

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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COMMUNALISM

JOURNEY'S END

— *Mervyn de Silva*



Premadasa won't rock the boat

— *J. N. Dixit*

Galkattas and Exit Theory

— *Tilak Gunawardhana*

SOUTH ASIA — Women

— *Kumari Jayawardena*

— Development

— *Saman Kelegama*

Did Wijeweera learn the right lessons ?

— *S. Leelananda*

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RARE INTERVENTION

In a rare, probably unique, intervention in domestic politics, Army Commander Hamilton Wanasingha issued a statement flatly denying an accusation made in Parliament by Opposition Leader, Mrs. Bandaranaike. The SLFP leader, had said that the Armed Forces were training a special hit-squad at a Ganemulla camp. The target: Opposition politicians.

In another interesting development, the Army Commander and Brigadier Algama presented to President Premadasa "Ruhunu Handa", The Voice of the South. It documents, in Sinhala and English, how the 13th Brigade defeated the JVP and liberated the South, to restore peace and democracy.

HIRE AND FIRE

"I appoint them. So I can remove them" said the President explaining that he will deal with errant and incompetent Cabinet Ministers, State Ministers and top officials the way a student is punished when he misbehaves or fails an exam. He was speaking at a ceremony

connected with the distribution of free textbooks. The one-year old UNP administration is expected to get a Lee Kuan Yew style 'face-lift' soon.

DEATH TOLL

445 in 30 days. That was the December death toll, Justice Minister Vincent Perera told the House on the 26th. 14 of these were described as 'political killings'. Ten security personnel lost their lives, the victims of suspected subversives.

'V' FOR VIJAY

A minor stir was caused in political circles by an announcement of a former Committee member of Mr. Vijaya Kumaratunge's S.L.M.P., Dr. Ranjith Senarathe. He said that Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunge, now in London, had formed a new party called SLMP (V), the 'V' standing for the founder of the SLMP of which she remains President. The SLMP 'V' will apply for recognition from the four party Left alliance, the USA. The SLMP general secretary, Mr. Y. P. Silva dismissed the report as

(Continued on page 12)

**A Comment on
Mr. T. S. P. Soysa**

Mr. T. S. P. Soysa writes: 'Don't be fooled. Mr. Siriwardena is not all vacuity and bombast: he does have something to say.'

I am tempted to add: 'Don't be fooled, Mr. Soysa is all vacuity and bombast. He has nothing to say.'

Mr. Siriwardena is a UNPer of the Premadasa variety. Mr. Soysa is, obviously, a UNPer of the JR variety.

Mr. Soysa claims the media know nothing about our democratic system being subverted and elections aborted. Leaving aside Mr. Soysa's title to speak on behalf of the media, he seems to have forgotten the strange things that happened to our democratic system and our elections during JR's 11-year roller-coaster ride. To jog his memory let us mention just a few: the 1981 DDC elections in Jaffna in which the officers appointed by the Commissioner of Elections were replaced by men nominated by a political party, the promotion of errant cops, the intimidation of Supreme Court Justices by thugs, and the 1982 Referendum about which the Commissioner of Elections had some scathing things to say.

For Mr. Soysa's information fire does **not** lick, it burns. Flames lick, just as do political sycophants.

Boyd Almeida

Colombo 4

**"Psychophants"
(L.G. 15 January: Letters)**

When Amaradasa spells 'sycophants' as in 'psycho' with a 'p' in front You must not think it a Trotskyist orthographic 'stunt'; There's a simple reason for the supererogatory letter: He doesn't know better.

Leonard Thirunavakarasu

Colombo 4

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What's in a ?

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS
BACKGROUND

There is a tide in the affairs of men. . . .

Likewise in the affairs of nations, and the communities that comprise a nation? 1956, 1958, and 1983 were the high tide of anti-Tamil sentiment.

Are the passions spent? Is communalism dying, in the hearts and minds of the people, if not on the rabble-rousing tongues of the demagogues and the politicians? May be it is simply that some symbols of yesterday have lost their evocative power.

The *WEEKEND* had a smart headline . . . "IT'S END OF THE ROAD FOR SRI".

On January 1st, a bloodless, neutral 'dash' (—) was introduced to licence plates on motor vehicles. It meant no more "SRI" over which so much blood had been spilt over 30 years ago in the second major eruption of widespread communal violence. (The 1956 outburst sparked by the FP satyagraha in Colombo to protest against the Sinhala Only Bill was less gruesome).

What's in a letter? In the heat of wild passions and mutual hostility, life itself. The explosion cannot be understood unless it is set in the background of a slow but sure build-up of racial tensions, hatred and fear.

In June 1956, Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike kept his polls promise as MEP leader to introduce the Sinhala Only Bill. It was passed in July. That same month, the Federal party passed a resolution in

which it confirmed the party's basic aim of setting up an "autonomous Tamil linguistic state within a federal union of Ceylon".

LTTE STRATEGY

However, unlike in the early days of the battle for Eelam, the LTTE is now not interested in proving its firepower. Having survived the war with the IPKF and proved its might on the battlefield, the LTTE is now keen on showing its administrative skills. And in all the areas from where the TNA has been driven out, a strange calm has descended. People in Batticaloa and Vavuniya now say that the LTTE has emerged as a more effective peace-keeping force than IPKF.

Yet, the peace is brittle. Even as the Sri Lankan Government is carrying on talks with the LTTE, the IPKF has reportedly been arming the TNA. The Premadasa Government and the LTTE are keen on burying the Indo-Sri Lankan accord while the Indian Government hopes that the TNA will gain enough strength to defend itself and the accord.

If the way the police in Sri Lanka are behaving is any indication, the TNA stands little chance of survival.

P. Jayaram in Colombo
(*India Today*)

It declared that there was no other alternative path to "the cultural freedom and identity of the Tamil-speaking people". The party asked all Tamils to transact business in Tamil or, if necessary, English and to refuse to "learn or speak Sinhala".

Another, much larger gathering demanded for those areas in which the Tamils were in a majority the widest autonomy and residuary powers consistent with the unity and external security of Ceylon".

It also demanded an end to "colonisation" in those areas that were "traditionally Tamil-speaking".

It is in this context that the introduction of "Sri", which would have looked harmless otherwise, became an emotional issue. The simple 'Sri', far more decorative than any letter in the English alphabet, was seen as yet another majority Sinhalese imposition.

By January 1957, Tamil MP's began to alter the license plates on their cars, substituting a Tamil letter for the official "Sri".

The campaign gathered momentum in the Tamil areas. When the CTB sent a new fleet of buses to the north, Tamils started to tar the letter Sri. In retaliation, Tamil names were tarred in the south. A boycott of Tamil shops and a campaign of harassment was launched. Meanwhile strikes and industrial unrest added fuel to the communal fire. A north-bound train carrying MP's to

the Federal party's annual convention was derailed. Passengers were roughed up. In the south Tamil shops were attacked or set ablaze. A government weakened by divisive conflicts and trade union agitation and increasingly nervous as racial passions swept the South caved in. An emergency was declared, effective day-to-day authority passing to Governor General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleka. Four-five days of mob rule led to the first long emergency.

"To dwell on the horrors of those four days in which murder, rape, arson and mutilation were commonplaces" wrote Prof. Lyn Ludowyk "is only to court disbelief".

Ludowyk was lucky. He left Ceylon before the decade was over. Those four days were no pages from Dante. Anyway, it is not the horror, the violence and the evil so unbearable to the humane, and sensitive Ludowyk that is most significant in the light of the next three decades and more. It is the impact of these events on politics, on communal relations, on political institutions and the structure of the State.

In the post-war pre-independence period, emergency regulations were used to deal with a GCSU strike. It is the recourse to "Emergency" powers by successive, popularly elected regimes in independent Ceylon-Sri Lanka that best illustrates the crisis of the State, and the diverse 'threats' that have justified its use which illuminate the crisis of Sri Lankan society. Extraordinary Law is the armour of the State—a State not armed against an external enemy but its own 'subjects'.

When the Emergency lasted an unprecedented 100 days, the island's premier daily thought it fit (and rightly so) to write a 'first leader' on this, then unusual event. The exception soon became the norm.

"Sri" has another connected story to tell. Racial violence and perceived threats connected with communal problems rather than industrial unrest or external challenges have been the principal reason for emergency rule. The notable exception was the JVP revolt of 1971. The insurgency in the north was indeed a mini-war but it too had ethnic roots, though it did eventually provoke a military threat from outside, but that too of the mildest kind, the Indian 'air-drop' before the July 1987 Peace Accord.

After the Accord however the State was confronted by a dual threat, the two-front war: the threat to the island's territorial integrity posed by the LTTE, and the challenge to State power posed by the JVP revolt. The latter threat has receded following the State's fierce, unrelenting crackdown in the last quarter of 1989. What particular form of political expression the social forces which produced the JVP revolt will now assume remains the overwhelming question of 1990.

The other, perhaps more immediate issue, is the next stage of the northern insurgency. The LTTE has become a political party. Yet it has not only kept its powder dry

but augmented its armoury, thanks largely to a TNA-CVF on the run.

Right now, the LTTE has kept demonstrating its near-total military dominance in the north-east, forcing the EPRLF-led combine to retreat... Retreat where? To the jungles? Is the jungle a safe sanctuary? Can its armoury be hidden from the 'Tigers' there? Or does the arms cache discovered on Tamilnadu soil, the first sign that the ENDLF has decided that only external sanctuary can provide a safe rear-base? In other words, learn a lesson from the 'Tigers' in the first phase of the Eelam struggle.

What degree of autonomy; that is political power, over what extent of territory, will satisfy LTTE aspirations. Its operations in the East suggest that it will hold fast to 'the traditional homeland' concept, north and east, and bargain for a constitutionally guaranteed authority as close as possible to an Indian state. If it is conceded then, there will be no "Eelam".

Conceded less, it may well decide that a *modus vivendi* with an understanding Colombo regime, is tactically sound. If not, a new war will begin, its consequences unpredictable.

RAJIV'S MOVE

With an internal revolt likely to erupt if he leads the Congress to another defeat in the State polls, a desperate Mr. Gandhi has grabbed an idea of AIMDK leader Ms. Jayalalitha with both hands. They propose an all-Party meeting at the national level or in Madras to discuss how the Sri Lankan Tamils can be protected after the IPKF pulls out.

Mr. Karunanidhi, he said, must show that he feels for the Tamils. The IPKF should not withdraw without getting the Sri Lankan government's promise on devolution fulfilled, he added. Otherwise there would be a holocaust, he warned.

Is Amnesty "Terrorist" ?

Human Rights, groups, the Bar Association and wellknown international organisations such as Amnesty International (it has special status with the UN) and the ICRC were caught up in one of the most acrimonious public debates of recent times. Addressing a Colombo Correspondents Club, Opposition Leader Mrs. Bandaranaike was reported to have urged the donors to cut off aid unless the government's Human Rights record improved. She was promptly branded 'unpatriotic' and 'disloyal'.

Mrs. Bandaranaike denied that she had called for an aid squeeze. "If it is alright for the World Bank to use pressure for the withdrawal of subsidies, why is it wrong for it to use the same pressure for halting human rights violations... the conduct of the government indicates that it only listens to those who give or lend it money" she said at a press conference. "If the match is over (as Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne had claimed) why was it necessary to continue the Emergency and "these draconian laws?" she asked.

The furious counter-attack was led by Mr. Wijeratne, and Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe.

Amnesty International and the Bar Association were the main targets of the government's onslaught. Amnesty was denounced as "a terrorist" organisation. It was accused of 'funding' subversives.

Amnesty, in fact, had circulated a letter (the LG received one) which said that it funded Bar Associations for legal work to help 'victims of Human rights violations'.

Mr. Wijeratne then made two points (a) the ICRC had agreed to a government proposal that its representatives should first speak to the "victims of the criminals" (subversives) before speaking to 'the criminals behind bars', and (b) that A. I.

was ready to accept the same arrangement, it would be allowed to enter Sri Lanka. The government, he added, was prepared to go before the UN Human Rights Commission to answer all questions.

