

LANKA

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SAM: THE OUTSPOKEN SPOKESMAN THE MESSAGE TO COLOMBO

— *Mervyn de Silva*



GORBACHEV ON LENIN

Why Sri Lankans are pro-Israeli — *Izeth Hussain*

Fathers and Sons: the SWRD syndrome — *Reggie Siriwardena*

UNP, JVP: Redefining Progressivism today — *Dayan Jayatilleke*

Caste and Women — Oppression in Jaffna — *Devanesan Nesiah*


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TRENDS

MORE FROM JAPAN

Japanese aid to Sri Lanka will be enhanced. About a hundred million dollars more can be expected in 1990-91, an embassy spokesman said in Colombo on the eve of Prime Minister Kaifu's visit. Grants, concessional loans and technical co-operation provided in 1989 amounted to 200 million US dollars.

Despite more attention focussed on Europe following recent changes there, South Asia will remain important to Japan and aid will continue, Counsellor T. Takata told a media conference. "In fact 20 per cent of Japanese ODA (Official Development Assistance) has been set apart for that region", he said.

WANTED — A NEW LOOK

CWC General Secretary M.S. Sellasamy has called for a fresh look and another dialogue on a human problem. About a hundred thousand plantation workers of Indian origin are awaiting repatriation to India. Mr. Sellasamy, who is also Minister of State for Industries, said that agreements had been signed without consulting the people, there was a human angle to the story which had to be considered.

The situation should be reassessed after a fresh dialogue with India he said.

The plantation workers involved have been given Indian citizenship but physical repatriation has been delayed.

Meanwhile, an EPRLF news release said that the Sirima-Shasiri Pact of 1964 under which these plantation workers of Indian origin were granted Indian citizenship, was a horse deal done without consulting the

people on whom it was thrust. "We are against all attempts to force these people to go to India", the release said.

NO MORE CLUSTERS

Plantation Industries Minister Ranjan Wijeratne has dismantled the cluster system of management introduced by his predecessor, former minister Gamini Dissanayake. Mr. Wijeratne announced at a press briefing that he had brought back the "tried and tested" system of superintendents managing individual estates.

The minister said that the cluster system was a hastily adopted concept. The World Bank too had not advocated it, but had only called for a pilot project to develop the tea industry.

Privatisation too was ruled out by the minister, "for the moment", because the country lacked managerial expertise.

"The private sector has no capital to invest on the estates.

So why should we get them only to manage the estates and pay them management fees?" he said.

BRIEFLY...

● The Inland Revenue Department has collected nearly eight billion rupees in the first three months of this year, from a projected Rs 30 billion for the whole year. Last year the collection was Rs 5.3 billion for the corresponding period.

Commissioner General T. Ratnasundaram told a news conference that tax collection in 1989 was Rs 7.4 billion, which was an improvement on 1988 when the collection was Rs. 4.6 billion.

● The Hindu said on April 26 that the DMK and Congress (I) members in the Tamil Nadu State Assembly were locked in verbal duel after reference was made to portraits of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi and LTTE leader Prabhakaran appearing at public meetings in the state.

DMK members denied allegations that the LTTE was misbehaving in Tamil Nadu. The LTTE were not anti-social elements but freedom fighters, they said.

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LANDMINES IN COLOMBO 7

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

The landmine has been such a crucial fact in the darkest chapter of Sri Lanka's harrowing history that it soon became persistent metaphor, and for the literary imagination perhaps an irresistible symbol. We paid tribute to the vital importance of the landmine by making it the title of a book in search of an author — The Landmine War.

But there are landmines of different kinds. Today the mines are buried not on the roads used by military vehicles or public transport but on the path to peace, to a negotiated settlement of the most tragic and costly ethnic conflict in the world. In a way, these mines are identifiable — the Sixth Amendment for instance.

One landmine we hadn't quite suspected went off on a quiet afternoon in the most respectable residential district of the capital, Gregory's Road, right opposite the Canadian High Commission, when Sam Thambimuttu, TULF MP was gunned down by two killers on a motor-cycle. His wife was very seriously wounded. They were about to leave on a trip to the U.S., under the State Dept's 'International Visitors Program', and visit Britain and Canada too.

Understandably, this visit hardly a secret, and a Sunday *Island* lead story by the paper's police reporter, Suresh Mohammed, headlined "HIT SQUAD IN TOWN — special security for Tamil MP's," shaped public reactions to the daylight murder, plainly a professional 'operation'. So it was hardly a surprise when Dr. Anton Balasingham, the LTTE spokesman, issued a press statement promptly, denying LTTE complicity (See state-

SAM THAMBIMUTTU

"What's going on, Sam... can you hear me, Sam?"

"Mr. Thambimuttu, any comments on yesterday's clashes...?"

"Sam, got any line on this Batticaloa killing...?"

Right through the 'war' in the east, before and after the arrival of the IPKF, Sam Thambimuttu was the reporter's first choice for what in the professional patois is called a 'check' and a 'double check'. Even if you had the story, you went through the routine of a double-check, just to be absolutely sure that you won't commit some bad mistake that'll ruin the reputation of your paper or organisation, beyond repair and redemption. Or, in these times of peril, cost lives. The radio reporter, with far more demanding 'deadlines' (in his case, tightly scheduled, programmes with a 3,2,1 you-are-on-the-air regimen) had to be doubly careful. But then there was the more exacting professional demand rooted in the very character of a highly competitive profession. Beat your rival. Get the story out first.

"For the foreign correspondent" (the foreign-foreign or the local stringer) the source is vital. So is ready access to the source. But most of all, reliability. And credibility.

Since this is not a personal, but a professional's tribute to Sam Thambimuttu, I have had to break an old established rule not to reveal the source. In this case, however, Sam's assistance to the international press, particularly to the BBC, was hardly a secret. His name has been mentioned a hundred times.

Nothing reveals the man better than his role as a regular news source. And since there are no real secrets in this little island, Batticaloa or Colombo, certainly the English-educated Sinhala-Tamil-Muslim community, knew all about Sam's work as chairman of the Citizens Committee. In fact, Everyman's Mouthpiece, Lawyer, the Community's PR man, Batticaloa's link to the world.

And why Sam, not somebody else? He was independent... though he sported a party label. He was outspoken, perhaps too outspoken. He respected the press, and understood its role, recognised its role, recognised its needs and its importance. He realised that the best service to his 'own people' was to let the world know what was going on.

M. de S.

ment). Besides, memories of the Amirthalingam killing, also in the heart of Colombo, are still fresh.

Colombo is the capital. Psychology and public opinion are crucial factors in the conduct of war. . . more so in 'unconventional wars than in orthodox military confrontations. It is a question of effective power, of authority, of credibility. When the city is under seige, the ruler's capacity to rule is undermined and steadily eroded. Mass confidence sags, soon on the edge of collapse. Does the ruler's writ really run. . . in his own CAPITAL?

The enemy's attack is not just physical or aimed at economic disruption and the de-stabilisation of the administrative system. That too. But equally important it is an attack on the mind of the people. Once the people lose confidence in the ruler's ability (not 'right') to rule, the isolation of the government is the beginning of the end. We saw it all in the last quarter of 1989. The JVP was in no position to govern. But visibly the government's capacity to do so, that is perform its primary function, was also in serious doubt.

That is not the situation today. Far from it. One might even say, just the opposite. The LTTE and the Government are holding top-level talks and a senior Minister, Mr. A. C. S. Hameed, the former Foreign Minister, is in continuous contact with the LTTE leadership. The IPKF withdrawal was as much a 'victory' and an important gain for President Premadasa as it was for the LTTE, which could now come out of the jungles, and take virtual control of the Tamil areas. As for President Premadasa, he had kept his pledge — to see that the foreign army was out of Sri Lanka, which meant denying the JVP-SLFP opposition its main propagandist ammunition.

The 'Tigers' had agreed to a ceasefire. Why not? Its battle-tested cadres were holed up in the jungles, and the LTTE's

operational capabilities and mobility had been severely restricted by the IPKF. Besides, the LTTE had a new factor on its mind, political-military — Delhi's newly trained and armed "Contras" call it what you like, CVF, TNA or any other.

The IPKF had to pull-out for the LTTE to take back lost ground, recover operational mobility and impose its will on the Eastern province, never very sure at the best of times. But once the IPKF and Brigadier Mahmud left the area, with 'control' vested in the EPRLF and its allies, plus the new militias, the LTTE was ready to return. The Tiger sprang, with characteristic fury. . . having received a little bit of covert help from the local forces.

Already, a measure of mutual trust and some active cooperation between the LTTE and the S. L. G. had been established. And in the next phase the area of convergent interest between the two grew. The climax was the ceasefire, and a green light for contacts, leading to formal, publicly announced 'negotiations'.

But between a Sri Lankan government and a separatist Liberation Front, which has NOT formally resiled from its basic position of "self-determination" and "Eelam", there cannot possibly be complete convergence or total trust. On the contrary, major differences exist.

The question then is each other's priorities, and how much each is ready to concede in the mutual interest, and how much each will NOT yield at any cost. So, there is continuous interaction and conflict — the gray area of mutual interest, expanding and contracting, as each party seeks to advance its interest, knowing the risk of the dialogue and its give-and-take collapsing, if one party pushes its self-interest too far or too hard. There is a natural,

built-in brake on such manoeuvres too. Can the LTTE afford to provoke Sinhala opinion so rashly if its price involves a great loss of popularity for the Presidency. Or intense unpopularity?

The LTTE knows that the Opposition has one strong card, the INFLATION card. But it can't be played right now.

The more inflammable issue, certainly the issue, that is natural to the SLFP, pro-JVP constituencies is the Tamil, more specifically the LTTE i.e. the traditional cry of a defeated Sinhala-party (SLFP or UNP) "You are selling the nation to the Tamils. . .".

Sam Thambimuttu was not killed in Batticaloa but in Colombo, on President Premadasa's terrain. The LTTE says 'We will be in charge of security in our areas. . . . there is no need for the S.L. Army or Police to do so. . .'. Mr. Premadasa may buy that argument, and so the LTTE wins that point.

By the same logic, the South is indisputably the President's and security in the South, the government's responsibility. True, the President had agreed to hold talks with the EPRLF and the other groups. But was that sufficient reason to 'invade' the South and expose the government's inability to ensure security in the Sinhala areas, the capital itself? That is the political issue.

LTTE denies involvement

The LTTE has categorically denied any involvement in the killing of Parliamentarian Sam Thambimuttu.

LTTE ideologue Anton Basingham speaking to the press from his office at Kondavil, Jaffna said they also condemned the attempt of a few leaders of EPRLF who blamed them in this connection.

Tight security for Tamil MPs

Hit squad in town

Suresh Mohamed

The Government has alerted all TULF Members of Parliament and leaders of other Tamil political parties on the presence of a 15-member 'hit squad' in Colombo, political sources said.

Last week's killing of a TELO activist at Kotahena is also suspected to be the work of members of the squad which is believed to have arrived from the East. Senior security officials described the shooting of the TELO man as a "professional job".

