

**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

Vol. 12 No. 15 December 1, 1989 Price Rs. 7.50 Registered at the GPO, Sri Lanka OJ/32/NEWS/89

## *The System Strikes Back*

— *Mervyn de Silva*



*The Enforcer*

*The Target*



## **The roots of JVPism**

— *S. Leelananda*

**JAFFNA : The Defiant Ones**

— *Reggie Siriwardena*

**J.V.P. : The Silindu Syndrome**

— *Laksiri Fernando*

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## RECRUITS FOR A THOUSAND RUPEES

They have moved into the thotams too, Mr Thondaman notwithstanding. North-East based Tamil militant organisations have now moved into the hill country tea plantations to recruit unemployed Tamil youths "to agitate and cause confusion for the government". Mr Saumyamoorthy Thondaman, Minister for Rural Industrial Development and Textiles, and CWC boss, told a national daily.

The youths are being offered between five hundred and a thousand rupees to join up and are being trained in the hill country; they are not taken to the North or East.

This posed a potential threat of a complete take over of the plantations by the militants, unless some effective action was taken without delay, the Minister said.

The LTTE, "who are currently at peace with the government", were not involved. Almost every other Tamil militant organisation in the North and East was involved, he said.

## TO GO DEMOCRATIC?

The LTTE was ready to form a new political party and go democratic, Tiger ideologue Anton Balasingham announced last week. This, he said, was the result of three rounds of talks with the Government, and the ongoing troubled situation in the North and East. The Tigers had decided to enter the "political mainstream". A name for the new political party will be decided by LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran.

In a reference to the IPKF, Balasingham said that the Indians were soft-peddling their withdrawal. Instead of packing their bags the IPKF was playing with a so-called Tamil National Army, an illegal militia created by them.

As for the LTTE's new political party contesting an election, Balasingham said that it would depend on a complete withdrawal of the IPKF from this country and the dissolution of the North-East Provincial Council.

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## ENGLISH, THE CAUSE

An MP from Jaffna, T. Puvanasundrarajah (EDF) told parliament that the switching away from English as the medium of instruction in schools was the beginning of discriminatory treatment (of the Tamils), which ultimately led to violence. Students took to forming militant movements and now those who had got used to using arms could not give them up, he said.

(Continued on page 4)

## TRENDS + LETTERS

### Glass Houses

Mr. Neville Kanakarathne, who was probably not in the country when the Jaffna public Library was burnt, is totally wrong when he implies that no intellectual protested and no organisation even passed a resolution regarding "this act against the entire intelligentsia". (L G, Nov. 15). I am aware of several organisations which passed resolutions and issued statements, but none of them appeared in the press under conditions of censorship. Moreover, MIRJE sent an investigating team to the North and their report on the events was published (the text appeared in your own journal). Many other groups and individuals in the South expressed their disapproval of the burning in the most tangible way by donating books and money for the rebuilding of the Library stock.

Apart from his ignorance of the facts, however, I think Mr. Kanakarathne's assumption of the role of conscience-keeper of the nation is open to questioning. If he was so concerned about the burning of the Jaffna Library, why didn't he resign his ambassadorial post in protest, instead of staying on and probably defending the Government's action and policies in his official capacity?

**Reggie Siriwardena**

Dehiwela.

### Shanmugaratnam

Mr. N. Shanmugaratnam's article "7 days in Jaffna" which appeared in our November 1st issue, and was published earlier in the *Island* was originally published in **RACE & CLASS**, London edited by A. Sivanandan and Egbal Ahmad.

LANKA

## GUARDIAN

Vol. 12 No. 15 December 1, 1989  
Price Rs. 7.50

Published fortnightly by  
Lanka Guardian Publishing Co. Ltd.  
No. 246, Union Place,  
Colombo - 2.

Editor: Mervyn de Silva  
Telephone: 547584

Printed by Ananda Press  
82/5, Wolfendhal Street, Colombo 13.  
Telephone: 435975

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# Premadasa Presidency: The Moving Target

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

There must be something in this astrology business after all. The more things went downhill (law-and-order, economy) and faster every hope collapsed (APC) the more assuredly did every prominent astrologer announce that President Premadasa's fortunes were on the up-and-up!

But the Cassandras persisted... "AID-CUT!" they predicted, and an "IMF SQUEEZE". But the IMF came up with the second tranche of the 255 million dollar SAF loan, and what's more the World Bank-sponsored Paris donor group pledged US 173 million dollars more than the previous year (LG Nov. 1).

Which of course doesn't mean much, interrupted the pundits pointing out correctly that there was a "catch", what they call "conditionality" the price the government must pay and the burden that the regime, captive to the Fund's conditions, must pass onto the people. While the masses groan, working class anger will rise, the trade unions (the established and the genuine) will agitate, and then the JVP-controlled SATTAN PERAMUNA will strike, making Colombo a city under seige, and allowing the guerrillas to march into the capital... as they have now done in San Salvador! As the cliché goes, that was the scenario.

Yet, when Prime Minister — Finance Minister D. B. Wijetunge presented his budget, he was all smiles, not because he was Santa Claus bearing give-away pre-Christmas gifts, far from it. (See: *On the Brink*) It was because his colleague, the Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Defence, had reported to the President and

Cabinet and told the press. "The Match is Over...!"

The Enforcer had enforced. The announcement however was a bit premature. Only the captain, Wijeweera, had been caught and bowled, to stay with the Minister's metaphor, the most irresistible in Sri Lankan middle-class conversation.

Could the southern front be closed? That was the crucial question. That had always been the central issue once the JVP emerged as a serious threat to the State in 1987. But President J R, of all Sri Lankan leaders the most attuned to military psychology, had always known that. That was why, he explained to foreign correspondents, he had no choice but to close the northern front or rather hand it over to the IPKF.

President Premadasa is not a militarist. He is a populist who believes in divine rather than armed intervention. And of course the Gods that guard Sri Lanka, the virtuous and the peaceful.

The war, a new war, suddenly erupted in the East. A new 'army' too — the Tamil National Army of the EPRLF, ENDLF, and TELO, trained in Indian camps and equipped by the IPKF. The T. N. A. is certainly not the Civilian Volunteer Force (CVF) which the North-East Provincial Council and its Chief Minister, Mr. Varatharaja Perumal was empowered to establish so that it could undertake law-and-order tasks once the IPKF pulls out of the island. The deadline, not too rigid, was Dec. 31, and it looked that time was running out for the N-E Council,

and its Chief Minister. The LTTE made that clear in a characteristically brilliant and murderous attack on two new TNA camps in Batticaloa. It massacred some 36 TNA cadres, and kidnapped over 100, and drove off with a huge haul of modern arms, Indian and Soviet-made.

## SOVIET OPTION

Though compelled to withdraw under U. S.-led international pressure, the compulsions of Gorbachev's wide-ranging reform program, the death toll in Afghanistan and its impact on Soviet morale, and the military successes of the Mujahddin, Moscow had a better range of options than Delhi.

Though besieged, the Kabul regime had been long established and despite rapid leadership changes in the ruling party, the government did have some credibility. Not so Mr. Perumal's North-East Council.

Secondly, the Afghan resistance is bitterly divided — ideologically, in the first instance; each has a different pay-master, the US being only the most generous; leaders hate each other as much they hate the Kabul communists. It is just the opposite of the disciplined well-knit, nearly self-reliant LTTE, with one commanding personality as leader. Nobody challenges Velupillai Prabhakaran.

The Soviet Union had no deadline. It picked a date for a phased pullout on its own, and announced its own timetable. There is an agreement, tacit or informal, between Colombo and Delhi on the deadline — the end of the year. So time's running out. The North-East council must have a Police/Self-Defence Force. Quickly.

## DELHI DESIGN

Or, the second option, create conditions which can justify a postponement of the IPKF withdrawal. Events in the East, and the general pattern of developments there suggest a 'mix' of the two — build up an EPRLF — ENDLF — TELO controlled 'army' and de-stabilise the East for possible political gains e.g. scare the Sinhalese away from Amparai, the district from which the IPKF pulled out. The Muslims were another target, more Muslims and Muslim policemen dying in the TNA rocket-attacks on the police stations than any other community. Together, the Muslims and the Sinhalese can decide the crucial referendum on the extension of the present North-East merger.

As the JVP campaign reached its peak, an eruption of armed violence in the East, with the possibility of communal clashes, would totally destabilise the Premadasa regime, an Indian objective too. The LTTE and some influential sections of UNP believe it is all an Indian plot hatched by R. A. W. but the LTTE can be pathological when it comes to Delhi. On the other hand, there can be a convergence of interests between Delhi, the EPRLF/ ENDLF/TELO combine, whether led by Perumal or Padmanabha, JVP; and Left Opposition groups, including sections of the SLFP. The only thing common is the target — the Premadasa Presidency. But Premadasa, clever as always, has made himself a moving target.

## Israelis: a decision soon?

Answering a question in parliament, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Defence, said that the Israelis had been brought into the country to assist in security work and also to help in certain spheres of agriculture and rehabilitation. A decision on the continued presence of the Israeli Interests Section would be taken soon, he said.

Mr. Hisbulla (SLMC) who asked the question, said that the continued presence of the Israeli Interests section had strained relations between Sri Lanka and the Arab countries.

Mr. Wijeratne said that there had been no official expression of dissatisfaction but reports from Sri Lanka's overseas missions indicated that some Arab countries were not satisfied with the presence of the Israelis.

## TRENDS

(Continued from page 1)

### THE DULLEST

Mr Anura Bandaranaike, MP (SLFP), described this year's Budget debate as the duller since he entered parliament in 1977. According to his information this would be the last budget the present Finance Minister would be presenting; and the Leader of the House was in for higher things, he said.

The UNP had come into power pledging to restore peace and order; now they were saying that the Government did not have even a month of peace to sort things out. And the cost of living had "gone through the roof"; prices were increased before the budget and after it. Mr Bandaranaike said that the Government had to go on bended knees to the World Bank because of the mismanagement of the past 14 years. The Government got all that aid not because of "a climate of

confidence" but because the Government had agreed to all the terms of the World Bank and the IMF, he said.

In the matter of employment, Mr Bandaranaike said that political affiliations should not be taken into account when providing jobs.

Mr Ranjan Wijeratna: "That started in 1956".