The Bar Association, in reply, stated that the allegations were 'utterly baseless and unfounded'. It added:-

"The Association opposes and condemns terrorism. To provide

legal remedies for alleged violations of constitutionally guaranteed human rights is not to support terrorism but on the contrary to seek to uphold the rule of law...".

The Association, it added, received assistance from the governments of Canada and Australia and from Amnesty for this purpose. It was under no obligation to say how funds are spent.

S-I-G-N-A-L-S

(This column, addressed specially to the more foreign affairs-minded of the L. G. readership, will highlight events and issues worth keeping an eye on when reading the world news page in your daily paper.)

- Eight Indian states, with a population of 230 million, about quarter of the country's total, go to the polls in the last week of this month. None of the states are in the South. Many are in the Hindi heartland, the traditional power-base of the Congress, which prime Minister V. P. Singh and his allies swept at the recent parliamentary polls. The State assemblies are now Congress-controlled. If the National Front captures power in most of them, Mr. Singh will feel much stronger at the Centre, making Mr. Gandhi's political future quite uncertain.
- Perestroika has failed, and so has Mr. Gorbachev said former Moscow party chief Mr. Boris Yeltsin, the Soviet leader's most powerful critic, in an interview with a Dutch press team. Mr. Yeltsin is the leader of a newly formed Democratic Front. "We are not a party but a movement" he said. The credibility of a leadership has its limits. After 5,6 years of perestroika, this limit has now been reached, he added. The people no longer tolerate low living standards. Meanwhile, Mr. Gorbachev has appointed a pro-market reformer Prof. Petrakov as his top economic adviser.
- The five permanent members of the UN Security Council have agreed on a "set of guideline principles" for a Cambodian peace settlement. These include a ceasefire, UN-supervised elections and a UN-assisted interim administration.

'No Politics' — Unions, Bar protest

Trade unionists of diverse political bent reached near unanimity in condemning a government decree prohibiting political activity in work places. The prohibition was variously described as "draconian", "unnecessarily harsh", "retrograde", "ill timed" and "stupid and illogical".

The decree applies to campuses as well. It seeks to prevent political activity in any work place or educational institution and specifically prohibits posters, processions and rallies. Also, outsiders entering workplaces or educational institutions will not be allowed. A provision that permission for such activity may be sought from the head of the workplace or educational institution has been interpreted by some as possibly leading to discrimination in application.

A joint trade union front meeting has been convened by the Government Clerical Service Union to discuss the issue. A GCSU spokesman said that many workers were against the activities of the 'Satan Peramuna' (an unnamed, shadowy organisation that forced work stoppages) late last year, but had succumbed through fear. Traditional trade unions did not support the terror tactics of the Peramuna. But with this government move now, amidst a rising cost of living, a very sensitive situation was being created: "Our fear is that the workers may start to voluntarily protest", he said. Another state sector trade union leader said that the effectiveness of these stringent rules would depend on how fairly they were applied. "It should not be a case of certain people being allowed to do their kind of political activity only", he said, and added that activity involving the day to day rights of the common man would continue, ban or not.

A spokesman for a pro-government trade union said that draconian measures were initially necessary to maintain peace, but the regulations should only be temporary.

The opposition SLFP's co-ordinator of trade union activity, Dharmasiri Senanayake asked why, if the situation was improving as Government politicians claimed, the government was courting disaster with such draconian measures? "Naturally we will strongly resist this", he said.

Bar Association president and human rights activist Desmond Fernando said, "Assuredly, these are very retrograde measures". He described the regulations as "illigocal and stupid".

In an editorial comment *The Island* said: "work places were paralysed by so-called 'strikes' for a greater part of 1989. These strikes were the result of a chit being passed by a puny school boy to a security guard or the action of so-called 'Satan Peramunas' (war fronts) which were responsible for the closure of work places. Emergency regulations were of no consequence at that time. The traditional left oriented trade unions, quite apart from having nothing to do with such strike action, were perhaps under even greater threats than government politicians themselves. Thus, the question has to be viewed whether the extension of Emergency regulations to restrict the action of organised, recognised trade unions with a proven track record of their commitment to the democratic process, is justified.

"With the cost of living spiralling as never before, trade unions are bound to flex their muscles and demand concessions. Such action should not be considered subversive but settled within the ambit of labour relations".

India must disengage

Like Gorbachev pulling out of Afghanistan, the IPKF, now an interloper, should go home, a commentator in the Indian newspaper *The Independent* has said. International affairs columnist Ajit Bhattacharjee urges India to pull out and admit that the decision to enter was wrong. The fate of Sri Lanka must be left to the Sri Lankans, whether they fight or make peace with each other, he has said.

The most urgent problem inherited by Prime Minister V. P. Singh lies abroad, in Sri Lanka. What had Rajiv Gandhi achieved by this costly adventure? Only the ashes of Indian soldiers, says Bhattacharjee. The exchange of letters accompanying the Indo-Lanka agreement, which pledged that the port of Trincomalee would not be available to a power hostile to India, was not such a big deal, says this columnist, because: who wants Trincomalee's rusted facilities anymore?

Mohan Ram, another writer in *The Independent* has expressed similar views. India's Sri Lanka policy has failed and has resulted in India alienating both the Sinhalese as well as the Tamils, says Mohan Ram, a frequent visitor to this country, and author of a book on the conflict.

Contours of the Indian government's Sri Lanka policy indicate that it considers the previous government's involvement in Sri Lanka a folly. The ending of the involvement means the ethnic problem is returned to Sri Lanka; the future of the ethnic issue does not lend itself to political crystal-gazing, says the article.

But, unlike Rajiv Gandhi's government, the new government does not regard the LTTE as untrustworthy; and, India will do well not to obstruct the political processes among the Sri Lanka Tamils, says Mohan Ram.

Sirima on Tigers, Democracy

In parliament, during the debate on the opposition's no-confidence motion, Mrs Bandaranaike, the Opposition Leader, asked the Government whether it was aware that the LTTE was conducting military operations against other Tamil groups in the North and East, had it indicated that the Sri Lankan security forces should keep out of those areas that the LTTE gained control of; whether the LTTE in its negotiations with this Government had given any assurance that it would drop its demand for an independent state of Eelam in Sri Lanka?

Mrs Bandaranaike also asked the Government what precautions it had taken to guarantee the safety and security of the lives and property of the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim people in the Northern and Eastern provinces and those living in the periphery of these areas. She also asked the Government whether it was aware that the LTTE was forcibly occupying the homes and property of residents in the Polonnaruwa area.

The Opposition Leader said that the Government was trying to keep itself in power by violent or non-violent means, by hook or by crook. Corruption during 13 years of UNP rule had been unprecedented, she said. She also said that various private militia and terrorist gangs were torturing and killing people, many of these were political killings of the opponents of the Government.

Unemployment had increased since the present government took over, and would increase further with retrenchment; and the removal of subsidies and the increase in prices indicated that the Government had no consideration for the poor. Mrs Bandaranaike said.

The Opposition Leader said that there were almost daily complaints of key SLFP Organisers at village level being arrested or abducted and that they had good reason to believe that many of these arrests or abductions had been instigated by powerful persons in authority with governmental connections; "it is commonly known that some of them have their own private armies for this purpose".

Mrs. Bandaranaike said that ten-fold the number of subversive suspects bumped off "when attempting to escape", were being tortured and murdered or taken away into detention. Aid donors could no longer be bluffed by the government's pretence of innocence because ambassadors of these countries were living in our midst and were horrified by the spectacle of mutilated bodies burning on tyres of floating down rivers, the Opposition Leader said.

Mr. Anura Bandaranaike (SLFP - Gampaha District) said that over 35,000 persons had perished in the violence. Mutilated corpses on the roads and floating down rivers were a common sight, and had replaced television and cinema.

Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister of Food and Agriculture said that the Opposition had been looking only at parts of the problem, the tide of subversion had now turned but that did not mean that the problems were over. Democracy had survived, and it was the duty of every member of parliament to find out if constituent is taken into custody whether such a person is in custody or not, the minister said.

He said that the presence of a foreign power in the country was also a grave problem the government had to face.

Briefly...

A hit-list of 300 names of security services personnel was found in the home of the slain JVP military leader Keerthi Wijebahu at Piliyandala. Government officials believe that the personnel on this death list were to be targeted whenever they went on home leave. They also believe that the JVP military strategist had access to certain confidential information on security affairs, including some operational directives issued from the Joint Operations Command (JOC).

Among those in detention camps, suspected of involvement in subversive activities, are 45 Buddhist monks, mostly university students.

Rabies killed 183 people since May last year. The deaths resulted from a shortage of anti-rabies vaccine in hospitals and pharmacies. Only 29 state hospitals in the country are supplied with anti-rabies vaccine, and this too restricted to 80 doses per day. But the requirement at Colombo's Lady Ridgeway Children's Hospital, for instance, is 200 doses daily.

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Extremism, the menace

J. N. Dixit

The Indian armed forces are not political but our troops have created an environment where these warring groups, if they have any wisdom and vision about their own destiny can get together and evolve a cohesive institutional framework for Tamil politics for the future. So this is how I view what the IPKF has been doing and is doing and this mind you in the face of adverse publicity from the Sinhalese Press and constant needling by the Western Press and our own introspective, investigative journalism.

I am not jingoistic about the Indian Armed forces, but I have had the unique privilege of functionally interacting with the Indian Armed forces in every war and conflict that we have been involved in, except the Kashmir war. So, I have a great sense of chronological continuity when I make this assessment. I think, there is every reason for Indians to be very proud, and I am not saying this because I am speaking to this audience; I have said this to earlier audiences too, much more critical audiences.

J.R., Premadasa

Lastly, the election in Sri Lanka and what do they augur for us? Some of it I have already explained. The revival of democracy after eleven years, is something which neutralizes extremist forces and their capacity to claim that the existing power structure is not in favour of elections, so our violence is justified. That rationale has been destroyed by these three elections. When I say this I do not mean the extremism has disappeared. Extremism of the Sinhalese type led by the JVP and extremism of the Tamil type, led by the LTTE continues. But if the trends which we have set in motion are sustained, I will go into detail, then the process of marginalisation of such extremist forces, I think, will be accomplished, but it is subject to this being sustained. But what this sustaining

means, and what they sustain — what does that mean? As far as the Government of Sri Lanka is concerned, Mr Premadasa, I think should be responsive to the Tamil demands. We must not, repeat, 'not' indulge in the osmosis, the ambivalence of President Jayewardene which characterized his policies towards Tamils between 1977 and right upto 1986: like offering District Councils and not giving them money; telling the TULF to become an electoral alliance and expelling from Parliament; discussing the devolution of power with Prime Minister of India in June, 1985, and agreeing to hold Thimpu talks and then coming up with proposals which have nothing to do with Tamil aspirations. That kind of a thing will land Mr Premadasa back to square one and would land us there too. But we will now negotiate from a position of strength if that happens. But I hope it does not.

Mr Premadasa should, first of all, actually grant devolution of power which is already stipulated in his own laws, fully, unhesitatingly, without letting his bureaucracy and politicians to pull back or interfere in the processes. The Tamil groups which are in the power structure instead of standing aside and making demands, as pre-conditions, should join the institutional framework and work through it to fulfil their aspirations. We, India, should continue to generate political and diplomatic pressure on the government of Sri Lanka to see that Tamil aspirations are met and that there is no pulling back. At the same time we should send signals to Mr Premadasa that we will not be destabilising him and that we will not endanger his remaining in power as long as he is delivering on his own promises, and the promises made by his own party before he came into power.