The TULF has members of the EPRLF and TELO under its banner in Parliament. "The Island" learns that the MPs and the leaders of Tamil political parties have been advised to restrict their movements and if going out to ensure the presence of their bodyguards.

One member who had been living in a house in Colombo moved into "Sravasti" on Friday as a 'precautionary measure' in light of the threats that had emerged. An EPRLF MP, Ganeshasankari Yogasangari said that they had been asked to exercise care at all times. He added that no additional security personnel had been provided to them but told to make the best use of the bodyguards already assigned to them (the MPs). "We are facing a grave security threat", he said.

Another MP who asked not to be named said that he had received information about the presence of "killer squad" in the city and they were now on the prowl hunting for certain persons.

President's condolence message

I was shocked and saddened by the brutal killing of Mr. Sam Tambimuttu, Member of Parliament of the TULF for Batticaloa District. Mr. Thambimuttu was a successful lawyer. He actively participated in Parliamentary debates.

His contribution to uphold democratic traditions will be long remembered.

Undoubtedly all peace loving people will condemn this dastardly act. It is unfortunate that such criminal acts are committed when honest endeavours are being made to resolve controversial issues through goodwill, understanding and dialogue.

This brutality brings to mind the validity of the often repeated teaching of Lord Buddha that 'hatred does not cease by hatred but by love alone'. At a time when the country is rapidly returning to normalcy from a reign of terror it is the bounden duty of all who shun violence and terror to desist from promoting or provoking such crimes.

Mrs. Tambimuttu was seriously injured in this incident. We wish her speedy recovery.

Mrs. Premadasa and I extend our deepest sympathies to Mrs. Thambimuttu, their son and members of the bereaved family

'Dastardly crime' - Opposition

The opposition members of Parliament who met in the office of the Leader of the Opposition unanimously moved the following resolution on the passing away of Sam Thambimuttu, M.P., for Batticaloa District

"The brutal assassination of Mr. Sam Thambimuttu has shocked us and brought grief to us. We condemn this dastardly crime.

The crime has been committed in broad daylight in front of the Canadian High Commission, indicated that terror gangs are moving freely with impunity even in the metropolis of Colombo.

Further, the government had warned that a hit squad was in Colombo a few days prior to this brutal assassination but the government had failed to protect the life of Mr. Thambimuttu thus making the government solely responsible for his death.

We, therefore, demand from the government to ensure that such brutal crimes are prevented in the future.

Chief Opposition Whip Richard Pathirana MP has signed the resolution on behalf of all Opposition Members of Parliament.

May 1st – Day of the old faithful

Once again each party drew its faithful, and as many as could be drummed up. Workers' solidarity was not the issue. The ruling UNP had the largest show, on Galle Face Green. A fragmented opposition met here and there.

President Premadasa renewed his pledge to overcome poverty. He said that he would strive to eliminate social injustices and inequalities and ensure that the deserving got their place in society. Merit would be the criterion, he said.

"We must dedicate ourselves fully to serve the masses" the President said.

At the SLFP's rally at Campbell Park, Opposition Leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike said that thousands of mothers were shedding tears for the children lost in recent violence. People still lived in fear and were afraid to come even for a May Day rally.

Workers' rights had been given by the SLFP government of 1956 but the UNP had suppressed most of those rights, she said.

The Opposition Leader welcomed President Premadasa's announcement that corruption would be eradicated. If an international commission was appointed to investigate all the corruption that had been going on from 1977 she would support it wholeheartedly, she said.

SLMP leader Ossie Abeygoonsekera said at their rally at Havelock Park that SLFP wanted his party to get onto the streets to fight the UNP, so that they (the SLFP) could walk into power. He said that if his party fights the UNP he would ensure that power would go to the people and not to the Walawwe.

The United Socialist Alliance (USA) which met at the Kirilapane market, and drew a sizeable crowd, called on all

progressive elements to close ranks and fight all forms of repression and regain lost rights as citizens and workers. USA leader Chandrika Kumaranatunga said: "We have fallen back into an era that is a thousand years back in time. We have regressed. You who are trampled underfoot, deprived, harassed, and repressed at every turn — this is your day. You must come to a full realisation that you are being exploited. Your plight is worsening.

"With the dawn of this era in 1977 you, the workers, have been crushed; burdened, killed and have watched helplessly the destruction and repression of all your inalienable rights".

NLSSP leader Vasudeva Nanayakkara whose party held a rally at Cotta Park accused the SLMP of "treachery" that obstructed a united socialist alliance, and both the SLMP and the CP of "appeasement".

May Day, according to the police, was "incident free". □

Japan No. 1 and Japan's No. 1

Mr. Toshiki Kaifu, the Japanese Prime Minister, is the first Japanese premier to visit the Island in 30 years. Though it was only a one-day visit, the Japanese Ambassador told a group of Sri Lankan editors that Sri Lanka, in terms of population (17 million) was the largest recipient of official development assistance (ODA). Last year's development assistance of two hundred million U. S. Dollars also made Japan the Island's biggest donor.

Private investment is still quite modest, about ninety three million dollars, on 105 small enterprises mainly manufacture of ready-made clothes. With the improvement in the security situation, Japanese businessmen are interes-

ted in construction projects and the hotel industry. The trade balance is heavily in Japan's favour, with Sri Lanka selling tea, precious stones, shrimps, and titanium to the value of (117) million dollars, while paying 302 million dollars for Japanese machinery and consumer items.

Sri Lanka and the Maldives have become favourite holiday resorts for middle-income Japanese tourists and "Air Lanka" has already started two weekly flights to Tokyo, and applied for a third. Bank of Japan or Sinwa Bank may open an office soon. "Kaifu's visit is as important, politically" said a western diplomat. "Japan has replaced the U.S., West Germany and Britain as Sri Lanka's major donors, and Japan does not scream about human rights".

Economy

Modest Growth

The economic stabilisation measures introduced by Sri Lanka on IMF and World Bank advice and the improved security situation have resulted in a modest recovery of the balance of payments situation. It is described by the Central Bank report just released as "the most encouraging feature in an otherwise worrying situation. Gross reserves 385 million S.D.R. in June rose to 547 million SDR in December.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increase in 1989 was 2.3 percent, down from 2.7% in 1988. Considering the widespread violence, and the disruption and sabotage campaign launched by the extremist JVP, this performance was "creditable" said a top Central Bank official. The trade deficit has dropped from S.D.R. 564 million in 1988 to S.D.R. 521 million last year. Export income increased by 11%, while imports cost only 5% more. The terms of trade however remained unfavourable. The export price index showed an 11% rise whereas average import prices went up by 18%.

UNP, JVP : Who is a progressive ?

Dayan Jayatilleka

At any rate we acted as though the State was 'ours'. So, for the Tamil militants, there was no distinction between State and people. And of course that is a fundamental distinction, made by guerrilla movements, by revolutionary movements, by national liberation movements throughout the world. So in fact we had two 'national — popular' blocs colliding with each other. Now those are the real questions: Why did the Tamil struggle take the form it did? Why were there not two parallel struggles, a two-front struggle against the State, linking the peoples of both communities. Those are the questions of which we have to find answers, because those questions shed light and offer a window to our social processes and social and cultural structures.

So where do we go from here? What do we do about this situation? The old thinking is that all these problems are due to capitalism and the UNP, so let's throw the rascals out and put somebody or something, else in. But as I said I am not convinced that is the case. In fact I am convinced to the contrary — that most of the policies: educational policies, the cultural policies, that created this barbarism were in fact policies enacted under SLFP — led United Front regimes. I refer to that social atrocity, the language policy of '56, I refer to the policies of mediawise and districtwise standardisation of '72. These were done under SLFP regimes with Leftist participation under ministers who were supposedly more progressive than the other ministers. And under permanent secretaries who were still more progressive than other permanent secretaries. Now until we find out what is wrong with that so-called progressivism. I want to be very careful about tossing out those who are in

and putting in so-called progressives. I think we have to be very careful about this. Because we have to analyse the kind of social forces that were behind those retrogressive transformations. Those are the social forces who some Marxists still refer to as progressive! Those political parties are the agencies which some still consider to be more progressive than other parties.

Now let us look at this progressivism. From the point of view of social modernity, from the point of view of secularism, from the point of view of democracy, I am not at all convinced that the social forces, ideologies, and political agencies that we have seen so far as progressive are in fact so. One of my friends here was talking about the 'national democratic tasks'. I think one of the most important democratic tasks in Sri Lanka is the democratisation of the state structure through the system of provincial councils. Now I think that, it has been flawed in conception and birth, its umbilical cord with India has to be severed. This is also why I was one of the few who resigned from a ministry, albeit from a provincial ministry, last year. But I do think that from the point of view of the attitude to provincial councils, the JVP is more retrogressive than J. R. Jayawardena and Gamini Dissanayake and therefore much more anti-democratic. From the point of view of elections, the JVP which shot people who voted — and normally insurgencies take place when Governments do not hold elections, insurgencies and do not target people who voted — is more anti-democratic than the UNP. I think that the oppositional political parties that are opposed to and are ambivalent towards provincial councils are less progressive than those who have been forced into

making some kind of commitment to provincial councils, however shaky.

So I want to look at all that again. Because I don't think we should go through that tortured history once more. Therefore when it comes to the question of solutions I think we must know what the problems are. I think the problems are located in the kind of consciousness that we have, the kind of political culture generated by our educational system reinforced by our mass media. Now I do not agree with the standard view that the problem with our media is one of servility. No. I think that the *Divaina* for instance, has been extremely critical of the Government from 1983 onwards and unfairly so, irresponsibly so, because they have accused the Government of selling out to the Tamils! Any slight concession, any effort to give some kind of political concession was derided. And by the way these reforms were not out of the generosity of the Government, it was because of the guerrilla struggle in the North and East, the realities of which were perceived by top military professionals like General Nalin Seneviratne but not accepted by our cabinet ministers, particularly those who thought they were the guardians of national security and are now born-again liberals. Servility is an accurate criticism of the English language media. But the Sinhala language media was virulently hostile, not only towards the Government but towards the anti-government forces such as Vijaya Kumaranatunge who were trying to bring about some political solution to the ethnic war. The Sinhala papers did not say "look, Tamil civilians are being killed there, this is what is happening, these are the photographs." No. They do publish about human rights now. Is it

because only Sinhalese are human? And I speak as a Sinhalese. Are human rights violations taking place only now? Did they write about human rights violations in Jaffna before '87-88? No it is only because the IPKF is there. Now they are talking about human rights in Jaffna. The Jaffna people have human rights now. They didn't have human rights when we went in there. The Sinhala people have human rights but not the democratic leftists who are slaughtered by the JVP. They don't have human rights. University students have human rights but not university students killed by the JVP. Tamil people did not have human rights all this time. When the Sri Lankan military offensive was launched, the JVP and the Sinhala press criticism was that it was not hard enough. They were saying, go for it. So the problem with our media has not been one of servility but of false consciousness. This is a very serious situation, it is as if the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* were published by the Ku Klux Klan! The most serious problem in Sri Lanka is not dependent capitalism or the IMF or the World Bank. The problem is that in Sri Lanka, the lunatic fringe is the mainstream.