Mr Bandaranaike: "No".

Mr Wijeratne: "Let us come to a truce not to talk of the past. That will not happen in the future".

### IPKF TRAINING FOR SINHALA YOUTHS?

Reports of Sinhalese youths in a clandestine military training camp in the Trincomalee district are now being officially investigated, a national daily said. The youths are being trained ostensibly as part of CVF operations, assis-

ted by some members of the IPKF, the report said.

The training of the Sinhalese youths is under the patronage of a left-oriented trade union, according to this report. Ten of the recruits have been arrested by "some armed men", it added.

### A TAMIL HAND

Attacks on hill country tea factories, earlier blamed on the JVP, are now suspected to be the work of anti-Government Tamil political organisations, based in the North and East. About 25 tea factories have been destroyed.

Investigation of a Tamil connection follows the arrest of three Tamil youths suspected of violence and sabotage on the estates, in the Sabaragamuwa province. The suspects belong to an East-based Tamil political organisation, according to police sources.

## Won't Walk into trap — President

President Premadasa commenting on the situation in the Eastern Province said that Sri Lanka would be cautious not to fall prey to any deliberate campaign of provocation to create a situation to prolong the stay of the IPKF in Sri Lanka.

The President was speaking to Members of Parliament at the Government Parliamentary Group meeting — the members called for strong action against the illegal army formed by the North Eastern Provincial Council Chief Minister, Vartharaja Perumal in collaboration with the IPKF.

The President said that it was not that the Sri Lanka security forces could not launch an all out offensive against such illegal armies. It could be construed by interested parties as an attempt again by the Sinhalese to persecute Tamils and thus create an impression justifying the continued presence of Indian troops in the country. The Sri Lankan security forces had been sent to the Eastern Province to maintain peace. They will defend the Government institutions and the people.

The great difficulty with which agreement was reached with India to withdraw the Indian troops from the country by the end of December this year was well known. Several batches of troops had already been withdrawn, he said.

"The Government for its part made the necessary arrangements as agreed to provide security in the Eastern Province after the IPKF started withdrawing. A Security Monitoring Committee in which the Minister of State for Defence, the IPKF Commander as well as the Chief Minister of the North-East and other officials

are represented was set up. It has also been planned to set-up the necessary security forces for the province by recruiting people from the area on an ethnic population ratio basis."

It was in this situation that the Government came to know that an army was being raised in the North-East Provinces without any legal sanction. When the IPKF Commander was asked whether the IPKF was training any army in the province the Commander admitted that this was so. The President said that he told the Commander that it was wrong for the IPKF to train an illegal army.

"The violence unleashed by this illegal army in the East is a deliberate attempt to provoke the Sri Lankan security forces into a confrontation.

### Civil war, warns Speaker

In parliament, Speaker M H Mohamed urged "all of us" to get together and do something soon about the situation in the Eastern Province. Other wise, warned Mr. Speaker, there will be civil war very soon.

Mr. Ashraff, leader of the SLMC, made a statement on the situation in the Ampara district. The TNA attacked a police post, segregated the Muslim policemen and killed 43 of them, he said. Mr Ashraff described the attack as an absolute betrayal of the trust that the Muslims had placed in the provincial government. The situation, he said, was very grave.

### Treachery, says Deputy Speaker

An illegal television transmission was being operated in the North, Deputy Speaker Gamini Fonseka charged at a Government Parliamentary Group meeting last week. The TV service, beaming programs to India, was being operated with Indian connivance, Mr. Fonseka said. The Deputy Speaker accused North-East Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal of treachery. Mr Perumal Mr Fonseka said, was trying to project with these transmissions beamed to India that all Tamil speaking people of the North want Indian intervention in Sri Lanka, and that they wish the IPKF to remain indefinitely in Sri Lanka on the pretext of protecting the Tamil people.

The Chief Minister was conniving with a foreign country—India — to wage war against Sri Lanka, he said.

For this treachery he should be removed, Mr Fonseka who has been a distinguished film actor, cast normally in heroic roles, said. And, if it were to be done, how long would it take, Mr Fonseka asked the government group meeting presided by President Premadasa.

### CORRESPONDENCE

Your correspondent Mr. E. M. C. Edirisinghe makes many good points but misses the main point and thrust of my argument and therefore criticises the wrong person.

I am concerned in this instance only with anti-systemic movements, that pretend to be revolutionary or liberationist. How could these be cruel or barbaric as oppressor states, regimes or classes?

— Dayan Jayatilleka

## BUDGET :

## Close to the Brink

M. de S.

Colombo's taxi drivers were taking no chances. Anticipating a steep rise in petrol prices, they pleaded their meters were out of action and bargained over the taxi fare.

But Mr D B Wijetunge, who is both Prime Minister and Finance Minister announced no increases in his budget. That does not mean the taxi drivers were wrong.

"These things are not done in budget speeches any more," said Mr Bernard Soysa, a former deputy finance minister.

The Sri Lankan Petroleum Corporation has good reason to jack up prices. Recently, the opposition howled when it signed a contract for six cargoes of 120,000 tonnes of crude each with the South Korean Daewoo corporation at a cost of more than \$100m. The normal tender procedures had been ignored. The Industries minister explained why: the Corporation owed its traditional suppliers nearly \$78m. Those bills had to be paid. If it defaulted, the word would get out the Sri Lanka was broke.

Rumours were already rife that Sri Lanka's foreign reserves were down to less than a week's import bill. If the oil contract, guaranteed by the central bank, had not been signed, all transport on the island would have ground to a halt.

Sri Lanka, racked by years of ethnic warfare which has killed off tourism and stifled growth, is on the brink of economic collapse and its increasingly hard-pressed citizens are paying an increasingly heavy price. Petrol and kerosene prices will indeed go up following flour, sugar, rice, milk and electricity.

One by one, subsidies are being removed. Rail and bus fares will rise. The electricity board has threatened to cut off supply to defaulters; debt collectors from the telecommunications department are now visiting the homes of late payers.

The runaway spending of 1988, an election year, and President Ranasinghe Premadasa's \$400m poverty alleviation programme, his vote-winning policy, were the last gasp of the good times of spending money which was not being earned. Already the poverty alleviation programme has been scaled down, together with most other welfare policies. Austerity lies ahead.

Sri Lanka's aid donors have long taken a sympathetic view of the country's plight. But this year's campaign of economic disruption, sabotage and violence by the extreme nationalist Sinhala group, the JVP, compelled the World Bank to postpone the aid group meeting.

The International Monetary Fund had already held back the second instalment of a vital loan.

Nevertheless, considering that Sri Lanka has failed to respect binding commitments to the IMF and the World Bank and promises to donors, the aid group was still being exceptionally tolerant when it finally met this year. It pledged \$785m, an increase of \$173m over last year.

The IMF eventually released the delayed £87m instalment to demonstrate international confidence at a time when a flight of capital and skilled personnel had demoralised the island's business community.

And even now the IMF conditions for Sri Lanka remain for less harsh than those imposed on many Third World countries.

The crisis is so deep however that collapse may be inevitable, given the continuing terrorist activities. Several ministries have been closed, and many government departments and corporations wound up.

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**Rumours were rife that the country's foreign reserves had fallen to less than a week's import bill**

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More than 4,000 marketing department workers lost their jobs last month. That will be the pattern.

On one level the austere budget looks necessary and prudent: consumer subsidies have been slashed, together with the anti-poverty programme; the budget deficit has been reduced from 14 per cent of GDP last year to 10 per cent.

Ailing state enterprises will be sold to foreigners. Privatisation failed when it was restricted to Sri Lankans but last week a state-owned textile mill was sold to a South Korean company for \$7m. The devaluation of the rupee will be accelerated.

But the great danger of the budget measures is that an already unsettled population will encounter rising inflation and rising unemployment. Such a mixture would be explosive in the present climate.

It used to be the JVP which forced "hartals" or strikes. Now the established trades unions are stirring. So far 17 unions have asked for a 40 per cent pay hike. Austerity may be the least of Sri Lanka's problems.

*(This article was originally published in the F.T., London)*



# The Rise of the JVP—A Sociological Perspective

S. Leelananda\*

**A** sociological analysis of the rise of the JVP can conveniently begin with an overview of demographic changes in Sri Lanka during the last forty years. The demographic picture of the 1940s show both high mortality rates (death rate 20-21 per thousand) and high birth rates (35-39 per thousand). This phase is followed by two decades of continuously high birth rates and decreasing mortality rates. As a result the natural increase climbs to an all time high (average 2.7 per cent). The rate of increase begins to drop in the mid seventies and by the 1980s it reaches 1.8 percent. Even so, one has to bear in mind that those born in the high natural increase period are also now reproducing.

When this demographic data is converted to social reality what we see is a dramatic increase in numbers of each successive cohort (Defined as all those surviving persons born in a given year) of our population from about the 1950's.

Such rapid population growth, together with severe adverse terms of trade, the decline of the plantation export sector the sluggish growth of non-traditional exports and chronic foreign exchange scarcities illustrate deep structural problems in our economy for which no government since independence has been able to find effective solutions. The impact of different policy packages—offered by both welfarist and Economic liberal regimes which managed the country,—on the rise of the JVP will be analysed later in this essay. For the present let us note some clear patterns arising from this fast growing population.

(1) The increasing inability of administrations since Independence to continue its commitments on social welfare. There

are simply too many people to be taken care of. Take food subsidies for example. Every government has tried to "feeding the people".

Following the end of the rubber boom in the early fifties the UNP administration attempted to reduce the rice subsidy leading to a Hartal and eventually the resignation of the prime Minister. The SLFP Government also began to feel the pressure a few years later and Finance Minister—Felix Dias Bandaranaike, who proposed similar changes in his budget, was removed from office.

The 1965-70 UNP regime tried different combinations of rice quotas—all attempting to reduce the financial burden of this subsidy. In the 1970 General Elections—Mrs. Bandaranaike's offer to bring rice from the moon" was a vote puller, but once elected the United Front Government proceeded to raise prices not only of rice, but all consumer commodities in its very first budget, leading to a rebellion in the parliamentary group forcing Dr N M Perera to amend his budgetary proposals. The UNP followed with a offer to give "8 pounds of cereals" which, after winning the election,—party leaders announced with mind-boggling cynicism, were available for purchase in any food store if only one had the money! And now we have the Janasaviya Programme with its own basket of commodities, including rice, being reduced for lack of funds.