Another interesting aspect which we should take into account is that the Sinhalese voter has voted for the UNP and the SLFP both

moderate middle of the road parties and for the existing democratic institutions as defined in the Sri Lankan Constitution of 1978. They have rejected the extremists whether they are leftist or Sinhalese Buddhist Chauvinists, whether it is the JVP or some elements of United Socialists Alliance. Similarly, the fact that nearly 63% of the Tamil voters voted for Parliamentary and Presidential elections in which they chose candidates other than those belonging to the LTTE, is a rejection of the LTTE's "all or nothing" approach towards politics. This nuance we should take note of.

While the Sinhalese have ideologically voted for the middle of the road moderate democratic political forces there has been a radicalization of Tamil politics. The Tamils have voted for the Left-of-the-Centre parties; young Tamil groups by rejecting the traditional TULF, the Old School political leadership of Tamils, totally rejecting TULF. So they have rejected radical extremism as well as moderate constitutional forces and they have chosen the radical youth to man the power structure who would not lose sight of Tamils aspirations of a populist-leftist orientation. This is an emerging trend in Sri Lanka politics, which would affect development.

As far as bilateral relations go, my assessment is that regardless of the pre-election rhetoric President Premadasa will not rock the boat as long as he feels that we will not insist on things, but at the same time he will expect us to ensure that Tamil militancy does not cross threshold where his stability is threatened. So, it will have to be an extremely deliberate exercise in reciprocity, and if we can maintain that balance, I think that our relations can grow slowly, advisably slowly, on positive lines.

Having said that I must underline I am predicating all this on

(Continued on page 12)

DMK Ideology and Delhi's Concerns

Izzeth Hussain

The importance of Tamil Nadu as a factor influencing Indo-Sri Lankan relations cannot be doubted. In a talk given in March 1989 to the United Service Institute, Delhi, the former Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, J. N. Dixit, said in explaining the reasons for the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka, "We had to respect the sentiments of the 50 million Tamil citizens of India. They felt that if we did not rise in support of the Tamil cause in Sri Lanka, we are not standing by our own Tamils; and if that is so, then in the Tamil psyche, the Tamil sub-conscious the question arose: is there any relevance or validity of our being part of a larger Indian political identity, if our deeply felt sentiments are not respected? So, it was a compulsion. It was not a rationalised motivation, but it was a compulsion which could not be avoided by any elected Government in this country. So, that was a third reason."

Dixit is categorical on the point that the Delhi Government having to take into account Tamil Nadu sentiments in reacting to developments in Sri Lanka amounts to no less than a compulsion. However, some important qualifications have to be made if we are to reach a proper understanding of the Tamil Nadu factor in Indo-Sri Lankan relations. It is arguable that as the Tamils of Sri Lanka and of Tamil Nadu speak the same language, share a common cultural substratum, are predominantly Hindu, they might be regarded as constituting a single ethnic. On this argument, it is even conceivable that should the dreams of India's ill-wishes be fulfilled and anti-Hindi sentiment in Tamil Nadu State could make an irredentist claim

to the parts of Sri Lanka that supposedly constitute the Sri Lankan Tamil "homeland".

But it would be far more plausible to argue that notwithstanding the commonalities of language, culture, and religion, the Tamils of Tamil Nadu and of Sri Lanka constitute two distinct ethnic groups. There is the geographical divide of the Palk Straits, their histories have followed different courses for centuries, and it has to be expected therefore that their ethnic identities will also be different. For several centuries before independence, interaction between them does not seem to have been particularly significant, except for a period in the late Nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It should not be surprising, as this paper will try to bring out, that there has been a notable ambivalence on the part of the Tamil Nadu Tamils towards the Sri Lankan Tamils more particularly towards the Sri Lankan Tamil militants and their aspirations. There certainly is a Tamil Nadu commitment to the Sri Lankan Tamils, something that cannot be ignored by any Government in Delhi, but that commitment is not total and stops well short of support for a separate state of Eelam, even though Tamil Nadu opposition parties may make political capital out of the Tamil militants' extremist claims as part of the Tamil Nadu power-game. All this follows from the fact that "for historical reasons, there is no symbiotic cultural kinship between the people of Tamil Nadu and the Sri Lankan Tamils. They are not Siamese twins."

We have to note the significance of the fact that Dixit gave the Tamil Nadu factor as only one of the three reasons behind Indian intervention in Sri Lanka. It was a "compul-

sion which could not be avoided", in his words, but of course there were other compulsions as well, so that the Tamil Nadu factor cannot be regarded as the sole determinant of Indo-Sri Lankan relations. It has to be noted also that the relationship between Tamil Nadu Governments and Delhi is more often than not one of understanding and Co-operation, not an adversarial relationship. The extent to which Tamil Nadu by itself influences Indo-Sri Lankan relation has to be questioned.

Some complexities and ambiguities have to be taken into account in trying to understand the Tamil Nadu factor in Indo-Sri Lankan relations. Different aspects of the Tamil Nadu factor have to be examined. This paper will situate the Tamil Nadu factor in the context of India's relations with its neighbours, examine the interaction of Tamil Nadu and Delhi, the interaction of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, and Delhi's priorities in relation to Sri Lanka, before drawing what appear to be the appropriate conclusion.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

It should be useful to situate Sri Lanka's Tamil problem in the context of the ethnic factor operating in India's relations with its neighbours. Usually, though not always, a country's relations with its neighbours have far more importance than relations with others. Arguably, relations between neighbours have a specific dynamic of their own if only for the reason that neighbours are particularly prone to quarrel with each other. The neighbours of India have for the most part had unsatisfactory relations with India, which should not be regarded as altogether surprising. But a contrast is sometimes made with

China which for the most part has had satisfactory relations with its neighbours. Actually this contrast is somewhat unfair for several reasons, one of which is that India's neighbours tend to interact for more with India than China's neighbours with China, in a process that can lead to misunderstanding, irritation, and overt hostility.

Refugees from Tibet flow into Himachal Pradesh. Bangladeshis seek greener pastures in Assam, and Chakma rebels flow into Tripura from the Chittagong Hills. The Nepali Indian population in Bhutan has been increasing, and Indian labourers are going into that country. When conditions in Nepal are disturbed, refugees go to Bhutan or Uttar Pradesh. There are appreciable numbers of Indians in Nepal, while ethnic Nepalis constitute the majority in Sikkim. The Nepalis in Darjeeling set up the Gurkha National Liberation Front to struggle for a state within the Indian Union. Pakistan suspects the Indian hand behind the unrest among Sindhis, and in Baluchistan where there was a serious separatist rebellion under Bhutto. India suspects the Pakistani hand behind the Sikh problem. India and its neighbours are involved in each others' affairs to an extent that cannot be duplicated anywhere else in the world. And in one way or another, the ethnic factor plays an important role in the mad kaleidoscope of India's relations with its neighbours.

It has been said that India's neighbours tend to interact far more with neighbouring Indian states than with Delhi itself. Sri Lanka interacts with Tamil Nadu; Bangladesh with West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura; Nepal with Uttar Pradesh; Bihar, and West Bengal; Pakistan with Jammu and Kashmir Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. Consequently Delhi is under pressure from several Indian states to sort out matters with neighbouring countries. And it has been argued that therefore

there are general constraints on India's freedom of manoeuvre in dealing with neighbours, a situation that did not exist under Nehru when all the Indian states were ruled by the Congress.

From our point of view there is nothing unusual in the Tamil Nadu factor influencing Indo-Sri Lanka relations, a situation apparently replicated all over North India. But there is a qualitative difference in that Tamil Nadu is far more important in India's relations with a neighbour than is any other Indian state. A particular sensitivity on the part of Delhi towards Tamil Nadu has to be expected if only for the reason that it is the biggest of the Dravidian states with a population of over 50 million. The first separatist movement in India took place in Tamil Nadu, and restiveness there over the issue of Hindi has continued. Since 1967 Tamil Nadu has been lost to Congress, the ruling party there alternating between the D. M. K. and the A. I. A. D. M. K., and in fact Congress (I) has lost to regional parties in all the Dravidian states, a fact of some importance in a country where the cultural division between Aryan North and Dravidian South would possibly have serious political implications some time in the future. It should be quite understandable that Delhi thinks it prudent to be responsive to strong Tamil Nadu sentiments over what takes place in Sri Lanka.

We must also note the fact that the Sinhalese are a majority known to have a minority complex over the presumed identity of the Sri Lankan Tamils and 50 million or more Tamils in Tamil Nadu. It appears that the ethnic Nepalis of India outnumber the Nepalis of Nepal, but they after all are the same people. The Nepalis in Bhutan together with the Indian Nepalis outnumber the Drukpas who are the majority community in Bhutan; but the numerical dis-

proportion in that case is not so great as that between the Sinhalese and the Tamils of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu. There is also in the case of the Sinhalese the historic memory of Tamil invasions from South India. It is to be expected that the Sinhalese will have an extraordinary sensitivity over the Tamil Nadu factor in Indo-Sri Lanka relations. The equation of Delhi-Tamil Nadu-Sri Lanka seems to be sui generis, and is hardly comparable to anything prevailing in the North of India.

TAMIL NADU - DELHI

The centre of gravity in the politics of pre-Independence India was in the North. It is significant that only one national-level politician emerged from the Dravidian South, the Tamil C. Rajagopalachari. But a new Tamil political consciousness had evidently been growing in the course of the Thirties, resulting in the formation of the Dravida Kazhagam (D. K.) in 1944 under the leadership of E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker. His disciple C. N. Annadurai broke away to form the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D. M. K.) in 1949, and in the latter half of Seventies M. G. Ramachandran broke away from the D. M. K. to form the All India Anna D. M. K. (A. I. A. D. M. K.).

As observed earlier those two parties have alternated in power, and something must be said about the socio-cultural factors which could explain their persisting political strength in Tamil Nadu. The D.K., and subsequently its offshoots, were anti-Brahmin, anti-Sanskrit, anti-Hindi, and posed a secularist challenge to religious orthodoxy. They represented a caste revolt, though not apparently of the really underprivileged castes against the dominant position of the Brahmins, who constituted no more than 2% of the Tamils. The secularism, which might perhaps be seen as the southern counter-part of Nehru's secularism in the north, even lead to a

virtual excision of part of the Tamil past through an under-valuation of the Bakhti literature of the Tamils and an over-emphasis on the secular Sangam literature of 100 BC to AD 250. The anti-Hindi position, which as will be seen later has turned out to be the most important component of D.K. ideology, flowed from pride in the Tamil language and a concomitant resentment against the Aryan north. This is quite understandable as the Dravidian contribution to Indian civilization has consistently been under-valued both within India and outside. As Professor Sivathamby once put it in an interview given to a South Indian periodical, "Pages are written on Tagore and Nasrul Islam, but there is only a passing reference to Bharati." Readers of Raja Rao's well-known novel *The Serpent and the Rope* may remember his curious notion that the further south you go in India the higher the form of Hindu spirituality, until the acme of spirituality is reached at the southernmost point of India. That was evidently a Dravidian reaction against the Aryan exaltation of the Ganges and the Himalayas.

It appears that the ideology of the DMK and of its offshoots has drawn political strength from the tap-roots of Tamil consciousness, and perhaps it was inevitable that it should lead to a separatist movement in Tamil Nadu. Nehru handled it very sensibly, most notably by establishing Tamil Nadu as a linguistic state. Other important measures included the Act for the Prevention of Insult to the National Honour in 1957, after an epidemic of flag-and constitution — burning in Tamil Nadu. In 1963 there was the sixteenth amendment to the Indian Constitution banning the advocacy of secession. However, in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian border conflict of 1962 separatism came to be abandoned in Tamil Nadu. But the D.M.K. came to power in 1967, the expression of a con-

tinuously strong Tamil political identity and consciousness.