Finally in our search for solutions I remember this line from a poem by Robert Frost — I think he wrote it for John F. Kennedy's inauguration — "Before I build a wall I would first like to know who I was walling out and who I was walling in". Of course he said that about the Berlin Wall and that's pretty much gone now. Its the same with systems. The same with Governments. The same with economies. Before I call for throwing out what exists — and I personally did more than just call for it — I would like to know what we choose to put in its place. And, please, I would not like to be told that agriculture in Sri Lanka has to be collectivised. Because the experience not only of Europe, but the new thinking in the Soviet Union of which I am an

keen student has being exactly in the opposite direction. If at all, it is the policies of Nikolai Bukharin, the whole policy of an extended New Economic policy that has been vindicated. I do not want to impose on the people of Sri Lanka, a system in which agriculture will be in a worse crisis than it is now. We won't have food! The World Bank and IMF will cut off credits because of the various other closed economic policies we will adopt and there will be food riots here. We'll call this system Socialism and the working class will also join the anti-systemic rebellion! The last time it was only the JVP against capitalism, a rebellion encompassing broad section of the youth, but this time the working people will also join because they have nothing to eat and they have to wait in queues I am a great admirer of the Cuban Revolution but I must also say that I think buses are more frequent in Sri Lanka today than in Cuba. That's not the fault of the Cubans, that's the fault of the United States embargo. But still, if I am overthrowing this system I want to substitute it with something better for and from the point of view of the majority of the people. And I am speaking as a Marxist-Leninist.

NEW THINKING

So I would want to know, what the real economic options for Sri Lanka are today, in this global and local context. If I am criticising the government, I want to be able to say "Look, this is what I want you to do instead of what you are doing". And please do not say "Join up with the Socialist economic system" because there is no socialist economic system. There is no socialist world economy. Ask Mikhail Gorbachev, I am sure there are many Lankan Leftists who would prefer if President Gorbachev was replaced by a provisional government! Because Gorbachev and new thinking is to them what the Cross was to Dracula! Therefore when I look at the Sri Lankan system today what I see is this: **We have been able to do about**

half of what the Socialist countries want to do. They are headed in the direction of what they call a Planned Commodity Economy or Socialist Market Economy which is part of the international division of labour. Some of that is because they can't get rid of, the 'Socialist' part so quickly, so they call it Socialist Market Economy, but let me tell you, as one who has travelled extensively in those countries they would like very much to have the kind of things in their shops that you can find in any village in Sri Lanka today. Now, this does not mean that the Capitalist system is superior to the Socialist system in all ways and all places. Certainly not. All I am saying is this: Let's not talk of Capitalism and Socialism, in the abstract. Let's say the Socialist system in Cuba today is superior to the Capitalist system in Paraguay. Let's be specific. Let us say the Capitalist system in Belgium today is superior to the so called socialism of Polpot in Kampuchea. Let's be concrete.

I will say that we must head towards some kind of synthesis. Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet Foreign Minister says that his vision of the future is one of a synthesis, in which the best of East and West, of Capitalism and Socialism will be present. So, the socialist countries are headed towards a kind of mixed economy which is a Socialist market economy. We in Sri Lanka have the 'market' side of it albeit with its distortions because of politicisation. I think what we need to do therefore is not abolish it, not put another system in place, which will collapse after a few decades with the people rising up in rebellion, and discredit the notion of socialism. Then we would have to go back to where we started off in the first place. Let us reform this system where the benefits of the market will operate unfettered by political patronage, where appointments will be made on the basis of merit. One of our main objectives should be the installation of a **meritocratic** system. And let us build back the Social welfare safety net. I think that some ef-

forts are being made, rather puny efforts, like Janasaviya and so on. Let's build on those. I would personally prefer a democratic socialism to what exists. But given the balance of forces in our society and polity today that is simply not possible.

Revolution is not possible in every country at every time. I think the only revolution that is possible in Sri Lanka today is the JVP kind of revolution. And I would much rather have a reformed or even an authoritarian capitalism than a revolutionary regime under the JVP. I do not think that the United Socialist Alliance has a chance in the immediate future of assuming power. I mean we haven't been able to put a man in Parliament from the national list, so I think it's really very very funny, when we come out with these grand schemes. Let's first decide on a chap to go to Parliament. Given the balance of forces in our society today, I think it is the SLFP, the MEP and the JVP who have a chance, of forming a government. Given that balance in our polity and given the kind of programmes that they still adhere to, on the economy, on education, on provincial councils, on Sinhala only, on the question of pluralism, I would not like to see them in office. Let me be very frank about that. I think it will be regressive.

I think the system is in very grave crisis, and it is precisely in crises that systems try to restructure because otherwise they will perish. So the system is trying to reform, it's trying to restructure and that is where we of the Left must intervene. Because the system is so badly divided, the ruling party is so divided within itself, the ruling party and the opposition are at such loggerheads, that it is only those of us who do not have a stake in that, who can see the needs of a democratic system as a whole, who can propose and push for healthy reform. This is because we are not part of this or

(Continued on page 18)

SIBERIA REVISITED

*Pity poor Lysenko. Stalin
Finally sent him
Sometime after Solhzenitzn
To the same Auroran Archipelago.*

*Without gaps, in his bio-data
Or taints with invading Huns
Lysenko was not tight lipped.
He had much to confess.
Big sins and little. Major offences
Falsification of data and experiments
Ignoring observations which did not concur
With preconceived notions
Then the little sins
Bad laboratory practice, sloppiness,
Inadequate records, poor authorship, fabrication
Falsification and plagiarism. Deception,
In proposing conducting, or reporting Research.*

*Unconfessed and mystically virgin
Solhzenitzn, fits in,
To the post Stalin scene
Enlightening, like Trotsky, the bright bourgeoisie.
Not so, Lysenko, unredeemed
Except for this recent,
Startling report from the US National Science
Foundation
About an epidemic of major and minor dishonesty
On data handling, infractions of research regulations
(Not unusual, they comment like Tax Evasion,
So common to be almost customary).*

*This will hearten Lysenko,
USNSF reports,
That misconduct is common in the biological Sciences
One expert published 109 papers on heart disease
in three years
And a Nobel Laureate at the M.I.T.
Had to face an investigation into his investigation
Of immuno-mutation in mice.
And a young 36 year psychologist
Had submitted fraudulent research results
For a research grant application
To the National Institute of Medicine*

*What ho, Lysenko (confessed) may still surprise
And emerge posthumous with a Siberian Peace Prize.*

— U. Karunatilake

Peace Zone: Commitments*

Edmund Jayasingha

Having commented on some of the important aspects and preoccupations influencing the present status of the Declaration, I also would like to make a few suggestions that may accelerate progress towards its implementation:

(a) The most important amongst them, as mentioned earlier, is the need for increased co-operation between the super-Powers. A positive contribution to that end would be to list the Indian Ocean as a subject for discussion between them. It is no secret that the key to the solution of many issues before the international community lies in the hands of the super-Powers. This gives them greater responsibility for initiating appropriate action aimed at the resolution of such issues. They should engage constructively in examining ways and means for application of concrete measures that would bring about a greater degree of stability and contribute eventually to the establishment of lasting peace and security. The establishment of a zone of peace is well within this category. Needless to say, the active co-operation of other extra-regional Powers and other States would also be of immense value.

(b) Almost equally important is the firm commitment of the regional States of policies and concrete measures that would promote the prospect of early establishment of zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

These measures, *inter alia*, should include:

(i) Non-interference in a direct or indirect manner in the internal affairs of any State in the region and firm commitment to full respect for political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of these States.

(ii) Non-use of force or threat to use force against any State in the region.

(iii) Commitment to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes.

(iv) Promotion of greater co-operation in the field of economic, social and environmental activities, etc., in the region. The Association of South-East Asian Nations and South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation are welcome developments in this respect.

(v) Firm commitment to non-acquisition of nuclear and other forms of weapons of mass destruction.

(vi) Respect for and compliance with international treaties, conventions, covenants and other agreements that may strengthen the peace, security and stability of the region and the international system as a whole. Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a good example.

(vii) Commitment to the establishment of other forms of zones that may be complementary to the realization of a zone of peace. The proposal for establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia is a good example.

(viii) Initiating precise and meaningful action aimed at the promotion of speedy implementation of the zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. At the national and international levels, priority should be accorded to policies and actions required to achieve this goal. In their bilateral relations with the extraregional Powers and like-minded countries, the regional States should seek active support for the implementation of the Declaration.

(ix) Determined efforts towards gradual dismantling of foreign military bases and other facilities in the territories of the regional States and in the Indian Ocean.

(x) Greater reliance on multilateral arrangements, particularly on the concept of collective security in the resolution of political, economic and social problems in the region, with the aim of ushering in a greater degree of stability. The establishment of a zone of peace should form an important part of this overall policy.

(c) There are also some important general measures that may be complementary to the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. These measures should be taken by the international community as a whole or individual States outside the region, as applicable. Such measures may include:

(i) Greater injection of development-oriented assistance into the region, including the provision of favourable terms of trade and removal of other economic barriers that have retarded the economic and social development of the States in the Region.

(ii) Accession to international treaties, conventions and covenants and other agreements that may create an international and regional atmosphere conducive to the realization of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region. For example, strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its international legal regime would provide a very healthy atmosphere for establishment of peace zones in various regions of the world.

(iii) Acknowledgement of the fact that bilateralism and

* This is the concluding part of a U.N. speech by Sri Lanka's Deputy Permanent Representative. The first part appeared on April 1st.

multilateralism should not compete with each other but should be complementary and should work in parallel in the search for solutions to regional and international issues

(iv) Commitment to the validity of the widely accepted

view of the establishment of zones of peace as measures that could contribute immensely to the maintenance of international peace and security. In this respect, States should lend their active support to efforts for the establishment of such zones, in particular for the estab-

lishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region.

* * *

Action aimed at the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean has been confined by and large to the

(Continued on Page 15)

Letter

Two groups of Tamils

In his insulting letter (L.G. of May 1) Sachi Sri Kantha writes that he was flabbergasted by my conclusion that the Tamil Nadu and Sri Lankan Tamils are distinct ethnic groups. He need not have been had he understood the two quotations he himself provides, both of which could accommodate my conclusion. Thereafter he proceeds to state that my conclusion is ridiculous as the two groups of Tamils belong to the same racial group and speak the same language.

Obviously he is unaware of the controversy that has been raging for years over the question of what exactly constitutes an ethnic group. There are scores of definitions, and some scholars have even taken to arguing that there is no such thing as ethnicity. A vast body of literature on ethnicity has accumulated since the early seventies when historians, sociologists and others became really serious about ethnicity as a subject of scholarly enquiry. If Sri Kantha consults some of that literature, he will soon find that the consensus is against his simplistic notion that ethnicity is constituted just by race and language. For instance, Joseph Rothschild writes in his *Ethnopolitics* that language, religion, pigmentation, or tribe are primordial markers that are necessary but not sufficient for the consolidation of ethnic groups.