Thus the political implications of the lack of growth is the progressive inability of Governments to co-opt the majority of the people by trading off social welfare measures for social stability. The architect of this "trade off" strategy was Mr. D S Senanayake and it worked reasonably well during his regime. But the picture has now changed due to demogra-

phic pressures and Governments are compelled to use moral imperatives like the famous 3 'C's—Consensus, Concillation and Cooperation.

(2) The "bulge" of post fifties cohorts in the population curve skewers our population pyramid in favour of the young. According to the ESEAP Monograph on Population in Sri Lanka (1976) "Children under 15 years of age contribute 40% or more of the total population while the range in developed countries is 20-30%. Since children (0-14 years) and youth (15-24 years) together form nearly 60% of the total population, the population of Sri Lanka may be termed a young population". (Page 96)

This preponderance of youth implications for all aspects of Sri Lankan Society and culture. Political scientists have pointed out that levels of recruitment of young cadres is a good test of the vitality and popularity of a political party, particularly a revolutionary party. By this test, the JVP's focussed appeal to youth was unprecedented and highly successful. The traditional left—the LSSP, CP, and NLSSP etc. were woefully uncompetitive in this field. The exceptions to this JVP monopoly were the UNP, in the 1973-77 period, when it was able to mobilise both urban and rural youth against the SLFP. The real challenge on the youth front to the JVP however came from Vijaya Kumaratunge's party or more correctly Vijaya himself. If Rohana Wijeweera's charisma was based on his "anti-capitalist" image Vijaya Kumaratunge could appeal to a wider audience both on his anti-capitalist' background as well as his media (film actor, singer) image. This was an image that Vijaya carefully nurtured, even to the extent of refusing to play "unsympathetic" roles in films.

\* The pen-name of a leading Sri Lankan academic.

It is clear that the JVP leadership did not brook any challenge to its youth base. Daya Pathirana a charismatic youth leader of the University was murdered long before the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord. The decision to eliminate Vijaya, though fraught with risk in view of his personal popularity, was also taken presumably on the same premise.

The numerical preponderance of alienated youth in the population pyramid of Sri Lanka creates special conditions in the country which, to their credit, the JVP was the only political party in Sri Lanka to grasp and firmly act upon.

Who can spearhead the Sri Lankan revolution? Here, the real and only powerful proletariat is the Estate Labour largely of Indian origin. They have been cut off from radical politics from the early fifties indeed, due to the Sinhala oriented parliamentary politics of the left leaders, have moved to a virtual alliance with the right to secure political and social advantages. (In retrospect, it is clear that the colonial administrators fear of the LSSP in the pre-independence period stemmed from their influence over the plantation sector rather than their activities in Sinhala areas. Colonial office records show the impact of LSSP strikes (Mooloya; Wavendon) and other events like the Bracegirdle Affair on the thinking of the British — a fear cleverly exploited by D. S. Senanayake and Oliver Goonetilleke to extract concessions for the Sri Lankan bourgeoisie).

The rise of communalism among the urban working class — first exploited by the rising national elite represented by persons like Anagarika Dharmapala, John Kotelawala Snr and D R Wijewardene found open expression in the politics of A E Goonesinha and his Labour party which campaigned

for "Ceylonisation" of workers in the harbour, toddy trade manufacturing and construction industry and small business enterprise in the Pettah and its environs. This struggle against the "Kochchiyas" was symptomatic of the communal feelings that were rampant among the urban workers.

The consequences of such ingrained communalism — a far cry from the rosy picture painted by the leftist leaders — was the further disorientation of the small Sri Lankan working class. Another characteristic of the Sri Lankan urban working class is the weightage given to the service sector as against the manufacturing sector. With the estate labour out of the equation we are essentially left with service sector workers like those in the Port, CTB, CGR Govt. Press, Hospitals and those who package plantation produce for export. The only important non estate productive sector — the FTZ and Garment industries, have kept out of working class politics as they are an elite group when their salaries and perks are compared with local wage rates and per capita incomes. While all regimes have not hesitated to keep the manufacturing sector satisfied as seen in the wage increases of plantation labour, the service sector has not been taken seriously, President Premadasa's master stroke in not settling the CTB and Hospital strikes alienated the poor from the JVP. The JVP itself seems to have realised its mistake and began to ease up on this service sector while stepping up its attacks on economic targets.

The Sri Lankan urban proletariat is unskilled, weak and vulnerable in the context of rampant unemployment. It is perceived as an advantaged group by the rapidly expanding numbers of the rural poor. The vulnerability of the urban proletariat was fully exploited by the UNP and the JVP. Both used the terror weapon to cow

it down and humiliate union leaders. Early in its administration the UNP smashed a general strike and threw 100,000 workers out of employment. The UNP trade union, the JSS mopped up the remnants of the workforce. In 1988/89 the JVP also went over the heads of the organized working class and its leaders, killed Trade Union opponents and set about recruiting members to its organizations. In the CTB, Port and Hospitals for example workers who had come over from the left and SLFP to the JSS when the UNP came to power, now became busy aligning themselves with JVP "Satan Madyasthanayas".

One of the consequences of the Sino-Soviet split of the 1960s was the calling into question of the vanguard role hitherto assigned unquestioningly to the working class. Communists particularly of developing countries who were disenchant party cadres and the anti-intellectual Soviet culture exemplified by her mediocre modern literature, theatre music and cinema.

ted with Soviet dogma and social organization began to study other approaches to revolution, particularly the Cuban and Chinese experiences.

It must be borne in mind that Wijeweera was the only Sri Lankan leftist leader who had actual experience of living conditions in the USSR. Though Sri Lankan Communist leaders regularly visited the USSR and gullible local journalists (including Martin Wickremasinghe) who were given "Sunshine tours" came back and wrote glowing reports — which now have distinct ironic glitter considering what the post Perestroika Russians themselves are saying about repression in the USSR during this period — it was Wijeweera who came to know first hand of the miserable living conditions of ordinary Russian people the privileges and corruption of

(Continued on page 21)

# Honouring a Heroine and Martyr

Reggie Siriwardena

(Reporting from Jaffna)

“She was a heroine of human rights,” said Martin Ennals, speaking at the Rajani Thiraganama Commemoration Meeting in Jaffna, “and is now a martyr.” The words didn’t belong to the fulsome vocabulary of post-mortem eulogies; they were nothing more than the simple truth. Rajani was an extraordinary woman, and her role in Jaffna during the agonies of her people in the post-1987 period was proof of her enormous courage, total commitment and tireless activism in the human rights causes she served.

She chose to return to Jaffna after her academic training abroad, at a time when scholars and professionals — not only from the North but also from the South — were flying away as plentifully as migrating birds. With her brilliant intellect and distinguished academic record, she could easily have found a comfortable nest in one of the cities of Europe or America, but these possibilities she rejected.

During the last two years she single-handedly ran the Department of Anatomy at the Jaffna University, and her students testify that they found her not only an inspiring teacher but also a warm friend, a trusted counsellor and a source of succour in times of distress. But her greatest service to the people of Jaffna, and indeed to the indivisible cause, of peace, democracy and human rights in Sri Lanka, was in the founding of UTHR (University Teachers for Human Rights), in which she was the Principal activist. UTHR retained its independence of all political parties and groups, of the IPKF, and the Sri Lankan state. In its three reports so far issued as well as in the manuscript “The Broken Palmyrah” (still

## GARLAND FOR RAJANI

*You refused to eat the bounteous and bitter bread  
of exile; returned to live with the hot breath  
of death pursuing you, yet held your head high.  
They shot you like a dog in the street, but that death  
will be remembered as their shame, your pride.  
I bring you no wreath, flowers as for a bride.*

R. S.

to be published), it has recorded impartially and objectively all violations of human rights, irrespective of whether they were committed by the IPKF or by militant groups.

This however, was only part of Rajani’s activity in these years. She intervened personally on behalf of people who were victims of injustice, came to the help of women who had been raped or had lost a member of the family, strove to defend the rights of freedom of speech, writing and organisation, as well as the rights of women. Her vision was one that rose above fanatical and destructive nationalism and the reliance on coercive violence. What she worked towards was the restoration of free democratic life in Jaffna, based on the activity of the people. And it is for this that she died.

Six days before her death Rajani wrote in a letter: “One day some gun will silence me. And it will not be held by an outsider, but by a son — born in the womb of this very society — from a woman with whom my history is shared. “Running away was alien to her nature, but what must have sustained her in this premonition of her death was the knowledge that she had built a consciousness and a nucleus of people which would live after her, perhaps that her very blood would fertilise the social movement she had begun.

And so it proved — in the impressive two-day commemoration and peace march organised for the 60th day of her death by UTHR and the Jaffna University Students Union. “MADAM’S VALUES ARE NOT DEAD” said one of the placards carried on the march, “THEY LIVE ON IN THE HEARTS OF HER STUDENTS.” Over 600 people — students, university teachers and representatives from the south — attended the seminar on human rights and the commemoration meetings on the two days. The international esteem and respect that Rajani had won for her work was signified by the presence of several distinguished human rights and women’s rights activists — British, Dutch, Tanzanian, Indian and Pakistani. One of them, Nighat Khan from Pakistan, proposed the appointment of an independent three-member team from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to investigate the killing, and the commemoration meeting endorsed the proposal.

## PEACE MARCH

The peace march through the city was a moving experience in a city that had not known such an independent mobilisation for many years. The posters plastered on the city walls and the placards (in three languages) carried on the march testified to the firm commitment of the participants to people’s rights and against vio-

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# Political Violence — The JVP Phenomenon

Laksiri Fernando

There is a special characteristic of Sri Lankan culture, to my understanding, which relates to anger, crime or violence. Perhaps this is common to many cultures and especially to agrarian societies. One of the most symbolic expressions of this special behavior is Silindu in the celebrated novel "Village in the Jungle" by Leonard Woolf. Silindu was a poor and innocent villager who tolerates all the inhuman treatment of society without a word and finally bursts out in anger by killing the perpetrators. The long tolerance and sudden burst into violence are characteristics to be noted.