It might be supposed that the formation of the A.I.A.-D.M.K. implied a dilution of that Tamil consciousness, because "All India" Anna D.M.K. suggests that emphasis was being given to Tamils and Tamil Nadu as no more than components of a wider Indian polity. Furthermore, both the D.M.K. and the A.I.A.D.M.K. usually got on the famously with the central government in the Delhi, and it appeared therefore that those two parties were not much different from any other regional party in India. That impression was completely belied by the anti-Hindi furor in Tamil Nadu in 1986, to which special importance has to be given in trying to understand Delhi's sensitivity to the Tamil Nadu factor. Under the 1951 Constitution, Hindi was declared the official language, while 14 major Indian languages were declared "national languages" along with Hindi. The Constitution also allowed a 15-year grace period for the use of English as a link language. On Republic Day of 1965, Tamil Nadu went up in flames over the issue of Hindi, and when the D.M.K. came to power in 1967 it abolished the teaching of Hindi in state schools. Again in September 1986 Tamil Nadu went up in flames, the result of a Central Government circular about the observance of a "Hindi Week" which apparently was regarded as innocuous in other Indian states. The first to protest was the leader of the Congress (I) in Tamil Nadu, followed quickly by the D.M.K., A.I.A.D.M.K. and the Communists. A State Minister warned that the imposition of Hindi would lead to a Sri Lankan-type situation, meaning that Tamil Nadu would opt for separation. Rajiv Gandhi reiterated the assurances of his mother and Nehru that Hindi would not be imposed on any state.

The agitation died down, but it provided a reminder to Delhi

that Tamil Nadu was not just like any other state on the issue of Hindi. It is understandable that Delhi has to respect Tamil Nadu sentiments, and that includes sentiments about what takes place in Sri Lanka.

(A paper presented at the recent B.C.I.S. Seminar on Indo-S.L. relations Courtesy B.C.I.S. and author.)

Extremism . . .

(Continued from page 9)

certain positive premises. But we must be prepared for contingencies — JVP pressure on Premadasa, Sinhalese backlash to the economic pressure, inflation, incapacity of the Tamils to hold together whatever they have achieved so far and the rise of Tamil militancy.

So the prospects are of some uncertainty. But with the safeguard now which we did not have in 1983, of a framework within which we can implement a coherent policy with diplomatic and defence policies where we can preserve our interests and at the same time ensure that we are not accused of breaking up of a neighbouring country.

(Speech concluded)

TRENDS

(Continued from page 1)

'ridiculous'. Dr. Senaratne said that Chandrika daughter of SLFP leader Mrs. Bandaranaike would return to Sri Lanka in mid-Feb.

NEW EXODUS

Sri Lanka has lost 1,250 doctors in the two-and-half years the Universities, and the NCMC, were closed on account of the JVP-sponsored 'sabotage' campaign. Ideally, the island's health services should have a cadre of 3,350. "The basic need is a cadre of 2875" said a senior official. We now have 2,350.

The IMF Scenario

(Excerpts from an official report)

The new Government that came into power in early 1989 is confronted with the daunting task of re-establishing peace, stabilizing the economy, and resuming the reform process interrupted in 1988. At the top of the Government's economic agenda is the stabilization of economy without which structural reform cannot proceed. The Government is aware that a quick correction of macroeconomic imbalances would bring about equally quick economic gains but considers that too rapid adjustments could contribute to political instability. The Government thus believes that the stabilization of the economy should be gradual and that the program of structural reforms — the key elements of which are public expenditure restructuring and civil service and public enterprise reforms — envisaged in the PFP should, likewise, proceed at a pace consistent with the country's political situation.

The Government's commitment to a more liberal and open economy and to the medium-term structural reforms outlined in the first-year PFP is not in question. It was reiterated in the March 1989 budget speech, when the Government announced three principles that are to guide the formulation and implementation of policies over the medium term. The first is that the private sector should have primary responsibility in generating growth. The Government on its part will take deliberate steps and formulate policies to improve the business environment in all sectors of the economy and remove impediments to private sector initiatives wherever they exist (paragraph 29). The second, a corollary of the first, is that the role of the public sector should be reduced and its efficiency increased. This objective requires policy initiatives on a number of fronts, the key elements of which are

a reduction of central government spending (paragraph 14), the implementation of the Administrative Reform (paragraph 17), and a restructuring of public expenditures (paragraph 20) with a view to eliminating wasteful programs and improving the efficiency of remaining programs. It also requires that the public enterprise reform process which, with a few exceptions, had been restricted to selected Public Manufacturing Enterprises (PMEs) now be extended to a much wider range of public enterprises in all sectors of the economy (paragraphs 24-26). The third is that the Government will take primary responsibility in ensuring that the benefits of growth are distributed equitably among the population and in designing programs for that purpose. The JSP is a first attempt to achieve this objective and the Government is prepared to review is the design of this program as necessary to ensure that it is well targeted and that the poorest segments of society are not left out from the growth process (paragraph 22).

With these principles in mind, it is evident that the cornerstone of structural adjustment must be reform of the public sector. The key measures include reducing the size of the public sector and improving its economic and financial performance. At the top of this agenda are the goals of reducing overstaffing in the civil service and restructuring public enterprises. While both these objectives pose great challenges, the Government attaches the highest priority to making progress in these crucial areas. In addition, the economy is expected to benefit from a substantial tax reform in 1990, and further liberalization of trade and finance.

Macroeconomic objectives. Because of the uncertain political situation, the Government recognizes that stabilizing the economy while maintaining some growth

in per capita consumption will entail somewhat lower levels of investment over the medium term. The key macroeconomic objectives over the medium term are: (i) to increase growth from its current 2-3 percent level to 3-4 percent by 1991-92; (ii) to reduce inflation from 12 percent at present to 7 percent by 1992; and (iii) to reduce the current account deficit of the balance of payments to about 6 percent of GDP by 1992, a level that would allow a modest recovery in the level of foreign exchange reserves. While these objectives may appear modest, they represent a major improvement over the country's recent macroeconomic performance and seem realistic given the political constraints under which the program is to be implemented.

The Stabilization program

At the heart of the stabilization effort is the reduction of the fiscal deficit from 15 percent of GDP in 1988 to 12 1/2 percent of GDP in 1989, 10 percent in 1990, 9 percent in 1991, and 8 percent in 1992. The burden of the fiscal adjustment will fall on government expenditures, which are to decline from 34 percent of GDP in 1988 to 32 percent in 1990, 30 percent in 1991, and 29 percent in 1992. In 1989, public expenditures are expected to remain high at 34 percent of GDP, because in addition to subsidies, new expenditures are required for the mid-day meal, the JSP, and the expanded NFSP. Thus, in the short run, increases in revenues will have a major role in reducing the public sector deficit. Government revenues, at 19 percent of GDP in 1988, are expected to reach 21 percent of GDP in 1989 and to stabilize at that level through 1992. While the increase in revenues in 1989 is due to more normal tax collections and to discretionary measures that, have a once-for-all effect (e. g., the sale of foodstocks and taxation of central bank profits), new revenue measures will have to be intro-

(Continued on page 15)

A Funeral in Trinco

David Housego reports on a 'Tiger' ambush

As the last Indian troops prepare to pull out of Sri Lanka over the coming two months, Tamil Tiger guerrillas are set to take control of the rest of the north and east of the country.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), as they are called, already control all six districts from which the Indians have withdrawn. In the seaport of Trincomalee, which is with the Jaffna Peninsula the only place where Indian forces remain, the beleaguered Tamil-dominated administration is preparing to abandon the town when the Indians depart.

"We shall go underground", says Mr. K. Padmanabha, the general secretary of the EPRLF (the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front), the main rival to the Tigers which now heads the north-east provincial council.

Trincomalee, one of the world's great natural harbours and a base for allied fleets in the Second World War, remains much as it was 40 years ago—a result of government neglect of the Tamil north, and more recently of six years of civil war.

Bearded, wearing dark green battledress with a picture of Lenin pinned to his lapel, Mr. Padmanabha was speaking after the funeral of Mr. George Thambirajah, one of his most senior colleagues and the founder of the Tamil National Army (TNA), the alliance of anti-Tiger guerrilla groups that India has equipped.

Mr. Thambiraja was killed by the Tigers recently in an ambush that demonstrated their ruthlessness in removing the leaders of other Tamil factions opposed to them.

"It is an indication of what is to come" said another EPRLF official, watching the emotional ceremony on the shores of Dutch Bay. Indian

officers bearing wreaths stood a few steps in front of an escort from the TNA—many of them boys of 14 or 15 with automatic weapons.

The killing illustrated the inability of the Indians to provide protection for the more moderate Tamil groups though they had earlier made the security of the Tamils who co-operated with the provincial council one of the main points on which their withdrawal would depend.

The Indian peacekeeping force—80,000 strong at its peak but now down to 20,000—arrived more than two years ago for what they believed would be a brief operation to disarm the Tigers. They will finally leave by the end of March with seemingly none of their objectives achieved, more than 1,000 soldiers killed and with their involvement having earned them the hostility of both the Tamils and the Sinhalese population.

As a result of an understanding with President Ranasinghe Premadasa reached last year, the Tigers are now establishing themselves openly as they seek to organise an official political party. Their aim is to force the other Tamil factions to lay down their arms—a goal they are pursuing through selective killings—prior to the holding of new provincial elections in the north and east which they expect to win with a handsome majority.

According to their spokesmen, they will then put their demands to the Sri Lanka Government. Posters in Batticaloa, the other main eastern seaport town that fell to the Tigers in January, proclaim that they have not given up their ultimate objective—meaning a separate Tamil state and the partition of the island.

It is because of this belief that the Tigers will eventually go for a unilateral declaration

of independence that many think that a fresh conflict with the Sri Lankan army is inevitable. "Everybody anticipates a confrontation between the army and the LTTE," said one Muslim politician.

Indian and Sinhalese hopes that the Tigers were a spent force because of the hammering they had received from the Indian troops were seen to have no substance from the skill and speed with which the Tigers captured Batticaloa—fondly believed to be a bastion of the EPRLF. The Tigers' authority in the town is now unquestioned. They collect their own taxes—which has made them unpopular—and have told the Sri Lanka police to remain in barracks, even forbidding them traffic duty. "We have asked the police not to operate," says Mr. S. Karikalan, the local LTTE commander. "If there is any problem, the people can come to us."

Talks now going on between the Sri Lankan Government, the Indians, the LTTE and the other factions focus largely on who will have responsibility for the police and security issues after the Indians withdraw. The Tigers would like to have full authority over both police and internal security on the grounds that the Sinhalese assure these for their own people in the south.

* * *

The Sri Lankan Government resists such demands which would carry the island a step further towards partition. They have a responsibility as well to the Sinhalese from the eastern province—who account for a third of its population and look to the Sri Lankan army to return their lands and homes when the Indians depart.

The second main issue in the talks is the nature of the administration that will follow an Indian withdrawal. The more optimistic of the Tamils think that there could be power sharing between the Tigers and the

(Continued on page 15)

The Muslim Factor

The reference to the powerful Islamic Revolution in Iran in an article titled "Muslims Enter the Fray", by Mervyn De Silva which highlights, Mr. M. H. M. Ashraff's SLMC is somewhat misleading.

To put the record right kindly permit me the use of your most interesting and informative journal, the *Lanka Guardian*.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran led by the late Imam Khomeini is in complete accordance with the enunciations of the Holy Quran. Devout Muslims the world over read the Holy Quran and study the traditions of the Prophet. Hence, the Islamic Revolution of Imam Khomeini was bound to influence the oppressed and deprived Muslim masses the world over.

The developments in Azerbaijan are somewhat belated. Afghanistan, Lebanon, Jordan, West Bank, Gaza, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria, Egypt, Kashmir, Pakistan and even Malaysia and Indonesia are on the boil and potential areas of Islamic upheaval. The Western mass-media except in Afghanistan and Lebanon have played down the Islamic resurgence in the other countries for fear that reports of developments may accelerate the Islamic revolution.

This trend of Islamic resurgence cannot be halted by any force. Communism, socialism, democratic-socialism, capitalism and all other "isms" have not liberated the oppressed and the deprived masses.

As regards M. H. M. Ashraff, he has used the rising tide of Islamic resurgence of the oppressed and deprived Muslims of Sri Lanka, especially in the eastern province, to serve his own ends.