Let me explain. The Spanish of Latin America are of the same race, and share the same language and religion, but because of their different histories in different Latin American countries they have come to be culturally differentiated over the centuries and can be regarded as consisting of several distinct ethnic groups. So, can, say, the Arabs of Iraq and Syria. Consider also the fact that the Swiss Germans and the Germans of the two Germanies, or the Swiss French and the French of France, share commonalities of language and race but are all the same regarded as belonging to distinct ethnic groups. This point applies also to the Tamils of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu. That my view is far from ridiculous, and acceptable at least to some Dravidians, is shown by the quotation at the end of paragraph three of my paper. It is from the *Peace Trap* by P. S. Suriyanarayana who argued that there is no "symbolic cultural kinship" between the two groups of Tamils.

It might interest Sri Kantha to know one of the two discussants of my paper was Professor K. Sivathamby of Jaffna University, who acknowledged that my distinction between the two groups of Tamils was correct in an "anthropological sense" but he thought I had pushed the distinction too far. He is too much of a scho-

lar to make himself ridiculous by arguing that my distinction is invalid simply because the two groups belong to the same racial group and speak the same language.

I must say I am non-plussed by Sri Kantha's rigmarole about M.G.R. He writes that M.G.R. died in December 1987, and seems to imagine that for that reason I am wrong about M.G.R. and the Tamil Nadu Government having failed to react against the I.P.K.F.-L.T.T.E. fighting. But that fighting erupted weeks before M.G.R.'s death. It erupted in October 1987, as I wrote plainly in my paper. Sri Kantha seems to be ignorant of that fact, or he chooses to ignore it. As far as I am aware, it has never been seriously disputed before that the L.T.T.E. was disappointed that the AIADMK had not exerted pressure on Delhi to stop the fighting.

He makes the point that as M.G.R. died in December 1987, he would have had to rise from his grave to counter Karunanidhi's politicking in February 1988. At least on that point I am in total agreement with Sri Kantha, as I myself wrote in my paper that when Janaki was Chief Minister in January 1988 she was the "widow of M.G.R."

Izeth Hussain

Colombo 7.

The Israeli Issue

— a Sri Lankan Muslim view

Izeth Hussain

After making some preliminary observations on the significance of the I.I.S. closure I am offering an adapted version of the talk I gave prior to the closure, with my arguments for the such a closure. These arguments may now seem of academic interest only. But they could be regarded as having a special interest in relation to our ethnic problems as I was articulating a specifically Sri Lankan Muslim viewpoint. As a Muslim, my basic concern was not the Palestinians or the Israelis as such, but the unsatisfactory position of the community here. This article is therefore written in the first person singular as a Muslim.

According to our Foreign Ministry's communique the I. I. S. closure was in consequence of an election pledge made by President Premadasa. The U.N.P. Parliamentarian Mr. Azwer subsequently claimed that the President had pledged at Kalmunai that "All the forces that exist in Sri Lanka and work against the aspirations of the Muslim community will be sent away after I come to power."

It seems more than probable that the Muslim factor was not the only determinant behind the President's decision. Obviously the national interest required that account be taken also of the importance of maintaining the friendliest relations possible with India. A continued Israeli presence here will be totally incompatible with any degree of friendship with India, for reasons that will be given later.

It is known also that, apart from the Muslims, others too have been agitating for the I.I.S. closure. It appears that all the opposition parties, with the singular exception of the Liberal

Party, have been in favour of the closure. The media has not adequately reflected this broad consensus as it was only the Lanka Guardian editor who over the years utilized his magazine, as well as newspaper columns, to expose the enormity of what was being perpetrated against the Palestinians and to promote an informed understanding of the issues involved in the Palestine problem. The Muslims have to be grateful to their non-Muslim compatriots who campaigned against the I.I.S.

All the same the President's decision is particularly gratifying for the Muslims, more particularly for the U.N.P. Muslims who have been embarrassed for decades over their support for the notoriously pro-Israeli U.N.P. Their embarrassment increased immeasurably when the former President told a group of U. N. P. Muslim notables that if they didn't like the I. I. S., they could leave. Muslims recall that not long after a newspaper published a remark about the possibility of another "1983" taking place. And they recall further that after the 1983 riots there had been a "letter-campaign" informing the Muslims that they were next on the list for the chopping-block. Muslims gained the impression that U. N. P. devotion to Israel was so great that should any Muslim dare to raise questions about the I.I.S., he would be summarily shown the door. And worse might follow. It is not being assumed here that the Muslims were justified in drawing such conclusions. It is regrettable, however, that euphoria over the opening of the I.I.S. appears to have gone so far as to make the 1977 Government forget that the Muslim minority, like any minority anywhere in the world, can easily become paranoid.

The significance that the Muslims now attribute to the closure of the I.I.S. has to be viewed in the context of developments over its opening. Muslim supporters of the U.N.P. are known paradoxically to bewail the fact that under the U.N.P., unlike under the S.L.F.P., "We are taken for granted" a well-known phrase in Muslim circles for decades. They also came to feel that they were held in contempt after the opening of the I.I.S. Not surprising at all, in my view, as pro-Israeli attitudes usually go together with contemptuousness towards Muslims. The I.I.S. closure has enormous significance for the U.N.P. Muslims.

The closure should be viewed also in relation to the new Muslim consciousness. It was manifested in the spectacular emergence of the S.L.M.C. It was also manifested in the spontaneity of the Eastern province rioting after the I.I.S. opening. And yet another manifestation is the present article. As this is not the place to explore this subject fully, I will merely state that a greater sense of alienation from other ethnic groups than in the past, on the part of a community which has traditionally tended to hold itself apart, is a function of the new Muslim consciousness. The I.I.S. closure, backed as it is by all the political parties except for one, could perhaps help in lessening that sense of alienation. This is so important a matter that even anti-U.N.P. Muslims, while refusing to dishonour their political allegiances, must at least on this occasion join the ranks of Tuscany and raise three loud cheers for President Premadasa.

I now proceed to give an adapted version of my talk. I explained that my perspective

(The writer was Sri Lanka's Ambassador in the Philippines)

on the Israeli problem in Sri Lanka had changed consequent to a discussion I had with the Philippine Foreign Minister at the time of the I.I.S. opening. Referring to a Philippine newspaper account of the Eastern Province rioting, he expressed bewilderment. Was there not a fairly appreciable Muslim minority in Sri Lanka, and was not I myself a Muslim? So why the I.I.S.? (I must remark in parenthesis at this point that the Philippine Muslims are 4% and the Sri Lankan Muslims are 7.7% of the population. I must mention also that the pre-Aquino Philippine was widely regarded as an American satellite which had no option but to allow an Israeli Embassy in Manila). I explained to him the 1977 Government's rationalization on the subject, and proceeded to say that I had the impression that the Israeli Embassy in Manila was not particularly active. His reply surprised me. It was that the Embassy was not meant to be active at all, as he himself had told the Israeli Ambassador some years earlier that his Embassy should be inactive as the Israeli presence in Manila was offensive to "our Muslims." It struck me that his formulation "our Muslims" was revelatory of very different attitudes from what prevails in Sri Lanka towards the Sri Lankan Muslims. The few details I have given earlier about developments, after the I.I.S. opening show very clearly that there was absolutely no question of the views of "our Muslims" on Israel being even heard by the 1977 Government, let alone being given appropriate weight as in the Philippines.

I gathered subsequently that there had been no public furor, no anguished letters to the editor, no carefully orchestrated campaign, over the induction to the Israeli Embassy to keep quiet. The average Filipino, it appears, couldn't care less whether the Israeli Embassy was active, hyperactive, or totally inactive. Filipinos were neither anti-Israeli, nor pro-Israeli, nor

for that matter were they pro-Palestinian except for radical students, the left-wing, and of course the Mindanao Muslims. An exception was one of the Philippines best writers who once a year published a blistering brilliantly devastating attack on Israel. His fellow intellectuals, I found, were perplexed by the phenomenon of Christian Filipino who got so worked up on behalf of the Palestinians. Christian Filipinos simply cannot bother about Israel or Palestine, but for them their Mindanao Muslims are "our Muslims" whose view certainly counted against Israel.

I could not identify any Filipino who was pro-Israeli, that is to say anyone with the deep emotional commitment to Israel shown by some Sri Lankans. This raises the important question as to why some Sri Lankans are so strongly pro-Israeli, a question that seems important to me if only for the reason that our pro-Israelis had earlier been at the commanding heights of the U.N.P. The Muslim Sri Lankan is pro-Palestinian because of the Islamic bond, but our pro-Israeli Sri Lankan is an oddity because he is not a Jew. The usual explanation is that he is pro-Israeli because he is pro-Western. But you cannot find comparable pro-Israelis in the Philippines whose pro-Western, or more precisely pro-American, attitudes are widespread. Besides, Westerners themselves have been becoming less and less enamoured of Israel, so that it no longer makes sense to say that someone is pro-Israeli because he is pro-Western. It is to be expected, of course, that the pro-Western Afro-Asian will generally be tolerant of Israel's outrageous behaviour. But I am writing here of something quite different, the bizarre phenomenon of the Sri Lankan who has an intense commitment to Israel, so intense that he becomes logically incoherent when he writes his letters to the editor, betraying prejudice against Muslims and in at least one case an obvious contempt for Sri Lanka.

I argued in my talk that in trying to explain this pheno-

menon we have to ask ourselves firstly what Israel signifies internationally. Why was it that the 1967 Arab-Israel war provoked such intense reactions polarising humanity globally, and not just between Muslims and non-Muslims? I must go into some detail on this subject as the background to the Palestine problem is not generally known to the average Sri Lankan, the data being available in books and not usually in our media.

Theodore Herzl, regarded as the progenitor of Israel, became renowned for his epigrammatic pronouncement that Palestine was "A land without people for people without a land." He would have been perfectly well aware that according to the 1880 census there were 24,000 Jews out of a total population of 500,000 in Palestine. Far from being a land without people, there were Palestinians in Palestine by the hundred thousand, the descendants of non-Jews who were in Palestine before Moses led the Jews into the Promised Land. We have to wonder whether it was downright mendacity on the part of Herzl, in the hope of misleading Westerners, or whether the explanation was the racism of a European Jew who just could not bring himself to regard those coloured Palestinian natives as human beings. Such racist attitudes were a commonplace in the late nineteenth century Europe of Herzl. I referred in my talk to the white American missionary who had said that there were together with him in a boat, a man, an Indian, and a dog, revealing that he could not regard a Red Indian as a human being. There is also the case of former Israel: Premier Golda Meir who said in 1973 that Israel had not thrown out the Palestinian people and taken away their country because "They do not exist." If the Palestinians are not Palestinian people, then what on earth are they? Is it that Mrs. Meir had a racist mental block which forbade her recognizing the Palestinians as "people", as

human beings. One has to wonder also about Sri Lankan letters to the editor which persistently claim that "only" Israel helped Sri Lanka over the Eelam problem, whereas it is quite well known that so did Pakistan. Is it that Pakistanis are not fully human, or is it that help is meaningful only if it comes from whites such as Israelis?