The above anecdote relates to crime and violence in general and not just to political violence. Political violence is generally considered as conscious, planned and premeditated behavior. Following Neieburg we can define political violence more precisely as:

"acts of disruption, destruction, injury whose purpose, choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation, and/or effects have political significance, that is tend to modify the behavior of others in a bargaining situation that has consequences for the social system"<sup>2</sup>.

\* Associate Secretary for Asia/Pacific, World University Service (WUS), Geneva.

## Historical Overview

Until the outbreak of youth insurrection in 1971, Sri Lanka was considered as a non-violent and non-volatile nation compared to many other Asian, African and Latin American countries. There were only six

major incidents of political violence since Independence until 1971 other than violent events during elections. These include a workers' violent protest (1953); the assassination of a Prime Minister (1959); two attempted coups (1962 and 1967); and two communal riots (1956 and 1958). However, when compared to the youth insurrection in 1971 these events recede into the background.

When comparing this insurrection to the present insurgency, one of the major differences is the gross violence against civilians today even on the part of the insurgents. In 1971 the overall civilian casualties were minimal.

Although the Tamil youth did not take any part in the 1971 insurrection the police reported early that year the growth of a clandestine movements in Jaffna which they claimed to be very much similar to the Naxalite movement in India. However it took some years for the Tamil youth to resort to violence as a means of achieving their political objectives. The language medium-wise standardization of university entrance examinations introduced in 1972 which discriminated against the Tamils and the 1972 Republican Constitution which failed to address the Tamil aspirations in relation to the political structure of the country, among many other discriminatory measures like the language policy, set the conditions for discontent and the resort to violent means by the Tamil youth. The government attempts to suppress youth discontent by final force both in the South and in the North was a major cause of the escalation of political violence in the 1970s.

1983 was a major landmark in the process of events

which led to the present situation. On the one hand anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 which resulted in over 1,500 deaths of innocent Tamils in cold blood led the Tamil militants in no uncertain way to take up arms with whatever support they could muster from outside. On the other hand the proscription of the JVP under the pretext of their complicity in the said riots led them to organize clandestinely and resort again into violent methods when they considered the time was ripe. The two extreme movements of the Sinhalese and Tamil youth the JVP and (LTTE Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam), saw an easy symmetry when the Indian armies came into the island in large numbers in 1987. It is important to note that the JVP functioned openly and within the frame-work of democratic system between 1977 and 1983.

Although there are many divergences between the current insurrectionary movements in the North and the South in respect of objectives and ideology there are apparent common features in relation to their social, economic and political backgrounds. Rapid population growth, unresolved unemployment, discriminatory practices in respect of ethnicity, the dysfunctional educational system and subverted political processes are some factors which led to these movements.

There have been a good number of academic studies conducted on the 1971 insurrection. However the lessons drawn in these studies were not followed up by the policy implementers. To cite one example A. J. Wilson, a prominent Sri Lankan political scientist, stated in reference to the 1971 insurrection:

"... if Sri Lanka is to escape a far greater bloodbath

*The author, a former Senior Lecturer in Political Science, Univ. of Peradeniya, is Associate Secretary Asia/Pacific of the World University Service.*

than that which took place ... one of the first tasks of the existing political leadership must be to effect the socialization of the JVP.

It is good to see the Sri Lankan government coming out of, what can be called its "international phobia". The government has recently invited the International Red Cross into the country. The international community should ask both the state and all political parties in the conflicts to adhere to all UN human rights instruments. Sri Lanka should sign the Optional Protocol to the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. A proper international monitoring of human rights by the UN agencies should be ensured.

A lasting peace presupposes the self-disarmament of all para-military forces. Perhaps the government should take the lead in disarming their own para-military forces and reorganizing the army and police forces to ensure peace and security for everyone. Human rights education for the security forces, for university students and for the population as a whole is of primary importance.

There will be no lasting peace until the problems of the youth of the country are addressed properly. The international donor agencies should consider special assistance to development programmes aimed at assisting income generating, educational and training projects for youth, both in the South and in the North. The NGOs, both international and local, could play an important role in these efforts.

#### Footnotes:

1. Leonard Woolf, *The Village in the Jungle*, Hogarth Press Ltd, London 1913.
2. H. Nieburg, *Political Violence: The Behavioral Process*, St. Martin's Press New York, p. 13.
3. A. J. Wilson, "Ceylon: The Peoples' Liberation Front and the Revolution that failed", *Pacific Community*, (January 1927), p. 371.

## Third World 'threatened by 1992'

Joel Kibazo

Some of the world's poorest countries stand to lose out as a result of the creation of the single European market in 1992 according to a report published today.

The report, from the World Development Movement, a UK — based Third World pressure group, examines the single market programme sector by sector and looks at the impact each sector would have on trade, aid, the environment and on investment flows to the Third World.

Countries whose economies were dependent on the production of commodities such as sugar and bananas, the report says, would be hit particularly hard with the possibility of over 100,000 sugar workers in Mauritius and the Caribbean losing their jobs.

The report says many Third World countries, were already facing restrictions. It says: "In reality the markets of Europe

are already effectively closed to the most profitable forms of trade from the least developed countries. For them, Fortress Europe already exists."

Export opportunities into the Single Market are likely to be won by the newly industrializing countries (NICs) in South-East Asia rather than by the poorest countries such as those in Africa, the report says.

The report calls for the positive assistance for the poorest countries to adjust to the single market; special attention to the marketing of sugar, bananas and textiles after 1992; greater consultation with poor countries over the single market programme; and the establishment of a unit within the EC to monitor the effects of the single market on the Third World.

*"Beyond 1992 — the effect of the European single market on the World's poor". WDM, Bedford Chambers, London WC2 8HA.£2.*

## Honouring . . .

(Continued from page 9)

lence. "NO HUMAN RIGHTS, NO LIBERATION"; "STOP ALL POLITICAL KILLINGS", said some of them. Others — in a newspaper-less city where papers, both Jaffna and Colombo-produced, had been banned by different groups, appealed for the freedom of the press. Some posters and placards forthrightly condemned the practice of violence ("BARBARISM STRIKES AGAIN!"; "MURDERERS, HANDS OFF THE UNIVERSITY!"); others sought to reason with those who resorted to it. I was particularly struck by one pasted on a city wall whose deviation from the Queen's English testified to its authenticity as a

student utterance. It read: "DEAR OUR MILITANT BROTHERS; WE SALUTE TO YOUR SACRIFICE, BUT WE DISAGREE WITH YOUR METHODS, WHICH IS DESTROYING BOTH YOURSELVES AND US. PLEASE THINK CONSTRUCTIVELY."

I came away from Jaffna with only one regret — that there was nobody from the southern campuses among the twenty-odd people who travelled up there. If they had come, they could at least, like the rest of us, have learnt something. Would such initiative and such courage have been possible on any campus in the south two months after the killing of a member of university community?

## IPKF's Foot-dragging departure

A. S. Abraham (A staff writer of the Times of India)

"We were your best neighbours", the minister said, "but you fouled it up." He was referring to India's part in trying to resolve Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict by sending in the IPKF. Now that the IPKF has begun to pull out in phases, it is no longer a sore point with Sri Lankans. But their apprehensions over what they believe to be India's game-plan are far from being allayed. Officially these misgivings are usually expressed *sotto voce*, and they are immediately balanced by declarations of trust in India's good faith.

Among Sri Lanka's articulate middle-classes, the distrust of Indian intentions is bluntly voiced. The argument is that India, having agreed to the pull-out only conditionally, has left itself with plenty of loopholes to delay leaving. It can say that the peace committee, set up at its initiative as a means of settling intra-Tamil disputes, has been made impotent by the LTTE's boycott of it. It can say that the security of the Tamil people after the IPKF has left is far from being ensured. It can say that the devolution of authority to the North-Eastern Provincial Council (NEPC) has not been substantial or rapid enough.

The pull-out from Amparai and the preparations to withdraw from a second district, Batticaloa, do not impress these sceptics. Even a total pull-out completed on schedule will not demolish their fears. They justify their suspicions by pointing to the irregular Tamil force which they allege the IPKF is clandestinely helping to recruit train and equip to act as a proxy Indian force. A senior Indian official in Sri Lanka would say only that this is "a grey area".

**THE CVF.** The Sri Lankan government allowed the IPKF to recruit a Citizens' Volunteer Force (CVF) which, along with

the local police force is to maintain law and order once the IPKF has left. In Amparai, both the CVF and the police are already doing this, so far without incident. According to India's Sri Lankan critics the CVF is being expanded stealthily by the IPKF, with the accretion of forces (variously estimated at 8,000 to 10,000) actually designed as a separate militia for the protection of Mr. Perumal's NEPC government, which is perceived as the instrument of Indian interests. As far as India is concerned, however, "We are not aware of any other force," to quote the same official — other, than the CVF and the local police.

While the Sri Lankan and Indian governments are grappling to shed some light on this "grey area", the group most concerned about this development is the LTTE whose leaders mince no words in calling India the villain of the piece. They allege that the secret "child army" is made up mainly of kids who are 13 or 14 years old, who have been forcibly conscripted, and many of whom have since escaped.

A settlement of the ethnic conflict in the east is fraught with complexities. The merger of the northern and eastern provinces in a single unit is subject to a referendum in the east alone. Should it be held, the Sinhalese and Tamil Muslims are sure to vote to undo the merger which they view as prefiguring the separate Tamil Eealm that the LTTE has been demanding from the start. Naturally, the LTTE and other Tamil groups want the referendum to be scrapped, equally naturally, the Sri Lankan government, backed by the Sinhalese people and the Tamil Muslims want it to be held.

Decolonisation of areas where the Sinhalese have settled is another tricky question. The LTTE is studiously ambiguous

about it, saying that it is not an issue at the moment, and that it has not presented Colombo with any set of proposals on it.

Finally, there is the demand for Eelam. The LTTE is now softpedalling the issue. There is no point in bringing it up it says, when it is engaged in delicate peace negotiations with the Sri Lanka government. At the same time, it will not forswear it altogether. Ensnared on the eighth floor of a five-star hotel in Colombo, with Coombo picking up the bill for a second time, the LTTE leaders — Anton Balasingham, Dilip Yogi, K. Kittu, a near-legendary figure among the Tamils after his defence of Jaffna in the two-year-long siege by the Sri Lankan army — give no sign of their militant predisposition as they speak in muted accents of such unlikely subjects as compromise, patience, peace and dialogue, of their ardent wish to have India acknowledge the reality that it must eventually deal with them if it truly wishes to secure Tamil interests in Sri Lanka.

