

The mode of protest had also changed from usually non violent demonstrations by statutorily constituted societies and students councils to violence and intimidation by highly organised non statutory action committees with inter university connections. There have been organised assaults, hostage taking, and also murder.

The speakers included three Vice Chancellors, university teachers, and representatives from the University Grants Commission and the Ministries of Education and Higher Education. As these participants saw it, the unrest in universities in Sri Lanka differed from unrest in universities elsewhere. Here the agitation was

by a small group, as against mass involvement of university students in other countries, they said. The neutral majority here was politicised by threats, intimidation and violence, they said.

However, these thinkers in the field of university education conceded that the problems seized by this small group of agitators reflected the social and political problems current in society. These problems resulted from a conflict between the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural and the political right and the left.

The demands made by the university students ranged from the release of students in police custody and the re-opening of universities to the removal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force. It is interesting to note, said a rapporteur from the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science at whose headquarters the seminar was held, that some of the demands are no longer valid, others are self-contradictory and some are beyond the control of the universities.

Among other edifying revelations made at the seminar are these:

* Although a proposition has been made to revise admission policies so as to accommodate the less privileged students, such policies have brought in students who cannot cope, who are psychologically unfit and who are poorly motivated.

* Drop-outs in the current year, in engineering alone, has gone up to 38 per cent; "hence it is not surprising that they get involved in non-academic activities".

* The process of indoctrination of students by the radicals have spilled over to secondary schools.

* A gap appears to exist between the students and the administrators; also, the students seem to listen more to their teachers than to the administrators and security personnel.

* The reluctance on the part of teachers' associations to condemn violence and irresponsible remarks made by some lecturers have aggravated the problems.

Sri Lanka's literacy rate is 87 per cent, a commendable high for Asia. School attendance in the compulsory age group (6-12) is 84 per cent, which is not bad. But only one per cent of those who go to school finally enter university, which puts this country among the lowest in this respect for any part of the world.

And while the Government seems unperturbed about the crisis in the hospitals, leaving it to the government controlled media to dutifully rouse public indignation against the doctors for their trade union action (ignoring totally the fact that the trade union action is largely a result of the Government stubbornly refusing to yield on the private medical college issue), another statistic is not without relevance, according to official sources Sri Lanka has a total of 1,951 doctors for a population of more than sixteen million. This works out to a ratio which is among the lowest in the world.

Of this total, 750 doctors kept away from work in government hospitals, in the course of their trade union action. Four thousand nurses and 10,000 minor staff and laboratory technicians joined them.

True, medical services personnel should think of the sick too before they resort to trade union action, especially because those in government hospitals are mostly the poorest of the poor, as *The Island* said in a recent editorial: "The only way the authorities know to tackle situation seems to be to preach homilies to the doctors. While it is true that doctors have to act with a greater sense of responsibility, the Government would do well to take note of the restlessness which has now become manifest within the medical profession".

N. R.

No dictators in our party

UNP Chairman Ranjan Wijeratne told a meeting of party branch officials in the Galle district on May 17 that he would resign if the UNP Working Committee did not inquire into valid complaints against Ministers and MPs.

The Chairman asked: "If we are to proceed on the road to democracy we should do so unitedly, without fear or favour, and if there are faults on our side, we should correct them. If wrong-doers and others do not accept this, we should remove them because there should be no dictators in our party".

Abu Jihad Assassination

Discussion in Parliament

(Mr. Anura Bandaranaike)

What is the attitude of the Government on the death of Mr. Abujihad, the number two man of the PLO. The Government has made no statement on that.

(Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali)

I will refer that to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I do not want to answer for him.

(Mr. Lakshman Jayakody)

Also relating to a UN Resolution in the Security Council which was debated, Membership of 15 was there. I do not know what the Government viewpoint is. I think the Government should come out very clearly on this matter. I hope you will take this up with your colleagues or have a joint session with your colleagues and then make a statement.

(Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali)

I will convey that to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

(Mr. Anura Bandaranaike)

Is he around or is he away?

(Mr. A.C.S. Hameed — Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Sir, it has been brought to my notice that the hon. Member for Attanagalla had given notice of a question regarding the murder of Mr. Khalil Al Wazir who is also known as Jihad, the Deputy Commander of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and also about the present state of affairs in Ghaza and the West Bank.

I would like to inform this House that the Deputy commander of the Palestine Armed Forces, Mr. Khalil Al Wazir, was assassinated in Tunisia on the 16th of April. We condemned this killing. We also support the Resolution that was adopted by the UN Security Council on the 25th of April condemning the aggression committed against the sovereignty of Tunisia. As the hon. Members

are aware, Sri Lanka is not a member of the Security Council. Therefore, we did not participate in this debate.

Then, with regard to the present situation, we are most distressed at what is happening now, about the events that are taking place in the occupied territories of Ghaza and the West Bank. In fact we had a special envoy of the PLO three weeks ago here, to thank His Excellency the President and the Government for all the support we have extended to the cause of the Palestinian people. What is now happening in Ghaza and the West Bank is not a situation which can be met by law and order approach. The problem of Palestine is far

more fundamental and only a political settlement of the problem in all its aspects can bring peace to this unhappy region. We have therefore, welcomed the recent initiatives that have been taken. There had been an initiative to promote an international conference and from the very beginning we have supported this initiative to hold an international conference at a very early date to find a lasting solution to this problem. May I repeat that, Sir. We, therefore, welcome the recent initiative that has been taken with a view to holding an international conference at a very early date to find a lasting solution to this unhappy problem. We all want a solution as early as possible.

FOUR days before his second-in-command, Khalil al-Wazir, was assassinated by Israeli commandos in the Palestine Liberation Organisation bastion of Tunis last weekend, Yasser Arafat circulated a warning to all his senior officers after he had been alerted by a report in an Israeli newspaper.

The report, in the Hebrew daily, *Davar*, claimed that Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had been urged to carry out selective killings of PLO leaders by Lt-Colonel Eyal Presso, his security adviser.

Arafat immediately ordered that copies of the *Davar* article be sent to PLO offices all over the world. But al-Wazir, whose *nom-de-guerre* was Abu Jihad, was notoriously slack about his personal security. His fatalism meant that he rarely took more than one bodyguard with him on his many travels. His death at his relatively well guarded home in a smart suburb favoured by senior civil servants would have been quite in keeping with his belief that Allah takes you when He sees fit.

Elimination

There is now no doubt that the Israelis killed Abu Jihad, a quietly spoken man in his early fifties whose mild mannered exterior belied an iron determination to reclaim the land his parents were driven out of in 1948. In Jerusalem it is thought that the only reason the Government has not officially admitted responsibility was because it did not want to embarrass its friends, especially the United States, which values Tunisia as a pro-Western moderate in the Arab world. It also hopes that its reticence might stave off a unanimous condemnation by the UN Security Council.

Mossad, the Israeli secret service, is thought to have put up a plan for the elimination of Abu Jihad last month after Palestinian guerrillas hijacked a bus taking unarmed civilian workers to the Dimona nuclear research centre in the Negev desert. Three Israeli civilians, a man and two women, and the three Palestinians were killed when the bus was stormed.

— Times

THE REGION

"Regional conflicts" is a term introduced by the Reagan administration to the superpower agenda.

Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict was dramatically 'externalised' when over a 100,000 refugees fled the island after the 1983 riots. But the LTTE rebels, trained and supplied by India, enjoyed the open patronage of Tamilnadu leaders and had their rear-bases in the south Indian state.

The armed conflict between the Sri Lankan state and the separatist insurgents came perilously close to 'regionalisation' when Sri Lanka invited Pakistani military aid. Instructors here, training facilities in Pakistan, and arms were the more overt forms of this assistance. In a gesture of grateful appreciation, President JR visited Pakistan where on the border with Afghanistan he shouted the slogan "Free Afghanistan Zindabad!" and in a bold departure from traditional Sri Lankan policy, extended support to Pakistan's claims on divided Kashmir.

The Red Army is pulling out of Afghanistan at a time when Indo-Pak tensions have been dangerously aggravated by the latest eruption of Sikh extremism and violence in the Punjab, accompanied by public Indian accusations of active Pakistani aid to the Sikh separatists. Feelings have run so high that another Indo-Pakistani military encounter on the border has been widely predicted in the Indian media. Top-level talks in Delhi and Islamabad appear to have helped cool passions... for the moment. Meanwhile, Pakistan has assured Moscow that it will not permit Afghan rebels to operate from 'bases' on Pakistani soil. But Moscow fears that the US will continue to help the mujahdeen, via Pakistan, until the communist regime in Kabul is ousted.

AFGHANISTAN

Najibullah's visit — an Indian move

Bhabani Sen Gupta

(Special to the L.G.)

The principal significance of the first state visit of president Najibullah to India a little more than a week before the beginning of front-loaded withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan lies in the visit itself. No Afghan head of state or government had

paid a state visit to India since the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. India is seeking to forge a political-strategic linkage with Afghanistan similar to that which existed between the two before, and in the first phase of, the Saur revolution.

This, in itself, is an event of unusual importance for South Asia. Delhi has not been deterred by the widespread western speculation about the poor longevity of the Najibullah regime. The Indian government appears to be persuaded that the regime in Kabul will survive if the Geneva accord is not openly and cynically violated by Pakistan and the U.S.

The central emphasis in the talks was on non-interference and non-intervention in Afghanistan during and after the withdrawal of Soviet troops. The agreement clearly forbids Pakistan and the United States to intervene in Afghanistan after the Soviet troops have begun to withdraw on May 15. At no point in the long agreement is there the slightest tacit recognition of the right of Pakistan to act as a channel of American arms to the Afghan rebels after the accord. Nor can the U.S. supply arms to the mujahedin either directly or indirectly without violating the letter and spirit of the Geneva agreement of which it is one of the two guarantors, along with the USSR.