Since the signing of the Indo-Lanka Accord in July 1987, he claimed that the accord did not meet the aspirations of the Muslims, adding that the Muslims were not consulted.

He, however, contested Provincial Council elections which was a necessary pre-condition of the Indo-Lanka Accord. Worse still

he conducted his election campaign for the North-East provincial council elections last year in Kalmunai having received all logistical support from the Indian army.

This despite the fact that the Indian army was responsible for the killing of Muslims in Jaffna, Vavuniya, Muttur, Kinniya, Ottamawaddai, Valachchenai and Batticaloa prior to the elections.

Recently it was stated in parliament that members of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress had been inducted to the illegal Indian backed Tamil National Army (TNA).

Saybhan Samat

Copies: 1) Ayatollah Khomeini
Leader of the Islamic Republic
of Iran

2) Embassy and Cultural Section
of the Islamic Republic of
Iran in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The I.M.F. . .

(Continued from page 13)

duced in the 1990 budget to maintain government revenues.

This task has already begun and a Tax Commission is currently reviewing the tax system to make recommendations for changes by the end of 1990. The objectives are to broaden the tax base, improve its elasticity, and reduce its regressiveness. To achieve short-term revenue objectives in 1990, the Commission will make an interim report recommending revenue measures to be incorporated into the 1990 budget. In particular, the following measures will be the Tax Commission: (i) replacing the business turnover tax by a value added tax; (ii) broadening the coverage of the income tax to include currently exempt persons and institutions; and (iii) changing the unit of taxation from individuals to families for income tax purposes.

Restraining monetary and credit growth—primarily through market-based financial instruments—will be essential in stabilizing the economy. During 1989, the Central Bank has been mopping up liquidity by reducing the proportion of out-

standing treasury bills it holds, and interest rates have been allowed to rise considerably. Over 1990-92, the growth of total liquidity will be targeted at levels consistent with the growth, inflation, and balance of payments targets, and interest rates will be adjusted accordingly. In addition, the Government's external policies in 1989 will be guided by the need to strengthen the competitiveness of Sri Lanka's exports and to maintain reserves at adequate levels. The Government intends to pursue a flexible exchange rate policy over the medium term.

(To be continued)

A Funeral. . .

(Continued from page 14)

other factions on the grounds that this is the only way to prevent further blood-letting and to achieve maximum autonomy. But Mr. Padmanabha, general secretary of the EPRLF, believes the Tigers are too intolerant to accept a compromise. "They want to be the sole representative of the Tamil people," he says. He is thus preparing to return to the jungles from which the Tigers are emerging with as many of his own faction and of other militant groups that he can muster—perhaps 1,000-2,000.

He believes that the likely confrontation between the Tigers and the Sri Lankan Government as each tries to dominate the other, and the problems the Tigers will have in running the administration will work to his advantage. Without saying as much, he clearly counts on continuing military help from an India reluctant to see either the Tigers or the Sri Lankan army establish a dominant hold.

The chances thus that the Indian withdrawal and the reconciliation between the Tigers and President Premadasa could usher in a period of peace and reconstruction in the north still seem remote. A people weary of conflict face the prospect that it will continue. ☞

(F.T.)

Some Thoughts on the Left and the "Woman Question" in South Asia

Kumari Jayawardena

The Left in South Asia, has been active in mobilizing women workers and peasants (as well as women of the petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie) in many activities. These range from independence struggle, trade union actions, peasant agitations, student movements, and housewives' campaigns against higher prices, to party activity at election time. In India, for example, Communist-led women played a crucial role in all the historic movements of the twentieth century. These include nationalist agitation (both violent and non-violent), the 1951 Telegana peasant uprising, strikes such as that of the militant Coimbatore mill workers in 1946, famine relief work in Bengal in 1943-44, antifascist campaigns during World War II, and many militant class actions of recent years. In fact the tendency has always been to emphasize women's equal rights of participation in nationalist and class struggles. Moreover, political leaders have always been aware of the importance of women's involvement for the success of struggles and, of course, for electoral politics. However, the question of women's liberation — as opposed to national and workers liberation — has been merely subsumed under "class struggle." This, it has been said will automatically liberate women when it succeeds. In this subordination of women's specific interests and liberation to those of class liberation, left movements in South Asia parallel all too closely the problematic

assumptions and practical weaknesses of many other left movements and regimes.

Although it frequently tries to forge alliances with other "democratic" organizations, the Left has always had problems with organizations where party members were not in control. Thus autonomous women's groups, although raising issues of importance to socialists, were regarded as hostile, and even attempts by women of the Left to unite across party lines were seldom tolerated for very long. In 1947, Sri Lanka women from the Communist and Trotskyist parties got together with other socialist women to form an autonomous United Women's Front to campaign for women's economic and social rights. Although the organization made significant gains and received a lot of publicity for its programs to mobilize working women, within a year the male leadership of the two parties had forced the dissolution of the organization because of conflict on other issues between the parties. In West Bengal too, although the Communist Party split in 1964, women party members of both communist parties continued to work in a single women's organization until 1971, when increasing problems between the two parties also resulted in a split in the women's organization.

In recent years, when many issues affecting women's rights have arisen in South Asia — including the extreme cases of the Hudood Ordinance (1979)

in Pakistan (which includes stoning to death and lashes for adultery), and *sati* (burning women to death on their husband's funeral pyre), or killing women for bringing inadequate dowry in India — the Left has failed to come forward to give leadership to these struggles that have been taken up by feminist groups. The relationship today between the Left and feminists in South Asia remains an uneasy one.

A Glance at History

It is interesting to note that when the "Woman Question" came up in India from the nineteenth century onwards, it was discussed in terms of social evils to be eradicated by legislation. British bureaucrats along with Indian social reformers, nationalists, and Christian missionaries supported the campaigns against *sati*, child marriage, and the ban on widow remarriage, and promoted the rights of women to education, property, and political participation. It was predominantly a campaign of Indian and Western men whose aim was to liberate, modernize, "civilize" or Christianize women, as the case may be. Nevertheless local women were also involved not only as victims but also as agitators, activists, and reformers, often receiving support from European women feminists, theosophists, and socialists residing in South Asia.

Since the agitation for legal, franchise, property, or education rights for women was part of a package of democratic demands, support for such campaigns came also from the liberal nationalists in India. As the nationalist movement grew, the leaders saw the advantage of drawing the masses of women into the

FROM **PROMISSORY NOTES: WOMEN IN THE
TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM**

ed Sonia Kruks, Rayna Rapp and Marilyn Young,
Monthly Review Press, NY 1989

movement and for this purpose they urged women to come out of their homes and into the streets. Thus liberal ideology on women's rights coincided with the need for mass support. It is this that accounts for the enlightened stands Gandhi and Nehru took on the subordination of women.

The nationalist reformers of course had to be careful; they needed to take from the West to combat the West, but in the process, they wanted to also retain their self-identity in terms of national culture. Chatterjee has suggested that there was a separation of social space into the home (*ghar*) representing "the inner-spiritual self, our true identity" and the world (*bahir*), representing the external, the domain of the material.

The European power had challenged the non-European peoples and, by virtue of its superior material culture, had subjugated them. But it had failed to colonise the inner, essential identity of the East which lay in its distinctive, and superior, spiritual culture... No encroachments of the colonizer must be allowed in that inner sanctum. In the world, initiation and adaptation to Western norms was a necessity; at home, they were tantamount to annihilation of one's very identity.

Hence, the Westernization of women had to be very selective — in Bengal the new "respectable woman" could acquire "the cultural refinements afforded by modern education without jeopardizing her place at home."

Of course one may add that the home represented not only spiritual but also strong material interests and ideological domination, providing the men of all classes with unpaid labor and other privileges as well as unlimited power over the lives of women. Thus the home was the primary source of women's oppression and exploitation, which few males were (or are) willing to change.

In India, the opponents of social reform for women were a mix of orthodox Hindu and Muslim conservatives who, iron-

nically, included some of the most militant opponents of British colonialism. One such example was B. G. Tilak, leader of the "extreme" group in the Indian National Congress. When, in 1908, he was tried for sedition and deported, there was a major wave of strikes in the mills of Bombay, in which many woman workers participated. But Tilak, although politically militant, was socially conservative. He regarded legislation on social issues affecting women as an unwarranted and objectionable interference by the colonial state in local tradition and custom. He even joined the social reactionaries in the campaign against the Age of Consent Bill of 1891, which raised the legal age for female sexual intercourse from ten to twelve years.

Sri Lanka, ahead of India in terms of female education and quality of life in the nineteenth century, produced no liberal demands for women's rights from reformist males. The "Westernized" men of the bourgeoisie were concerned with moderate constitutional reforms, limited male franchise, and equal opportunity with Europeans in the professions and government service. The women of the class were given a limited education with the emphasis on "accomplishments" and keeping up with the latest Western fashions. Opposition to these trends came from the Buddhist and Hindu revivalists who urged women to be chaste and docile, discarding Western influences. For example, Anagarika Dharmapala (1869-1933), the most militant spokesman for Sinhala Buddhist consciousness, urged industrialization and scientific advance but criticized the adoption of Western customs and fashions by Sinhala women. "The glory of woman is in her chastity, in the performance of household duties and obedience to her husband," he insisted.

In South Asia, the Left is frequently accused of being too internationalist and secular and of being insensitive to the

strength of feelings based on national identity and tradition. Without entering that debate, I would only point out that this is not true of the Woman Question, where one finds a continuity of traditional values, permeating all strands of current political thinking, including frequently, that of the Left. Moreover, many leftists who were prepared to support the national liberation of all peoples and to struggle for the democratic rights of workers and peasants at home and abroad were not only unwilling, but also reacted with great emotional fervor against attempts to raise the question of women's liberation. The strongest reasons given for such opposition have always been linked to arguments of resistance to foreign domination and ideological control.

However, in colonial times there were also some radical male reformers who spoke out against women's subordination, but who tended to be from the more maverick elements of the political spectrum. They were able to make the connection between caste oppression and women's oppression that existed in a hierarchically organized caste and class society. For example, in Maharashtra, Jotirao Phule (1827-90), of low-caste origin, led a struggle against Brahmin hegemony. He opposed child marriage and polygamy, set up schools for girls and "untouchables," and, in opposing *sati*, speculated on whether a man would become a *sata* on his wife's funeral pyre; he was an early opponent of sexism in language criticizing expressions such as "all men are equal," and in his own writing, changing this phrase to "each and every woman and man." Another outstanding example is that of E.V. Ramaswami Naiker (born in 1879 and known popularly as "Periyar," the Great One), the founder in the 1920s of the Dravidian movement against North Indian and Brahmin domination of the South. Being a great iconoclast,

(Continued on page 19)

J. V. P. Learning from Vietnam?

S. Leelananda

It is clear that the JVP in the post accord period modelled its tactics on the Vietnamese experience. They identified an external aggressor (India), saw the UNP government as a puppet regime of that power (like the Diem regime in South Vietnam), claimed that cliques (Jayawardena-Dissanayake-Thondaman)-(Premadasa-Ranjan Wijeratne) were at work within these regimes, brought in women, students and monks as a "frontline" in street battles, emphasised the 'patriotic nature of the opposition, wooed 'patriotic intellectuals, attempted to deprive the "puppet regime" of its revenue and started killing village level officials of the government and ruling party. All these were successfully tried out by the NLF in the Vietnamese war.

In retrospect however we see that the JVP leadership has fallen victim to the romantic notion that the Vietnamese struggle was a "guerrilla war". This was a view promoted by both romantic radicals of the west and the official Left. It enhanced the "good guy vs bad guy" image. In reality however the USSR, Eastern European countries and China funneled tremendous military and financial assistance to North Vietnam and NLF. The Liberation struggle could not have continued without such backing. While no doubt the NLF had great guerrilla fighters they also had trained soldiers ready for modern set piece battles. The tanks and soldiers who swept into Saigon from the Central highlands were parts of a disciplined military machine; not village youth. The JVP had no source of strength. In this they were quite different from the Tamil guerrillas who could find sanctuary, men and material in South India.