The LTTE acknowledges it is in a dilemma. It desperately wants the IPKF out as soon as possible. To make that happen, it must lie low, lest fresh turbulence give the IPKF a handle to prolong its presence. But the longer it lies low, the greater the credibility attaching to Mr. Perumal's NEPC government elected in what the LTTE holds was a farcical poll because it was confined to the east and attracted even there a miserable turnout of voters. The lower the LTTE profile, the more time, too, Mr. Perumal has to beef up his allegedly Indian-built militia.

Mr. Balasingham is blunt. "We are not prepared to lie low forever, after December 31, we will have to reorient our policy." Also, well before then, a new government will have begun to function in New Delhi.

# The Europeanisation of Nonalignment

A. W. Singham

When the non-aligned Movement selected its venue for the North Summit it did not reckon that Belgrade would open the door for a possible European realignment. Six of the seven Warsaw Pact members attended along with five NATO countries and two ANZUS states. In its twenty-eight year history, the movement has been primarily an Afro-Asian movement with increased membership from the Caribbean and Latin America in the last decade. Only three members are from Europe: Yugoslavia, Malta, and Cyprus. But Yugoslavia enjoys a special place as a socialist country led for decades by a charismatic leader of a national liberation movement, Tito. It now appears that non-alignment could become an attractive alternative for a number of Eastern European countries looking for a movement that represents a non-bloc, independent force in world politics.

This large gathering of Europeans did disturb some older members of the "Bandung" family who saw the possibility of losing the militant anti-colonial and anti-racist posture of the movement if a number of these European countries were admitted. It should be remembered, however, that historically Eastern European countries were structurally the third world within Europe. Thus European realignment in the North, South and East gives the Non-aligned Movement an opportunity to become a genuine universal movement in the near future.

In addition to Eastern European countries, several Nordic states, Canada, New Zealand and Portugal attended as guests. Canada's foreign minister made it abundantly clear at a United Nations speech after the summit that his country's presence at the non-aligned meeting should

not be misunderstood. He insisted that Canada remained a devoted, loyal and proud member of NATO. In this light, the movement will have to take greater care with its invitation list. In retrospect, it was quite appropriate for the chair of the Political Committee to announce that those with guest status could attend the plenary meetings but not participate in the specialized private meetings of non-aligned countries.

In previous summits, one was always aware of the powerful presence of China and its lobby. China's internal situation especially the student rebellions and the new detente between the USA and USSR could lead to a re-examination of its foreign policy. China has seen herself as a "fellow traveller" of non-alignment. It is likely that it too will be looking for a platform from which to conduct an independent non-bloc foreign policy.

## Regional Wars Revisited: Non-aligned Solutions

The effort to reduce the length of the Belgrade final declaration essentially failed. The second part of the document reveals the movement's primary concerns: regional wars and the global economic crisis. On regional wars, the movement is clear that while East-West relations are improving, the Cold War is alive and well in the Middle East, Southern Africa, Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Central America and throughout the globe. The central issue is that regional wars are being arbitrarily settled by the major powers without consultations with the parties involved, especially non-aligned countries. Furthermore, there is the grave danger of settlements being conducted with little regard for particular countries in the region and their

domestic consequences.

The so-called settlement in Southeast Asia at the end of the Vietnam War, for example, plunged the entire region into chaos and no settlement appears imminent for Kampuchea. In fact, another war seems to be looming with the prospect of the notorious Pol Pot sharing power in that tragic country. In Afghanistan, the withdrawal of Soviet troops has created internal anarchy and the prospects of a coalition government is nearly impossible. President Najibullah left his capital to attend the summit in the midst of rocket fire and immediately called for another international conference to resolve a conflict which includes India, Pakistan, Iran, China and both superpowers.

In Southern Africa, the Namibian solution is very fragile and there is no guarantee that a free and fair election can be held. Savimbi has been unleashed again by South Africa and it seems likely that Angola will find itself in a permanent civil war. In South Africa itself, the newly elected President de Klerk appears to have read his mandate as giving him the right to maintain internal order through police brutality and violence.

In the Americas, the situation in Nicaragua is explosive. In spite of the efforts of heads of state in Central America to bring about peace; Salvador, Guatemala, and the entire region face the prospect of a protracted civil war. The so-called drug war can also lead to armed intervention throughout the continent beginning with Panama and Colombia.

In the Middle East, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Javier Perez de Cuellar, was actively involved at the summit trying to keep together

the peace between Iran and Iraq. The situation in Palestine is in a stalemate and the recommendations of the Non-aligned movement for an international peace conference are becoming increasingly remote. One underlying fear of the movement is the possibility of many more nations facing the prospect of becoming dismembered like Lebanon, especially as ethnic conflicts spill over boundaries and become regional wars. Already the process of Lebanization seems to have begun in Sri Lanka, Sudan, Somalia, and now Angola.

The resolution of regional conflicts by the superpowers within the framework of the United Nations has caused enormous diplomatic and political difficulties for the movement. The Namibian question is a good case study. The United States, which recognizes neither Cuba nor Angola and has no treaty obligations in the region, has become the principal actor in devising a settlement. This settlement also involves the Republic of South Africa which enjoys no legitimacy in the global community and is well known for blatantly violating international law. More importantly, South Africa has been given responsibility for implementing transition arrangements for Namibian independence. The Soviet Union has been invited through the back door by the principal actor to be a silent witness and signatory for the settlement. Finally, and most pathetically, the people of Namibia and their representatives, SWAPO, as well as the UN Council for Namibia, were excluded from participating in this process. Yet, SWAPO is held responsible for implementing some aspects of the resolution. This entire comic opera of international relations is now to be implemented by a constrained and financially disabled Secretary General of the United Nations. To add irony to the insult, the gang of five in the Security Council has financially crippled the implementation process.

If this type of regional solution is replicated in other areas, the Non-Aligned Movement should insist on a permanent membership in the Security Council. If nothing else, the movement can represent the victims of regional wars.

The details of the economic analysis undertaken by the summit were no more comforting. Regional wars have wreaked havoc on development prospects. The debt crisis is slowly eroding the sovereignty of debtor countries. Africa faces one of the most severe economic crises of this century with hunger and famine as part of the permanent reality. Yet American, European, and Japanese superpowers seem in no mood even to entertain the notion of global negotiations.

### A Condominium of Superpowers

It was for these economic and political reasons that the heads of state proceeded to modify Yugoslavia's original draft declaration. While they welcomed the new East-West relationship, they were not convinced that the Cold War on the political economic front had ended. They also felt that the world faced a new threat: the maldistribution of the world's wealth and resources that could lead to a dangerous war for global control and the concentration of this economic power amongst a few industrial nations which could destroy the global environment.

One major change in world politics since the founding of the movement in 1961 is the shift from a bipolar world to a multipolar superpower world consisting today of the USA, USSR, the European Community, and Japan. In the political realm, the USSR announced recently that it was rejecting the Brezhnev doctrine. It is difficult to comprehend the real meaning of this announcement, especially since the doctrine was never clearly articulated. What concerns non-aligned countries is whether the Soviet Union

plans to extricate itself entirely from all regional conflicts in the third world. During the summit a Soviet foreign policy spokesperson pronounced that the USSR was abandoning its policy of seeing the Non-aligned Movement as a "natural ally" and that it recognized the movement as an independent force in world politics. This was seen at best as a gratuitous statement because the movement has always seen itself as an independent force in world politics. It is hoped as the Yugoslav theoretician of non-alignment Ranko Petkovic has proposed it would be best if the debate about "natural ally" and "equidistance" be put to rest and that the more concrete issues facing the movement be addressed.

One major underlying issue at the summit was the proper understanding of the consequences of the changes in the Soviet Union, both internally and externally, for the global community. Internally, reemergence of ethnic nationalism and new demands for secession are seen as a dangerous warning to national sovereignty, not only for the Soviet Union, but many non-aligned countries with similar situations. Externally, there is the possibility of the Soviet Union becoming so obsessed with its internal problems that it could become the weaker partner in the global power structure. In strategic terms, non-aligned countries have always understood that as long as there are two powers with nuclear hegemony neither could dominate the globe.

What troubles the movement is the possibility of the Western world becoming a new condominium of superpowers with the European Community, Japan, and the United States creating a fortress around themselves to protect their economic and political interests. A weakened USSR and China would become junior global partners with the new condominium as the only hegemonic power. This would

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# Can Liberalism accommodate interventionism, nationalism

Chanaka Amaratunga

If the 19th century expressed the most coherent formulation of classical Liberalism and the case for the minimal state, which was to be powerfully restated in the 20th century, it also saw the development of another in my view, more socially responsible Liberalism, which has had as distinguished a redefinition in the 20th century. It was unsurprising that as Britain faced the harsh consequences of the Industrial Revolution and the social deprivation that existed alongside the immense material prosperity of the second half of the 19th century, many Liberals recognized that the Liberal ideal of individual liberty must also be an enabling idea — that is to say that the social and economic conditions needed to be created to ensure minimum standards of life for all so that all persons would be able to exercise their liberties. The natural corollary of such a recognition was the view that the state could not be maintained as a minimal presence but that rather, it must become an interventionist instrument which would help make freedom more real for the many.