India has now put its not inconsiderable weight in support of the faithful implementation of the accord. Unfortunately, the accord has been grossly distorted by political leaders and the mass media both in the West, in the Middle East and in Pakistan. The core of the Geneva accord is the bilateral agreement signed between Pakistan and Afghanistan on the principles of mutual relations, "in particular on Non-Interference and Non-Intervention." With this agreement two other bilateral documents are closely linked. One is a second bilateral agreement "on the voluntary return of the refugees". The other is an agreement, also between Pakistan and Afghanistan, "on the Interrelationship for the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan."

The agreement that was concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States, the shortest of the documents, is a "Declaration

on International Guarantees." Under it, the two superpowers "Undertake to invariably refrain from any form of interference and intervention in the internal affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and to respect the commitments contained in the bilateral agreement between (them) on the principles of Mutual Relations, in particular on Non-Interference and Non-Intervention."

If there was an understanding between the two superpowers on the "symmetry" of arms supplies to their respective clients in Afghanistan after May 15, it was reached outside the framework of the Geneva agreements of which it is not a documented part. The bilateral Afghan-Pakistan agreements nowhere recognise Pakistan's right to maintain armed Afghan rebels on its soil after May 15, to supply arms to them, let them use Pakistan territory to violate the border of Afghanistan or intervene in Afghanistan's internal affairs. The Geneva accord does not recognise the mujaheddin as a legitimate actor in the Afghanistan drama.

India's firm commitment to faithful implementation of the Geneva accord, negotiated over a period of four years by a special representative of the UN Secretary General, is unexceptionable. The UN has recognised the government in Kabul as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. The UN has worked out the modalities of Afghanistan returning to its non-aligned status as a Sovereign nation with untrammelled right to fashion its relations with the external world. After the Soviet troops pull out, indeed as the withdrawal operations begin, any foreign interference and intervention in Afghan affairs will be in violation not only of the Geneva accord but also of international law. A civil war may rage in Afghanistan between or amongst contending Afghan elements. Interference or intervention occurs only when one or the other side in the civil war get external armed assistance.

India will be given no seat on any of the several 'watchdog bodies' the UN Secretary-General will set up before May 15 to oversee implementation of the Geneva accord. This is because the accord makes it clear that the nations to be chosen for UN watchdog roles must have the approval of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan will definitely not wish to see India play a role in watching the implementation of the Geneva agreement. However, as Gorbachev adheres strictly to the withdrawal schedule agreed at Geneva — 50 percent of the Soviet troops to be taken back in three months and the rest in the next six months — international opinion will be increasingly against US-Pakistan interference and intervention in Afghan affairs. With the change in the US presidency coming before the end of the year, America itself may not wish to be seen by the world community to violate the agreement of which it is a guarantor.

A great deal, of course, will depend upon how the mujaheddin forces fare in the wake of the Soviet pullout. Mujaheddin forces will of course enter southern Afghanistan and set up their "government". However that government will not receive diplomatic recognition from anywhere, not even from Islamabad.

The Kabul regime is banking on the serious cleavages that are known to exist between the Afghan rebel groups located in Pakistan. Leaders of these groups may well fall out among themselves. There are certain limitations to American support to these groups. The United States is committed to see the Soviet forces out of Afghanistan. The withdrawal policy of Gorbachev will meet that commitment. It is not necessarily in American interest to see an Islamic fundamentalist regime installed in Kabul. That kind of a regime may not be friendly towards Pakistan at all. The mujaheddin alliance has already called for a merger of Afghanistan and Pakistan or at least a confederation. Ironically, a broadbased regime in Kabul of which the Marxists

are an important partner may adopt a more friendly attitude towards Pakistan than a fundamentalist Islamic regime dominated by militant Pushtun nationalists. Also, Washington cannot be certain that a fundamentalist Islamic regime in Kabul will not be friendly towards the Khomeini regime in Iran.

In Delhi's calculation, if the Kabul regime can withstand the first rush of Mujaheddin wrath in the immediate wake of the Soviet pullout, and if its programme of national reconciliation picks up gradual momentum, its survival will be more ensured from 1989 onward. The significant factor is that Delhi has determined to do whatever lies within the reach of its diplomatic resources to make the Kabul regime's survival more possible than it may otherwise happen to be. And Delhi diplomatic clout is not insignificant.

Though there will be no dearth of people in Pakistan, the US and elsewhere, who will see in Rajiv Gandhi's Afghan diplomacy an explicit helping hand to Gorbachev, in the Indian government's own perception, what India is trying to do is nothing more than protect its own geopolitical interests. A friendly Afghanistan has always been a foreign policy priority for India.

Especially in view of India's unfriendly relations with Pakistan. There is absolutely no scope for the two countries, at least for the time being, to work together for Afghanistan's smooth and peaceful transition to its post-Soviet intervention phase. This much became quite clear during the foreign secretary, K. P. S. Menon's recent visit to Islamabad. The Pakistan blockade lends an additional impetus to working with Gorbachev and the regime in Kabul. The combined weight of Moscow, Delhi and Kabul for strict implementation of the Geneva accord under UN supervision will go a long way to isolate Pakistan if Islamabad is found lacking in will or power or both to cooperate in the accord's faithful implementation.

India gets involved

Salamat Ali

Afghan President Najibullah's 3-6 May visit to New Delhi has signalled India's open involvement in the Afghan imbroglio on the side of his communist regime. The visit produced implicit Indian promises of pressure on Pakistan to constrain its involvement in the widely anticipated drive by mujahideen rebels on Kabul. India indicated to Najibullah that it would use its considerable prestige among the non-aligned nations to break his current isolation in the non-communist world and will participate in the US\$ 300-million annual foreign-aid package he wants to help rehabilitate the Afghan economy.

New Delhi was responding to fears — shared by Najibullah's patrons in Moscow — that a mujahideen success could eventually result in the setting up of a fundamentalist Islamic regime in Kabul. India also is concerned that Pakistan will redeploy military forces to their joint border and that the flow of Afghan weapons reaching Sikh separatists in the Punjab could increase.

At his press conference, Najibullah argued for an Indian role in the Afghan national reconciliation process. Taking note of the contacts Indian diplomats have been making with some prominent Afghan refugees, he said New

Delhi could play a major role in persuading former Afghan monarch Zahir Shah and some overseas moderate Afghan groups to return home.

However, he insisted that the former king and the moderates should join a government of reconciliation headed by himself and with his communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan forming the core of such a government. He envisaged this government including "second-rank armed groups."

* * *

India for its part cannot resist the temptation of jumping into the fray for both historical and current political reasons. Against the background of its hostile relationship with Pakistan since partition, New Delhi has assiduously cultivated Kabul in its dispute with Islamabad over the two countries' joint border. Kabul does not recognise the Durand Line — a border inherited from the British — which puts some Pathan tribal areas inside Pakistan.

Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan have always been either hostile or indifferent, except for a brief period of warmth near the end of former Afghan president Mohammad Daud's era, before he was murdered in a communist

coup of 1978. Alarmed by Soviet penetration of Afghan state apparatus, Daud had negotiated with Iran and Pakistan an agreement to break the Soviet hold over the Afghan army, bureaucracy and economy. Part of the accord was to be Daud's recognition of the Durand Line.

India is concerned also because of reports that Pakistan is looking forward to cashing in on the long years of its association with the Afghan national resistance to Soviet occupation. Some of the fundamentalists among the Afghan guerilla groups are fighting for nothing short of an Islamic revolution in Afghanistan, and these groups have gone to the extent of proposing an eventual confederation between an Islamic Afghanistan and Islamic Pakistan.

Fears have been expressed in India as well that Pakistan, relieved on the western front, could shift a large number of troops and a considerable array of weapons to the eastern border. Also the current trickle of Afghan guerilla weapons into Sikh separatists' hands in the Punjab could turn into a torrent, confronting India with a formidable army on its border and an impossible domestic situation in Punjab.

— For Eastern Economic Review

India rolls out the red carpet for Najibullah

Melinda Liu

His country is in the throes of civil war, his Russian protectors are preparing to withdraw and there is no telling how long he can hang on as Afghanistan's leader. So what was Najibullah doing away from home in India last week? Searching for what he now needs most: a friend. Which is exactly what he appears to have found in Rajiv Gandhi.

India's enthusiastic and high-profile embrace of Najibullah surprised practically everyone, especially the United States, but perhaps it shouldn't have. Moscow's decision to begin pulling its troops out of Afghanistan starting this week has cleared the way for a redefinition of the balance of power and influence in Central Asia. And it has spurred a whirl-

wind of diplomatic activity among old friends and enemies alike, all of whom intend to make sure that their governments don't get left behind.

American officials were perplexed at why Gandhi would so openly ally himself with the Afghan leader, whose ability to rule the country

(Continued on page 24)

The other side of Kabul

Rita Sebastian (Former Editor, Sunday Times, Colombo.)

It reminded me of sparklers on Christmas eve. But they were no sparklers, nor was it Christmas eve. They were flares thrown out by Soviet aircraft flying over Afghanistan, meant to deflect the attack by heat-seeking stinger anti-aircraft missiles targetted by the Mujahideen from behind the mountains.

Once you fly into high-security Kabul airport and gradually get accustomed to the constant drone of aircraft, armed soldiers and security checks on every Kabul roadway, Soviet trucks and armoured tanks trundling along, and the occasional burst of gunfire and bomb explosion, you begin to see the other side of this "war-torn" city.

It was Spring in Kabul, and the winds from across the snow-capped paghman mountains, biting cold. And the arid harshness of the desert climate nowhere evident as in the clayey dust-laden soil. But Apricot and apple blossom were just beginning to appear on the skeletal remains of winter-dead trees, and the grass was turning green again.

Kabul is a city of fascinating contrasts. The old and the new, the traditional and the modern rub shoulders with seeming unconcern. Desert dwellings of mud-wall enclosures that house home and garden and animal, is just as familiar as high rise housing blocks and fiat roofed modern residences.

Women in western dress, in lacy stockings and spiked heels walk alongside women in the traditional chadari, the long, flowing tent-like robe that covers them from head to toe. Men in three piece suits and youth denim-clad and leather jacketed, a contrast to the turbaned men in their Peran Thomban, the baggy

trousers and the loose and long overshirts,

Camels climb the narrow mountain roads while Japanese Toyotas, painted white and yellow the city's taxis cross and crisscross the large network of city roads.