Westerners are loth to associate Israel with racism because the Jews were themselves the victims of the racist Nazi holocaust. But Westerners must try to understand that racism is simply a variant of group prejudice which is a constant in all human groups, and that any group can turn racist depending on the situation in which it finds itself. That seems to have happened with Israel. One Westerner who recognized the Palestinian problem as at least partly a colour problem was George Orwell, a writer of dazzling insight and fearless integrity, who wrote in 1946 "The Labour Party, and the Left generally, is very strongly committed to support the Jews against the Arabs, largely because it is only the Jewish case that ever gets a hearing in England. Few English people realize that the Palestinian issue is partly a colour issue and that an Indian nationalist, for instance, would probably ride with the Arabs." Orwell was absolutely right. An Indian nationalist, Gandhi, wrote the following in 1931: "It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. The mandates have no sanction but that of the last war. Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home."

Orwell's point certainly applies to the UN Partition Plan of 1947, giving 55% of the land to the 33% Jewish population, which was adopted in blatant contravention of the UN's own

Charter principle of self-determination. That would have been unthinkable if not for the fact that the UN at that time was dominated by the whites. A white people, the European Jews, were being benefitted at the expense of a coloured people, the Palestinians. It is interesting that the US had trouble coercing its Latin American satellites over the U.N. vote, as perhaps they were recalcitrant because they were of duskier hue than the European and American masters of the UN. At least one representative of a US satellite, Carlos Romulo, lost his post temporarily because of his recalcitrance. Even though he was an abject devotee of everything American from the cradle to the grave, he was still a coloured man, and very probably therefore he could not stomach what was being done to a coloured people at the U.N. Orwell was surely right.

It should not be surprising that it is frequently alleged that the European Ashkenazim Jews, who are in a dominant position in Israel, discriminate against the oriental Sephardim Jews. Very probably there are the usual group prejudices in Israel as elsewhere. But it is questionable whether the relative backwardness of the Sephardim Jews can be explained in terms of racist discrimination, as economic and other performance is determined so largely by cultural factors. However, there is no getting over the fact that the intimate links Israel established with apartheid South Africa, outraging black Africa and the American blacks, was a blatant manifestation of the racist reality of Israel.

Before trying to understand what Israel signifies internationally, we must also take into account the manner in which it was established. The Jews are a religio-cultural and not a racial category, and it is questionable therefore whether the ancestors of many contemporary Jews ever were in Pales-

tine. The brown Jews of India and of the Arab world may claim a "right of return." but one wonders about the black Jews of Ethiopia and even more about the white Jews of America and Europe. Arthur Koestler, himself a Jew, argued in a book that the European Jews are the descendants of the converted Jews of Khazaristan, a state which existed in the lower Volga from the eighth to the tenth centuries. The Khazars were a Turco-Mongoloid people who never at any time inhabited Palestine. It was the European Jews who established Israel, and in doing so they followed the age-old practice of going into a territory and driving out the natives, or reducing them to serfdom or second-class status, or subjecting them to genocide: That it was an age-old practice is suggested by our own Vijaya-Kuveni legend, and that is how the Latin American states, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and apartheid South Africa were established in the era of European domination. That way of establishing a state became impermissible by the end of the nineteenth century. What is peculiar about Israel, as pointed out by Maxime Rodinson, a Jew who wrote one of the best books on the Arab-Israel problem, is that it was established in the mid-twentieth century by methods which had come to be widely regarded as outrageous.

I will now deal with the question of what Israel signifies internationally, dealing firstly with the significance it has had for the West before turning to the peculiar problem posed by the pro-Israeli Sri Lankan. It is obviously incorrect to say that Israel simply signifies the return of a people, the Jews, to their ancestral land. The difficulty is that Israel denies the right of another people, the Palestinians, to establish their state in the land of their ancestors, and behind that denial all sorts of complexes are involved as suggested in the above excuses on

Israel and its founding. The details in the excuses suggest that what Israel has signified internationally is white, or more specifically Western white, domination over natives. And that is why it has been upsetting people all over the world not just the Muslims.

Some Westerners did balk at the methods used for the creation of Israel, but they were fiercely committed to Israel all the same, quite unlike Afro-Asians in general. We must remember that at the time Israel was established in had late forties decolonization the not really got going, the French, the Dutch, the Spanish, the Portuguese, still being against it. Perhaps what Herzl wrote in 1896 about his proposed Jewish state was still relevant: "We should therefore form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism." I can understand what Trotsky, another Jew, meant when he described Herzl as "a repulsive figure." Perhaps not many Westerners could have in the late forties.

But in the four decades since the Western attitudes to Israel and the Palestinians have changed radically consequent to certain global changes. Decolonization has been practically completed and the resistance to domination of Non-Alignment to a hundred countries, as well as in European de-alignment. Racism has been diminishing in the West, even to the extent that the brutal kicking down of one human group by another, of which racism is just one form, seems to be worse in Afro-Asia than in the West. With such changes Western attitudes to Israel and the Palestinians had also to change.

The Arab-Israel war of 1967 appeared to confirm, and perhaps even strengthen, Herzlian white supremacist attitudes, though there were of course dissentient voices such as those of de Gaulle in France who

provoked a storm by speaking of Israeli "arrogance", of Bertrand Russell and Tounbee in England, and of Fullbright and George Ball in the U. S. But the Yom Kippur War of 1973 produced really significant changes. As Christopher Mayhew and Michael Adams note in their book "Publish it Not," before 1973 it was rare to find in a European magazine or newspaper, and refer still in an American publication, an article giving serious consideration to Palestinian claims, while after 1973 most of the serious papers became well-balanced in their handling of Arab-Israeli affairs. Probably the changing attitudes were due to several specific factors operating in the context of global changes outlined earlier. The spectacular Egyptian crossing of the Canal in 1973 shocked may Westerners into an awareness of the possible military vulnerability of Israel in the future. The Arab oil-weapon also helped in changing Western consciousness. And the Palestinians came to be seen as a distinct people who were not to be grouped with the Arabs, a point that was convincingly demonstrated when Jordan's King Hussein subjected them to the Black September massacre. Most important, the West was coming to accept that while the Israelis had established their right to a state, the Palestinians too had to be given their state.

The Intifada, the heroic uprising of the Palestinian people, seems to have further changed Western attitudes over the last two years. The 2nd December 1989 issue of the Economist (London) carried an interesting editorial about changes in the U. S. "Although support for Israel is deeply entrenched in the American Congress, it is based rather more than it used to be on the lobbying power of American Jews, rather less on a conviction that Israel is in the right." After pointing out that Premier Shamir had encountered more embarrassment than warmth

on his Washington visit in November, the editorial proceeded, "If Israel continues to shoot Palestinian civilians, and reject the compromise of partition, the embarrassment may eventually fade into indifference. The Intifada may not push Israel out of the West Bank; but it will have inflicted a far deeper wound on Israel if it makes the West turn its back on the Jewish state."

(To be continued)

Peace Zone. . .

(Continued from page 11)

United Nations. Very little has happened outside this forum. The time has come to examine what other action the community of nations could initiate to generate greater momentum for the efforts of the States directly concerned to bring into focus the importance of the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

As mentioned by the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Indian Ocean, the United Nations is now engaged in the consideration of procedural and substantive matters that are connected with the holding of the Colombo Conference. The Committee has been able to agree on most of the procedural aspects in the course of its preparatory work and is now engaged in identifying and elaborating a set of issues and principles that may eventually get into a Final Document that could be adopted by the Colombo Conference. These issues and principles attempt to address the political, military, economic, social and other interests of the countries within and outside the region. Thus, they are issues and principles which directly or indirectly influence the self-interest of States and the implementation of the Declaration.

This gathering may wish to seize the opportunity to comment on this issue, as such comments will be of immense value in future efforts for their elaboration.

S W R D: Sir Solomon's Son*

Reggie Siriwardena

Posturing and humourless, it is a deadly self-exposure of personal vanity:

"I suppose, in my own small way, I am one of those unfortunate beings who are driven by destiny. In passing, I may say that I have a deep sympathy for the much harrassed, but pious, Aeneas. Not for such is a life of quiet or happiness or the enjoyment of the ordinary pleasures of men. As a boy at school, as an undergraduate at Oxford, and now in the wider arena of life, I have ever been conscious of some task I had to perform, of the need for striving and effort that appears to have no end, but rather to increase in the widening circle of a ripple on the surface of a pool. But there is also a part of me that longs for ease and quiet. Sometimes I yearn with a fierce yearning for the calm content of a priest, sheltered in his cloistered temple, or the care-free happiness of some jungle-dweller with the singing of the birds about him and the blue sky above him, or even the humdrum life of the average man with its small troubles. But, also! it cannot be."

Equally self-betraying are his expressions of belief in his intellectual superiority, as when during his Prime ministership he spoke of his wish to retire and write a historical novel — "something like *War and Peace*." This conviction of superiority was no doubt intensified by the mediocrities who surrounded him in this period of his life and activity. "When a bumbling Cabinet colleague once quoted man of letters in a speech to a public meeting, Bandaranaike turned to a journalist and said, 'You see, some of my ministers actually read books.'"

What is of concern to the student of politics, however, is how the character formed by Bandaranaike's early family

life manifested itself in politics. Manor argues that his relations with his father shaped his subsequent dealings with authority. When Bandaranaike returned from Oxford in 1925, his father put on a show appropriate to a conquering hero. He was met at the jetty by a large family crowd and taken to All Saints Church for a thanksgiving service. "A few days later," writes Manor, "he was driven to the estate at Horagolla, the last three miles in procession headed by a number of caparisoned elephants and attended by dancers and music". At the boundaries of the estate, he was met by 'a mammoth crowd' gathered round gorgeous pandals where he 'was received with respectful obeisances' and presented with florid and obsequious addresses by local villagers. Then, on the lawn before the great house, there followed performances by beasts from Sir Solomon's private menagerie, a school sports meet, devil dances and fireworks." However, in answer to the speeches of welcome, Bandaranaike, much to his father's displeasure, said, "If fate has decreed for me a prominent place among you, it is not that I may be your master but that I may be your servant." He declined an allowance from his father, moved into a town house where he supported himself by his earnings at the Bar, and decided, again in opposition to his father's wishes, to take to a political career. However, when he fought his first political battle, at the Municipal Council election for the Maradana ward in 1926 against the formidable A. E. Goonesinha, Bandaranaike depended on his father both to persuade the sitting member A. E. de Silva (later Sir Ernest), to stand down, and to use his influence with one of the powerful Muslims in the ward to secure their support.

Manor's argument is that this pattern of alternating rebellion

and dependence in relation to his father was the prototype that foreshadowed his future behaviour towards figures who represented higher authority. He records three such relationships in Bandaranaike's later political life. One is in the first State Council, where as backbencher he first castigated the Board of Ministers, and then, when he was slapped down by Jayatilaka and Senanayake, shifted to an attitude of submission and became the defender of the Ministers against outside criticism. The second occasion was when in wartime he clashed with Governor Caldecott. To the Governor's lack of co-operation with the Board of Ministers on the immigration issue, he reacted violently, making a personal attack on Caldecott, pouring scorn on British war aims, and imposing a ban on local bodies making contributions to war funds. Caldecott replied by writing to Bandaranaike to say that these actions were inconsistent with his ministerial office. Apparently fearing dismissal, Bandaranaike backed down. That by itself might merely have signified that in the absence of a militant nationalist movement, Bandaranaike would have recognised his isolation. But what followed tends to support Manor's theory of a pattern in his behaviour where rebellion was followed by submission. He made another 'dramatic turn-about' as in the earlier case, and 'assumed the role of Governor's champion in the Board of Ministers'.