The interventionist or revisionist school of Liberalism was one to which John Stuart Mill belonged and much in his writings, particularly his *Principles of Political Economy* makes this clear. But the case for state intervention and for the limitation of the liberty of the individual in the economic sphere so as to maximise the possibilities for liberty for a greater number of individuals was most clearly made by the Oxford academic T. H. Green. In his *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* and in his *Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract*, Green argued that

the state had a moral right to intervene to ensure a better standard of living for the underprivileged, in the interests of justice and fairness and in the interests of increasing the real possibility of the exercise of individual rights. In his work Green also criticised the notion of the atomised and wholly autonomous individual contained in much Liberal thought as being unreal and asserted that while the individual was important, he/she could only exercise any meaningful existence in the context of society and that the common good and social responsibility needed therefore to be recognized. Green's ideas developed by those such as the Journalist L. T. Hobhouse, inspired many interventionists in the British Liberal Party, led to the adoption of its Newcastle Programme at the end of the 19th century, and laid the philosophical foundations for the socially reforming Liberal legislation of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Despite his support for an interventionist attitude by the state, Green was firmly within the Liberal mainstream in his attitude to private property and rejected the central assumption of socialist economics. He declared in his *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*:

We must bear in mind that the increased wealth of one man does not naturally mean the diminished wealth of another. We must not think of wealth as a given stock of commodities of which a larger share cannot fall to one without taking from the share that falls to another. The wealth of the world is constantly increasing in proportion as the constant production of new wealth by labour exceeds the constant consumption of what is already produced. . . . Therefore in the accumulation of wealth, so far as it arises from the saving by anyone of the products of his labour, from his bequest of this capital to

another who further adds to it by saving some of the profit which the capital yields, as employed in the payment of labour or in trade either by the capitalist himself or someone to whom he lends it, and from the continuation of this process through generations, there is nothing which tends to lessen for anyone else the opportunities of ownership.<sup>15</sup>

The 19th century saw the development of other rival conceptions of Liberalism which are of interest. One of them, particular to continental Europe was Liberalism that had its inspiration in nationalism. Later in this paper, I propose to argue that nationalism is an idea incompatible with Liberalism. Nevertheless in the 19th century, particularly in areas under foreign rule and seeking national cohesion and identity, Liberalism was part of a nationalist movement. This was true of the movement in Poland against oppression of Czarist rule, the revolt of the Hungarians against Austrian domination, the movement for German unification which culminated in the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848 and the Italian Risorgimento. Thus nationalist leaders such as Louis Kossuth or Count Cavour or the figures of mid nineteenth century German or Polish nationalism supported Liberal attitudes. However, as the century progressed the ultimate incompatibility of the two ideas were made evident by the ascendancy in these nations of the nationalist spirit at the expense of the Liberal one.

Another significant school of 19th century Liberalism contained a strong anti-clerical sentiment. This was particularly true of Liberalism in countries in which the dominance of the Roman Catholic church was strong. In Britain Liberalism was not particularly hostile to the clergy although many Liberals opposed the idea of an established church and although there was a strong non-conformist i.e. dissident protestant, tradition in the British Liberal Party.

There was too, in Britain a sharp distinction on the Libe-

ral attitude to foreign and colonial policy leading to the distinct schools of the Little Englanders and the Liberal Imperialists. Deriving some of their inspiration from the nationalist-liberal European tradition, the Little Englanders believed that the proper Liberal course was to permit each nation to order its own affairs in its own way. The Little Englanders were therefore critical of colonialism and of intervention in the affairs of other states. The Liberal Imperialists among whom the Liberal Prime Ministers Lord Rosebery and Asquith were prominent believed that Liberals had a moral obligation to help ensure good government, freedom and justice wherever possible. They developed even towards colonialism, the attitude that the justification of colonial rule lay in the interests of the governed. It was such attitudes that governed the drawing up of the Durham Report which led to the establishment of Dominion status for Canada and the enactment by the Liberal Viceroy of India Lord Ripon of political reforms such as the Ilbert Bill, in the teeth of violent opposition from the British community in India at the time.<sup>15</sup>

The seeds of controversy between classical and revisionist Liberalism sown in the 19th century have blossomed in the 20th century into two very powerful rival strands of Liberalism of great intellectual authority. Among the most distinguished classical Liberals of this century are Friedrich Von Hayek, the greatest among them, Robert Nozick, John Gray and Milton Friedman. Among the great revisionists are John Maynard Keynes (Lord Keynes) who more than anyone else was responsible for proposing the ideas that led the world out of the depression and into the productive era of the first two post-war decades, Lord Beveridge whose report led to the establishment of the modern welfare state in Britain and has served to advance the fron-

tiers of socially responsible and enabling Liberalism, the philosopher John Rawls and the economist John Kenneth Galbraith. But that both classical and revisionist Liberals ultimately come together on the essential outlook which makes them Liberals is evident from the following passages:-

John Maynard Keynes asserted:-

The political problem of mankind is to combine three things. Economic Efficiency, Social Justice and Individual Liberty. The first needs criticism. Precaution and technical knowledge; the second an unselfish and enthusiastic spirit that loves the ordinary man; the third tolerance, breadth, appreciation of the excellencies of variety and independence which prefers, above everything, to give unhindered opportunity to the exceptional and to the aspiring... The party that best combines these strengths is the Liberal Party, the party of Economic Individualism and Social Liberty.<sup>17</sup>

Friedrich Hayek emphasised the essential characteristic of a Liberal:-

To live and work successfully with others requires more than faithfulness to one's concrete aims. It requires an intellectual commitment to a type of order in which, even on issues which to one are fundamental, others are allowed to pursue different ends.

It is for this reason that to the liberal neither moral nor religious ideas are proper objects of coercion, while both conservatives and socialists recognize no such limits. I sometimes feel that the most conspicuous attribute of liberalism that distinguishes it as much from conservatism as from socialism is the view that moral beliefs concerning matters of conduct which do not directly interfere with the protected sphere of other persons do not justify coercion. This may also explain why it seems to be so much easier for the repentant socialist to find a new spiritual home in the conservative fold than in the Liberal.<sup>18</sup>

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## The Europeanisation . . .

(Continued from page 14)

turn non-aligned countries into client states of the condominium. This is particularly critical for the large number of small states in the movement with weak economies. One of the issues that confronts the movement internally is the growing tension between large and small states, particularly in the context of global economic negotiations. A fortress mentality will have severe consequences for the movement, especially in the areas of security, cultural domination, development, and political sovereignty. It should be noted, however, that will be difficult for Western condominium powers to live in isolation in the fortress as they are dependent on raw materials, labor, and markets from outside. Sooner or later, the dwellers inside the fortress will have to come to some accommodation with barbarians outside.

This grim assessment of global conditions simply means that the Non-aligned Movement has an even greater role in protecting its populations than in previous decades. As a trade union of the poor and representative of the wretched of the earth, it has no alternative but to maintain internal unity and to look for new allies both inside and outside the fortress. It is for this reason that non-aligned countries have come to the firm conclusion that the United Nations remains the only organ that can enable them to survive under conditions of international anarchy.

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# Agrarian Production Relations

Jayantha Perera

Size distribution of paddy holdings in Sri Lanka indicates that nearly one fifth (19%) of the holdings are less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre each and (44%) are less than 1 acre each. In districts such as Kegalle and Kandy, 60% of the paddy holdings are less than one acre each in size. Two-third (67%) of all paddy holdings in Sri Lanka are less than two 2 acres each in size which accounts for about 30% of the area under paddy cultivation. The Agricultural Census of 1982 shows that two-third of the total paddy

area is cultivated purely on tenancy basis.

In a recent micro survey carried out in eight villages by the current writer with an economist on rural landlessness, a more serious scenario was observed (Perera and Tilakaratne, 1988). The eight study-villages were chosen to represent both the wet zone and dry zone. The study shows a rather low level of paddy land ownership compared with the national paddy land ownership estimates.

Table 2  
Paddy Land Ownership in Study-Villages  
Percentage Distribution (n=588)

Size Distribution (acres)	Percentage of Households		
	Wet Zone	Dry Zone	Total
no land	69	43	50
less than 0.5	27	19	30
0.6 — 1.0	02	17	09
1.1 — 1.5	00	07	05
1.6 — 2.0	00	05	02
2.1 — 2.5	00	03	02
2.6 — 4.0	00	06	02
4.1 and more	00	06	01

In the wet zone villages, no household owns more than one acre or practically not more than half an acre of paddy. In the dry zone, only 27% of households own more than one acre of paddy each.

The accelerating rate of landlessness during the last few dec-

ades can be seen in the table below. In comparison with their fathers, 81% of chiefs of land poor households own less land. Among the landed group the process declining ownership is not so rapid and still 75% of chiefs of households own more or equal amount of land as their fathers did.

Table 3  
Land Ownership of Household Chiefs Compared with  
That of Their Fathers — Percentage Distribution of Households

Father Owned:	Dry Zone		Wet Zone		Both Zones	
	a	b	a	b	a	b
more land	77	24	85	26	81	25
equal land	07	67	09	60	08	64
less land	16	09	06	14	11	11

a = land poor; b = landed

Even among the households of present generation, the process of becoming land poor is evident.

Table 4  
Land Poor Households which Operated Land in the  
Past — Percentage Distribution

Households	Dry Zone	Wet Zone	Both Zones
owned land	35	35	35
not owned land	65	65	65

Of the households which operated land in the past, 35% owned holdings of one acre or more each of which qualified them as landed households according to the criteria of the study.

Given the extremely limited absorptive capacity in the industrial, commercial and service sectors of the economy, the majority of the working population in rural areas is compelled to make a living out of land and other marginally productive activities. Thirty four percent of working population (above ten years of age) in the study villages—excluding students and disabled—are employed in the agriculture and in casual work; only a 18.5 have found work in the non-agricultural sector (in the dry zone, 9% and in the wet zone, 27%). The remaining majority is housewives and those who can be regarded as unemployed.

## Agrarian Production

### Relations: Patron Client

### Relations or Class Relations?

#### Landlords and Tenants

The incidence of *ande* tenancies is not the result of the availability of large paddy holdings to let out to tenants. Land owners let out their small paddy holdings on *ande* tenancies for other reasons. Many landowners still think that they have an obligation to rent out some of their paddy lands to their kinsmen and friends. Second, renting out lands on *ande* is a sure way of recruiting dependents in the villages. Third some of the landowners, especially educated and those employed outside their villages, rent out their land either because they have left the village or because they are engaged in more lucrative occupations other than agriculture. In all study-villages, the biggest landowners are the salaried and some of the self-employed. Fourth, widows old and sick landlords rent out most, if not all, of their land. Fifth, whenever a villager mortgages his paddy land to obtain money for a household emergency the general practice, especially in

the wet zone, is to allow the mortgager to cultivate on *ande* basis if he so desires. Finally, some tenancy arrangements are linked with inheritance. When a son of young parents married and established his separate household, he could become a tenant of his parents. Although he is the heir or one of the heirs to his parents property if is not formally divided among children, he cannot have absolute rights over his share. If parents wish, they can employ their son to cultivate his share, or more, and would take a share of his harvest as their rent of land.