I think it was this 'fatal gap' in JVP's military situation which forced its leadership to threaten armed services personnel with reprisals, after appeal to them

to join the JVP army failed. They needed to win over a part of the Army. JVP irregulars had done their job. Now they needed battlehardened troops for the final push. Ironically it was the brutality of this ultimatum that finally swung the army round to an all out offensive.

- (a) Though we will discuss this phenomenon later under ideology, it should be mentioned here that a special effort was made to organize the Buddhist clergy as an important support group for the JVP. Firstly, this fitted very well with the Vietnamese strategy of winning over the monks to the Patriotic Front and converting Buddhist monasteries into focal points of resistance. Just as the Catholic elite which dominated South Vietnam were hated by the Buddhist monks, the Jayawardene regime—particularly after the accord, earned the universal censure of the Buddhist clergy. Even Gangaramaya, the UNP patronized Temple in the City, became a focal point of anti-Jayawardene opposition. A Narahenpita Temple played a role similar to that of Quon Tri Pagoda in Saigon. Senior monks including Mahanayakes intimidated by young monks into supporting Patriotic Front. Leading monks of the UNP and the left were killed. Pro-JVP monks took over the management of important temples and monasteries which became centres of propaganda and refuge for JVP activists. These monks ran their own Front organization and published a magazine which mirrored the JVP viewpoint.

Monk's Role

S. J. Thambiah in his study of Buddhism and spirit cults in Northern Thailand draws attention to social networks which link the Buddhist

neophyte of the village to the prestigious Metropolitan Temples of Bangkok (Cambridge University Press 1970) There is no parallel, study in respect of Sinhala Buddhism but some impressionistic data may be considered here. Recruitment to the Sangha today appears to be mainly from children of the poorest strata of the peasantry. Recruitment from the aristocracy and higher village strata are on the decline, even in the Siyam Nikaya which traditionally catered to those categories. Peasants who could not afford to feed their children, as demonstrated by Thambiah with Thai data, tended to offer them to the Sangha. The network has always been the best instrument of upward mobility for poor rural youth. If they had outstanding *pragna* (intellectual ability) *Sila* (ascetic practice), or *Samadhi* (meditational skills), they would receive recognition first within the Sangha hierarchy and later be identified as outstanding personalities by the whole of Buddhist society. The spread of education, to rural areas has opened new vistas for the young village monk. On one hand he can now use the educational opening to reach Universities and establish himself without recourse to traditional criteria of the Sangha such as subservience to senior monks. They have a charisma of their own. On the other hand they are introduced to the secular traditions of the University, particularly its critical stance towards the establishment. They are also introduced to an intellectual world which does not have the moral certainties of the Dhamma. Thus the young Buddhist monk becomes the focus of a 'culture shock' which predisposes him to radicalism. Marxism recreates a

world of moral superiority like his familiar Buddhism. Indeed, they have, unknown to the Buddhist establishment. Cultural Ministry, Mahabodhi Society, YMBA etc. created a new radical, Buddhist ideology of social commitment which is accepted by a majority of Sinhala youth. This new radical ideology emphasizes the social and egalitarian functions of Buddhism. (eg. articles in *Vinivida Magazine*; Sinhala newspapers).

INDIAN HEGEMONY

- (b) The creation of a Patriotic Front was predicated on the JVP's interpretation of the hegemonic power of India. Here Wijeweera could claim to be a political prophet since this had been one of his five major themes from the time of the founding of the JVP. The reasons for the JVP attitude in the sixties can be linked to the USSR-China controversy, the cultural revolution in China and the Sino-Indian conflict of that time. Recent visitors to China have been told that during the early seventies Chou-en Lai was under attack by supporters of the Gang of Four in the Chinese Foreign Ministry. On the agenda of these anti-Chou extremists was a critical stance towards the SLFP, particularly the Bandaranaiques, who were known to have the support of the Chou-en Lai and Chen Yi. It was this "left aberration" in China which supported the JVP. Once the leftists were routed from the Foreign Ministry, Chou made amends by sending the famous "who but the Bandaranaiques can we support" letter in 1971 together with an unprecedented offer of a grant in convertible currency.

In any event this was a period when pro-Chinese elements were condemning Indian hegemonism, related

especially to India's boundary dispute with China. The Chinese also resented the even handed attitude of the USSR on this issue, which they took to be a pro-Indian one.

Wijeweera had taken the Chinese side in this dispute fashioned his views of Indian expansionism largely based Chinese polemics. In the 1977-83 period the JVP seems to have soft pedalled the Indian issue for two reasons. First they identified the UNP as an American puppet regime hostile to India and second, they had not at this stage, worked out their stance regarding the Eelam movement.

The signing of Indo-Sri Lanka Accord however provided an ideal opening for Wijeweera. For the first time all his 'hate figures'—India, the West, UNP and Old Left, had come together on a highly vulnerable issue. It also in the eyes of the Sinhala-oriented middle class and rural youth tended to invest a great deal of credibility no Wijeweera. After all, he was the only Sri Lankan politician who had for over twenty years predicted such a confluence.

Ironically, the ground for Wijeweera's ideological dominance had been prepared by anti-Indian propaganda carried out by the UNP from 1983. Indian support for the Tamil guerrilla movement had been used by the Government to create "a nation at war" psychology. This was enhanced by further Indian interventions in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. Wijeweera was the beneficiary of this propaganda and his later writings show a leader pre-occupied with the question of a long-term resistance to the Indian Army.

All these characteristics — anti Indianism, Patriotic Frontism, anti-elitism, use

of violence, recruitment of the clergy etc, were evolved within a new nativistic ideology which coincides with rise of the influence of the middle class Sinhala youth. In the next issue we will discuss the encompassing role of this *Jatika Chintanaya*.

Some Thoughts . . .

(Continued from page 14)

challenging Hindu orthodoxy and excoriating priests, he condemned the worship of gods and religious ritual and went even further to denounce Tamil social customs and the enslavement of women. He hit out at the revered classic texts on women, attacked the sacred laws that enforced chastity, and advocated "self-respect marriages" without clergy or religious ritual, with rights of divorce and remarriage. His boldest suggestions included the plea for sexual freedom, a new moral code for both men and women, intercaste marriages, and a women's strike against reproduction; he also called for an autonomous, strong movement run only by women, because in his view, male presence would be like having Brahmins in the anti-Brahmin Dravidian movement.

However, while Periyar is venerated as a founding father of what became a powerful political movement that still dominates Tamil politics, little is heard of his revolutionary views on women. These are regarded as an aberration and are seldom referred to.

(To be concluded)

Violence

One is reluctant to enter into dispute with a person of the power and position of Mr. J. R. Jayewardene; but when he insists on making his frequent jack-in-the-box public appearances to come out with controversial statements, one is compelled to do so in the interests of accuracy and truth.

At the Savsiripaya Auditorium, on the occasion of the bicentennial of the French Revolution, Mr. Jayewardene said quite unequivocally that he was totally against violence. Yet, it was this same Mr. Jayewardene that, during the last presidential election campaign, speaking at the Sugathadasa Stadium, said 'violent or non-violent methods' must be used to ensure the UNP candidate's victory. This was said in the hearing

of thousands of people and was reported in the media. Has he then, in such a short time, changed his attitude towards violence?

On that same occasion at the Savsiripaya Auditorium, Mr. Jayewardene said that 'the British came here in 1815 and our leaders got together and signed a Convention with the British to hand over the sovereignty of Sri Lanka to the British sovereign and there was no violence.' This is a travesty of the truth. The British came here in 1795 and there was much violence and bloodshed prior to the 1815 Convention. Within a couple of years of the signing there came the Uva Rebellion which the British crushed with great violence and cruelty. Thousands of

people were mercilessly slaughtered. No violence, Mr. Jayewardene?

Mr. Jayewardene said 'We have changed our governments on various occasions by the free votes of our people, no blood was shed. Surely Mr. Jayewardene cannot be serious.' Has he actually forgotten the on-going violence and killings during the 1977 general election, the post-election violence and killings in 1977, the violence and killings during the the Referendum etc., etc.?

We are hardly in a position to take a moralistic stand about the violence and killings during the French Revolution which, in any case, happened 200 years ago.

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GERMAN QUESTION:

A Dual Impact

Frank Kurschner-Pelkmann

The dramatic changes in East Germany within a few weeks, now called the "October Revolution 89", were only possible because both the Government and the opposition recognized that only dramatic changes within a short period could prevent the total collapse of the country. Especially the fact that up to 10,000 persons per day (!) went to West Germany left no room for long meditations on a change step by step. And once the process of change had started it developed its own dynamics. The fall of party leader Honecker left no other leader in an ivory tower. The Trade union leadership, the regional heads of the administration, the whole cabinet... all had to resign. And still the population continued to demonstrate for change—and succeeded. People had lost trust in the old political leadership. On banners one could read: "After marching for 40 years through the desert nobody believes what the old prophets say". The courage of the population was based on the insight, that there was only one other possibility and that was to level the country. As it was now possible to take this step when things would get worse it was reasonable to try out first if changes were possible. More and more sectors of the society were affected by fundamental changes and this gave new hopes and new determination to the demonstrators. One success was that the whole media system changed over night. The political leaders are suddenly confronted with journalists who insist on concrete answers to their questions and who cover the meetings of the opposition extensively. It may have been a mixture of desperation and hope for change that convinced the political leadership to open the border on November 9th and to announce that free and

fair elections will be held in one or two years time. The population has been so used to distrust political leaders that the demonstrations continued to safeguard the "October Revolution." At the same time the East Germans are enjoying their new freedom to visit the West, to meet their relatives and friends again, and to buy bananas and pineapples.

The Communist party is aware of the possibility of losing the next elections. What the party can really hope for is to play a certain role within a coalition, but even that would need deep changes within the party and a critical debate on the role of the party in the last 40 years. The question is, has German socialism come to an end? It is very obvious that the East German type of socialism that has been practised over the last four decades has failed. Even if the present political leadership would try to return to the old system they would soon find out that this approach must fail because of the resistance of the Soviet Union to assist such a development. But maybe the end of the old socialism is a chance for a new one. At least one has to be aware that another 40 years of the old East German style of socialism would have discredited the whole idea of socialism to a such a degree that nobody would have been interested in socialism any more. But presently a lot of people in East Germany are struggling for a new type of socialism: a socialism without bureaucracy but with democracy. It is difficult to assess how strong these groups are, but their voice is heard all over East Germany. On their banners one can read: "Imagine that there is socialism and nobody runs away!" Stefan Heym, a well known East German author and for many years a critic of the old government,

has an even more ambitious vision: "It is now necessary to give up old patterns and to transform the old existing socialism into a new socialism despite all our (negative) experience... a German Democratic Republic where temporary lodgings have to be built to provide shelter for those who are coming to live in this socialist society."

IMPACT ON WEST

The West German establishment is not yet afraid that its citizens might move to East Germany and say good-bye to Western capitalism. But in West Germany the end of the old East German system opens some new political options. The days have gone when all those who raised their voice for fundamental changes were asked to go to East Germany. The establishment has lost its enemy on the other side of the border. From now on it will have to rely on its own achievements without having the excuse that things are worse on the other side of the border. The changes in East Germany may have serious consequences for the political system in West Germany. After years of ignoring the respective demands from the peace groups, the government has now agreed to reduce the number of soldiers and to cut the expenditure for new weapons. It is simply no longer possible to convince the population that billions of German mark have to be spent for new arms when obviously no enemy is around. The arms industry, so far an important political factor, will have live with a decline of the market (unless they succeed in selling much more arms in other parts of the world). Further—more the dependence of West Germany on the big brother in Washington is decreasing as protection is no longer needed. Since the end of World War II the US-governments have had a tremendous influence on West German politics, especially in preventing any socialist development. With the decreasing number of American soldiers in West Germany this influence will diminish.