In the old city you find the legendary oriental bazaar where finely woven cotton and silk carpets are piled high inside shops, where mounds of dried fruits, and nuts, for which Afghanistan is well known, is heaped on the sidewalks, where velvets and silks embroidered in gold and silver glisten as they catch the sun or the artificial lights, where the Afghan trader will put his right hand across his chest in greeting and invite you inside.

And it is here in the old city that you find Kabul's money market, the city's unofficial Bank where a hundred dollar bill will get four times the official rate.

In a glass fronted cubicle Ranjit Singh, 34 is in business with his two brothers. He claims his family has been operating in the money market for over eight hundred years. On a good day 30,000 to 40,000 dollars worth of business is conducted. The yearly turnover in the market is in the billions. Wads and wads of notes held together by rubber bands lie atop tables inside the cubicles. But business is conducted in the outside square as well. Young men and old, are busy buying and selling. The rate peaks one day and drops the next.

You literally carry thousands of Afs, as the currency is called, when you go out marketing for a pound of tomatoes will cost anything from about three hundred Afs and a kilo of mutton 500 Afs.

The shops are flooded with imported goods. You can get anything from Bally shoes to a Marks and Spenser shirt, from Russian caviar to canned fruit from Bulgaria, from electrical goods from Japan to the finest china and crystal. There is a large market in second hand goods as well, from clothes to footwear from both East and West.

Thursday and Friday is the official weekend in Afghanistan and its on Thursday that the Soviets come out in droves to do their weekly shopping, the day the international community is warned to keep out of the busy shopping area like chicken street for fear that the Mujahideens will trigger off one of their bombs.

The international community also observes a self-imposed curfew. UN missions have made ten pm. the curfew deadline. Its not a pleasant experience though driving on the Kabul streets at night. In the dark and near deserted streets the only people you encounter are the Afghan soldiers checking vehicles and people and after 11 pm you will find that the Soviets have positioned themselves as well in the city streets. The nine year war has taken heavy toll of both life and property. Travel outside Kabul to the provinces are arduous journeys according to reports mainly because the roads have been either damaged or destroyed in the fighting. Salang Pass is the only main trunk route through which goods and equipment comes into Kabul from the West routed through the Soviet Union.

Foreigners are warned not to travel outside Kabul except to Garga, 20 kilometres from the city centre.

(Continued on page 16)

Pakistan denies Afghan—Soviet charge

FOREIGN
NEWS

Pakistani Prime Minister Junejo flatly denied the Soviet backed Afghan charge that Pakistan is violating the Geneva Accords in the very first week of the Soviet pull-out. Mr. Junejo who said there was "no substance whatsoever" in the allegations made against his government flew to Beijing the sameday. Along with Pakistan and the US, China was a major backer of the anti-Kabul mujahdeen.

The Pakistani Prime Minister was reacting to a TASS report which said:

Soviet officials on Friday backed Afghan Government charges

that Pakistan is supplying Afghan rebels with arms in violation of UN-mediated agreements, Tass news agency said.

"The shipping of arms and ammunition from Pakistan into the territory of the Republic of Afghanistan is an obvious violation of the Geneva Agreements" Tass quoted a Soviet Foreign Ministry statement as saying.

The Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan are fulfilling their obligations under the Geneva Agreements and urge Pakistan to do so as well" the statement said.

The Soviet-backed Kabul Government complained to the United

Nations on Thursday that Pakistan was supplying Afghan rebels with arms, in violation of accords signed in Geneva on April 14.

It was the second Afghan complaint to United Nations observers this week alleging violations of the Geneva Accord and followed Pakistani press reports that lorries continued to move arms to rebels in Afghanistan.

On Afghan bases

MOSCOW, May 17

Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Zain Noorani, has stressed that there are no training camps or bases of the Afghan Mujahidin on Pakistani territory.

Mr. Noorani also said Pakistan would not want its territory to be used for delivering arms intended for hostile actions against a neighbouring State, a communique issued after his meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Eduard Shevernadze here said. The two met at the Soviet Foreign Office yesterday.

Mr. Noorani was replying to his counterpart who said the Soviet Union would strictly comply with the Geneva accords, but noted that Pakistan was also under an obligation not to allow on its territory "the presence, refuge, training and arms supply to political and other groups waging subversion against Afghanistan."

Mr. Noorani stressed that Pakistan 'strictly' intended to abide by its Geneva commitment not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. He agreed with Mr. Shevernadze that the internal problems, including the formation of governments, was the exclusive prerogative of the Afghan people themselves, the communique added.

Pakistan must match India

— Zia

ISLAMABAD, May 22

Pakistan's armed forces must meet an increasing military threat from India, Pakistan President Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq said on Sunday.

"We must match a sword with a sword, a tank with a tank, a destroyer with a destroyer. Not necessarily in quantitative but in qualitative terms," he said to applause from his audience at a speech to introduce a new book on the armed forces.

Pakistan, which has fought three wars with its large neighbour to the east, has watched with alarm

as India has bought more and more modern weaponry from its Soviet allies.

"India, without any threat to its integrity, is spending incredible amounts of money on defence," Zia said.

"But how do you counter a nuclear submarine, an aircraft carrier, the latest fighter aircraft and modern tanks? Not with bamboo sticks," he said.

Pakistan's armed forces total around 500,000 against India's total of about 1.3 million.

Pakistan aided Sikh rebels

NEW DELHI May 18.

Disclosures made by captured extremists in the course of their interrogation confirm the involvement of Pakistan in the anti-India activities of the protagonists of Khalistan. One such extremist — Amrik Singh, son of Gian Singh, a Jat Sikh of Shahpur Goraya in Gurdaspur district — revealed after his arrest on December 11, 1986, that a Pakistani intelligence officer named Malik had conveyed to him in June 1984 that Sikh youths fearing arrest in Punjab should cross over to Pakistan where they would be given every help including supply of arms.

Amrik Singh sent more than 100 Sikh youths to Pakistan and he himself, along with Wassan Singh Zafarwal, a member of the Panthic Committee, went across to Pakistan. Under the instruction of Pakistani intelligence officers of Amrik Singh and Bhai Kanwar Singh, president of the Akal Federation motivated 375 Sikh youths including Nirwair Singh (who later opened a Khalistan office in the Golden Temple complex) in Faisalabad jail to fight for their rights.

Meetings in Lahore

At meetings held in Lahore on April 1-2, 1985, under the aegis of Pakistani security officers — Malik Asif and Bhatl — Bhai Amrik Singh, Bhai Kanwar Singh, Bhai Gurjit Singh and Atinderpal Singh (of the AISSF), Ajaib Singh (Damdami Taksal) and Balbir Singh Sandhu discussed measures to coordinate the activities of various terrorist groups in Punjab.

Amrik Singh confirmed that Sikh youths were trained in subversion and sabotage techniques at camps located in Faisalabad jail, Civil Lines in Lahore, Dalla Kothi in Sialkot district, Lala Musa, Jalalpur Jathan and a building at Sheikhpura in Lahore.

At the Dalla Kothi camp, the trainer was Sakif Sufi, a Pakistani intelligence officer, who taught Sikh youths how to make and handle explosives, and use them for destorying railway tracks and bridges, oil tankers, power houses, etc.

Between February and July 1986, Pakistani intelligence officers headed by Malik infiltrated more than 100 trained Sikh young men in 12 batches into Punjab from across the border. The head of each team was given sufficient money for meeting expenses.

Arms consignment:

According to Mohan Inder Singh Sachdev alias Pushpinder Singh alias Tony, son of Kanwaljit Singh of Delight Fashion House, Amritsar, the International Sikh Youth Federation of Canada (ISYF) sent a consignment of arms worth \$ 250,000 to Pakistan for onward transhipment to Punjab under the guidance of Satinderpal Singh Gill of the ISYF. Mohan Inder Singh himself was a member of the ISYF and was nabbed on January 5, 1987.

He disclosed the Gill had been based in Pakistan to coordinate the procurement of weapons and to give directions to Sikh terrorists in Punjab. Another plan of the ISYF, he said, was to procure weapons worth about Rs. 20 lakhs from Abdul Rahim, a gun runner of the North-West Frontier Province, through the assistance of one Sham Singh Sindhi, a Pakistani Sikh working for the Pakistani intelligence service. One Jalaluddin of Lahore was an important link between Sikh extremists and Pakistan who was in touch with Dr. Arjinderpal Singh, U.S. based top extremist.

— Hindu

The other side...

(Continued from page 12)

On a Friday when the Mujaiheen guns are said to be stilled you climb into the mountains and come upon a reservoir and down below an abandoned golf course that has known better times.

The clubhouse near the dam that spans the reservoir is bullet riddled and windowless, and a part of its concrete roof has caved in.

It is also on a Friday that in the large open spaces just outside the town that the Afghans indulge in all forms of gambling, from betting on trained fighting dogs to cocks to playing with dice and cards.

Something that strikes you very forcibly as you travel around Kabul is that be it the factory floor or labour gangs digging ditches to lay pipes, the workforce is either quite old or very young.

The young men have either joined the rebel groups, got killed in the fighting, conscripted into the army, or walked over the mountains into Iran and Peshawar as refugees.

And as Afghanistan awaits its fate with the withdrawal of the estimated 115,00 Soviet troops there is a growing optimism among the Afghans that even if the Soviet withdrawal spurns a virtual bloodbath time will effect the compromises that will end the war and bring peace to this war-torn land.

Poverty alleviation

— Warnasena Rasaputra

In 1978, Robert Mc Namara predicted that by the year 2000, those living in abject poverty in the world will be reduced from 770 million in 1985 to 600 million due to economic growth. He was hopeful that as economic growth takes place, it will make visible impact on the poor, and that assault on poverty has to be made in an environment that is conducive to rapid economic growth.