*Ande* tenancy is generally an agreement — whether written or oral — between a landlord and his tenant to share the cost of production, cultivation risks and profits. *Ande* tenancies vary not only from region to region but also from one landlord to another within a village. The land rent the landowner receives varies according to the productivity of land rented, labour and other inputs provided by the landlord and above all, the personal relationships between the landlord and his tenant.

The prevalent ratio of sharing the harvest the landlord and tenant is 50 : 50. In the dry zone, 85% of tenants got 50% of the net harvest while the other 15% got 75% of the gross harvest. In the wet zone, 94% of tenants got 50% while 6% of tenants got three-fourth of the gross harvest (Perera & Tilakaratne, 1988).

The relationship between the landlord and his tenant is an easy one when the landlord does not live in the village. An absentee landlord cannot easily obtain extra-tenurial services from his tenant. Some times absentee landlords find it difficult to get rent from their tenants as the tenants often underreport the harvest or try to postpone the payments of rent.

By contrast, the village resident landlord is often able to extract a higher share of the

crop from his tenant than his absentee counterpart. When the villageresident landlord belongs to the dominant caste or a wealthy household, or both, it is easy for him to obtain not only a big share of the crop as rent, but also extra-tenurial services such as help in household chores or the running of errands from his tenant. But what the landlords can command is now less than it used to be.

On the other hand, 21% of tenants get additional help from their landlords. Twenty two percent of tenants in the dry zone and 17% in the wet zone reported that they obtained help from their landlords on occasions such as family bereavement and weddings.

During the last thirty years, several changes have been taking place in the character of the landlord-tenant relationship. Chief among them is the frequent change of tenants by landlords. This is simply a way of evading tenancy laws which provide security of tenure of a tenant who cultivates the same plot for two consecutive years. Nearly 60% of tenants in the wet zone and 40% of tenants in the dry zone mentioned this with regard to their tenancy status. Thus they are temporary tenants on *ad hoc* basis and for all legal purposes, wage labourers. Another change reported by tenants (24%) is the landlords preference to give their land parcels on lease rather than on *ande* tenancy. One reason for this is the lump sum of money a landlord can take into his hand at the beginning of a season. Another reason is that he could avoid risks associated with the cultivation of land. Another observation is that the land available for tenancies is diminishing, as landlords now try to cultivate their holding by themselves or with the help of wage workers. It is often difficult for a landlord to get his land from the tenant, who is often a relative or a friend

of his household soon after the harvesting. The landlords overcome this difficult situation, by getting the land back to be cultivated by themselves for a season. This alternative cultivation of their lands for one season with tenants and the other by themselves or with hired wage workers also eases the risk the landlords have to bear in the dry zone villages, where irrigation water often becomes short for cultivation. When a holding is cultivated by a landlord himself with the help of labourers he has to bear all the risks, if a tenant is associated, the risk is shared.

### Land Poor Wage Workers and Agricultural Operators

Wage workers can be divided into two groups: those who work in their own villages and in the adjoining villages, and those who seasonally migrate to other districts seeking employment mainly in paddy cultivation. Wage workers who work in their own villages and in the vicinity, usually find irregular day-labour. In peak periods of agriculture, many of them find work as casual agricultural labourers in paddy lands. Regular wage workers in villages are known to the landlords, who usually inform labourers in advance of their labour requirements. When a wage worker agrees to work in a field on a particular day, he does not violate the agreement even for a higher wage, as it is essential to keep good relations with the landlords in the area.

In larger-scale settlement schemes, seasonal migrant wage labour plays an important role in agricultural production. It is a common phenomenon in the Mahaweli H and C systems that migrant wage workers from the countryside seeking temporary employment. The wage work is on contract and with the payment for labour, the land owners sever relations with their labourers. However in many parts of the dry zone, landlords tend to invite the

same workers in every season to work in their fields. On such occasions it is possible to observe some patron-client relationships between the landlords and wage workers.

Wage workers differ from tenants in several ways; the most important is their lack of employment security. Tenants, once they are tenanted in holdings on *ande*, are assured of employment for at least one cultivation season. Further-

more, they often control agricultural operations in their tenanted holdings. But wage workers have neither responsibilities over the operations nor risks except physical injury or exhaustion in dangerous work such as chemical spraying. When working in agricultural lands, they are paid for the job they have completed and do not have to wait for the harvest to be collected to obtain their wages.

to have landlords as 'patrons' so that they could get such limited work to themselves. Landlords are aware of this and attempt to stop such dependence. As the crops fail often due to lack of irrigation facilities, wage workers tend to borrow money from the landlords. But if wage workers are recruited from outside, this dependency could be minimised and therefore, landlords prefer to recruit outsiders as wage workers.

Table 5

Wage Workers in Agriculture The Basis of Their Recruitment

Basis of Recruitment	Dry Zone	Wet Zone	Both Zones
Daily wages	70	92	81
Monthly wages	26	01	15
On contracts	04	02	02
Piece work rate	00	05	02

As the table 5 shows practically workers in the wet zone are recruited on a daily wage basis. There is very little extra work relations between land operators and their wage workers. However, it is customary to provide food and drink — breakfast, a mid-day rice meal morning and afternoon tea also *beddi* (local cigars) and sometimes toddy in addition to wages.

Long-term tied labour supply by a few households to their masters were reported from two villages. In one village, two landless households are full-time wage workers of a big landlord in the village. The workers attend to all household and land activities such as security, plucking fruits marketing and transporting timber to Colombo. The workers are not paid fixed salaries or wages, but the landlord looks after their workers basic household requirements. Spouses and children of each worker household obtain food from the landlord. They live on a piece of land which belongs to the landlord. In such relations, one can observe some elements of feudal bon-

dage. However, caste-based deference and bondage are not any more to be seen in the village.

Wage workers, particularly in wet zone, tend to gather around landlords as they have to compete with each other for limited wage work available in villages. As a result, some landlords have formed informal retinues around them with workers. This relationship is reciprocal as landlords usually help such workers by giving priority to them in recruiting workers, helping them to take sick people to hospital and by bailing out them from police custody when arrested.

In the dry zone, hardly any personal relations exist between the landlord and wage workers. As there is not enough wage work in villages, land poor households work for anybody who offers work. However, there are few wage workers who are being employed by the landlords on long-term basis and in such events, the relationships between the landlord and the workers become close and personal. It is therefore to the advantage of the wage workers

NEXT: Job Patterns

The Rise . . .

(Continued from page 8)

In fact, reading the disclosures now coming out of Gorbachev's USSR one has to credit Wijeweera with considerable perspicacity and maturity in relating his own life experience in the USSR to the growing crisis of soviet communism. His deep seated hatred and contempt for the leaders of the old left seems to have stemmed from their inability, or unwillingness to make a proper assessment of the soviet position. It is interesting to speculate why Wijeweera was not drawn to Trotsky's analysis of the degeneration of the bureaucratic Soviet State. I am told that Bala Tampoe had tried to do precisely that by providing Trotskyist literature to Wijeweera when he was in prison after the 1971 defeat. What can be said however is that the only Sri Lankan left leader who actually lived in the USSR began to attack its degeneration both inside that country and outside. In a true bureaucratic style that would have fascinated the young rebel was denied a reentry visa by the USSR "authorities."

(To be Continued)

## George Keyt

**A Life in Art with a bio-bibliography of the Artist  
1923-1988**

by **H. A. I. Goonetilake**

Published by the George Keyt Foundation, Colombo.

41 pages, 5 illustrations, Price Rs. 150/-

I doubt very much if there is a more reliable or more capable guide to the art of Keyt than the author of the present work. He has an uncanny insight into the painter's moods, an unsurpassed feel for his compositions, and above all an intimate and factual knowledge of the artist as he has developed over the years to become, internationally, the most recognised among the practitioners of art in this country. Unlike any other critic, here and abroad, Ian Goonetilake does not have to refresh his memory of the artist's work, from time to time, visiting art galleries or dropping in at exhibitions, because he lives almost his entire life surrounded by some of Keyt's most surprisingly good work which no gallery or private collector could boast of. From the day he came to know Keyt at Sirimalwatte in 1950, it has been a case of "veni, vidi, vici". He has been in constant touch with the artist, corresponding with him regularly (besides making visits) and since the death of Lionel Wendt in 1944, has become his alter ego.

As such *'George Keyt — A Life in Art'* has a Boswellian authenticity, and is an achievement by itself. True, there was the 'Felicitation' volume that was published in 1977, but there Ian Goonetilake could supply only the much valued bibliography. In this small book, for the first time, he has sensitively discussed the artist's work and related it to the vicissitudes of the artist's life and times. A great deal more could have been written, specially placing him in the context of modern art here and in Europe, and developing some of the criticisms he has only hinted

at, but then for even a connoisseur such a work would have been expensive. Hence this 41 page monograph, which nonetheless presents apart from Ian Goonetilake's comments, a complete bibliography and a short biography of the artist's own writings, writings by others about his work, and a full list of all the exhibitions that have been held here and abroad. In addition there are five colour plates (including the one on the cover).

About Ian Goonetilake's devotion to the artist there is no question. However he has not let that blind him to the artist's few failings which need elaboration to obtain a balanced view of the complete oeuvre. Keyt like others of the 43rd Group epitomise in his work the impact of the avant garde tendencies of, particularly the French painters of the early part of the modern era. But unlike others he was able to capture an oriental atmosphere, and develop his own convention (not quite a language) and develop a remarkable skill and fluency of expression within that convention. This the others like Ivan Peiris, Justin Deriniyagala, or Harry Peiris failed to accomplish, and their work do not possess that characteristic 'oriental' touch that Keyt with consummate skill exhibits. The echo of European styles is stronger in them, for instance that of Gauguin in David Paynter, or that of Marc Chagal in Manjusiri. Traces of Cezanne's influence are found in all of them. It is not so with Keyt's work. There is a firm individuality about them, and currents of foreign influence do not appear over-powering. Keyt's genius lies in transcending the primary influences that

he was subject to along with others of his generation.