The progressive groups and parties in West Germany are presently irritated by the development in East Germany. This is especially true for the small communist party. It has had close links with the East German communists since its incorporation. Do the fundamental changes in East Germany and the Soviet Union encourage the West German communists to rethink their political concepts?

So far the party is split and it seems that the old party establishment tries to prevent an "October Revolution" in its own ranks. The Green Party is debating the whole East-West issue in as controversial terms as it debates all major political issues and one cannot anticipate if the party will come up with a clear strategy. The social Democratic Party is convinced that its politics since the sixties which was to be open for dialogue and cooperation with the East, it was bearing fruit. But it has been involved in a dialogue with East Germany's ruling party slightly too long, when the wind of change had already brought up new political movements. As far as West German politics is concerned, it is not very likely that the socialist groups within the Social Democratic Party will gain anything from the development in the East. The pragmatic group in the party will claim that this is not the right time for a socialist approach in West Germany. They will talk of the next election and will hope for coalitions with the liberals. It was Rosa Luxemburg who recognized that a revolution can only be successful on the long run if it is both socialist and democratic. But does a combination of the limited success of East Germany with socialism and of West Germany with democracy offer a chance for a truly socialist Germany? United and socialist, that is a dream of many socialists in Germany but they are aware of all the stumbling blocks on such a road. The neighbouring countries are not too eager to be audience of yet another German

experiment that could effect them in many ways. The American government would see all its remaining influence to prevent a united socialist Germany as they are already concerned over a natural united Germany. It is not very likely that a socialist united Germany is really a political option.

MERCEDES STAR

Another possibility is a reunification under the shining star of Mercedes.

The more conservative groups in West Germany hope to incorporate East Germany into one big market and to gain new investment possibilities for the West German companies. But this appetite for power and dominance is not too popular in East Germany. Being proud of what has been achieved despite all difficulties, people in East Germany are not willing to accept "On Sale" signs on all their factories. Furthermore they are aware of the problems of the West German society and are not too eager to repeat all the mistakes of the West.

If the per-capita-income is the only criterion for the success of a society, than the West German society has been very successful. But one should not forget the two million unemployed people in West Germany, nor the fact that the number of West Germans depending on social welfare has doubled since 1980, that there are thousands of young drug addicts and the fact that West Germany has tremendous ecological problems. If only half of the population of this globe would use as much resources and energy, producing at the same time as much as garbage and poisoning the water and the air as the West Germans human life would no longer be possible on this globe. The deep social problems in West Germany have resulted in the rise of a right-wing political party, called the "republicans". They won up to 10% of the votes in the recent local elections in Southwest-Germany, an

alarming signal in a country where right wing radicals caused a catastrophe half century ago. Furthermore one cannot forget the role of West Germany in the exploitation of African, Asian and Latin American countries. Few countries gain more from the cheap raw materials from Third World countries, "good" investment possibilities (due to low salaries, no environmental laws etc.), from high interest rates on loans and from the trade with regimes like the apartheid state in South Africa than West Germany does. Should reunification mean that more power is concentrated in one country?

INTEGRATION TREND

As things are, it is likely that two German states will continue to exist for the time being with a tendency towards the integration of both Germanies into one state. Neither the USA nor the Soviet Union will encourage the Germans to come together again but the close economic and personal relations plus the location of West Berlin as an island in East Germany will lead to more and more links between both states. Furthermore the per-capita-income gap between the states will either result in more East Germans moving to the West or to more joint efforts to balance this gap. As neither of the two governments is interested in more people moving to the West one can foresee that both of them will take steps in a direction of closer cooperation that may open the road to reunification. Therefore reunification is not the decisive question in Germany nowadays. It is obvious that it cannot be achieved in the near future and it is very likely that it will happen in a slow process over the next years. The decisive question is in which direction the Germans will move. One option is that this will be a democratic socialism. But the traditional and new splits in both the East and the West

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The Writer as Politician

A. H. Hermann

Vaclav Havel, whose plays were banned since 1968, will today become the ninth president of Czechoslovakia. He will be elected by the Federal Assembly in Prague Castle's Valadislav Hall. The Assembly will be chaired by Alexander Dubcek, whose bid to give socialism a human face was crushed in 1968.

The people of Prague will know Mr. Havel has been sworn in when 20 rounds are fired from a battery of guns brought this morning to the Plain of Letna. The new president and the members of the Federal Assembly will then proceed to the cathedral for Mass. The people may well find this recognition of the Catholic Church more stunning than the election itself. But the real game of politics takes place out of the public view, and it would be wrong to believe the change in the power structure is to be as pervasive and fast as this symbolism would suggest.

The Federal Assembly will merely be complying with an agreement reached at a "round table" of the Communist Party and the new political organisations which have mushroomed during the past month. The one of a power centre formed outside the constitutional organs and consisting of coalition party leaders is another revived Czech tradition from 1918-38, when "the Five" — the leaders of the coalition parties — decided all important matters of state, leaving their enactment to parliament and their execution to government.

The students' cry "Havel to the castle" was heard first in Prague. The provinces are not so enthusiastic. All they knew about Havel was that the press called him a bourgeois intellectual troublemaker moving in and out of prison, supported by money from abroad.

Leaving vituperation aside, this claim of the communist press was justified. Havel was born 53 years ago into a family of Prague entrepreneurs. Because of his origins, he was denied higher education but despite this is an outstanding intellectual. His employment as a laboratory assistant and in a brewery did nothing to alter his essential personality. The discrimination he suffered, and his experiences, provided him with material for plays and motivated his dissident activities.

It is also true he received money from abroad. Royalties from his plays in London and elsewhere were his only income and though modest, seem to have been sufficient. The communist press was also right in describing him as a "troublemaker" moving in and out of prison. But this could hardly be taken as a defamation even if it were not true.

Havel's plays are more important than his prison experience. The Garden Party, staged in Prague in 1964, and other of his works, expose the double-speak of a decadent and brutal regime, the schizophrenia of people who became used to pretending conformity with absurd and harmful policies while keeping their common sense to themselves.

In one of his essays Havel writes: "We have to be alert to the danger that almost unnoticeably, our responsibility might split into two responsibilities — one human and the other political". In confronting the human person with his bureaucratic *alter ego*, Havel continues the struggle for integration of the Czech spirit started by Franz Kafka's Trial and Jaroslav Hasek's Good Soldier Schweik. But while the first only exposed the tension created by the dehumanised nomenklatura — to use a more

recent term — and the second released this tension by laughter, Havel stirred the oppressed to opposition.

What can one expect from Havel as president? He accepted the nomination only for the six months leading to free elections in the middle of 1990, and is probably the best man to ensure the election will be free. Beyond that, it is difficult to see if his popularity and influence will survive the present enthusiasm, and the unavoidable difficulties of transition to a multi-party system and market economy. At present, he still prefers writing to be a president, and says he will stay on in his modest apartment. This he may find impractical, particularly if he is re-elected next year.

Constitutionally, the Czechoslovak president has no greater power than the British monarch. It depends entirely on the strength of his personality and political skill whether he can become as influential. Thomas Masaryk, founder of the independent Czechoslovak state in 1918, exercised enormous influence by his personality alone. Starting as a village apprentice, he became a university teacher, fighting causes and proclaiming humanitarian ideals. Havel's ethos is clearly inspired by the same ideals as Masaryk's. Unlike Masaryk, he was born rich, but the silver spoon was wrenched from his mouth. He is small, dresses informally, speaks haltingly and when interviewed, gives, short, monosyllabic answers.

When Masaryk was contemplative, Havel reveals a remarkable absence of doubt: there is a great strength in his singleness of purpose, his ability to give a "yes" or "no" to almost any question. He has shown himself willing to forgo personal comforts, even going to prison for his opinions.

(Continued on page 25)

Galkattas and Power Projection

Tilak A. Gunawardhana

I dreamt that I addressed the Council of Strategic Studies of Sri Lanka, on invitation, as I happened to be the Sri Lankan ambassador in India during the Punjabi and Kashmiri struggles for independence, and as I happened to play a key role in ensuring that India stuck to norms of democratic practice, and allowed a degree of independence for both the Punjabis and Kashmiris. Of course my aim was full independence from India for these oppressed peoples.

The history of the Punjabi struggle is a long one. They are the most industrious community in India as against those who come from provinces like Uttar Pradesh, or Bengal and who are well represented by my friend Mr. Exit who hails from somewhere there. Punjabis and Kashmiris deserved their independence to look after their own affairs without being discriminated against by Hindus. At the moment Punjabis, or mainly Sikhs have no place in caste stratified Hindu society. Hindus started caste and class discrimination, and they still sanction it. Those who rise against it are killed mercilessly, as witnessed in parts of Bihar recently.

If not for the Sri Lankan invasion of Punjab and Kashmir, the people in these two provinces would have continued to be treated like pariahs, or untouchables. The question of Kashmir is a question of a forcible annexation of a Muslim dominated region by India when on their own, they would have opted to join Pakistan or even be independent at the time India was granted independence.

So when I advised the Sri Lankan government to invade both Punjab and Kashmir, we were acting in accordance with (a) our greater Sri Lanka concept (some say it is a megal-

omaniacal attitude) (b) our concern for democracy in this region. If India is stupidly and blindly following the path of self destruction through a death wish, or schizophrenia, then we cannot just watch the situation and not send our crack troops there and bring the situation under control. Primarily for our good. This follows from the well known theory of mine which I have named 'The Exit Ripple Theory' So we were forced to land our troops in Punjab and Kashmir after forcing the Indian Government to sign a friendly agreement with us to enable us to send an unspecified number of troops, and to allow us to ferry troops, materials, arms, and ammunitions, and even freedom fighters between Sri Lanka and India without the normal customs and immigration encumbrances. Anyway between two friendly countries why should we be subjected to our passports being checked when we travel to India. After Ravana, India was a part of greater Sri Lanka!

Anyway we landed an unspecified and an uncounted number of troops in Punjab and Kashmir, mostly STF boys with experience in guerilla warfare and tactics, armed with the latest range of Galkattas. I must add that we developed the range independently, even though we borrowed freely from Russian and U.S. know how. There are several varieties of Galkattas. The Galkattas S. 40, Galkattas S50 and Galkattas S75. In addition, our warships are now armed with the long range Galkattas 120 and the long range Ballistic missile Galkattas 2400.

Our Air Force is uniformly armed with the heat seeking multiple entry Galkattas 120. We are now developing a small nuclear device in the 1000 Megaton range which is to be called Galkattas M 1000.

EXPORT DRIVE

In advising the Sri Lanka Government to invade India and save democracy there, I had another thing in mind, and this idea must not be underrated, or ignored. That is, after the Indian invasion we have been able to find a non-traditional export in the form of the whole range of Galkattas. We can earn sufficient foreign exchange to offset all our expensive purchases abroad in recent times. By our military engagement in Kashmir and the Punjab our production of Galkattas has increased over thousand fold. What only a small cottage industry in Tangalle, Matara, Hambantota, is now a mighty mass production-oriented technologically viable, export led, capital intensive undertaking with international financial backing. The Galkattas range is now a major foreign exchange earner surpassing, garments, gems and tea put together. We export them to all the provinces of India, where tribes are fighting for their independence from the Hindu dominated Government at Delhi. According to the latest customs statistics, our best customers are South Indians in Madras, Nagalanders, Kashmiris and Punjabis. I feel that the Sri Lanka Government must give encouragement to all freedom loving ethnic groups in India to wage war against the caste ridden central government which is exploiting the peripheral states for its own purposes and that undemocratically.