Today, there are nearly one billion people in the world who are living on the margins of survival. Among these nearly 80% are absolutely poor, living under conditions of severe malnutrition and semi-starvation levels, condemning them to endless prospects of poverty.

When Gunnar Myrdal published the 'Asian Drama' he created a greater awareness among the policy makers, researchers and others in the developing countries of Asia, about the urgency, that had to be placed on a poverty alleviation programme for Asia. Lot of work has been done in this respect but poverty is still with us. Every nation has done so much of work in this connection but the results achieved have not been in proportion to the efforts put in Sri Lanka, perhaps, has done more than most developing countries to alleviate poverty among the lower income groups. Accordingly, it had its successes as well as failures. There are several questions that remain unanswered. Why does poverty persist despite long years of experience in poverty alleviation

programmes? Do these programmes lag behind despite efforts made! Why does poverty remain elusive? What steps can be taken to eliminate poverty? It is necessary to find suitable answers to these and related questions at regular

achieved a life expectancy of 69 years, literacy rate of 86.5 per cent and an infantile mortality rate of 29.5 per thousand. More women have entered the labour force. The average income per income receiver in rural areas

The poorest of the poor have to find some work in order to maintain themselves. But poverty reduces capacity to work due to ill-health, malnutrition, lack of initiative and self confidence.

intervals of time so that poverty alleviation programmes can be reviewed, revised, improved and intensified.

Despite various efforts made by government and non government organisations, poverty is still with us. It is an elusive problem which changes its character and magnitude from time to time. Poverty in Sri Lanka has to be viewed in the context of the vast strides it has made in the social sphere. In 1950, Sri Lanka had a reasonably high standard of living than most of the Asian countries. In 1950, Sri Lanka had a life expectancy of 50 years, literacy rate of 58 per cent and infantile mortality rate of 92 per thousand. Corresponding figures for most South Asian countries were lower than those achieved by Sri Lanka. In 1960, too, Sri Lanka's economic and social achievements were far above those of most South and South East Asian countries. By 1984, Sri Lanka

has increased to 82% between 1973 and 1981/82.

Despite these achievements, the incidence of poverty has abated very little. Thus, the incidence of poverty declined from 27.6% in 1973 to 22% in 1981/82. The per capita daily calorie consumption declined from 2,572 in 1969/70 to 2,290 in 1981/82. The worst affected were the two lowest deciles where the calorie consumption dropped by nearly 400 calories over the same period.

This apparent deterioration of certain indicators of poverty could be attributed to changes in the character of poverty itself. The world has gone through several economic crises and the environment that emerges soon after takes a different shape with new requirements and new problems. The breakdown of the traditional social organisations can add a further dimension to existing

Dr Rasaputra is Governor of the Central Bank

problems. The causes of poverty are many but can be identified. What is essential, therefore, is a multi-pronged assault on poverty. This has to be backed by institutional support from the public and private sectors.

The poorest of the poor have to find some work in order to maintain themselves. But poverty reduces capacity to work due to ill-health, malnutrition, lack of initiative and self confidence. The intermittent nature of their labour force participation is further restricted by lack of opportunities. Productivity constraints are further aggravated by inertia and even bad luck. As incomes decline their indebtedness increases. In 1981/82, the lowest income group receiving less than Rs. 400/- a month had negative savings of nearly 40% of income. Any poverty alleviation programme must raise the job opportunities for the poor, raise food availability and provide shelter for the homeless.

One of the greatest achievements in this respect is the sharp increase in paddy production and the yield per hectare. In 1984, the paddy yield per hectare in Sri Lanka was 3,000 kg and was higher than the yield obtained in India, Pakistan, Malaysia or Thailand. This increase is vital for it has laid the basic foundation for increased supply of food to the poor and an increase in per capita income of the poor in the future.

Increases in productivity can lead to redundancy of labour in a particular area and this requires a re-allocation of resources to increase job opportunities. Economic growth and employment expansion must go together. Creation of job opportunities to the targetted group requires immediate attention and this has to be reconciled with policies leading to long term growth. This would not only give short term benefits to the poor who in turn will work for greater progress within the framework of economic development, but also, would provide greater stability

than providing a privileged class the wherewithal of high consumption.

There is of course an international dimension to the instability of income and to the poverty problem. Income differences between countries are increasing and the outlook seems to be even more gloomy. Trade and aid policies are not adequate to get over this problem in the medium term. It is not possible to get over all the constraints that tend to work against early solutions. Supplies must be increased to raise incomes but this cannot be done in the short run. What is required is to shift resources to those areas that are favoured by the new demand structure. This would mean that we have to adjust the economy to meet new situations. The adjustment programmes however, must find solutions to existing imbalances without inflicting severe burdens on the more vulnerable sections of the people. Adjustment policies have often led to increase in unemployment in many countries mainly because of the existing rigidities that tend to obstruct smooth functioning of the free market forces.

Most of the poor are landless. They possess only their labour. Their incomes can be raised by increasing employment or raising real wages. The poor who own some land, own less than half an acre per family, and are not economically viable. They will not be able to benefit from a direct increase in the price of paddy as they cannot generate a marketable surplus. Enhancing the returns to this productive asset by reducing input costs and raising productivity can lead to some reduction of poverty. This has to be supported by appropriate pricing policy. Any policy bias against agriculture can result in increased rural to urban migration. Given the dominance of service activities in the urban areas, these migrants into urban areas will suffer most and intensify problems of poverty alleviation.

Improvement in agricultural prices need to be supplemented with the development of rural

infrastructure and supporting services. A poor country by itself cannot meet these requirements to increase the supplies. This calls for more resources and their productive utilisation assisted by the international community with concessional aid. This is all the more necessary because poor farmers are food producers who on un-economical plots. They have to be weaned away to the production of commercial crops. Given the necessary assistance, the small farmers can be expected to participate and benefit fully by switching over to products that will give them a high rate of return. Whether the poor have little or no collateral, they should be able to get credit on the basis of their productive capacity.

There is no doubt that success in poverty alleviation programmes largely hinges on the ability to maintain sustained economic growth. The benefits of such growth should seep down to all levels. In addition, this requires a direct assault on poverty to protect the poorest of the poor from any possible social deterioration. The resources, whether they are human, physical or financial must be used to the fullest extent by increasing their productivity, efficiency and reducing costs. A reduction of the opportunity gap will enable the poor to get more jobs, higher incomes and higher labour force participation and provide the incentives to display their initiatives whilst becoming involved in development activities. This will also enable local aspirations to be reviewed by constant inter-actions with the poor. The central planning organisations will no doubt provide the leadership, but too much of central can be counter productive. Too much of central control will lead to paternalism. Self reliance cannot be fostered under paternalism. There is an inexorable need to foster professional confidence of youth in rural areas by scientific farming. Without efforts of youths, without instilling confidence into them and without self reliance, the future of agricultural farming can turn out to be bleak.

What is required is total approach for poverty alleviation.

Growth strategy and Sri Lanka's poor

(NORAD REPORT)

For a range of reasons Sri Lanka's experience of the relationship between economic growth and welfare in a broader sense have been very closely examined by economists and quoted in international debates. Until recently it had been almost conventional wisdom that Sri Lanka was an example — perhaps an admirable example — of a country which had managed through a wide range of redistributive and welfare policies to maintain an unusually high quality of life for the majority of its poor citizens despite a very mediocre rate of economic growth.¹ It is not surprising that this conventional wisdom has recently been challenged. For it would seem to constitute an endorsement of the policies of the previous more statist — inclined government of 1970–77, and a *de facto* critique of the more growth-oriented and private sector-oriented policies of the present government. A major research study on 'The Evolution of Living Standards in Sri Lanka', financed *inter alia* by NORAD, has recently been completed by the World Bank and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Some of the research papers raise major questions about the accuracy of the 'conventional wisdom' as defined above. Equally importantly this research has produced some very penetrating critiques of the quality and accuracy of the data series bearing on poverty and income distribution.

In comparison with many other developing countries, Sri Lanka produces abundant social and economic statistics which have a reputation for relative reliability. There are a range of statistical series which bear directly on questions about the levels and distribution of material welfare: the national accounts; sample surveys of consumer income and

expenditure (and, less consistently possession of consumer durables, access to household amenities, and food consumption) conducted by the Central Bank in 1953, 1963, 1973, 1978/79 and 1981/82 (Consumer Finance Surveys) and by the Department of Census and Statistics in 1969/70 and 1980/81 (Socio-Economic Surveys); annual national food balance sheets; morality statistics; and a variable range of data from the decennial population census.

It is surprising that in the light of the apparent richness of the statistical material and the availability of the results of the recent World Bank — Central Bank research project, there should be difficulties in reaching conclusions about the evolution of living standards, common of the distribution of income and welfare, and of the material conditions of the poorer sections of the population. Part of the reason lies in the way the World Bank — Central Bank research project was conducted. A number of economic researchers set to work simultaneously but independently on similar sets of questions, often using different sets of data and almost always using different methods of adjusting for the imperfections of the data and different statistical and econometric techniques. No attempt appears to have been made to consolidate and summarise their points of agreement; much less to identify and reconcile their points of disagreement. In the available papers the different researchers rarely address one another's conclusions directly. The outsider, therefore, has to begin by mapping out the different methods used and the different conclusions reached. Only then is it possible to begin comparing and evaluating the different findings. This exercise did however help in clarifying one of the most useful products of the original research project: a strong indication of the inadequacies and

inconsistencies of the existing statistical data and of the dangers of attempting to draw refined conclusions from a crude data base.

The main problem faced in attempting to draw conclusions about the evolution of living standards are explained below. It was, however, possible to build on some of the results of the World Bank — Central Bank research project and draw some conclusions of varying degrees of firmness but, unfortunately, very little quantitative precision. Taking the period since 1970 the three main conclusions are:

- (i) It is virtually certain that a large fraction of the poorer population have experienced stagnation or deterioration in their standard of living since 1970.
- (ii) Correspondingly, since per capita national income has increased considerably since 1970, it follows that the degree of inequality in the distribution of income and welfare must have increased considerably.
- (iii) Leaving aside the adverse impact on many poor people of the changes since 1979 in the value and coverage of food subsidies (see section 1.3.3.) it is not possible to make a comparative judgement about the effect on the welfare of the poorest of the different economic strategies pursued by the present government (1977 onwards) and its predecessor (1970–77).