Where Keyt has failed, if it can be called a failure, is in imprisoning himself in the excessively sensuous, at one stage in his career. Some might call it even 'erotic', and point to particular paintings where this is only too obvious. I feel it is this feature apart from his enormous skill with line and colour that has brought him a great deal of international recognition. We respond not so much to colour as such, or curves and lines that build another world of harmony in the abstract, but to suggestions that they make, and suggestions that relate to our basic emotions of love, sex, anger, or distress. Keyt has exploited this suggestiveness with abandon and produced large number of paintings in this genre. This happened in the forties, and fifties principally, and in the early seventies I noticed a turn in this tendency, which I characterised as the 'Saivitep Phase' in my article in the 'Guardian' in the December 15th issue of the journal. In this phase, Hindu Saivite symbolism relating to sex appeared as a principal feature. In some paintings of this period his old style and the new symbols did not quite blend, and Keyt betrayed a lack of finesse in the compositions.

Also lately Keyt's powers of draughtsmanship have shown a noticeable decline, and quite naturally. He is 88 years old, and it must be physically difficult for him to get the tension and fluency that characterised his earlier work. Every artist must succumb to the physical realities of advancing age and connected infirmities, and Keyt is no exception. It is surprising that he is still vigorous enough mentally to go on painting, and wanting to do so. I can only think of one other artist in this country who went on passed his nineties painting, even though what he kept on producing later was not of much worth, and that was

(Continued on page 24)



## Sri Lankas bid to be the 'Sin Capital'

Asoka Bandarage

While tourism was promoted and was expanding prior to 1977, it received a tremendous boost from the economic liberalization policies of the current regime. Both direct and indirect employment in the tourist industry was only 7,000 in 1966, but by 1982 an estimated 65,000 people were depending on tourism for their livelihood. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism which were Rs. 6.1 million in 1966 rose to Rs. 2.5 billion in 1982, making tourism the fourth most important foreign exchange earner for the country. Although tourism has virtually disappeared since the escalation of ethnic violence in 1983, it is still necessary to take a look at tourism in order to complete this account of women and capitalist development in Sri Lanka in the 1977 to 1987 period.

Women were only about 19 percent of all employees in the tourist sector in the early 1980s, and most of these women were concentrated in typically in female jobs such as receptionists and secretaries in big hotels and travel agencies in the urban areas. Enrollment figure from the government's hotel training school for 1977-78 show that all female students were trained either to be receptionists or housekeepers. However, Shireen Samarasuriya's *Who Needs Tourism?*, a study of a tourist village on the southern coast, shows the women are employed to a greater extent and in a wider variety of roles than indicate by official statistics. Samarasuriya has identified several new categories of entrepreneurship among women related to tourism: operation of guesthouses — both legal and illegal; owning and managing restaurants; batik making and selling; and petty trading in the tourist market. In the popular tourist village of Hikkaduwa alone, there were ninety small hotels, 150 small restaurants, 250 shops and sixty-eight un-

graded guest houses in 1984. As a local newspaper reported, "In the period of 1979-1980 the percentage of tourists who stayed in the formal or approved category of hotels has dropped from 89% to 61% and since then even further." These facts and figures reveal predominance of low-budget or "hippie" tourism in Sri Lanka and the importance of the informal sector and women's roles in tourism.

As in Thailand, tourism in Sri Lanka is turning more and more into sex tourism or international prostitution. While prostitutes are not as prevalent as in Bangkok, where there are an estimated 100,000 to 200,000, there is no doubt that the expansion of mass tourism has greatly increased the numbers in Colombo and the island in general. "Sri Lankan newspapers give information on package sex tours and the range of prostitutes available in the country, from local film stars and upper class women to the poorest of village women." The "Blue Book," a guide to sexual attractions in Asian cities, describes the many services available in Sri Lanka, and a survey by the *Weekend Sun* newspaper revealed that

... top fashion models, high society married women, school boys and rugby players were "on call 24 hours" in many of Colombo's top tourist hotels. Male and female prostitutes were graded to cost from Sri Lanka Rs. 100 to 3,000 to 3,300 (\$3.75 to \$110)... Six high class gambling clubs employed waiters and waitresses who became available for paid sex after midnight.

Child prostitution, especially the prostitution of young boys, is a recent development related to the heavy male homosexual tourist traffic to the island. In 1985 there were an estimated 15,000 male prostitutes in Sri Lanka, with 1,500 in Colombo alone. Economic need is the major factor in the rise of prostitution, and as Samarasuriya explains in her 1982 study.

The fact that such activities as pimping and female and male prostitution

are increasing in spite of acutely felt moral degradation proves that few other means of livelihood are open to those who engage in it... Before the advent of tourism, hetero- and homosexual prostitution... was not established on a commercialized basis. Prostitution was not the money-making business venture it is today.

In a more recent study done in 1985, sociologist Nandasena Ratnapala observes a loosening of the attitudes towards prostitution. Apparently prostitution "has eaten deep into the social fabric of society in the tourist areas... has gained a new respectability and acceptance which induce husbands to encourage their wives and parents to compel their daughters into prostitution."

Partly to compensate for the recent demise of tourism, gambling casinos and striptease hotels have been opened in Colombo. The city attempts to rival Bangkok as the "sin capital" of Asia, and more of the poor without alternatives are driven to become "skin sellers," providers of direct bodily services. Pimping prostitution, transvestism, drugs, and venereal diseases have soared, and pornography has become highly popular even among school children. As a result, an outbreak of AIDS is greatly feared.

Yet another development related to tourism and the international traffic in women is the export of brides. It is a highly lucrative multinational enterprise, which for instance, allows males in rich countries to buy Asian females through catalogues printed by bride-export agencies! To what extent this mail-order-bride business that flourishes in Southern Asia has penetrated Sri Lanka is not clear. But there is ample evidence of other forms of bride export from Sri Lanka to the West and to Japan. One such is the phenomenon of "tourist brides."

Some Western males, preferring innocent and subservient Asian stereotypes to their own

supposedly liberated and demanding women, come to the island seeking young wives. Many tourists who come for this purpose are older men. Local parents who are otherwise strict about their daughters' morals often encourage and even arrange quick marriages to tourists. They find it impossible to pass up an opportunity that promises to improve the financial situation of entire family.

Some of the Sri Lankan tourist brides are reported to be living in comfort in Scandinavian and other Western countries they have been taken to. On arrival, others discover that their husbands are not millionaires but mere factory workers who flew over on cheap package tours. Still other Asian brides may find themselves treated as servants or turning to prostitution or the pornography business. They are absolutely no protections or guarantees in marriages of poor local women to foreigners. Cut off from their families and culture, the women remain strangers in lands where the language, food, weather, and people are utterly alien to them. This situation has been vividly portrayed in a recent expose of a bride import-export business conducted by a Japanese marriage-arrangement company, Toshi Patri-monial Agency.

Japanese researcher Nakamura Hisashi points out that there is a growing shortage of single women in "feudalistically male-dominated" farming communities such as those in Nagano Prefecture in Japan. Women from these communities prefer to leave for the cities, leaving behind the oppressive life of "farm labor on top of home chores and tending elderly in-laws." As a result, the men are seeking wives from other Asian countries such as Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. While Filipina brides are still predominant, there is now more demand for other Asian brides since a Filipina in Nagano was found to have AIDS. The system for recruiting and exporting women to Japan is

well established. While it is not clear how many Sri Lankan brides in total have been taken to Japan, it seems that at least a few batches of twenty to fifty women have been sent. The cost of a bride from Sri Lanka is particularly low, about 27,000 or 11,000 yen, and the profit potential for the Japanese "marriage counselor" or middleman is extraordinarily tempting.

Sri Lankan newspapers report that while twenty-to-twenty-five-year-old women are in demand in the European bride import market, in Japan women under twenty are wanted. The Sinhalese women brought to Japan range from sixteen to nineteen years of age, but they are forced to marry Japanese farmers in the forties and fifties. Most Sri Lankan brides lead miserable lives because their Japanese families do not speak to them and they have to work in the fields all day long. The women whom Hisashi interviewed summed up their situation: "We'd never known the pain of poverty until we came to Japan."

Perhaps the degrading of all ventures in the skin trade is the new business of exporting babies. In the West where birth rate is decreasing there is an increasing demand for foreign infants. To meet this demand some of the hotels in Sri Lanka have been converted to "baby farms" for exporting infants to other countries. In 1987 at least one such baby farm, a joint local and Western enterprise operating in the guise of a tourist agency, came into national attention. Poor women, often pregnant and abandoned are brought to the farm and well maintained with proper food and medical treatment and facilities throughout their pregnancies. As soon as the women give birth, the infants are taken away from them and sold to foreigners for anywhere from Rs. 25,000 to 50,000 each. It is not certain as to how many of the 1,637 Sri Lankan babies adopted by foreigners in 1986 came from baby farms. It is rumoured,

however, in some cases the breeder women are made to conceive children with Westerners because lighter-skinned babies are considered more desirable and hence more profitable. The day when poor women in Sri Lanka will be used simply as rented wombs to carry-offspring with no genetic relationship to themselves is not far in the future; it is already happening elsewhere, and as the *Lanka Guardian* commented:

... it is the unsavoury aspects of what is obviously a flourishing business that have scandalised the average Sri Lankan — "baby farms," managers with political connections," corrupt officials, foreign "contacts," etc.

Money may be the root of all evil but an import-export firm, located close to our much published Free Trade Zone sends a letter to a West European agency offering Sri Lankan babies for sale with a rate card attached, the cold callousness of the commercial approach hints of something rotten deep down in our society today. One step more, and we could take our babies to the weekly tea auctions and sell them along with our most traditional export item.

In response to protests from feminist groups, the government has banned the export of babies. However, it is unlikely that the skin trade can be wiped out through mere administrative fiat. Sri Lankan feminist organizations have also exposed and denounced prostitution and the degradation of women that have accompanied and accelerated capitalist development. But, as they well recognize, these problems are rooted in the capitalist world economy and patriarchal culture and as such require international solutions in addition to local solutions. Several European and Southeast Asian feminist organizations like Gabriela have now coalesced into networks campaigning against sex tourism and the exploitation of women.

## George Keyt

(Continued from page 22)

Mudliyar Amarasekera. Keyt is still more inventive than the Mudliyar at a comparable age, but the signs are unmistakable that the best period of his work is over.

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