The third and perhaps most significant example of this syndrome was his relationship with D. S. Senanayake in the post-independence Cabinet. Between 1949 and 1951 Bandaranaike pressed within the U.N.P. government a number of mainly nationalist issues which were turned down by Senanayake and the rest of the Cabinet. Moreover, there occurred several incidents which seemed designed

* This is the second part of JAMES MANOR's recently published biography.

to humiliate Bandaranaike and push him into resignation. Yet even when his usually docile followers in the Sinhala Maha Sabha pushed for confrontation, Bandaranaike temporised. He took the final step of resignation in July 1951 only when Senanayake had left him with virtually no alternative.

Those who reject the projection of personal psychology into the study of political behaviour may find Manor's Erikson-style analysis unacceptable. However, Manor has a strong point because he can find confirmation in Bandaranaike's own words. In his resignation speech in Parliament in 1951, Bandaranaike began by comparing his break with Senanayake with his decision in 1926 to take to politics against his father's wishes. Of that earlier step he said, "I was faced with a most difficult decision involving not only personal relations with those whom I would not wish to displease but also certain sacrifices and hardships for myself. It would seem that I am faced with a similar decision once again now." He went on to say of his resignation, "I have conquered myself."

The discussion of Bandaranaike's attitude to authority leads naturally to the question of how he exercised it when he attained the position of head of the government. But I think it is necessary to preface this part of my review with a consideration of Bandaranaike's political philosophy. For this purpose I wish to cite two quotations from Bandaranaike himself. The first is on the subject of truth:

"Whatever may be the eternal verities, truth itself is in many ways a relative thing. What is true today may not have been true yesterday, and may not be true tomorrow. What is true for one person need not necessarily be true for another. Very often, the whole truth lies neither entirely on one side, nor on the other.

It is very often, a rather puzzling compound of many things."

The second quotation is on the subject of social change, and was made in a parliamentary speech when Bandaranaike still sat on the UNP front bench. It may therefore be taken to have been intended to mark his differences with Senanayake on the one hand and the left on the other:

"I feel that I am in my own small way both a nurse and a midwife. I am a nurse at a deathbed. I realize at least that the thing is dying. I would like to see, as should be the case at every deathbed, that the death is reasonably peaceful and dignified. It shocks me equally that anyone should try artificially to galvanize the dying thing into life and that anyone should place his hand at the throat of the dying thing and squeeze out the life that is already fast ebbing.

"I am also, I feel, a midwife at a birth. I would like that birth to be auspicious and painless as far as possible... I am not impatient to drag the living thing before its time out of the womb with instruments and bring forth to the world something grotesque and distorted. I am also not prepared to strangle that life in its womb."

When Bandaranaike used his metaphor of the midwife, he was probably borrowing and transforming Marx's application of it in his famous aphorism, "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with the new." He was, in other words, rejecting the forceps of revolution. But in his casting of himself in the role of both nurse and midwife, and in the way in which he conceptualises these roles, there is a devaluation of the task of political leadership. Change is seen as an organic process that is already taking place and will in-

evitably be consummated in society; the function of the leader is only to create the conditions under which that process can be completed naturally and peacefully. Such a conception excludes both the choice of social goals as well as guidance and direction by leadership in the process of change. This becomes all the clearer when combined with the agnosticism in respect of truth declared in the other passage. If 'truth' itself is so indeterminate and many-sided, what else is there for leadership to do but let social forces express themselves freely and work out their own directions?

I don't want to deny that there are certain attractive features in such a political position, if one compares it with that of a Pol Pot or a Wijeweera who is dogmatically convinced of the infallibility of his own political model and wishes to impose it by force on society. But the record of Bandaranaike's premiership is a demonstration on the other hand of the disastrous consequences of his abdication of the legitimate and necessary tasks of leadership in a democratic society. I cannot go here into every aspect of this weakness — what Manor calls his "general and quite astonishing tendency to 'make' unwarranted concessions to almost any groups that demanded them". But the most costly manifestation of this habit was in the ethnic conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils.

Bandaranaike had begun by endorsing in all sincerity the general consensus among political leaders of the mid-forties onwards for equality of official status between Sinhala and Tamil. During his phase as an internal opposition within the UNP Cabinet, he urged — quite correctly — that nothing was being done to replace English in its official functions by both national languages. When in the mid 1950s linguis-

tic nationalism surfaced among the Sinhala-speaking middle classes and a few intellectuals who spearheaded their cause, they didn't think originally of Bandaranaike as their potential leader. This was natural in view of the contradictions in Bandaranaike's image and public behaviour. Although he had wooed these same social groups through the Sinhala Maha Sabha from 1937 onwards, he also projected a distinctly anglicised and elite personality — a contradiction that was to persist to the end of his days. Manor records how in 1938 he appeared in national dress at a public meeting and condemned the adoption of English customs, but within a fortnight was photographed 'wearing a western suit alongside his greyhound Billy Micawber, winner of six prizes at the Kennel Club dog show'. He also relates how on assuming the Premiership Bandaranaike substituted, at the weekly press conference-cum-breakfast, kiribath for Sir John's egg hoppers, but spoilt the effect by himself eating the symbolically national food with a spoon. I should like to add to these anecdotes one not told by Manor but derived from my own experience in the parliamentary press gallery after 1956. As Prime Minister, Bandaranaike was once involved in heated cross-talk with Robert Gunawardena. The argument was in English, and Robert at one point said something that was rather inelegant grammar. Bandaranaike turned on him in withering scorn and said, "Why don't you speak a language you understand? Speak Sinhalese!" His tones left no doubt that this was a language fit only for the lower orders. The Prime Minister must have recollected himself later, for when Hansard came out, it didn't report the remark.

So it was not to Bandaranaike that the Sinhala nationalists first went in 1955 when they wanted a charismatic politician to espouse their cause

but to Dudley Senanayake. It was only after Dudley turned them down that they fell back on Bandaranaike. When the SLFP responded to this offer by passing its resolution on language policy in September 1955, Bandaranaike framed it in a form that was much more liberal than the later 1956 Act, and in fact approximated to the present-day regional solution. "Sinhala would be the language used by all courts, government offices and local boards 'except in the Northern and Eastern Provinces where the language should be Tamil.'" From then onwards, Bandaranaike, in keeping with his practice of yielding to articulate pressure groups, steadily gave way to chauvinist demands for pure 'Sinhala only'. The final and most shameful surrender was the abrogation of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact in response to group of monks who squatted outside his house at Rosmead Place. Let me quote Manor:

"He (Bandaranaike) drove to the radio station and announced to the nation that the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact was dissolved. He then returned home and informed the bhikkus of the announcement, but they demanded a declaration in writing. He refused, saying that it was unnecessary, and still they insisted. He then consented, but before they took their leave the bhikkus' leader added further humiliation by asking that the Federal Party be banned, that demonstrators among the estate Tamils be sent back to India and that Tamil lettering be deleted from the official stamp that government employees used on correspondence. The premier explained that he had the power only to accomplish the last of these, and promised to do so."

This and similar episodes have a bearing on the paradox summed up in the title that Manor has chosen for his biography, *The Expedient Utopian*.

I am not sure whether 'utopian' is the most appropriate word in this context to relate to Bandaranaike's inchoate liberalism. But the combination between this and his quite evident readiness to compromise his principles in the face of political necessity can probably be explained in part by the political philosophy that I have already described. Perhaps Bandaranaike saw no inconsistency between the two because his brand of populism was dependent on the assumption that whenever supposedly popular forces asserted themselves, authority should bend before them.

Next: SWRD and ethnic violence.

UNP, JVP . . .

(Continued from page 9)

that faction. We are relatively autonomous of them. That is the only realistic role for the Left. Or else we must destabilise the system through strikes and what not, which will only help those with the guns, the JVP and the military. Because power is a serious business. Just because we hit the streets, when there are armed vanguards like the JVP and the military. I don't think we can preempt them and take power. Therefore I think, that is the task of all of us today and this task presupposes that there is a commonality. Because for me, today, in Sri Lanka and in fact in the world — here I agree with Gorbachev — there are things beyond the contradiction between capitalism and socialism, between 'right' and 'left', beyond bourgeoisie and proletariat. There are common problems in the world, of peace, the environment, of debt (as Fidel Castro has pointed out). So also in Sri Lanka. All these tasks that we have been discussing are those which cannot be discharged by the Left alone or by the opposition and in fact requires a concerted effort of the rational, democratic, modernist sections within government and opposition; in politics and outside of politics; in civil society as a whole.

Perestroika is a new Lenin to us

Mikhail Gorbachev

Humanity needs a genius at all times, and every era presents his new features to us. This is how a genius differs from ordinary people.

Perestroika is revealing a new Lenin to us. It has once again placed his personality and his political and theoretical legacy into the vortex of political and ideological struggle, where the socialist content of Perestroika is at stake.

Lenin made a unique contribution to the development and practical implementation of the socialist idea — an idea which marches on through all the trials and tribulations of this dramatic century. If not for Lenin and the October Revolution, we would be unable now to give a new treatment to the global questions of the criteria of progress and of human beings as values into themselves.

The world of Lenin is boundless and spreads into all spheres of human life, of the human community in all its manifestations. It involves the situations, roles and destinies of all social classes and strata — workers, farmers, intellectuals, women, the youth. Nothing is alien to his world, from everyday cares to vital political issues, from basic morals to law and order in a state, from political tactics to the philosophical treatment of global processes.

Whatever features of this world I choose to highlight in this address, it will be only a partial analysis of a vast matter.

Now we see that the tremendous wealth of Lenin's heritage requires comprehensive, not selective studies.

The method of his rationing, his dialectical approach to all issues, and the turning points of his historic activity

have an eternal purport and are especially important to us today.

Endowed with a vast knowledge of his time, Lenin penetrated the secret workings of social patterns. He, the greatest thinker of the 20th century, is with us.

He is with us as an exemplary politician, who never used his power in the interests of a group, let alone to his own selfish ends. Whatever turn the political and other events took, he never forgot the interests of the people — the thing that mattered most.

He is with us, a revolutionary capable of resolute steps in incredibly difficult situations — when a country is on the threshold of revolution, and hesitates to cross that threshold, when the mammoth grassroots force is coming to the surface, and may reveal its creative potential to enrich history or, on the contrary may act as a destructive element.

Lenin precisely evaluated the motive forces of history. His policies pursued both distant and immediate goals. This is why he influenced history.

His dialectical potential in politics and theory was of special value in transition periods, when situations changed apace. He saw all factors, with their mutual contradictions, and discerned the main trend behind them. He foresaw all possible developments and drew up effective policies on their basis. This was a sublime art which we must study.