Data Problems

The main problems arise with the main data series which have been used to assess long run changes in living standards in Sri Lanka.

The first problem is that there is simply no reliable consumer

1. P. Isenman, 'Basic Needs: the case of Sri Lanka', *World Development*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1980.

price index for Sri Lanka for any long period of time. The only official series of any depth, the Colombo Consumers Price Index, is based on an out-dated weighing system, has been substantially influenced by official views on what price should be as opposed to what they actually are, severely understates inflation, and simply cannot be taken seriously. In recent years a number of new price indices have been constructed. But no amount of price data for recent years can remedy its absence for previous years. And even for recent years there are cases of wide divergence between different sources of information on what should be fairly straightforward facts, such as the prices prevalent in Colombo markets for individual commodities.

If one is obliged to be a little sceptical about the accuracy of recent price indices apparently conducted in a correct manner but nonetheless inconsistent with one another, how much more sceptical must one be of the results of attempts to reconstruct historical price indices on the basis of various fragmentary data and considerable statistical ingenuity? Ingenuity, unfortunately, tends to be very personal and subjective. The kinds of assumptions and adjustments made to construct long-term consumer price indices vary widely. One of the **adjusted** indices indicates an overall consumer prices increase of just over 100% between 1975 and 1982, while another points to more than 200%.

This problem is compounded by the fact that inflation has been far from neutral between different categories of commodities. In particular, food prices increased especially fast in relation to other consumer prices both around 1974-1975 and in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Real per capita food expenditure is in principle a very good measure of the welfare of the poor in a country like Sri Lanka where the poor are under-nourished and spend on food most of any additional income they receive. But no trustworthy measurements of real food expenditure can be made

on the basis of sequential consumer finance studies without a reliable consumer price index.

The only safe conclusion seems to be that, **taken alone**, the studies based on apparent changes in real food expenditure of the poorest between successive consumer finance surveys, cannot be trusted.

The second major data problem, equally severe but affecting a wider range of data series, concerns attempts to draw conclusions about trends from a series of pointwise data relating to a handful of individual years. One of the very useful products of the World Bank-Central Bank research project is clear evidence of the major impact on the living standards of the poorer sections of the population of year-to-year fluctuations in economic performance and economic policy. In particular, the poor tend to eat relatively well when good weather brings a good harvest (especially a good rice harvest) and when the prospect of general elections brings in unusually large quantities of imported basic foods. In addition, some of the other regular fluctuations to which the Sri Lankan economy is prone, such as major changes in world tea prices, may have substantial short term effects on the level and distribution of welfare.

Economists can — and sometimes do — attempt to adjust data from individual years to take account of special variable factors. This however, elicits a whole new range of questions and doubts. How can one separate out 'basic trends' from 'short term factors'?² What statistical methods does one use to calculate basic trends and thus adjust raw data? The method of adjustment will always be disputed. What cannot be accepted are conclusions about

2. E.g. unlike in 1970 and 1977, the 1982 elections seem not to have been a time of unusual abundance of basic foods (see Table A.9). Do we still make adjustments to the 1982 food availability data based on the premise that, without elections, 'trend' food availability in that year would have been even lower than it was?

'trends' based solely on assessing change between two individual years. One can only draw reliable conclusions about trends from **any** set of pointwise observations when, *inter alia* (a) substantial number of individual years are covered by a similar survey; and (b) different (acceptable) methods of analyzing the data all indicate similar conclusions. Unfortunately, among the the Sri Lankan data series we are considering here, the only area meeting conditions (a) are those on consumer food expenditure (National nutritional status data, for example, are available only for two separate years). These data are however, adversely affected by the price index problem mentioned above. To some degree condition (b) is met in this case, especially, if one gives positive weight to those studies which make fewer adjustments to the raw survey data. The general picture from the studies, which is pessimistic about the living standards of the poor, is taken below as supplementing evidence to support a conclusion drawn by more direct methods.

The third problem with the data is fairly obvious but easily ignored. This is that there is too high a margin of error in many of the data series for one to draw any reliable conclusions about trends from comparing two or three sets of observations. Reliable indications of even the **direction** of trends would be derivable only if there had been large real changes over a fairly short period of time. And this seems not to have happened in Sri Lanka since 1970. There has been no sudden major shift in welfare levels of individual large population categories or in the distribution of income.

Figures on the distribution of **income** for various years selected from among 1953, 1963, 1973, 1978/79, 1980/81, 1981/82 have frequently been quoted to prove that the distribution of income had gradually become more equal in the period before the early 1970s, and has since consistently become more unequal. The raw

data to indeed appear to support such a conclusion. The data are, however, simply not reliable. Careful comparisons show that consumer expenditure is reported more completely than income, and that proportion of actual income which is reported in consumer finance surveys has varied widely between one consumer finance survey and another, very much along the lines that one would predict given the reporting incentives created by government policy. The high degree of equality of income distribution reported for the early 1970s could plausibly be explained by the incentives which the 'socialist' policies of the 1970-77 government gave to the rich to under-report incomes. While the actual trends in income distribution are probably accurately captured by these data on incomes, there are too many doubts about the data to accept them as useful in their own right, perhaps even for them to be acceptable as supplementary evidence.

Doubt about questionnaire-based data on personal incomes are predictable. What is more surprising is that there should be contradictions between data series in other cases where it should be fairly easy to establish the facts. A good example is provided by the contradictory results of closely comparable sets of information on housing standards. According to the decennial censuses of population and housing, housing standards improved between 1971 and 1981. The proportion of houses constructed of entirely permanent materials (brick, stone, tile, cement etc.) increased from 35% to 42%. The average number of rooms per house increased by 11%, and the number of occupants per house fell by 7%. A study based on data from consumer finance surveys in 1973 and 1981/82 indicates similar improvements for all income groups. Yet according to consumer finance surveys conducted in 1969/70 and 1980/81 average floor area per household remained almost the same and the dwellings of the poorest 25% of the population declined in average area. Even for relatively

easily measured indicators, only rather marked changes over time can be separated out from normal statistical error.

The Evidence

The basis of the first conclusion above — that the living standards of large sections of the poor have not improved since 1970 — is a rather simple calculation: had the poor really become better off, then per capita food intakes would have increased, whereas in fact they have not.

Let us explain this in more detail. According to the national accounts; real per capita private consumption increased by 45% between 1970 and 1985. At the same time, a substantial proportion of the population suffers from under-nourishment. The total supply of calories for the nation has generally been below the recommended minimum during this period, averaging around 2,100-2,200 per day (see Table A.9, column a). And this total supply is of course not equally distributed, leaving many people with calorie intakes well below recommended levels. Consumer finance surveys indicated that the poorest 40% of the population spend 70-75% of their income on food. On the basis of (a) available information on the distribution of income and food between different income groups and (b) some plausible (conservative) assumptions about the proportion of extra income which each income group will spend on food, one can arrive at some illustrative estimates of how much total calorie intake would have increased between 1970 and 1985. If this 45% recorded income increase was both genuine and had been equally distributed among all income groups (deciles of the population ranked by income). In other words, one is conducting a simple and crude but nevertheless powerful plausibility check.

And the results are quite startling. The calculations indicate that, had this 45% real income increase been equally distributed, the national average per capita calorie intake would have increased very substantially, by a minimum

of 15% and possibly considerably more. (The uncertainty lies in the lack of direct information on the proportion of extra income spent on calories by each income group. It has been assumed here that this is 50% for the poorest 40% of the population). Yet the actual figures in Table A.9 indicate a very different picture. With the exception of 1984 and 1985, per capita calorie intake have remained virtually unchanged since 1970, moving up and down a little in short cycles of a few years, but with no sign of any trend increase (see especially column c.). The only period of sustained increase was the late 1960s.

The T-56. . .

(Continued from page 4)

the politics of nationalistic counter-attack, of Sinhala resistance. It is not well-knit nor directed by disillusioned senior officers like the anti de Gaulle O. A. S. after the "betrayal" or "amputation" of Algeria. Yet it may have a strong political character, anti-JR, anti-government and nationalistic.

The acclimatisation to violence, access to and militarisation with sophisticated weaponry, the brutalisation of society and a less traditional respect for the sanctity of life are all part of the pattern of social, psychological change.

And these changes mark the stormy passage from the '56 to the T-56 Revolution.

As in the North, the government's response has been a tough military STF crackdown. Again, the students, usually the more radical groups, have been the first casualties. The CRM notes:

"University students are a group particularly disaffected. There has been a pattern of large scale arrests accompanied by prolonged detention, not merely without charge or trial, but at times even without prompt basic investigation to see whether there is any justification for arrest".

Harry Pieris

Ian Goonetilleke's tribute to the memory of the late Harry Pieris, a painter the writer had known, apparently, from the very inception of the 43rd Group, cannot possibly be rivalled or excelled by any other critic in the way he has captured for us in literary terms his complex visual response to the artist's complete oeuvre. He has traced the trajectory of the artist's development, his key role in the formation and sustenance of the group that triggered the most significant development in painting in this country in modern times, with the skill of a true historian of art. However there are a couple of points about the artist's creative work that I felt would be worth discussing and which had not been touched upon by Ian Goonetilleke.

Evaluating Harry's work against the background not only of the kind of art his first teacher, Mudliyar Amarsekera, represented, but also against the background of the work of his own avant garde colleagues of the forty's, one notices that he was the least 'revolutionary'. To the end he remained a skilled draughtsman, and if he deviated from the jejune academism of the local practitioners, it was least noticeable in the portraits. True they had a kind of freshness and an incisiveness, that his first teacher's portraits lacked. But the element of daring that George Keyt or Ivan Pieris exhibited in their work was completely absent in Harry's work. Stanley Abeysinghe, and J.D.A. Perera were, in my opinion, equally stimulating portrait painters.