To come to my theory itself which I have named after my good friend Mr. Exit, I must stress that it has two sides to it. The first is the principle of 'Greater Sri Lanka'. We must ensure, I nearly said by hook or by crook, all the countries surrounding Sri Lanka should so adjust their policies to attain the maximum conformity with Sri Lankan policies, wishes, and desires where her external and internal mat-

ters are concerned, basically in the interests of our stability, but not necessarily that of the surrounding countries. We do not want the DMK of Madras to instigate our peace loving Tamils to revolt against our Government. If there is such a provocation we will not hesitate to send our STF boys to Madras and deal with the situation effectively, democratically, and in a peace-loving way, using our armed might. As a corollary we should act from a position of strength vis a vis India or any other country which cares to destabilise our country or its economy. In any case the independence we give to India is more than sufficient for them. Sixty percent of the population in India is illiterate. Among the rural population illiteracy goes up to 80.5%. So what democracy for them? The bulk of the people do not understand modern concepts like democracy. Votes are wasted on them. Like the old style feudal landlords, Saheebis, Zamindars, and Sarkars, we should keep the Indians under us till they raise their literacy to at least 50%, which is still way below ours which is one of the highest in the world. Till Indians reach our standards I feel we should keep our troops there. But there should be fair play.

RAVANA'S DREAM

The other side of the 'Exit Ripple Theory' of mine is the maintenance of a divided India. We should encourage caste divisions, encourage inter-tribal warfare, and the genuine struggles of independence now embracing Punjab, Kashmir and Nagaland. Assam also should be supplied with small arms, and their young trained in guerilla tactics in the jungles of Monaragala, Tangalle, Belliatte and central Sri Lanka. We will supply them arms to suit their degree of competence, and the availability of foreign exchange from any source to cover those purchases. This is a highly secret matter which I would not like to discuss with you today.

So the task of the STF in India is two fold. (A) To ensure the integrity of Greater Sri Lanka, which includes all the littoral states, principally India, guided by my 'Exit Ripple Theory'. (B) Encourage all divisive tendencies in India, caste, ethnic, provincial linguistic and religious. Our ultimate aim must be twenty or more independent but warring states, kept under democratic control by our STF forces for our greater good, and which was our Ravana's dream when he first flew to India to bring Sita, in the first man-made flying machine.

The Writer. . .

(Continued from page 23)

It is an important feature of Havel's struggle with a hypocritical oppressive regime, but it is not the sort of post-revolutionary bravado which now sweeps the country. His political manifesto was dated April 8 1975, preceding by 10 years glasnost and prestorika. It took the form of an open letter to President Gustav Husak. It is couched in complicated intellectual language.

Havel started his letter by saying it was which made everybody behave as if Czechoslovak society were united, when in fact it was sliding into a crisis more dangerous than any in its recent history. This "ersatz life" was the result of such superficial conformity, where energy was spent on chasing scarce food and consumer goods, and individuals, lost the sense of their identity.

But even in 1975, Havel was optimistic. Life can be repressed for long periods, he said, but not stopped forever. The silent striving of the oppressed would in the end shatter the power structure. The 1968 "moment of truth" had to be paid for dearly, but the humiliation which followed would lead to a still greater

explosion brought Havel to the castle.

One question remains unanswered. Will Havel and those who follow his lead be able to replace the lopsided economic structure of Czechoslovak industry with one more in harmony with the country's resources? Will they be able to terminate Czechoslovakia's counter-productive command economics by freeing market forces and the skills and inventiveness of the people?

The movement unleashed by Havel reminds one of Masaryk's "Castle Group" — which did much for Czech arts in the inter-war period, but left the economy and politics at the mercy of politicians and bankers. One hopes history will not be repeated.

A Dual. . .

(Continued from page 22)

German socialist movement plus the difficult task to reach a East-West cooperation of socialists weakens this movement and strengthens the already very strong position of those who use all their political and economic power to make Germany one big capitalist state labeled as a "free" or "social market economy". What is needed in West and in East Germany now is a growing awareness that the social and economic system of the West has failed as much as the East German system did. There is today a historic change to learn from the mistakes of both German states and to create a new just and democratic society. But will the Germans take this chance? We will see. Few people anticipated the dramatic changes in the East. Maybe we will all be surprised by fundamental changes in the West. The need for such changes is obvious both for the children of Marx and of Coca Cola.

Challenging orthodox development theory

Saman Kelegama

As is often the case, a collection of essays arising from conferences or projects (in this case a U. N. U. project) results in a mixed bag, and this book is no exception to this common rule. *'The Challenge in South Asia'* is an ambitious book. It is a collection of 15 essays which seek to discuss the crisis, economic as well as political, that South Asia is facing four decades after the end of the colonial period and which appears to threaten some of the existing state structure and the very fabric of its society. The editors identify 1) the failure of the approach to economic development adopted in the post-colonial period, 2) the inability of the highly centralized structure of political power to give effective political representation to all strata in society, and 3) growing polarization of society along ethnic, religious or linguistic lines and undermining of social values as the main interrelated dimensions of the South Asian crisis. These dimensions are then placed in the perspective of the potential South Asia in terms of Development Democracy and Regional Cooperation.

The essays depict the thinking of South Asian academics who are attempting to break out of the conventional neoclassical and Marxist paradigms of thought and action "which are not by themselves sufficient for an understanding of South Asian reality in all its richness and variety" (p. 10). The book is divided into two parts. In the first part, chapters 1 to 3, re-

examine the existing concept of development and attempt to propose an alternative approach which takes people rather than growth as the starting point. In the same part, chapters 4 to 7 discuss country experiences in economic development in order to highlight the need for an alternative approach. Central theme of this part is that development has been undermined, thus a new kind of theory and new kind of practice are essential for economic development in South Asia.

In the first chapter, Wignaraja attempts a methodological critique of the current dominant approaches to development and proposes a dialectic between development and creative energies of the people. Here people are the subject not the object of development. Development is seen as simultaneous 'top down' and 'bottom up' process. The new approach which is called Participatory Action Research (PAR) emphasizes the latter. It is a process of bringing about the creative potential of the people, in particular the poor and the oppressed at the grassroots level. This new approach which draws its basic framework from the concepts of Sarvodaya and Antodhaya involves social mobilization and conscientization through (a) awareness creation, (b) socio-political action and (c) research in order to produce scientific knowledge in harmony with nature, and people's groups.

Although it is essentially a micro-level development strategy it has much influence at the

macro-level. Wignaraja explains this along the following lines, "If the grassroots organizations were linked across space and sustained each other through exchange of ideas, they could contribute to the eventual emergence not just of a new consciousness but a new kind of a state structure. Within such a state structure, decentralization of power and mass participation in economic/social decision-making could become a real possibility" (p.56). However, Wignaraja admits that "it is difficult for such self-reliant process to take place spontaneously. . . Catalytic intervention is more often than not a necessary initial input . . ." (p. 57). On the whole, the attempt made by Wignaraja is praiseworthy but " . . . some of these need to be further clarified in specific environments through further experiments" (p.58) if PAR is to make a significant impact as an alternative development strategy in the academic world.

In the second chapter, Seth takes up the issue of catalyzing an alternative development strategy, and argues that such a strategy would be confined only to international academic clubs and commissions if there isn't a political dimension to it. Seth points out that most of the prevailing alternative development strategies at the grassroots level have failed to make a major impact because they are a political and thus have been subjected to official government policy. "It is forgotten that without political process the people cannot be sold any idea even if it may logically further their own good and interest" (p.66). Thus, Seth argues that a theory of alternative development should start from a value premise and spell out its alternative politics. Participative, self-managed, decentralized democratic policy is suggested as the political framework for alternative development. But how to achieve this is the crucial question. The provision of a few examples, such as the progress of Green Parties in Europe, to explain this "how" would have

The Challenge in South Asia, Development, Democracy and Regional Cooperation, Edited by Ponna Wignaraja and Akmal Hussain, published by SAGE, New Delhi, India and The United Nations University, Tokyo, 360 pages.

been worthwhile. However, Seth's contribution to the book is indispensable.

Shiva provides an illuminating critique of modern science and technology in the third chapter. A useful critique of Rostow's stages of growth theory and the Green Revolution is also provided. The importance of natural resources and ecological balance has been emphasized and *inter alia*, the importance of the Chipko movement in India has been discussed. Shiva's discussion of alternative development strategies is weak and one wonders whether she is speaking about a romantic return to traditional technology. Thus the discussion leaves us with the 'choice of development model' and this becomes clear when she says, '... wisdom and time-tested experience lies the only hope for growth alternative science that ensure survival instead of threatening it' (p.87).

From the overall perspective of these three chapters one feels that given the embryonic and dispersed character of these alternative strategies it would be unwise, indeed unreasonable, to assume that the challenges they pose to mainstream development theory and practice would be decisive or that the success of the transformative projects they are engaged in, is assured. For either to happen, a macro theory for transformative political action, which is based on the values and practice of democracy and which has synthesizing potentials for integrating perspectives and actions of various issue-based movements in a larger framework of transformation, is required. However, the current global thinking on alternative development falls short of this basic expectation.

In the country case studies (chapters 4 to 7), Sundaram shows that all development strategies that were implemented in India since independence have failed to alleviate poverty. Lakshman examines the Sri Lankan experience with special reference to the post-1977 period and shows the failure of Sta-

bilization and Adjustment policies (recommended by the IMF/World Bank) to bring about sustainable growth with equity. He goes on to argue how the post-1977 liberalized economy was sustained through massive dependence on foreign aid rather than by market forces. One important area which Lakshman has left out is the lack of 'supply-side factors' for an export-led development to take place. The IMF and the World Bank assume that these factors exist in South Asia. Unfortunately, this is not the case and market forces alone are unable to develop those supply-side factors.

Hashemi indirectly focuses on these supply-side factors when he discusses the industrial sector in Bangladesh. "Bangladesh lacked an indigenous capitalist class" (p.157). "For most part there is little distinction... between merchant capital and industrial capital" (p.158). His analysis of foreign aid is excellent where he says, "...foreign aid, far from creating a self-sustaining industrial process in Bangladesh, has created dependence on aid... Aid has created the new rich class in Bangladesh (indentors, consultants, contractors, bureaucrats, traders) who share a common social milieu... As long as this group dominates the economy, the chances of reducing aid dependence is indeed limited" (p.156) In fact, the post-1977 experience with foreign aid in Sri Lanka, as Lakshman has lucidly shown, is very similar to that of Bangladesh.

Hussain shows that in spite of high economic growth in Pakistan, poverty, malnutrition, regional disparity, balance-of-payment problems and foreign aid dependence have increased to noteworthy levels. "The economic structure is both fragile and unable to significantly improve the economic conditions of the poorer sections of the society and the backward regions of the country" (p.180-81). "Pakistan may be entering a period over the next decade

when it may be faced with grim choice of stagnation in per capita incomes or very high debt service burdens" (p.180). Although the essay clearly exposes what is behind the veil of growth in Pakistan there is less interpretation compared to the number of tables that has been included at the end.

These country studies are competent, and some are excellent in certain areas. But at the end of the day one is left wondering whether they have really persuaded us that, with a pinch of political will, we can make a transition to an egalitarian economic system with sustainable growth. It is not clear what role these authors advocate for the market vis-a-vis the state and the country studies are essentially critiques of the existing development strategies. Further, for some authors economic development turns entirely in domestic factors and their organizations. In sum, alternative development strategies have not been clearly spelt out. At best, such treatment remains superficial and there is no link to the alternative development strategies outlined in the first three chapters.

Part II of the book is on 'Regime Dynamics and Regional Cooperation'. Regime dynamics include aspects of politics and culture. The former is discussed in chapters 8 to 10 while the latter is discussed in chapters 11 to 13. The last two chapters are on Regional Cooperation. The central theme of this part is that although South Asian history and politics have been marked by violent explosions and communal conflicts there is a civilization consciousness among diverse communities that can constitute a framework within which diverse communities can develop in creative interaction within stable states and different states can come together in regional cooperation.

The first four papers (chapters 8 to 10) in this part by Hussain, Gunasinghe, Sivathamby and Sethi highlight the crisis


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