We are celebrating the 120th anniversary of his birth at a critical stage in Perestroika, when change has brought our community to a crucial point.

Perestroika has become our life. It made us reappraise many things in our past and present. We are looking back to the sources of our great revolution

to realise what kind of society has emerged from it and why we need another revolution of no less importance for our country and the world.

Now it is essential to make these points clear, when Perestroika is entering the history of the 20th century as an event to which the standards of major social revolutions are to be applied.

However, as the historical impact and social essence of Perestroika are being evaluated, destructive approaches to Lenin have come into the foreground. These trends are dangerous because they are simplistic and use the methods of the "concise history of the Communist Party," though for a contrasting purpose. They are aimed at identifying Lenin with Stalin and can paint all Soviet history black to portray the October Revolution and the ensuing events as errors and, even worse, as crimes against the nation and humanity.

Such attacks on Lenin strengthen conservative trends in the Communist Party and society, as the covert enemies of Perestroika make use of the chance to pose as defenders of Leninism — the way they see it.

True, we must reappraise Lenin's theoretical and political legacy, put an end to idolatry and discard misrepresentations. We must draw a dividing line in his legacy between what wholly belongs to the past and what shall remain in the intellectual and cultural treasury of our community to spur on its progress.

But disrespect is out of place here. Philistine slander of Lenin as man is immoral, and attempts to cast aspersions on his noble goals and aspirations are absurd.

It is high time to put an end to the absurd idolization of Lenin. Now we know its aim too well. But we are re-

Speech in honour of V. I. Lenin on 120th Birth Anniversary.

solutely up against the desecration of his memory, whatever form it takes in this country or abroad.

The sooner we discard simplistic attitudes to Lenin, the better we shall see his grandeur and the extent to which his legacy is topical and essential for us. This is a difficult task, because decades were spent making an idol of Lenin — we know for what policy and ideology. But to give up the true image of Lenin under the pretext of shattering the idol means to rob the hearts and minds of the coming generations and undermine the very basis of our state and community.

To defend Lenin does not mean to make a religious cult. As we defend him, we defend our achievements, our quest and our socialist future.

Lenin's era, with its storms, antagonisms, heroism and drama, has receded into the past. Now we must study it, free from lies and myths. It is edifying knowledge, necessary to form the political and ethical culture of our community, to imbue it with genuine patriotism and internationalism based on education and conviction.

Lenin detested highflown talk about patriotism. He left us unsurpassed political and moral examples of true patriotism and internationalism going hand in hand. He was dead set against national arrogance and chauvinism. When he felt it was necessary, he wrote his famous article about the national pride of great Russians (collected works, vol 21, pp. 102-106).

An intellectual of noble birth Lenin was part of the people. He never saw the working people as clay from which anything could be sculptured, nor as objects of philanthropy, revolution and socialism, the way he saw them, arose due to the creativity of the masses.

This was Lenin's fundamental idea. We see its import with particular clarity today, as we seek to implement it, as perestroika aroused the entire

community from its slumber. New social patterns are taking shape, and ever new problems come to the fore. Old patterns can no longer solve them.

Still we hear reproaches: the Party launched Perestroika without a detailed long-term plan. Some say that our order of priorities is wrong. Others are nostalgic for the old ways, when reality was squeezed into schemes imposed on the people, and never mind the hard facts.

We had enough of these ways, and we know their fruit only too well. Social reality was squeezed into the procrustean bed of theoretical schemes, and what was too big for them to hold was severed as alien and hostile. Our social organism suffocated in fetters. Ideas and social mentality were deformed.

Having embarked on the course of Perestroika, we should remember this lesson very well and not yield to the temptation of looking ourselves in our offices in order to ponder over ways of healing our society. We are much too used to relying on ready-made solutions.

By and large, one can understand a nostalgic feeling about the times when every step was planned well in advance: after so a prolonged domination of the bureaucratic system of administrative management it is very difficult for us to overcome the ailment of dependence on directives and the habit of sticking to a certain pattern of thought and acting only on someone's instructions.

Socialism is being created by the masses. Let us think what this famous phrase actually means. The creative efforts of the masses are varied and unpredictable. They cannot be forced in advance into a certain pattern, "...the minds of tens of millions of those who are doing things create something infinitely loftier than the greatest genius can foresee," Lenin said. (Vol.26, p.474)

Perestroika gives all of us a chance to be ourselves and to

take part in creating history. Herein lies its mission of emancipation and a great chance for the entire country to utilize its vast potential at last.

We do need plans and projects. There is no need to prove what immense importance Lenin attached to them. But he considered a plan or a project viable and effective only if it was the result of the theoretical comprehensions of real processes and the activities of the masses.

Lenin constantly urged the Party to measure its intensions and programmes against the expectations and sentiments of the people. Otherwise, any policy, even if it is theoretically correct, can prove inconsistent. He warned that "millions of people will never listen to the advice of parties if that advice does not fall in with their own experience," (Vol.24, p.495).

That is why Marxism was never a dogma for Lenin. In the very beginning of his career he wrote that the idea was not to "repeat the old conclusions" of the classics "by rote" but to be "able to use the Marxist method of research to analyse the new political situation." (Vol. 6, p.458) this gives us the key to understanding those spectacular turns which Lenin made at the crucial points of historical development.

Each of those turns was very difficult. Lenin had not only to struggle with himself and his political opponents but to withstand strong pressure from his comrades in the Party who reproached him for "giving up the principles" of Marxism and even "deviating" from it. Responding to such accusations, Lenin wrote: if things have worked out differently, if they are more original, more peculiar, more variegated than anyone could have expected, we should not "take after those 'old Bolsheviks who more than once played so regrettable a role in the history of our Party by reiterating formulas senselessly learned by rote instead

of studying the specific features of the new and living reality," (Vol.24, p.44.). Such people, he went on to say, "should be consigned to the archive of 'Bolshevik pre-revolutionary antiques (it may be called the archive of 'old Bolsheviks).'" (IBID).

Sarcastically smashing the narcissus-like revolutionaries who pined away for love of themselves, Lenin warned that a revolution "that took these people seriously would perish irrevocably (and deservedly)." (Vol.27, p.340).

I am deliberately quoting Lenin frequently in this part of my speech in order for us to see the character of his statements on an issue of such topical importance for us today.

At the sudden turning-points, Lenin sometimes had to enter into conflict with his colleagues and blunty go against the majority. This is vividly borne out by the story of the Brest Peace Treaty and the most acute problems created by the transition to NEP (new economic policy). This is how one of the participants in those events described what happened: probably only Krasin and Tsuryupa agreed with Lenin right from the very beginning, while all the others either kept silence or objected. This is what Lenin did (I quote): "when I look straight into your eyes, you seem to agree with me and say yes. But as soon as I turn away, you say no. You are playing hide-and-seek with me. Then allow me to play an ordinary parliamentary game with you. When parliament gives a noconfidence vote to the head of government, he resigns. You expressed no confidence in me during the conclusion of the Brest Peace, although even fools understand now that my policy was correct. Now again you have no confidence in me concerning the New Economic Policy. I thereby make the conclusion common in parliamentary presence and hand in my resignation to the two highest bodies

— the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Plenum.

Lenin's arguments and logic eventually prevailed: the Party accepted NEP.

For all his love for theory Lenin changed his mind when life demanded, disregarded any postulates or dogmas which had seemed sacred, and relied on a specific analysis of a concrete situation, which he considered to be "the living soul" of Marxism. (Vol. 31. p.166).

Thinking over the lessons given by Lenin, it is necessary to bear in mind that he lived at a tough time of widespread violence, when revolutionaries, including the greatest humanists, had to "hold their hearts by the wings," as one Bolshevik worker said.

From time to time nowadays, we are asked whether the October Revolution was necessary at all and whether it wouldn't have been better for Russia to stop after the February revolution. In the political struggle of ideas, such deliberations, which are absurd with respect to the past, pursue demagogic goals, as a rule. There is only one remedy for them — stark facts.

It goes without saying that the February revolution was an outstanding event in Russian history. It is a fact, however, that the bourgeois Menshevik government failed to resolve the main issues of the Russian revolution — peace, bread and land. The country was heading for a national catastrophe. Later, rejecting the accusation that the bolsheviks had deliberately "drowned the country in blood," Lenin said. "Is there a fool in the world who would have resorted to revolution if you (mensheviks and Socialist-revolutionaries) had really begun reform? Why did you not do so? (vol.30, p.392).

Lenin resorted to every trick in the book to avoid civil war. The Bolsheviks, soon after the Kornilov rebellion, proposed a compromise to the other socialist parties: "without any claim to participate in the government", they "would refrain from demand-

ing the immediate transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasants and from employing revolutionary methods of fighting for this demand." The Mensheviks and the S.R.S., would then agree... to form a government without the bourgeois parties which could be wholly and exclusively responsible to the Soviets... this would ensure that "the revolution would proceed peacefully and Party strife in the Soviets would be peacefully overcome..." (Lenin, complete works, Vol.25. p.307).

It is worth recalling all this now, because many people today — some out of ignorance, others deliberately — snatch episodes, facts and documents out of the chain of events to prove Lenin's alleged inclination for violence. But Lenin always sought political solutions as long as they were possible. Some even said he had devised a whole "theory of compromises". "...Violence is, of course, alien to our ideals." he wrote (complete works, Vol.23, p.69). These are the words to be comprehended by anyone who wants to understand Lenin.

The above example is not merely a reference to the true facts of history and a tribute to discovering the real Lenin. It is also crucial to us in another important respect.

Being in a revolutionary turmoil, this country is again attempting a historic breakthrough in search of justice and prosperity. Launched by the Soviet Communist Party and inspiring most of the people, the policy of Perestroika measures up to the revolutionary tasks which stare society in the face. The methods of conducting this policy are designed to keep the formidable drive for profound transformations safely within the democratic framework based on national concord and unity, and to prevent the country from heading into the chaos of civil and ethnic conflict fraught with violence, death and bloodshed. True, in some parts of the country,

(Continued on page 24)

Caste Oppression and Womens' Subordination in Jaffna

Dr. Devanesan Nesiah (Former G A, Jaffna)

We see everywhere violent destruction, gaping tears in the fabric of our society, the abandoning of many of our cherished values and the collapse of many institutions of which we were once proud. Our people have been brutalised by several years of civil war in which many thousands of the population, mostly young girls and boys, have been killed and immeasurable damage has been done to public and private property. The economy has been devastated. The military presence which significantly intruded into Jaffna in the late fifties and from time to time thereafter has greatly increased and spread through the length and breadth of this island. We are now confronted with an intimidating array of diverse armed forces. Some parts of our country including Jaffna have been virtually unpoliced for many years and the courts have ceased to function in those districts. Civil authority has been greatly undermined. Numerous public, private and non-governmental institutions have all but disappeared and much of civic life has ground to a halt.