In a social sense, Harry was not a commoner, having belonged to family that could boast of great wealth that had lasted more than a generation. Why I have to mention this fact is that, Harry carried over his bourgeois aestheticism and eliticism to his art. He lived the life of a 'wealthy leisurely gentleman, tending his

almost English garden totally cut off from the outside, screaming, unorganised, jungle of a poor tropical capital. To enter his house in Barnes Place was to enter a completely different world and the artist appeared like a lost European ex-colonial (when I met him late in his life) rather than like an artist who was going through the horrors of an enervating Asian existence.

He was a representative of a cosmopolitan world, and he would not have looked out of place in an artist's garret in Montmartre or in a basement flat in Bayswater. There was not a trace in him of the 'Ceylonese' or in modern parlance of the 'Sri Lankan'. May be he had tropical plants around his cottage, and tropical grass neatly mown in his impeccably kept lawn, or colourful tropical flowers adorning his cosy sitting room, but he himself was a product of ultimate deracination most successfully carried out by the English colonial masters on the local elite of the day. I do not believe he spoke or felt like a Sinhalese at all. He was a European to his finger tips, by accident taking an abiding interest in a poor little imperial outpost and its art, like so many colonial administrators did in their leisure.

I had to paint this otherwise unimportant literary portrait of the artist, very impressionistic though to bring home the fact of his total alienation from the physical milieu in which he worked and lived. This had, in my opinion, a rather disabling effect on his art. This prevented him from being an artist who belonged to a specific and a particular time and place. He was completely divorced from the feelings and visions of the ordinary people of this country, and I doubt if a truly great artist can afford to cut himself off from his ordinary fellow men however unprepossessing or uninspiring they may be.

His sojourn in India after his return from Europe was, in my opinion, completely fruitless, and failed to produce the fantastic effects such a trip produced on George Keyt for example. Unlike Keyt and Manjuri, he never got 'Indianised'. How could a person who behaved and lived like a European in Ceylon suddenly don a dhoti, speak Hindi or Bengali, eat chapathi with ones fingers smearing gravy all over one's face, and sleep on a bare reed mat? But this is what Keyt, Manjuri, and a host of others, who lived in India for some time, did, and they exhibited unmistakable signs of 'Indianness' in their art. But in Harry's paintings, one is hard put to find an 'Indianness' that he had worked into his artistic personality. His colonial European upbringing had insulated him so completely from being part of India, that his visit there would have, for all practical purposes, not taken place.

I must hasten to add that this was not due to any arrogance or insensitivity on Harry's part. The fault lay in his background, which no other artist in Sri Lanka shared with him. Other Ceylonese artists were from what we may call the 'middle class', and even though they had an alienating education in their schools, they were not all that far from the degrading social conditions of the large mass of the country's population, and ugliness add disorder that existed side by side with unsurpassed natural beauty of the country untouched by colonial rapacity and commercial greed. If he was born to a family less affluent than the one he was born to, perhaps he would have made a more stimulating and a more technically worthwhile contribution to the art of Sri Lanka. May be in that case the 43rd Group would have had to wind up its activities at a fairly early stage in its life, and many young artists would have gone without the generous assistance of an understanding and a sensitive artist.

— Tilak A. Gunawardhana

Ethnicity and regionalism the Jharkhand resurgence

Aravind Das

A storm is building up in the geographical heartland of India—21 tribal districts in south Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. The All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) and the Jharkhand Samanway Samiti (JSS) have given notice of the revival of the popular movement for carving out a new state. Typically reacting to the storm signals, the government or what passes for government in Bihar, the epicentre of the storm, has in its all too familiar ostrich style, buried its head in the uncertain sands of the law and order machinery, hoping that like the earlier ones, this storm too will pass.

The Jharkhand movement has indeed seen its ups and downs. The Jharkhand Party, founded in 1937 by Jaipal Singh, has gone through so many twists and turns and factions and fragments that even its golden jubilee has passed unnoticed. But today a situation has arisen where in the Jharkhand movement the Jharkhand Party has become irrelevant. The movement and the issues that give it momentum transcend party formations and have acquired the vitality of an autonomous, spontaneous upsurge which cannot be whisked away.

The issues behind the resurgent Jharkhand movement are not new. Over centuries, the native population of the districts included within Jharkhand has been oppressed by others. In the last two centuries, the oppression has been compounded by the exploitation of mineral, forest and human resources of the region. The immense mineral wealth of Jharkhand has been used by outsiders without adequate compensation to the people of the region. Coal, iron, manganese, mica, uranium and a variety of other

minerals and metals vital for India's economy have been extracted from Jharkhand without proportionate benefits of development having reached it. The ecological balance of the region has been shattered by emissions from heavy industry, massive dams and hydro-electricity projects and commercial exploitation of forest resources. And, worst of all, the indigenous peoples have been subjected to oppression and cultural humiliation. Forced migration, transportation to plantations and industries outside the region, chain-ganging into hazardous work in mines and factories, alienation of land and the conversion of the tribals into bonded or semi-slave agricultural labourers, etc., have been features of the political economy of Jharkhand. This has been matched by a cultural assault on the **adivasis**. Derision of their way of life on the ground that it is 'primitive', active subordination, or at best callous neglect, of their languages and traditions, domination over their religious and social mores through invidious extension of the so-called Great Tradition—all these have represented the attempted cultural conquest of the **adivasis**.

The subjugation of the **adivasis** has been most dramatically demonstrated by their subordinate position vis-a-vis the 'outsiders' or **dikus** whose incursion into the area in position of power, influence and wealth has unleashed physical terror which compounds economic exploitation and socio-cultural oppression. The mafia of the mines is drawn from the notorious ABC-Arrah, Ballia, Chapra-districts where cultural backwardness matches **junker** brashness. The aggression of these immigrants is unleashed on tribal workers and peasants. The **dikus** hold sway not only over employment in industry but also practi-

cally monopolise trade and commerce. Till recently, even such middle class as existed in the region was essentially non-tribal.

It is significant that it is the emergence of an enlightened middle class among the **adivasis** that has qualitatively altered the Jharkhand movement. Indeed while tribal resistance to domination and exploitation is legendary and peasant insurrection among them against landlordism and usury have taken the form of great upsurges like the **ulqulan** led by Birsa Munda, the first political organisation of **adivasis** in a modern polity was begun by the Cambridge-educated Jaipal Singh who had led the Indian hockey team to its golden trail in the 1928 Olympic games. In 1937, exactly fifty years ago, Jaipal Singh founded the Jharkhand Party.

It is perhaps not only coincidental that it was around the same time the 'untouchables' (later called scheduled castes) and the 'primitive' forest-dwellers (later classified as scheduled tribes) started asserting themselves under Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Jaipal Singh, respectively. The attempt of both to articulate the grievances of their particular constituencies got inevitably interwined with the issues of the general polity of the age. Babasaheb Ambedkar's role in the evolution of the Indian constitution was not divorced from his concerns about the social, political and cultural resurgence of the 'backward class' and Jaipal Singh's association with the processes of industrialisation, in particular his closeness with the Tatas, did not stop him from organising the tribals of Jharkhand.

The difference between Ambedkar and Jaipal Singh however was that while the former saw through the deleterious effect on the scheduled castes position exercised by the politics of the Congress and thus disassociated himself from it, Jaipal Singh led the Jharkhand Party into the embrace of the Congress. The result of these different courses was that while the movement of the scheduled castes retained sufficient autonomy to allow self-expression of its people to go

through the stages of **achhoot** to **harijan** to **dalit**, the self-consciousness of the tribals under Jaipal Singh remained passive. The noted administrator-anthropologist, K. Suresh Singh, quotes the perceptive British civil servant, Sir John Hubback, as remarking, "Jaipal Singh's prowess on the hockey field was not necessarily combined with sound political judgement". And, the tribal movement stagnated, with the Jharkhand Party drifting between the Scylla of Congress politics and the Charybdis of the easy venality of its leaders.

The original phase of the Jharkhand movement had developed on account of several intrinsic and contextual factors. The political and ethnic assertion of the tribals, in particular that of the Mundas, had been facilitated by the politics of the Muslim League which hoped to carve out a tribal corridor between the two segments of Pakistan, the Bengali-Bihari tensions which made Bengalis seek security and superiority among tribals and the attempt by a section of capital to carve out a relatively autonomous 'steel state' whose boundaries by and large corresponded with the Jharkhand region. With Independence and consolidation of Congress rule, much of the context changed. In order to regain vitality the movement had to respond to altered circumstances.

In the 1960 it was precisely a new general situation which injected vitality into the otherwise moribund Jharkhand movement. K. Suresh Singh has summarised elements of the changed scenario in terms of overall radicalisation of the polity expressed in the form of political extremism, agrarian radicalism and cultural revivalism of the subaltern groups, rise of urban and industrial pressure groups occasioned by economic recession, nationalisation of coal mines etc. and growth of the militant trade union movement in response to the institutionalisation of the mafia.

This new situation significantly affected the fragmented and factionalised Jharkhand movement and centered it on concerns like the rights of workers and peasants.

A new leadership, this time from outside Munda ranks, and including Santhals, Kurmi Mahatos and even non-tribals who empathised with the cause of the indigenous peoples came to the fore. The second phase of the movement was symbolised by the militant and creative Jharkhand Mukti Morcha led by Shibu Soren and supported by the legendary leader of the coal miners, A. K. Roy. The invigorated movement had signal successes in Dhanbad and Santhal Parganas and in addition to fighting **diku** moneylenders, landgrabbers and mafia hoodlums it also brought about social reform and cultural resurgence among the tribals. It transcended ethnicity.

However, the simplistic policies of the tribal leaders and the lures of electoral politics led to the decline of even this phase of the movement. The leadership fell prey to blandishments held out by the establishment and, for a while, it seemed that the story of Jaipal Singh was being repeated. However, the present resurgence of the Jharkhand movement has demonstrated that conclusion to have been premature.