Jaffna society has been often described as conservative and even reactionary. There is much truth in this. There has been some belated improvement but caste prejudice continues to be strong in Jaffna. In this respect the Jaffna Tamil Community is perhaps the most backward in Sri Lanka. Even the Christian schools have done very little to combat this evil. What is the proportion of the so called depressed caste student in Jaffna's leading Christian schools compared to that in the population of the district? How many teachers do they have from those communities? Do they have any programmes to promote integration

(Speech at Chundikuli Girls School.)

or to reduce disparities in socioeconomic levels?

Jaffna women also suffer restrictions but in this matter the evidence is mixed. In the Hindu as in the Greek pantheon the 'portfolio' of education is held by a woman, presumably the most learned of the deities. Despite the status of Saraswathi and of Athene as the Goddess of Learning there have been many obstacles to the educational advancement of women. Some of these barriers are being lowered in Jaffna as elsewhere. In fact the people of this region were among the first to respond to the new opportunities for education that emerged under British rule. Some of the finest and the earliest of the modern girls schools of South Asia were established in Jaffna. Since then girls schools have multiplied and expanded. Schools like Chundikuli have produced thousands of girls who have gone on to excel in higher education in Sri Lanka, India and many other countries.

But there continues to be a disparity between boys and girls in the encouragement and motivation provided by many of the parents and several of the schools in respect of selection of subjects of study and choice of careers. While boys are encouraged to take subjects which will equip them for high-prestige careers, girls are often encouraged to opt for subjects which are intellectually less demanding and career-wise less promising. Despite such bias it is a matter of pride that in certain highly competitive fields, e.g. admissions to Sri Lanka's Medical Schools, girls have secured almost as many places as boys. In this respect we are ahead of the USA and many other developed countries in which the gender-disparity in Medical Schools is greater. Girls have succeeded

in staking a strong claim for parity in educational opportunities and, despite some handicaps, have shown that given equal facilities they can do as well as, or even better than boys.

However, society continues to impose many restrictions on women in respect of employment. In this matter we have been slower to lower barriers against women than many developed countries. Even within the professions to which women are admitted they tend to be pushed into certain functions and specialities and away from certain others. Women may be encouraged to get involved in religious work but are largely denied the status and functions of priesthood. Within the medical profession they may be encouraged to specialise in obstetrics and gynaecology rather than general surgery. Women engineers tend to do desk jobs with prospects of career advancement inferior to that of their male colleagues. In the legal profession women are numerically disproportionate in chambers headed by male lawyers or assist male advocates rather than head their own chambers or conduct their own cases in the courts. Once excluded from the Ceylon Civil Service, women are now admitted to the Sri Lanka Administrative Service but, to the best of my knowledge, only one of them has been posted as a Government Agent and none has risen to be the Secretary of a Cabinet Ministry.

Such obstacles to the professional advancement of women exist to a greater or less extent in all countries. All over the world we find women concentrated in teaching, nursing, library science, secretarial work, social work, certain types of factory work, the garment industries etc. None would claim that these occupations are unsuitable for women. What I am suggesting is that women can greatly widen their horizons and enter and excel in hundreds of other professions which are now largely the preserve of men. I have no doubt that such developments will be encouraged by this school.

Some may protest that the environment is not conducive to such venturing out along new avenues of activities. They may urge that women must stick to safe and well-trod professional fields till settled conditions are restored. Feminists, who are no doubt well represented in this school, may urge that it is precisely because conditions are unsettled that there are new opportunities which should be seized. There is indeed much evidence from many countries to support such an assertion. For example Franz Fanon writes of the transformation in the status of women during the Algerian revolution: "The woman who before the Revolution never left the house without being accompanied by the mother or the husband is now entrusted with special missions. . . she spends the night with an unknown family. . . the husband or the father learns to look upon the relations between the sexes in a new light".

There have been some such developments in our society in the last few years. I do not want to be misunderstood. I am not suggesting that women should take needless risks. Nor am I endorsing their involvement in violent activities which I consider to be suitable neither to women nor to men. All I am saying is that under revolutionary situations, such as during the French Revolution two centuries ago, or during the Egyptian or Indian independence struggle half a century ago or in the current Palestinian Intifada, some of the obstacles to the activities of women may be removed and they may gain opportunities to exercise certain freedoms or to advance in new career fields. Such openings may not come their way under more settled conditions. Similarly in times of rapid economic and cultural transformation, as in South India in the Sangam period, in the USA for many decades and in many countries in the early post world war 2 years, women may occupy key positions from which they were previously excluded and exercise freedoms

they were traditionally denied. A large proportion of the writers and poets of the Sangam period were women, notably Avvai whose advice on government was sought by the kings of that period. Some of the gains may become permanent but some may be lost when the special conditions conducive to such gains disappear. In some respects Tamil women have not fully regained the freedoms they exercised during the Sangam period nor French women the status they enjoyed during the French Revolution.

The extraordinary conditions which now prevail may provide fresh opportunities for women to advance. To a limited extent we saw, in the eighties, women's groups taking important initiatives in public affairs in various parts of our country. Moreover, with a large proportion of the male population killed, disabled, detained, engaged in military activities, gone overseas or otherwise unable to be active in public life women are needed more than ever before to occupy key positions. Some progress has been made. We need to advance further and to consolidate the gains. We are in a critical period in our history. Many are apprehensive of our future and the society of tomorrow. Let us hope that women will have a major role in determining that future, in creating the institution of that society, in establishing its values and in the conduct of business and the public services in the years to come.

I have spoken of what women in general are called upon to do. But what do others expect of the women and little women of Chundikuli? As an old pupil and also as an old boy of St. Johns, I may claim to have some insights into this question. Many schools have Latin mottos which the students do not even understand, let alone live up to. Your motto is Forward, which is also the theme of your Collage song. It could mean that you are called upon to be in the vanguard, on the frontier, of every advance. The

Collins New Concise Dictionary also defines Forward as presumptuous, pert and impudent. I believe that the common perception, particularly among, Johnnians, is that the girls and old girls of Chundikuli are forward in every sense of that word. I urge you to be true to your motto. Those who know the girls and old girls of Chundikuli are aware that they do not really need such prompting to assume leadership roles. Some may even think that what is needed is a word of caution. But submitting to undue restraint, keeping out of the centre of activity and failing to meet challenges are not in the spirit of Chundikuli.

I would urge the girls of Chundikuli to be bold and ambitious in your choice of subjects of study and adventurous and idealistic in your career aspirations. Do not feel constrained by the traditional limitations placed by others on your scholastic and professional careers. Several of those who have passed through this school have distinguished themselves in fields which were once but are no longer regarded as more suitable for men. I have no doubt that many among you will do the same and blaze new trails along which others will follow. I am not thinking only of the white collar professions but of every kind of community service which requires imagination, special skills, dedication to duty, strength of character and leadership qualities.

Perhaps by the turn of this century many among you will occupy key positions in various public and community services, in banking, in industry and commerce, in academic and in political life. Perhaps some of you will become outstanding philosophers, archeologists, electronic engineers, artists, architects, mathematicians, scientists, marine engineers, explorers, authors, economists, journalists, broadcasters, drama and film producers, actors, airline pilots and stewards, industrialists, marketing managers, diplomats

and political leaders. I have listed some professions at random not so much as occupations I recommend but rather as indicating the range and variety of career prospects open to a young woman with a modern education such as Chundikuli provides. You have as much right as anyone else to set your sights high and your school equips you better than most others to reach those targets. But I trust that your aspirations are not directed exclusively on the elite professions and that your ambitions are not narrowly defined in terms of social prestige and economic status.

It is important to keep several factors in mind. Firstly, only a small minority of students can enter the elite professions. The large majority will occupy positions of less prestige and lower remuneration. It is as much the function of the school to prepare and motivate girls to serve in these positions as to equip the few who may move into occupations higher up the social ladder. Secondly, job-satisfaction and opportunities to make a significant contribution to public welfare may be found as much outside as within the elite professions. Mahatma Gandhi was eminently qualified to be a successful barrister. He got far more job-satisfaction and made an incomparably greater contribution to society by abandoning that career for unpaid political and community service. Many of the missionaries including several who served in this district were well equipped for distinguished professional careers in their own country. They gained, and we all gained, because they chose instead to engage in even more valuable, and demanding but virtually unpaid, service in land far distant from their place of birth. Subramaniam Barathi with the advantages of Brahmin birth and exceptional intellectual and literary skills, could have found a place at the apex of Indian society. He preferred to align himself in his lifestyle and the content of his poetry

with the poor and oppressed of that subcontinent; our civilization is much richer on that account.

It is not only people of the stature of Mahatma Gandhi, Subramaniam Barathi, Florence Nightingale, Vinobha Bhave, Albert Schweitzer and Mother Theresa who can gain job-satisfaction through deviating from lucrative traditional or professional career tracks. If we look around we can see many men and women at every social level who greatly contribute to the happiness of others and gain much job-satisfaction in doing so. You may find such people both in your school and outside in many walks of life. They may be teachers, clerks, minor employees, nurses, attendants, shop-keepers, salespersons, bus drivers, conductors, government servants, municipal employees, voluntary workers in non-governmental organizations or neighbours, not all of whom may have regular employment. Creative energy, high motivation to help others and satisfaction in doing one's duty well are needed and are to be found in all sectors and at all levels. To the extent that a society places excessive emphasis on gaining high academic qualifications, entering the elite professions and enjoying economic affluence in assessing the worth of its members, it contributes to the frustration of the majority who may have other goals or who fail to reach the targets set by that community. That population also fails to make the best use of its human resources. Perhaps we can trace back much of the ills of our society to the false values to which we have all contributed.

Perhaps among you there are many who aspire to be social and community workers, whether full time or part time. Perhaps large numbers among you will opt to work with women's groups, with the physically, mentally or socially handicapped and with the poor. I trust that whatever your social status may be in the years to come, you will engage in

combating class and caste prejudices, ignorance, corruption-poverty, violence and other social evils, and champion human rights. Let us hope that the stature of this school will grow not only through producing the social elite but also through inspiring, motivating and equipping girls and old girls to transform our society. Any school can produce pupils and old pupils who aspire to join the elite professions and move up the social ladder. Not all schools inspire students with higher motivation. I trust that Chundikuli will provide such inspiration and that it is those so motivated who will lead the way forward to our future. I thank you for giving me the privilege of addressing you and for your patient hearing.

Perestroika . . .

(Continued from page 21)

events have proved too volatile to be restrained to above framework. Regrettably, we know what it means to cope with the heady aftermath of this. And in such circumstances, I ask those who keep speaking about the phantom of civil war and make people used to thinking about it, those who are whipping up confrontation in society and between ethnic groups, those who sow the seeds of intolerance and hatred and who have turned the "enemy image" into a steadily traded commodity whether they realise where all this will take them. Or is theirs deliberate attempt to cause chaos and disintegration?

It is necessary to act in keeping with common sense: power must advance reform in all walks of life, paving the way for society's cohesion and acting firmly to uphold the law. Deliberations appealing to populist sentiment and abuse of democracy and Glasnost can only stir up trouble and incite destructive action.

Where then will it take us? One ought to know our history well to engage in politics in such a country as ours,

NEXT: Lenin's socialism

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