Now a third phase of the Jharkhand movement has begun. This time it is not only pan-tribal but it includes within it non-tribal workers and peasants too. It has a distinct ideologically motivated leadership of great sophistication and its cadre are not the archetypal simple forest-dwellers but students and youth in urban and industrial areas. Much has changed in the political economy of the region since Jaipal Singh founded the Jharkhand Party and the changes are reflected in the movement shifting from issues of ethnicity to regionalism to class in the broadest sense of the term. Its **dénouement** will also be in the domain of political economy. □

India rolls out...

(Continued from page 13)

once the Soviets are gone is widely suspect. Apparently New Delhi is betting that Najibullah will figure prominently in Kabul's post-Soviet politics, despite the mujahe-

din's repeated insistence that he must go. But Gandhi has other reasons to befriend Najibullah. India is increasingly worried that the Soviet pullout will give new life to Moscow's efforts to improve its ties not only with Pakistan, but China as well, two countries whose support of the mujahedin have kept them at a distance from the Kremlin. That prospect frightens India, which wants nothing to interfere with its cozy relationship with Moscow.

Final obstacle: Moreover, Gandhi could point to concerns closer to home to justify taking the diplomatic gamble. Najibullah, weak though he may be, represents what may be the final obstacle to the rise of Muslim fundamentalism in Afghanistan. That prospect is a bleak one for Gandhi, who with his myriad of other social problems, can ill afford to allow radical Islamic tenets to take hold in India's own disaffected Muslim minority.

But Pakistan didn't like what it saw. "Unfortunate and regrettable" was the way one Islamabad government spokesman described Najibullah's official visit, his first ever outside of the Soviet bloc. Pakistan has other worries, too. A blood bath in Afghanistan could delay the return of 3.5 million Afghan refugees now living in Pakistan's border areas. And once the Russians are out of Afghanistan, Washington may not place such a high priority on aiding and arming Pakistan, currently seen as a "frontline" state against Soviet inroads. Recently the Reagan administration reiterated its commitment to Islamabad and unveiled a six-year \$4 billion aid package to Pakistan. But some U.S. officials doubt that Congress, which must approve aid allotments, will look as favorably upon Pakistan once the electorate turns its attention away from the cause of the mujahedin and the plight of the Afghan refugees.

Unifying role: Najibullah undoubtedly viewed his trip as a boost to his efforts to win a measure of international legitimacy. In India he treated New Delhi officials to a rundown on his plan to create a "pluralistic, multi-party state".

Re-enacting the Revolution

'The Long Day's Task' is Reggie Siriwardena's first play, Sri Lanka's leading authority on Russian Literature and Soviet politics, Siriwardena's translations of Anna Akhmatova were included in a collection of verse published in the 70's. He has written extensively on Tokstoy, Pushkin, Dostoevsky Chekov and Blok.

Inspired by Bukharin's 'memorised letter' to his wife, Larina, before leaving home to the Kremlin, jail trial and execution, 'The Long Day's Task' was preceded by commentaries on the current theoretical debate in the USSR and the revaluation of the October Revolution's heroic leaders, their role and contribution. Siriwardena's essay on BUKHARIN was published in our 10th anniversary number.

This comment on 'The Long Day's Task' is by the regular ISLAND columnist, JAYADEVA.

“... the long day's task is done
And we must sleep”.

Some tasks are still undone when sleep comes upon us; some take much longer than we anticipate. The task that Anna Mikhayalovna Larina wife of the great Russian revolutionary Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin, undertook in 1937 was accomplished only in 1988. On receiving the final summons to the Kremlin to face his accusers — a journey which he knew was to be his last — Bukharin entrusted Larina with the sacred “revolutionary” duty of redeeming his name. He made Larina memorise a letter “to the future, to posterity, vindicating” himself. It was too dangerous to commit such a message to writing; so Larina had to learn it by heart, and “save” it in the tablets of her memory, until time was ripe to release it to the leaders and the people of Russia. For fifty long years she carried this unique document in the hermetic security of her head, the privations and humiliations she suffered in the Stalin era helped to etch the “writing” ever more deeply. And when she judged the circumstances to be propitious, Larina “copied” Bukharin's letter on paper, and

submitted it to Gorbechev. The dead man's words fell on sympathetic ears. In February this year, Bukharin (along with his co-accused at the infamous Moscow Trials of 1938) was exonerated of the charges and fully rehabilitated.

“Larina and the Memorised Letter” — a marvellously human tale at the core, telling of a woman's unswerving devotion to a man and to the ideal he embodied. It is a tale that will touch everyone of us, whatever our views of Russia and the Russian system. For Russia-watchers, it will be irresistible, because of its unmistakable political resonances. For Reggie Siriwardene, humanist, poet, liberated Marxist, as well as exceptionally well-informed Russia-watcher, it has proved to be a source of literary inspiration. He has written a play on the story of Bukharin and Larina. It goes without saying that the title of the play is “The Long Day's Task”. And the dedication reads: “In memory of Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin the centenary year of his birth and the fiftieth year since his execution, and in honour of the love, fidelity and fortitude of Anna Mikhayalovna Larina”.

Act

Plainly, The Long Day's Task is an act of homage; it is in praise of Bukharin and Larina, their indestructible faith in each other and in praise of the values they stand for. The characters are as emblematic as they are individualistic. Mr. Siriwardene invests both Bukharin and Larina with a shining moral purity; he is rather less interested in their individuating personal traits than in their representative function, whether as principal figures in the affairs of a nation at a vital point in its socio-political evolution, or as partners in a private, domestic relationship based on mutual trust and affection. What informs the play is a steady historical sense which sees the flow of events in their larger connecting sequences and patterns. Mr. Siriwardene reminds us of his dramatic focus in the opening paragraph of his “Afterword” to the play. He writes:

Execution

Fifty years after his execution, Nikolai Bukharin has risen from the grave. It's not just the fact of his exoneration and rehabilitation that is significant. As the Soviet Union struggles to cast off the incubus of Stalinism, Bukharin and what he stood for constantly surface in current discussions and controversies. The fundamental question the Soviet experience — from the era of Stalin to the era of Brezhnev — raises is whether total centralised state control of the economy is compatible with political freedom. Bukharin's great importance for the liberalising Soviet Union today — and for socialists everywhere — is that he answered that question with a decisive ‘no’.

Stated in other terms, Mr. Siriwardene's perspective is deeply

and unambiguously humanistic. And it is this quality that attracts me most to the play.

Unfortunately, however, I am not qualified to comment upon the theoretical and philosophical implications of the rhetorical position adopted by the playwright, particularly in respect of Bukharin. I simply don't know enough. But I must confess to a gut feeling which tells me that Bukharin was right in his opposition to the policies of Stalin. In the course of a highly revealing exchange with his old 'antagonist' Kamenev, Bukharin argues: "And we don't want the socialist industrial revolution pushed forward at such a pace that it comes into the world — as Marx said of capitalism — bleeding from head to foot at every pore"

Lived

Few Sri Lankans who have lived through the past five years in this country would disagree with Bukharin — no revolution, however desirable, is worth the cost if it arrives bleeding from head to foot at every pore.

A Long Day's Task is a play of modest length. Within its brief compass, however, touches major bases. Primarily, I think, it awakens and animates the humanistic impulse in us, in a manner that is affirmative but never naively optimistic. At the same time, the play alerts us to the uses of history in comprehending the present and guiding the future. This historical orientation lends special interest to the play, if only because it spells an approach quite alien to local dramaturgy.

"Nearly all the events of the play, both public and personal, are based on historical fact", Mr. Siriwardene states in his preface to the printed text. For instance, even a minor incident like Bukharin's encounter with a fortune-teller in the streets of Berlin is true. That is to say, A Long Day's Task conforms to a dramatic genre of recent origin which draws upon authenticated, documented fact confining invention largely to the area of

structure and to the detail of character and business. In short, history as drama, but tuned to a frequency which offers high fidelity.

History

Now, of course, history has always been the stuff of drama. Or, shall we say, history is very amenable to the dramatic form. Full of heroes, villains, strumpets, sundry shady characters and very frequently, events that mock the fictional imagination, history offers superb hunting ground to the playwright.

"For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground

And tell sad stories of the death of kings:

How some have been deposed, some slain in war,

Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed;

Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed;

All murdered: for within the hollow crown

That rounds the mortal temples of a king

Keeps Death his court. . ."

Thus Shakespeare had no compunctions about raiding the Chronicles for his raw material.

Continues

Death continues to keep his court everywhere, but other things have changed since Shakespeare's day, and not only in the form and style of governance; our historical awareness too has been transformed. Sad stories of the death of kings still fascinate us, without however satisfying our yearning to know and understand the present. Inevitably, therefore, the dramatist latches on to contemporary event, to figures still living and others who reside in our immediate recollection. Today's dramatist is better placed than his predecessors. Shakespeare

had to do with a-not-always-dependable Hollinshed; we, on the other hand have access to an untold wealth of archival material consisting of reportage, official record and personal reminiscence. All we have to do is dig, unearth choose and then fashion our content to suit the medium, and our point of view.

Easy

Actually, it is not as easy as I have made it sound, especially if we are concerned with fidelity to fact. Nor is documentary stage drama as yet a significant part of the mainstream in most parts of the world. But it indicates an important tendency, which has to be related to kindred developments in other media — developments such as "new journalism", "non-fiction" novel, documentary and semidocumentary drama in television and cinema. *Missing, The Killing Fields, Gandhi, The Last Emperor* in film *Mountbatten, The End of Empire, Holocaust* on television; *In Cold Blood, Of a Fire on the Moon, The Armies of the Night* in the "non-fiction" novel, *The Deputy* and *A Long Day's Task* in drama, all denote to an emergent thrust in the narrative use of contemporary or recent history. The television product in this category is naturally the best known, followed closely by film.

History

The deployment of contemporary recorded history on the stage is unusual and for a very good reason. The stage is a tricky place to impersonate the living or the dead, if they are to receive critical or unconventional interpretation. The censoring hand can fall heavily on such controversial enterprise; besides, there are the laws of defamation and libel. Ultimately, therefore the leeway for "non-fiction" drama depends on the openness of a given society, and on the maturity of its historical consciousness.

(Continued on page 28)

BOOK REVIEW

Major-General Anton Muttukumar, **The Military History of Ceylon — An Outline**. Randhara Books (Pvt) Ltd, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka, 1987. Foreword by President J. R. Jayewardene, 227 pp. Rs 525.00

Shelton Kodikara

The first Sri Lankan Army Commander has written a Military History of Sri Lanka from the time of the Anuradhapura monarchy right down to the contemporary ethnic conflict in the Island. It is an ambitious, but commendable exercise. It is essentially an account of the army in Sri Lanka through the ages, sketchy, no doubt, in a book covering nearly twenty-five centuries, but it is a pioneering work, the author makes no claims that it is anything more than an outline, and he concludes expressing the hope that "someone will emerge who will pick up the threads where I have left off and weave the continuation of this study".

The author has based his study on the standard texts, ranging from the ancient chronicles, Queroz and Ribeiro, Tennent and the early British Commentators on Ceylon, down to G. C. Mendis and Wriggins. But he also pursued research into his subject during visits abroad as Army Commander and later as a diplomat, in numerous Archives in London, Lisbon and the Hague.

If one were to ignore the blandly uncritical adoption of military heroes in the ancient and medieval period which the author depicts in Part I of the book, which he has subtitled "The Indian Period", several interesting insights emerge from it.

One relates to the warlike qualities of the Sinhalese. The author makes reference to Tennent's comment about the "ascertained inaptitude of the Sinhalese to bear arms", which led Sinhalese Kings "to take into their pay a body of Malabars (or Damilos as the Mahawamsa calls them) in order

to protect the coast and the interior" (p.7). Referring, in a later context, to the "two main components of the Army", i.e., the mercenaries and the militia, the author says of the mercenaries ("the Damilos, Keralas, and Kernatas"), that "they were a warlike community whose efficiency was such that they played an important part in Ceylon affairs" (p.31). The militia, on the other hand, was drawn from agriculturists, from people "as Wilhelm Geiger described them, who were tilling and watering their fields and waiting for the harvest, in perpetual fear of demons who might annihilate the whole work". It was Geiger's view, too, that "the Sinhalese were not a warlike people, and the militia was, therefore, of no great military value". In his "Army and War in Medieval Ceylon", which the author has cited, Geiger is said to have quoted the authority of Cordiner, who found the Sinhalese unamenable to military discipline, as well as the authority of the Mahawamsa, "which gives instances of soldiers running away when exposed to an unexpected danger" (p.31).

Now the author does not subscribe to this view of the "ineptitude" of the Sinhalese soldier for fighting. At any rate, the author did not find this view to be "consistently true" (p.209). He found that there were times in Sri Lanka's history when "the aptitude of the (Sinhalese) soldier for fighting was unquestionable". The crucial variable, for the author, was that "such aptitude was manifested when they came under the influence of the great captains of our military history" (p.209).

And the author has identified these military heroes as numbe-

ring six in the entire "Indian period" of Sri Lanka's history:

"During that period (BC 161 to AD 1505) one hundred and sixty-five sovereigns passed through our history. I can, however, single out only six of them as having made any worthwhile contribution to the development of military affairs. They are Duttagamini, Gajabahu, Dhatusena, Vijayabahu I, Parakramabahu the great and Parakramabahu VI, all of whom contributed in some way or another to the creation of martial traditions which might have been passed on to posterity" (p.53).

A connected issue is that relating to the role of mercenaries in Sri Lanka's army in ancient and medieval times. Were mercenaries made necessary because of the militia's military ineptitude, as is implied in the book? Or was it not rather the accepted practice of the day. The author states:

"I have been critical of Sinhalese Kings for not having taken steps to create a "standing army" even though they were under constant pressure from the South Indian region. Such moves would have enriched military history and helped to create military tradition". (P.213)

The author asks himself whether the concept of the "standing army" is so essentially modern as to absolve the kings for their omission. The fact is, that it is. Even Europe did not know of standing armies until the early 19th century. Even the British, in their conquest of Sri Lanka, profited from the crossing over to their side of the

(The writer is Professor, International Relations, University of Colombo).

Swiss regiment de Meuron, a mercenary regiment, from the service of the Dutch. The author has noted the fact but appears to have missed its significance for his argument about standing armies.

In Part II of the book, which is devoted to "The Colonial Period", assessments by foreign commentators of the fighting qualities of the Sinhalese soldiers have changed. Farian Y Sousa, cited in Tennent, is quoted to the effect that "at the close of Portuguese dominion, the Sinhalese made the best firelocks for the East" the author comments that Geiger himself, who "did not have a word of commendation for the Sinhalese soldier in the pre-Portuguese period has by contrast nothing but praise for fighting spirit of the Sinhalese soldier in confrontation with the Portuguese" (p.83). One would have expected a fuller treatment of the guerilla resistance offered by the Kandyan Sinhalese against successive invasions by Portuguese, Dutch, and British invading armies, though the author does allude to the adaptability of the Sinhalese in devising an art of defensive warfare suited to the terrain, climate and "the wooded nature of the country". By the time of the Uva Rebellion in the British Period, according to the author, the Sinhalese soldier had "come into his own", and encomiums in support of this view are cited from John Davy as well as from Cordiner, the latter's comment being that "there are few countries in the world where the rude and undisciplined peasant is so nearly on a level with the trained soldier" (p. 108).

Part III of the book, dealing with "The Modern Period", that is, period after independence is, not unexpectedly, the most useful part of the author's military history. He was personally involved for ten years, from 1949 to 1959, with the organisation and development of Ceylon Army, first as Chief of Staff to two British Army Commanders, then in his capacity as Army Commander. He looks back with pride and also

with a sense of nostalgia at the army he left behind. Having been nurtured in the best British military tradition, he can scarcely withhold a tinge of regret and disillusionment over the behaviour of particular segments of the army at particular moments of social crisis in Sri Lanka. He rejects the notion that "all is fair in war" can apply to any situation but one in which army is engaged with an external enemy, though he is characteristically prone to give the benefit of any doubt in more recent instances of transgression of army discipline, to those who have overstepped the bounds of army propriety. As the author recounts, the Army was armed and trained to meet local contingencies—in the fifties army units engaged in antitrade union activities, in the sixties they were required to deal with non-violent satyagrahis and an abortive coup d'etal, in the seventies they were called upon to quell a Sinhalese insurgency, and in the eighties to deal with its most difficult task of all, a Tamil insurgency deriving sustenance and support from outside the country.

In a 1979 reorganisation of the army, its role was redefined not only in terms of its responsibility to defend Sri Lanka against an external or internal threat, to maintain law and order in aid of civil authorities, to maintain essential services when called upon to do so, but also to participate in national development projects.

After his retirement from the army, Major-General Muttukumar served with distinction as a diplomatic representative of Sri Lanka abroad for a period of ten years, and for several years after that kept up his interest in international affairs by his connection with the Ceylon Institute of World Affairs as its President. This book is evidence of his continuing interest in the affairs of Sri Lanka even after he left its shores to take up residence in another country. And his continuing feeling for this country and

its institutions are sincerely expressed at the end of the book "In the fervent hope that the Gods, who have lavished so much elegance and beauty on this lovely land of ours, will make it their divine purpose not to sully that beauty by the continued shedding of precious blood and will instead endow our leaders with the wisdom to arrive at a lasting and equitable solution of the issues which now threaten the integrity of this country".

Re-enacting. . .

(Continued from page 26)

Represents

A Long Day's Task represents kind of a drama which is still taboo in our country

Our contemporary history we enact in the form of parable. And our parables for the theatre (no Brechtian parallels intended) are peopled by gross caricatures of persons in public life. They are meant to provoke humour, not to bring a clearer view of men, matters or historical process.

Which is fine—a good laugh has a cathartic effect; it exorcises demons. Sadly, though, we get no closer to confronting the bleaker realities of our country. *A Long Day's Task* performs this necessary duty for a land far away. Obviously, there are degrees of glasnost.

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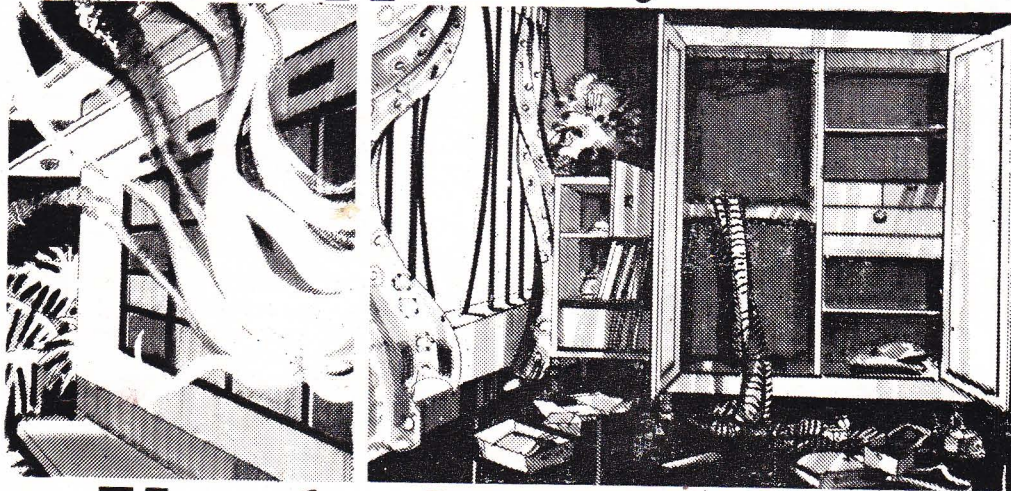
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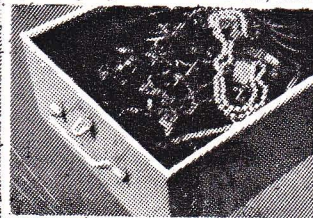
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